

FORTUNES  
OF  
MAURICE O'DONNELL

CHILDREN'S BOOK  
COLLECTION

\*

LIBRARY OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
LOS ANGELES

October 5<sup>th</sup> / 1866. Athlone

21-



# JAMES DUFFY & SONS,

THE MOST EXTENSIVE

Catholic and National Publishers in the Three Kingdoms,

**H**AVE been awarded the Medal and First-class Certificate for their Exhibits in the National Exhibition of Irish Manufactures, Dublin, 1832, and the Medal and Certificate for their Exhibits in the Cork Exhibition, 1833, and the Certificate of the Artisans' Exhibition, Dublin, 1835.

Knocknagow; or, the Homes of Tipperary. By Charles J. Kickham, Esq. With Biographical Sketch of the Author. A new edition, ... .. 3 6  
 — The same, cloth, extra gilt, ... .. 5 0

## William Carleton's Works.

Carleton's Black Baronet; or, the Chronicles of Ballytrain. Post 8vo, fancy cover, ... 2 0  
 — The same, cloth, plain, ... .. 2 6  
 Do do gilt, ... .. 3 0  
 — The Evil Eye; or, the Black Spectre. A Romance. With Illustrations. Post 8vo, 1 6  
 — The same, cloth, plain, ... .. 2 0  
 Do do gilt, ... .. 2 6  
 — Willy Reilly and his Dear Colleen Bawn. A new and beautiful edition, just published, post 8vo, fancy cover, ... .. 2 0  
 — The same, cloth, plain, ... .. 2 6  
 Do do gilt, ... .. 3 0

## Gerald Griffin's Works.

Gerald Griffin's Life and Works. A new and beautiful edition, printed in the best manner on fine paper, with Illustrations. Post 8vo, 10 vols., handsomely bound in cloth, 20 0  
 — The same, cloth, extra gilt, ... .. 30 0

*The following may be had separately:—*

The Collegians. Complete in one volume, ... .. 2 0  
 Card Drawing; The Half Sir; Sull O'iv the Coiner. Complete in one volume, ... 2 0  
 Holland-tide; the Aylmers of Ballyaylmer; The Hand and Word; The Barber of Bantry, &c. In one volume, ... .. 2 0  
 The Rivals; and Tracy's Ambition, ... .. 2 0  
 Tales of the Jury Room, ... .. 2 0  
 The Duke of Monmouth, ... .. 2 0  
 Poetical Works; and Gissippus, a Play in Five Acts. ... .. 2 0  
 Life of Gerald Griffin. By his Brother. A new edition, ... .. 2 0  
 Tales of the Five Senses; a Night at Sea; Touch mine Honour, &c. In one volume, ... 2 0  
 The Invasion; a National Tale, ... .. 2 0  
 \* \* Each of these volumes of "Griffin's Works" can be had handsomely bound in cloth, gilt, and gilt edges, ... .. 3 0  
 The People's Edition of these inimitable Romances of our great National Novelist is issued in 10 vols., pictorial covers. Price of each volume, ... .. 1 0

## Very Rev. Monsignor O'Brien's Tales and Stories.

Alley Moore; a Tale of the Times; showing how evictions, murders, and such-like pastimes are managed, and justice administered in Ireland; together with many striking incidents in other lands, ... .. 2 6  
 The D'Alton's of Crag. A new Historical Tale of '48 and '49, ... .. 2 0  
 Jack Hazlitt, A.M.; a Tale, showing the unquestionable power of Secular Education and Free Thought in Ireland, England, and America, and some stirring Scenes in Transatlantic Cities. ... .. 2 6

## Tales by Christopher Von Schmid, Canon of Augsburg.

Fridolin and Dietrich; a Tale. Translated by Charles William Russell, D.D. 18mo, fancy cloth, gilt edges, ... .. 2 0  
 Trial and Trust; Tales designed to show the Christian uses of adversity. Post 8vo, cloth, 3 0  
 Two Roads of Life. containing Tales designed to show that "Honesty is the best of policy." Post 8vo, cloth, with frontispiece and vignette, ... .. 3 0  
 Trust in God; Tales designed to show How to overcome Trials, ... .. 3 0

**JAMES DUFFY & SONS,**  
 14 and 15 Wellington-quay, Dublin,  
 PRINTERS AND BOOKBINDERS.

176. MURPHY, James: The Fortunes of Maurice O'Donnell: an Irish-American Story ... Dublin: John Falconer [1887]. 8vo, original cloth. First edition. £12.00

Forced to leave Ireland the hero plays a prominent part in the American Civil War before returning home covered in glory.





THE  
FORTUNES  
OF  
MAURICE O'DONNELL.



THE  
FORTUNES  
OF  
MAURICE O'DONNELL:

An Irish-American Story.

BY

JAMES MURPHY,

AUTHOR OF "HUGH ROACH, THE RIBBONMAN," "THE FORGE OF CLOHOGUE,"  
"THE HOUSE IN THE BATH," "CONVICT NO. 25,"  
"THE SHAN VAN VOCHT,"  
ETC., ETC.

---

*Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1887, in the Office of the Librarian  
of Congress at Washington, by Richard Oulahan, of Washington, D.C.*

---

DUBLIN : JOHN FALCONER.  
LONDON : SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.  
NEW YORK : MESSRS. A. E. & R. E. FORD

[All rights reserved.]



EDWARD MURPHY, ESQ., J.P.,  
MONTREAL, CANADA,

As one who, in the course of an unusually prosperous career, never forgot the land of his birth; who was always ready to promote the welfare of the Irish race abroad and the National Interests at home; who caused the Irish name to be honoured and respected in the New Dominion; and who never ceased to foster and encourage in his adopted City the ancient history, literature, and sports of the Irish People,

This Work is inscribed by

THE AUTHOR



## PREFACE.

---

IN the few introductory words to the *Shan Van Vocht*, I stated my intention of discontinuing this series of novels after the publication of a work (then, and still, in hands) dealing with the great Rebellion of 1641.

I received since, however, so many letters from clergymen in Ireland and abroad, from patriotic Irishmen in many lands—in nearly all cases entire strangers to me save by name—dissuading me from this course, and urging me to continue the series: pointing out to me that, setting aside altogether the main motive which prompted me to write them (and which, I should hope, is perfectly manifest through them) they were performing a still further useful function in placing pure and wholesome literature in the hands of our youth, and thereby supplanting the pernicious stuff imported from London: expressing to me also in very warm and encouraging language the sense of pleasure with which they themselves had read them, and the olden memories of home and fatherland they had called up in their breasts—that I was persuaded to break through my resolve and continue their publication.

Hence the present volume.

J. M.





# THE FORTUNES OF MAURICE O'DONNELL.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### THE SMUGGLER.

“I WON’T permit it any longer. You must take your choice. Either go back to your profession and attend to it, or you shall own no part or portion here. I know well why you are idling your time. It’s that baby-faced girl yonder that occupies your thoughts, and not the profession for which, at so much expense, I have prepared you. You have my word for it now, sir. Unless you abandon this nonsense—unless you go back to your business and attend to it—a shilling more you shall not handle from me. A pretty thing, indeed, to see an O’Donnell of Arranmore paying attention to the doll-faced daughter of a—a pensioner! And I’ll tell you what more, sir—if you do not forthwith return to your ship and show yourself as well-disposed as your brothers to keep up the family name and position, there shall be—and hearken to my words!—no home for you here any longer. There now!”

Sir Hugh O’Donnell turned on his heel and entered the doorway of his mansion, leaving his son standing on the doorstep. The angry words of his father, and his impetuous departure, prevented him from making answer—even if he had intention of doing so, which he had not. He well knew that to seek further to change the intention of the tall, gray-haired gentleman who had just left him—whom he called father—would be worse than vain.

He stood irresolutely for a moment—glanced over the

western sea, which the setting sun was turning into a broad expanse of gold, veined here and there with streaks of opal that seemed to extend to the horizon, where they became merged in the masses of purple and white clouds. The sun was dipping into the water, and but half of his face was visible. A stormy-looking disc it was, and seemed as if, in taking leave of the earth for the time, to fling more than usual of his rays around him in fiery wrath.

Although the youth bent his eyes in that direction, the magnificence of the scene had no attraction for him, either because it was a familiar sight or that his mind was otherwise engaged, for he immediately descended the marble steps and crossed the lawn that led from the house. Pursuing his way he passed several fields until he came to a farmhouse, whose whiteness—in remarkable contrast to those in the districts surrounding—was, with the descent of the sun, beginning to lose its bright colour and to be enveloped in the falling dusk.

A small orchard, whose trees were laden with apples, lay between him and the steading; and he paused at the stile leading thereto, when his attention was attracted by a rustling step behind him, and a merry, musical voice rang on his ear:

“Were you afraid of the ghosts, Maurice?”

“Is that you, Norah?” said he, turning quickly around.

“No, I wasn't afraid of the ghosts; but I was anxious to see George, and I was doubtful whether I should find him in.”

“Well, I don't think you will find him in. But that need not prevent your coming in. I thought you might be afraid to pass through the orchard in the dusk.”

“Is it so dangerous, then, to pass through the orchard?”

“I thought you knew that it was—everyone knows it.”

“I did not, at any rate; but I shall be glad—that is, I mean to say, terrified—to learn now.”

"Well, then, the entrance to this orchard is protected by the ghosts."

"By the ghosts? That is very kind—if not very strange—of them."

"Yes. Did you not wonder why the trees, though laden with apples, are not touched?"

"Well, no; that consideration never occurred to me."

"Well, the reason is so. There is not one, young or old, for miles around would cross that orchard-stile after dusk if the apples were made of gold."

"I am afraid that consideration would not weigh much with me, under certain circumstances," said Maurice O'Donnell, laughing at the serious face of the speaker. "Nor do I suppose it does with you at any time."

"Oh, me! they would not touch me."

"That is very considerate and kind of them. How did you come to learn that?"

"It is too long a story to tell. But they promised it to mother when I was quite a child."

"What—not even if *you* stole the apples?"

"No, not even if I stole the apples—which I don't."

"I fancy you must have been stealing them this evening, Norah, or stealing their bloom at least, for it is in your cheek. Where have you been?"

"On the cliffs yonder. There is a foreign vessel in Innisbeg that I went over the cliffs to see."

"A foreign vessel? I did not notice one on the sea to-day."

"She came in last night."

"I shall go over to see her. Will you come?"

"Oh, no; it is too late. But you will find George there."

"I am glad of that, for I want to see him very much."

"Shall you come back with him?"

"I may, Norah; or, again," said he, as a thought struck him and his face grew serious, "I may not."

"Oh, yes, you will," said the girl with a smile. "Say you will. It will not be much out of your way home."

"I shall, if I can, Norah; but I am not quite certain yet."

"Well, at any rate, you must not go without the anger—or protection—of the fairies on your journey," said the young girl, laughingly; and stepping back into the orchard she plucked some "russet" apples, and leaning over the stile handed them to him.

They were not very much of a present, but as she bent over the stile to reach them to him, her handsome face suffused with the blush the exercise had given her, her rosy lips touched with the brightest of smiles, and her blue eyes looking at once so innocent and so winsome—not to speak of the masses of dark hair over her white forehead, nor of the well-developed form, nor of her tiny hand, too small, one would think, for the very smallest of small gloves—she was such a delightful picture to look at that O'Donnell would rather have them as a parting gift from her than a diamond gem from another.

"You will come back, won't you?" she asked again.

"It is very likely I shall—if," said he, hesitating as he glanced at her exquisitely attractive face, "I meet George. Indeed, I am almost certain I shall."

"Well, good-bye till you do."

She gave him her hand, and immediately raced through the orchard to her house, whilst Maurice took his way to the shore, or rather to that portion of it known as Innisbeg.

Precisely as Norah had said, he saw, when he reached the cliff, far below him in the little bay the tall masts of a barque. So high were the cliffs surrounding, and so landlocked the harbour which the unceasing storms of unnumbered centuries had cut into a softer strata among the granitic formation of the cliffs, that it was only by stumbling on it

by accident, so to speak, one could find out that there was a vessel there at all.

But there she was—lying below him, her tall masts not reaching half way up to where he stood, and, in the depths below, looking very tiny indeed.

Without waiting to consider what brought her there—indeed wholly indifferent in his present uncomfortable state of mind as to the cause, or to her presence—he descended slowly the shingly path that, winding zig-zag, led downwards to the strand.

“What—you here, Maurice?” said the youth for whom he was in search, and who was standing on the beach with another whom Maurice took to be the skipper of the vessel. “How did *you* happen to come here?”

“Why, I was just in search of you; and Norah, whom I met at the orchard, told me where you were.”

“Well, I am glad you have come.”

“What vessel is this?”

“The barque *Grisette*—from Bordeaux. I say, Maurice,” said George, *sotto voce*, “if you are on for a pleasant night, you’ve come just in good time. Are you?”

“I am not exactly clear as to what you mean by a pleasant night,” said O’Donnell, doubtingly. “If it is anything I can well join in, why, I have not much other business on hands. What is it?”

“The captain of this vessel, Maurice, is a right jolly fellow, and an excellent story-teller—and”——

“You know him, then?”

“Of course I do. He often calls here.”

“What is he?”

“What is he? What a question to ask! Captain of this barque, of course.”

“I did not mean that. What does he trade in?”

“Oh, lots of things. Wine and brandy amongst others.”

"He does not find much customers here, I fancy."

"I did not say he did. He puts in here—to—to re-fit," said George, coolly, and with a glance around as if the docks of Liverpool lay at his back.

"The appliances for re-fitting are not very extensive here," said Maurice O'Donnell, laughingly, "but at any rate I am at your service. I am not in the best of spirits this evening, and if your friend the captain"—

"Why, here he is," said his friend. "Let me introduce you—Captain Reinor, Lieutenant O'Donnell, of her Majesty's ship — What's the name that's on it, Maurice?"

"*Indomitable.*"

"Aye—of her Majesty's ship *Indomitable*. I am sure you will like one another."

"I am glad to have the pleasure of meeting Lieutenant O'Donnell," said Reinor, with the slightest possible touch of a Frenchman's accent in his voice.

"I was telling him, or about telling him," said George, "that we have always a very enjoyable time when you come here, and asking him to join us."

"I shall be honoured by his presence," said Reinor. "And to that end, as the dusk is falling and there is not much to be seen about, I suggest we come into my cabin. It is not very magnificent, but"—

"Agreed," said George. "What do you say, Maurice?"

"Why, I say 'agreed,' too," said Maurice, cheerfully. "I shall be nothing the worse in my present temper and condition of mind," he added to himself, "for an agreeable hour or two. There is not so very much that is cheering before me to refuse a short absence from care."

"I shall lead the way, then," said the captain, as he ascended the gangway that led up to the side of the vessel and down the companion ladder into the cabin, whither he was followed by the two young men.

The dusk had fallen, and, though it was summertime, a chilly breeze had set in from the sea. The night, moreover, promised to be dark; and, although the moon would rise after midnight, at present the clouded skies showed no light.

"This is pretty comfortable," said Maurice, as they entered the cabin, and the captain began making preparations to entertain them—in the shape of long narrow-necked bottles and cigars, the fragrant scent of the latter as they littered the table betokening a brand of more than usual excellence. "I am not certain that the *Indomitable* could provide anything pleasanter."

"The *Indomitable*!" said his young friend, with an air of high contempt. "Who speaks of an insignificant man-of-war in the same breath as the *Grisette*!—a thing of light and beauty that skims the wave like a sea-bird, as if the sea was specially made for her."

"Well, I'm glad to have fallen into such quarters," said Maurice O'Donnell, laughing again at this somewhat *outré* eulogy.

"You might be in worse places," said his companion, significantly.

"Assuredly I could. I did not expect anything like this when I left the castle this afternoon. Who could have dreamt of it at Innisbeg?"

"By the way, talking of dreaming, Maurice, it is very odd that I was dreaming of you last night."

"And what might be the nature of your dreams, if I may make so bold as to ask?"

"I object to all conversation, gentlemen, until you have tasted some of this," said the skipper. "Talking is dry work, and a little of this grateful liquor loosens the tongue wonderfully."

"And excites the imagination, captain," said George, cheerfully. "So it does. Who could have expected so

much subtle philosophy," added he, turning to Maurice O'Donnell, "in a bold rover of the sea."

"Very well," said Reinor, falling in with the careless humour of his companion; "put my philosophy into practice. There are tumblers, here are bottles"—

"And here are cigars," added George Desmond. "I like the philosophy which tends to practice. None of your airy metaphysical disquisitions for me. Vanity of vanities.—Taste that cognac, Maurice. Did you ever see anything to match that? Veritable ambrosia—nectar of the gods! Talk of your old frigate after that! The cabin of the *Grisette* is a land of Paradise and the skipper its dispensing angel."

"Excellent—both brandy and cigars," said Maurice O'Donnell, somewhat critically.

"Didn't I tell you? You'll not get the like outside Bordeaux nor inside either. That's the potion that sends the heavenly gift of eloquence into men's brains and tips their tongues with the burning fire of oratory—that sends poets dreaming such dreams as"—

"That'll do, George? You may stop there. What's that you said you were dreaming about me?"

"About you?"

"Yes; you said you were dreaming about me?"

"Oh! so I was. I forgot. Reinor's nectar was already lifting me into the seventh heaven of"—

"Yes, I know; but about the dreams?"

"Why, Maurice, I doubt I should tell them under the present most agreeable circumstances, for, to say truth, they were not very pleasant."

"No matter; let us hear them. Dreams go by contraries."

"So they do. That must be my excuse."

"You stand excused. Pray proceed."

"You know the old ruin that lies between the orchard and the sea?"



“Considering that I have seen it every day of my life whilst at home, I should think I know almost every ivy leaf upon it.”

“’Twas a very odd dream. I thought I saw you there, lying injured, or hurt, or wounded somehow, within the walls, right under the place they call the Abbot’s Seat.”

“Dreams go by contraries, George. So that you shall see me all right, safe and sound, there when we leave the captain’s agreeable company.”

“I am glad you think so and that dreams *do* go by contraries; for in this instance I was going over to speak to you when a rough hand grasped me to prevent me, and then I woke.”

“Well, there is not much in that,” said Maurice.

“No, except that one should dream at all of a ruin.”

“Talking of that old ruin,” said the skipper, as he filled the bowl of a long pipe from the canister of tobacco that stood on the table, “it is quite as well known, perhaps better, in Bordeaux than it is at Innisbeg.”

“How did its fame reach so far?” asked Maurice, carelessly, as he lit a cigar.

“In this way. You young fellows are not old enough to remember a skipper, Von Homberg, who used to ply on this coast a great many years ago?”

“Never heard of the gentleman,” said O’Donnell, carelessly.

“I don’t remember him, certainly, but I think I have heard the name in my very young days,” George said. “Let us hear the history of the gallant skipper.”

“Well, he used to traffic a great deal between Bordeaux and Rotterdam and this coast—not altogether with the hearty sanction and concurrence of the Board of Trade. But on one of his trips, in this very little harbour of Innisbeg that we are now in, he was surprised to see bearing down on him, as he lay safely ensconced there, just at the heel of the evening, a

revenue cutter flying her Majesty's pennant at the masthead. It did not need that, nor the long carronades at her bow, to tell Von Homberg what her mission was, when she slacked her sails and slewed in from sea as soon as she stood straight opposite Innisbeg. There was not a soul at the Admiralty in London that knew the trim and jib of a revenue cutter better than the old skipper. He could see one on the horizon, when every glass on board, with the sharpest eyes peering through, failed to detect it. At any rate his eyes no sooner saw this one than he knew what she was up to, and prepared"—

"To fight," suggested O'Donnell.

"Not he. Von Homberg never fought. He knew better than that. He always surrendered. Suffered the loss without murmuring, and, as soon as he got free, was generally at his old business again. If he had one unlucky trip, he counterbalanced it by several successful ones; and so acquired a larger fortune—at least so it was thought—than any other skipper did in his time, and some of them amassed very handsome ones."

The captain here took a sip of cognac, and puffed vigorously at his pipe to make up for the loss of time occasioned by his conversation.

"Well, what happened him this time?" inquired O'Donnell. "I am becoming quite interested in the skipper Von Homberg."

"This time," pursued the captain, after duly addressing himself to his pipe, "Von Homberg was coming from Bordeaux. He was getting tired of adventures; he had grown rich, perhaps I should say rich beyond the dreams of opulence, and was anxious to retire to his native Rotterdam, to enjoy his old age after a life well and satisfactorily spent."

"Yes; go on," said George, as the captain again paused to refresh himself. "I hate moralising. The skipper's most praiseworthy deeds we want to hear of."

“After a life well and satisfactorily spent—I won’t say it was altogether piously spent, because Von Homberg had a manner of swearing when things were not to his liking—and that was nearly always when at sea—that was enough to start the planks in the deck. For that again, he was an eminently pious man in his conversation at other times, for he never spoke at all—never. But when he did—in time of a gale or the like—between the Equator and the North Pole there was no man in copiousness of language to match Von Homberg.”

“We have his character pretty well by this time,” said O’Donnell, cynically. “He must have been a very exemplary man.”

“He was that,” said the captain, gravely. “Unfortunately for himself he made up his mind to abandon the profession of which he was a shining light, and betake himself to Rotterdam to enjoy his *otium cum dignitate*.”

“Von Homberg didn’t say that, I hope,” said the lieutenant, gravely.

“No; as I told you, he never spoke at all except when things were going wrong at sea, or perhaps when he met another Dutch captain at Bordeaux. But he didn’t like the French language—his guttural accent couldn’t manage it; and I am sure he did not know Latin. At any rate, that is not of much consequence; but what is of consequence—at least to poor Von Homberg—was that on this occasion he took from the bank in Bordeaux, for safe transference to his beloved Rotterdam, all the savings of his life—the results of all his honest industry, so to speak—in gold Napoleons; and he had it on board, stowed safe and sound in his cabin, when his alarmed eyes first discerned the ugly lines of the revenue cutter suddenly tacking in upon him.”

“That was a surprise to him,” said George.

“It was. There is no doubt it was. But Captain Von

Homberg was always a man of resources—always. So on this occasion he seizes upon his treasure, and hurries with it to the old ruin—what's this you call it?"

"Kilrone," suggested O'Donnell.

"That's it—I wonder why I forget it, for I am sure I heard it a thousand times from the lips of poor Homberg. Kildhrone he used to call it. There at any rate he hid it, and returned to his vessel, which was a short time after boarded and seized by the revenue cutter, and himself made prisoner."

"I hope he hid it securely."

"He did. That was his misfortune. So very securely that he never could find it again. Never."

"Did he," inquired O'Donnell, as he threw the end of his cigar into the ashes-box, "make search for it?"

"Did he make search for it? Did he come the moment he was liberated to take it up and recover it? Did he come time after time, searching high and low, everywhere, for days and days? Did he come a hundred times? Aye, and more. But all to no purpose. Von Homberg's money was gone—clean gone, beyond all hope of recovery."

"What became of him finally?"

"He lived in Bordeaux, a poor old crazy man, for years after; for he would not go back to Rotterdam without his money. But there was not one, gentle or simple, in Bordeaux that did not know and was not familiar with his story—nor a skipper trading therein or thereout, that he did not in broken Dutch tell his loss to. People who did not know whether Ireland was in the South Sea or at the North Pole were as familiar with 'Kildhrone' as they were with the Quai de Revolution in Bordeaux."

"It's a very interesting story," said O'Donnell, indolently. "It puts me in mind of a maxim which I have sometimes heard—'Ill got, ill gone.'"

"I don't suppose Von Homberg ever heard of that pious saying," said Reinor testily; "and I doubt he would pay much attention to it, even if he did."

"Of course not," broke in George, airily; "he had too much good sense. He would know very well it had no application to him, and, very properly, therefore, shouldn't mind it."

"What! no application to him—and he a smuggler!" said O'Donnell, with surprise.

"What a thing early training is!" said Desmond, in mock indignation, appealing to the skipper. "Here is a young fellow with naturally good dispositions in him, and fancy to what a pitch of depravity his associations have brought him. How strangely perverted his mind has become. A vigorous effort to extend free trade, to cheapen produce, to extend brotherly love and more intimate communication between friendly nations, causes in his mind only"——

"How absurd you are, Desmond!" said O'Donnell.

"Upon my word I am perfectly serious. The ideas of brotherly love and tolerance on board her Majesty's ship *Indomitable* are to my mind most narrow and bigoted. Von Homberg, now, for instance, was a man of liberal and broad views who—— Hallo! What in thunder is that! What has happened?"

The exclamation was drawn from him by the shock occasioned by something colliding against their vessel.

After a brief interval—even whilst yet they were silently wondering what it was—a furious uproar burst on deck. The tramp of hurried feet, the noise of clashing arms, and the cries of quarreling men, burst with extraordinary suddenness on their ears out of the previous stillness.

Setting down their glasses, the three men with one accord leaped to their feet. The captain or skipper slipped through the door and hurried on deck.

"What can this be, George?" inquired O'Donnell, anxiously, as together they tried to make their way through the outer darkness after him.

"I don't know," said George, hurriedly, "unless it be the revenue men."

"The revenue men!" exclaimed O'Donnell in astonishment. "Why they?"

"Didn't I tell you?"

"Tell me! Tell what?"

"The *Grisette* is a smuggler, Maurice!"

"A smuggler! My God! why didn't you tell me that before? What a place for me to be in!"

"Who would have thought the revenue men could have found her out—if it be really they?"

"It's a very unpleasant matter for me—to be here at all at any time, or under any circumstances."

"It is too late to talk of that now. Let us get on deck and see what can be done."

"What shall we do even there?"

"Get overboard in the confusion."

"If we can."

"If possible. Yes. Where is this confounded stairs? I cannot find it in the dark. Oh! here it is! Have you it, Maurice? You have? All right. Follow me. Leap over the side and hide where you can, or swim for it. It does not matter about me so much. D'ye hear?"

"Yes."

"Then come rapidly. The confusion is growing greater on deck. Follow me."

As well as he could, and as fast as he could, Maurice followed his friend and companion. He was not so quick as the latter as to the intricacies of one of those coasting vessels—his experiences were of stately men-of-war—but he managed to gain the stairs that led upwards, and rapidly climbed it.

The sight that met O'Donnell's eyes as he leaped from the companion ladder on to the deck was as strange as it was unexpected. A fierce struggle was going on—but between whom he could not tell. One short glance was all he could give; for the next moment he was seized by the collar, a gleaming cutlass shone before his eyes, the glare of a bull's-eye was turned on him, and a hoarse voice—hoarse with passion and excitement—said :

“What! you here? A son of Sir Hugh O'Donnell's here!—here among these smugglers and villains!”

At once the conjecture was confirmed that the vessel had been boarded by the revenue officers.

At the same moment the swaying crowd of fighting men rushed in their direction, and partly urged by an impulse to get out of their way, and partly owing to the desire to shake himself free from the hand that grasped him, he struck up the menacing weapon, and with a vigorous effort flung his captor from him. At the same moment a blow from some iron instrument came with great force on his head and temples.

A thousand lights seemed to flash before his eyes, a sensation of unconsciousness grew over him, he staggered, and, before the blow could be repeated, slipped and—fell headlong overboard!

## CHAPTER II.

### IN THE EAGLE'S NEST.

WHEN Maurice next awoke to consciousness the sun of a June day was streaming down on him.

His opening eyes rested on the blue vault of heaven and on the white clouds that here and there flecked its azure expanse. Intervening partially between was an ivy-clad wall standing upright above him.

A sort of wondering thought as to where he was was his next sensation. Something strange had happened him, he knew; but his half-recovered mind failed to carry him back to the incidents of the previous time.

He closed his eyes to try and think where he was, and why he was there. But his thoughts seemed to play him the same trick, that a vanishing dream does the suddenly aroused sleeper. Ideas and remembrances slipped out of his head, and he could make nothing of the confusion of scenes that presented themselves to him.

When he next opened his eyes a girl's face was before him—a winsome face which he now remembered had been often present to him in his dreams or unconsciousness.

“Norah!”

“Yes, indeed, it's I, Maurice, and sorry I am to see you here.”

“Where am I, Norah?”

“Don't ask me where you are, but lie still. Is there,” said the girl, and in some unconscious way it became palpable to him that she had been crying—the while it seemed to him as if her face had been before his unheeding eyes for hours—“is there anything in the way of refreshment you could



partake of? You are weak and ill. Here is a glass of wine"—pouring some from a bottle which she took out of a basket beside her—"maybe you could try and take it."

"What has happened, Norah?" he asked unheeding her suggestion.

"Don't ask now. Try and take this; it will strengthen you, and you want it badly."

"Wait a moment, Norah. Tell me—oh! now," said he quickly, as his mind began to gather strength and coherency—"Oh! now I remember. It was that schooner!"

"Indeed it was," said Norah, bursting into tears. "It was that that brought all the trouble around us."

"I cannot quite remember how it came about, Norah. Do you know? I am quite perplexed."

"Take this first," said Norah, as she placed one arm under his head to lift him, and with the other put the glass to his lips. "There now, that'll do you good. You want to ask me something?"

"I do, Norah."

"What is it?"

She laid his wounded head gently down, after he had tasted of the liquor.

"What has happened me?"

"Don't you remember the French vessel?"

"I do."

"And that the revenue men attacked her?"

"Yes, Norah, I remember that now. Yes; and I," said he, as his memory revived—"I remember being struck by something or somebody, and falling overboard."

"So you did, and it's well that the tide swept you out, and that some of the revenue men coming up in a boat saw you, and, not knowing what was amiss, lifted you into their boat."

"The revenue men, Norah?"

“They did not know, it seems, what was going on on the deck of the French vessel, and so, seeing who you were, and that you were still living, they took care of you, and brought you to the shore, where they left you to recover, whilst they kept rowing on guard outside. Whilst they were gone, some of the men carried you here for safety, for there'll be trouble of that night's work—God help us!” and Norah's tears burst forth afresh.

“And where is *here*, Norah? I can only see the wall and sky above me.”

“Don't you know the Eagle's Nest, Maurice?”

“The Eagle's Nest!” said he in much, but weak surprise. “Is it the Eagle's Nest in the abbey?”

“It's the only safe place they could think of. The soldiers and police searched every likely place—even your father's house.”

“Searching for me? Why should they search for me? It is I that have reason to complain, if any one has. Where is George?”

“George,” said the girl, whilst her tears flowed freely—  
“George is in Galway jail.”

“For what?”

“There was one of the revenue men killed in the fight on the smuggler's ship. But the smuggler and her captain and men got off before the rest of the revenue men came up, and so there is no one to answer the charge but you, if they arrest you, and George. Oh! why did you go on board? Why did you not come back that evening as you promised?”

“It was hardly my fault, Norah. I did not intend to go. But you astonish and alarm me. I could not conceive that there was anyone killed. This is a very serious business,” said he, gravely; the responsibility of the position in which he stood overcoming his weak state, and throwing new vigour into his frame.

"It's serious enough. There is nothing else talked of around the country. And you will have to keep very quiet here for some time ; for if they catch you—and they are looking everywhere for you—it's many is the long day you'll spend in jail before you see Innisbeg again, if ever you do see it."

"This is shocking news! You're not going, Norah?" added he, as the girl made a movement of departure, when she had communicated the intelligence.

"I must go. I am too long away. I don't know whether it was right for me to come at all or not ; but I could not rest until I saw you, when I heard how you were."

"Stay for a little while, Norah," said the youth, glancing at the fair face of the young girl, whose rosy blushes and winsome glances not even her hot tears and manifest mental distress could entirely cloud. "Stay a little while longer. Your news has given me so much to say and to think of! Where is the skipper?"

"Gone. Brought his vessel out to sea in spite of them, and no one knows where he sailed to, or whether he was wounded, or how many of his crew—for there must have been some of them."

"What will my father think of this?"

"He thinks bad enough of it. He is so angry that a son of his should be concerned in this smuggling business that he is more disposed to give you up—if he knew where you were—than to shelter you."

"I would have expected that," half soliloquised O'Donnell, as he bethought him of the furious hate with which, in his capacity as magistrate, his father had on previous occasions pursued the smugglers of the coast. To one who prided himself as Sir Hugh did on his unflinching enforcement of the law in this wild western district, the idea of one so closely related to him as his son being concerned in violations thereof would be hateful in the extreme.

Maurice could well pourtray in his own mind the angry face and beetling brows of his father, when the news became known to him; the passionate utterances and execrations that burst from his lips; and the stern resolutions not only to cut off all further relations with him, but to give him up to the tender mercies of the law if it lay in his power so to do.

"And so one of the men was killed? It must have been an accident, Norah?"

"It is of—of little consequence to him—poor fellow! whether it was intended or not," said Norah in a voice broken with sorrow, "for he is in his grave these two days."

"Two days, Norah! Good God! How long am I here?"

"You have been a long time here—don't ask me how long now," said Norah. "We thought you would never waken."

"I remember now. That blow on my head did it. It was an iron bar, I think, struck me. My head is still dull and heavy. Have you been here long, Norah?"

"Off and on, since you were brought here."

"Dear girl! How trusty and faithful you are, Norah! Who else was here?"

"Ned, the doctor."

"The doctor."

"Yes, Ned Flaherty; he is very skilful as a bone-setter; it has been in his family for generations, I am told."

"I remember. So it has. His father before him was skilful. What brought him here?"

"I don't think you would be speaking to me now if he had not come. I don't think you would have ever recovered consciousness."

"That was the way, was it? Tell me, Norah—am I much injured? Shall I be soon able to move out? I feel as if I must have been badly injured—and I cannot stir."

"You mustn't stir. You will get all right in time, but you

must not move now. You are still in great danger from your hurt. You are in great danger from the exposed place you are lying. But you are in greater danger lest the soldiers and police, who are scouring the country for you, should find out your whereabouts. It is not alone that you would be put in jail and placed on trial for your life,—as poor George will be”—and here the young girl's tears burst out afresh—“but the very removal from here, Ned says, would certainly cause your death. You see how necessary it is that you should lie quiet.”

“So I will, Norah,” said the youth, with a mixture of gratitude and love, glancing into the fair face which her unaffected grief seemed to make the fairer. “But how long shall I have to remain?”

“A few days, if”——

“If I am not caught, Norah.”

“No—if you are not too impatient.”

“That I shall not be with such dangers around.” The young fellow might have honestly added, “and with you to bear me sympathy.” But he did not. “How shall I ever repay you, Norah, for your attention to me?”

The young girl was not disposed to listen to the warm words which he was about to utter, but, with a warning nod to cease speaking, she smoothed the soft pillow that rested his wounded head; and, with a hurried whisper to sleep and rest himself until she should return again, rapidly descended the ladder that gave admission to the Abbot's Seat, or the Eagle's Nest, as it was variously called, and, removing this means of ascent when she had gained the grassy sward below, threw it into the long grass that grew at the base of the ivied wall, and fled homewards.

It was many days before Maurice could stir himself in his curious resting-place, during which earnest search was made everywhere for him.

Great indignation had been evoked amongst the authorities at what they called the murder of the revenue officer, and telegrams had come from Dublin, and even from the Home Office in London, to use every effort for the arrest of O'Donnell.

Every house in the neighbourhood, and, indeed, for miles around, was searched for the hiding fugitives—even that in which Norah and her father resided—and so close was the seeking that the old ruin was not left alone, every nook and corner was pried into, and Maurice was startled from his sleep one morning to hear the voices of soldiers beneath him, and to see the beams of the morning sun flashing on the thick ivy leaves above him as they were reflected from polished gun-barrel and steel bayonet. But, though the men made careful and diligent search below, it apparently never occurred to them to search the Eagle's Nest; and after some time he had the satisfaction of hearing them go away.

The search, however, was not relinquished nor lessened, but continued with unabated ardour. It was strongly suspected that his hiding-place was somewhere in the vicinity of Innisbeg. He had been too badly hurt—his condition of insensibility showed that—on the night of the fray to enable him to endure transfer to a distance, and it was more than likely, his searchers thought, he was in hiding in one of those places where the smugglers were wont to conceal their goods.

During all this time Norah attended at occasional intervals on the injured youth.

And if ever nurse had aught to do—outside of care and attention—in making patient get well, surely it was in this matter.

The light touch of Norah's white hand, as she bound anew the bandages across his broken forehead, the bright flash of her blue eye, as having clomb the ladder, she bade him good morning and inquired how he rested; the rare and radiant loveliness of her face—more beautiful to his mind now than

ever in that his eye or his mind had nothing else to dwell upon but it; the tender grace with which every motion of her's was invested, made Maurice look forward to her visits as he would to those of a messenger from Paradise, did such gentle and airy beings ever condescend to minister to wounded men.

If Maurice's broken temple was rapidly healing, the wounds in his heart were growing deeper and deeper; and as chances of escape from his pursuers grew more hopeful, the meshes of another fate were weaving themselves around him with force powerful as adamant and stronger than chains of twisted steel.

Before this accident occurred to him Maurice had been attached to Norah, as any young fellow without much of the cares of the world on him would be to a singularly handsome and refined girl, but there was nothing more; and his father's address to him on that evening, harsh and cruel as it was, was unjust to him in nothing so much as in that it upbraided him with neglect of his profession because of his attachment to her.

Owing to the influence of his father he had been nominated as a midshipman on board of the *Trafalgar*, whilst but a youth had gained the post of lieutenant on board that vessel, and had come on leave, consequent on his promotion to the *Indomitable*, some months before the occurrences which we have related took place. He had, indeed, outstopped his leave without any ostensible reason, and had shown no great anxiety to return; but Sir Hugh was mistaken in attributing this carelessness to an especial fondness for the fair daughter of Orchard Farm. It arose quite as much, or more, from the easy, amiable, unanxious, happy disposition of the youth.

He found the freedom of the country very enjoyable after being so long pent up within the walls of the ship; he pre-

ferred climbing the mountains, gun in hand and dogs by his side, to climbing the mainmast; and Norah Desmond's face—which seemed to have borrowed from the sun its rosiest tints, and from the moon its fairest whiteness—was much pleasanter and more attractive to look upon than the ship's sextant or the ship's compass.

These airy pleasantnesses might have been the beginning of love, ready to develop afterwards, or they might have been mere passing fancies which half a year's absence would dissipate; but circumstances had now given them a local habitation and a name in his heart from which no power on earth and no effort of his could expel them.

There was not a changing expression in the girl's deep blue eyes, nor a passing smile that wreathed itself over her face—there was not a gentle, delicate touch of her hand on his broken temple, so full of grace and pity and devotion—that was not treasuring itself up to be yet remembered in the future.

So far, save for the pain from the healing wound, and the uneasiness caused by the vigilant efforts of the military, his time passed in a state of ecstatic enjoyment.

He was lying indolently thinking of these things, and half dreaming, one morning, looking up at the ivy overhead, and above that at the rising sunlight brightening the blue vault of the heavens, and awaiting with careless heart Norah's usual morning visit, when he was not a little surprised to hear a noise as of some person climbing up, not by the ladder, but apparently by the roots of the huge ivy trunks that sent their festooning branches far above his place of repose.

The climber was no laggard at his work, for almost as soon as the noise reached the listener's ears his hands appeared above the protecting wall, then his arms, next his forehead, and then his face.



With a quick effort the intruder swung himself into the Abbot's Seat.

"What, Ned, is this you?" asked Maurice, as he gazed at his visitor.

"It's me for certain," said the visitor.

"What brought *you* here, Ned?—for I certainly did not expect you," said the invalid, in the last portion of his statement anxious to qualify the harshness of his first.

"I know you didn't. But I came for all that. Are you able to stand up?"

"Am I able to stand up?" repeated Maurice, wondering at the strangeness of this abrupt question.

"Ay; and to walk?"

"Why do you ask?"

"No matter why. Are you?"

"Why, I think I am. I have had no opportunity of trying my strength as yet."

"I know. Well, you'll soon have it. An' you'd better make trial of it yourself afore you're made."

"What do you mean?"

"That the sojers 'll be here afore evening; an' that if you're not out ov this, an' not alone out ov this but out ov the county, afore the sun shines at twelve o'clock, the sorra sight ov sun you'll see shinin', except athrough the prison bars, for many a day to come."

"Who told you this?"

"One that knows."

"Who?"

"I can't tell you that."

"Who knows of my being here—besides Miss Desmond?"

"Your brother."

"He does—does he? Surely, he wouldn't tell it?"

"See, Masther Maurice. You know your brother better

nor I do. If you believe he wouldn't I'm not going to persuade you to the contrary; but if you'd like to lave here after what I said, I'll call again in an hour's time, and you can tell me."

"I don't want an hour's time," said Maurice, seeing the angry effect his manner and words had on his visitor. "I quite believe everything you say. You must excuse me, Ned; for truth is I feel a little disappointed. I expected quite another visitor and quite other news."

"I know—I know," said Ned.

"Do you?" asked Maurice, taken somewhat aback.

"I do. It was Miss Norah bade me come here."

"It was? Does she know of this ill news, too?"

"She does. I told her."

"And she approves of your suggestion?"

"To be sure she does. Anyone would that wasn't mad. Here—there is no time for delay. Danger may come at any minit. Wrap yourself up in this cloak—it belongs to the housekeeper yonder. Put on this ould bonnet, too. It's well for you there isn't much beard on your face—though, for all that, 't isn't much like an ould woman's aither. You can climb down the ladder by-and-bye. I'll put it up for you when I go down. At the turnin' in the lane yonder you'll find a jaunting-car, with me and Norah waitin' for you. No wan 'll know you. In two or three hours we'll put you where safe friends 'll be near to shelter you, or send you far on the road to Dublin. Are you attendin' to me?"

"I am, Ned. I'll follow your directions."

"Do. An' don't delay."

## CHAPTER III.

### ARRIVAL IN DUBLIN.

THE lamps were lighted in the city when the conveyance which brought Maurice passed through the streets.

The little money which he had with him was well nigh exhausted, and he was very seriously considering how long it would support him, and what he was to do thereafter. In truth, these considerations alternated in his mind with those for his personal safety.

The evening, or rather the night, was beautifully fine; the principal street, where the car had deposited him, was full of people; but the wilderness would have been quite as populous to him as the crowded streets in which he knew no one. In the loneliness and desolation of his heart he turned down the dimly-lighted quays—his thoughts alone for his companions. He bethought him of a youth from his neighbourhood who was a student in Trinity College, and he was busy considering how he could without danger to himself call upon him. In the absence of any other acquaintance he would be glad to see him, and if possible be guided by him as to what he should do. Two heads are better than one, he had often heard, and so it might be in this case.

But how was he to see him? The danger of detection was too great to permit of his appearing abroad in daylight, and how otherwise could he see his young countryman?

Revolving these thoughts in his mind, and with his attention wholly abstracted from outward things, he had wandered farther than he had intended, and was suddenly awoke to the fact by being brought up by the flare of lights from a vessel taking in cargo. From the bustle and work on board

and on the quay, and from the torches blazing in both places, it was evident that the men were working night-shifts for her quicker loading. Pausing for a moment to watch the unusual and exciting spectacle, he for the first time felt that he was very tired and hungry and worn out. His anxiety to get to Dublin had sustained him in his weary wandering; but now that he had reached the haven of rest, tired nature asserted itself, the physical portion of him predominated over the mental, and all his weaknesses and wearinesses seemed to culminate on him at once.

He looked around to see if there were any hotels near. Fortunately upon his eyes there gleamed the lighted windows of an inn—half hotel, half publichouse—and thither he turned his steps.

In a little room off the bar he had dinner. It was, if he could judge by the spittoons around and the pipes on the chimney-piece, the resort of sailors who frequented the port. It was not by any means a very presentable room; but the fire burning brightly in the grate gave it, although it was Summer, an air of comfort. Then there was the sense of shelter and absence from scrutinising eyes that made it doubly welcome to him.

Drawing over an arm-chair to the fire, when he had done his dinner, he lit a cigar; and what with the heat of the fire, the weariness of his frame, and the sense of repose around, he fell asleep.

He was awakened from his slumber by the noise of voices talking beside him. Too tired to move himself or open his eyes, he listened in a state of semi-wakefulness to the speakers.

“You will get completely loaded to-night?”

“I hope so. I intend if possible getting away on the ebb tide at sunrise.”

It was evidently the captain of the vessel loading on the

quay outside that replied. So much was evident to the listener.

“Do you go back direct?”

“Yes. Direct. I must get back to America without delay. This shipment completes our cargo. I should properly have started long ago. But the delay cannot be helped.”

“I thought you said you were short-handed.”

“So we are, but even so we cannot wait. There is but little chance of storms in the Atlantic at this season of the year, and we shall try and do with the men we have. It would be better if we could get some hands, but time is pressing, and seamen seem to be scarce at this port. So we shall start if we are ready in the morning.”

“Then I had better look after matters without delay.”

“By all means. It would be great inconvenience to me to remain here another day. Time is money now—more than money, in fact—no money could at all compensate for delay.”

“Then we had better adjourn on deck.”

“I think so.”

The two men finished their drinks and departed.

But this conversation had suggested a new train of thoughts to Maurice. What if he were to volunteer to go with the captain whose vessel was thus about to start in the morning. A solitary half sovereign and some small silver was all that remained to him after paying for his dinner. But he had heard of men working their passages to America. Could he not do likewise? He had resided long enough by the sea to know something of seafaring life. His experience on the *Trafalgar* and the *Indomitable* was worth but little, but it might be better than none at all.

These considerations effectually dispelled his slumber, and he sat up in a state of complete wakefulness.

A small pocket-book lay on the table beside him. It had

evidently been left by one of the two men. Taking it up and glancing at the cover, he saw printed thereon in gilt letters, "*The Georgia*."

Whilst he was yet looking at it the owner entered. It was the captain.

"Did you see——? Oh! that is it. I was really afraid I had lost it outside."

"I found it on the table just now," said O'Donnell, handing it to him.

"I am glad I left it here. Had I lost it outside I should not give much for the chance of finding it again. You have had a sound sleep?"

"Yes, I was very tired."

"I guess so. We were more than an hour talking here, and you slept as soundly as if you were never to awaken.—Been travelling?"

"I have been travelling," said Maurice, with great curiosity, glancing at his inquisitive acquaintance, "for the past week, and am more or less worn out. You are the captain of the vessel outside?"

"Why, yes, I am," said he, good-humouredly. "Have you seen her?"

"Slightly. She seems a fine vessel."

"Would you like to sail in her?"

"It was just the thing I was revolving in my head before you came in," said Maurice, seriously.

"I put the question as a bit of pleasantry," said the captain with equal seriousness; "but do you really mean what you say?"

"I do, indeed. I heard you say, as I sat here half awake, that you were underhanded."

"You do not seem," said the captain, taking his seat again, "like one who has done much rough work. Your hands are too soft and white for that."

"You are right there. But I wish to get away. I have no money to pay my passage, and—I am prepared to work as well as I can."

"Got into trouble?"

The captain, glancing at his dress, his face, and his curling locks, smiled as he asked the question.

"Something of that kind," said Maurice, cautiously.

"A woman, I suppose, as usual?"

"You are wrong there."

"Ah, I thought," said the captain, laughingly, "it might be that. They generally are at the root of all trouble. But, no matter what it is, if you really mean to come I'm your man."

"But I don't know much, indeed I may say I know nothing, of a seaman's duties—I mean on board a merchant vessel."

"It does not matter. We shall find work suitable for you. And in any case, if you are in trouble and want to leave the country, it is not Fred Walton that shall leave you behind. I have been in lots of trouble myself in my time, and know what it is. I am not quite sure that I am out of it at the present moment."

Possibly it was the handsome, tired face of the young fellow that attracted him; possibly it was the good heart of the speaker that prompted his words. At any rate, without hesitation—rather with an exultant heart—Maurice accepted his offer.

"Well, that is settled," said Captain Walton, pleasantly. "I am particularly glad of it, for life at sea is somewhat monotonous when storms are not to the fore, and ordinary seamen, though very useful, are not the most companionable of beings. Your company will not therefore be undesirable. And, as this is rather a dry introduction, what say you to something to drink?"

O'Donnell saw no objection, and something hot was brought in for their refreshment.

The captain was a frank, hearty fellow, and full of conversation. One story borrowed another, and Maurice soon found himself in the middle of a narrative detailing how he had come to his present position.

"Reinor—Captain Reinor?" said Walton, as Maurice finished. "That name seems very familiar to me. I think I must have met him somewhere. Low, stout, dark, was he—with a scar across his right hand?"

"Yes, that's he, and with a portion of a finger gone," cried O'Donnell, who remembered his taking notice of it in the cabin when that officer was raising the glass of wine to his lips.

"The very same. I know him well. I shall tell you a story about him and that wound some time between this and New York. But, by-the-way, that puts me in mind that some detective officers were inquiring to-day if we were carrying passengers to America."

"Eh?" inquired Maurice suddenly, with alarm.

"It couldn't be you they were looking for?"

"Did they visit any other vessels?"

"They did—every foreign vessel in the port. Could it be you they were seeking?"

"It might," said Maurice, gravely, explaining shortly how matters stood.

"In that case," said the captain heartily, "I am doubly glad I came across you. There is no need for alarm," continued he, as he saw the expression of anxiety depicted on his young companion's face; "now that we know the danger we can avoid it. I was about taking you across to the vessel immediately, but it is just as well you should sleep here until we are ready to start. The deck of an American ship is still American ground, but our flag does not cover murder,



however innocently committed, and the extradition treaty might render me powerless to protect you. And now, as I must needs be on board, and as you must want rest, it would be better, perhaps, you retired."

Maurice thought so too, and stood up to go. But his joints seemed with fatigue to be ossified; and, unable to use them, he fell back again into his chair.

"I see you *are* tired," said Walton, compassionately; "but take a little of this. You will be all right before morning. I shall call you in good time."

Maurice took the drink from the captain's hands, who good-naturedly helped him to his room. He had scarcely lain down when he was fast asleep. He did not think he had been ten minutes in bed when Walton's hand was again on his shoulder, waking him.

When he opened his eyes the morning light was streaming through the windows of his room. The sun was some distance above the horizon, for as he looked out he could see its rays gilding the mast-tops of the vessels outside.

"Come along," said Walton, hurriedly; "we are already behind time; the tide is ebbing fast and we must go with it."

Maurice made a motion to his purse.

"Nay, never mind that," said the captain, understanding the movement. "I have made it all right with the landlady. We have not a moment to lose—come along."

In a few minutes they were on board the vessel; the anchor was hauled up, the gangways thrown off, and in a short time the stately ship was steaming past the lighthouse, and out into the Irish Sea. Long before noon, with all her canvas spread to the breeze as well, the ship was bearing past the Wicklow coast, whose hills looked purple and gold in the flooding sunlight; and straight for the Atlantic and the far away shores of America!

## CHAPTER IV.

### ON BOARD "THE GEORGIA."

"It has often occurred to me to ask you," said the captain, some days after they had been at sea, and whilst the wide Atlantic bordered the horizon on every side, "what you propose doing on the American shore. It seems to me that in all our conversation you have not even bestowed a thought upon that."

"Nor indeed have I," said O'Donnell. "I am only too glad to get away from the Old World to bestow a thought upon the New."

"Nevertheless," said the captain, with a keen glance at his young companion, "it is what most people would have uppermost in their minds. The world's battle is hard to fight everywhere, but most particularly at present in the States, where war is raging."

"The war will soon be over," said O'Donnell. "It is only a passing quarrel between friends—a quarrel which will soon be made up. The North do not mean fight and the South do not mean separation. They have been often threatening secession, but it came to nothing; they never meant it."

"They mean it in this instance, at any rate," said the other, whilst a deep, grave thoughtfulness overshadowed his brow. "They mean it in this instance. In fact they have shown their meaning pretty clearly, for at this moment the two nations are at open war."

"The two nations! I do not clearly understand you."

"The two nations. No other expression could describe it now. The United States and the seceding States. You must have heard of that."

"Oh, yes; we've heard of that, but not much attention was paid it. It will only be a few months' skirmishing."

"Not at all, and it is for that reason I inquired what you meant to do. Unless you mean to join one or other armies, America is a bad place at present. What do you propose doing?"

"You could not ask me at this moment," said O'Donnell, "a question I am less able to answer. Unfortunately, I am not in the habit of considering beforehand what I should do, else possibly I should not be the recipient of your generous hospitality. The fact is, I am leaving the future to blind chance, glad to get away from the difficulties that surrounded me."

"Then I take it you have not shaped out your course yet?"

"Indeed I have not," said O'Donnell, emphatically; "so far as I concern myself about the future, it is a wholly untraversed region of the unknown."

"I thought as much. I had gleaned as much from our previous conversation—which is the reason why I mooted the matter now. For in truth and fact the time has come when you *must* decide."

The captain spoke so gravely, withal so kindly and conciliatingly, that O'Donnell looked at him for a moment with much earnestness. But the captain was looking over the taffrail and responded in nowise to the inquiring glance.

"You seem to have a meaning in what you say," said Maurice, after a pause, "that I do not comprehend. I am certain you have. Not at all intending to trespass on your hospitality or on your kindness to me, I shall be, nevertheless, greatly obliged to you if you would explain."

"The explanation is very simple. I am a Southerner myself. I am sailing for a Southern port, where I mean to

hand over this vessel to her owners, who are the chiefs of the Confederacy, and take such part in the Southern cause as I may find to do or as may be allotted to me. If you sail with me you must necessarily follow the same course."

"I have thought very little of the war and still less of taking sides in it," said Maurice, laughing at the unexpected problem so suddenly presented to him. "I am not clear why I should take part in it."

"It should not be necessary to give one of a military race like the Irish a reason for joining a cause like that of the South, who are fighting for freedom and home. But I did not invite you on board to induce you to do either. Only this—that if you stay with me you will be landed—that is if we should be able to run the blockade—in the Confederacy, in which there is but the one prospect at present: that of joining the army and following the fortunes of the South. If you do not—if you wish to go Northwards—I shall put you on board any vessel we may cross bearing to a Northern port."

"I am deeply obliged," said O'Donnell, with much warmth; "but, on the whole, I think I shall remain where I am. The world is much the same to me—any part of it—and if you have no objection I shall stay on board the *Georgia*."

"I need not tell you how welcome you are, and how glad I shall be of your company."

"Where are you sailing for?"

"Charleston."

"When do you expect to get there?"

"In about ten days—if we ever get there."

"If you ever get there?"

"Yes; I mean if we can run the blockade safely. Unless a broadside from a Yankee man-of-war sends us downwards."

"It is closely watched, then?"

"There is a regular cordon of Northern men-of-war blocking the harbour."

"How do you propose to get through them?"

"At night. We must run the blockade at night. Creep as noiselessly as we can apast them without awakemng their attention, and once through put on all steam until we get within shelter of the batteries."

"A dangerous venture, I should say."

"It is, rather; but I have done it before. What I have done before I may do again. Besides, it is absolutely necessary that I should succeed. The cargo is a very valuable one, and of great use to the Confederacy.

"Arms?"

"Yes, and whiskey for the use of the wounded troops. And we are ballasted with sheet-iron for the navy, every square foot of which is worth its weight in gold. Really and truly worth twenty times its weight in gold."

"I don't quite understand how that may be. Sheet-iron for the navy?"

"It is not possible for me to explain, for the present. But I tell you that there is a surprise preparing for the Northern fleet which will not only render their power valueless, but will startle the world besides. We Southerners are about to revolutionise the navies of the world, and set aside once and for ever the old-fashioned fleets. You scarcely believe me?"

"It is rather a bold prophecy to make."

"It is not a prophecy. It is speaking of what I absolutely know. At this moment the council of Southern chiefs would rather have this cargo presented to them, than the ship if she were laden from stem to stern, from deck to keel, with gold dust. But enough of that. Let us talk of something else. We shall soon be where there is no talk of anything but arms and war."

This conversation gave a new turn to the thoughts of O'Donnell. Previously he had not troubled himself much

with the future. Satisfied with having so easily escaped from imminent danger, and pleased with his new and interesting surroundings, he was content to let the future take care of itself, and accept, without forecasting, what time might bring forth for him.

But this happy state of mind now was broken in upon—not, however, unpleasantly. The captain's conversation awoke in him a fresh vigour—the vigour of anticipation and conjecture. In the indolent carelessness of his past life he thought little of the future. But he was now through accidental circumstances cast in the broad ways of the world, where it was necessary that he should be prepared to hold his own and do a man's part. Nay, more—circumstances, as we have seen, had constrained him to direct his steps to a land where war was rife, and where he should promptly elect his future career.

Often, as he looked over the bulwarks and into the glancing waves beneath which ran sparkingly past, he thought over his position, until even these thoughts faded away and the sunlit waters too disappeared, and before him there stood only the fair face of Norah Desmond, illumined with the gleam of her bright blue eyes, and glorified by the light of her entrancing smile!

The reflected rays of the Summer sun on the green waters reminded him of the flash of her glance, and the brightness of the gleaming sunbeams called up the winning light of her handsome face.

The more he began to consider the future, the more fondly his thoughts turned to her; the more uncertain the time when he should again see her, the more dear—the more inexpressibly dear—she became to him.

If he had but known that circumstances would have brought him across the Atlantic, what a leave-taking there would have been! If the opportunity only presented itself now,

with what vows of affection—with what open-hearted revealings of love—would he part from her!

But if the future were unknown, the past was irrevocable; and so O'Donnell was obliged to put up with matters as they were. Consoling himself with the reflection that he could write to her, and so hold a pleasant link of conversation with her across the Atlantic which should last until the time—not far in the distance—when he might be enabled to see her, he turned his thoughts otherwise.

Indeed it was not easy to keep one's mind concentrated upon any one subject—no matter how engrossing or absorbing it might be—in presence of the friendly and hospitable captain, and the pleasant surroundings.

The vessel clove her way through the water with the graceful ease and swiftness of a wild duck; a distant sail from time to time appeared on their track on the far ocean; and scarcely a breeze arose to dispel the sleepy, dreamy repose of the vessel's deck. Save the ceaseless thump, thump of the engines, and the continual whish of the water as the cleaving ship pursued her way, there was nothing to interrupt the agreeable monotony of their voyage.

Captain Walton was a pleasant companion; he had seen much of the world, had sailed through all parts, and had had adventures in many—stormy nights at sea, when pitch darkness fell on the waters, and the howling wind swept through rope and sail with screaming power, as if all the water-demons were let loose, and the ship lying almost on her side tore through the dark night and the raging waters. He could tell of shore adventures scarcely less perilous on the Eastern and Southern coasts, where all the dangerous characters of the whole world seemed to have made their rendezvous; he could also tell of places where once, and not long ago, trading skippers carried their lives in their hands

almost from the time they stepped on shore till they weighed anchor again.

In such entertaining converse the days passed, until almost insensibly Maurice found growing up within himself the strange charm of adventure, and began to think that the past portion of his life had been spent obscurely and valuelessly; that the great world was worth seeing, after all; and that it was more or less a mistake to vegetate for ever in one small corner of the globe.

So pleasantly, indeed, passed the time that it was with no great welcome he heard from the captain one morning the announcement that they were within a short distance of the American coast.

"We shall try and run the blockade to-night," he said to Maurice, after communicating the intelligence to him. "The night will be favourable to us. The moon will not rise till late, and the early portion will be pitch dark."

"How far are we away?"

"Not more than three or four hours' steaming. But we shall slow up, and not come within sight of land until near dusk."

"How do you propose to evade the vessels?"

"Impossible to say for the present. Circumstances must decide that. But in all cases of the kind I have found the boldest plan invariably the best and most fortunate."

"I sincerely hope you will succeed. It would be a pity to get captured."

"We won't get captured, I trust, at any rate, Maurice," said Captain Walton, cheerily. "At the worst it can scarcely come to that."

"How can you prevent it?" asked O'Donnell with some curiosity.

"Prevent it!" said the other with supreme *nonchalance* as he cut a plug of tobacco and placed it between his teeth.

"Of course we can."



"How?"

"By compelling them to sink us! It is the only other alternative."

"Do you really mean that?"

O'Donnell asked the question with some surprise. This was a view of the question which had not before presented itself to him.

"Of course I do. I thought you understood that all along."

"Well, no, I did not."

"Why, it would be absurd to suppose that we should convey such a cargo here to allow it to fall into Yankee hands. If it shall not benefit the Confederacy, it certainly shall not benefit *them*. But if you do not wish to run the risk"—

"Oh," said Maurice, laughingly, "my words arose more from surprise—because this is the first time I heard of that alternative intention—than from fear. Of course I shall follow the fortunes of your ship."

"That's right. I knew you would. But if you decided otherwise, I should send a small boat with you and put you ashore."

"There is no need for the present. I shall stick by the ship. As we came so far together, so we shall end the voyage together."

"Now I call that agreeable. I don't want a stranger to share dangers that a Southerner might very well shrink from, and should therefore not hesitate, did you express a wish for it, to put you ashore. But it would be accompanied by a considerable risk on our part, and I am therefore all the better pleased that it is not necessary."

"When do you propose to make the attempt?"

"To-night, if nothing untoward occurs."

"It is early yet. What do you intend doing until night?"

"Turn her prow Northwards. Make pretence of steering for a Northern harbour. Creep back when the darkness sets in, and run in between their vessels. I have done it before. I shall do it again, trust me."

"It is a risky business at best," said Maurice, as he listened to the proposed programme.

"It is, no doubt. One shell properly directed would send us to the bottom."

"Is it not a tremendous venture to risk such a valuable cargo on such small chances of success?"

"We must either do that or go without. We must introduce necessary goods thus, or not at all. Besides, what would you have? It is war time, and with the fate of a nation depending on the final turn of events, millions of money would be as dross."

"Setting aside my own interest in the matter, which might make my wish seem a selfish one," said Maurice, laughing, "I certainly do hope for success in this attempt."

"I never anticipate anything but success. I never allow the shadow of coming misfortune or failure to throw its gloom over me. No one that does ever, I think, achieves success."

"Misfortune is sometimes avoided by being prepared for it and expecting it."

"Even so, it is bad policy. Nothing ever great or noble was done in the world except by those who had confidence in the future and a firm belief in their success. It is now as ever, 'faint heart never won fair lady,' and 'fortune favours the brave.' But, as my attention will be needed for the vessel, I shall leave you to enjoy your smoke alone. In an hour or two more you will see the American coast."

The captain departed on his business. O'Donnell lit a cigar, and, sitting at the prow, watched with much interest for the signs of the new continent, as yet unseen on the distant horizon.

He could not help thinking of the adventurous discoverer who, three hundred and fifty years before, sailing over the trackless waters, looked with intense eagerness for signs of land on the distant rim of ocean—for that wondrous continent which his prophetic faith told him lay somewhere in the untravelled and unknown seas. Neither could he help thinking of the wonderful mystery which surrounded the first peopling of this unknown land; how a country as completely unknown to and shut off from communication with the rest of the world as if it were part of the planet Saturn had become thickly populated; when and how the link of communication that must at some time have connected them with the cradle of the human race had been snapped and broken; and how, thus separated from the knowledge and civilisation of the old world, they had developed such high civilisation and government and culture as Cortez found in Mexico, and amassed the riches found therein. This further brought into his thoughts the extraordinary fact that everywhere from the earliest ages, alike among civilised men as among savages, among the unknown and unexpectedly discovered people of the new world, as amongst the inhabitants of the old, *gold* was in equal respect and power. How was it that mankind, without exception, attached value to this yellow metal? What secret affinity turned the human mind to the reverence of this ugly yellow mineral equally amongst the rude as the cultured?

In the midst of these reflections he fell asleep.

The American shores had come in view; had shone in their azure beauty in the afternoon sunlight; had been wreathed and hidden again in the falling dusk, ere he awoke.

The steady, even beat of the slow-going engines, the swishing murmur of the water as it swept along the sides of the vessel, and the beautiful warmth of the evening conspired to render him drowsy, and so he had slept on undisturbed.

"You have had a long sleep," said Captain Walton as he shook the slumberer and woke him.

"Why, bless my soul! where am I? It is not evening, is it?"

"It looks very like night, if the dusk be an indication of it."

"What a time I must have slept! Why did you not waken me?"

"I think you were fortunate in getting such a sleep when you may be a long time before you get another. Besides, I have been so busy that I had scarcely given you a thought."

"Preparing for the venture?"

"In a way, yes. We were shifting the cargo and placing some powder casks in a more secure place, where a random shell would be less likely to search them out. We had a busy time of it, I can tell you."

"You look like it. Why, you are black from head to foot."

"I have told you the reason. But, black or white, I must stay so until I see the Confederate flag again, or until the *Georgia* goes under. Meantime we must dine. Dinner is ready. Come below."

"Where are we now?" asked O'Donnell, as he glanced at the compass, and saw that they were heading due south.

"We are creeping down the shore, back on the way we have been travelling since mid-day. We shall strike the blockading cordon in a couple of hours. We shall hug the shore as much as possible. We shall probably steal in without trouble, as the night will be pitch dark."

The dinner over, Captain Walton opened a bottle of champagne and pledged success to the venture. Then, ascending to the deck, they found that the night had gathered whilst they sat below, and the surroundings were in darkness. A

murky pall fell on the surface of the water, through which the black form of the *Georgia* moved with serpent-like motion, the steady, slow throb and pulsing of the engines alone disturbing the dark silence that lay around.

---

## CHAPTER V.

### RUNNING THE BLOCKADE.

ALONG the dark breast of the ocean, that heaved and throbbed with its never-ceasing impulse, the steamer kept on her almost noiseless way. A thick cloud had settled over the water, and, rising into the night, shut out any pale, timid stars that might have been on high. Nothing was visible on deck, nothing was visible all around; and save the smoke that came from the funnel there was nothing to indicate that there was a living thing in the neighbourhood.

After an hour's slow motion, faint lights began to show in the distance, in their front. By degrees these grew and grew, now one cropping up after the other, until a ring of lights showed clearly enough.

"How like a circle of lamps dimly burning!" was O'Donnell's whispered remark, as he and Captain Walton in silence watched the opening spectacle.

"They are the lights of the blockading squadron," said the captain. "Yonder, with the blue light at the masthead, is my old vessel, the *Cumberland*. I sailed in her for five years. And yonder is"——

"They seem to be very near one another. How will it be ever possible to run between them?"

"They are not so near as you think. They are more than half a mile apart, though they look so close. It is not these we have so much to dread; it is not difficult to escape *their*

observation. What it is difficult to elude is the guard-boats that constantly row between."

"How numerous the lights grow!" remarked O'Donnell again, as the vessel by slow but continuous motion grew near.

"Yes; they appear to be on the *qui vive* to-night for some reason."

"Unusually so?"

"Yes; so it seems to me."

"What can be their reason for that?"

"Possibly some vessels may have lately run the blockade and caused them to be more alert. Possibly, also, they may have some reason to anticipate our approach."

"How could they learn that?"

"Quite readily. They have agents in every foreign port, and their swift steamers bear the news to the nearest American station, where it is telegraphed to Washington, and thence to the commanders of the various blockading fleets. But we are getting into close quarters now, and a short time will tell our fate."

So saying, the captain left his position and descended to the engine-room to see that all was right.

The crew were lying around on the 'tween decks, chewing their quids of tobacco as *nonchalantly* as if they were in mid-ocean instead of being on the verge of their desperate venture.

In the engine-room the fires were banked up. Beside or in the neighbourhood stood huge cans of oil to be flung on the fires when the supreme moment came—when it was necessary the *Georgia* should put on all her speed and her powerful engines should do their utmost.

Satisfied that all was right, Walton came on deck again. They were nearing the blockading fleet—were, indeed, among it. To their right lay the shore lights—the light of but one

vessel lying between them and land. To their left the curving lights of the great body of the blockading war ships lay—looking now almost in a straight line.

The engines had slowed to that extent that the vessel's motion was scarcely perceptible, and but the faintest wreath of smoke came from her funnel.

By slow degrees she drew herself along until the cordon of lights was passed; the two silent watchers at the prow looking with intense eagerness through the darkness.

O'Donnell's heart beat with excitement. Would they get through? Would this silence, unbroken save by the noises that came across the water from the distant ships, continue? Or would it presently be rent in twain and sundered by the thunder of the great guns of the fleet, pouring upon them their terrible missiles.

Every moment—and how long these moments seemed!—he expected to hear the opening crash breaking upon the night.

How slowly the vessel seemed to move!

He could hear the calls of officers from the men-of-war borne across the water.

He expected each time—and his heart palpitated doubly quick as he did so—to find that they had been discovered, and that the shouted commands he heard from the distant ships were words of discovery and warning. But it was not so. The vessel was still moving undisturbedly along like a huge black snake gliding through the yielding waters!

"Ten minutes more, Maurice, and we are safe," whispered Walton, with unconcealed exultation.

"I am delighted to hear it," said the latter. "Can it be possible?"

"By that time we shall be ready to run for it. They will neither be able to hurt us nor overtake us before we are safe under the shelter of the Confederate batteries."

"Thank God! I shall be glad to see land again," was O'Donnell's fervent reply under his breath.

But the words were hardly out of his mouth when, with a force that made him start, the captain placed his hand on his shoulder.

"Listen, Maurice! Do you hear anything?"

"The sound of oars!"

"Precisely. They are coming in this direction."

"They are right beside us," whispered O'Donnell, whose eyes, in their intense eagerness, had penetrated the gloom and had seen the outline of a boat, fully manned, underneath.

"Can you see them?"

"Yes."

"It's more than I can do."

But Walton was soon made aware forcibly enough of its presence. From the boat a small rocket shot up, and, arching over the vessel, broke into a thousand fragments, enveloping the *Georgia* in a momentary gleam of light.

"We are discovered, Maurice," was Walton's hurried exclamation, as the gleam ceased as suddenly as it flashed. "Answer them as best you can. Give them any name or any statement that will delay them even for a minute or two;" and, hurrying from his side, the captain descended into the engine-room.

"Ship ahoy!"

"Ay, ay!" answered O'Donnell, bending over the prow of the vessel and looking down upon his hailer.

"What vessel is this?"

"The *Wabash*."

"Where from?"

"New York."

"Where to?"

"To the *Cumberland*, with ammunition."



“You are going astray. Why did you not show lights? Stop her and let down a ladder until I go on board.”

“You’re a Corkman, at any rate,” thought Maurice, even in the excitement of the moment.

“What’s that he says?” whispered Walton, hurriedly.

“Stop the vessel until he comes on board.”

“Tell him we are about to put round.”

Maurice did so, and the boat put back a little. At the same moment a burst of white smoke came from the funnel; the huge engines began to move with speed; and the screw, quickening its revolutions, began to dash the water into surf below.

But the vessel did not put round, or was slow to answer her helm; for, as the white smoke gave way to a shower of sparks discharging from the funnel, and the engines beat with ever-quickenings movement, the ship seemed to spin forward on her course.

The men in the guard-boat, misled perhaps by the Irish accent of O’Donnell, and therefore believing him to be really of the Federal service—for there were few Irishmen in the Southern navy, whilst those in the Northern service were legion—soon divined their intention; and three different coloured rockets went up from the boat in rapid succession.

Immediately answering rockets went up from various quarters, and bugle calls and signals arose in many places!

“There is nothing for it now but to run,” said Captain Walton, as he for a moment glanced at the myriad lights that suddenly flashed out in all directions, and looked at the gloom before him.

As if the vessel partook of his eagerness and anxiety, it sprang forward like a greyhound. The shower of sparks—no longer smoke—flew upward, and trailed, meteor-like, behind! The great piston worked backward and forward with the rapidity of lightning, making the vessel quiver and

tremble like a thing of life! The screw, going with ever-ceaseless and increasing motion, churned the water into hissing foam!

"That's speedy work, Maurice," was Walton's shouted exclamation into his friend's ear.

But the words were hardly out of his mouth when, at some distance beyond and in front of them, and out of the darkness, flashed a quick, angry, red light, and at the moment a round shot passed with a rush beside them! Although accustomed to the terrific roar and windage that accompany the passage of heavy solid shot, O'Donnell had his hearing for a few moments completely dinned.

Still the vessel, unharmed, clove her way through the water.

It was a race for life or death!

If the rifled cannons of the gunboats that they now knew were stationed inside the men-of-war failed to hit her, or to hurt her grievously, she would soon be within reach of the sheltering guns of the batteries. Unfortunately, the bright trail of spark, offered in the darkness a fair object for the gunners' aim.

A second burst of flame flashed through the gloom, and the vessel staggered palpably and perceptibly under their feet, as a cannon-ball tore through her. The sensation was but momentary, and like a wounded hare flying from pursuing greyhounds the good ship kept on her way with redoubled speed.

"We'll win yet, O'Donnell!" was Captain Walton's cheery cry as he saw the pace his vessel was going at, with immunity so far from harm.

But it was not to be.

Suddenly it seemed as if the world had come to an end!

A roar as if the globe had been rent asunder by some sudden and extraordinary convulsion, a blaze of light that in

one furious, blinding burst seemed to fill earth and air and sky, a sensation as of speeding through a falling world, full of wreck and ruin—and the light of consciousness fled from the mind of Maurice O'Donnell.

A shell, cleverly or randomly aimed, had struck the side of the vessel—had pierced it; and, exploding inside, had fired the gunpowder.

The explosion was over in a moment; but, long after, the air was filled with falling timbers, fragments of iron, and shattered pieces of firearms, while the dense cloud of white smoke that arose lifted its ascending head to the skies!

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HEIR OF ARRANMORE.

It was with a sad heart that Norah returned home after having parted with Maurice O'Donnell. She retired to her room and wept long and bitterly. The brightness seemed to have gone out of the world, and the airy lightness and freshness from her heart. Sorrow unspeakable took possession of her soul.

George was in jail with a deadly charge hanging over him. What the outcome of it might be she did not know, but augured the worst. Her father had been that day to Galway to see him, but was refused admittance. A report had got abroad—true or otherwise she had no means of knowing—that in the fray he had been wounded. This added not a little to the anguish of the position—for, if wounded, the care and attention which he would receive within the precincts of the prison would, they well knew, be of the slightest.

Norah, to prevent her father seeing her distress, dried her tears, and, taking her work with her, proceeded to her favourite seat in the orchard.

Whilst her hands were busily employed her mind was occupied with the sad events of the past few days, and full of unavailing regrets.

What an unfortunate thing it was, she thought, and how much she was to blame therefor, that she should have told Maurice O'Donnell of her brother's whereabouts that evening, for if she had not this disastrous business would never have happened. Had she only kept him by her side until George's return that most unfortunate visit to the smuggler would never have taken place. Peace and the sunshine of love would encircle their home.

Her simple and regretful reverie—as if poor Norah could have foreseen the future!—was rudely disturbed by the sound of a footstep beside her.

Looking up she saw that the new comer was—not less to her surprise than her embarrassment—no other than the elder son of Sir Hugh O'Donnell, and brother to the absent one for whom in part her tears were flowing. Norah knew him well, for he had grown to manhood before she had gone to school, and had often seen him unobserved since her return home.

A young man of somewhat dubious moral character, and quite as unpopular as his brother was popular she knew him by repute to be. The merits of the respective brothers were often discussed in the house and in her hearing. Very like in appearance to Maurice—so like, indeed, that a stranger's eye would have difficulty in detecting which was which, unless both were present—he was yet as unlike in manner and in character as he well could be. Maurice was gay and affable and easy-mannered among the people; Henry was, on the other hand, cold, haughty, and distant. Maurice, save in the natural gaiety of his disposition, was free from the slightest taint of ill repute; his brother was the subject of many evil rumours, true or false. The younger brother was

lavish of his money; the elder, except on his own pleasures, was close-pursed. Whilst Maurice, as we have seen, when at home mingled joyously with the people, his brother held steadily aloof from them and consorted with none but the gentry around.

This was the young man whose unexpected coming so startled Norah, making the tears dry quickly in her eyes and the red blushes mantle in her cheeks.

He had never seen Norah before, but of late had heard much in praise of her. He had often planned an opportunity of seeing her, but his hauteur, and, perhaps, a sense of embarrassment, prevented him. The opportunity arising from late events now presented itself, and he availed of the occasion.

But as his step startled the sorrowing girl and she rose hurriedly from her seat at his approach, his astonishment was great.

As the deep blue eyes looked so startled and embarrassed on him, and the mantling blushes rose to her cheeks, he confessed to himself that being so fair he had never before gazed upon. The perfect grace of her manner—notwithstanding her sudden embarrassment; the masses of braided hair surmounting a forehead of snowy whiteness; the soft, rounded contour of her cheeks, wherein pink and white so wonderfully blended with one another; the cherry lips and the dimpled chin—not to speak of a neck fair and white as a lily, and a bust beautifully rounded, that Raphael might have loved to paint, were something to which he was wholly unaccustomed.

So struck by this unexpected vision was the young man that for a moment or two his embarrassment was equal to hers. Taking courage, however, from her startled look, he promptly recovered his confidence.

“Miss Desmond!”

He lifted his hat with not unbecoming grace and respect. Norah bowed.

"I took the liberty of calling to see you," Miss Desmond. I am Mr. Henry O'Donnell—eldest son of Sir Hugh"—

Norah bowed again, whilst her heart palpitated and her colour came and went, with misgivings as to his object in coming.

"And I came to speak with you concerning this unhappy affair on the coast, in which we are both so much concerned."

He paused; and Norah, unknowing what to say, remained silent. She was still full of fears that something had occurred to Maurice, and that he was coming to acquaint her father of it—for she could not conceive that he would know enough of the secrets between his brother and herself to be the bearer of information to her. Therefore she remained silent.

Seeing that she awaited some further information or communication on his part, he said:

"It has been a very unfortunate business both for your family and mine, Miss Desmond. Have you heard from your brother, to-day?"

"Father went to see him but was not admitted."

"I regret to hear he has been wounded."

"So we have heard, but as we have not seen him even that we do not know."

"It was very cruel not to have admitted his father to see him. I am certain if you presented yourself you would gain admittance."

"I fear not," said Norah, whose affectionate heart grasped at the idea at once. "If I thought I would I should"—

"Sir Hugh," said Mr. Henry O'Donnell, "is a magistrate of the county and could give you an order of admittance; but as he is, through my brother, so much concerned in that unfortunate business, I dare say it would be difficult to get

him to do so. But I have sufficient acquaintance among the magistracy to get the necessary permission for you without consulting him."

"I should be deeply obliged if you did," said Norah, in whose blue eyes a look of pleasure and relief shone for a moment, lighting up her handsome features with much the same effect that a flash of sunlight does a beautiful landscape.

"It will give me much pleasure to be the medium of getting you the necessary permission, Miss Desmond," he said, noticing this frank and momentary gleam of happiness. "I believe he was quite innocently brought into the unhappy business?"

"He was—most innocently," said Norah, emphatically, the question and the answer coinciding so strongly with her late thoughts.

"And so, I believe, was my brother?"

"He also," said Norah, with somewhat unguarded frankness. "Neither of them had any intention of doing further than paying a visit to the foreign vessel that came in."

"Whatever could have induced them to go on board; least of all, what could have induced them to mix themselves up with the quarrel between the smugglers and the revenue men?"

This was a question the answer to which touched so strongly also on her thoughts that Norah immediately entered into a statement of how the matter occurred, to which Mr. O'Donnell carefully listened.

At least it would seem so from his outward bearing, but in truth he heard but little of, and paid but partial attention to, her story. His mind was fully taken up with admiration of herself—intense admiration, which increased with every moment that he listened to her.

She had the sparkling vivacity, the ever-changing and ever-attractive phases—from her long residence abroad—

of a French girl's manner of expression and pose of face, added to the rare handsomeness of an Irish one. The union was bewitching.

He had never any conception of what a really lovely girl was before. Had Norah's face been a passive and immobile one—after the manner of those whom he had met in society, where coldness and impassiveness of demeanour and face are taken for *haut ton*—she would have been, from her beauty, exceedingly attractive; but when the delightful vivacity, the sparkling changes of expression of eye and mouth, the never-for-a-moment-resting play of features that make the attraction and life of the French character, was added to this, it would be difficult indeed to describe the effect upon him. She stood before him the embodiment of loveliness!

Very little attention did he give to Norah's narrative; and if his knowledge of the occurrence depended upon the amount of information which he acquired from her statement, it would be small indeed.

But he was already in possession of the whole matter from other sources—as, indeed, so were many others in the country; and when she had finished her story, although he heard so little of it, he was able to shake off the fascination she exercised over him, and discuss the matter with her as if he had been listening attentively all through.

“It happened quite innocently after all,” he said.

“Most so. Yet they have suffered grievously for it, and are likely to suffer more.”

“I hope not. Every effort must be made to place the matter in its true light before the authorities. Although my father, Sir Hugh, is naturally much offended with Maurice, still it is his interest to prevent any further harm to him. The same rule holds good with George, and what of course affects one will similarly affect the other. It was all the fault of this deceiving Frenchman, whom I hope the Govern-



ment will capture and prosecute. But setting aside all this matter, and referring to what we were speaking of, if you appoint a day on which to visit Galway and see your brother, I shall exert myself to provide the order for admission. You have only to name the day."

Norah paused a moment.

"To-morrow would be too early?" she asked.

"Oh, yes; I fear so. Indeed, I do not see how I could obtain the order, or see those who have influence in the matter by to-morrow."

"True, it is only my impatience that spoke," said the young girl, with gentle regret. "Would the day after be too early?"

"I shall do my best. I may not be able to see those who have the control of the place even to-morrow, but if not the day after to-morrow, the day after that again at farthest."

"If he be wounded he will need care and attention," urged Norah, gently, whose thoughts turned to the absent one.

"That is true, perfectly true, Miss Desmond," said Mr. O'Donnell, considerately. "I shall take means, if at all possible, to obtain you admission to him the day after to-morrow. Meantime," said he, as he saw that Norah was about to take her departure, "I should be glad to see your father, in order that we may see who prevented his entering or refused him admission, and what may be done in the matter generally. For so far, dear Miss Desmond, we sail in the one boat, We both are unfortunately concerned in the matter."

Norah, on this statement, led the way into the house.

It was cleverly said and suggested by Mr. O'Donnell, who was loth to lose this opportunity of making his acquaintance with Norah more perfect. Such an occasion might not again turn up. He could not come again without incurring suspicion, or without some awkwardness and embarrassment. The

opportunity was at hand now, and he was determined to seize it. He was reluctant to leave her presence. Short as his acquaintance was with her, she was already beginning to exercise a spell over him—that spell a perfectly simple, innocent, and lovely girl invariably exercises over one of the other sex and possessing the opposite qualities.

Mr. Desmond was not a little surprised to see the companion whom his daughter introduced—and not a little annoyed. Indeed, if the occasion were not explainable on the very natural grounds of mutual trouble, it is possible that his reception of him would be cold and distant enough. But the mutuality of their positions made his friendship at the moment acceptable to the old man. His son was in jail wounded—in suffering and in danger possibly—and anyone who could bring him aid or help under the circumstances would have been made welcome.

Therefore Henry O'Donnell was received hospitably.

The evening was mellow and glorious. The slanting sunbeams fell through the leaves of the orchard trees, throwing broken patches of light on the ground; the linnets sang melodiously outside; and the creeping jessamine grew up to and around the window and framed it with a setting of golden flowers. Everything outside, from the white ripening crops around to the blue hills arising in the hazy distance, looked beautiful. But Henry O'Donnell had no eyes for scenic beauties. The only object beautiful to him in the world in the present was the fair girl whose white hands presided at the tea-table, or that afterwards laid the materials for punch for the two men.

If Norah's appearance outside had struck him with surprise, her movements in the house irresistibly attracted him. Her every motion was grace. Her every turn developed a new phase of beauty. Whether she presided at the table, in which the calm of her face seemed the very ideal of beautiful

repose; or smiled at some remark made, in which a light born of innocence seemed to illumine her features; or bent down to attend to the hospitalities of the table, in which her white neck and curving bust revealed themselves—she only presented to him attractions each more winning than the other.

“I don’t wonder at Maurice being taken with her,” was his secret thought. “I am glad he has got himself into trouble. It shall not be my fault if he comes back to or stays in *this* country.”

Norah had but little idea of the admiration she was exciting—indeed, her thoughts never for one moment ran on the matter; and when Henry O’Donnell left, attended for some distance by her father, the idea that was strongest in her mind was as to the hope of, in a day or two, seeing George—mingled, of course, always with a soft, sad feeling for the other wanderer.

If she *had* known of the feelings of admiration she created, she would probably have had cause for more painful trouble.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PLOTTERS.

PUNCTUAL to his promise, Henry O’Donnell was at the orchard cottage next afternoon. He had made great exertions, and had succeeded in obtaining from the lord lieutenant of the county an order for Norah and her father to see the prisoner.

It is surprising what habit and custom can by imperceptible degrees accomplish. For whereas Mr. Desmond on the previous evening looked on his presence with something approaching to repugnance, now his coming had something of the nature of welcome surrounding it. To Norah also his pre-

sence was not nearly so embarrassing as it had been the previous evening.

It was arranged that they should visit Galway next day, and accordingly, early in the morning, Norah and her father proceeded to the Citie of the Tribes.

The morning was fine, and the views along the drive inexpressibly beautiful.

To their left lay the Atlantic Ocean sleeping in the flood of sunbeams that silvered its surface. To their right the purple headlands of Crummer uprose in stern magnificence. And the low level lands intervening furnished, in the purple warm colour of the peat, and its brown heath and white canavan flowers, no small quota to the beauty of the scene.

Norah's spirits were light. In the bright freshness of the morning it was well nigh impossible that sorrow could rest upon a young heart. If a feeling of pain or trouble came it vanished before the exquisite surroundings, as the gossamer webs the night dews wove did before the sun-rays.

She was in pleasant converse with her father when, as they came near to the town, the noise of horses' hoofs fell on their ears.

They came quickly nearer, and turning her head around she was pleased to see that the horsemen were Henry O'Donnell and another.

"I thought it right to come myself, Mr. Desmond," the former said, after the usual salutation, "lest anything unforeseen should occur to prevent your admission."

"I am very much obliged to you," said the old man.

"It was very considerate and very thoughtful of you," said Norah, with winning thankfulness.

"Officials are sometimes so stubborn—are such dogs in office," he explained, "that sometimes for the mere sake of obstinacy they throw obstacles in the way. But this must

not be now. We shall prevent that. Is not yonder a pretty view, Miss Desmond?"

He pointed to the bay opening out before them like a silver lake. Calm and waveless it lay, in its broad expansiveness exquisitely beautiful. There was no sign of traffic or business on its wide waters; no passing sail gave life to its tranquil breast; and, but that a two-master—half dismantled—lay at anchor near the grass-grown docks, it was as lone and silent as any of the lakes the early American explorers looked down upon from the summits of the newly-won Alleghanies or Saskatchewan hills four hundred years ago.

"It is exquisitely beautiful," said Norah, in proud admiration, as her eye took in the view. "How beautiful the hills look yonder beyond Stramore, so bright and sunlit, and how blue the valleys that cluster round Ballyvaughan!"

"To my mind," said Mr. Desmond, "it is but the beauty of desolation. Look at that splendid expanse of harbour—seven miles across from where we stand to Ballyvaughan—where all the navies of the world might ride at anchor, and yet not a single vessel to show sign of life or commerce, or prosperity in the place."

"But it is so beautiful in its perfect loneliness, father," pleaded Norah.

"To my mind, Norah, it is," said her father, smiling sadly at her rapture, "not beauty—it is desolation. Only think of it. It is the port nearest America. It is twenty-four hours nearer New York than Liverpool. It has none of the dangers of the Channel passage, none of the delays of the Mersey; and yet, see!—there is not a sail on it. Thousands of vessels leave Liverpool every week for all parts of the world, bearing wealth and commerce, and riches to and fro; not one from here. One would be inclined to wonder if the Creator had not made a mistake in forming this unrivalled harbour here, for apparently no purpose and with no object."

This conversation was not exactly suited to the mood of Mr. O'Donnell at any time—least of all now.

He was brought up in that easy style of accepting things as they stood, so common among the Irish gentry and landlords—particularly in the West. The world was a very good one as it was. So long as they could themselves live in affluence, had money, horses, fine houses, could see company, and travel hither and thither, the country was prosperous enough. It did not matter that the people were poor and struggling—perhaps God intended them to be so. It did not matter that their cabins were a standing disgrace to humanity, a danger to morality, an eyesore in the sunlight—they fitted them well enough, and they were accustomed to them. Better might not be good for them.

So long as the gentry received rent, sufficient to enable them to live in opulence, from the miserable tenants living in these squalid huts, it concerned them not that the broad harbours of the coast were void of passing sails, and bereft of commerce; that undrained rivers flowed over the lands, turning fertile acres into swamps and quagmires; that the hills, which should be crowned from base to summit with trees, alike useful in promoting health to man and fertility to the land, were bare and desolate—that, in a word, the land, in olden times so fertile and thickly populated, was slowly and surely passing into barrenness and decay.

Nature, left to itself, provides for the fertility of the land. It clothes the mountains with thick woods, whereby the rain and the sweeping storms are intercepted and made to trickle down for the irrigation of the lowlands. Out of the abundance and waste of vegetable life, it reproduces the element of fruitfulness. Man's destroying hand alone alters that.

The western autocrat, leading his lazy, idle, and inert life, saw, without care, the hills denuded of their natural covering; the rain-storms beating upon them, sweeping down in torrents

to the sea the elements which constitute fertility ; saw, for the same reason, the same torrents overflowing the rivers and destroying, and rendering useless, or impossible to cultivate, the surrounding lands.

Mr. Henry O'Donnell had been brought up in this school, and the remarks of Desmond were therefore distasteful to him, and he turned the conversation :—

“Has anything been heard of the smuggler, Mr. Desmond?”

“I believe not.”

“It was quite a mysterious thing how he could have escaped.”

“It was very singular.”

“Nor is there any account of my brother?”

“I believe not.”

“The police, up to this, have failed to discover him. There must be a great many people who know of his whereabouts. They have been very faithful to him. Don't you think so, Miss Desmond?”

Norah, blushing deeply, thought so.

The question, whilst a random one, struck the mark ; and she, for a moment, was under the impression that her secret had been discovered. O'Donnell noticed the confusion—indeed, the blood mantled so hotly in her cheeks that a less observant eye than his could not fail to notice it ; but he did not divine the true reason. He divined enough, however, to say in his own mind, with a malignancy which his smiling face would have given but little evidence of :—

“It will be my fault, and my loss, if he ever puts foot again in this country.”

In a short time they reached the town, where, driving through the streets quickly, they reached the jail. Thanks to Mr. O'Donnell and his friend, they had little difficulty in getting admitted to see the prisoner.

Once passed in, Henry O'Donnell and his friend withdrew to the hotel where they had put up their horses, and had something to drink.

"Well, what do you think of her?" asked the former when they had time for conversation.

"Splendid, magnificent"——

"Beautiful, eh?"

"Such eyes, such lips, such form!"

"All the points good, eh?"

There was nothing very objectionable in these laudations so far as the words were concerned; but the manner was of the worst. If it had been the points or symmetrical form of an animal they were referring to, the conversation could not have been of a rougher cast.

The two laughed heartily over this description.

"Would do for Lady O'Donnell, when the old people go out of the way—eh, Harden?"

"Scarcely. You would hardly think of that," said his companion, rather coldly.

"Upon my word I am not quite certain that I do not."

"But I know you do not, or at least will not."

"If you do," said O'Donnell, laughing, "it is more than I do myself."

"Shall I tell you the reason why?" said the other, somewhat curtly.

"She is too handsome perhaps, and I should be jealous of her?"

"No, not that."

"What then—because she is of humble family?"

"Not even that. The highest names in England have allied themselves with humble birth where it was united with graceful manners and handsome appearance."

"Perhaps you would be good enough to explain the reason, then," said O'Donnell, sharply.



"Because you cannot afford it, Henry," said the other, with unpleasant arrogance.

"Cannot afford it! And, pray, how comes it that you," said O'Donnell, warmly, "can or dare say that to *me*?"

"Well, that is a question that I would prefer you should not put to me," replied his companion, sneeringly.

"It is a most fitting question after what you have just said."

"As you like; but it would be better not."

"I insist upon it," said O'Donnell, angrily. "I cannot see what right you have to concern yourself with my affairs."

"Don't get angry, Henry. Do you really wish the information?"

"Certainly."

"Well, the fact is we have purchased up that mortgage of twenty thousand pounds on your property, held by Bryce and Co., Kildare-street."

"*You* have," said Henry O'Donnell, his anger giving way to his surprise at this information.

"Yes," said the other, with undisturbed coolness. "Bryce and Co. got into difficulties lately; they had always, indeed, been embarrassed, but their embarrassments have grown into difficulties, and they asked our firm to take over this mortgage with some others, which we have done. The mortgage will fall due in two years hence, as you are—or ought to be—aware of, and we cannot afford to let the money remain out. Indeed, it was only to convenience Bryce and Co.—who have always been great friends of ours—and at great inconvenience to ourselves, that we have done so. It is just as well to inform you of this before making an imprudent match, even though it is with so beautiful and attractive a girl as Miss Desmond."

"This is news to me indeed," said O'Donnell, angrily.

"Better learn it now than later on," returned the other, with imperturbable coolness.

"Perhaps you would like to get hold of her yourself."

"It might not be so striking a match, but it would certainly be less imprudent," said the other, cynically.

There was an evil gleam in Henry O'Donnell's eye as he glanced at him on hearing this statement, but he checked himself promptly.

He felt instinctively that it would be dangerous to quarrel with him if he had—and he felt assured he had—this dangerous power over them in the near future. His pride was sorely ruffled. That a middle-aged, hard-featured, close-pursed Dublin attorney, with all the unamiable characteristics of a money-grubbing bachelor, should dare to place himself in rivalry with him—the heir of the long line of the O'Donnells—would under other circumstances have stirred his blood. But he was possessed of no small amount of worldly shrewdness, and he checked his growing ire with a laugh.

"There is nothing to turn one's heart from a pretty face," said he, "like the want of money. I believe you are quite right, and, although I made the remark merely in jest"—as indeed he had—"a fancy of this kind might readily develop into some imprudence. I am glad you communicated the intelligence to me. Here's her health, at any rate?"

"We can readily join in that—for," said the other, lifting his tumbler to his lips, "she is truly a beautiful girl—a very beautiful girl."

"I spoke the truth when I said I should introduce you to one of the handsomest girls in Connaught. Did I not, Harden?" asked Henry, gaily.

"Scarcely the whole truth," said the other. "If you had said you would show me *the* handsomest in Connaught—or in Ireland, for the matter of that—you would have spoken truly enough. But you did not introduce me."

"I forgot that, by Jove!" said O'Donnell, with well-affected surprise.

"There is plenty of time yet."

"So there is. I shall be the happy medium of making you acquainted with her."

"To-day?"

"Why, yes; certainly. I see no reason against it. We shall probably see them after they come from the prison. Meantime we had better have lunch."

"Agreed. We shall be in the better humour to enjoy her smiles afterwards."

They retired from the bar to the diningroom, but when they had departed the pretty waitress behind it said to herself:

"It's of Norah Desmond they've been talking. Sure as anything these fellows mean no good to her. Joking, indeed! She's too good for him. I have half a mind to tell her. But no, I won't. I'll do better. I'll tell Ned Flaherty. He'll have an eye to her, and see that no harm comes to her. I know he will—for my sake."

With which reflection the pretty waitress indignantly whisked the dust from the counter, and taking the two tumblers which the gentlemen had been using, threw them contemptuously on the shelf under the counter, with some idea, perhaps, that she was thereby venting her sense of dislike on their late users.

Meantime Norah and her father had gained admission to George. They found him in good spirits, and the wound—which was merely a flesh one on the arm—was healing rapidly. After talking over the occurrence, over local news, of the steps to be taken for his defence, and many other things incident to the occasion, the father and sister took their leave of him, and, as they had remained a considerable time, drove swiftly through the streets homewards, thereby missing the opportunity of again seeing their two acquaintances of the morning.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A PROPOSAL.

THE next evening the two gentlemen proceeded to Glenheath, where Mr. Henry O'Donnell introduced his friend as the Dublin solicitor whom he had engaged to defend his brother when he should—if it so happened—be arrested, and whom he had also engaged to defend George Desmond when his trial should come on.

To this end it was necessary that he should have all the particulars of his case from his friends, and who better to tell that than Norah?

Mr. Desmond was very grateful at this mark of attention, and, indeed, so was his daughter. It is only in times of trouble and sorrow that true friends can be proven, and here was a case in point. Whatever feelings unpopular with regard to O'Donnell there may have been in the country, this was an indication of his good-heartedness. It was all the more gratifying in that his father, Sir Hugh, it was well known, was for the utter vindication of the law, not only against the captured man, but against his own son. It was therefore an act of most chivalrous attention on Henry's part to provide the necessary defence not only for his brother, but for George; and Norah and her father regarded it in that light.

But it would seem as if the particulars of the defence required unusual care and searching out, for the visits of Henry and Harden were frequent, and their conversations with Norah were often recurring, until the poor girl was tired of repeating all she knew.

And so the days and weeks and months went by.

Still no move was made towards the trial of George for the death of the revenue officer. No one could give any reason therefor, but some rumour had reached even that remote region—nobody could well tell how—that strong representations had been made to the British Government by the French Ambassador touching the attempted capture of the French vessel, tending to show that she was bound for an American port and had merely put into the bay, where she was so illegally attacked, for a supply of fresh water, her owners having in some way omitted to provide that all-necessary article on her departure from Bordeaux.

Whether this rumour was true or false, Norah had no idea, nor, indeed, had Henry O'Donnell, or Mr. Harden the solicitor. The suspense was, however, telling heavily on the poor girl; in addition to which other troubles had come on her. Her father had taken ill and was no longer able to go to Galway to see his son. This deprivation added to his illness, and added also to Norah's troubles.

She was, therefore, when going herself, obliged to go alone.

It was on an evening after one of these journeys that she sat pondering on her troubles in her accustomed seat in the orchard. The Autumn was far advanced and the trees were beginning to shed their leaves. The orchard paths were strewn thick with them.

It was, perhaps, for this reason that she did not hear the approaching footstep until close beside her, and when she did hear it and looked up she saw Mr. Henry O'Donnell. She had been at that moment thinking—as she had been many times and oft before—about Maurice, wondering what had become of him, where he had wandered to, and why he had never written.

“Alone, Miss Desmond?” said the new-comer, as he took his place on a seat beside her.

"As you see me—quite alone," said she, looking up with a bright smile.

"This seems to be a favourite seat of yours."

"It is," said Norah. "It was so years ago when I was a child; and since I came back from France I love to sit here and read or work."

"It is very secluded. Would you not like a better and a more extended view?"

"It keeps out the sound of the sea."

"You do not like that?"

"No; I do not like the murmur of the sea—not at this distance at least. It seems to sob and sigh, and depresses me."

"I should not think you were so easily depressed. It seemed to me you were always in bright spirits."

"I believe," said Norah, quietly, "everyone is liable to depression at some time or another. There are few, I should think, that have not their gloomy moments—either of sorrow, or what is sometimes as bad—anticipations of sorrow."

"You feel sorry for Paris—for the gaieties and life of that pleasant capital?"

"I saw but little of the gaieties of Paris. Our life was rather secluded there. I had dear friends there, no doubt, but none so dear as those at home. No, I do not fret for Paris. But I certainly do feel at times as if Fate had been a little unkind in bringing so many troubles—and so rapidly."

"And yet for one like you the world should be all brightness. As indeed it would be—if you but willed it."

"That is a very reassuring statement, Mr. O'Donnell," said Norah, forgetting for a moment her sad disposition, and laughing heartily. "I wish you could tell me how."

He paused a little, as if he were embarrassed, and did not know how to commence.

At last he said:

"Have you never thought that—there might be—many—someone at least—who might make your life pleasanter and brighter if you so wished it."

"I really don't understand you, Mr. O'Donnell," said the young girl, looking up with unaffected surprise. "Who is the someone, and what is it about?"

"I see you do understand me," he said, with embarrassed manner.

"I assure you I do not. If you mean that there is anyone who has it in his power to free George and restore him to his home again, that—if it were possible—and I am sure it is—would make my heart brighter."

"That is not what I mean, Miss Desmond. Everything that can be done is being done for George—but it is not at present with regard to him I wish to speak."

"Is it not, Mr. O'Donnell? And what then?" inquired Norah, looking up again with two blue eyes full of wonderment. For, indeed, she possessed no idea—unlike young ladies under the circumstances—of what was coming, of what he meant to say.

"Have you never considered that there might be someone in the world who would have it in his power—and would feel it his delight—to surround you with happiness—to make your path in life pleasant and bright?"

"I know there are—two," she said brightly.

"Two!" exclaimed he, conjuring up at the moment the idea that the two were himself and Harden, and that the latter had already been before him with a declaration of his love.

"Yes," said Norah, quietly, "two—father and George."

"You mistake me, dear Miss Desmond," said he, much re-assured. "I did not intend that kind of relationship. I mean," continued he, glancing at the handsome face and the wondering eyes before him—"I mean who would stand to you in another light—in the light of one even dearer."

"One even dearer! And who might that be?"

"I—I, Miss Desmond."

"You!" said the young girl, in great and sudden alarm, as his meaning now broke on her with perfect distinctness.

"You! Oh! Mr. O'Donnell, do not say that!"

"I must indeed, Norah—if you will allow me to call you so. I have long loved you, though you did not know it. Loved you—ay, until I came to worship the ground you walked on; until, waking or sleeping, there was no thought in my brain but of you, until"—

"Oh, Mr. O'Donnell!"

"Call me Henry."

"Oh! Mr. O'Donnell," cried Norah, in great distress and alarm, and quite oblivious of what he said, "this is wild talk! You must not say these things. You distress me immeasurably."

"I say but the truth, Norah, and I must tell it now or my heart shall burst. I tell you that the love I bear you is stronger than that borne by man for any woman before; that I can think of nothing but you—see nothing in the air or in the sky or wherever I look but your face."

He had taken hold of her hand, and in her confusion and excitement she allowed him unwittingly to hold it for a moment.

But, remembering herself, she quickly withdrew it, and said:

"This is not right, Mr. O'Donnell; you should not speak thus to me here. It is wrong, and not treating me fairly. You do not mean what you say—and even"—

Decided as were her earlier words and her manner of saying them, her concluding sentence was weak, and left an opening which he readily availed himself of.

"Before heaven, Norah, I protest I do mean them! Never sincerer words were spoken, I cannot live without you,



think but of you, or exist but for you. Only say that my love is—or may be—returned—only say that one day I may hope to”——

“Mr. O’Donnell,” said Norah, by a strong effort conquering her fluttering heart and nerves, and addressing herself to what she had to say, “when you say you are in earnest I must believe you, but, even so, it is necessary to tell you that any relationship of the kind between us is impossible—quite impossible. The distance between us is too great, even if”——

“Too great, Norah! There never was position so high yet that you would not grace.”

“Even if,” continued Norah, unheeding his words, “there were not other reasons that would render it absolutely impossible.”

“Not impossible, Norah. Do not say that. Take a few days to consider it. Think of what I offer you.”

“Quite impossible, Mr. O’Donnell,” said Norah, quietly, but gravely and firmly. “If these feelings that you speak of exist—and I am sure they do or you would not say so—you must banish them from you. I am grateful for the interest you have taken in George, and the kindness you have shown in his case, but—nothing further can ever exist between us!”

“Do not say so, finally, Norah,” he cried, with a sense of dismay at her refusal which nearly overwhelmed him.

He had never for a moment doubted that she would accept him readily the moment he proposed, and the only hesitation he had on his mind for a long time was whether he should propose or not—as to the judiciousness of it, indeed, on his part. However, he reflected, it could do no harm, and could be withdrawn if at any time his passion cooled. Moreover, it would serve to keep out, for the present, any rival.

He had never even dreamt of the possibility of her refusal—

such an idea never entered his head; but now that she had rejected him, it not only filled him with indescribable dismay, but turned into searing and consuming fire the previous smouldering flame of his love.

She never seemed so fair, so radiant, so handsome, so necessary to him as now when she was denied him. Property, rank, title, social position, seemed to vanish into thin air, into nothingness, before the love that was never to be his.

"Do not say so, finally, Norah," he almost cried in anguish. "Take a few days to think over it! I shall wait for any length for your answer; only do not finally decide against me—do not entirely deny me!"

"Mr. O'Donnell," said Norah, rising—he made a movement as if to compel her to resume her seat, but withdrew it—"this must be our last meeting. I am sorry if it gives you pain, but I must repeat again, it is impossible. I cannot listen to your words further. It is better we should part now—and I have been here much too long."

She was moving to go away, but he caught her hand again.

"You will think over it, Miss Desmond—Norah! You will give me yet another chance. Do not throw away the love I offer you."

"Let go my hand, Mr. O'Donnell," said the young girl, partly in indignation, and very much in nervous fright, for by intention or by accident he had clutched her hand with a clasp of iron—"let go my hand. I have been already too long here. This is not the way your love, if it is love, should be shown."

He was about making another passionate appeal to her, and in doing so unwittingly relaxed his grasp on her hand.

Norah hastily seized the opportunity, snatched her hand away, and with the speed of a wild deer—and incited thereto by a deadly fear that was throbbing at her heart—flew into the house.

Her departure was so sudden and so swift that Henry O'Donnell hardly realised it until she was out of sight. Even long after she had disappeared her radiant face and eyes still seemed before his gaze.

His heart was burnt up with thwarted love and passion unappeased. His brain was on fire with disappointment, and a sense of loss irrestorable.

If Norah had lightly accepted his proposal, he might possibly have never thought of making her lady of Arranmore House; but her refusal heaped oil upon the smouldering passions of his heart, and kindled them into red-hot consuming flame.

The desire to win her leaped up all at once with an overwhelming passion amounting to insane fury. The sense that these blue eyes, deep at times as the fathomless ocean, and anon bright and smiling as the sunbeams in the summer sky, should never look in love upon him—that that fair face, rare and radiant, and fair as an angel's, was lost to him for ever—filled him with that feeling which, made up of terror, loneliness, desolation and revenge, is termed despair.

Despair! Most hideous of all the calamities that afflict the human mind—most potential of all the furies that are permitted to assail the human heart—before which the strongest minds break down, the most vigorous hearts give way, and poor humanity, under its impulsive terrors, takes the fearful step that leads to wrong and ruin, and the terrible and eternal night of unrepentant death!

He stood for a time as if his senses had left him, or that he had been turned into an immovable statue; then, suddenly recovering himself, he sprung over the stile by which he had come, and with white face and whiter lips pursued his hurried and unreflecting way across the fields, with no fixed intention or care whitherwards, save that, as the feet of a drunken man turn homewards, his instinctively sought Sir Hugh's mansion.

Once there, he went to his room, and, throwing himself into an armchair, with his elbows on his knees, buried his face in his hands.

How black the world seemed to him! How hateful the garish sight of day! How dreadful—with the light of hope shut out from him—the slow, wearying monotony of the seconds, minutes, hours, and days of the coming years!

How terrible to think of them all!

Terrible! For the unseen Tempter was kneeling by his side breathing into his ear: "Why should you try to live through all these black and dreadful years? Think of it! Each second—each slow movement of the pendulum indicating that space of time—is burthened with its own sorrow and horror; think how slowly it moves; think how many of these there are in a minute; how many of these again in an hour; how many of these in a year! How can you live through all these years with the wearying pain at your heart? Better get done with it. Repose is what you want; oblivion is better for you; cut short the slow-moving thread of these weary years; it is soon over. Better get done with it!"

He rose up, and with unsteady step proceeded to a cabinet in the room, whence he took forth a decanter and poured out a tumbler of raw spirits, which he drained at a gulp. Then he took out a case and proceeded to the window to open it.

Opening it, he took from it a long silver-mounted pistol. It was one of exquisite workmanship; and the delicate steel polish of the barrel, with its minute but carefully traced wavy blue lines, as well as the chiselled filigree silver-work on the handle, showed what pains had been bestowed on its manufacture and what care had been taken of it since.

Its perfection of style and beauty of workmanship, however, had no concern for him.

He drove the ramrod down with a nervous thrust! The clear ring that responded showed that the weapon was empty.

He ran home a cartridge, clamped it down with unusual tightness—then selected a bullet.

It seemed to him too small. He felt a strange sort of blindness coming over his eyes. A film seemed to be gathering before them. He drew the blinds aside the better to see. Finally, he adjusted it, rammed it home, and capped the pistol!

What a strange fascination it had for him! How brightly gleamed—with a strange and attractive gleam—the shining barrel of the weapon! How weird, and even yet more fascinating, looked its dark mouth! What strange secrets lay within that black opening! What a key lay hidden therein to unlock the wonderful mysteries of the future! More potent than all earthly knowledge—revealer of such secrets as philosopher or seer or prophet had never yet foretold or explained, or had power of foretelling or explaining!

That trigger!—how hard his nervous fingers found to open, to bring to half-cock, to bring to full cock; how difficult to get his finger in the proper place! He closed his eyes, and——

A knock came to the door, so rapid and so sudden, coming on the extreme tension of his brain and nerves, that it sent a shock through him.

The pistol dropped from his fingers on to the floor, exploding as it did, and sending its bullet into the surbase.

At the moment the handle turned in the door—he had forgotten to lock it—and somebody entered!

The spell that was on him was broken. The presence of another human being banished the black tempter that was whispering in his ear, urging his arm, polishing the steel tube, and throwing the glamour of resistless fascination into the gloomy pistol-barrel!

His head reeled, his nerves and muscles gave way; and with a great cry, like to that which comes from a strong man in convulsions, he fell backward at full extended length on the floor of his room!

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE STORY OF ELLEN KAVANAGH.

It was Taylor Harden who entered.

He was startled, as he opened the door, by the report of the pistol, and he was still more startled by seeing the falling form of his friend.

Anticipating that he had accidentally shot himself, Mr. Harden rang the bell furiously, and ran to the lobby to call any servants that might be within hearing. In a few minutes the room was crowded, and O'Donnell was raised from his prone position and placed, still insensible, in a chair.

A short examination proved that he was unhurt, and the mark of the bullet where it had entered the surbase showed that at any rate *he* could have sustained no injury therefrom.

"It must have been the shock of the explosion that caused his swoon," Mr. Harden said.

He was carried to his bedroom, where the needful stimulants were applied for his recovery.

Mr. Harden had just arrived from Dublin. He had been there for some time attending to business, but his powers of attention were strongly disarranged by thoughts of Glenheath—for so the white farmhouse was named—and its inmates. If Henry O'Donnell's thoughts turned in that direction, so also—but in a different manner and different method—did his.

He was a bachelor just turned of forty-five—thus ran his thoughts when many a time his attention should have been engaged on the mortgage deed or settlement or record before him. He was senior partner in the firm, and he had abundant means. True, he had never thought of marrying before, but

that was all the greater reason why he should think of it now. Why should he *not* get married? Why was he working, slowly but surely accumulating money, with no one to inherit it? Was it not a throwing away of his opportunities, his labours, and spinning out the sands of his life uselessly?

Norah Desmond! Yes, there was the young lady that was meet and fitting match for him. If she had not means, he had, and in abundance. If she was not of high position, her grace and surpassing loveliness lifted her high above those who had, and conferred upon her the peerless rank of nature's coronet. What was to prevent him choosing where he would a partner? Nothing.

To whom was he under obligation to excuse himself as to what quarter he should look in for a wife? To no one.

By slow degrees of reasoning with himself he finally made up his mind that he would take the lovely girl for his wife. Rival he had none. The hold he had over Henry O'Donnell and the baronet, his father, effectually precluded any possibility of the former interfering with his plans. He would arrange his business and prepare to pay a visit to Glenheath.

Putting the resolution in force, he left Dublin and arrived at Arranmore Castle, as we have seen, at an important juncture.

He could not leave the place that evening in consequence of the condition of his friend; but on the next day, when Henry O'Donnell had quite recovered from his frenzy, and they had had a drive through the country together, during which neither spoke of the subject that was nearest his heart, but only of indifferent matters, Taylor Harden thought he would pay a visit to the young girl who was so much the object of their attentions.

If he had known that Henry O'Donnell had been before him on the previous day; if he had known, furthermore, of the

reception he had met and of his subsequent agony—for no other word can express it—he would have gone with less self-confidence than he did.

But he found to his mortification that his suit was rejected almost as soon as it was mentioned. It was not pushed with the ardour and the vehemence the heir to the baronetcy of Arranmore had used, but with the cool complacency of a man who had only to ask to be accepted. Neither did it take much to convince him that he *was* rejected. The lawyer's nature was too cold, crabbed, and calculating to need much—the hot blood and impulsiveness, if ever there had been any in him, had oozed out pouring over musty manuscripts and calculating bills of cost.

As for Norah, she would have laughed merrily over this second proposal following so rapidly on the heels of the first, if it had not been that a new and grievous trouble had set in. Her father's illness had taken a dangerous turn, and it had become a question of weeks, if not of days, when the fatal moment should arrive. She was therefore in no mood to listen to the proposals of a suitor or to enjoy the oddity of the rich attorney's addresses as she would undoubtedly have done when her spirits were less clouded with care and her heart lighter and merrier. Wherefore, almost as soon as he had mentioned his purpose, she closed the matter by saying a few kind, sad words, more effectual than more vehement rejection.

Heavy troubles were surrounding the poor girl and taxing her strength much. George's imprisonment, her father's illness, and—not the least cause of hidden sorrow—the unknown whereabouts of Maurice O'Donnell, were weighing heavily on her. But there was a further trial before her—o further cause of dread hanging around her—which she wotted not of.

The attorney, stolidly as he took his rejection, had no intention of accepting it as final. Less impulsive than his



rival, he took the matter quietly, but he did not the less resolve to make Norah Desmond his wife.

He knew—or thought he knew—human nature well, and how readily women of all classes and degrees change their minds. He had been all his life mixed up with their private business-matters in his capacity as lawyer, and had seen them incomprehensibly reverse their most fixed and vehemently formed opinion in a short time, and without, as far as he could see, very weighty or sufficient reasons.

Wherefore, he had no doubt but that, circumstances permitting, she could be in time induced to consent.

It has been remarked as one of the inconsistencies of human nature that a Government that is constantly propounding peace doctrines is the readiest to glide into war, whilst a warlike and braggart Government cringes in time of peril, and so evades the dreadful pastime. So it was with the lawyer in his cogitations on the subject on his way homeward; and in his many devices for winning for his bride the fair girl of Glenheath, he hit on a plan that one would naturally suppose to be the last to enter an attorney's head.

"I was speaking to the Rose of Glenheath, Henry, a few days since," said he quite abruptly, as they were sitting on a rock on one of the hills surrounding Arranmore Castle one afternoon some time after.

"Indeed!" said his companion, turning a little pale, and glancing at him with sudden suspicion.

"Yes, and I learned something I did not quite anticipate."

O'Donnell's paleness changed into the opposite colour as he heard this. Had his interview with Norah been revealed by her? Had she, to his utter abasement, told the story of his proposal and its result?

"Why don't you speak? Have you no curiosity on the subject?"

"Considering that I do not know of what you are speak-

ing," said O'Donnell, coldly, "it is only reasonable to think I have not."

"Well, then, I saw her," said the lawyer, as coolly as if he were advising a client, "and proposed to her."

"What!" exclaimed the other, nearly arising to his feet with the excessive start which the news gave him.

"Yes; proposed to her," repeated the lawyer, laconically.

"And," said O'Donnell, whilst his beating heart nearly stopped his utterance, "she accepted you?"

"Quite the contrary; she refused me promptly."

"I am surprised," said O'Donnell, unspeakably relieved, "to hear that."

"It is even so."

"Did she give a reason for it? I should have thought it an excellent offer."

"She gave no reason—nothing but a firm and gentle refusal. But she must have a reason."

"What do you suppose it is?"

"Possibly some other suitor—yourself."

"Did she say so?" asked O'Donnell, quickly. "Did she mention my name?"

"No. I was merely jesting. But I could not conceive any other reason."

"Possibly," remarked O'Donnell, gratified that the circumstances of his own visit were unknown to his companion, "she was unacquainted with your position. Girls like her generally love wealth and social standing. They are always ready to exchange their beauty for these."

"I told her of it, not very elaborately, for I had not time, but in a few words."

"And yet she rejected you?"

"Very quietly, but decidedly."

"She will change her mind," his companion remarked, greatly pleased by the knowledge that he was not alone in his

rejection. "She will alter yet in her disposition towards you."

"So I am inclined to hope and to believe," said the lawyer. "I have known the most obstinate of them to change their minds with and without reason. For I am determined on making her mine one way or another. By the way, what is that sound which comes on the air?"

A strange noise, as of the chorus of many voices, came borne up the hillside, floating on the breeze.

"It's a very curious sound," said the lawyer again. "What is it?"

"I really couldn't say," said Henry O'Donnell, listening in an abstracted sort of manner. "Oh, yes! now I remember—that's the *caoine*."

If his mind had not been so intent on the subject of his conversation with Taylor Harden that he found it difficult to fix his attention on anything else, he would have at once known that it was the funeral wail. There could be no mistaking the depth of passionate sorrow, the height of forlorn woe, the wild bursts of despair that mark the progress of the funeral song, when, chorussed by many voices, it breaks on the stillness of the Summer day.

"The keen! what is that?"

"You don't mean to say you have never heard it before?"

"Never."

"It is the funeral march of our Western people. They generally accompany the dead to the grave with it."

"It is not real sorrow, then. I thought it was. It is strikingly touching and affecting."

"It is not always real—it is in this case."

"I should think so. Tones like that could hardly be affected. Who is it for?"

"You mean who is dead?"

"Yes."

“A young woman, a tenant of my father's. There is a very curious story connected with her—a very unusual story.”

“A love story, I suppose?”

“Partly.”

“Let us hear it. If it be striking as the keen it must be worth hearing.”

“It is. This is it:—Ellen Flaherty—her maiden name was Kavanagh—was an extremely pretty girl, and, being the daughter of comfortable parents, was very well off, and, I need not say, a most eligible match. She had suitors in abundance, and at length selected for her lot a young fellow, a neighbouring young farmer, between whom and her a very strong affection existed. It was settled that they were to be married, and, in fact, the marriage night had come and the wedding was being held. Before the priest had performed the wedding ceremony, however, and whilst the company, newly arrived, were exchanging salutations—many of them having come from long distances and not having seen one another for a long time—they were startled by hearing cries outside the house, as if of one being beaten or done to death.

“It was about eight o'clock of a Winter's night after Christmas (when weddings generally take place in the country) and some four hours after nightfall.

“There was a general rush to the field at the back of the house whence the cries proceeded, but when they reached there they found that they came from a greater distance than they thought—in fact, from a place a field or two further away. It was the terrible cry—the appeal of a murdered man for help! Every man that was there, young and old, gentle and simple, rushed with all the speed possible to the place, crossing ditches and hedges with the swiftness of greyhounds; but the cries appeared to have died out before they reached.

“The man, whoever he was, had evidently been done to

death. Nowhere, however, was there sign of the murderous deed. Nowhere could token of affray be discovered. Searching parties to explore the night and darkness for evidences of what had been done spread themselves over the fields for a quarter of a mile or more.

“Whilst they were thus engaged, cries arose again on the night, but this time they came from the house of festivity.

“This, happening so soon after what they had now begun to look upon and to find to be a hoax, only created a general peal of laughter at its absurdity, and relinquishing their search they turned slowly homewards across the fields to the wedding-place. The persistency with which the cries, however, came from the latter by degrees impressed them; and, though still reluctant to be hoaxed a third time, they began to walk quicker.

“Before they had reached the house some of the girls and women came rushing to meet them.

“It was some time before these latter in their breathless haste could speak—and, when they could, still longer until the men could take in or understand the incredible story they pantingly told.

“It was this:

“Ellen Kavanagh was *gone!* Gone—beyond doubt or question.”

“Men with covered faces had suddenly entered the house, seized the shrinking and fainting girl, and borne her off—borne her off in spite of the resistance of the women and girls.”

“Where to? Where to?”

“Who knew? Who could tell?”

“It didn’t take a minute to bear her out into the bawn, and to the boreen. Galloping of horses heard a minute after—galloping at their dead best—galloping as if for life or death. They could hear their footsteps where the stony road rises over Knockraun-hill.

“All listened.

“Truly they could hear them—could hear the iron-shod hooves beat against the almost equally iron road. The sounds rang out sharply, and yet more sharply, as the horses swept up the hill; sharpest of all as they topped it and the sounds came with unbroken directness on their ears!

“Unmistakably, Ellen Kavanagh was gone!

“There would be no wedding in her father's house that night, and perhaps never more!

“There was quick running here and there and all round, to get horses and saddles ready to pursue the abductors; but it was not easy to provide these on the moment, and even when they had, hasty hands make but slow work, and before their vengeful pursuers were ready to vault into the saddle with wrath if not murder in their hearts, the abductors had placed many a mile between the sparks that flew from their horses' feet and the wedding house!

“Nay, more, they seemed to have disappeared into the very night, and got lost there. Had ridden into obscurity and oblivion, and been swallowed up. For, after some five or six miles, their pursuers lost track of them and heard of them no more. People in country places retire early to bed, and, tired with their work, are soon asleep. No one stirs along the road. So the hoof-beats of the flying horsemen passed unheeded over the midnight roads, the trail was lost, the girl undiscovered.”

“Was there no search made for her?” asked Mr. Harden.

“From the sea to the mountains, and from North to South, every likely or available place was searched, but to no purpose. The secret was well kept—closely kept. Their labours were fruitless.”

“Did she ever turn up?”

“She did. Some eight months after, just as the dawn was breaking of a Summer's morning, and before the family had

arisen, a knock came to the door. It was opened; and in the flood of sunlight that bathed the world outside, and radiant as the beams that were dancing on the dewy window-pane, stood Ellen, looking happy, delighted, well dressed, and in bounding health. If her eyes were bright before, they were ten times brighter now; if the roses on her cheeks were fair before, they were ten times fairer now; and altogether she looked a marvel of beauty—a fairy come with the dawning, or softly descended from heaven during the night with the dew!

“I need not say what an ecstasy possessed the household, or what a screaming frenzy of delight was the turn their rejoicing took.

“Surely never yet came a visitor, since the angels stood at Abraham’s tent door, so welcome!

“But she would give at first no account of herself, save that she was married and doing well and loved her husband. But the intelligence leaked out by degrees—could not help it, indeed, when her baby shortly after came to be born.”

“What was the story?”

“You know it pretty well already. They swept her away, forcibly married her to a young fellow the equal in every respect of him she loved and was about to be married to, and kept her strictly concealed from all knowledge for that time.

“But the oddest thing of all was that she turned her love entirely from one to the other, and not only loved, but positively worshipped, the ground on which her new lover walked. There never was such a wonderful change of affection, and the love she bore her forced husband was something marvellous. So much so, indeed, that when he was killed a few months ago, by being thrown off a young runaway horse, she pined and wasted away; and to-day, as you may see, they are bringing her to place her by his side.”

"It is a singular story," was Taylor Harden's abstracted comment.

"It has always seemed so to me."

"Let us arise and leave this. That *keen* is altogether too mournful for me."

"Where shall we go?"

"Suppose we cross the hill to the other side? The view of the Atlantic to-day must be very fine."

"Agreed."

They walked over the soft moss of the hillside and through the heath together in silence.

As the funeral procession wound round the base, and the hill intervening opposed its bulk to the sounds, the wail began by degrees to grow fainter and fainter, until finally it came pitifully, like phantom voices, on the evening air.

"And so she loved him after she was forced to marry him," said Harden, breaking the silence.

"As I said. Far better than she would probably have loved him from whom she was taken."

"And had never regarded him with affection before?"

"Had never seen him, I do believe—nay, I am sure of it."

"Women are very strange," said the lawyer, reflectively. "It is hard to tell what chord to touch that will awaken their affections. Philosophy does not teach it. A fool will as readily solve the problem as a philosopher."

"More readily, I believe," said O'Donnell, drily.

They walked along again for some distance in silence. That silence was once more broken by Taylor Harden.

"Henry?"

"Well?"

"Touching this abduction. Do these things often happen in this country?"

"Repeatedly."

"Yet we never hear of them."



"They are kept silent."

"How silent?"

"Why, when the girl is taken away she is generally forced to marry. That being so, where is the use of kicking up a row over it? Both parties accept the inevitable and bow to circumstances."

"But how is the ceremony performed in such case?"

"By a clergyman of course. You don't suppose Marriage Registry Offices are set up in the wild West?"

"No, of course. But what clergyman could be got to perform the office under such circumstances?"

"Have you never heard of a couple-beggar?"

"No."

"Well, I shall not attempt to describe him. Let it be enough to say that the people consider that the ceremony, when performed by him, is—and I believe it is—binding and valid."

"Abduction being a usual thing, then, I suppose it does not create much sensation?"

"Well, not much. In a district like this, where the people's lives are uneventful, of course it creates some sensation, but, for the matter of that, it soon blows over. Matters are arranged and things settle down again."

"And I suppose at all times fellows can be had to take part in a matter of the kind?"

"Take part? I don't clearly understand. Do you mean"——

"I mean to—to carry the girl away."

"Oh, yes, always."

"Always?"

"Why, yes. That is so. It is good fun."

"Yet there is a heavy penalty attaching by law to it?"

"If you believe me, Taylor, I think that is the very reason why they are so ready to lend a hand. Of course there is a

spicing of rollicking fun and devilment in it that lends a charm ; but it is the breaking an English law that is the real spell. If the Government were to place a reward on every successful abduction, or even to countenance them, the handsomest girl that ever trod our Western land, and with a good portion, might sleep at night with her door unlocked, so safe would she be."

"They are not diligent observers of the law?"

"No. There is no pleasure so sweet as the breaking of one—particularly where a heavy penalty attaches to the offence."

"It is the danger, not the girl, that induces the crime?"

"Please not to call it crime here. It is rather a gallant and meritorious action, blessing her to whom it is done and he who does it."

"It appears to me, then, very strange," said Mr. Harden, after another pause, in which he nibbled with his penknife at the end of a Cuban, "that so handsome a girl as Miss Desmond"—

He paused ; whilst Henry O'Donnell glanced sharply at him, with a look of inquiry in his eyes, as who might say, "Hallo! my friend. Is that the idea that's beginning to grow in your head?"

However, seeing his friend pause whilst he completed the fixing of his cigar, he pushed back the mental query into the recesses of his brain, and simply said :

"You were saying it was very strange. What was strange?"

"That Miss Desmond, with so many attractions, should have been allowed to remain at home so peacefully."

"She has been but a short time *at home*, as you are aware. She has not been long here from Paris. But, in any case, she is not of their class. Her education, her accomplishments, lift her too much above them ; and they would not dream of

such a thing in connection with her. It is quite another thing with a farmer's daughter, who, beside being handsome and attractive and having a good portion, is of their own level, and would make—a very important thing in their eyes—a suitable farmer's wife. But with Norah Desmond—no."

"But if she were taken away by one of her own station, or above it?"

He was busy kindling his cigar as Henry O'Donnell again glanced at him with a quick, inquiring, half-angry glance. The latter had a glimmering of the thought that was arising in the other's head, and awaited impatiently the further development of it. He had no time to reflect on the anomalous state of mind by which a lawyer could entertain such an idea. But parallel to and springing out of the idea the lawyer's words conveyed to him, came another which he also for the moment relegated into the recesses of his brain, to be brought out and used and put into action when the time came.

"Assuming she were?"

"I suppose if she were, it would not create much wonder."

"I should think not," said O'Donnell, with assumed carelessness.

"Nor would there be much difficulty in accomplishing it?" asked Harden, with similar assumption.

"With smart fellows it could be easily managed."

"You think so?"

"I most assuredly do."

"And there would be no difficulty in finding these."

"A man disposed to spend money can do almost anything."

Taylor Harden said no more on the subject.

"It is growing late," said he. "What if we turned homewards? It will be soon time to dress for dinner."

"As you wish. The evening is so fine, it almost tempts one to remain out. The sun looks so beautiful over the Atlantic!"

It did look beautiful. The ebbing tide broke in surf on the

shore; and, as the waves chased one another along the strand, the sinking sun sent his parting rays through them and turned the white foam into a sparkling mass of liquid rubies.

But it was with a perfectly indifferent eye Taylor Harden glanced at it. The charms of scenery or of the sunset had little attraction for him. He was resolving something so deeply in his mind that he had no room therein for anything else; neither was he in much mood for conversation: therefore, with scarcely the exchange of a syllable, the two men strolled over the hills back to Arranmore Castle.

“And so that’s what you’re thinking of, my legal friend!” was Henry O’Donnell’s soliloquy, as he dressed in his room for dinner. “That’s how you, with your legal training, would effect your wishes. I should like to know if the common ignorant hinds around are violators of the law and criminals, under the circumstances, what you are! But I shan’t prevent you, Mr. Taylor Harden. You shall have every assistance from me. Trust me, you shall. It was a happy idea that suggested itself to you, and one that would never have occurred to me. No, never. But I shall see if I can’t utilise it through you. I have an old grudge to settle with you—I don’t forget that mention of the mortgage, nor your conversation in the hotel at Galway. And another thing! Yes, I have it now. I shall punish *her*, too. And when I have sufficiently punished her I shall come as her rescuer, and she will be then less disposed to reject me. Yes; you must have all the encouragement and assistance I can give, Mr. Taylor Harden, my legal friend! And if you put your neck in the halter, it is not I who shall cry tears over it. But one thing, Mr. Taylor Harden—one thing is this; if the mortgage were even to be foreclosed, and Arranmore to go to strangers, and though I stood beneath the shadow of the gallows, you shall not have Norah Desmond—never, my legal friend—never! And now for dinner.”

## CHAPTER X.

### A STRANGE CONFERENCE.

SOME days passed over without further reference to Norah Desmond. Indeed, Henry and Harden had not had much opportunity of speaking or conferring on the subject, for Sir Hugh had much to do at Galway about quarter sessions and other matters, and he generally drove the lawyer in with him in the mornings; in the evenings one or other of the barristers down from Dublin drove over for dinner; and one way or another there was but little opportunity for their meeting.

The idea, however, which was referred to at the close of their last meeting had not faded out of the thoughts of either, but had rather germinated and taken faster root therein. Especially in the mind of the younger man it had firmly fastened. He wondered why he had not thought of it before, and, wondering, shuddered at the consequences into which his own want of invention had nearly forced him.

Why, it was the simplest matter possible—the very simplest. A few active fellows could at any time have snatched her away; and so, too, that no blame could attach to him—nor suspicion. To think of a mad fit of despair nearly producing such appalling results whilst so simple a manner existed of possessing himself of the attractive girl!

But it was better as it was—much better! He would make the astute lawyer his agent in the matter, and let the odium and the danger fall upon him, whilst he would take effective means to baulk his success.

“Do you know, Henry, I have been thinking over that matter we were speaking of the other evening when we came down the hillside of Knockraun?”

The conversation occurred in the stables while they were preparing for a ride.

"The matter we were speaking of!" O'Donnell said, with an air of surprise. "We were speaking of so many matters. Which of them?"

"I should have thought it would have attracted your attention more," said Harden, disappointedly.

"Perhaps it should; but as it has not, why, it is easy to refer to it again. What was it?"

"About Miss Desmond."

"Yes?" said O'Donnell, inquiringly.

"You remember," said his companion, with some asperity of tone, "the story of the abduction you told me?"

"Perfectly."

"Do you remember our mentioning Miss Desmond in connexion with it?"

"Assuredly I do," said O'Donnell, whose remembrance was suddenly awakened; "but, as it was merely a passing conversation, I failed to remember it."

"It was not a passing conversation with me, and, if it were so then, matters have since turned up to make it otherwise."

"No?"

"Yes. It is even so. And perhaps, as I want to speak over this matter with you confidentially, it would be better we should stroll over the hills instead of riding."

"Agreed," said O'Donnell, cheerfully. "I am always at your service."

"These circumstances, you say, that have occurred," continued he, as they came some distance away, "what are they?"

"Let us walk to that old ruin yonder, and rest ourselves there. I shall tell you. Since I saw you I wrote again to Miss Desmond."

"The devil! you did."

The remark was drawn unguardedly from his companion by

the unexpectedness of the statement, but he quickly covered the position by adding: "At least I mean—I thought after the interview you told me of, that you would certainly not—ah!—have adopted that course."

"Well, I did," said the lawyer, with calculating quietness and solidity. "My verbal proposal to her was cut so short by her answer that it struck me she was not aware of, and did not realise, the offer that I made her; that, brought up as she was in a convent in Paris, and living here since isolatedly, she did not understand or perceive the effects of her rejection of my proposal; that she did not quite know, perhaps, the position and wealth and all the—the surroundings which I was prepared to give her. You understand?"

"Perfectly."

"That being so, I thought I should write and explain the matter fully, and lay all the circumstances before her."

"And you did?"

"I did."

"And what," inquired O'Donnell, with great ease of mind, "was the result?"

"This."

He placed in his companion's hands a tiny note, written in a slight, delicate hand.

O'Donnell read it.

"This, at any rate," said he, with difficulty repressing a feeling of triumphant satisfaction, "is decisive. This, I should think, puts an end to the matter."

"Quite—if she alone were to be consulted."

"And I should think she is the one of all others to be consulted on an occasion of this kind."

"So far, possibly, but not altogether. I count for something in the matter. You remember that anecdote you told me the other day."

"Yes; what bearing has that on the matter?"

“Why, this : What has happened in one case may happen in another. What is possible in one may be equally possible in a similar case.”

“I am not clear yet, Taylor, as to what your meaning may be.”

“That,” said Mr. Harden, sinking his voice to a whisper, “the consent which I cannot get by persuasion I shall obtain by force.”

Mr. Henry O'Donnell gave a long whistle of apparent surprise. He knew thoroughly well what his companion was driving at from the moment he opened his lips.

“Do you really mean that ?” he asked, in a low whisper.

“As strongly as ever I meant anything in the world.”

“And how do you propose to accomplish it ?”

“Through you.”

“Through me !”

There was no affectation of surprise in the manner in which O'Donnell responded to this.

“Through me !”

“Yes.”

“You puzzle me. Why through me ?—and how ?”

“Perhaps,” said Taylor Harden, after a pause, and in the same emotionless voice as if he were settling with a client the conditions of a deed, “it would be better to have an understanding over this. You remember my telling you that I—at least, my firm—hold the mortgage-bond over the Arranmore estate.”

“It is,” said O'Donnell, coolly, “one of these pieces of information which a man is unlikely to forget.”

“Quite so. And you are also aware that it will be due by efflux of time in two years more.”

“That, too, you made me acquainted with.”

“Very well. I need not ask you—because you must be well aware of it—that it would be well nigh impossible for



you to meet it, and that, in that event, foreclosure and realisation of the estate would probably ensue. At least, might."

He paused.

"Assuming that to be so—which might or might not be the case—how does the matter come to be introduced here, and in this conjuncture?"

"For this reason. There is no possibility of anyone hearing us?"

"None. Unless the owls in the ivy walls around us may hear and understand."

"I am determined Norah Desmond shall be my wife. Nay, do not start. You may feel surprised that I do not look for higher; but I do not. Her beauty suits me. I have ample means. I am more disposed for the pleasure of having handsome, graceful children growing up around me than for any advantage of birth or fortune in a wife."

"You old devil!" thought O'Donnell, with exceeding disgust. But he merely said, "Go on."

"My wife—by force if need be."

"By force?"

"Yes; your anecdote of the other evening has set me a-thinking. Why should she be allowed, through ignorance of their value, to refuse the advantages I offer her?"

"Very true. But how do you propose preventing her through me?"

"Because you are the only one—or at least the best one—to aid me in the matter."

"How?"

"Well, you know the locality. Most—indeed all—of those around are your tenants and dependents. There are, I make no doubt, wild and reckless characters here ready to do your bidding. What more need I say?"

"No more. I understand perfectly."

"Pardon me. I was going to add a little more. This

service demands some consideration at my hands. I am prepared, on behalf of my firm, to renew the mortgage deed for another ten years."

"That is a large consideration," said O'Donnell, as if deeply reflecting on the proposed bargain.

"And for that"——

"For that you are," said Taylor Harden, sinking his voice to even a lower whisper—"you are to have her taken away—secreted somewhere where she will be safe, and where, after a time, the marriage can be performed."

They had taken their seats on a broken wall fronting the sea. The ivied walls of an ancient ruin—castle or abbey—thick and massive, rose round them much higher. There was no one in their immediate vicinity.

Why did Henry O'Donnell's fingers clutch so convulsively? Why did he, half rising from his seat, look round him so suddenly?

Whatever was the actuating motive he checked it, and re-seated himself by his companion's side.

"I cannot aid you in this matter, however willing I am, Taylor," he said with a choking utterance, "further than this. I shall introduce you to one whom I know to be reckless enough for anything; who will—I know him of old—stop at nothing if he only gets his price. You must arrange the matter with him. If you square matters satisfactorily with him, you may rely upon his efficacy and secrecy. Will that do?"

Said Harden, after a pause during which his usually stolid features bore the unusual blush of emotion and excitement: "I think so. When can I see him?"

"This night."

"Where?"

"Here."

"A suitable place enough."

“And now touching the renewal deed, when shall it be signed?”

“I shall have it drawn up at once—and perfected as soon as she is in a place of safety.”

“For ten years?”

“For ten years.”

“Then it shall be a bargain.”

“Now Mr. Henry O'Donnell,” said Taylor Harden, and his usually quiet, impassive expression of eyes gave place to one which was a curious combination of fear and determination, “let us understand one another. This must be so arranged that I shall not appear in it—or, at least, as little as possible. To that end you must select for the active agent in the matter one on whom the most implicit reliance can be placed. Otherwise”——

“Otherwise?” suggested O'Donnell, quietly.

“Otherwise there will not be an O'Donnell in Arranmore two years hence.”

“It is a pretty severe alternative,” said his companion, rising to his feet; “but I shall send you a trusty agent, who would stand firm for the Devil himself if he supplied him liberally enough with money. But I am tired of sitting on this ruined wall so long—by the way, what a dangerous place we selected? a fall backwards would break one's neck so readily!—and feel inclined to stretch my legs a little. Shall we walk homewards?”

Taylor Harden did not intend terminating the conversation so soon. But this last intimation from his friend precluded any further discussion of the question, so, with slow and reluctant steps, and with a rather irksome and dissatisfied feeling at his breast, he followed the other and descended from the ruined wall on which they had been sitting.

## CHAPTER XI.

### AFTER THE EXPLOSION.

AMID a thunder-burst as if the earth had exploded and rent itself asunder, and amid wreck and ruin as of falling worlds, Maurice O'Donnell found himself flying through the air!

The awful flash of light that seemed to him to fill the whole immensity of space, might well have been—so fierce and sudden and lurid it was—the final flame that shall quench this globe of ours and resolve it one day into that nothingness out of which the Creator's hand formed it.

A heavy shell thrown from one of the intercepting gunboats had pierced the side of the blockade-runner, and, bursting within, had exploded the cargo of gunpowder.

The flash was seen for miles around!

It flared through the blackness of night and lit up for a second the streets of Charleston five miles away! It made every mast, spar, and topsail on the line of blockading frigates stand out for a second in the most perfect relief! It aroused the crews, near and remote, from their sleeping-places, and sent them hurrying on deck, in wild confusion, to know what was the matter. And it caused dozens of boats to put off from every vessel to the scene of the stupendous disaster.

With the readiness and bravery so strikingly shown by the navy on both sides all through the huge conflict, the explosion had scarcely taken place, than strong arms, undeterred by the shower of falling fragments of wood, iron, and firearms that descended immediately after, were pulling with vigorous strokes and bending oars to see if among the *debris* there were any lives that might be saved.

It was instinctively known by all that a desperate venture had been made, and that more than usually gallant hearts had been at work to evade the lines. It needed no interpreter to tell them what a precious cargo was being borne to the beleaguered confederacy—nor how, for the explosion told them that, the men on board the blockade-runner had verily carried their lives in their hands!

And although a triumphant and exultant cheer went up from the deck of every vessel that flaunted the United States flag, as the black darkness snapped out the lightning-burst that told that the daring venture had been thwarted and had proved unsuccessful, they were not the less eager to rescue any of her dauntless crew who might have survived the explosion. Whilst they were prepared to shatter all attempts to succour the Secessionists, they were not the less ready to recognise the manhood that essayed such bold efforts—more especially one of such utter life-disregarding recklessness as this that ended so terrifically.

Wherefore it was that, as soon as O'Donnell, who, whirled into the air, had sunk into the water, had arisen again to the surface, he was seen, grasped, and speedily lifted, quite unconscious, on board one of the boats.

“Is he dead?”

“I think not, sir.”

“Feel his pulse.”

“It beats still, sir.”

“Then we had better row with him to the nearest vessel. Which is it?”

“The *Minnesota*, sir. That's her with the red light gleaming from her mast.”

“Very well, boys. Row back. The other boats will pick up any others that may come to the surface. Let us put this poor fellow in the surgeon's hands at once.”

“I fear, sir, there is but little use. His pulse is growing

weaker and weaker. It has ceased altogether," broke forth the sailor who held his wrist.

"Give me that lamp," said the officer to one of the men, and, holding it over his face, "How terribly black and burnt he is! I fear the poor fellow is dying, if not dead. Turn him on his face—the water may be smothering him. Gently, boys, gently! He has had his baptism of fire, poor fellow, such as few men in this world before have passed through."

"He must have been the skipper, sir. See his white wrists. Not much sign of hauling of ropes there."

The officer passed the light of the lamp downwards to where the outstretched hand lay in the grasp of sailor Joe. It justified his saying. The hand, black and charred with the fierce flame of the explosion, made the wrist, that the clothes had protected from its scorching power, snow-white in comparison.

"I think you're right, although he is not in uniform. But so much the greater reason why so gallant a sailor and so resolute a heart should be saved if possible. Pull faster, boys—pull faster!"

They soon reached the vessel. A whistle blown shrilly by the young officer quickly brought a crowd of faces peering over its side. In a few seconds the bulwarks were opened and a rope-ladder was suspended, up which the men of the boat bore the unconscious form on deck.

The ship's surgeon was quickly in attendance, whilst powerful lamps shed around light as clear as that of noonday. The surgeon feels the pulse of the wounded man; shakes his head. Opines, save for humanity's sake, their trouble was needless. Orders him, however, to be brought to the Infirmary.

"Will he die, then?" asks the young officer.

Surgeon thinks so—unless, indeed, a miracle is worked on his behalf.

Midshipman, thorough Yankee, and somewhat sceptical,

purses his mouth and shakes his head too. He has nowhere yet seen a miracle worked—not, at least, in New York arsenal or in the Norfolk navy yard—and thinks to himself: If that's the only hope, the sufferer's chance must be a poor one.

Yet he is interested for his patient, partly from the fact of his own being the hand to rescue him; partly from admiration of the gallant heart that lies within that burnt breast, throbbing imperceptibly—if it throb at all; and partly also from his innate good nature.

It is so natural always for the young to be good-natured.

Wherefore he sees him carried down to that department of the vessel called the Infirmary, where, laid upon a couch, the doctor proceeded to examine the patient. Which examination is quickly relinquished, however, as he perceives that the life seems ebbing away—dying out, in fact, as of one dying from drowning—and gives prompt orders for the necessary steps to be taken for his resuscitation.

“Why, he is dying of suffocation!” the surgeon says to the midshipman, who stands by listening. “How did that occur?”

“Found him in the water,” laconically answers him named Charlie, watching with intense eagerness the efforts of the sailors, and the sufferer's body, for signs of life. For the matter of that, indeed, the surgeon, even when asking the question, kept his eyes fixed on the patient's face and breast, whilst his hand kept attentively on his pulse.

“What brought him in the water?”

“Blown up.”

“Ah! he was on board the blockade runner—was he?”

“Yes; and,” said the middy in reply, “was blown up with the explosion of the vessel.”

“I said a short time since, Charlie, it would be a miracle if he lived; I can only say now that it is a miracle he is alive. How *did* he escape? That terrific explosion should have blown a man to pieces though he were made of iron.”

Charlie cannot explain it. All he knows is that he *was* blown up, and is there still, with whatever of life in him there may be.

"It was a tremendous venture, Charlie."

"Terrific."

"And with such a cargo," continued the surgeon.

"They were very near succeeding though," Charlie added in a whisper, as if afraid of hurting the unconscious form before him.

"Who hit her?"

"The *Florida* gunboat."

"Red-hot shot?"

"No. Shell."

"Burst inside?"

"And blew her clean to fragments. He seems," said the midshipman, after a short pause, "to move a little. I thought I saw his breast heave."

"His pulse is reviving a little. A few minutes more and he would have been suffocated. His lungs were full of water."

"Will he recover?" asked the middy, anxiously.

"From drowning, yes. From other injuries, impossible to say yet."

"Towards morning you will probably know."

"I fear a good many nights and mornings, should he live so long, will come and go before that decision can be made concerning him. Was he the captain?"

"He is not in captain's uniform at any rate," Charlie says, "and his wrists and neck do not look like those of a common sailor. His hands and face—poor fellow!—are so burnt that we cannot judge by them."

"He is one of those Southern agents, over buying stores in England for the Confederacy. That's what he is, Charlie, you may depend upon it."

"No matter; you'll attend to him, won't you?"



"Yes, I will, Charlie—you may depend upon that."

"It would be a pity that such a brave fellow should lose his life if it can be helped."

"He won't, if my assistance can avail him."

"That's a good fellow. I must go away now. I am in charge of the guard boat for the night. I shall call again in the morning. I hope you will have good news for me."

"I hope so. You will not be so anxious in cases of the kind before the war is over. You will see some hardening scenes by that time. Your good nature will have evaporated a good deal then."

"It may," said the midddy, "but surely as my name is Charles Steadman, I could not be more anxious about him this moment if he were my brother."

"I am sure of it, Charlie. Call to me in the morning and I may have hopeful news for you," said the doctor, shaking hands warmly with the midddy; and that young gentleman thereupon brightly departed.

But, indeed, as the surgeon had said, it was many a night and morning afterwards before the patient could be pronounced out of danger, or that hope could be held out of his safety.

He was frightfully burned, as might be expected—much more so, indeed, than his appearance on the first night indicated; but after many weeks of painful incertitude the crisis was reached and safely passed, and the surgeon was enabled to pronounce him out of danger and on the fair road to recovery.

There was no one, from the captain to the seamen before the mast, that was not rejoiced at the news. The story of the venture had become a household word in the fleet; and, though other blockade-runners had essayed successfully or unsuccessfully to pass the lines, none ever bore such a dangerous cargo or carried their lives in their hands so venturously.

What added even more to the interest was, that he of all the crew, so far as they knew, was the only one who had escaped. The others apparently had been blown to atoms or had disappeared beneath the midnight waters of Charleston Bay.

By slow and painful degrees, however, Maurice O'Donnell grew well; grew able to be carried on deck, where the soft Southern breezes brought health to his veins; grew finally strong enough to walk on deck with the aid of a crutch. Great was the anxiety to hear his story, which, as all his companions had perished, the sufferer had no hesitation in telling. Much surprise was manifested when it was told; and if the interest in him was great when they believed him to be a Southern rebel, much greater was the sympathy now when they found that his feelings were perfectly neutral, and that he was a blockade-runner and a prisoner by the merest of accidents.

"Your prisoner will need change of air," said the surgeon one day to the captain of the ship, as he saw that Maurice's progress towards ultimate health was suddenly stayed.

"He is not a prisoner," said the captain.

"What is he then?"

"A guest, sir. We cannot call him a prisoner—at least I do not—who was by mere accident on board a blockade-runner."

"I am extremely glad to hear it," said the delighted surgeon readily. "But that does not affect—or rather it affects favourably—what I was going to say. Mr. O'Donnell needs change of air. He is not progressing as rapidly as I should like."

"Change of air he shall have," said the captain with a smile.

There was something unusual—some hidden meaning in the officer's words that prompted the surgeon to ask—

"How? Will you put him ashore?"

"No."

"Send him to New York?"

"Not that either."

"What then?"

"See here, Mr. Wyers," said the captain, handing him an open letter which he held in his hand, "we are all about to get change of air. We are ordered off."

"What! To Hampton Roads!" said the surgeon, glancing at the letter.

"Precisely."

"What is the object of this?"

"I am quite in the dark as to the meaning of it. But it appears that the Confederates have built a fleet in our late naval dockyard. It is, I fancy, expected they will make an attempt to escape to sea to prey upon our commerce and our merchantmen, and it will be our business to intercept them. So that we may look out for stirring times presently."

"Well, whatever may be the reason, I am heartily glad of the change, for us all as well as for your prisoner—I mean your guest."

"So am I," said the captain, heartily. "We were all beginning to stagnate here. Of all kinds of service the worst and most demoralising for men and officers is this of lying idle, doing nothing. No life, no stir, no activity."

"When do you weigh anchor?"

"To-morrow morning."

"Is it known aboard yet?"

"You are the first to hear it, because of your suggestion. I have only received the despatch this moment from the admiral."

"It will be rejoicing news for all on board," said the surgeon.

As, indeed it was when they heard it.

At daybreak the next morning the *Minnesota* hauled up

her anchors, spread her sails to the wind, and with a parting salute from her batteries to the other vessels, left the blockading line and put to sea—turning, when she was well out, her prow to the Northwards!

---

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE COMING OF THE "MERRIMAC."

THE change had done Maurice much good. His health under the bracing airs of the Northern latitudes grew wonderfully strong, thanks to the untiring care of the surgeon, and but slight traces remained of the wounds he had received on either his face or hands. Indeed, save that he was much more tanned and sunburnt than when he left Ireland, there was scarcely any other change in his appearance.

But with his restored strength came the yearning for activity.

The world was before him; but he knew not what to do with himself. His experience of the hardships and vicissitudes of life was but small previously, and his stay on board the *Minnesota* had rather limited than enlarged them.

For some reason, also, his thoughts now went back to Arranmore more frequently than they did. As his health grew strong and his heart beat more vigorously, an anxiety to learn something about Ireland and Norah Desmond grew upon him.

What had happened George? Was he still in jail, or had he been put on his trial; and if the latter, what was the result? Could they have found him guilty of murder, because of the death of the revenue officer?

As to Norah herself, Maurice never thought of her except as the presiding angel genius of Glenheath Cottage. Her

young life was flowing on, and likely to keep moving on, in the even tenor of its way. There were but little of the troubles of the world likely to assail *her*. Accidents and dangers and vicissitudes might encompass those whose paths were on the stormy highways of the world; but he could not comprehend that—save the anxiety for her brother's welfare, and perhaps a loving thought for himself—there was anything to disturb the repose that surrounded her home. He loved to think of her as he had often seen her, reposing in that quiet, natural ease of contentment that seemed to be part of her very self—disturbed only when some remark or passing thought made the flash of merriment leap from her eyes, or the smile brighten up her face like a sudden burst of sunlight on a beautiful landscape.

What was he going to do with himself, and when was he to see her again? When should her musical voice fall like angel-tones on his ears? When should he look into those blue eyes again? When should he stand in the presence of that dear, sweet face—handsomer and more bewitching to him than all else in the world?

Certainly never if he remained where he was. It was necessary for him to be up and doing. His health and strength were now fully restored, and it was absolutely essential that he should be making some headway in the world. He could not go back to Arranmore without having made a name somehow—without have made a competency, moreover. He knew very well his position at home. As a younger son of a family, and with estates heavily mortgaged and encumbered, his portion at any time would have been small; now he was completely cut off even from that. He must rely upon his own exertions, to win not only fame and fortune, but what was uppermost in his breast, Norah Desmond for wife.

He was leaning over the bulwarks looking at the high bluffs covered with waving trees that crowned the entrance to

the James River, whose blue waters came in noiseless and unbroken flow from the capital of the beleaguered confederacy, one forenoon.

He was vainly endeavouring to shape out some course of life for himself; but he could only get as far on the dim road of the future as to intend writing a letter full of love and hope and confidence to Norah, when his meditations were suddenly interrupted by a hand laid on his shoulder. Turning round, he found his accoster to be the middy whose friendly hand had saved his life the eventful night of the explosion of the *Georgia*.

"Well, Mr. O'Donnell, how do you like the change from Charleston?"

"I like it very much, Charlie. This bracing air of the North is bringing me round rapidly."

"The Southern air was too enervating for you?"

"Possibly it was. Anyhow, I feel quite strong here."

"I hope you like the *Minnesota*?"

"I could not do otherwise. The kindness I have met with from all here is something surprising. I could scarcely expect it from my friends in Ireland."

"It was not quite of that, I asked you," said Charlie, with something of a constrained air, "but how do you like the service?"

"That is a question I could not well answer, for I do not know much of it."

"I am sorry for that," said the middy gravely.

"Why?"

"Well, for a reason."

"For a reason! What?"

"Truth is, Mr. O'Donnell," said the young officer in a burst of frankness, "I am afraid I am but an awkward negotiator, and I am of no use for beating around the bush. The captain desired me to sound you as to whether you would join

the service, and if so whether you would join his ship. He is prepared to get you a commission from the Admiralty at Washington as lieutenant on board. Some of our officers are leaving to take command as captains of new vessels."

"Are you really serious in this?" asked Maurice, turning on him a look in which doubt was mingled with surprise.

"As serious as ever I was in my life," returned the midy. "The captain desired me to sound you on the subject; but, you see, I am so awkward at saying anything but what is straight in my head, that he could not have selected a worse negotiator."

"You are a thorough sailor, Charlie," said Maurice, laughing heartily.

"If being unable to go round about a story, and telling right out what I should have kept back, is a sign of one, I suppose I am," said the midy, clearly dissatisfied with his performance.

"The captain never mentioned this to me," said Maurice, growing thoughtful over the proposition.

"No, he naturally felt a delicacy in doing so, seeing that you had been, even in a slight way, connected with the Southern cause."

"Just what I would expect from his chivalrous character."

"There you spoke but the truth," said the young officer, warmly. "He is the very soul of honour. But what shall I say to him in answer?"

"The offer—for which I am deeply grateful—comes to me so suddenly, Charlie, that I am scarcely able to reply. Curiously enough, I was thinking over my future prospects just when you came."

"You have not, then, made up your mind what to do?"

"I really have not. It is a difficult thing to determine."

"You are not—excuse me for asking the question—it is not as a United States officer but as a friend I ask it—you

are not in any way bound or promised to the Southern cause?"

"No. I am perfectly free. There was no promise asked of me, and I gave none."

"There! I knew that; I said so. The best thing you can do, then, is to join us. The development of our navy is but beginning. You will probably get command of one of the new frigates, now building, in a short time. The Admiralty need skilled officers, and you will be trebly welcome. What say you?"

"It will take some time to consider, Charlie. The truth is that though in no way fettered by promise or engagement to the Southern cause, yet my lot was cast with it slightly and by accident in the beginning. I feel reluctant to take part against it now."

"I know the feeling, and it does you credit," said the youth frankly; "still, remember the cause we fight for is the cause of freedom all the world over. The success of the South would ruin this great Republic, where the light of liberty first spread through the world, and which even now is the only barrier that interposes between your European nations and the tyranny of their governments. The people of the world would be ruled with a rod of iron were it not that here they find a peaceful, prosperous home—and freedom. The cause we fight for is not our own, but that of human liberty everywhere. But I see the captain and his staff on the bridge with their glasses. There must be something up. Come and let us see what it is. Meantime say no word of this proffer to anyone. Think over it. If you accept, you will be made welcome by all; if you decline no one will be the wiser save we two and the captain. Come! There seems to be something unusual going on. Let us see."

The midy walked over to the quarter-deck, on which the captain and some of the officers were standing in a close



group. They had their glasses turned fixedly in the direction of the river's current, and were gazing with intense earnestness up its high reaches, which could be seen miles away. For a long time they remained thus, in perfect silence, after Maurice and his friend joined them.

"What is it, Cyrus?" asked the youth of one whose eye was, like the others, directed motionlessly through his telescope.

"Some strange craft that's coming down the river."

"How, strange?"

"Hang me if I can describe her."

"What is she like?"

"Like the roof of a house floating on the water."

"Perhaps," said the midy, as he took the telescope from the officer's hand, and fixed the focus for his own sight—"perhaps it is some timber-roof accidentally floating with the stream."

"Except that floating wreck is not generally attended by two gunboats, nor does it send smoke through its funnel, nor is it guided by a rudder, nor does it carry loop-holes for guns."

"Confound this glass," said the midy impatiently, "I cannot bring it to bear. I must get my own. Try it you, O'Donnell."

The midy's footsteps, as he was proceeding to look for his own, were stayed, as the captain, with a sharp click, shut up his glass, in which he was followed by the officers around him.

"I cannot make it out, gentlemen," he said. "It is a perfect mystery to me what it means."

"And to me," assented the others in turn.

"I guess I know what it is," said the engineer, who, black and grimy, had come up to take a look at the strange craft that, it was perfectly clear, the Southerners were sending for some unknown purpose down the river. "I'm a gwine to

think that 'ere vessel is a fireship. They will run her under our bows and blow us up."

"You may be right," said the captain, ponderingly. In the freedom that prevailed on board any one was open to offer an opinion, from the humblest to the highest, and no violation of discipline was considered to be done thereby. "You may be right, but in that case they would hardly mount her with guns. There seem to be port-holes—or apertures doing duty for them—in that curious roof of hers."

"I calkerlate these are made to deceive us as to her real meaning; it ain't bullets but the blaze of an explosion that'll sing out through these 'ere blessed holes."

"If she be what you think, a fireship, we'll take pretty good care she gets riddled with bullets long before she comes near enough to singe us. Furl all sails, gentlemen, clear the decks, and get the guns ready! We shall give them a salute when they come round the bend!"

The officers scattered to their several positions, the middy ran aloft with his glass, and the captain and Maurice O'Donnell were left together on the quarter-deck.

The strange-looking craft had, while they were speaking, been joined by two other gunboats, which had been lying at anchor at Smithfield Point, some few miles up the river, all the forenoon, and was steaming steadily but perseveringly down the river. In the windings of the latter they could no longer be seen from the quarter-deck; but the middy, from his high position, shouted down information of their steady and continued advance.

To those on deck the blue smoke, arising high in the clear, pleasant light of the forenoon, was alone visible.

It was with considerable difficulty that Maurice could conceive that an enemy was approaching.

The scene before him was truly serene. The sunlight fell on the wide waters of the bay, turning it into a sea of liquid

silver, while far in the distance the broad stream, all gay with glancing light, wandered through a beautiful country where forest and hill and sleeping valley alternated in picturesque succession. The high bluffs before them were clothed with trees, now beginning to put forth their many-coloured leaves, down to the very water's edge. Even the smoke that curled up so peacefully behind the distant hills gave an additional look of home beauty to the surroundings. It seemed rather the smoke from a farm house or village, cosily sheltering in the woods, than that of gunboats coming with deadly intent. The huge man-of-war vessels, anchored around, looked—as they heavily rocked to the soft splash of the waves—the very emblems of peace and strength and repose.

"Have you ever seen a sea-fight before, O'Donnell?" asked the captain good-humouredly, and after a pause in which he was sunk in deep reflection.

"No. We never have been at war in England during my time of service."

"Well, I fancy you will now see something of the kind. Our friends yonder seem to be coming on some pressing business of that nature."

"But they can have no chance with your vessels," Maurice said, and indeed he spoke as he thought. To think of the little pigmies, that looked no larger than tug-boats as they trended down the broad breast of the river, opposing themselves to the tremendous man-of-war vessels that guarded the Roads seemed the height of presumption if not of reckless sacrifice and loss of life.

"Of course not," said the captain, confidently; "but, as the engineer said, by exploding their fire-ship under our bows, if they can get her so far, they may hope to set on fire and destroy one of our vessels."

"Where do these gunboats come from?" asked O'Donnell,

whose knowledge of the topography of the country over which his eye ranged was as yet very limited.

“That river before you leads up to Richmond. On its banks are the Norfolk navy yard and arsenal, which formerly belonged to the United States, but have now been seized by the Confederate Government, with all their machinery and stores. They have the means and appliances of turning out as many vessels as they wish—a frigate or a liner every week if they like—the only misfortune for them being that, even if they did, they cannot get to sea. We are here to prevent them. Before one of their vessels could be ten minutes past yonder point she would be riddled with the concentrated broadsides of our fleet here.”

“Under these circumstances, don't you think it foolhardy to see these four or five vessels—so tiny-looking—coming to make an attack?”

“I should think it foolhardy,” said the captain, sinking his voice gravely and seriously, “did I not know the men that are in control of the navy yard. They have the very best men who were in our service—men who seceded from the United States navy—in control there. I know them well. I know Brooke their designer, Chief Engineer Williamson, and Naval Constructor Porter; and I also know well that when these three men put their heads together those opposed to them have good need to look out.”

“Yet a fireship or an explosive ship is an old invention—old as the navy itself.”

“I did not say it was a fireship. It may be. I cannot conceive anything else it can be. But, as I said before, there is very little wood in the heads of the men who rule at Norfolk navy yard, and I fancy they know what they are about. Though I'm darned,” said he, hitching his sword belt around, and placing a quid of tobacco unconcernedly in his mouth, “if I do.”

"They seem to be coming with steady determination. They are rounding the point. Their smoke is coming right over the bluff."

"Yes," said the captain, laying his hands on the brass railing of the quarter-deck, and once more fixing his eyes on the point whence the approaching gunboats would appear, "we shall see what they mean shortly. Well, Charlie," to the midgy, whose step had come beside him, "can you make out what they are up to?"

"Unless, as the engineer said, she is a fireship intending to throw us into confusion, and so make way for a swift-sailing frigate to get out to sea."

"Hardly that, Charlie; for twelve miles up the river there is no sign of a large vessel, and long before one could come that distance, we should have the blockading cordon drawn tight again. No, it is not that, whatever they mean."

"And what they mean will soon be apparent," said the youth, excitedly, "for here they come!"

They had, indeed, sailed into sight. Passing the high bluffs that had previously shut them out from view, they came steaming into the open waters of Hampton Roads.

And a curious sight they seemed!

First in advance came the nondescript vessel. As has been said, she was more like the roof of a house floating towards them than a ship. Save and except the apertures from which the mouths of heavy guns projected, there was but little to indicate that she came possessed of hostile intentions. Behind and at some distance steamed the gunboats.

The *Congress* frigate lay inward of the blockading fleet; but, with the greatest coolness, the strange vessel steamed past almost under her bows without taking the least notice of her. All at once, however, the boom of heavy guns shook the air around as the former poured a shower of solid shot upon the strange craft.

They glanced off her sides harmlessly; and, save that the nondescript staggered visibly under the weight of iron balls striking her, they appeared to have no effect. She continued her way without noticing the broadside.

“By heavens! Charlie,” said the captain, “this is the vessel we have been hearing such rumours about. She is plated with iron. See! she is roofed with railway iron. Balls have no effect on her. Great Scott! she is making straight for the *Cumberland*! See!”

She was indeed. With the undeviating persistency of the sleuth hound, and wholly undeterred by the broadside of the *Congress*—indeed, seemingly unconscious of it—she was making with quickened speed for the huge vessel—the *Cumberland*—that lay broadside on directly in her way. Clearly the captain and crew of the latter vessel were considerably alarmed and surprised by the approach of this most menacing and mysterious stranger!

The sharp bugle call of the captain was heard; the guns of the vessel were run out; and, as the stranger came nearer, the red light flashed along the sides of the man-of-war; the smoke belched forth in white gusts from her port holes; and twenty heavy guns sent their iron missiles at the stranger.

The bullets glanced from her strongly plated roof as if they were peas. Nor did they serve even to retard her progress.

Noiselessly and without firing a shot she came relentlessly and straightly forward!

With intense anxiety—and in utter astonishment and amazement and bewilderment—the officers of the *Minnesota* crowded the bulwarks, watching the *denouement*. The crew of the *Cumberland* were quickly alive to the danger that so pressingly threatened them, and were at work. Before the white smoke had curled upwards from the sides of the vessel, the guns were drawn back, cleaned, loaded, and rammed; and once more run out.

Once more the air was rent with the thunders of their broadside; once more the smoke rolled away; but still steadily onward steamed the strange vessel—unharméd!

"She is going to ram them—by thunder!" was the exclamation of the captain of the *Minnesota*, as he saw the strange craft face for the frigate. "There is not a vessel of the fleet will escape."

It was true enough.

The nondescript put steam on, and was now going at considerable speed. She looked, as she came nearer, something uncanny in her noiseless advance, in her perfect invulnerability, and in the complete absence of all sign of life around her! A small hull arose about a foot over the water. Inside of this, and from two feet beneath the water line to about ten feet above, rose her iron roof thoroughly and strongly plated—so strongly, indeed, that they might as well be pelting wooden pellets against her as shot and shell.

The words were hardly out of the captain's mouth when the stranger ran prow on towards the *Cumberland*!

With all speed on she struck her with full force in the starboard fore-channels!

The effect was prodigious!

Her iron prow tore through the side of the *Cumberland* as if it were made of brown paper, leaving a huge chasm therein, whilst at the same time from every gun that could bear on her the ironclad sent her shot tearing and rending.

The chasm that was made by the latter when she drew back was marvellous to see. The water rushed in with the fury of a waterspout. In twenty minutes the frigate's forward magazine was drowned out! Backing, the terrible enemy moved quietly around, pouring her shot and shell into the doomed vessel, which, with brave but unavailing gallantry, sent broadside after broadside at her invulnerable foe.

At last the water in its steady in-pour had ascended to the

hatches, the vessel canted over, and, with one final burst of fire from her deck guns at the terrible foe, her commander, Lieutenant Morris, ordered every man to jump overboard and save himself if possible!

A minute afterwards, the vessel, whose deck was nearly on a level with the wave, sank with a plunge in deep water—her flag still flying as she went down. Hundreds of dead and wounded, strewn in every position of death and agony, on her deck and elsewhere, went down with her. There was no possibility of saving them.

The smoke from her last broadside was yet oozing from the port-holes when the drowning waters closed over the doomed vessel as she plunged beneath them.

“Launch the boats, launch the boats!” echoed from a dozen voices on board the *Minnesota*, as they saw the great ship disappear.

Their attention had been so much attracted to this singular fight between the *Cumberland* and her persistent and invulnerable foe, that but little thought was given to another conflict that raged around the *Congress*.

Whilst the nondescript stranger had made for the former, the gunboats had ranged themselves opposite the latter, and were pouring rifled shot and shell into her, each in succession, to which she was replying with steady broadsides.

Seeing the fate of the *Cumberland*, the *Congress*, in face of the deadly discharges into her, set her jib and topsail, and sought to run in-shore under the shelter of the batteries. The breeze not being sufficiently strong, the gunboat *Zouave* ran to her assistance and pulled her aground under the protection of the heavy batteries at one of the bluffs called Newport News.

Meantime the nondescript—or, as we shall now call her by the name that became visible on her sides, the *Merrimac*—having finished the *Cumberland*, turned round, and, seeing



the *Congress* escaping, steamed towards her. The latter vessel had grounded stern on, and was, therefore, at the mercy of her foes, as she could only use her two forward guns.

The ironclad boldly facing shorewards, and finding the depth of water not sufficient to get near enough to ram her, took up position within one hundred and fifty yards of the ill-fated vessel, and raked her fore and aft with shell, occasionally despatching a shot among the gunners working the batteries on shore.

In this she was well assisted by the gunboats, which, keeping further up the river, poured their fire into the unresisting *Congress*, until she was completely riddled, and her two forward guns rendered useless—one being dismantled, and the other having its muzzle knocked off.

The captain of the *Minnesota* having seen the effect of the ramming on the *Cumberland*, caused the bugle to be sounded calling his officers together. He thus announced his intention to them :

"This ironclad, gentlemen, will sink the whole fleet. She is perfectly invulnerable. Shot and shell have no effect upon her. To save our vessel we must put to sea at once ; we had better, therefore, weigh anchor, unfurl the sails, and stand out to sea."

Before this could be accomplished, however, the *Cumberland* had gone down before her resistless foe. As the latter turned round to join the gunboats in their attack on the *Congress*, Charlie, who had kept by the captain's side in breathless suspense all the time, said :

"I should not let her pass without giving her a broadside. She must be vulnerable somewhere."

"It's no use, Charlie. Shot or shell won't hurt her."

"Even so," cried the youth, excitedly. "Who knows but a shot may strike her under water."

"Very well. Give the order," said the captain, with a perplexity akin to despair in his voice.

In a moment all hands were piped to the guns, and Maurice for the first time experienced the sensation of what a broadside fired in real warfare was like. Before he was well conscious of what was taking place, a flash of lightning broke on his eyes, blinding them; the air and sky seemed rent asunder as the ship trembled with the thunder-sounds that burst from her!

The smoke wafting away showed the strange craft still pursuing her way towards the *Congress*, perfectly unharmed, and, indeed, heedless of what they had done.

"It must have been the devil invented her," said the midddy, with something of horror in his voice.

"No wooden vessel can withstand her, that's certain!" was the decisive statement of the first lieutenant, as he watched her steaming towards the stranded *Congress*.

"She will sink the whole fleet with impunity," said the captain. "We must run for shelter under the walls of Fortress Monroe—else the *Minnesota* will fare like the *Cumberland*."

Active hands were at work with all speed to get the vessel under weigh. Soon she moved; but, before she had gone far, a heavy shock thrilled through her from stem to stern, shaking and straining her massive timbers.

"She's grounded!" came in a hoarse cry from many voices.

Grounded indeed she had, and not all the efforts of her powerful steam machinery could get her off.

"This is awfully unfortunate," said the captain, aghast.

"We are simply chained here for destruction. What shall be done?" replied the lieutenant. "See yonder!"

As he spoke a cry of rage and vexation went up from all on board the frigate.

For, looking in the direction of the *Congress*, which had been silent for some time, her guns being rendered useless, whilst the ironclad and the gunboats unceasingly poured their shot into her, or rather along her decks, with shell and grape—

they saw that her flag was being hauled down. A pinnace was put off from the gunboat, and the surrendered vessel was boarded. The firing had ceased!

---

## CHAPTER XIII.

### AT FORTRESS MONROE.

BUT the most singular scene of this most extraordinary day was yet to take place.

It was but four o'clock, and the dusk was beginning to fall. The air was dark and heavy with the clouds of smoke that had arisen from the unceasing discharges of the guns. It was all silence now, when suddenly a furious burst of artillery opened up. The flash of the guns lit up the shore.

It was the land batteries that had opened fire!

"What are they doing? They are our guns!" said Charlie, in amazement.

"They are firing on the *Congress*," said the captain, who now stood alone, the officers being busy trying to warp off their vessel.

"I declare to heaven, I believe they are!"

"I suppose they regard her now as a rebel vessel, and will try to sink her."

"Hard lines for her officers and crew. Don't you think so? And, by Jove, there go the guns of that confounded ironclad thundering at her again. She is fired on by both friends and enemies!"

"I almost think it is the first time in the history of naval war that it has happened that a frigate has been made the target of friends and foes. I cannot understand it. Heaven help her officers and crew!"

But their thoughts were otherwise speedily attracted, for

the *Roanoke*, which had grounded also, but had got off, came to the assistance of the *Minnesota*, and sought to drag her free.

A huge six-inch cable was passed on board, and steam put on. The cable spun round with the strain; smoke arose from it as if it were on fire; and with a loud noise like that of an explosion the rope broke! The *Minnesota* was aground! Twice, thrice, the attempt was essayed, but still she remained fast.

Finding their efforts useless, the *Roanoke* moved off to provide for her own safety; and in a short time they had the mortification of seeing the frigate *St. Lawrence* also towed by the *Cambridge*, passing slowly to a place of safety at Fortress Monroe.

Clearly flight was the only hope for the navy of the United States. Fight was hopeless, impossible—nothing short of suicidal madness.

“We are in for it now, by heaven!” said the restless midshipman, as his eager eyes, scanning around, detected the assailants of the *Congress* abandoning their attack upon that crippled vessel, and bearing straight in their direction.

“So we are! Thank heaven, she draws too much water. She cannot come near enough to ram us; else,” said the captain, “we should share the fate of the *Cumberland*.”

The gunboats speedily came near the stranded vessel, and placing themselves at some distance on her port-bow and stern, where only her heavy pivot guns could be brought to bear, sent their shot and shell tearing through her decks and sides.

Showers of grape poured along her decks and round shot tore through her hull. The first discharge of grape struck down every man at the bow pivot gun before it could be fired. But others rushed forward to supply their places, and for three hours the unequal fight was kept up. The ironclad,

as the captain apprehended, was unable to come nearer than a mile of the stranded vessel, from which she kept up a steady fire, but doing little damage. Her prowess seemed to be confined to close quarters.

“This business will go on all night, and we shall be knocked into matchwood before morning,” said the midy, impatiently, when the shadows of night had long fallen, and still the decks of the gunboats vomited forth flashes of lightning. “Let me try a ten-inch shell at that venomous assailant yonder. I had always a quick eye for a chance shot.”

The ebbing of the tide had swayed the *Minnesota's* head a little round, but quite sufficiently to enable them to train one of her ponderous 'tween-deck guns on the gunboat. The midy carefully set the gun, the torch was applied, and the shell went speeding on its way.

It struck the object aimed at, piercing the deck at the base of the funnel and exploding beneath. A huge volume of smoke and steam arose in the air, showing that the boilers had burst. The column of vapour rose high in the night. In a moment the deck was crowded with men flying from the escaping steam. Thereupon the available guns of the *Minnesota* opened upon her, and the flash of the guns lit up her sides. The other gunboat steamed to the assistance of her consort, and both together sought the side of the iron-clad still firing her shot and shell at the *Minnesota*. Together they steered off—the *Merrimac* and her consort gunboats—and anchored once more above the bluff, their work of destruction for the day ended, but ready to commence on the morrow.

Several steam-tugs that had been afar off watching the gallant fight maintained by the stranded vessel now came to her assistance, and sought with might and main to pull her off. But the recoil caused by her heavy guns only embedded her more deeply in the mud, and cable after cable parted

without the *Minnesota* moving an inch. It was clearly impossible to stir her. She must remain where she was until the high tide would enable the ironclad to get near and destroy her—which would be early in the morning.

A council of officers was called. Their deliberations were long; but meanwhile no effort was relaxed in their fruitless attempts to get the vessel off.

At last the chief officer, towards midnight, came on deck. The middy and Maurice were waiting to hear the result.

"Charlie," said he, "you must take a boat at once and bring this despatch to the General at Fortress Monroe. You can supplement the statements in it by your own personal information. Tell him the terrible danger we stand in stranded here, and of the necessity of some plan being devised for saving the vessel. The ironclad will return in the morning and resume her work of destruction."

"She has resumed it already," broke in Charlie, as the boom of heavy cannon came surging over the water. "See the flash of her guns. By Heavens! she has set the *Congress* on fire."

"So she has," cried the senior officer, as he blew his whistle for the captain. In a few minutes all hands, from the captain to the stoker, were on deck, or up in the shrouds, watching the fire as it leaped from sail to sail and burst through the hatchways. The vessel was quite deserted, the crew, with their wounded, having escaped in the small boats to land the moment the ironclad turned her attention to the *Minnesota*.

It was a splendidly picturesque sight, this burning ship—seen through the blackness of midnight—flaring up against the night sky! The flames leaped from the hatches and sprung aloft, and the burning masts flared like pine torches to the heavens.

The guns of the ship had been fully charged at the time

when the *Merrimac* had abandoned the attack upon her, and when the crew saved themselves by flight. They began now, in the great heat, to go off, adding another to the weird incidents of the day and night. A shell fired from one of them struck an ammunition sloop at the other side of the bay, blowing her up. It seemed as if the war-demons, rejoicing in the slaughter and saturnalia reigning around, had taken possession of the fiery ship, and were amusing themselves with firing her guns!

All at once a tremor ran through the *Minnesota* as if an electric shock made her quiver! A hoarse roar, as of the simultaneous discharge of ten thousand cannon, shook the air; a flash of light filled the night so wide and so vivid that it seemed to brighten up the whole bay and the James river for many a winding mile!

The fiery blaze was suddenly quenched in the blackest gloom. The blazing *Congress* had disappeared! The fire had caught her magazines, containing several hundred tons of powder, and the explosion had scattered the vessel into hissing fragments.

Another of the line of battle ships gone down at the hands of the terrible *Merrimac*!

"It is all over, gentlemen," said the captain when night and gloom had settled on the water. "It is an ominous time for the American fleet if some assistance does not arrive, and I cannot perceive where it can come from, or how. Has the boat left?"

"Not yet, captain," said the midy, who had been an entranced spectator of the conflagration.

"Then you had better lose no time. Tell the General what you have seen. Tell him, further, unless he can send us assistance to get off we shall share the fate of the *Congress* and the *Cumberland* in the morning."

"I shall not lose a second, captain; I shall tell him all.

Will you come?" he asked, turning suddenly to Maurice O'Donnell, who stood among the officers.

"Certainly. With the greatest pleasure—if it be not against the regulations."

"Oh! hang the regulations!" whispered the youth. "This is not a time to speak of regulations, with the Federal navy being sent one after the other to the bottom. Come!"

The boat lay rocking by the side of the vessel as they swung themselves downward. The force of the explosion had produced a disturbance on the surface of the water that expressed itself in long and heavy swells. Taking advantage of one of these, they pushed out from the side of the vessel, the sailors took their seats, dipped their oars in the water, and in a few seconds they were lost in the darkness. Save and except the noises that came from the ship and her attendant tugboats as they still worked to get her off, there was nothing to intrude on the solitude and darkness—nothing to indicate that the surroundings had been the scene of a conflict that was destined to set aside all previously conceived ideas of naval warfare and to revolutionise the fleets of the world.

"Well, Maurice, this has been an eventful day," said the midy after a pause, in which nothing was heard but the motion of the oars in the rowlocks or dip of the rowers' blades in the water.

"Very. I wonder what will the morning bring forth."

"A repetition of to-day's work, I fancy. I see nothing to stop it. Wood is no match against iron."

"If was a clever invention. Do you know anything of her?"

"Our people seem to have got hold of her history to-day—I don't know how. When the Norfolk navy yard was shamefully deserted by our people and taken hold of by the rebels, among the vessels that they captured was the *Merrimac*, a first-class 40-ton steam frigate. She was set on fire before our people left it, but, by some confusion of orders, she was



scuttled at the same time, so that before the fire could do her much harm she sank. The Confederates found her ready to hand, raised her, cut her down to the water's edge, built that solid roof of railway iron on her, and shielded her with heavy plating, it seems, even below the water line—with what results we have seen to-day, and shall probably see yet more of when morning breaks.”

“They are smart men you have to contend with, apparently?”

“Smart! They have the cleverest and most inventive engineers in the world. You see, Maurice, our best men have gone over to the rebels. Our navy in particular was filled with Southern officers, and they have gone over to a man.”

“Can there be no resistance offered to her?”

“I don't see,” said the midgy perplexedly, “how there can, unless we had a vessel similarly built to withstand her. That will take some time. The only hope I see is that from the construction of the vessel she can hardly live in the open sea, otherwise there is nothing to prevent her sailing up to New York and laying the Empire City in ashes.”

“But surely something must be done for the *Minnesota* before morning.”

“Except to shield her with gunboats, and so intercept the fire of the enemy, I know nothing. Otherwise the ship, as far as I can see, is doomed. By the way, a curious rumour I heard to-day, with which you are concerned.”

“With which I am concerned?”

“Yes, or at least may have an interest in.”

“How?”

“Why, it is this, Maurice. The rumour is—and, by the way, it is astonishing how these rumours grow, and how information comes in times of excitement on shipboard without anyone knowing how—I think it is engendered by the smoke of the guns; you remember—of course you do—Captain Brooke you sailed with in the *Georgia*?”

"Captain Brooke was not his name. It was Captain Walton."

"Never mind that. He goes, from time to time, under a good many names."

"He, poor fellow, will never bear another name—in this world, at least," said Maurice, with unassumed regret.

"I am not so sure of that," said the middy, sharply.

"You are not? I am. Nothing could be more certain, I am sorry to say, than that he went down after, or was blown to pieces by, the explosion."

"I fancy you may save yourself that regret, Mr. O'Donnell," said the middy, gaily. "It comes to our turn to regret that he has not. For if the rumour be true—and it seems, somehow or another, to have good foundation—your adventurous friend has not only designed this vessel, but is in command of her."

"What!" cried Maurice, in astonishment. "It is impossible!"

"Possible or impossible, so the story runs, and I, for one, should be slow to call it false. But there are the lights of Fortress Monroe. I wish to heavens we had the *Minnesota* anchored under the shelter of her guns! Steady men! Pull easy!"

"Who goes there?"

The cry came with guttural hoarseness through the darkness.

"Friends," promptly cried, in return, the middy.

"Give the countersign;" and at once the glare of a bull's eye was turned on them, lighting up the boat and its occupants.

"Lincoln," shouted he.

"All right. Pass on." And a few strokes brought the guard-boat alongside them, where the officer in charge shook hands warmly with the middy.

"This has been a bad day's work," said the former.

"Why, yes; so it has. How did you learn of it?"

"Learn! Why we were watching the work all day. And if we had no other means of knowing, the hurried flight of the other vessels to sea would have told us there was something wonderful afoot."

"Have they put off to sea?"

"The *Roanoke*, the *St. Lawrence*, and the *Cambridge* made for the Atlantic this evening—stopping only to signal the fort."

"They did wisely."

"What confounded thing is this that has the power of doing such damage? What is she? What is she like! She must be the devil turned into a man-of-war."

"I have no time to describe her—I must see the General in command in all haste—but if I say that the devil invented, and, for aught I know—I beg your pardon, Maurice!—commands her; that she is invulnerable to shot or shell; that bombs burst on her as harmlessly as a child's squib; and that six-inch solid shot glide off her sides like pellets from a popgun—I have told you enough to show you what she is."

"Can a broadside make no impression on her?"

"None. She could steam up unharmed within a hundred paces of your heaviest guns and ram and sink a vessel protected by them. Where shall we land, Jack? I'm in a deuce of a hurry to see the General."

"This way. Here are the iron stairs. Take care, the steps are somewhat slippery."

"Come along, Maurice. You remain here, men, until I return. We shan't be long. It is not a time for idle gossip," he added, half to himself, as they ascended the slippery stairs the embrasures overhead—where, passing over the granite battlements, they were speedily taken in charge and conveyed to the presence of the General commanding.

There was but little ceremony in being introduced to him. In a small square room in a turret which in the daytime overlooked all the approaches to the fortress the General sat talking with a naval officer. Both were smoking cigars, and both were in undress uniform. The two strangers were without previous notification introduced to the apartment and the doors closed behind them.

A lamp burned on the table. A decanter of wine and a box of fragrant cigars stood thereon also. The general sat in a rocking-chair with his heels over the back of another, and much higher than his head. The naval officer was peering over a chart that lay extended on the table before him, and so intently that he never stirred his eyes or his head as the two young men entered.

"Despatches from the *Minnesota*, General," said young Steadman, as he entered.

The officer took them, tore the despatch open, and carelessly glanced over it.

"I know all this already," said he, somewhat sharply. "What other news is there?"

"The *Cumberland* is sunk, General, and"—

"So it is said here," said he, angrily, crumpling up the despatch in his hand, and flinging it into the fireplace. "And, even if it were not, we had information of the fact previously."

"The *Congress* is also lost, General. Blown up."

"I thought as much. I knew that explosion was from her."

"The *Minnesota* is just aground, and, unless she is got off before morning, will follow the fate of the others."

"Can she be got off?"

"Not, I fear, with the assistance we have. She is deeply embedded in the mud and sand, in which her broadsides have fixed her more firmly."

"Can the gunboats not render her assistance?"

"No; I fear not."

“What depth of water is she in?” asked the naval officer, lifting for the first time his head from the chart.

“About twenty feet.”

“And what when the tide is full in?”

“Thirty, perhaps.”

The officer traced the position of the vessel on the chart with his finger.

“What is this strange vessel? Have you seen her near enough to describe her?”

Charlie *had* seen her near enough, and in consequence gave a rough but accurate description of her, to which the naval officer listened with silent attention, nodding his head as some vigorous description caught his thoughts.

“Yes,” he said, when the midddy had finished, “I thought as much. I have seen Brooke sketch such a vessel dozens of times. He has now had the opportunity of turning his theories into practice, and to some purpose apparently.”

“You have no doubt about what you stated just now, Lorrimer?” inquired the General of the naval officer.

“None whatever,” said the other, carelessly.

“Then I may send this message,” said the General, abandoning his easy position, and addressing himself to the writing of his note:—“The General commanding at Fortress Monroe presents his compliments to Captain von Brunt, and regrets he cannot aid him in getting off his vessel. He has no further tugboats to send. But a powerful vessel will be despatched to his assistance in the morning. Is that enough?”

“Except to stay his anxiety,” said the naval officer, “by stating that he may relieve himself from apprehension for the safety of his ship.”

“Very well. I shall add that. That’s quite enough?”

“Quite. More would be dangerous, as the smart Southerners might lay hands upon these gentlemen, and reveal our plans.”

"Very well, gentlemen, you may go. Perhaps you would take a glass of wine before you leave. Excuse my inattention or I should have offered it earlier. Wine or whiskey—Irish whiskey, too?"

Irish whiskey, it would be, both gentlemen said, right promptly.

It was now drawing on towards morning, and they had not tasted anything since early in the forenoon of the previous day. The excitement on board, and the imminent danger they had stood in, precluded any possibility of the minor wants of humanity being attended to. So they were by no means disappointed or annoyed when the General, taking some tumblers from a gar-de-vin that stood convenient, poured them out two glasses of whiskey.

"You're an Irishman, I think," the General said, addressing Maurice O'Donnell, catching up the accent in the words by which he expressed his thanks.

"I am."

"In the United States navy?"

"No."

"No?"

"No. I'm merely a prisoner on the *Minnesota*."

"And what the devil brings you here, then?" inquired the General, rising hastily, as if to ring a bell.

"He has exaggerated his position, General," said the midddy, quickly. "He had the misfortune to be an accidental passenger in the blockade runner commanded by Captain Walton, when it was blown up. We rescued him, and he has remained on board—an invalid—since then."

"Did you know Walton?" inquired the naval officer, sharply, lifting his head from the chart which he was again studying, and addressing himself to Maurice.

"Yes. I sailed with him on that venture."

"And you were aboard when the explosion took place?"

"I was; but I do not remember the explosion. I only remember finding myself aboard the *Minnesota* some weeks afterwards."

"He was the only one that escaped," added the youth.

"Hardly the only one, sir," said the naval officer, with a grim smile. "You were somewhat lax in your duties that night, and the American fleet has paid for it to-day."

"I don't quite understand," said the young middy, bristling up.

"I don't suppose you do," said the other, sharply; "but you may probably know it later on."

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen," said the General, significantly. "A word with you, Captain Lorrimer."

The two officers whispered earnestly for some seconds, during which the naval officer threw occasional glances at the friends, clearly indicating that they were the subjects of the conversation.

The discourse was broken off shortly by the latter saying :

"No. It's of no consequence. They may go. Even if so, it might be more to our advantage than loss."

"Very well, gentlemen," said the General, "you may row back as soon as you like. Bear this despatch safely to the commander. If the *Minnesota* can get off, let her come here; if not, we shall send her assistance in the morning."

"And be more careful, young sir," said the naval officer, sharply, "next time you are on guard duties to see that no important man escapes. The hanging of a midshipman from the yardarm would but badly compensate for the loss of two costly line-of-battle ships and hundreds of valuable lives."

The affronted middy was about to reply to this insolent address, but, O'Donnell touching him gently on the arm, he restrained himself, and they descended the stairs from the turret with as little ceremony as they had entered it.

"Could you guess," said the midshipman, as they clambered

once more over the granite battlements, "what they were conferring about?"

"I have no idea."

"I'll tell you. They were discussing whether it would not be better to retain you as prisoner in the fort."

"You think so?"

"I am quite sure of it. It was a most incautious admission you made, and might have brought us both into serious difficulties."

"Why should they have retained me a prisoner?"

"I don't know; but it seems to me there is something important on foot."

"Why do you think so?"

"From what they have said—or, perhaps, from what they have left unsaid."

"They did not intimate as much."

"No; if they had it is highly improbable I should have the pleasure of your company back."

"They certainly kept their secret—if they had one—pretty close."

"Not very; but I fancy somehow our invulnerable friend will get a fright she does not expect to-morrow."

"How?"

"Hang me if I can even say any more than yourself. But both looked confident and assured—Lorrimer particularly so."

"Do you know him?"

"Well."

"A good officer?"

"The best," said the middy, laconically. "When Lorrimer is confident on anything in his business, there is abundant reason for assurance. He is one of the best officers in the service—though a trifle insolent, as you have seen. No matter, to-morrow will reveal all. Pull away, lads! The tide is with you. There is not much fear of straggling boats



being about the harbour to bar your way to-night. Give way!"

A swift pull of an hour or so brought them once more beside the *Minnesota*. The grounded vessel was surrounded with boats and tugs, all straining their best to get her off with the rising tide. A powerful steam-tug was lashed with a huge cable to her prow. Several iron chains, twisted together like strands of a rope, were passed round her stern, and firmly fastened at either end to two other tugs. At a given signal the paddles lashed their waves with fury as they tugged and strained at the cables, but the huge ship was immovable. She did not stir an inch. Not all the aid that could be rendered by the myriad boats around could make her advance.

Meantime the two young men clambered up the side of the vessel, and, reaching the deck, separated—Steadman to give an account of his mission, O'Donnell to watch the proceedings so energetically carried on for the relief of the vessel.

Tired of watching the gleaming torches moving to and fro, the rapid darting of boats from point to point, the hoarse cries and commands of the officers, the fiery groaning of the hawsers as the steam-tugs vainly pulled and strained, he turned to saunter along the crowded deck. A waving torch carried in a sailor's hand attracted his attention, and he looked up. The light fell bright as day on the faces around, hurrying to and fro!

Suddenly he stopped—with a feeling of surprise and alarm!

His eyes had rested for a second on a well-known face. For a moment their eyes met; but the next moment the flaring torch disappeared; and with its light, the face!

That well-known, well-remembered face!

Could it be possible? His heart almost ceased to beat with the sudden start. For the face his gaze rested on, and the eyes that met his, were the face and eyes of his former friend, the captain of the *Georgia*. For a moment he doubted the

evidence of his senses, and laboured to convince himself that it was a mere optical delusion superinduced by weakness, uneasiness, and fasting.

But no. The face was too real and apparent!

Could it be possible that the adventurous blockade runner had survived the perils of that terrible night? Even if he had, what brought him on board an enemy's vessel? What motive lurked beneath this equally dangerous venture?

Another consideration: How far was he, Maurice O'Donnell, justified in knowing of the presence of this dangerous enemy—if it were really he—on board of a vessel and among men that had saved his life, and had proved such warm and fast friends to him, without telling of it?—nay, more, in whose service he was so lately offered a commission. Was it allowable in him—as a matter of honour—to keep the fact concealed from the authorities of the ship? Who could tell what terrific danger the presence of the restless Southerner boded to the vessel? For a growing presentiment was strong within him that, daring and reckless as the Confederate officer was, he would not have hazarded his freedom and life if a bold stroke were not in contemplation.

On the other hand, why should he bring his former friend into peril? Why should he, because of an accidental meeting, betray one who had stood to him in his need? Was this a fitting recompense for past kindnesses?

After all, he was but an accidental witness of this singular but terrible sea-fight. He had no concern with one more than the other. Both had been equally friendly to him, and would it not be the proper thing to do to act neutrally between them?

In the confusion and pandemonium-like character of the scene on deck it was useless—even if he wished it—to hope to see his adventurous friend again; so distracted by conflicting promptings and thoughts, he retired between decks, where, throwing himself on a bunk, he was soon fast asleep.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE KILLERIES.

OUT on the cliffs of Galway, where for ever and for ever the Atlantic waves break in foam and spray—coming sometimes laden with the ozone of three thousand miles of ocean-space, at others bearing with them the gentlest breath of Summer—depending on whether the Western gales have been lashing them into fury or otherwise—stands an ancient ruin—the Killeries.

What time it was built, what purpose it subserved, what people inhabited it, are matters as forgotten and unknown as well can be.

It may have been the square and lofty fortalice of a chieftain's keep, what time Connaught in general and Galway in particular were fit homes for gallant chief and stalworth clan, before centuries of misgovernment and spoliation and ruin had left them the abode of barrenness and infertility. Or it might have been the remains of an ancient abbey, built in the earlier period of Christianity, and endowed by warrior-hand repenting perhaps over a life spent in fray and foray; or by gentle chieftainess whose thoughts were attuned, with the earnestness and gentle fervour of these early days, heavenwards. Saintly monk and mitred abbot may have knelt in its now ruined sanctuary in the days when silver bells rang out from its summits, and golden lamps burned before its shrines—may have looked out upon the never-ceasing waves that beat beside it, and linked the idea of the great ocean with that wondrous and mysterious eternity to which they were hastening, and for which they were making such excellent preparation.

But whether the abode of haughty chief or saintly monk none could now tell. The hungry winter winds swept over ruined arch and ivied barbican; whilst in summer the great, thick, massive walls were gay with wild flowers that bloomed on their broken summits or glistened from their many crevices.

But it was not summer now, and therefore no bright flowers made the ivy look greener by contrast. The Killeries stood gray and dismal in its solitary desolation.

It was a heavy day of sea-mist and fog which covered land and water alike, and through which—and out of which seemingly, as if it had been germinated therein—the rain fell ploddingly and unceasingly. It was not heavy rain, coming in vigorous and drenching showers—which might have had an appearance of life about it—but a thick-falling rain-mist that wetted one with steady and lifeless perseverance, but with more certainty than a summer thunder-shower.

Even the old ruin looked more dismally under the steady, continuous depression of the never-ceasing downfall, and the ivy leaf hung heavy with its burden of sorrow, as it drooped from broken arch or ruined tower.

“It’s a bad day, boys,” said one of three men, who, having pulled their boat in on the strand and fastened it there, made their way to the old castle.

“Bad!” said a second, as he pulled off his sou’-wester, and, striking it against the wall, dashed the water from it in a shower of drops. “It’s horrid; that’s what it is—horrid! It’s not worth living for, to be out in such weather as this. Ugh!”

“There’s not much comfort here, Sam,” said the third, as he glanced at the shelterless condition of the walls within which they had just entered, “as far as I can see. Why did we come here?”

“You’re only part of the way yet. There’s better shelter inside.”

“Go on, then,” muttered the second man sulkily. “It’s no good stopping here, an’ I’m tired carryin’ this. If there’s no better place than here we might as well have stopped in the boat.”

He referred to a heavy carpet bag which he was carrying, and from whose oiled sides the rain came off in vapour—steaming under his hand.

“This is the way—just in here! I told you,” said the first speaker, in a pleasant and conciliatory manner, “that I knew a snug place where we’d get shelter, and here we are. You might get worse places on a day like this.”

“It ’ll do,” said the sulky carrier of the carpet bag, as he looked around at the apartment which they had entered—at the bare walls, unclothed by plaster, at the stone roof, at the entrance half hidden by the trailing ivy outside, and lastly at the ample chimney, which bore traces of having been used in the not distant past. “It ’ll do, but ’twould be nothing amiss if there was something there to dry us and warm us. I’m a-shiverin’ as if I had the ague. D—d if I aint!”

“We’ll soon make that all right, Bill,” said the first speaker, who seemed to be the guide if not the leader of the little party. “Lay down that carpet bag and bear a hand. You, Jim, too”——

“What’s this? Sure you’re not goin’ to”——

“What else? One would think it was put here for the purpose. It’s useful, so it is, anyhow. Bear a hand boys an’ lift it off.”

The first speaker had his hand laid on the upper slab of a tomb which stood in the centre of the vaulted room. Large stone slabs formed the sides, not hoar with rime of ages, nor hidden by the growth of ancient mosses, but clean and fresh as if by constant rubbing against. Similarly, this top slab—though quite worn, and its ancient lettering indistinct and almost gone in the lapsing and vanishing years—was clean

and polished as if with friction. It was upon the edge of this, overlapping the sides, that he had placed his hand, and to which his observations were directed.

"Bear a hand, Bill."

The man addressed deposited his travelling bag in the corner, and turned with a look of infinite repugnance to his companion.

"Don't touch it! Leave it so. Let the dead rest. D—n it, I say, don't take it off!"

"Why, you're a goose, Bill. One would think you were afraid. Don't look so, man. There's nothing inside of it. See!"

Without awaiting the desired help from Bill's manifestly reluctant hand, he tilted over the slab to one side.

"There! you see there's nothing in it—but this! So you needn't have been so unwilling. It is well the flag was not broken. If it had it would have been your fault, you know, for not giving assistance."

The "this" to which the speaker referred was a quantity of bog-wood, which was now piled in the empty receptacle. This he lifted out, placed in the huge fire-place, struck a light, applied it to the resinous heap; and in a short time a blazing fire threw a look of comfort on the bare walls and the earthen floor.

"I tould you we'd soon have comfortable quarters. I never promise anything that I don't carry out. Now lift it on again? Careful—boys! careful! That's right. It'll do for a table. The best use it ever was put to. A great deal better than when it covered the dead man's bones that lay in it!"

There was less reluctance to replace it than there was to take it off. Indeed, the open look of the empty tomb, and the cold air that seemed to arise out of it, were uncomfortable and disconcerting, and it was a relief to find it on again.

"There now, that's snug! A more comfortable table Sir Hugh hasn't in his mansion. Open that bag, Bill, an' lets have what's inside of it."

"U-l-i-c De B"—spelled out Bill from the replaced slab, unheeding his companion's directions. He was slowly and laboriously tracing the worn letters with his long clasp-knife, which he had taken out to cut off a plug of tobacco, but had now turned to this antiquarian object.

"Never mind 'Ulic,'" said the first, somewhat sharply. "He's dead and d——d long ago. Hand me the bag. Don't mind unlocking it. Cut it, Bill; cut it!"

The sharpness of this command impressed the careless and obstinate character of the speller. He stooped for the carpet bag, dumped it down with a bang on the tombstone and running his knife quickly around it, laid bare its contents.

As he finished his feat he glanced with a singular look at the other.

"Hand over the pitcher, Bill. Hang it, man, don't look at me in that way; you look at me as if you'd like to cut my throat. Pass over the tin tumbler. There! That's bubbles you don't see every day!"

Filling out a measure of drink from the pitcher, he glanced at it some time admiringly and then tossed it off. Bill, rebuked for his curious glance, had again devoted his attention to the name inscribed on the tombstone.

"Here you are, Bill. I shouldn't be so cross, but it isn't easy to be in good humour under the circumstances. Toss that off; it will warm your bones!"

Without lifting his eyes from the name the speller extended his hand, took up the tumbler, and drank it.

"U-l-i-c," he spelled slowly, tracing with the point of his knife each letter as he with difficulty deciphered it.

"Don't mind Ulic! Fill out a little more drink. I think I hear the wheels ov a car kumin'. It's time he did kum

anyhow," he muttered. "I hope he aint goin' to keep us here all day. Look out, Bill, and see if there's a car kumin' along the lane."

"There aint a d—d one in sight," said Bill, returning.

"D—n the fellow! what's delayin' him? No matter. Taste that. That's good stuff, Bill. Strong, aint it?"

"Ay; it is," said Bill, gulping down the measure with a shiver which partly arose from a recurrence of the ague and partly from the muscular contraction which accompanies the imbibition of strong raw drinks; "chasing away—I can feel it—the shiver down to my toes."

"You're not in as bad fettle now as you wor in?"

"No."

"Your'e a different man altogether—you look it."

"I am."

"Then draw over your seat nearer the fire. I'm sorry we can't draw over the tombstone too, it would be so handy for resting these"—he motioned to the tumbler and the pitcher—"on. But it's as well where it is. Ulic de Burg—if there's any ov him left, will"——

"Stop that!" said Bill, sharply. "Let him rest! Let the dead rest! There's enough things to talk of athout mentionin' him."

"Ay, let him be," interposed Jim, depositing his horn-measure on the floor beside his stone seat. "You're always a-dhrawin' his name up. Always a-dhrawin' it up. What's the good ov it? That's what *I* say. What's the good of it?"

The first speaker, apprehending that he had got on a wrong tack in his conversation, without exactly understanding why, turned his attempt in another direction.

"If you hang that rug across the doorway it'll make us more comfortable."

"I think it will," said Jim, slowly getting up to put the



suggestion into execution, "I feel the cold going through every bone in my body."

"Now, mate," said Bill with a side glance at the first speaker so addressed, "we're all square and comfortable here, don't you think we might as well settle what we came about? What do you want with us?"

"That's the game, Bill," said the man known as Jim. "We can't stay here all day. It would do us no good even if we could. What do you want with us? We have to row back again, for there's no wind out this murky day—confusion to it!"

"Well, boys, don't be in a hurry. The day is long. There's not much good to be done on the sea to-day."

"There's not much good to be done here," broke in Bill discontentedly.

"Not much good!" cried the first speaker, in well-affected surprise. "Not much good—only hear that! Here's fine shelter; here's a firm roof, fine thick walls, a fine rug over the door—not a breath can come in—an' a fine fire. More than that, here's a pitcher—a regular stone pitcher—full of the best whiskey ever made from barley. And yet you, Bill, says, 'Not much good here!' What's outside? Rain—clinging, dreeping, melting, foggy rain. Not much good there, I should think!"

The speaker's words were full of sense and to the point. In proof of their convincingness the two men, having placed their wet knees where the heat of the blazing wood was best likely to fall upon them, addressed themselves to their tumblers.

"Now, Jim and Bill," pursued the speaker, "I told you when we were coming along we should find shelter here. And haven't we found it?"

The answer was, in the face of the roaring fire and the perfume of whiskey around, an easy one enough. Yet

neither of the men spoke. Both looked sulkily at the fire, and then at their empty tumblers.

"Some more?" said the first, noticing the glance. "That's right. It'll do no harm. There's plenty of it here. That's more comfortable than being out in the rain."

"It's comfortable enough; but what are we here for?" broke in the man addressed as Bill, whose growing uneasiness and ill-humour deepened with each measure of whiskey. "We didn't row all the way from Clare Head to sit here by the fire. We could ha' done that at home without wetting ourselves. You tould us you wanted us for something—what is it?"

"See, Bill, don't be uneasy—things are not done in such a hurry as that. I tould you I'd put you in the way of making money, an' I will."

"It's nigh time you tould us how. It's just as well now as at any other time."

"I'm waiting for another party. That's the reason of the delay."

"Another party—you didn't tell us that afore."

"What was the use. Isn't it time enough now? One would think, Bill, you were afraid of the tomb there. But you needn't, my boy. The tomb is empty, and ghosts don't come out in the daylight. Dead men's bones lie quiet."

A movement outside arrested their attention—the noise of car wheels on the sand.

"Remain here, boys, till I come back," said the man addressed as Sam; and, emerging from the door, which he closed carefully after him, he confronted the new arrival.

"I expected you earlier, Mr. Harden."

"It is a long road and a dreadful day. A very long road and a very bad day," said the new comer, flinging the rain from his hat. "I couldn't come sooner. This is the place."

"This is the place. How d'ye like it?"

"I think it will do."

"There's not better on the coast."

"Where's the apartment you spoke of?"

"Inside," pointing to the door which he had just closed.

"Can I see it?"

"Better not. There are some parties there whom I am frightening into aiding me, an' it might be as well they didn't see you!"

"All right. This place will do."

"I am glad you like it. Did you bring the money?"

"I did. Here it is."

"How much is in it?"

"A hundred pounds."

"That 'ill do—for the present."

"You will get the rest when she is safely lodged here."

"Safely lodged here she'll be, and that before very long."

"That's right. There's no need for me to remain longer now?"

"No; it's better not. You can do no good, and you may be seen."

"You're quite right. Good-bye. When do you think it will be?"

"To-morrow night, or the night after; or soon at any rate. You'll know when she is. You'll get word quick enough."

"All right. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye."

The lawyer clomb up again into the trap, dashed and splashed with the miry roads, or rather lanes and ruts that did duty on this bleak Galway coast for roads.

His accomplice, folding the notes and placing them in his pocket, glanced at the vehicle until it was out of sight, shook his head, and proceeded to enter the ruined apartment where he had left his companions.

"I'm not very good myself," said he; "but may the dhou sink my soul to the lowest pit-if I'm not an archangel compared with you, Mr. Harden! Poor Norah!"

With which soliloquy he re-entered the ruin.

"Now, boys, you see this roll of notes"—he produced the packets referred to from his pockets—"these can be earned quite handy—and for no more trouble than you had to-day in rowing from Clare Head."

The men glanced at them greedily, with a movement of their hands—a clutching movement—which he did not fail to notice.

A smile passed over his lips as he did so.

But it quickly vanished, and with it the notes, which he replaced in his pocket.

"The man who instructs me, boys, won't allow me to tell what the nature of the work is until you're sworn. I know myself it's not necessary, because Jim and Bill don't mind a bit of work of the kind. The men who drowned the Englishman at Corrig-na-reade are not likely to be cowed at a small thing like this. But he insists on it."

If a loaded blunderbuss had been presented at the heads of the two men it could not have had a more singular effect than this statement, made in a low confidential manner.

At first it came with a scowl of sudden and desperate temper and malignity, but it quickly subsided into a pallid hue of mingled fear and imploration. But neither spoke, though both moved on their seats.

"He insists on it," pursued the speaker, "and what he wishes must be obeyed. There, now; will you take the oath?"

He opened the roll of notes.

The two men glanced greedily at them, whilst their lips said, "Ay will we."

He pulled out from his pocket a worn, greasy Testament,

and repeated the form of an oath of secrecy, which the men said after him.

They then kissed the book, which he replaced in his pocket.

"There now. That's right. That satisfies all parties. Well, now, you see, after all, it is not much. Stout fellows that thought nothing of scuttling the Englishman's boat unknown to him, and of taking a reward for carrying in the dead body after robbing it, ought to think little of this. There's no foul play—no striking of blows, or anything like that; it's only the taking away of a girl, after all, the bringing her to a safe place of concealment such as this."

"A girl?"

"That's all. You both know her—Norah Desmond."

The men started. Scoundrels as they were, they were quite unprepared for anything wrong in her regard.

"What's a-goin' to be done to her?" said Bill, a savage look of dislike and reluctance darkening on his face.

"This. Norah is a pretty girl, as you know. I'd go farther and say a beautiful girl. Well, there's a young gentleman—I won't say who he is or where he is—that's very fond of her. Also she's fond of him. Nothing more natural than that they should like to come together; nothing more natural than that he should keep the marriage—for that's what it's to be—secret. Therefore, he is going to take her away—somewhere—an' you're to do it!"

"Who is the gentleman?" asked Bill, slowly raising his head for the first time, and looking into his master's face.

"That I'm not at liberty to tell."

"It's Mr. Henry O'Donnell. That's who it is," said the other, bending his eyes again on the fire.

"I won't tell you whether you're right or whether you're wrong. It's enough to say that you're to help me to take her away and bring her here. No harm will come to her—quite the contrary. Plenty of money awaits you for doing

it—as an earnest of which I give you these”—he took some notes from the roll and deposited them on the tombstone—“more than you could ever hope to come by, by fair means or foul. Help me to bring her here. That's all you have got to do. The rewards are yours. Fail to do it, and not all the powers on earth will keep the rope from your necks. The hand of the dead man will force its way above the ground again and cry to Heaven for vengeance!”

The men again started, and simultaneously their right hands moved convulsively.

“It's no use, Bill; and it's no use, Jim,” said the mate quietly, “for two reasons. First, because it's well known that we three are here at this moment, and you couldn't get twenty yards to sea, until you'd be caught, even if you succeeded; and, secondly, because you *couldn't* succeed whilst there are six bullets in the six chambers of this.”

He hammered the butt-end of the revolver on the tombstone with a force which made it jingle.

—“When is it to be, master?”

“Now, that's a question to the point. That's coming to business. As I said to Syl Trevor the night before he was hanged at Galway—he was up for killing his captain—struck him a blow of a hatchet in the back of the head as he was going along the passage to his cabin at night—‘don't be crying and fretting. There's no use in it. Come, to business.’”

To judge by the faces of the two listeners this story came in wholly *inapropos*.

“When is it to be? Well, that I can't well say at present. It all depends. Maybe to-morrow night. Maybe the night after. I can't say. But some night soon. It must be in the night, for she's not to know where she's a-comin' to.”

“I thought you said she was eager to come to meet him?” asked Bill, lifting his eyes to the other's face with a glance of great suspicion.

“An’ so she is,” said the other, with great readiness, although considerably nonplussed by this question. “So she is. But, by course, it wouldn’t be proper or decent for her to pretend to come of her own accord.”

“You’re goin’ to carry her off whether she likes it or not. Isn’t that the way? Why don’t you tell it out openly?” inquired Jim, with truculent bluntness.

“Don’t speak so plain, Jim. It was spakin’ like that in your cups that made it known how the Englishman was drowned and robbed, an’ who planned it,” said Sam, coolly. “Whether she comes by her own accord or no, come she must. If she don’t know what’s good for her, she must be taught. That’s spakin’ plain enough, ain’t it?”

“Ay; that’s more like id,” assented the man.

“And now,” continued Sam, “as we know now what we have got to do, as we are long enough here, and as the gentleman who gave us the money is on his way back to Galway, I think we may take our way to the boat again. It’s a long pull back, an’ there ain’t a breath of wind out this cursed day.”

Finishing their drinks, all three rose up to leave. Sam turned the key in the door, trailed the ivy down over it, and the men passed out through the broken arches and towards the shore.

## CHAPTER XV.

### ESCAPED.

NORAH Desmond was learning to become reconciled to the misfortunes which had crossed her path.

So far as Maurice O'Donnell was concerned, she had heard nothing of him since his departure. What had become of him, where he had gone to, were matters over which she unavailingly reflected many an hour. At times she brightened up with a belief that circumstances might have occurred to prevent his writing, but the facilities for communication all over the world were now so great that that hope, she felt, was sadly delusive.

George was still lying in gaol, awaiting his trial at the coming assizes, and she, save the visits which she paid him whenever she got the chance permission, was therefore sad and desolate enough—wearing her heart out in loneliness.

Her pair of suitors had been dismissed from her thoughts as soon as they were dismissed from her presence, and another solicitor had been entrusted with George's defence.

Misfortunes rarely come alone, and the adage proved true in this case also. Her father's illness grew worse, and kept her thoughts constantly occupied.

"You will want to pay him particular attention to-night, Norah," said the doctor, one evening as he stood at the orchard gate, previous to mounting his horse and bidding her good-bye, "for I notice a great change come over him."

"For the worse?" asked Norah, in sudden affright.

"It may be only a temporary spasm; but it may be serious. At any rate keep close watch on him."



"There is—there is"—asked Norah, with a choking feeling at her heart—"no danger of him? No fear of—of"—

"There may be, Miss Desmond. These changes come and go, and we never can tell. Doctors don't know everything, my dear." This was in answer to a plaintive look of surprise from her. "The mysteries of life and death are not always palpable; and sometimes the life that seems to be threatened mysteriously hides among the tissues and reappears when we least expect it. Similarly it disappears and never comes back. Have you anyone staying with you?"

"Only old Molly."

"You would want someone else. She is not able to stop up long enough, nor to watch closely enough; and *you* cannot remain up constantly. Would you have any objection to a companion?"

"I should be very glad of any assistance I can have; but I have been so seldom out of the house since I came home that I know of no one—of no one at least that I could ask."

"Any objection to my selecting one for you; I know a young girl that would"—

"A young girl—who?" asked Norah, with some surprise, for in selecting a companion, under the circumstances, she imagined it would be a steady, middle-aged nurse?

"I hardly think you remember her. Her name is Sally Doherty. She lived at the cross roads before *you* went away, and before *she* went to Galway.

"I think I remember her. But, doctor, if father is so ill, don't you think that it would be better that we should get an experienced nurse?"

"I don't think so, even if such a one was about here—which she is not. You want companionship yourself as much as *he* does nursing; and one that can supply both is the one especially that you want. You may rely on Sally for both."

“Will she come?”

“She will be glad to render you any assistance she can. You may rely on her as a good, faithful girl, and put every confidence in her. And now, Miss Desmond,” said the doctor, as he mounted the saddle, “I want you to take care of yourself. Fretting will do no good. And the braver and brighter your spirits are, the better it will be for all. I shall be here in the morning early; and, as I am passing, shall desire Sally Doherty to call over.”

So holding out his hand for a farewell, the doctor put spurs to his horse and was off. Norah watched him until his gray head had turned the corner of the orchard and disappeared from sight. Then with a heavy heart she bent her steps towards the cottage door. Notwithstanding the good old doctor's kindness, she felt that her heart was very depressed, and her sorrow and loneliness hard to bear.

“And this is you, Miss Norah! And how grand you look, and how glad I am to see you, and wasn't I glad when Doctor Charles told me just now to come over and stay with you, and wasn't it kind of you to think of me!” was the friendly and affectionate, if somewhat hurried and incoherent, address delivered by a young girl, about her own age, to Norah, in less than an hour after, shaking hands with her and giving her at the same time a hearty kiss, which disarranged a good deal Norah's usually placid way, even if it broke for a time the continuous successions of her griefs.

“It was so kind of you to come, and so thoughtful of the doctor to ask you,” said Norah, delighted at having one so bright and lively beside her.

“Don't mention it, I beg of you,” said the girl, brightly. “I have not been at home these twelve months before, and so I thought I should take a couple of weeks to rest myself. I am, my dear, in the hotel,” said Sally, cheerfully, “and as it

is the dull time, I got leave easily. But amn't I glad to see you, and haven't you grown grand and handsome ?

"I am glad," said Norah, smiling in spite of herself at the high spirits and lively demeanour of her new companion, "that you think so."

"Ah, yes! Wait till I take off my bonnet and things. Yes, my dear, I heard in Galway that you had grown so nice, but I couldn't think, dear me, you so very, very beautiful!"

"In Galway?"

"In Galway, my dear," said Sally. "You can't think what a lot of news one hears in a place like that, where everyone gathers."

"When did you come home?"

"This morning, Norah, dear. I left early. Indeed, I thought the journey would never be over, I was so anxious to get home—little thinking, my dear, that I should have the pleasure of seeing you."

"And is it a pleasure, Sally?"

"The greatest. That is what it is. And now let me see your father. If I am here at all I must make myself useful. Doctor Charles said you got no rest, night or day. That mustn't be," said Sally, in whose bright face, now that her bonnet is off, we recognise the young lady who had been a by no means unconcerned listener to the discussion between the two gentlemen some weeks ago; "you mustn't do that, you know. You must take care of yourself. Now that George has got off, my dear, I don't see"——

"What's that you say, Sally? What do you mean?" asked Norah, quickly. "What's that you said about George?"

Whilst her companion had been running on with her gossip, Norah had been thinking of George, and this somewhat incoherent allusion caught her quick attention.

"Why, my dear, he's got off!"

"Got off! What do you mean?"

"Escaped, my dear. He's out of gaol. I thought you heard of it. Everyone knows it."

"For God's sake explain yourself. What are you speaking of?"

"George got away last night—out of the gaol; and no one knows where he is. Poor fellow! I'm so glad of it."

"Are you quite sure you know what you are speaking of?" asked Norah, laying her hand on the other's shoulder as if, in her surprise, to assure herself that she had heard the words, and that she was not merely dreaming.

"Quite, my dear. All the horsemen in Galway were out scouring the roads looking for him. I wonder you did not hear it before this. But they won't catch him—you may rely on that. They won't catch him. But you are quite faint, my dear!"

Norah had indeed grown quite faint. She felt her strength leave her, and rested herself on the window seat.

"There—take this glass of water; bathe your lips in it. You'll be all right in a minute. I'm sorry I told you, Norah, dear."

"Is it true?" Norah's quivering lips were barely able to enunciate the question.

"Of course it's true. D'ye think I'd tell it to you if it wasn't."

"But how did it happen? How did it come about, Sally?"

"Oh, sorra a one knows. Some friendly hand in the gaol must have helped him; but anyhow he's out, and I hope they'll never catch him—and I'm sure they won't."

"Their horsemen were looking for him, Sally?" asked Norah, in great bewilderment.

"Everywhere. There wasn't a road or a house about Galway that wasn't searched for him."

“He’ll come here to-night, Sally. With the blessing of God he’ll come here to-night.”

“Faix he won’t, Miss Norah—if he has sense; an’ I’m sure he has.”

“Why?” asked Norah.

“Because, Miss Norah, dear, he knows very well, and so does everybody, that it’s this place will be watched most closely for him. He daren’t come here, of all places in the world.”

“Where can he hide?”

“Oh, plenty of places—anywhere but here. He has lots of friends.”

“But he cannot always remain in hiding like that, Sally, if he really has escaped—which I find it hard to believe.”

“Hard or not—it’s the case.”

“But what use is his liberty, Sally, if he cannot come home—if he cannot see his father or me. What can he do with himself?”

“Ah! don’t bother your head about that, Miss Norah, honey,” said Sally soothingly, “God is good. One trouble is enough at a time. Don’t be thinking of the future or what’s to come. Everything will come right, never fear. An’ isn’t it grand to think that the poor fellow is out of their cold stone gaol an’ at the back of their bolts and locks, instead of inside. Isn’t it pleasant to know, wherever he is, that he has a friend to talk to, instead of sittin’ silent and alone in Galway gaol.”

Their conversation was interrupted by the call of the old housekeeper.

Mr. Desmond had grown rapidly worse; grew worse still during the night; worst of all towards dawn; until when the day-beams broke over Glenheath, Norah had learned what it was to be alone on earth—to be fatherless and motherless!

Death had entered the house, and had added another to the heavy sorrows that hung over her heart.

In a sort of stupor—a dulling of the senses which prevented her realising the loss she had sustained or the grief that had fallen on her—Norah passed the next few days. A vague belief that George would turn up, would come to her assistance, to her comfort, possessed her; but the hours and the days passed and he came not.

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE ABDUCTION.

THE funeral over, Norah was seated, when night had long fallen, in the parlour, resting her wearied limbs, but finding no rest for the aching loneliness and sense of loss that pervaded her. Her brain felt as if it were seared with hot iron, and grief seemed to have burned up the tears whose flow would have given relief. She had taken up the prayer-book, and with the light of the lamp sought to distract her thoughts by reading it. But she was unable to give attention to this; and so, even interspersed with it, and mingling with the ideas it contained, came thoughts of the hunted fugitive wandering, one knew not whither, and of the empty arm chair which should never see its occupant again. The desolation of utter loneliness was around her; and for the present there seemed to be no comfort this side of the grave. Even religion had almost lost its power to give solace.

“See, Miss Norah,” said Sally, who had been settling things to rights, with her usually quick and tidy habits, in the kitchen, coming in and laying her hand on her shoulder, “there’s no use in fretting, and I think you ought to go to

bed. Old Molly, poor thing, is fast asleep, and you ought to be so too. I can remain up."

"I can get rest nowhere, Sally," said Norah, mournfully; "I cannot sleep."

"Oh, but you can if you try," urged Sally.

"I am better up. I do not feel so utterly lonely when sitting here. It is early yet, and the night is so long!"

"Well, then, I shall settle a place for you on the sofa, where you can rest yourself," said Sally, perseveringly. "And I shall remain to keep you company if you like, or to watch beside you if you go asleep—which I wish you would do, for you are tired and worn out by want of rest. You will fall ill yourself if you do not take care; and then look at the condition everything would be in here, with nobody at all to take care of it."

"I wish I could take your advice, but I feel it impossible," said Norah, weariedly.

"You can just try at any rate," said Sally. "Do your best, dear. And who knows how soon good news may come?"

"From where could it come, Sally?"

"From many a place," said Sally, cheerfully. "From any place—from every place. It's far away what God sends, you know. It's God's will that people should die—we must all die—and it's best for the living to live for one another and in hope. Who knows how soon we might hear from George?"

"I am afraid there's no use in hoping for that. If he could come he would have been here for the funeral. But he is gone away—and I hope he is for his own sake. Coming here would only place him in gaol again. They are searching for him everywhere."

"No matter for that, I don't doubt but he will be able to find a way to come. The friends that helped him to get free will help him in other things."

“If he could have come at all, he would have endeavoured to come to the funeral. He would have tried to see his father before the grave closed over him.”

“He might not have heard of it, Norah, dear, and even if he did, that, as you know, would be the most dangerous thing he could do, and at the most dangerous time. But you may depend upon it, he will turn up—when you least expect him. No matter how long he keeps a-hiding, he won't go away without seeing you. Indeed he won't, my dear.”

“I hope you may be right, Sally—though I should much prefer now thinking that he was safe far away than lingering around here still in danger.”

“Trust him to keep out of danger. And now,” said Sally, secretly gratified to see her young mistress's mind by degrees turning from its sorrows, “what do you think you will do yourself? Will you stay here or what?”

“I don't think I shall remain here. There is nothing to keep me here,” said Norah—to whom, indeed, the query had presented itself.

“And where would you think of going?”

“To France again, Sally—to Paris—to the convent. I am sure they would be glad to see me there again.”

“I am sure they would,” said the girl, confidently, and with an admiring glance at the winsome features of her mistress, which in their sorrow and weariness and want of rest seemed spiritualised into the softened splendour of an angel's loveliness. “I am sure they would. They wouldn't have many like you there. I wish I could go with you.”

“You will have pleasanter times at home in Ireland among your friends, Sally. You are differently situated from me. I know of no one. I am friendless and alone, and the convent walls, that would be a living death to you—cutting you off from home and kindred—will be a sweet heaven of peace and contentment to”——



She was about to say the word "me," but was interrupted by the sudden standing up of her companion with her finger on her lips and in a listening attitude.

"What is it, Sally?" asked Norah, in sudden alarm.

"There is someone about the house," whispered Sally. "I hear someone hustling about. Hush!"

"I don't hear anything," said Norah, after a pause, in which she strained her ears to catch some sounds, but in vain.

"I do," said her companions softly. "There's a step coming by the window. It's at the door now. It's George. I'll engage it is!"

"Perhaps it is," said Norah, faintly, her heart throbbing violently.

"There's a knock at the door," said Sally, in a tremor of excitement. "Do you hear it?"

"I do."

"It's George! I am sure it is! Shall I open it?"

"In the name of God," faintly whispered Norah, in whom a cold trembling begotten of joy and fear set in, scarcely permitting her to say so much, "do."

The girl glided noiselessly to the door, softly withdrew the bolt, and opened it.

But, instead of the well-known and welcome figure that she expected to present itself, a tall figure in a slouch hat and over-coat—the collar of which, turned over his neck and face, partially concealed the *face*—stood in the gloom of the doorway. A cry of surprise and disappointment rose to her lips, but was as suddenly checked as the danger of alarming her young mistress occurred to her.

The cloaked figure at once allayed her fears by placing his hand on her shoulder, at the same time placing his lips to her ear, and whispering the word "George."

The touch of his hand indicating that he wished her to

come further with him, Sally, with great eagerness, walked by his side into the darkness.

"Do you come from George?" she asked.

"I do."

"Where is he?"

"I can't tell you that. I can only tell his sister. But it is by the sea."

"How is he?"

"Well, and eager to see her."

"How delighted she will be! Shall I tell her?"

"Do. Tell her to wrap herself well up, and come with me as soon as she can."

"What name shall I say? She will like to know your name."

"She wouldn't know me if I told. She has never seen me before."

"Do I know you? Your voice seems familiar to me."

"No—you don't know me. You have never seen me either."

"I thought I knew your voice."

"You do not. And," said the stranger, rather impatiently, as it struck Sally, "we are losing time, and every minute is of importance. He is waiting to see her, and cannot delay."

"I'll tell her," joyfully responded the girl, as she made a movement to rush in with the news.

"Tell her to get ready at once—to wrap herself well up. The night is cold, and the mists on the sea are thick and heavy. Be quick!"

"We won't be five minutes."

"But *you* are not coming!" said the stranger, with a strain of surprise and annoyance in his voice.

"Why not?" asked the girl, turning with answering surprise, on her heel.

"Because you cannot. She must come by herself. It is too dangerous for anyone else to come. It might attract attention."

"I'll tell her," said Sally, disappointedly, as she disappeared within the door.

"What is it? Who is it?" asked Norah, to whom the short space of Sally's absence seemed like years.

"It's a strange man, Miss Norah," whispered Sally, breathlessly, "and he says he's come from George"—

"From George?"

"From George," pursued the girl, hurriedly, "who is waiting by the shore. And he says you must dress yourself, wrap yourself up, and go at once—that every moment is important."

"What sort of a man is he?"

"He wears a slouch hat like a fisherman, and an overcoat buttoned around him. But I couldn't see his face—or much of it."

"What did he say about George?"

"That he's well. That he sent him for you in a hurry."

"Thank God! Oh, Sally, isn't God good to send us such news!"

"Yes, Miss Norah; you'll see him, if you hurry, in a quarter of an hour or so."

"I am hardly able to stand with the fright and the excitement. We must strengthen ourselves and get ready."

"Oh, *me!* I'm not to go."

"You're not to come?" Norah asked in great surprise; "why not?"

"That's what I asked him myself, but he said it would be dangerous. You must go alone. George wishes it."

"Very well. He knows best, poor fellow. Make haste, Sally, and get my cloak. Won't the man come in while I am getting ready?"

"No, miss; he won't come in."

"Perhaps he is afraid of being known, and so might lead to George's detection."

"So he is, miss; and he must be a good fellow to befriend him so well. So hurry, miss; every minit might be worth an hour in a time like this.

"There! I'm ready, Sally."

"Keep your heart, up, Miss Norah, dear, and don't be afraid."

"Why should I be afraid, Sally? George would walk farther than this for my sake."

"To be sure he would; and 'tis not a quarter of an hour's walk."

"It's a dark night—but so much the better for him. Poor boy! I wonder how ne looks!"

"He'll look better when he's after seeing you, an' that'll be very soon, please God. There now, God bless you! and bring your feet safe to him. Keep a stout neart, and I'll go to meet you coming back."

With much parting injunction, Sally saw her young mistress leave the doorway, and cross over to the stranger who awaited her.

"You come from George?" she whispered, fearful of mentioning the name, as if the trees standing around, rustling in the breeze, might breathe forth the secret.

"I do. Don't speak—or whisper even. Walk quickly with me.

Sally was near enough to hear the question and answer. The latter seemed to her more gruffly rendered than was consistent with the position of the messenger, or of the gentle delicacy of the fair charge that was committing herself to his keeping.

"He's a brute," was Sally's indignant remark, as she fastened the door, and retired into the glow of the lamp, whose bright light was in cheerful contrast with the black darkness

outside. "But these fishermen are all rough, and it's a pity to see Norah having to depend on them for"—

Curiously enough, Sally's muttered soliloquy was broken off, as if it occurred to her, quite suddenly, "What a dangerous thing it was for Norah to go out on such a night with a totally unknown stranger!"

But the thought was so uncomfortable and disconcerting, and so unworthy a one, that she banished it at once from her head. Nevertheless, a sense of alarm had crept into her heart and remained there, as her imagination followed the slight, graceful form of the young girl through the rough ways, and shrubby paths, and dark night, to where the waves of the Atlantic surged upon the complaining shore.

Indeed, what with the loneliness and nervous noiselessness of the place—wherein the rustle of her own dress seemed to create discordant echoes, and an occasional fluttering of the flame of the lamp to cause curious sounds—her fears in spite of herself grew so great that, seizing the prayer-book which Norah had been using, she flew hurriedly to the shelter of the room wherein the housekeeper, after the troubles and upsetting and non-rest of the past few days, was asleep.

The more comfort she was in herself the greater pity and sympathy she felt for the gentle girl who, amid all her troubles, had to plod her rough way through the night. In truth, so strong was her feeling of commiseration that she followed in earnest imagination the path of the nightfarer step by step along the way from the orchard gate to the sea.

She was present in volition with her when she met her brother. - She was witness to the cry of love and affection and sorrow that burst from Norah as she threw herself into the hunted fugitive's arms. Annihilating time and space, her eyes went out through the darkness of the night, until she saw, in the fervour of her imagination, the scene around—the white crests of the waves as they broke on the sand; the boat rock-

ing to and fro in unison with the ebbing waters ; the shrouded boatmen sitting silently therein ; the oars resting across their knees or lying horizontally in the rowlocks ; whilst rapped up in the semi-opaque mist the two talked of their recent sorrow, of their present difficulties, or of the troublesome and uncertain future. Equally present was she in spirit when they parted ; and the cry of loneliness and affliction, as Norah unwound her arms from him, arose on the shrouding mists of the night plainly enough in her ears !

So clearly, indeed, so thrillingly, so agonisingly it came, that Sally stood to her feet in dire affright—only to find that she had been dreaming !

Tired nature asserted itself ; and, whilst her uneasy thoughts went forth to the night, sleep had unconsciously settled over her frame, and, loosing the controlling power of her will, had given the errant brain free scope.

For some time after she woke, she was unable to tell whether the cry existed only in her imagination, or whether it had really resounded in her ears.

There was a feeling of actuality about her that seemed to indicate that the cry had really broken in on her sleep, and awoke her. But, on the other hand, it was far too long to the seashore for a girl's voice to be heard. She must, therefore, have dreamt it.

She looked to the clock. It pointed to half-past eleven. But an hour had elapsed since Norah had gone ; it was too soon to expect her back yet. Nevertheless, Sally went to the door, opened it, and looked out. Nothing met her eyes but darkness—black darkness, that seemed piled up in a solid wall before—darkness that might be cloven with a knife or a hatchet as the case might be—which arose, indeed, as much from the fact that she had been sleeping in the full glare of the lamp, and had presently come from its effulgence, as from the darkness of the night. In country *parlance*, “the light

was in her eyes," and the blackness lifted up before her was as impenetrable to her gaze as a wall of pitch!

For otherwise she might have seen a form standing within a few feet of her. But she did not.

"God help her, the poor thing! It is an awfully dark night for her to be out. I wish she was safe back."

With which muttered soliloquy Sally closed the door, bolted it, placed a light in the window to guide the wayfarer's footsteps, and retired to the housekeeper's room once more.

The latter was quietly asleep. The room was in profound silence, not even the breathing of the sleeper disturbing its perfect repose. In the unbroken noiselessness—in which the beating of her own heart or the rustle of her own dress alone disturbed the silence—the minutes seemed to march with leaden footsteps. Every second seemed longer than hours at other times, and she marvelled at the interval—at the long interval—which occurred between one tick of the slow-moving pendulum and the next.

With a sensitive young girl these feelings and fears were likely to develop rapidly into hysteria; and to banish the hold which they were rapidly gaining on her, she took up once more the prayer-book, and steadily sought to concentrate her attention thereon, to the exclusion of all other things. And to do this more effectually she commenced to say the Litany half aloud, which seemed to give her company.

She awoke with a start, as the prayer-book, dropping out of her hands, fell on the table! Again her weariness had overcome her, and, as the muttered responses died on her lips, her eyes had closed.

Glancing again at the clock, she found its hands pointed to the hour of midnight.

"I wonder could Norah have come while I was asleep? How unfortunate I should have fallen off again! Good God! to think that it is midnight, and the poor girl not back yet!

Oh! there's a knocking at the door! It is she. Thank God!"

There was a faint tapping at the door unmistakably. At one time it touched the unshuttered window where the guiding light glimmered; and at another the door, firmly barred and bolted.

Waiting but to hear a repetition of the knock, and to make sure that this time there was no mistake, Sally turned into the kitchen, withdrew the bolt, and opened the door. She was about to throw her arms around the wandering form, and to bestow a kiss upon her in earnest of her delight and congratulation that she had returned, when she suddenly started back!

The words of congratulation died on her lips, and the blood rushed back with freezing horror on her heart! For it was not the gentle form of Norah that stepped forward, but the muffled figure of a man.

"Don't cry—don't scream," said the figure, hurriedly. "It is I—George!"

This at any other time reassuring statement only caused the girl to feel the shock of a new terror.

"Put out that lamp in the window. It attracts too much notice outside—if there was anyone but myself to notice it. Allow me to close the door. Where is Norah? Call Norah. Tell her I want to see her hurriedly."

"Norah!" said Sally, in faint dismay and with a strong tendency in her throat to choke. "Didn't she come back with you?"

"Aren't you Sally Doherty? Yes; I thought I knew you, though I have not seen you for a long time. Well, surely you must remember me—my face," said the stranger, pulling away his muffler and taking off the slouch hat that concealed his face. "Don't you know me—George?"

He thought that her answer was given evasively, because of



some doubts she had as to his identity, and he wanted to reassure her.

“Don’t you know me—George?”

He had to ask the question again, before the girl was able to say, “I do.”

“Then tell Norah, like a good girl, I want to see her—hurriedly. Or perhaps I’d better go myself,” making a quick motion towards his sister’s room.

“Norah isn’t here,” almost shrieked Sally.

“Norah not here! Where is she!” asked her brother, staying his hasty footsteps and turning sharply round.

“She went to meet you more than two hours ago.”

“To meet *me*?”

“And hasn’t come back. I thought she’d have come back with you.”

“To meet *me*! You must be dreaming, girl. How could Norah know where to meet *me*?”

“The messenger told her.”

“The messenger—what messenger?”

“That you sent.”

“That I sent? This is growing perfectly maddening! I sent no one. How should I send any one?”

“I don’t know,” said Sally, stirred into activity by the life and vigour of her impetuous questioner; “but—a messenger came here for her, who said he was sent by you to bring her. That was about half-past ten o’clock. He said that you were waiting for her on the strand.”

The youth looked at her in the blankest amazement, and as if he failed to catch the import of her words. He merely nodded to her, as she ceased speaking, to go on.

“She went and—she has not come back. Did you not send for her?”

“No.”

“Told no messenger to come for her?”

"No. No one."

"Oh! my God!" cried the girl, in a scream of agony, "where can she have gone? What can have happened her?"

"Where is Molly?" asked the youth, hurriedly.

"Asleep—she was so worn and tired that"——

"Does she know of Norah's absence?"

"No; we did not waken her!"

"And she went out alone on such a night as this! Who was the messenger? Did you know him?"

"No."

"Did Norah?"

"I think not."

"The bead-drops stood out thickly on his forehead, and as he dashed them away with his hand, the blow of the latter on his temples, given in the force of his excited feelings and of his rising wrath, seemed as if it were struck against marble.

"Call Molly! Tell her I want her at once in the parlour. Hurry! I shall get into a fit if I am kept long waiting."

He passed up into the parlour, while Sally flew with bewildered brain to the housekeeper's room and woke her up quickly.

"George is here," she said hurriedly. "Throw on some things and come down."

"George!"

"Yes, yes; don't lose a minit, but come. He cannot wait."

Molly hastily dressed and rushed into the parlour.

"Oh, George!—George! Have you come back? You're welcome home, asthor! and it's sorry I am that"——

"Do you know where Norah is, Molly?" he said, impatiently breaking in on her welcoming address.

"Norah! Isn't she here?"

"It seems not," said he, in a burst of anger. "It's a curious question to ask *me*, after some months' absence, and coming home a hunted fugitive as I do."

"Where is Norah, Sally?" said the alarmed housekeeper.

The weeping girl explained in a few words what she had already told, and with which the reader is acquainted.

"Merciful Providence!" said the alarmed and astonished housekeeper, "what can be the meaning of this? How long is she gone?"

"Nearly two hours now."

A sudden silence fell on all—a silence begotten of wonderment and terror.

"I shall go down to the strand," said George, breaking the silence. "I may meet her on her way back, or there. Or she may be here before I return myself. Keep the lamp burning in the window to guide her. I feel as if I were losing my senses. It's odd news, and a strange welcoming, on my return home."

He flung himself out of the parlour, unbolted the door, and stepped hastily into the night. Down by the orchard where the gaunt and leafless trees waved their ghost-like arms above him; by the ruined abbey where the dead of countless centuries slept. There were times, and not very long ago, when George, though not very easily frightened, would have felt a shudder pass over him at the idea of walking through these mouldered tombstones in the dark hour of midnight and would have made a long detour to avoid it. But in his terror and uneasiness for his sister all other fears vanished; and it would not have stayed him though jabbering and fleshless ghosts sprang up from every ancient grave he passed. In the one all-powerful and overmastering reign of mental fear for his sister's safety, all other considerations were swallowed up and lost.

"What has become of Norah? Who had come on that foundationless errand? What motive lay underneath it?"

These were questions that he put to himself again and again, until he got so completely confused that he found it

impossible to realise that she was gone, and almost equally impossible to realise that he was not dreaming, or subject to one of his many prison-hallucinations—so strange, unaccountable, and inexplicable were all his surroundings.

But he was not dreaming. The night-clouds were above him, with an odd rift between, through which a glimmering, half-hidden star could be seen, with the white mists driving rapidly past them; the mossy sod was under his feet, and the ceaseless beat and surge and moan of the ocean on the not distant shore was in his ears.

No; he was *not* dreaming. The pain of fear and surprise in his heart and brain was real, not imaginary: the greater the reason for speed on his part—the greater the necessity for allaying or satisfying the terrors that were gathering over him.

Could Norah be even now making her way back through the darkness, possibly parallel to his path—possibly terrified by his hurrying figure, and hiding?

It might be—nothing more likely.

So he said to himself, comforting himself. But, indeed, there was a foundation of alarm at his heart, which he felt—despite of his comforting words—was built upon a sure basis of certain danger. As a drowning man clutches at straws, so he caught at the idea, however, and despising all considerations of self or of his own danger—indeed, never even thinking of them—he cried aloud through the night:

“Norah! Norah! Are you near? It is George calls! Do you hear me? If you do, answer—and fear not!”

He paused awhile; but the air, for a time sonorous with his voice—with dull, heavy, stupid echoes thereof, that the rocks and trees gave back to him on the silence of the night—grew still; and there was no answering voice to his. He continued his course, hurrying his steps—stopping now and then to give the same calls, and to hear the same voiceless noises in response—until he reached the shore. There he

descended by the well-known pathway to where was the scene of his first and unwitting misfortune some months before—so many weary months indeed that, as the memory of it broke like a flash of electric light on his brain, it seemed to him as if it had happened many, many years ago.

But there was no one there.

The never-ending, never-tiring, wash and roll of the sea against the rocks or against the current of the little stream that debouched through the ravine into it, or the cry of the seagull sweeping past, was the only sound. No light was visible.

He called again :—

“Norah! Norah! It is I, George—your brother. If you are within hearing answer me! For God’s sake, answer me!”

There was no reply. Not even the echoes this time responded; or, if they did, the surge of the wave drowned them out.

It was clear she was not there. If she were she would have replied. It was clear there was no one there. If there were, someone would have answered.

The white, soft strand lay to the left; to the right nothing but precipitous rocks. She might be on the former. She might be there, he thought. He did not stop to ask himself why she should be there. There was not, Heaven knew, in the wide world a more unlikely place where a girl such as Norah was could be found past midnight of a winter’s night!—hardly more so if the wide civilised globe were searched. But, in his anxiety and desperation, he took no thought of this. She must of necessity be somewhere, and there as well as elsewhere.

He ran along the soft and level sands for a mile or so, until the projecting rocks cut off further progress.

She was nowhere to be seen.

Bathed in the perspiration created partly by exercise, but

much more by excitement, and quite as wet as if he had been drawn through the sea, he retraced his steps.

As there had been no one as he went along, so there was no one on his return. The seagulls, as if wondering at his presence there, swooped past him, almost lashing his sou'-wester with their wings, and croaked ominously into his ears as they swept by. Similarly the night birds, perched on the sands, disturbed by his hasty footsteps, flew up, striking against him, and seeming to him as if it were the sudden grasp of someone's hand seeking for aid and help!

"She has arrived home. I am disturbing myself unnecessarily. These ridiculous fears arise from my long solitude in gaol. I am nervous and easily excited through weakness and long confinement. I shall return to the cottage!"

He climbed the hill he had descended but a short time before. He would have had some difficulty in climbing it in the daylight so quickly; but now his excitement lent a degree of surefootedness to his steps, and he found the obscure path as if by instinct.

As he reached the summit, the noise of oars below and the indistinct murmur of voices sounded on his ears. He turned eagerly to listen; but at the moment and in the sudden abstraction of thought, his foot failed him; he trod upon air; and a sense of falling, falling, falling, as if he were never to come to solid ground again, was present to his otherwise reeling senses!

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE MONITOR.

MAURICE O'DONNELL did not think he had been a quarter of an hour asleep in the *Minnesota*—but had really been several—when a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a heavy shake awoke him.

“Maurice!—Maurice! Waken! Waken, I say! The enemy are coming! Come on deck! Waken, man!”

It was Charlie who spoke. Maurice with difficulty awoke. But the next moment he was thoroughly awake, as the bugler piped to quarters, and the gunners hurried from all directions to their positions.

The tread of many feet on deck; the creaking of the heavy guns as they were hauled into position; the clanking of the rifles as the sharp-shooters stretched themselves at the loopholes in the bulwarks or in the embrasures beside the guns; the cries of the officers appointed to the various commands, and the brass notes of the bugler as he called the men to quarters, to clear the decks for action, or to train their guns, made it appear a scene of the wildest confusion.

But he had scarcely reached the deck when all these sounds had ceased—every motion was suspended, and the greatest order and quietude reigned.

O'Donnell's eye took in the position with a glance. The *Minnesota* was still aground. Two tug-boats were made fast to her side with steam up to tow her off if she showed signs of easing, and also to interpose between her and the guns or ram of her dangerous enemy.

“What's up, Charlie?” cried Maurice, as he came breathlessly on deck.

"See!"

The midshipman stretched out his hand seawards. His friend's eye followed, sweeping the horizon in every direction.

"Not that way, Maurice—but there! Look!—Lie down! For heaven's sake, lie down!"

O'Donnell had been looking so earnestly in the direction pointed out that his companion's voice fell but indifferently on his ears. All at once his gaze, having drawn in nearer, beheld within a distance of some hundred yards the strange vessel of the day before—so plainly and so near, indeed, that his feeling was one of surprise that he had not seen it at once. This feeling gave way to one of danger as the white puffs gushed from the port-holes in her floating roof and a shower of grape swept the deck of the vessel—fortunately, without harming him.

Steadman leaped to his feet immediately.

"Not touched?" he said, anxiously looking at his friend.

"No."

The danger had passed before Maurice had more than conceived its possibility, so that he was able to answer quite coolly and unconcernedly.

"What a thorough soldier you are!" said the midshipman, admiringly. "There is her answer!" he added, as the *Minnesota*, from all her broadside guns, poured a volley of roundshot upon the *Merrimac*. But they might as well have been fired at the side of a granite cliff for any effect they took. "There is a volley that would have sunk the largest vessel afloat, and see how they glance harmlessly off her. It must have been the devil invented her."

"There is not the slightest use in firing at her," said Maurice. "But what is that strange thing steaming towards us?"

He pointed as he spoke to a small vessel—if vessel it could be called, but which really looked like an enormous black



cheese placed on a floating raft—that was steaming slowly towards the stranger.

“It was that I called you up to see.”

“What is it?”

“Heaven alone knows. It is some sort of vessel our friends have invented in the North.”

“What is it for?”

“For fighting—what else?”

“You are not joking?”

“This is hardly a time for jesting, Maurice, with the invulnerable flinging its iron hail around us.”

“For heaven’s sake!” cried O’Donnell, impatiently, “explain it to me. What does it mean? Who commands her?”

“Lorrimer.”

“Lorrimer?”

“Yes; do you see that thing like a cheese?”

“Yes!—yes!”

“That contains a gun of tremendous power, and revolves. It is a turret. And see! the enemy seem as much astonished as yourself. They have ceased firing; they are wondering what she is and what she is about. How gallantly she bears herself! There goes her first gun. Bravo, little *Monitor*! If ever there was a friend in need you are one!”

It was indeed perfectly apparent that their terrible enemy of the day before recognised with some surprise, if not alarm, the curious machine that was bearing down upon them, for their guns ceased firing and the last broadside of the *Minnesota* remained unreplyed to. Suddenly a puff of smoke arose from the cheese-like structure, and a heavy boom came with tumultuous force across the water—showing by its great volume of sound a heavier gun than they had yet been accustomed to.

“Hurrah!” shouted the midshipman, as, with glass in hand, he watched the effect of the shot. “She has smashed

to pieces the muzzle of the stern gun and closed the port-hole! Hurrah! a dozen such shots and we are safe!"

A cheer of rejoicing and exultation burst from the eager faces that swarmed on the quarter-deck and that lined the bulwarks watching the result of the singular fight. The sense of relief—of help—of succour—that had come, filled all hearts with enthusiasm. Instinctively every one seemed to feel that the stranger had met an enemy worthy of his steel. From the captain on the bridge to the humblest seaman, a cheer of frantic delight went up! In the pause that succeeded the crash of the *Monitor's* gun, the outburst of excited lungs must have been heard by the astonished men on board the enemy.

If so, it must have moved them to anger and a sense of retaliation. For, after a short space of time, their guns were depressed, and a broadside was poured—this time not on the timbers of the *Minnesota*, but on the iron deck of the *Monitor*. Their turn for discomfiture, however, had now come. The balls had no effect on the heavily iron-plated deck of the latter; equally unavailing were they against the massive turret, from whose rounded sides they slipped and glided more than rebounded.

A second cheer, more excited and enthusiastic if possible than the first, again rose up from the *Minnesota*! The officers waved their caps, while the sailors in their fervour leaped upon their guns, and, steadying themselves with the rammers, danced in frantic rejoicing! Others, abandoning their positions, ran up such portions of the rigging as remained, to get a better view. Nor was the fervour lessened when the big gun of the *Monitor* again spoke, this time striking the iron roof, between the midmost guns, starting and bending the iron plates, and so closing up the port-holes as to render these guns unworkable! From this time forward it was clear that the power of the *Merrimac* to do harm was paralysed. Gun after gun from the

*Monitor* at slow intervals hammered at her plating ; responded to on her part by whole broadsides on the little turreted ship, but ineffectually. Tired of this useless pummelling, they commenced to manœuvre for the better position, the *Monitor* seeking to send her bullets into the already damaged roof of the *Merrimac*, the latter to get one of her bolts squarely into the port-hole of the turret. The former, however, being so much smaller and thus more easily handled, had the advantage ; and shot after shot, like the blows on a beaten prize-fighter's face, was poured on the already shaken armour of the *Merrimac*.

In this manœuvring the *Merrimac* grounded.

A laughing cheer from the *Minnesota* hailed this misfortune on the part of their worsted enemy. The bugle piped to action ; the gunners leaped from their vantage points of view and clustered to their guns ; the officers flew to their commands ; and whilst the *Merrimac* put on all steam to force herself off, the *Minnesota* sent broadside after broadside at her, many of the shot striking her, or throwing up tons of spray around her.

"Come with me, Maurice. I want to see how the magazine stands," said the midshipman, racing down the companion ladder. "We are using ammunition pretty freely."

O'Donnell followed him.

"This way—this way. Here you are!" The middy had sped, followed by his friend, into the captain's room. "The fight is over. I am really exhausted. I have eaten nothing these two days. There ought to be some brandy in this locker. So there is! never more wanted than now! Hold that glass. There—take it off, man! That's right. Now for myself! One toast, Maurice, if the world were falling: Here's to the *Monitor*! Good luck to her. She has saved the honour of the American navy."

"So that's the surprise the General had in store for us?" said Maurice.

“And Lorrimer; I told you he knew what he was about.”

“He had a right to be confident.”

“He had, of course.”

“When did she come—this *Monitor*?”

“As if an angel sent her, last night at ten o'clock. Anchored off Fortress Monroe on her trial trip—how the ship trembles with these tremendous broadsides—on her trial trip, mind you! Heard the ravages that confounded *Merrimac* was doing, and promptly determined to stop her; which Lorrimer—gallant fellow, though a trifle high-handed—has done. Once more, if the sky were falling, here's to”——

It did indeed seem as if the sky were falling, or some other tremendous catastrophe had happened.

For whilst he was placing the glass a second time to his mouth the muttered toast died on his lips; the prow of the ship seemed to open; massive beams were torn into match-wood; all the rooms surrounding the captain's cabin were torn into one; a blinding flash of light, and a quick, sharp, deafening report followed, and, whilst yet Maurice stood dazed, the ship was afire!

“What has happened, Charlie?” was O'Donnell's astonished query as soon as he was able to draw breath.

“What has happened? A shell has pierced us—and burst!” was the reply, not from the midshipman, but from a sailor who was rushing past to stay the conflagration. “And from that darned *Merrimac*, too!”

It was too true, as he afterwards learned. The *Merrimac* having got off, and, seeing the uselessness of its attacks upon her formidable little foe, had trained such of her guns as were workable on the more vulnerable hull of the *Minnesota*, and a shell from her rifled bow-gun had pierced the prow of that vessel, doing great damage.

“Ship afire!” was piped, and in a few seconds the place was alive with seamen, the hose laid on, the engines set going

and vigorous efforts were being made for the extinguishment of the fire.

"Charlie—why don't you speak, Charlie? What's amiss with you?" cried Maurice, as, turning to address his companion, when his attention had sufficiently recovered itself, he perceived him lying against a broken beam.

"I am hit, Maurice."

His face was pale, and he appeared to be in great agony. There was a contraction of the muscles on his forehead that caused it to lose its usual fairness and smoothness and to look like that of an old man; and a twitching of his lips that showed his pain unmistakably.

"Hit!—where?"

He lifted the hand which was pressed against his side and a gush of blood burst forth.

"Maurice, I'm getting faint. That bursting shell did it. Let me rest. Lay me down!"

Telling one of the men, busy in extinguishing the flames, to hasten for the doctor, Maurice O'Donnell aided his friend to a position of rest. The doctor soon arrived, for although his hands were busy at work elsewhere, the grape of the ironclad having done mischief on deck, the young midshipman was too great a favourite to permit of delay on such an occasion. Quickly cutting off his jacket and underclothing, he reached the seat of the wound. A splinter of the shell had grazed his side, tearing skin and flesh, and severing an artery from which the blood issued profusely.

"Is it dangerous?" inquired Maurice, as he noticed the glassiness of the young fellow's eye and the pallor of his face.

"Not now. It may become so. This place is too hot and too dangerous. We must have him removed to the stern. I shall staunch his wound temporarily."

With some difficulty, for the case required care, the wounded

youth was removed from his place. But long before they had laid him down in the newer position he had fainted.

"Better see the captain, and tell him I want him," said the surgeon.

Maurice did not need to be told twice. He clambered speedily on deck. The captain, surrounded by his officers, was looking with great intentness down the river. As it was impossible, he felt, to disturb him or to accost him at present, so thoroughly was his attention fixed on what was going on, Maurice turned his gaze in that direction also. And a singular sight met his view.

The ironclad, by the united action of the gunboats, had got off the shoal in which she had been aground, and, finding that her guns had no effect on the redoubtable little *Monitor*, delivered a parting broadside on the more vulnerable sides of the *Minnesota*—one of the shells going right through the prow with what results we have seen—and then steamed down the bay. The *Monitor*—looking in the distance more like a cheese box than ever—followed after, occasionally discharging a bolt from her one gun at the retreating ironclad. Suddenly the latter halted, put her helm a-port, steered round, and putting on double steam, came straight for the *Monitor*.

It was a moment of great excitement.

"She is going to ram the *Monitor*, by Jove!" cried the captain, suddenly.

"That tremendous beak of hers," said the lieutenant, with keen remembrance of its terrible effect on the *Cumberland*, "will split her in two."

"More likely it will drive her under and sink her," said another officer, between his teeth.

"I shouldn't be surprised at either," said the captain, still with his eye fixed to the glass. "She is putting on treble steam!"

"What a speed she comes at. She would tear through

an iron cliff with that weight and velocity. See! there she comes, straight for her side. Good heavens!"

It was an anxious moment.

And as the *Merrimac*, with ever-increasing speed, clove the waters on her way to her foe, there were more than one of the officers who calculated what the effect would be if her designs proved successful. If the *Monitor* were disabled or sunk, two hours or less of the *Merrimac's* guns would leave the *Minnesota* a battered, stranded hulk, or set her afire or blow her up. Few would leave her alive unless she surrendered, and that they knew well enough their captain would not do. He would see every shot in his locker expended first, and every timber in her frame blown sky-high. It was only vaguely, however, that these after-consequences pressed on their minds; the result of the approaching blow was the absorbing interest of the moment!

From the time the ironclad put her helm around and bore down on the *Monitor* until the ram struck her sides was but the space of a few minutes. But it seemed hours to the eager watching eyes and throbbing hearts aboard the *Minnesota*!

The little cheese box, now almost certainly doomed to destruction, was the last line of defence for the American navy. If she were crushed down, nothing stood between them and annihilation! Not alone the navy, but almost the destinies of the armies arrayed on the Potomac and on the thousands of miles of Confederate border, hung upon it!

Wherever else fear and trepidation reigned, it clearly was not on board the little *Monitor*. Slowly her turret revolved, and once more a shot was pluckily despatched on the advancing vessel. It was a bright evidence of high spirit and determination, but it had no effect on her enemy; for the great iron beak and ram of the latter were advancing with speed through the water!

At last the anxiously expected moment came!

With a crash that could be heard among the breathless watchers on the *Minnesota*, the *Merrimac* struck with the force of hundreds of tons the side of the *Monitor*!

But, instead of staving in her side and drowning her, as had been by some anticipated, it had only the effect of sinking one side under water as far as the turret, and of staggering her through the sea. The *Merrimac* herself sustained much more injury; for her beak was twisted and cut over the iron edge of the *Monitor*—so that it was not only rendered useless, but became a great obstruction in the quick management of the vessel. Moreover, some of her plates were started with the force of the collision.

The cheers that rose from the *Minnesota* were those of triumph! Their redoubtable little friend was invulnerable! The ten-inch round shot that passed through and through a liner or a frigate struck harmlessly, as hail on a mountain cliff, on her low deck and massive turret. The iron beak and ram that but yesterday tore through the side of the *Cumberland* with as much ease as if it were brown paper, was itself bent and smashed against the iron edge of the low-lying deck of the cheese box.

In rage or in despair, the *Merrimac* steamed round, and with one parting broadside at her plucky foe, moved up the river. Evidently her iron sheeting had started, and she was fast making water; for, heedless of the broadsides poured upon her, and of the heavy gun of the *Monitor*, she kept silently on her way, making no response.

The fight was over and the battle won!

As the captain with a smile of satisfaction shut down his glass, Maurice touched him on the arm.

“Well, O'Donnell, have you seen the collision?” said the captain, turning around.

“I did—but it is not of that I wanted to speak. Mr. Stedman is hurt?”



"Hurt! Where?"

"In the side."

"Seriously?"

"I fear he is," said Maurice, hurriedly.

"How?"

"The shell that hulled the vessel"—

"Ay—that was well aimed! The gunners on the *Merrimac* knew their business."

"It burst; and a splinter has torn his side open."

"So serious as that? Where is he? Let me see him."

"I shall lead the way. He is in the stern."

Thither Maurice led the way, and thither the captain followed him.

The young midy had not yet recovered from his swoon. Long as it takes to narrate the incidents that O'Donnell witnessed after he went on deck, it took a very short time for their accomplishment.

"Is he badly hurt, doctor?" asked the captain.

"His side has been torn by a splinter."

"Not mortally?"

"No. I think not. Not at present, at any rate. The shock has been too strong for him."

"Has he lost much blood?"

"Not much. I was fortunately at hand in time to staunch the wound before harm was done in that way."

"He will need great care."

"Yes, and stimulants. And that is one of the reasons I sent for you. The forepart of the ship has been knocked clean to pieces, and everything there utterly destroyed. You will have to give orders to establish a store for the medicine here."

"The rascals have actually knocked the cabin and all the other rooms into one. A hundred carpenters in a week could not have done the work so effectually," said the captain, when he returned after seeing the destruction done, and the fire with

great trouble extinguished. "I have given orders that everything you require shall be placed here for you. Meantime that piece of destruction sadly hampers your work."

"Exceedingly," said the surgeon; for what with the smoke from the guns, that from the exploded shell, and that from the burning timber at the poop, the air was thick and heavy, and so dim as to be seen through with difficulty.

"I can hardly breathe myself in it."

"We must bring him on deck. In the weak action of his system at present he might smother here."

"I fear the deck will be a bad place. Now that the fight is over"——

"And it *is* over?" broke in the surgeon.

"It is. Lorrimer's invention has stood us in good stead in our hour of need, and has beaten off the Confederate ironclad—pretty well crippled too, I fancy; so that we may devote our attention to warping off the ship. In the confusion of doing so, I fear the deck would be but a bad place."

"Well, I think so. What if we send him ashore?"

"The very thing. If he could be sent to Fortress Monroe he could be properly taken care of. I shall order a boat to be manned instantly."

"Not yet," said the surgeon, placing his hand on the arm of the impetuous captain. "He is incapable of removal yet—will be, indeed, for some time. I shall intimate to you when he is."

"Thanks. I shall be busy, and the matter may otherwise fly from my head. Let me know at the earliest possible moment."

The earliest possible moment, however, was far advanced in the evening. The wound having been carefully bound up, and all that the surgeon could do having been done, the patient was committed to O'Donnell's care.

Watching every breath, the latter tended him assiduously.

Towards evening he had the pleasure of seeing returning signs of animation grow into his face—his lips moved and his eyelids opened.

“You’re all right, old man,” said Maurice with fervour, as he noticed the brightness of consciousness growing into his eyes.

“Where am I?” he inquired, faintly.

“In the *Minnesota*—where else?”

“It is so dark.”

“The evening is falling, and the smoke has not yet gone. How do you feel, Charlie? Do you feel much pain?”

“No; there is a confused feeling over me—a dull sense I cannot comprehend. What does it mean?”

“Don’t you remember what happened, Charlie? But take a spoonful of this; the surgeon orders it. You need it after your exhaustion. There!—that’s right. Now rest yourself; we can talk later on.”

The youth lay back, closed his eyes; then after a short time opened them again.

“I remember now, Maurice. It was that shell”——

“It was.”

“Am I much hurt?”

“Not much.”

“Dangerously?”

“No, not dangerously”——

“Thank God.”

“Not dangerously, that is, with care.”

“The atmosphere is dreadful. I can hardly breathe.”

“It will not be for long, Charlie. The captain has left orders that you shall be taken, as soon as you can be removed, to Fortress Monroe.”

“Just like him—always kind and careful. When shall I be able to move, Maurice. I shall smother here.”

“You are wonderfully better already. Do you feel much pain?”

"No; only the numbness—the deadly numbness."

"That is the result of the shock to the system. Take another spoonful of this. The more you take the stronger you will grow, and the sooner you will be capable of removal. But rest yourself; you mustn't talk too much—so the surgeon said."

"How did the"—

"No, not another question. I shall not answer another. You need rest, and must get it."

"Just this one, Maurice," said the patient anxiously. "How did the battle end? What became of the—the—*Monitor*?"

"She came off victorious."

"Victorious!"

"At least her opponent had to retire without being able to effect more injury, and is this moment steaming, pretty well damaged, back to Norfolk, or at any rate up the river."

"I knew Lorrimer would prove a friend in need. He was always the right man in the right place. Oh! the dreadful pain that begins to shoot through my side! Could you have me carried on deck, Maurice? I shall choke here. And how dark it is growing!"

It had not grown any darker to the latter's eyes, and this remark accordingly surprised and frightened him.

"Rest yourself, Charlie, as far as you can in this uncomfortable place. I shall go for the surgeon and see if you are capable of being removed. Don't stir or disturb yourself until I come back."

The patient closed his eyes, and Maurice, silently beckoning to one of the sailors, hurried away in search of the doctor.

He had not much difficulty in finding him, for the place of his present business was unfortunately well known.

Descending to the stern-hold of the ship he came to the operating-room. Here, far below the water level, and secure from plunging shot and bursting shell, lit only by lamps affixed to the sides, the surgeon was at work.

The bullets of the *Merrimac* and the scattering grape had left their results in the torn and mangled forms around him.

Here was a man whose two legs had been swept clean away by a roundshot. The skill of the surgeon had come too late to save him, and, although his wounds had been carefully bound up, his glassy eyes and parted lips showed that his hours were numbered. Further over and sitting on a hammock was a young fellow—Maurice was quite familiar with his face—whose left arm had just been amputated. He was trying to read a paper with the light of the lamp, but happening to raise his eyes when O'Donnell entered, he lifted the amputated arm in pantomime and smiled. Reclining on a bunk, with his head against the side of the ship, was a sailor whom Maurice marvelled to see asleep—until a flash of the rocking and tossing lamps falling on his face showed him to be dead.

The surgeon was at the moment engaged with a patient who was stripped to his waist—a stalwart, powerful man, the whiteness of his breast contrasting strongly with the weather-beaten face and blackened hands. A blue spot over the nipple of his breast indicated where he was hurt—not much bigger in size than a threepenny piece.

“Bullet,” laconically said the doctor, as he noticed Maurice's eye resting on the spot. “Lodged in lung. Afraid to probe it—but must be done.”

“Is it,” Maurice whispered him, although the closed eyes and pallid face of the patient pronounced him if not incapable of hearing, at least indifferent to, words—“is it dangerous?”

“Internal hæmorrhage, I fancy. Bullet either lodged in the lung or passed through. Very dangerous case!”

Maurice was sorry for him, for he recognised him as one of the most active and best men in the ship: He was therefore slow to press his own business on the surgeon until the patient was attended to. The end was not long coming,

however. The surgeon introduced the probe gently into the blue spot; a sharp quiver passed through the frame of the wounded man; a convulsive effort to raise himself from his recumbent position; a volume of blood gushed from his mouth; and all was over. He fell back instantly, dead!

"Now, O'Donnell," said the surgeon coolly, and with unconcern, as if such dreadful scenes were the most natural things in the world, and the to-be-expected occurrences of everyday life, "I can attend to you. How is Charlie? Has he recovered consciousness?"

"He has."

"And taken stimulants?"

"Yes."

"Then I needn't see him. He is all right. You may remove him as soon as you wish."

"I should like you to see him," urged Maurice.

The surgeon glanced mutely at the forms strewn around on the floor still needing his assistance. O'Donnell understood the glance.

"It shall be only for an instant."

"Lead the way, then."

In a few minutes they were beside the wounded midshipman. His eyes were closed, and he had relapsed into semi-unconsciousness. The surgeon felt his pulse.

"Fever," he said. "To get a chance for his life, he should be removed from this at once. Tell the captain so."

Maurice lost no time in communicating the intelligence to the captain, who even in the midst of his exertions to have the vessel gotten off and her torn sides plugged up, ordered a boat at once to be got ready.

It was no easy matter, with the disarray and confusion that existed on deck and on the water, to do even that much. What with the tugboats, surrounding on all sides, straining at the cables, the men and ropes on deck, the multitude of

smaller boats carrying cables hither and thither—easing, bracing up, slacking off—the shouts and directions from the officers and crews of the *Minnesota* and the gunboats, the scene was a veritable pandemonium, and the confusion endless.

But they succeeded at last, and nightfall found them approaching Fortress Monroe, and the challenge of the guardship again falling on their ears.

The midshipman was brought into the fort, and the surgeon attending therein was quickly at his side. He confirmed the diagnosis of his brother professional on board the *Minnesota*, pronouncing his stupor to be incipient stages of fever; and had him placed in a cool, bomb-proof room, where they could hear the ceaseless beat of the Atlantic waves on the granite walls without, and where the breeze from the Virginian woods and the Maryland heights came with unobstructed freshness through the opened windows.

There was too much to be done for this surgeon, or for any surgeon indeed, to pay him special or particular attention. The wounded and mangled after the two days' firing were very numerous—as well of those that had escaped inshore from the *Congress* during the interval when the *Merrimac* devoted her attention to the *Minnesota*, as of those of the latter herself. Hence the greater portion of the care and tending fell upon Maurice—to whom, indeed, it was a labour of love.

Day after day he watched with unceasing attention the progress of the disease, sitting by his friend's bedside, opening the window in the daytime to admit the breezes full of ozone that swept over the Virginian forests, or fanning the burning forehead of the feverish youth.

At night, when the stars had come out and the summer moon had shed her silver light over the sea—turning in those soft southern latitudes, the ocean into a silver sea of Para-

dise—he often sat, cigar in mouth, leaning over the iron casement of the window, watching the white breakers dash into silver foam against the granite walls of the fortress, and dreaming that they came in unbroken flow from the far-off shores of Ireland!

Dear Ireland! How beautiful must look this white moon, sailing across the cloudless vault of the sky, on the quiet valleys and holy hills and sleeping homes of that dear land! How sweet to think that the silver rays were bathing thatch and threshold and casement where one dear heart was sleeping!

He could almost fancy that he saw in the dim distance the orchard, with its many-coloured leaves trembling and glistening beneath the white rays of the moonlight—made all the brighter by contrast with the changeless darkness of the glooms where its rays fell not.

Mayhap Norah, too, was looking up at the beautiful orb whose lustre was turning the earth into one huge scene of panoramic glory. If so, he could well imagine the worshipping look in those exquisite blue eyes, the entrancing beauty of her bright and handsome face surrounded and bathed with moonlight—like the light from Paradise that shines around a martyr's head—as she gazed upwards in rapt admiration. He could see the wavy masses of hair that swept around her temples, contrasting so finely in their darkness with the marble fairness of the white forehead they surmounted.

This ideal scene so attracted his attention, so absorbed his imagination, as he let his mind rest on it wholly, that for some time he could not bring himself to think that it was but dreamland, and that the real things of earth and life lay around him.

In some measure he was awakened to this latter fact; but curiously and in some way, blending the one with the other, was a vague knowledge that gained upon him—that side by side with Norah's face, which he had carved phantomly out



of the shining parapet, another face very familiar too—but very different—had grown up. It came upon him still in his dreaming reverie insensibly, and in much the same way that one vanishing picture in a panorama is made to appear with, blend with, and finally give place to another—both appearing concurrently, but one fading into nothingness whilst the other grows more real and apparent.

In some such manner as this it came to pass that whilst Maurice was still looking at the beautiful vision he had conjured up, and eliminating the thousand miles of stormy space that lay between him and Glenheath, it grew dreamily palpable to him that another face had interwoven and intermingled itself with the ideal one he was looking at—a man's face, not unfamiliar—and looking at *him!*

A disposition to clutch the beautiful phantom to his arms, and a sigh for the unrealisation of his pleasant dreams, were broken and banished almost instantaneously, as it struck him sharply that there was a face before him in the shadow of the ramparts—and looking straight into his!

“Walton! Walton!” he cried, as the face flashed familiarly on his fully awakened senses. “Where did you come from?”

He had for a moment withdrawn his eyes from the apparition, in order to lift himself further through the casement the better to shake hands with the object before him. When he lifted his eyes again it was gone!

For a moment he doubted the evidence of his senses. He rubbed his eyes and looked again where the form had stood and the face appeared. There was nothing there! Most certainly, nothing! Yet it could not—having been there at all—have vanished in that almost measureless space of time!

Surprised and wondering, and doubting whether he was asleep or awake, he rose from his place, looked at the patient to see that he was sleeping, and, opening the door gently,

ran down the stone stairs and around the bomb-proof building to the place where the apparition had stood. But there was no one there. Not one.

Neither, indeed, could there well be. Two hours before, the bugle-call had sounded the "retire." The doors of the fort were closed, and, save an officer smoking his cigar in the square or walking therein, and the steady, ceaseless tramp of the sentinel on the granite ramparts, there was no other soul around. The shadow of the sentry passing along fell heavily on the stone floor of the fortress, and—as he paused in his walk to shift his musket, or threw an eye in the far distance where the waters of the James river glistened in the hazy horizon—fell to Maurice's feet where he stood, and on the very spot where the familiar face of his friend had appeared looking up at him.

"That must have been what occasioned the apparition," he thought.

"It's very odd!" he continued. "It's very strange that I should have seen him so palpably—so really—and all at once—without previously thinking of him. Could it be possible it was only dreaming I was? I am certain it was his living face; but, yet—how could it be?"

There was no use in reasoning the matter out with himself. His perplexity grew with his thinking. To relieve himself he went again inside, looked at his friend to see how he was, lit another cigar, and resumed his place at the casement.

But, strive as he might, Maurice could not conjure up Norah's dear face again; nor yet the stranger's. A smart breeze had sprung up from the East, ruffling the hitherto sleeping waters, and changing the moonlit surface of the ocean into alternate streaks of light and shade as the waves, under its influence, rose and fell. The clouds that skirted the horizon lying seawards, under its influence, grew also, and spread rapidly over the clear blue of the sky, until at last the

moon, instead of sailing in queenly beauty in peace, was encompassed with drifting fog, and struggling through masses of flying, scudding, obscuring clouds.

The wind, as if proud of its effects upon the face of night and nature, grew stronger; swept with bolder gusts over the darkened breast of the waters; and raved in impotent fury around and through the massive walls and towers, and keeps and bastions, and iron guns and loopholed battlements, of the great fortress: and blew the ashes of his cigar into his face and eyes.

He rose from his position, threw the stump of his cigar away, closed the window for the night, looked at his sleeping patient, and went to bed.

But all night long, whilst the storm blew and blew, and the driving ocean-waves, racing along, madly chasing one another, stormed and leaped at the walls of the fortress, flinging a shower of hissing spray, that fell in oxydized rime on the great iron guns, as they retreated baffled and defeated from its granite sides, strange voices came to him on the howling storms—in his dreams! Strange faces peered at him from the corners of his bomb-proof room! Faces in far away Ireland—his brother's, his father's, and many others he could not recognise. And amongst them—mixed up with them in some inscrutable way—Norah, always Norah! Now smiling on him as if delightedly welcoming him home—now with looks of terror and affright, and as if appealing to him for help. And, as in his moonlight vision, repeatedly her face disappeared and in its stead grew up the features of his friend the blockade-runner.

What curious association of ideas brought them together even in his dreams?

So impressed unconsciously in his sleep was he with this curious coincidence, that once he woke up with a cry of blended fear and amazement, and looked around the darkened

room—where only a tiny night-light burned, making the apartment if possible more indistinct—as if he expected to see strange faces there!

And, in looking, his eyes in the darkness seemed to fall once more on the face of the friend of whom he had been just dreaming. Suspecting himself to be still under the influence of his imagination, he closed his eyes to assure himself of his perfect wakefulness. Opening them, he saw the face no longer. If it had been there it was gone!

“I must be dreaming still,” thought he, “for I really thought I heard the door close. What *has* come over me this night?”

Unable to rest, he arose, trimmed the solitary night-light, lit a lamp, and, taking a book to read, placed his elbows on the table and his face in his hands—the while the wind blowing from the Atlantic beat the waves furiously against the fortress and howled through its open squares. It raved and moaned so, that—despite his determination to banish outward distressing thoughts and fix his attention on the book exclusively—he could not help remembering the old belief or superstition that associated such moaning wind as this with the flight of a departing soul.

Whereupon he rose to look at his young friend.

He was breathing heavily and stertorously.

“He does not seem to me to be getting better,” he thought, in affright. “The surgeon here may not be treating him properly. I shall ask permission to call for the surgeon of the *Minnesota* to-morrow. He knows him better, and, whether more skilful or not, will take more interest in his case.”

With which resolution he sat himself down again to his book; and succeeded so well, that in a short time he was fast asleep over it, only to be awakened when the guard came knocking at the door in the morning.

It was late in the following day when he had audience of

the surgeon stationed in the fortress. It was later still when he was able to see the General commanding, to get a boat and a crew to row him over to where the temporary hospital for the wounded of the *Congress* and *Minnesota* had been erected—for the latter, having been with much difficulty and great engineering skill gotten off, had been plugged up and sent off for repairs.

The boats, the commander said, were all engaged, and unless the officers of the *Monitor*, then stationed in the harbour, would give him the use of one, it would be impossible for him to get one.

“I am sure Captain Lorrimer will try and spare me one,” said Maurice, confidently.

“Lorrimer!” said the captain. “If you are relying on him it will be some time before you succeed.”

There was something so singular in his manner of saying this that Maurice took it to refer to the threatening and somewhat insolent tone in which the commander of the *Monitor* had addressed his young friend on the night when they besought his services for the crippled frigate. But this did not deter him.

“He is too much of a gentleman to remember that, when he knows how dangerously ill he is,” he thought. “I am quite sure he will give me a boat. An American officer will be above considerations of that character in the hour of suffering or emergency.”

Wherefore he obtained the necessary permit to enable him to go on board the ironclad, and, descending the ladder, once more presented himself at the landing-stage; stepped into a boat that was pushing off; and, sheltering himself in his cloak, for the evening was chilly and cold after the storm of the day and previous night, turned his head in the direction of the *Monitor*.

The gallant little vessel lay some short distance out; but

even in the short space was but dimly discernible. Her deck being less than a foot over the water, and her heavy armour rendering her but inertly sensible to the swell of the sea, the waves not unfrequently broke over her, giving her turret the appearance of a black buoy stationed over a reef of rocks.

There was not much difficulty in climbing up *her* sides when they arrived near. The difficulty rather was in being able to step down on her. This once effected, a water-tight funnel guarded the companion ladder that led to her interior.

It was pitch dark.

For some moments he could see nothing but, with the furnace doors open, the red flames leaping up the chimney. The doors closed, his eyes began to get more accustomed to the place, and he noticed the lights that hung suspended from the deck or were affixed to the sides.

"Can't see yet, O'Donnell?" said a friendly voice at his elbow; "you will get your sea-eyes soon. Very different from the *Minnesota*, this—is it not?"

"Why, Captain von Brunt, I did not expect to see you here?" said O'Donnell, delighted to find his old captain of the *Minnesota* beside him.

"Nor did I either, until a day or two ago."

"You have not then"——

He was about to say "gone with your vessel," but a feeling that the saying might be an awkward one under the circumstances prevented him. The captain, however, understood him.

"No. The *Minnesota* is despatched for repairs, and is out of commission for the present. I am appointed temporarily commander here."

"Where is"——

"Lorrimer, you would say?"

"I thought," said Maurice, hesitatingly, "he commanded here."

"So he did—so he did, O'Donnell; but I greatly fear he will never command again—or at least not for a long time."

"Has he been wounded, then?"

"Very severely; but you have never been aboard the *Monitor* before?"

"Never. How could I?"

"Then you must come and see her. This is the new style of naval warfare, O'Donnell. This vessel, with her opponent of yesterday, are destined to create a revolution in the navies of the world, the end of which no man can foresee. They may burn the wooden vessels. Their day is past. They are useless for evermore. Come this way."

By a narrow iron ladder they clomb up into the turret.

With much amazement Maurice looked around. A circular wall of iron surrounded him, within which was mounted a gun of such size and power as completely dwarfed the largest of those carried on board the *Minnesota*. The portholes and some circular apertures in the oval roof gave at once light and air. Through the former he could see into the water, which seemed near enough for him to dip his hands in.

"You asked me a minute ago where Lorrimer is. He was standing here when a solid ten-inch shot struck the port-hole lid, shattering its bolts—the only harm done to the *Monitor* during the fight—and blinding him. One of his eyes is utterly lost; the other nearly so."

"He was a good officer—Steadman said so."

"He was. I regret his loss. He came at a critical time, else the *Merrimac* would have left every wooden vessel, frigate and liner, at the bottom. Nothing built but this could have stayed her destructive career."

"This is a tremendous gun."

"The most powerful yet built. It would pierce the *Minnesota* through and through, and yet you see how little effect it had on the iron hide of her enemy."

"She was despatched," said O'Donnell, his mind returning to the scene of the fight, "in a good time."

"That is the oddest and the most fortunate thing in connection with the business. Her build and make and machinery—her whole construction—was kept a dead secret—is still, in fact—by the Admiralty in Washington. She was merely despatched on her trial trip to Fortress Monroe. She arrived there at ten o'clock on the night of the battle, just a few hours before Steadman and yourself called soliciting assistance."

"They had heard there of the destruction previously."

"They had. And like the good fellow he was, Lorrimer at once determined to try the mettle of his ship—if ship it can be called—and render assistance."

"Which he did with some effect."

"Which he did with some effect," said the captain, assentingly. "But the odd thing, as I have said, is the fortunate time at which she arrived. Had she come the previous night or in the morning she had returned again. Had she come the next day it were all too late—the work of destruction was over."

"She is an invaluable vessel."

"The most so that was ever floated. That is the reason why the secret of her construction is so jealously guarded. And, by the way, that makes it surprising to me—I had not thought of it before—that you should have obtained a permit to board her. You do not—as yet, at any rate—belong to the service."

"They had forgotten that at the fortress."

"They do business very badly there, I fear," said the captain, gravely shaking his head.

"No harm will come to them from"—

"From your presence? No, I should hope not. I have that faith in your honour that I am sure there will not. But for all that it shows great laxity that it should have occurred."



Maurice was about to add the words which the captain supplied, when he suddenly stopped.

The bolt which had struck the massive shutter of the port-hole had injured it so that it was incapable, even with the ordinary machinery for the purpose, of shifting. Several mechanics were at work repairing this and other similar damages. A careless glance at their faces was suddenly arrested, as he was speaking, by a sense of recognition in the face of one of them. A second quick glance revealed to him—to his horror and alarm—the face that he had seen before on the *Minnesota*, and had been in his dreams all night—the face of his friend on the blockade-runner!

A sudden choking and a hurried beating of his heart that he could not check stopped his words! A quick cautioning glance from the pseudo-mechanic assured him that he had not been mistaken and that the recognition was mutual!

The feeling of dismay that supervened after the unexpected meeting on the frigate was intensified now!

Here was a vessel whose machinery and construction were supposed to be a secret, known alone to her officers and crew, and to the draughtsmen at the Admiralty, and on whom none but sworn and confidential artificers were employed—and here in their very midst was one of the most clever, capable, and active captains of the Confederacy!

What could have brought him here? What mysterious agency had he employed? What were his designs—what sinister intentions had he? For unless they were deep and of grave import he would scarcely—no matter how daring and reckless he was—have risked his life by coming on board the *Monitor*.

So unexpectedly had he turned up, and in such dangerous and compromising situations, that a thrill of terror—a sort of mysterious fascination—seemed to have laid hold of Maurice!

The same doubts that had sprung up in his mind on the

*Minnesota* occurred to him here. Should he inform the captain of the presence of a dangerous foe on board, before whom secrets became palpable as the open day? Was it fair to him to let peril and danger surround him and leave him unconscious of it? On the other hand, what return would that be for his friend and protector? What gratitude would that be to one who had stood his friend when he knew not where to turn for one?

All these considerations flashed through Maurice's head even whilst the captain was speaking—with the result that one consideration completely neutralised the other, and without determining to come to a conclusion he had actually arrived at one.

"The *Monitor* has not as much attraction for you as I thought it would have," said the captain, as he noticed his silence and his distraught manner.

Maurice hastened confusedly to protest that it had. Whereupon the captain proceeded to point out the clever mechanical contrivances by which the immense charges of powder were conveyed upwards and rammed home, and the hydraulic appliances for lifting the 15-inch shot—some hundreds' weight—to the cannon's mouth, and the means by which the massive turret, built of 12-inch solid iron and weighing some scores of tons, was made to revolve at the touch of a child's hand. With this and a good deal more of information regarding the *Monitor* which Maurice would much rather not have had told openly, but which he did not know how to prevent the captain from telling, the latter and himself finally parted, one of the boats being despatched with him and his two rowers to the other side of the harbour for the doctor.

Him they were not long in finding out, nor was his reluctance to attend to the call very great.

They were rowing swiftly, for the night had fallen, and there were indications that the storm of the night before was

beginning to arise again—and the surgeon had yet to return.

“I say, O'Donnell,” broke in the latter, after a long spell of silent rowing, “what is that light yonder? That is not one of the lights of the fortress, is it?”

All looked around. A bright light had suddenly burst forth some distance, perhaps a mile, to the east.

“That,” said Maurice, “is not one of the lights of Fortress Monroe. Yonder, and more faintly, you can see these—straight ahead of us. It is a signal of some kind.”

“I guess I know what that is,” said one of the two rowers, after gazing earnestly at it for some time. “I calkerlate it's a small boat afire—that's what it is; and I'm a-gwine to think that it's not empty, either. I'm darned if there ain't people moving on her.”

The sailor ejected a large quid of tobacco, placed his oar across his knees whilst he cut another to use instead, replaced the oar in the rowlocks, and bent his eyes, as they all did, in the direction of the shining light.

“I guess we ought to row in that direction,” was his next remark.

“I think so, too,” said the surgeon, emphatically. “There may be someone needing assistance there.”

“I guess we'll head that way—shall we?”

“What say you, O'Donnell?” asked the surgeon. “The boat is on fire, and we should not leave the crew to perish by fire or water.”

“I think so, with all my heart.”

“Very well, put her head in that direction. Give way, lads—give way now; there may be some men's lives depending on your oars. Give way!”

“I'm darned sure there is. You'll want to pull tarnation strong, Jim. Lay to, my hearty,” said the sailor, not slow to exert himself when men's lives were in danger.

Half an hour's quick rowing brought them beside the burning boat.

They were not a little surprised to find that the boat was *not* on fire. The flames which they had seen arose from a pot of pitch which was burning in the bottom of the boat, and the figures of men they had seen moving were merely articles of dress suspended from a rope connecting her two masts.

"This is a most extraordinary business," said the surgeon. "Is there no one on board? What in thunder is the meaning of it?"

"She is a signal for some blockade-runner—that's what she is," broke out the sailor who had previously spoken. "I guess there'll be one or two black-painted, low-lying darned Britishers creeping in to-night before the moon rises."

"Well, lads, if this be a signal—and it looks very like it," continued the doctor—"we shall spoil their game for this one night, at any rate. Jump in, and pitch that witch-like cauldron overboard."

His advice was taken as soon as given. Connecting the two boats firmly by a short hawser, the whole party were almost immediately aboard. The two sailors first essayed the attempt, but finding the effort of throwing the cauldron overboard too much for them, called on the others. Their united efforts were sufficient for the attempt, and in a short time they had flung the dangerous article overboard.

The blazing pitch for a moment flared and hissed in the seething water, flinging up, as the quenching waves poured in on it, a cloud of steam; then disappeared suddenly under the surface, leaving all around—by contrast—black darkness; so dark, indeed, that for a moment after the bright light had died out, utterly extinguished in the drowning waters, they were quite unable to see anything.

"I think we might have provided better for this," said the surgeon gaily, as he tried to peer into the surrounding dark-

ness ; "it's an odd case of 'wilful waste makes woful want.' I can't see a stim."

"No more can I," said Maurice.

"Can we improvise a light of some kind?"

"I doubt that we can."

"No, I don't suppose we can. We did not anticipate the need for lamps," said the surgeon. "But how are we to get back?"

"I should think that's easily done. Pull shorewards."

"Where is shorewards, O'Donnell?"

"Yonder. These lights twinkling in the distance are the lights of the Fortress."

"Where? I don't see them."

"Yonder. Right in the line of the prow of our boat."

"Yes, I think I see them. A very bad guide to go by, however—these glimmers. They may be those of a sailing vessel—or—— Hollo! What is this? Hands off, you scoundrel!"

He had not concluded the earlier portion of his sentence when a movement occurred behind him. In the act of speaking he had turned round his head on hearing it, when a vigorous hand grasped him by the throat, and in a second or two he was gagged, bound, and carried on board a boat lying alongside.

"Go ahead, Ned? there is not a moment to be lost!"

These directions, coming out of the darkness, fell clearly on his ears. He could not see the speaker, but knew his directions were being carried out, for the moment after the ropes were being pulled, pulleys strained, and the sails ran up and floated from the tall, naked masts. Gradually the boat got under way, and in a short time was flying with great velocity across the water.

Out through the thick darkness of the night, through the fog that loomed heavily on the breast of the waters, the boat

sped on her way. It might have been a quarter of an hour—it might have been an hour—it might, indeed, have been any time under half an hour, for any distinct recollection or knowledge he had of the flight of time—when they reached the side of a vessel anchored some miles out; and, quickly unbound; they were politely asked to climb up the ladder descending the ship's side from the bulwarks high above them.

---

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A MYSTERIOUS VISITOR.

THE trouble and consternation that seized upon Molly the housekeeper, and Sally, when George hurried towards the seaside in quest of his sister, could scarcely be described. To the housekeeper's complaints and objurgations, that she had not been wakened and acquainted of the strange messenger before Norah was allowed to go on her dangerous and mysterious errand, was added the self-reproachings of Sally for having aided and advised so foolish a proceeding.

Huddled together in the parlour, beside the lamp, a sense of unknown danger seemed to pervade the room, and to float in almost palpable touch in the atmosphere over them. Around was a mystery which the blackness of the night wrapped up in its noiseless folds; and it was many hours yet before the dawn would come to throw some light upon it.

Where was Norah gone? Who was the stranger? What were the motives and intentions that actuated him in decoying the young girl from her home?

These were the questions that, with a shudder at her heart, the old woman asked herself; these, too, were the questions that came to Sally with a choking sense of horror she could not suppress.

As they sat thinking and listening in strained suspense for some footfall on the night without, their hearing had got so electric and excited that the wind blowing the leaves against the window seemed the tapping of a hand, and frequently led to a hurried run to the door to open it for the expected and welcome returners. But there was no one there, and the door was slowly closed and rebolted in bitter disappointment.

Similarly when the dying embers in the grate, disturbed by the draught, or their surroundings having exhausted themselves, fell beneath it, the sound came on their ears with a noise as alarming as a thunderbolt.

"Sally, wasn't it a wonder you didn't waken me?" said the old woman in a scolding whisper, "before you let Norah leave the shelter of the roof by herself with a stranger?"

"Who'd ha' thought he came with a false message, Molly *asthor*?" said Sally, the while the big tears sprang readily into her eyelids. "Who'd ha' thought that George hadn't sent him? It was natural enough to think that he would."

"Didn't you know if George was so near that he'd have come himself?"

"No, indeed, Molly, I didn't. There was nothing more likely than that he wouldn't have come near the house with a watch set on him, or than that he would have wished to see *her*."

"But he did come, you see," said the old woman sharply.

"But who was to know that?" pleaded Sally. "An' maybe 'twould be better for the poor fellow he *hadn't* come. There's a watch upon him, and if he's caught and put in gaol again, it's a long time till he sees the daylight outside of it."

"*Mavron*, it's the troubles that come upon the house, an' it's little they wor deserved!"

"God is good, Molly," said Sally, with a confidence she was far from feeling; "everything will turn out right, you may depend upon it. They'll both be back in good time, you may depend."

"With the blessing of God, maybe so."

"Ah, to be sure they will," said Sally, under the influence of her own words growing more cheerful; "there's not one from Clare-keep to Galway-head that wouldn't lose his life to defend one and the other."

"That's true," said Molly, acquiescingly.

"To be sure it is. An' as they're sure to be back I may as well light up the fire. It'll be badly wanting by the time they return."

The coals of the waning fire on the hearth were turning into white ashes and drowsily dying out when Sally, rising to replenish and rekindle them, uttered a cry of terror, and fell back into the old woman's arms.

"What is it, Sally?—what is it?" cried the old woman, startled extremely by the suddenness of the shriek. "What's the matter with you, child? Are you ill?"

"I saw—something!" whispered the girl with difficulty and in a paroxysm of terror.

"Saw something! The blessing of God be about us! What did you see?"

"Oh, don't ask me!" ejaculated the girl in a fresh accession of terror as she shut her eyes and turned her face inwards on Molly's breast.

"You had better tell me. It's right I should know. What is it, Sally? What did you see? Tell me?"

"Two eyes, looking"—

"God save us! Where?"

"Outside—through the window!"

A quiver in Sally's frame gave token that little more would have made her scream aloud hysterically.

"Did you see the face, Sally?"

"No. I saw nothing but the eyes. They were staring in!"

"You only thought you saw them, Sally," said the old woman firmly, standing up and placing the frightened girl in



the arm-chair in which she herself had been sitting; "it's only the fright that's over you made you think you saw them. But, anyhow, I'll go to the door and see whether there's any-one about. It's a shame for me to be afraid," said Molly, again dispelling her fears by a brave effort and rising to the occasion—"to be afraid like a fearsome girl."

Whereupon, in accordance with her stout words, Molly went to the door and opened it; nay, more, walked out into the darkness—to the window wherethrough Sally had seen the singular apparition that frightened her; and thence across the bawn to the orchard-gate.

But there was no one there—no one!

Had there been anyone outside Molly would have heard the retreating footsteps. Much gratified by the fact, and with her fears completely banished by this courageous effort, she returned to the house, and entered the room where Sally was, with such a confident expression on her face, such an utter absence of anything like supernatural fear, and such a look of matronly repose and unconcern, that all Sally's dreads and cares completely and at once vanished. So readily a composed and strong heart restores the sinking spirit of others.

In the revolutionary wars of the Swiss, in their bold uprising against the horrors of Austrian domination, a terrible fight once occurred in the fastnesses of the Alps. The patriot mountaineers held a formidable mountain pass in great force, against which an Austrian general, with numerous horse, foot, and artillery, had been despatched. The whizzing rockets, bursting shells, and solid shot, poured forth on the patriot army was so tremendous, so furious, so out of proportion to anything they had ever seen or heard of, that when an hour's terrific bombardment was succeeded by an on-rush of the glittering bayonets of the Austrian columns, the hearts of the insurgents, already broken and cowed, failed

them, and abandoning their strong places and fastnesses, they broke and fled! One man, however, composedly kept his ground. One man, alone, kneeling behind a rock, unconcernedly kept loading and firing on the advancing troops in the valley below. In no way disconcerted by the panic masses flying in disarray beside and around him—indeed, apparently taking no heed of them—but, calmly and leisurely, as if on parade ground, he kept on loading and sighting and firing. The example of one so cool, so unconcerned, so brave, wrought wonders. The panic-struck fugitives flying past saw him with but half a glance, and, flying, marvelled! They had not gone far when they turned to look back. He was there still, unconcernedly loading and sighting and firing. A sense of shame, of cowardice, came on them; they stayed their footsteps, shamefacedly returned, picked up the flung-away muskets, knelt near the steady mountaineer, and, like him, commenced firing on the foe. Others did similarly; emboldened, they rushed forward, gained the places they had so lately, panic-stricken, abandoned; and when under cover of a storm of crashing solid shot and shell the bayonets of the Austrian infantry appeared over the crest of the hill they were confronted by the mountaineers with a courage which knew now no failing; they were hurled adown the cliffs up which they had clambered; and the power of the Austrian was broken—all the result of the dauntlessness and bravery of one resolute and gallant man.

It was, in a small way, somewhat of this effect the composed features of Molly had upon Sally. She grew ashamed of her vague fears—she knew not what of—in presence of the real and pressing dangers that awaited the brother and sister. And so, by one of these sudden changes that the mind of womankind of all classes and degrees and ages are so inscrutably liable to, Sally passed from a condition of sheer fear-frenzy into one of indomitable pluck. And so far from screaming to see eyes peering through the windows she would

have been only too glad to see them outside every casement therein—did they only bring a clue to the position of the fair girl whose whereabouts in the dark night were still unknown.

Whilst Molly busied herself in restoring life to the waning fires, removing the white ashes that gathered around them, and in rekindling their well nigh extinguished flames, the young girl with her newly-acquired courage went to the door, thence into the bawn, and thence into the orchard, through which a path led to the sea—by which the wanderers might mayhap come.

Standing by the base of an apple tree, she listened long and intently for some sound that might indicate their approach. There was none.

She was about returning to the house after a spell of anxious waiting, when a rustling movement seemed to grow up behind her, and, turning around quickly, a hooded form—blacker than the black darkness surrounding, and, so, easily noticed—was passing from her. It was the cloaked form of Norah, and she could distinguish her eager hand beckoning her after. Greatly wondering why she did not speak, Sally hurried after the retreating figure until it became mingled with and lost in the dark gloom of this more thickly planted part of the orchard. But when her hurrying steps reached there, the hooded and cloaked figure of the young girl was nowhere to be seen!

“She is sheltering behind a tree,” thought Sally. “I wonder what she is afraid of—what is the reason of it?”

“Norah!” she called softly, “Norah! where are you? It is I, Sally! There is no one about. You need not be afraid. Did you see George? He’ll be here presently. Speak to me! Where are you? I can’t see you! Speak to me.”

No response came to her anxious calls.

A shuddering feel passed through her. Could this be the ghostly form that was said to haunt the orchard? A

panic rush of the blood back to her heart!—and she was about to fly into the house in terror, when her attention was attracted by a slight noise at the further end of the orchard. The gate leading thereinto was unlatched, and some persons passed therethrough. She could not see who they were at that distance, nor, indeed, for the matter of that if they stood within half a dozen yards of her, but she knew by the foot-steps passing over the dry twigs that there must be more than one or two. The position to which she had thus fortunately been brought was in its darkness and isolation free from risk of discovery, whilst it gave her unbounded opportunities of seeing what was happening.

When the parties reached the second gate, crossed the bawn, and stood in the glare of the light thrown from the window, she saw at once that they were armed men—soldiers. As her eyes readily gleaned this information, she bethought her that they were searching for George, who might at any moment return from his search successful or unsuccessful, and so fall into their hands. The presence of the new palpable and bodily danger dispelled all supernatural fears, and without pausing to reconsider her first impulse she flew from the house in the direction of the sea in hopes of meeting and intercepting him on his return route.

“George, George! the soldiers are searching for you. Don't go back to the orchard! Fly for your life!”

This was her cry whenever any sounds on the night made her think she heard him returning. But there was no response to indicate that she was correct in her thoughts until she reached the cliff, wherefrom she speedily descended to the sea.

“George! George”——

Her calls suddenly died out, as in the faint light that came over the face of the water—the thin, cold break of the winter's day—her eye fell on the form at the base of the cliff

She recognised it at once, and at the same time realised the accident that brought him there.

In a moment she was beside him. He was insensible, but not lifeless. He had fallen on to a mass of yielding, jelly-like seaweed, which fact had kept him from being killed outright. But his face was much torn by the projecting shrubs as he fell, and, being covered with blood, presented a dreadful sight.

A cry of anguish arose from her lips, startling the dawn and scaring the seabirds, as she dipped her handkerchief in the seawater beside, bathed his forehead, and washed away the blood from his face.

What was she to do? In a few minutes the soldiers might be on him. Oh, that some assistance were near!

She could now understand why Norah was alone in the orchard. She had met with George; had been climbing the hill with him on the way home when the accident had happened; had thereupon hurried homeward to get some assistance, when the tread of the armed men had fallen on her ear—alarming her and making her retreat into the gloomy spot where she had vanished.

But why had she not revealed herself? Why had she not spoken and told of what had happened, instead of leaving its revelation to chance and accident?

Sally could not tell, nor indeed had she much time to think over it. The wounded youth before her absorbed all her attention.

From the rivulet she brought her dipped handkerchief and bathed his lips with it—bathed his breast and temples.

“George! George!” she cried, as she clapped his hands to quicken and revive his pulse, “for the love of God waken! Try and waken!—you don’t know the danger you’re in!”

“Who speaks of danger? Who cries danger? *Sacre-*

*bleu!* it seems to me a word always in use on these coasts. What is it, girl? Who is it?"

This address, couched in a foreign voice and in a strange accent, coming from behind Sally where she knelt beside the insensible patient, startled her immensely.

"It is the soldiers!" was the alarmed thought that first ran on her mind.

But a glance reassured her. The person addressing her was a man of thirty or thereabouts, sailor-dressed, with a good-humoured smile on his weather-beaten face, and a look of hearty good nature and frank kindness notwithstanding the heavy moustache that curled fiercely upwards, and the rather ugly streak—the remains of some old wound—that triangularly marked his chin.

"Well, young lady, what are *you* doing here in the dawning of the day? Hast risen out of the waters like a mermaid, dropped from the skies with the dew, or—*sacre bleu!* What is this?"

The stranger, without waiting for an answer, stooped down over the prostrate form until then unseen by him, looked earnestly for some time, and with instinctive readiness felt the pulse.

"What has happened him?"

"I don't know," said Sally, tremblingly.

"You don't know?"

"No."

"What brings you here beside him, then, in the grey light of the breaking morning?"

The words were more sharply addressed than were those previously used.

"Surely you must know how he came in this condition."

"I think he must have fallen."

"Fallen! How did you come to find him?"

"I came to search for him."

“Ah!”

The explanation did not seem quite satisfactory to the stranger, who at once addressed himself to the condition of the patient.

“I think I know his face. It is George Desmond, is it not? Speak, girl—I am a friend of his. Is it he?”

Sally made no reply.

“You need not fear to tell me. I am Captain Reinor, of the barque *Grissette*. I came here to make inquiries about him, and most strangely I have come upon him thus. You may trust me, my girl—trust me. I shall not only see that no harm comes to him here, but I shall take him where none can.”

There was something in his smile, look, and firm expression of words, that shone with truth and constancy.

“What has happened him?” he asked again, hurriedly.

“He was coming to meet his sister, and—I think—must have fallen from the cliff here.”

“Then he was freed from prison?”

“He escaped; and the soldiers are after him, and may be here, any moment.”

The sailor applied a whistle to his lips, blew a shrill note, and waited for a moment.

Immediately there came on the grey morning air the noise of oars not far distant, the babble of men’s voices, and, in a second or two after, the head of a boat pushing around the rocky promontory came into view, and was with a dexterous stroke brought into the gully or little harbour beside them.

“Here, men, take this poor fellow carefully and lay him in the boat. There—quietly, easily. He may not be able to bear much disturbing.”

“As for you, my good girl,” he added to Sally, who looked on with somewhat of stupefaction, “return and tell your young mistress her brother is all right. Tell her it is Captain Reinor

who sends the message. She will know then what to think. Good-bye!"

He stepped on board the boat, and whilst she was yet trying to think of his words the boat pushed off from the shore, the oars dipped in the water, and, in a short space, rounding the promontory, was again invisible to her eyes.

As soon as it had vanished, Sally hurried to the path by which she had descended, clomb along it—her mood growing faster and faster into one of dreaminess and stupor through exhaustion, excitement, and long unrest—and ran along the pathway to Glenheath; the dawn as she ascended the heights growing clearer and brighter.

A singular clinking and jingling as she passed through the shrubbery fell on her ears. She could not think what it was; so ascending a hillock that stood a little out of the usual path she peered thereover at the approaching noise. The red colour of tramping soldiers fell on her eyes, as did also the sheen of their bayonets and muskets. It was the searching party advancing towards the shore. A further glance satisfied her that there was no one with them, for she had some vague idea that they might in failing to find her brother have arrested Norah. Whereupon she secreted herself beneath a tangle of scrub-brush and wood-briar, and waited for them to pass.

How long it seemed until they *did* pass! How interminable was that jingle and clank of bayonet and musket until it came near—came aside—and went by! How heavy was the stupor of sleep that came on her brain, thus waiting—clogging her eyelids and bearing them down with irresistible force! The long unrest of two successive nights was upon her; and as she listened to the retiring steps of the force, to the sounds of military accoutrements lessening in the distance, her head fell unconsciously on her shoulder—and she was fast asleep!

Tired nature asserted itself, and, whatever might be the fortune of Norah and her brother, exacted its debt of repose.



The Fates might weave their web of good or ill fortune for them, whilst Sally slept profoundly in the over-woven thicket—with the daylight brightening and broadening above her!

---

## CHAPTER XIX.

### O'ER THE MIDNIGHT SEA.

WHEN Norah left Glenheath in company with her unknown conductor, it was with an alternate rising and sinking of the heart which she had never previously experienced. At times she looked forward with unbounded joy to the prospect of meeting her brother; at others a feeling that danger was imminent to him overbore the previous hope and depressed her spirits.

Her companion strode silently before her through the darkness, with step so rapid that it took her all her time to keep up with him. It was impossible to get a word with him, even if he were disposed to conversation, which it was evident he was not. But once when the tangled brushwood stopped his way, she came up with him, and gave utterance to the question which was nearest her heart.

“How is George?” she asked, laying her hand on his arm in entreaty.

“Well.”

He muttered the word so indistinctly that it came but vaguely to her ears.

“Where is he?”

“On the shore—waiting for you.”

“Is there anyone with him?”

“Ay, plenty. Friends.”

“Thank God!” was her thanksgiving prayer, as her companion, having found the correct path, moved on—she following.

It was true there were friends with him, for, as she came to the brow whence the path moved downward, voices arose on her ear.

To her great surprise, however, when she reached the shore she was informed he was not there.

"He was here until a few minutes ago," said a man, in a friendly manner, and in a voice that seemed familiar to her.

"My God! Where is he? Can I see him?"

"You can't see him here, Miss Norah. He got afraid to remain longer; for the soldiers have been all day searching the country."

"But where is he? For God's sake take me to him! Let me see him—and speak to him. Where is he?"

"He is in a boat out some distance waiting for you. But if you would be afraid to come there"——

"I am not afraid," said Norah, resolutely. "Take me to him—take me to him."

"That's what George said—you would not be afraid. Step into this boat, and we shall leave you with him in safety in a quarter of an hour or less."

The boat was drawn up beside them, two men were seated therein, their hands on the oars. Delighted at the prospect of so soon meeting her brother, Norah unreluctantly stepped in. The two others followed her.

Out into the night the boat sped. The clouds lay thick and heavy on the breast of the water. Save the surf white that encompassed the boat, there was nothing to shed a ray on the pathless darkness of the Atlantic. A boat might be rocking within a cable's length, and yet be invisible. But with strong and skilful hands—George's friends and helpers—beside her, she was quite confident. The heavy swell of the sea tossed the fragile boat high in the air, then buried her deep down, while the white-crested waves rushed by like phantoms of the night.

For a long time the rowers rowed—for a very long time—so long, indeed, that it attracted her attention; but, knowing how deceptive the time always appears to those whose hearts are filled with eager expectancy, she concluded that the period seemed longer than it really was.

The rowing at last ceased. Indeed, it was with difficulty they kept the oars out for some time past, so high the sea was running. Therefore they stood up to hoist a mainsail and foresail to run before the freshening breeze.

Norah saw their intention and understood it. It meant a long run, and not the merely putting out from land she had expected.

“Where is George?” she asked, gazing around with affright on the dark and rushing water around her. “We should have seen him by this.”

“We hope soon to see him.”

“Why are you going to use sails if he is near?” she asked again.

“His boat is not around now. He must have run for shelter somewhere on the Galway coast.”

“Run for shelter! Where would he have gone to?”

“The nearest and safest place on such a night as this is the Killeries. There is no other place he could go to.”

“The Killeries!” said Norah, with whom the towering ruin had often been a familiar object in the far distance—“that is a long way off. Surely he would not have gone that distance if he expected me! Let me return!”

“We cannot, Miss Norah, you see, the storm has risen rapidly. It has come to blow a half-gale since he went out. There's no place nearer than the ruins of the Killeries where the boat could run in on such a night as this, and with such a sea on.”

“Could he not have put back to Innisbeg?”

“He could; but he didn't. He couldn't now, nor could we.

What would be his use, when he couldn't tell the minut the soldiers would be on his track."

"Will he—will he be sure to be at the Killeries?" asked Norah, grasping at this ray of comfort, and half afraid she might find that, too, a vanishing quantity.

"Yes, certain. Wrap yourself well up in that cloak, and sit still. It will take us all our time to guide the boat in the running sea and these chopping waves. There is not time for talking."

Thus directed—but with uncomfortable sensations at her heart—Norah wrapped the cloak about her, letting the hood of it fall over her face and eyes; for the beating wind caught up the surf and foam from the crests of the waves, and flung it against her with the force of hail. Meantime the little boat cut her way through boiling sea and rushing wind and rayless night, towards the far-away promontory where, with its face to the Atlantic, the ancient Abbey had seen the waters bright with sunshine or tossed with the storm for a thousand years, and had formed a guiding landmark for Western sailors in days forgotten and unremembered.

The place into which Norah was brought we have seen before. The tall, gaunt, weather-beaten tower fronting the sea, baring sullenly its head and breast to the Winter storm and the Northern blast, which whistled shrilly through the naked stone-mullioned windows, is not unfamiliar to us. The windows, opening as they did opposite one another, gave glimpses of the sky to the East, beginning to turn rosy with the dawning light. Behind arose the massive walls of the ruined abbey, upon whose tops the slowly cumulating decay of ages had taken effect, but whose sides outwardly, where they were sheltered, and universally in the interior, were clothed and protected by the mantling ivy.

"Don't cry—don't make a noise—you will see him soon—now here."

Norah looked indeed so pale, frightened, and trembling, as she gazed around after her stormy voyage, that it did not seem at all improbable thing if a cry of dismay should burst from her lips.

“Why here?” asked Norah, as she looked around the bare coast, on which no skiff could land without risk and remain without danger. “I see no boat around.”

“He was to run here if the night grew stormy.”

“Here?”

“It is the only safe place on the coast for landing—and for him. No one would think of searching for him among these ruins.”

“I don't see his boat. Are you sure we shall find him here?”

“Yes, certainly. Move quicker, please, lest any eye from the sea might detect us. We are not safe till we are inside.”

Thus urged, Norah exerted herself to climb the shingly path that lead up to the uninviting walls before her. Her knees and ankles were tired from the constraint of sitting in the one position; and the cold of the gale, that frosted the breast of the Atlantic with surf, had rendered her stiff and numb. It was a striking change from the comfort that reigned beneath the roof of Glenheath Cottage, but Norah had no thought of murmuring at her discomfort; it was all for George, and there was none other of her kith and kin living. Why should she hesitate to make whatever sacrifices for his safety were necessary?

Norah did not put this question to herself, as she passed through the broken arches and under the mantling ivy. She never thought of it at all. She was too much elated with the prospect of seeing her brother. But it was quite as much in her mind as if she did. And when she entered the apartment, wherein we have stood before, with the platform of the tomb for a table, her heart rejoiced to see the great fire

blazing on its hearth and to think that there was some comfort, at the hands of friends, in store for the hunted fugitive.

A white cloth—that would have looked like a shroud or a winding sheet if Norah only knew what lay beneath it—covered the table. The logs, as we have said, burned welcome on the hearth. An old woman sat somewhat apart from the blazing fire, evidently tending preparations for breakfast, and bestirred herself hastily as the girl entered.

The door closed on the outside and Norah was quite alone with her.

She looked around for her brother, as if expecting to see him somewhere.

“You’re tired, *alanna*,” said the old woman, noticing her slender figure—as slight and graceful as if she had been a sea nymph strayed from the foam outside—and her pallid and delicate face. “Take off your cloak and rest; warm yourself by the fire.”

“Where is George? Where is my brother?” hastily inquired Norah.

“Your brother—what brother?” replied the old dame, answering her question by asking another—and in tones which showed her complete ignorance of the pretence which had lured the girl hither.

“Isn’t he here? Where is he?”

“Is it Mr. Harden, dear?”

“I mean my brother—George Desmond; isn’t he here?” inquired the anxious girl with amazement. The name mentioned bore no cognisance to her ear. Her whole thoughts were centred on her brother, and for the other name her wandering brain had no attention.

“No, dear. There was no wan of that name here. But there is wan to be here soon that you’ll be glad to see.”

“Who is he?” Norah asked hurriedly, and in the moment half a dozen acquaintances of her brother’s rushed with the

rapidity of lightning across her thoughts. "Who is he? Do let me see him."

"He won't be here, alanna, for a couple of hours more," said the old woman, mistaking completely the anxiety displayed in Norah's hurried question. "But he'll come in good time, dear—an' others wid him you won't be sorry to see. 'Twas he made this place so comfortable for you, an' knowin' that you'd be cowl'd and perished tould me to have this fire and"—

"Who are you talking of? What are you speaking about?" asked Norah, with a dim perception dawning on her which—suspense being always worse than full knowledge—made her shudder where she stood.

"Who am I speaking of, aron? Who but wan that loves you dearly—wan that would give the apple of his eye for the smallest bit of that necklace you have around your neck, because it touched you."

"Woman, what are you thinking of?" asked Norah, shaking off in one violent effort her previous doubts as sense of unknown insults stirred her blood into warmth and made her on the instant throw off every feeling of shivering chill. "Stand up and tell where is he—my brother. Open the door and let me see him!"

Without waiting for the old hag to do as she bade her, Norah rushed to the door to open it herself. But it was closed—fast and firmly closed.

With the feeling that it was, a further perception flashed on her—a perception that she had been deceived, misled; that she had been brought here by dreadful trickery, and that there was no George in question now or at any time.

With the full flush of this knowledge instinctively upon her she stood still, her hands upon the panels of the ancient door, which, if it had been built of iron panels and bolted with bars of triple steel, could not have been more securely fastened,

so far as she was concerned. A rush of blood in affright to her heart and head, a vague dread that she was about to swoon, overcame her, and, for a short time, turned her into a moveless statue. But with a vigorous effort—perhaps begotten of her innate modesty, perhaps of the sense that it was imperatively necessary to keep control of her faculties, but both arising from impulse more than from any process of reasoning—she combated the feeling, and overcame it; not without a struggle, however, that manifested itself in the deadly pallor of her face and the curious colour that blended itself with the deep blue of her eyes.

“Woman!” she cried, advancing in rapid steps to the old hag, “answer me. Where is my brother, and why am I here?”

“I don’t know anything about your brother, acushla,” said the old woman, who had been watching her movements with a vague surprise not unmixed with alarm. “I don’t know anythink about him. I never heard ov him, my dear. But I tould you that there would be—and so there will—wan here by-an’-by that is fond of you as the day is long, and that worships the very ground you walk upon; that will make you a brave lady with”——

“Are you raving, woman? Do you know what you are saying, or to whom you are speaking?”

“Dear, dear,” cried the old woman, soothingly, “don’t be afeard. Many a one got married afore; an’ though their friends didn’t”——

“Married!” cried Norah, her present strength giving way to a recurrence of terror that made her tremble in every muscle.

“Ay, indeed,” replied the other in a more confiding tone, wholly mistaking the trembling fit she could not help noticing in the fragile form before her, “an’ there’s many a grand lady wid lands and gold would be glad ov the hour when Mr. Harden”——



“Who? What name did you say?”

“Harden. Mr. Taylor Harden.”

“What is that you said of him?” asked Norah, catching up but indistinctly her words.

“He'll be here to meet you to-day, acushla.”

Norah leaned against the wall, unable to speak—in unutterable dismay and terror.

“Ay, acushla, an' it's the lucky girl you'll be when he makes you his wife to-day.”

“Let me out, woman—let me out of this!” cried Norah, on whom for the first time the scheme by which she had been inveigled broke on her in all its naked and undiminished horror.

“Let me out. How dare you keep me a prisoner here! Let me out, I say. Open this door at once—open it, I command you!”

“Acushla, don't now; be peaceable! There is no harm to come to you. It's many is the girl that 'ud be glad to”——

“Come here, woman!” cried Norah, with a vigour to which her paroxysm of terror lent superhuman force, and seeking to push the old woman towards the door. “You have the key of this door; open it and let me out! I shall not be kept—you dare not keep me—a prisoner here. You and others will have to answer for this.”

“Acushla, where would you go to?” said the old woman, resisting, and successfully, the rapidly failing efforts of the imprisoned girl.

“Anywhere—anywhere, in the name of God! from here.”

“There is not a house athin two miles of this, and the rain is falling and the storm beating—hearken to it!”

She pointed upwards where the window, or the aperture that did duty for one, adjoining the roof, gave token of the storm. It was the only entrance save the chimney, through which light and air were admitted, and now, if Norah's ears could lend themselves to so small a matter, the wind and the

storm could be heard howling and whistling therethrough. But she heard none of it.

"Let me out! Let me go—for the love of God, let me go?"

Norah in her weakness fell on her knees.

"You'd lose your life, acushla. There wouldn't be a dry stitch on you afore you'd go two fields away."

"I won't feel the rain or the storm. I'll bless your name for ever if you let me go from this," pleaded Norah, her waning strength having now quite departed. "Surely you must have someone belonging to you that if not now, did need once, protection—for their sakes free me! Surely, surely you must have some human nature, some womanly feeling—if you have, then, in the name of God! let me out of this!"

"Acushla, I haven't the key; an' if I had a self it isn't out in the storm an' peltin' rain I'd let you go—to lose your life. Them that brought you here 'ill come by-an'-by, and then"——

A cry of affright that might have stirred the sleeping dead in their graves burst from the lips of the bewildered girl, as she sank into the chair, and bent her head in a shivering paroxysm of horror on the singular table before her.

How long she remained thus she did not know. She had no remembrance or conception thereof. With her head bent on the cloth, she took no notice of passing time, till a semi-consciousness that the apartment, in which she was confined, had darkened still further, came on her eyes!

She started up, only to find, with unutterable horror, that the blazing logs had burned down; that their flickering light, intermingled with that coming through the windowless aperture overhead, created, as is always the case where artificial light and daylight commingle, a dim and weird medium which added to the gloom of the place.

Further, to find that the *old woman was gone!*

Whatever repugnance Norah had to the companionship of the old jailor, her presence for many reasons was preferable to her absence. Not to speak of other dangers appertaining to her present state, the sudden sense of loneliness was not only insupportable but maddening. Norah flew to the door, but it was, as before, firmly fastened and bolted.

With a strange sense that some further deceit awaited her—for she had not heard the door opening or closing—she rushed back to the table, and raised the breakfast cloth that covered it, with some vague dread and belief that the old woman was hiding thereunder.

If anything further could add to the terror she already felt it was the sight of the tomb beneath.

This was the climax of her terrors!

All alone in this semi-cavernous apartment—this gloomy den, with the dim, weird lights interweaving themselves into ghostly shadows; with the mockery of breakfast things laid out as if it were a funeral banquet; with the white cloth—emblematic of a shrouded corpse beneath—thereon; with the sudden discovery of a tomb thereunder containing what her rapidly fading senses forbade her even to conjecture; it was but little wonder that from her white lips there burst a succession of agonising peals.

Her weakness and terror were rapidly turning into frenzy and madness!

“Father—father! save me! George, come to me! I am dying of terror! O Father, come out of your grave and help me! O God! look down on me. O Mary, help of the afflicted, come to my aid!”

Her voice failed. The massive walls and stone roof sullenly echoed the appealing cries—and seemed to have absorbed them again, so suddenly they died out in the gloomy silence of the vault! But the dust, which the suddenly and sharply perturbed atmosphere of the cave displaced from

ancient nook and arched roof, had scarcely time to settle, nor the echoes to sink into the drowning depths of the walls, when a key was turned in the door and a form entered!

The fresh light—fresh, even of this murky and miserable day, by contrast with the unspeakable gloom of the noisome vault, came in with the opening of the door; and a kindly voice, beautiful and sweet in her welcoming ears as would have been an angel's words from Paradise, broke the silence of the solemn and noiseless abode:

“Norah! Norah darling! for the love of heaven, is it here you are?”

---

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE RESGUE.

WHEN Sally awoke from her profound sleep she had but little consciousness of where she was. All sorts of curious fancies cropped up before her, half dreams, half realities; and lost friends, armed men, strange lights, boats, precipices, guns, bayonets, danced an endless reel in her head even at the moment of waking.

Where she was when she opened her eyes she had no conception of, nor of what had brought her there. So many extraordinary things flashed into her thoughts that she could not distinguish fancies from realities. She thought at first she was in the parlour of Glenheath, with voices in conversation around her. Her bewildered eyes showed her that the first portion of her supposition was, for the present, for some inexplicable reason wrong, but she became at once clear that the second portion was correct. There *were* voices talking beside her; and whilst yet endeavouring to recollect herself she instinctively lay still to avoid discovery, and listened.

Indeed, whether she intended to listen—which she did not—she could not do otherwise than hear, they were so close.

“Well, you are in for it now, and must bear the consequences,” said one of the voices in conversation.

“The consequences, you assured me yourself, would be of the slightest,” said the other.

I fear, Mr. Harden, you misrecollect me there. I did not say—nor would you, a lawyer, believe me if I did—that the consequences would be of the slightest. Quite the contrary. They are deadly and dangerous.”

“Not here—elsewhere. You told me that it was a custom of the place.”

“If I remember aright, I think I told, quite unintentionally, a story which showed the fortunate ending of a case of the kind once. You took the matter up, and adapted it to your own purposes. You asked me to assist you. And I did. And it is done.”

“But you were not to let my name appear in it.”

“I don’t believe that you recollect aright when you say so. I promised to provide you with a safe hand on whom you could rely, I have done so. I could not run the risk myself for no purpose. I introduced him to you. He suited you. Your money has paid him. Your money has paid the others. What more?”

“I confess I don’t see, after all, the force of this discussion nor its use.”

“Nor I. I only made the remarks you suggested yourself. The girl is carried away, and I have faithfully performed my agreement.”

“She is in Grey Arran?”

“She is. Better known, perhaps, as The Killeries.”

“There is no doubt of that?”

“None whatever. The messenger has returned. You can speak to him.”

“Where is he?”

“In a cave on the shore, where his boat is drawn up; or in his house, where you saw him before.”

“But I do not care to see him now.”

“Why you have seen him already. He may wish—probably does—more reward. Men of his character are insatiable for money. I should recommend you to see him.”

“I should prefer not. He does not know me—did not when I spoke to him last. Neither did he want to—all he wanted was the reward.”

“For which he was greedy enough, I warrant you.”

“Yes; you gave me a faithful account enough of him when you said he was perfectly reckless, and that all he wanted was money. He never asked for my name nor anything concerning myself.”

“I fancy I did give a true account,” said the other, with a laugh whose insincerity smote more harshly on Sally’s listening ears than if he had spoken in a voice hoarse with passion. In truth, without seeing the speakers, their voices and their manners told her that it was the same two whose conversation she had been an equally accidental listener to in Galway. “I seldom mistake my man. But if you think he does not know *you*, you are mistaken. He knows you well. These people are more keen and quick-witted than you think. A stranger cannot come around here, cannot dally for days along the shore, without being the mark for a hundred eager and watchful eyes.”

“I did not know that before.”

“You might readily have guessed it. I doubt if a stranger, foreign in manners and appearance to the residents, could walk the most crowded thoroughfare in Dublin for days—could loiter purposely about all the time—without being noticed. That being so there, how much more so here?”

“I thought you promised to effect this matter for me without observation and in secrecy?”

“I could not promise what was impossible to perform. I gave you introduction to one who would, I assured you, suit your purpose. You employed him. There’s an end of it. I did not recommend the transaction, remember—I did not even approve of it; but you willed it and I aided you—aided you, let me add, in so far innocently, that I acceded to your wishes by introducing you to your present friend.”

“Friend!” cried the other, indignantly.

“Friend. I fancy that is the word. At least I think he would be rather angry if you made him think otherwise, and his anger at this moment might lead to unpleasant consequences.”

“What should be done—ah—under the circumstances?” inquired the other, hesitatingly, not noticing or at least not caring to notice, the menacing import of the latter words.

“Why, I suppose you are not going to abandon the pursuit—not going to give the girl up?”

“Not with my life,” said the other, fiercely. “All the obstacles and interruptions and dangers that place themselves or are placed in my way, only impel me the more to make her my wife. Once she is, I am safe. No danger arises from anyone but from herself. No danger can arise thereafter.”

“No! Truly none. A simple, affectionate, winsome girl like her is not likely to raise strife against her wedded husband.”

“Don’t you think, then, we have been giving way to a good deal of idle talk?”

“I have no doubt of it, but I merely answered your questions. Wherefore I think—excuse me whilst I light a fresh cigar—that you had better see about completing the arrangements by calling on your friend. There is no time to be lost.”

"Perhaps so. You will come with me?"

"Yes. At least as far as the cliffs. You do not of course wish me to be a witness of your private transactions, and if I may use the term, business arrangements; nor do I want to implicate myself should matters go astray, in a dangerous business in which I have—and can have—but a friendly interest."

"I must reach the Killeries to-day."

"Not to-day—to-night. There might be more danger than necessary in going there in the day-time."

"There is no danger of her escaping?"

"Oh, none whatever."

"Nor of her communicating intelligence to anyone?"

"Nor of that either."

"Shall I go by boat?"

"Why, no; I should think not. Why should you? I have provided relays of horses to bring you there, or at least sufficiently near to provide against detection by twelve o'clock to-night. You will find all parties ready to meet you there"——

"Including a clergyman?"

"Of course, or one who for the nonce will do as well. Meantime, however, I would recommend you to oblige your friend and fee him handsomely if need be. If the fair Norah should prove reluctant"——

"And if she should?"

"Why, then, *if* she should, I think it essential, most essential, that you should keep him well on your side; and, in the next place"——

Henry O'Donnell paused, not from any hesitation as to the language he should use, or that he had any doubt as to what to say, but simply that his pause might give weight and significance to what he purposed to add. With a keen perception, peculiar to one of his cunning nature, he saw that the



lawyer, in his infatuation for the girl that had rejected him, had placed himself strongly in the power of the law, and consequently in his own power. A strain of malignant satisfaction and revenge, as he bethought of the lawyer's conversation at the Galway Hotel—which the concealed listener remembered thoroughly well, too—was evident in his words, and his exultancy was with difficulty restrained. It was as if he were saying, "I wish you joy of your mortgage bond now; see what good it will do you!"

"And in the next place," suggested the lawyer, as his companion paused.

"In the next place, if that be so, my impression is that you ought to put the sea between yourself and Ireland immediately. Whilst the abduction of a willing girl—or one who afterwards consents—is not of, perhaps, much consequence, the law, as you are aware, looks on it with serious face when it is a forced and unwilling matter. Besides, have you heard that her brother, having got free from gaol, is in the neighbourhood? One who had the courage and daring to force his way through solid walls and iron bars for his own personal liberty, is not likely to stay his hands when his sister's honour is concerned. But we have talked long enough. More is useless and idle. Let us go on. Have a cigar? These are good ones."

The parties left without further speaking, and, when their footsteps had died away in the distance, Sally crept from her position into the light of day.

"It couldn't be—no, no, it couldn't! It surely couldn't," thought she, as with true feminine instinct she arranged the folds of her dress, and smoothed down the tresses of her hair, before taking any further steps. "No, it couldn't be of Norah they were speaking! Could it be, I wonder? But I'll call to the cottage first. I'll see whether Norah is at home or not. God protect her! God save us! who is this?"

It was with no small amount of alarm that Sally, the while she soliloquised to herself, felt a hand laid on her shoulder—for she heard no step near her. Turning around, her fears, though not her sense of annoyance, were allayed as she perceived beside her—Ned Flaherty.

“What in the world brings you here, Sally?”

“What brings me here?” iterated Sally, offendedly. “What brings me anywhere? Because I like. Who is to stop me?”

Sally's annoyance arose not from meeting or seeing Ned, who was a stalwart, presentable fellow enough, but from the fact that he had met her under such embarrassing circumstances—had caught her at a disadvantage, in fact, in point of dress and appearance—an unforgivable offence for a woman of any age.

“I didn't mean to offend you, Sally,” he said—“only that I didn't expect to see you here.”

“Well, I suppose you were not asked to expect—here or anywhere,” said Sally, whose embarrassment added to her annoyance.

“Well, no, I suppose not,” said Ned, taken much aback by her unceremonious reception and her failure to respond to his warm greeting—“I suppose not, but I am glad to see you for all that. They were wondering where you were or where you had gone to at the cottage.”

“Were *you* at the cottage?” asked Sally, her interest in his conversation rapidly deepening.

“I was, and there was great uneasiness as to where yourself and Norah had gone. Faith, I thought you might have been lost in the storm last night—it blew so strong and so wild.”

“You don't say Norah hasn't gone back?” said the girl, earnestly.

“Faix, I thought you'd have known that at about your having to ask *me*. Weren't you with her? Didn't yourself and—

and—George,” said Ned, sinking his voice to a whisper, “go for her, an’ didn’t you all stay out together? And here I find you now alone,” said Ned, in a state of bewilderment, “in the mornin’, with the sun high in the skies, askin’ me if Norah came back. What does it mean? What is it all about?—for I can’t understand it,” said the young fellow, who appeared to have caught up Sally’s irritability and to grow annoyed as she grew softened and friendly.

“Ned,” said Sally, after a long pause in which her mind was apparently revolving something very far from his perplexed questions, “you’re a good sailor—aren’t you?”

“Am I?” said he, unsatisfiedly.

“So everyone says. The best in Clare or Galway or the islands round. Storm or calm there is no hand so sure as yours, Ned, at the tiller, or so safe. That’s what everyone says of you; and I’m sure it’s true—and I don’t doubt it, Ned; and you must do me a favour now, if you were never to do me another. You must bring me across to Grey-Arran as fast as ever it is possible for you to do it.”

“Grey-Arran,” cried Ned, forgetting his late annoyance and perplexity in the surprise occasioned by this extraordinary request—“Grey-Arran, Sally? What are you thinking of? Do you know where it is? Do you know it is there the Killeries are?”

“To Grey-Arran,” said Sally, fixedly, “you must bring me as fast as your boat can go.”

“Why, it’s twelve miles from point to point, as the crow flies.”

“If it were fifty—five hundred—I must go,” said Sally, with a fixedness that made the young fellow think she was getting dazed.

“What for, Sally? What would bring you—even if you could go—which is impossible—to Grey-Arran such a day as this? Do you know what sort of a place it is? Faix, it’s an

old ruin on the point of a rock, an' the face of a living thing except a seagull you wouldn't see, during the twenty-four hours, around it; and if a blade of grass was to give you shelter from the storm, sorra shelter nor protection you could get for two miles inland."

"I tell you, Ned, I must go—and *you* must bring me. If ever you were prepared to do anything for me—and I'm sure you would once, Ned"—Sally dropped her excited manner, drooped her eyes, and blushed in a most distractingly confused and abashed way—so much so, indeed, that if she had not very quickly raised her eyes again Ned would have felt himself impelled to at once clasp her in his arms—"you must take me there. And without a minute's loss of time."

"But look at the day it is, Sally! Look at the storm that is blowing! Look at the white surf out for miles. See these black clouds with white edges that are flying across the sky from the West! These are storms, more storms—rain an' wind, Sally. It would be as much as your life is worth to tempt the sea to-day."

"Not with you, Ned—not with you," said Sally, with bewitching confidence and coaxingness.

"With anyone. The skilfullest hand that ever handled a tiller or jibed a sail wouldn't have a lease of his life at any time for five minutes, in such a sea as is running yonder. It would be little better than murder—that's what it would be—a tempting of Providence, and for no purpose."

"For a great purpose, Ned—for a most urgent and important purpose. For one that won't brook a minute's delay."

"You must be dreaming, Sally. What purpose could anyone have in the Killeries?" asserted, more than asked, the young fisherman, as he glanced with much concern at the anxious and excited face of the young girl, whose dark curling tresses the wind had now tossed over her face in most attractive confusion. "I tell you once for all—I won't tempt

the sea that runs between this and the Killeries, though it were to win the Queen of England's throne."

"You must go—an' you will go—Ned, though it blew as it never blew before since the winds were made, and though the sea ran higher and wilder than ever it did before about Innisbeg. Whisper me, Ned," said Sally, after a brief pause of consideration. "I'll tell you the reason why you must go. Whisper me!"

He bent his head downwards to catch her words, when Sally, throwing her arms around his neck, placed her lips to his ear and whispered something.

Judging from the change that came over his face, and the look of the most extraordinary surprise, coupled with a shade of horror, that grew in his eyes, it was clear the communication was very startling and unexpected. So much so, indeed, that when Sally had ceased her revelation, and in releasing his neck from her folded arms bestowed a kiss on his lips, I doubt if Ned Flaherty knew of or attended to the incident—though under any other circumstances the greeting would not have passed unnoticed or unreciprocated—so much put out of his usual way of thinking was he!

"This is awful, Sally."

"Scandalous—shameful—that's what it is!"

"You're quite sure it is true?"

"Do you see the white surf yonder?"

"I do."

"And these white and black clouds flying across the face of the sky?"

"Yes."

"As sure as the one or the other—as sure as that white sea is before you, or the flying clouds above you—and as true as the one or the other! You're the only one to save her—to keep harm and trouble from the poor girl."

"That's enough, Sally, it must be done. The scoundrels!"

to think of such a thing the first night her father was in the clay!"

"Don't speak of them—they're monsters! But, Ned, like a good fellow, don't lose time. Every moment is precious, and time is running by. Where is your boat?"

"In the Burne-cove."

"We'll go there at once."

"But I must get someone with me, Sally. I could not face that sea without another hand."

"You must bring no one but yourself. It must be kept a secret. What would be said if it were known? Who could explain her absence last night, or how many would explain it truly? There must be no talk—for poor Norah's sake—about it, and so you must come alone."

Ned saw that she was right. If it once became known that the fair girl whose blue eyes formed so sweet a centre of attraction at Glenheath had been away from her house all night, ugly rumours hard to get under and hard to contradict might get afloat. Evil tongues—and where are they not to be found?—would soon weave a web of scandal around her that not all her handsome presence or sweet innocence could effectually or completely dispel.

"Maybe you're right, Sally; but," he added, as he looked at the long roll of the white-crested waves breaking in from the Atlantic, "it is no use thinking of doing it alone. At the least it would require two—one to manage the sails and the other to mind the rudder."

"Don't mind that, Ned," said Sally cheerfully, "I shall take care of the rudder."

"You, Sally?" said Ned, with a smile of admiring dissent gathering in his eyes.

"Yes," said Sally, confidently, "certainly. It would not be my first or my fortieth time to hold the helm. Well you know that."

“Not on such a day as this—not on such a day as this, Sally.”

“No, nor on such an occasion as this. Think of it, Ned—think of Norah! Wouldn't it be better to run any danger than leave her where she is, wid scoundrels around and about her? Would you ever sleep an easy wink, or”——

“That'll do, Sally. Jump in there! Steady there now while I get the boat ready. Take the rudder there, while I shove her out and hoist the sails. Now, Sally, hold that rudder fast. Whenever you see the sails taut as sheet-iron under the wind, keep the helm so; when they get loose bring it to the right. And see! yonder beyond that distant point—you can hardly see it through the mist and haze and beating surge—is the Killeries. Keep the head of the boat straight in the direction of the point as far as you can make it out, and keep your hand steady and your heart up. Here goes, in the name of God!”

He pushed the boat out into the water, and jumped into it, and whilst it rocked and tossed on the boiling waters, ran up the mainsail and foresail—which, catching the gale instantaneously, made her bound through the foam into the high waves beyond. Thence in the teeth of the storm that howled, and the huge waves that ran, and the briny spray that swept against their faces with the force of hail, they faced for the Killeries; she sitting steadily at the helm, her eye ever resting on the sails at the vessel's prow and the distant headland; he kneeling on one knee, the rope of the mainsail in his hand ready to let go and tack round when the urgency of the moment demanded it, but never for a moment deflecting his attention from the distant point and the rushing waves beside him.

Brave hearts and strong intentions can accomplish miracles. Resolute determination is the great miracle-worker of latter days; and—howling wind and mountain waves to the

contrary—Sally's heart leaped for joy as, through the gray salt mist that swept in thick swathes upon her, she discerned, quite near, the surf upon the mossy stones of the point; and—immediately after—raising their desolate walls in lonely and ruined magnificence, the Abbey of Grey-Arran, otherwise known as the Killeries.

They ran into a sheltered nook, where the shoulder of a projecting rock threw off the waves, and left the waters within in peace.

Leaving her companion in the boat, and with directions under no circumstances to stir from the place, but to listen to any call or appeal to him that she might make, Sally scrambled on shore, made her way with difficulty over the wet and slippery rocks, and thence over the *debris* of the once magnificent pile until she came within the actual walls.

But, save the storm that howled through the desolate ruin, or shook the masses of ivy, there was no sign of living thing around!

Peering through every broken arch, into every ruined window—which gave light only upon the sleeping abodes of the forgotten dead—slipping and falling over tombstones, long trodden smooth and now slippery as ice with rain and damp moss—calling at intervals, when the storm hushed for a moment, and listening intently for some answering cry—which at first she thought she had heard just as the rising gale again shook the place and carried the sound away, but which her second thoughts told her was only an illusion on her part—Sally anxiously, disappointedly, and not without spasms of fear, continued her peregrination through the ruins.

There was no one there. No sign of tenantable place in that vast area of ruins presented itself to her eye. No sound of human voice came out of its loneliness.

Dismayed with her want of success, and filled with the frightfullest conjectures as to what had become of Norah,



Sally was about to return for advice to where Ned sat rocking in his boat awaiting her.

Casting her eyes in one last look around, she was preparing to face seawards, when, out from the sky—from the ivy above her head, from the summit of the walls, from the ancient bell-room that had stood the wearing effects of ages—from somewhere that Sally for the moment could not distinguish, but at any rate from some place above her—came a cry that, far stronger than the storm-noise, smote on her ears! Full as the cry was of agony, charged as it was with its burthen of affright and terror, Sally knew it.

“Norah!”

Her own feeble cry—feeble as compared with that whose intensity rang on her ear—was blown away on the gale, and was little more than audible to her own ears. At the moment that she was about to repeat it her eyes fell on the heavy masses of ivy in the corner blown about by the wind. A door disclosed itself, so worn and weather beaten and rough and corroded as to be scarcely distinguishable to any eye less anxious and searching than her's. She flew towards it. In the door stood a key.

It was from this place that the cry must have come that startled her—although it seemed to have come from overhead.

Without a moment's hesitation, Sally turned the key and opened it. There was disclosed to her view a dark room—thoroughly dark save for the light that came through an aperture in the top, and from which, as the light attracted her eye, she instinctively knew that the cry had come!—and in the perplexing gloom, sitting asleep or dead or swooning, was the scarcely distinguishable figure of a young girl!

“Norah! Norah darling! for the love of heaven is it here you are? How are you? Waken up. It's I—Sally. You'll smother here, my pet. Do you hear me? Come with

me. I came for you. Stand up and lean on me. Ah! you're not able to stand. I'll carry you. The air and the rain on your face and forehead will do you good!"

Norah knew the voice that spoke to her; but her exhausted nerves did not enable her to lift herself out of the seat into which she had sunk. She suffered herself passively to be carried in the stout arms of the other to the open air, where, as Sally had said, the wind blowing on her face and the cold rain beating on her neck and temples, soon restored her to consciousness.

"Now, my dear, you must come with me as fast as you can," said Sally, as she stepped back to lock the door and fling the key through the long, tangled weeds. "I knew the open air would make you all right. Get up your strength, pet, and you will soon be in your home at Glenheath. And George is all right, my dear. And you'll see him too. And there!—Good heavens! What is that? Who spoke?"

---

## CHAPTER XXI.

WITH WALTON AGAIN.

WHEN Maurice recovered from the surprise created by his rapid seizure, and transference on board the ship, he had abundance of time to think. Knowing, however, that any efforts of his own would be useless to solve the mystery of their arrest, and wisely determining to let the future unfold itself, he stretched himself on a seat and fell asleep.

"It is not possible it is you I see!" were the words that met his ear, as, shaking himself drowsily, he woke from his slumber.

The sun was high in the skies, and the barque, with all sails set, was gliding, under the influence of a freshening breeze,

across the broad breast of the smiling Atlantic. The horizon swept around in unbroken circle, and no sign of land lay within it. They must have been sailing all the night and through the morning—whilst he slept.

“It is not possible it is you I see!” repeated the speaker, whilst Maurice took in these surroundings with a rapid glance of his eyes.

“What!—you—Captain Walton!” was the astonished exclamation of Maurice as the well-remembered tones drew his gaze on the speaker’s face.

It was indeed Walton, nor was his surprise much less than that of Maurice.

“I did not expect to have the pleasure of your company,” the former said, after the first warm greeting was over, “so soon. Though I certainly intended it, later on. I had hoped for quite another arrival. But as you are come, why you are trebly welcome.”

They had much to speak of, and Maurice learned, with no little surprise, that it was indeed his adventurous friend that was present on the grounded frigate; that was present on board the *Monitor*; and that was within the gates of Fortress Monroe.

“If it had not been for your presence, Maurice, we should have made the *Monitor* leap sky high out of the water this day, having first learned the secret of her construction. But I could not bear to send my old friend of the *Georgia* into eternity without warning. Once was enough to be blown into the air. The Federal Government will never know how much they owe to their prisoner. But you have not seen my ship—a tidy little vessel, ain’t she?” asked Walton, with an indolent glance around at the clean, white decks, with their burnished brass fittings, the tall tapering masts that lifted themselves daintily into the air, and the white sails that glowed again in the morning sun.

Maurice's eye followed him in great admiration of the trim—and, if the word could be applied to it—"aristocratic," look of the barque.

"She is fit to carry an ambassador."

"Yes," said Walton, again laughing at the enthusiastic character of the reply, "she *is* a dainty little thing. What is more to the point, she is a good sailor, and, being clipper-yacht built, is able to cross the Atlantic like a greyhound. She can run away—really and truly she can—from one of those slow-ploughing steamers."

"Where are you going now?" asked Maurice, after a pause.

"To England—London. There are matters of much moment to be attended to there. You have no objection?"

"I dare say I have no choice," said Maurice, laughing; "my coming aboard was not of the most ceremonious. I do not seem to have much hand in the regulation of my own future."

During the voyage Maurice learned how Walton had saved himself the night of the explosion. How coming up under the lee of a boat from the water, he had hidden himself under her side from the falling masses of *débris* that filled the air, and had afterwards swam silently ashore—the only man of the crew that brought his life out of the disaster!

Maurice was amazed at the richness and magnificence of the vessel. He had never before seen or conceived anything so very beautiful. The furniture of the captain's cabin was of the richest description. The Brussels carpet gave under the feet like the grassy heath of a mountain lawn, the doors and panelling were of polished mahogany, and the hangings that lined the windows were of finest silk. Even the carvings seemed to have been done with limitless care and taste; and it was perfectly clear that the question of expense was one that never entered into the builder's head, so careful and elegant was every particular.

If the rich housings of the captain's cabin attracted Maurice's admiration, the massive and costly silver service at the breakfast-table did not the less bespeak attention for itself. Richly chased and ornamented with curious filagree work, it looked the perfection of wealth and good taste. The rarest china, so thin and delicate that it seemed made from the yellow foam of the surf on some sunny tropical strand, formed the cups. A figured scroll-work, which he took for a crest, on the burnished surface of the silver, attracted his attention.

"I did not think you adopted crests in Republican America?"

"Not usually. That is rather a fancy of my own. Examine it more closely."

"It is rather a plain design, as far as I can make it out, though very beautifully done."

"It is exquisitely done. Do you see any of the marks of European heraldry there?"

"No. I do not recognise any."

"Well, there is, nevertheless. That is a coat of arms and a crest that was high in the world of princely power and chivalry when Guelph and Hapsburg were clothed in skins leading swine and living on acorns. That crest is the crest of a famous Irish family, from whom I chance to be descended."

"I did not think you were of Irish descent."

"I am, nevertheless. So are many of the great Southern families."

"Singular," said O'Donnell, "how widely our Irish race is scattered—turning up in the most singular places."

"Why, you must remember, O'Donnell, that all our American people, more especially those that have long settled, and in consequence have grown in power and position, are descended from Irish or English or Scotch families—save and

except the old French settlers, who still, in many cases, hold to their ancient language, traditions, and customs."

"I see the letter 'D' intertwined in your crest."

"That was an idea of my own. The family from whom I claim descent by the mother's side is that of Desmond—a family, as I said before, old as Irish history itself."

"Desmond!" said O'Donnell, with a smile and a perceptible start.

"Yes. Do you know the name?"

"I know some bearing the name very well."

"In Galway?"

"Yes."

"Some of my relatives have been living there. But I have not heard of them for many years."

"If those that I know are relatives of yours, you would have reason to be proud of them," said Maurice, eagerly.

"What sort are they?"

"Sort is hardly the word to apply. They are two—brother and sister. The young fellow is brave, affable, and chivalrous—his sister simply divine."

"A pretty enthusiastic description," said Walton, laughing.

"And as true as enthusiastic," said Maurice, warmly.

"Divine, you say? A rare face to sketch," added the other, laughing still. "You are clever at sketching. I have seen some of your etchings. What say you to sketching her face, if you remember it?"

"Remember it? I should think I do. There is seldom a whole hour that it is out of my thoughts."

"Oh! that's how it is—eh? Well, there are drawing materials. Let me see what face arises under your hand."

O'Donnell needed no pressing. He drew the paper towards him, and with rapid hand outlimned a face. A face fair and rounded; with soft, pouting lip; of rare winsomeness; and with eyes that seemed a marvel of enchanting beauty and innocence.

"Why, that is an angel's face you are drawing," cried Walton, in a burst of enthusiasm.

"It is a true likeness, I flatter myself," said O'Donnell, pleased with the implied compliment to his skill and Norah's loveliness.

"If that face were older I would say it was the face of my dear mother you were sketching," said Walton, softly, as he gazed again at the speaking likeness before him. "The eyes and mouth, making allowance for the difference of age, are wonderfully alike."

"What a singular thing if I were really sketching the face of one who was a relation of yours. But I see a 'B' interwoven here with the 'D,' pointing again to the crest. "That is not your initial."

"Not of Walton, certainly."

"Then that is not your name," said Maurice, suddenly remembering the conversation with Lorrimer and the General in Fortress Monroe.

"I go—as do many other Southernns just now—under a variety of names. Walton will do for the present," said he, evasively. "But to return to the crest. Yonder is a nigger bearing a bale of cotton. In the foreground is the planter's residence, with the verandah around."

"I think it is a happy description."

"It is. And a happy scene. It is to preserve that home-peacefulness that the South is sending her sons to form a ring of fire around her borders. And it is to aid that that I am now crossing the sea."

"I must say travelling is not at all unpleasant with these surroundings," said Maurice, in admiration of the richness and taste displayed around him.

"I had the yacht built especially for that purpose. It was intended for happier times. I have been all through the Mediterranean in her, and have crossed the Pacific to the coast

of China. Rare enjoyment there has been within the wooden walls of this cabin, I can tell you."

"I can well believe it," said Maurice, heartily.

The voyage was somewhat delayed by adverse winds, but the day came at last when the white cliffs of Dover came on their view; and not long after they furled their sails, as the tug-boat brought their vessel to the wharfage at London docks.

All this time no further word had passed between the captain and his young companion as to the object which the former had in coming to England. Nor, indeed, did it occur to the latter to ask. After the novelty of the life at sea wore off, his thoughts reverted with increasing force to Arranmore, and to the dear, sweet face in Glenheath Cottage. How he pictured her walking under the trees, or stopping to bend over the opening roses to watch the wondrous beauty of their unfolding petals! How, in imagination, he contrasted their richer colours with the dainty bloom on her cheeks and the marble tints of her fair white hand! Hour after hour and day after day, as the good barque pursued her lonely course, he sat at the prow thinking of these things and calling up old memories and incidents. Many a time and oft his eyes saw in the dividing waters that coursed by the side of the vessel naught but the vision of Norah Desmond, and in the sparkling sunbeams that leaped from the sea but the diamond sparkle of her blue eyes. One outcome there was to all these reveries—the determination, come what might, to see Ireland and Norah as soon again as might be after he landed in England.

They put up at a hotel in Trafalgar-square as soon as their vessel was safely placed in the docks. Then, afterwards, they saw one another but seldom, mostly at night. Captain Walton was busy with pressing business all day; he was engaged seeing and negotiating many matters with men of



eminence and position in the governing body of England—with the great shipowners also; and many contracts of a large character, and embassies of a private, delicate, and confidential nature, had been entrusted to his hands. He was not one of those who would let the grass grow under their feet. So the time sped swiftly for him. For Maurice it hung more heavily because of his anxiety to get to Ireland; and the entreaties of his friend alone kept him in London. He sought to pass the time by visiting the places of interest that the city possessed in such remarkable number, and by occasional walks to the docks to see the yacht.

“Well, Maurice, I am very tired; I am thoroughly weary of London,” said the captain one evening as he threw himself on a sofa in their sittingroom and prepared to light a cigar.

“If you are as weary and as tired as I am, my dear Walton,” said Maurice, languidly, “you are to be commiserated.”

“Well, thank heaven, it is nearly over. My work for this time is completed.”

“I am heartily glad to hear it. Much more of this life would render me a confirmed sluggard.”

“What do you propose doing?”

“Starting for Ireland, with your kind permission, by the morning train. I have delayed too long already. I am burning with impatience to get there.”

“When do you propose to return? It was my fault to delay you, but the truth is I was anxious for some companion to relieve the weariness of the evening hours.”

“It would be difficult to say, but as soon as ever I can. There is not much, as you are aware, to keep one in Ireland, and”——

"I know; except those dear, blue eyes you are so constantly raving about, perhaps."

"And a great deal to make me keep clear of it."

"I know that, too. By the way, Maurice, those Western girls of yours must be very handsome."

"Of course they are," said Maurice. "Who ever said otherwise? But why do you make the remark so emphatically now?"

"Well, owing to a very odd circumstance—a *very* odd circumstance."

"Let's hear it. I know it must be odd from your manner of saying it."

"It *is* odd. Wait until I get this cigar into better trim and I shall tell you. There! I have it all right now. Well, I was in the office of a great ship-broker to-day—I shall not mention his name—but he is one of the largest ship-builders and ship-owners in this island, although he is not above doing his business in a little dingy private office at the back of the one open to the public in general. I confess it grated upon my sense of what was fitting to see a man who could write a cheque for a million, and whose ships are in every port of the world, doing business in such a dark and footy spot. It somehow did not consort with our Southern notions of splendid extravagance."

"Never mind that," said Maurice, languidly. "Come to the story. Who was she?"

"That I cannot tell you, for I don't know. But, as the ship-owner and I were coming out—there was no means of ingress or egress, except through the public office to his—a young girl, and, I think, her brother, were there arranging something about a voyage to America. I have often seen pretty faces, Maurice—we claim to have the most attractive in the world in our Southern States—so that I am no novice where beautiful girls are concerned; but anything to match the

beauty—the rare, unparalleled handsomeness of that face—it would be impossible to describe. Her profile was the perfection of rounded grace; but when she turned her eyes, Maurice, to look at us as we passed out, I declare on my word and honour that I believe, except in dreams, no one before ever looked on such light as flashed from them. And, curiously enough, I think I have seen the face somewhere before, if I could only remember.”

“I am glad to hear that there is some soft spot in your heart,” said Maurice, blowing a cloud of smoke from his lips and laughing, “for I think I never heard you speak of girls before. Go on with your enthusiastic description.”

“I don’t think I could say more.”

“I don’t think you could add much more to your description at any rate. But there must be some conclusion to your story. What followed?”

“This. It seemed that there was some difficulty in the way of their being properly accommodated for the voyage, and there was a look of distress and of perplexity on the young girl’s face that added in some inscrutable way to its winsomeness—so much so, indeed, that I could not stand it—and what do you think I did?”

“Made a proposal to her on the spot?”

“No,” said Walton, laughing in turn, “I didn’t. Not but that if the war were over and my attentions less occupied, I am not certain that I shouldn’t have done so. But what *did* I do? You will have to guess again.”

“Made her a present of the *Ocean Foam* for the journey.”

“Upon my honour, Maurice, I think you are a prophet. It is precisely what I did.”

“You are in the humour for jesting this evening, my dear captain.”

“I assure you I am not. I made the offer, and, what is more, Maurice, it was, I am delighted to say, accepted. But

the curious thing is that her face seems quite familiar to me, as if I had somewhere before seen it. Perhaps in my dreams."

"Well, really," said the latter as he sat upright, the better to enjoy a hearty laugh at this information, "this is an odd business. Of course you will not intrude your own society?"

"No," said the captain gravely. "I do not intend returning in the *Ocean Foam*. I shall have her re-named and sent to New York, there to lie up till she is wanted again. Therefore it was that I was glad to have the opportunity of doing the graceful girl a service. I don't think an occasion of the kind ever arose before that gave me greater pleasure."

"You don't mean to say that you are not going back?" inquired Maurice, with surprise.

"Not in that way, Maurice. And this is one of the things I wanted to speak to you of. I am not going to America for some time; and certainly not in that way."

"This is rather a change in your career—is it not?"

"It is and it isn't," said the captain, with a lowering of his voice. "I had always resolved upon it under certain conditions. These conditions have now come to pass, or have been accomplished—whichever you will—and so the *Ocean Foam* goes back without me, and I go on another career. But talking of our new friends; if you wish, come with me to-morrow, and I shall introduce you."

"No; I go to Ireland to-morrow. I should have gone there long ago."

Oh, Maurice! if you had but accepted the invitation, what a meeting there would have been—and what a sudden termination to the story?

The Fates were busy weaving their destinies, in which the threads of life were tangled and twisted and perplexing enough, but no bright thread therein pointed Maurice's way on the morrow to the *Ocean Foam*, wherein so much of his fate and future lay.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### NORAH'S DISAPPEARANCE.

"It is I, Sally—only I. I wondered what was keeping you, so I came to look for you."

"You're a good fellow, Ned," said Sally, heartily and gratefully; "but you frightened me. "Give your arm to Miss Desmond, Ned—you know Miss Desmond, don't you?—and help her down to the boat."

"Certainly," said Ned, gallantly. "But you are all wet and shivering. Surely you're not going to tempt the sea back again?"

"We must," said Sally, emphatically.

"Are you sure that you're doing right?"

"Quite."

"Think of the danger."

"We faced the danger coming, and we must face it now and at once."

"It's a very different thing going back than coming. The sea is worse, and with the wind in the direction it is, the danger is ten times more."

"It must be done," said Sally, insistingly, and with a nod of her head that assured the young fisherman that further reasoning or remonstrance was useless, they proceeded to the cove where the boat lay landlocked.

"Sally," said Ned, gravely, in a whisper, "you don't know the danger you're runnin.' You may face it, and so may I, too—though for the matter of that if I were offered a hundred guineas this morning as a reward I wouldn't have ventured it—but you have no right, nor have I either, to imperil Miss Desmond's life."

"Better that than remain here. You don't know the danger, the life-long danger, she runs by remaining here even an hour."

"What danger? Amn't I here?" said Ned, with native chivalrousness.

"God help your foolish head?" said Sally, quite out of sympathy with his chivalry. "It's little use one man's head would be in protecting her, when unscrupulous scoundrels like them that brought her here have to be met. They're no more to be stopped by *you* than robbers breaking into a house at night are to be stopped by one man. They'd soon put you out of the way, depend upon it. So whatever comes or goes, we'll go back to where we came from. God will help us."

"I'll tell you, Sally, what we'll do. There's a barque yonder—you can hardly see her through the mist—she's a-beating about all the day during the gale—she's not more than a couple of miles out. If we must go to sea, I'll go to her. We'll get on board readily, and I'll engage Miss Desmond will get protection there until the gale moderates."

"The very thing!" said Sally, eagerly. "Anywhere out of this—and don't lose a minute."

In her eagerness to get away, Sally helped him to haul up and unfurl the sails, and, that done, took her place at the tiller. Once safely past the surf and into the deep water the little skiff flew out to sea with the speed of a wild bird—now breasting and flying over a swelling wave, then rushing down as rapidly the other side until she was deep in the trough of the water, with white-crested waves all round! It was not without a shrinking of heart that Sally saw the waters overtopping the boat and apparently ready to sink and drown them all; but her heart rose as she saw the confident look of the sailor and the steady eye that never looked but from green wave to swelling sail. And when, a moment after, the waves had passed and the little skiff, all unharmed,

continued her course through the more level waters, giving her time to look at the sky and the misty horizon in the distance, Sally's breast was filled with reliance on—and admiration of—the trusty young fisherman.

Their approach caused no little amount of surprise on board the barque, as they could see by the watching eyes that peered at them over the bulwarks—eyes of weather-beaten men with caps tightly tied down under their chins and over their ears, leaving little exposed to the storm but their moustached faces and keen eyes. Now and again a fresh accession was given to the list of watchers, and more than one powerful glass was levelled at the tiny skiff and its curious crew—out on the Atlantic, off the coast of Galway, on such a day of storm and danger.

But when it became evident that the boat was not a storm-beaten waif, tossed about helplessly, but was making straight for them with resolute purpose, and moreover had ladies on board, the excitement, palpable enough to the young fisherman's eyes, became intensified. Prompt measures were taken to fasten a ladder of ropes, adown which active sailors descended; and as the skiff ran rapidly under the lee of the barque, ready hands were to the fore to lift the ladies therefrom and rapidly transfer them to the deck, whither Ned speedily followed—the little boat being fast tied to the stern with sufficient swinging distance to keep her from being stoven in.

“You've had a dangerous run of it, friend,” said the captain to the latter. “What purpose tempted you to sea on such a day as this?”

“Purpose enough,” said Ned, flinging the water from him with a shrug pretty much as a Newfoundland dog shakes the water from his shaggy coat. “But these ladies are for the present—one of them particularly—in need of care. May I ask your protection and kindness for them?”

"They shall have both," said the captain, courteously, leading the way immediately to the cabin, the resources of which were at once placed at their disposal, and the two girls left to themselves.

"There now, Miss Norah, dear, didn't I tell you we'd find friends. Take a little of this—you're lost—God help you! Take this drop—just a taste, my dear. See that!—it brings the colour back to your white face and lips—you had the colour of death upon you—and you'll be all right in a little while. You're safe now, my dear—and oh! wasn't it God brought me to know where you were?"

"Let me rest a little, Sally," said Norah, whose white lips and white face gave indications of swooning.

"No; you mustn't, my dear; you must stir yourself a little, else you'll never get your strength back. Norah, dear—think of it! You're safe now, and among friends—and—and"—

The cry that burst from Norah's lips, as she fell back on the sofa, was in the same voice that struck upon Sally's ear less than an hour ago amid the ruins of Grey-Arran. But how different the tones! Then, it was the cry of terror, abandonment, and overwhelming fear; now, the cry was blended with a curious strain of rejoicing and delight.

Sally looked around to the cabin door, on which the swooning girl's eyes were fixed, and, as she did, it was with an effort that she stopped a scream of surprise and delight from herself; for there, standing at the door, was—George!

"Norah!" he cried, as he rushed forward to catch his sister in his arms. But Norah, unconscious of his presence, had fainted.

The greeting that ensued between the long-separated friends could not readily be described. Reinor could not wait longer, his mission in coming being accomplished; and as George could not land on Irish soil without danger of arrest, Norah



determined to accompany him. Reinor was bound for London and thither all sailed with him—Ned and Sally to return from thence when the final parting came.

A few days afterwards saw them in London, whilst Reinor was completing his cargo there. At all times Norah would have thought of Maurice O'Donnell, but her present unsettled life brought him still more constantly and vividly before her. But he was to be brought still more vividly by an incident which occurred shortly after their arrival.

"It's little I thought, Norah dear, this day week, in Glenheath, that I'd be in London to-day," said Sally, as one evening they sat at the window of the Hotel in one of the streets in London leading to the river, looking out on the never-ceasing crowd that passed below—skippers of vessels from every port under the sun; sailors of every nation and every hue—from the fair-haired son of Norway to the negro from New Orleans; merchants looking after the shipment of their cargoes; and stevedores bearing huge bales on their shoulders. "Isn't it the wonderful place compared with Arranmore?"

"It's something busier, at any rate," said Norah.

"My dear, isn't it though!" exclaimed Sally, in great admiration. "Why, one would see more people here in half an hour than you'd see in Galway in a year. But—good God—Norah! look—look before he passes!"

"What is it, Sally?" asked Norah, as the other clasped her dress and pointed excitedly down at the passing crowd with eager face. "Who is it? George?"

"Oh, Norah, look!—before he is out of sight! For God's sake, look! Quick!—quick!"

"I see no one in particular—none but the usual crowd. Who is he? Where is he?"

"Oh! there—Norah! look for the love of heaven! He is just passing the corner! He's gone!"

"Who was it, Sally?" asked Norah, with strong curiosity,

as the excited words and palpitating figure of the girl betokened her high interest in the passer-by.

"I could hardly believe my eyes. Did you see his face at all, Norah?"

"No; I saw only the usual crowd of strange faces. Who was it that attracted your attention so much?"

"I knew his face the moment I saw it, but he was gone in a second. Oh, dear me!—and so much changed! Well, who could have thought it?"

"I wish you would abate your excitement, Sally," said Norah, smiling at the continued interest of the other, "and tell who the wonderful stranger is."

"Maurice O'Donnell!"

"What!" cried Norah, with a sudden start which almost, if not entirely, surpassed Sally's surprise. "You must be dreaming!"

"Sorrah dream, Miss Norah; he passed, sure enough; I'd know his face in ten thousand. I'd know his bright, careless eye if I saw it in, in—in the bottom of the sea, five miles down," said Sally, vehemently, and very much at a loss for an illustration. "He's just passed. Oh, Norah! what a pity you didn't see him!"

"It couldn't be, Sally," cried Norah, scarcely knowing what she said with the suddenness of the news, and with a beating at her heart which well-nigh prevented her from speaking.

"It could—an' it was," insisted Sally. "I knew him the minute I laid my eyes upon him! If you had looked in time you would have seen him as well as I. Maurice O'Donnell!—sorrah one else. Oh, God bless me!—how my heart beats!"

"What could have brought him here? Oh! how unfortunate I was not to have seen him," cried Norah, as her colour came and went very fast, and the beating of her heart grew stronger.

"What could have brought him here?" echoed Sally. "What would have brought him anywhere? And why not here as well as elsewhere? I tell you it was he. I could not be mistaken."

"Well; isn't it pleasant!" cried the voice of Captain Reinor, who, with George, had now come in. "We have made a discovery this morning—George and I."

"Who was it?" cried both girls with one impulse, as the idea most prominent in both their minds found expression in words.

"Why, it was no 'who,' at all, said George, breaking in. "I shouldn't have been surprised if you had said, 'Who was he?' for I verily believe the girls never have some particular 'he' out of their heads."

"You don't mean to tell me that it wasn't *he* who passed?" said Sally, indignantly, and rising from her kneeling position. "I am certain it was. I couldn't be mistaken, though I only saw him for a second."

"What on earth is the girl thinking of?" said George, in amazement. "The discovery we have made is"—

"You needn't contradict me; I know better. I'd know his face anywhere," repeated Sally, insistingly.

"Well, does not this beat?" cried George, not quite certain whether he should get angry or laugh at these interruptions. "What are you thinking of? The discovery we have made is that there is a theatre near at hand, and that if you have overcome your tiredness we shall all go there this very evening."

"What news you have for us!" said Sally, disappointedly. "I thought it was some other information you had."

"What does the girl mean, Norah?" And what do you mean yourself by changing colour so fast? Have you both seen a London ghost?"

"George!" said Norah, quietly, "Maurice O'Donnell is in London. Sally has seen him."

"Maurice O'Donnell in London? Where?"

"Sally saw him passing by, not two minutes ago."

"What! Here?"

"Down the street. He turned the corner yonder."

"You are quite certain? It is not possible."

"It is. I saw him for certain. I did, indeed," said Sally.

"I shall go and seek him. How unfortunate it was that I was not here!" cried George, hurriedly, strangely impressed by the girl's excited and earnest manner.

"You may as well stay where you are," said Captain Reinor. "There is not the remotest chance, in that dense and constantly passing crowd, of finding him. We may come across him again. If he lives in this neighbourhood he must in some way be connected with shipping, and in that case we shall possibly see him. But search now would be utterly unavailing. And we are much too pressed for time to waste it on a wild-goose chase."

When the afternoon had arrived and dusk was beginning to fall, they proceeded to the theatre. Norah and Sally had been sitting at the window all the evening—the former vainly seeking to fix her wandering thoughts on a book before her, the latter watching with anxious scrutiny the faces of the never-ceasing throng that poured through the streets.

"I declare, Norah, I thought that was he. Oh, goodness! I thought my heart would burst with the fright! I was certain sure it was his eyes I saw looking up that time. Such fine dark eyes as he had!—that would look through you sometimes, and sometimes be soft and gentle as your own. That was like him—that young fellow passing! Just the same light, swinging step, broad shoulders, and straight as an ash-tree. But, ah! 'twould be hard to get the like of him in London!"

Remarks from Sally of this kind, half soliloquies, half addressed to Norah, had the effect of effectually preventing her from giving any attention to the volume which she held mechanically before her; had the further effect of filling her thoughts with memories and reminiscences of the wandering youth; until instead of the pages before her there shone his bright eyes and his pleasant face.

It was therefore with a heart and mind thoroughly imbued with his memory that Norah sat in the box of the theatre that had been provided for her use, and looked on at the play. But plays, like everything else, come to an end; and the acting at the East-end theatre was over and the company about departing.

Captain Reinor was wrapping the shawl around Norah's shoulders—for the nights were chilly—preparatory to leaving the box, when suddenly Sally placed her hand on her arm with electric touch.

"Look, Norah! Look! For Heaven's sake, look!—quick! Look—where I'm pointing!"

"Where?"

"Yonder, by the pillar."

"Who? I can't see!"

"Maurice! That's Maurice O'Donnell—if he be living!"

"Maurice O'Donnell! Where? Tell me, Sally—Quick! Where?"

"By the pillar at the far end—under the gallery. Not that way—don't look that way—yonder! See! His face is turning towards us! He is looking this way! He sees us."

Sally in her excitement was waving the programme which they had been using, in salute to him.

"I cannot see him," said Norah, whose wandering and anxious eyes failed to find the right position.

"I see him!" cried Reinor after a pause, during which his eager eyes swept the sea of faces that were pouring out. "I

see him! It is he certainly. He is looking this way! No, he does not see us! Wait a moment here; I shall meet him at the door!"

Reinor rushed out, and the girls remained in a state of great suspense. George, who had been sitting behind, was unaware until after his departure as to what the cause of the sudden excitement was. When he learned it he was much more excitedly anxious than the others to see his friend; and so they all awaited in a state of breathless anxiety the return of Reinor. A considerable time elapsed before he came back, for, the doors being narrow, egress was slow, and the waiting and watching was prolonged.

But when he did return it was with a face full of disappointment.

"You did not see him?" broke in George, impetuously.

"He was not there," said Reinor, decisively.

"It was his face; I couldn't be mistaken," insisted Sally.

"I could see him nowhere," said Reinor, dubiously.

"He was there for certain."

"No. I called his name aloud. If he were among the passing-out throng he would have heard his name and replied to it."

"I'd know his face a thousand miles away. He was there as sure as I am standing here," persisted Sally.

"Make way, ladies and gentlemen—make way!" cried the theatre attendants, as the little group stood discussing the probability or possibility of the person referred to being Maurice O'Donnell.

There was no ignoring the request, and so they moved on; and as the rain was beginning to fall when they came out, George hailed a cab, and they proceeded homewards.

"It's very odd, George," said Reinor, as they sat smoking in the room looking down on the now almost completely abandoned streets, after Sally and Norah had retired to their

rooms, "that if it be O'Donnell that is turning up so often we cannot meet him."

"It is the very thing I was thinking of myself," said George, breaking the long silence in a grave and serious manner. "Is there no way that we could come across him?"

"Upon my word I couldn't say," said Reinor in deep thought. It is wonderful how he appears and disappears. He could scarcely have been there to-night, else he would have heard my voice calling. Yet I am inclined to believe it was he."

In a few days Captain Reinor, having completed his arrangements, was ready to start for the American shores, when a telegram from his partner reached him requiring him, much to his chagrin, to return to Bordeaux for further cargo, ordered since his leaving. George, however, decided to proceed at once to New York with Norah—there being, as he felt, no other course for him to pursue.

He had an appointment next day in the city with a shipping merchant, where, he thought, they would be able to get suited, and there they agreed, at mid-day, to meet him. He was unable, however, to keep the appointment at the proper hour, and was hurrying through Threadneedle-street, when, emerging from a side street, he unexpectedly came upon them.

"Ten thousand apologies for being late," he said. "I am hurrying to make up for lost time. How well and radiant you are looking, Norah! Have you succeeded?"

"No," said her brother, "not in the way you indicated. But a rather strange thing has happened us. As we were leaving the shipping office, two gentlemen came from an inner room, and one of them, hearing us ask the questions and seeing us disappointed, offered us a place in his own vessel for the voyage. Very curious—wasn't it?"

"It *was* curious," said Reinor, with dubious acquiescence. "Did you accept the offer?"

"We did. We shall have to be aboard in the morning, for she sails immediately. Did we do right?"

"I should say most decidedly not. Who is the gentleman?"

"I don't know."

"Where is he from, even?"

"That either I don't know."

"Is he an Englishman?"

"I should think not. I think," said George, after pausing for a moment, "he must be an American. But why do you think we did not do right?"

"For a hundred reasons, not the least being that you know nothing of the gentleman that has made this friendly offer. It is curiously friendly—unusually friendly. London, George, is not a place where benevolent actions are frequently performed."

"But if the offer is a genuine one?"

"The very thing I am proposing to test this moment," said Reinor decidedly. "What sort was the other gentleman?"

George described him.

"Came out from an inner office—did he?"

"He did."

"Why, that must be the shipowner himself. I know him. I have had many dealings with him. Walk back with me, and if he is in I shall find from him how far your acceptance of the proposal was advisable."

They walked on through the streets quietly. The day was a beautiful one in June, and the thoroughfares were crowded with hurrying masses of people. This walk—or, rather, saunter—was very agreeable; but even the most agreeable walks must sooner or later come to an end, and the shipowner's office was once more reached. And being reached, Reinor leaving his friends outside, entered. The shipowner



had returned, and on the former sending in his card he was at once admitted.

In less than a quarter of an hour he came out, his face beaming with a good-humoured smile.

"Well?" said George.

"It is a very singular and opportune chance, George. It is all right."

"Who is our mysterious friend?"

"That, it appears, is a secret. But he is a gentleman—so the shipowner informs me, and his word is not to be doubted—who is not returning in his vessel. He is sending her back to New York. You have been very fortunate."

"Did he tell you the name?"

"Yes—the *Ocean Foam*, now changed to the *Albatross*."

"That's the very name," said George, taking from his pocket, and glancing at it, the paper upon which the strange gentleman had pencilled the name.

"Re-painting at the docks, George."

"That's it," said George, again comparing notes.

This state of things necessitated other changes and other separations. The two wanderers from their Western shores, now that their friends were proceeding further, were constrained to return homewards; and accordingly that evening they all proceeded to Euston station to see Sally and Ned off by the night train, where the parting was attended with many farewells of a warm and sincere character.

The next day Norah and her brother went on board the *Albatross*, and that evening Captain Reinor cleared from the London wharfage for Bordeaux. Thus there was a complete severance of the cordial relations that existed for the past few weeks, and they were once more scattered on their various paths in life.

The *Albatross* in the next mid-day was passing across the waters of the Channel, with the white shores of England on

one side and the low lands of sunny France on the other, when Norah, her first night on sea over, was seated in the cabin looking through the windows at either shore or at the white waves racing by. Tiring of this after a little, she turned her attention to the books that lay in the shelves beside her. The one she happened to take down was a sketch-book, in which various fancy portraits, the work of idle hands in idle hours, had been placed. Much amused by these, she turned the pages one after another until she finally came to one on which her eyes rested with a surprise that held them spell-bound, and sent the blood rushing back on her heart. For a time she sat in perfect amazement, doubting whether she was awake or merely dreaming.

For—on the page before her, sketched with a care that denoted how much the idle artist had his heart set on doing it well, was *her own portrait*, with the words “Norah Desmond” underneath it.

With a sense of blank amazement and inconceivableness, Norah glanced mechanically at the portrait and at the written words underneath, until her eyes grew dim and her sight scattered. If the vessel had gone suddenly flying through the air, or had been upheaved on dry land, it could not have occasioned her more startling surprise. Here was her portrait—there was no mistaking it—and her own name written in this book, in a strange vessel, of which two days before they had no knowledge; here, in the tossing waters of the English Channel!

“What’s amiss, Norah?” inquired George, who had been up on deck early, practising his hand at the work he was accustomed to—of furling and reefing the sails—and had now entered the apartment, wholly unheard by his sister in her state of bewilderment; “you look like a ghost. What has frightened you? I am afraid you’ll make a bad sailor if you get terrified so early in the voyage.”

“George, look here!” said his sister as soon as she could recover her voice, and pointing with outstretched finger to the opened page before her.

Her brother was as much surprised as she was—indeed, even more so; but think over it as they might, they could make nothing of it. Nor could they glean any information aboard.

“Whose hand was that that had sketched her face and written her name?” Norah constantly asked herself, in puzzled wonderment, during the voyage.

But without finding, in the remotest degree, any clue.

---

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### IN ARRANMORE.

MAURICE was up betimes in the morning and away by the train. The time was the middle of June, and his heart beat high with the beauty of the morning and the quiet pastoral look of the country through which he was passing; also with delightful anticipations of the reception that awaited him from Norah, when he should present himself before her, and make with the suddenness of his visit the winsome blushes tingle in her cheek and the love-light brighten in her eyes.

“How pleasant must the orchard look,” he thought, as, cigar in mouth, he sat dreamily looking out as he was whirled along by the express train—“how pleasant must it look with this sunlight on its leaves; how soft to walk on the grassy paths with the footfall so silent that it is never heard! I wonder what Norah is doing now? What is she thinking of? I wonder when she looks out upon the gleaming sea, like molten silver in the distance, does she ever think of me? Did she ever think of me all that weary time I lay ill after the explosion? Well, thank God, I am nearing Ireland and Arranmore

again, and shall soon see her. God bless her sweet face and her dear bright eyes!"

Holyhead was reached; Kingstown was reached; and the next morning saw Maurice in the Midland train for the West. With what throbbings at his heart did he look at the rich lands of Dublin, as, with wood and wold abounding, they shimmered in the freshness of the morning sunlight. How grand seemed to him the spreading pasture lands of Westmeath; their fields green with the wealth of grass, and their hedgerows white with the hawthorn blossoms whose scents filled the air. Even the spreading bog lands—with their cliffs of black peat contrasting so strikingly with the purple heath flowers that covered their surface, and with the monadon that lifted its solitary and snowy floss above—looked beautiful! With what curiosity he watched the strange effect as they passed from the spreading grass lands with a rush into the prairie of heathy bog extending far as the eye could reach.

It was bog, bog, everywhere. Now they were rushing through it; now it had passed and disappeared; now they were passing once more through fertile lands; anon the bog peeped at them from the distant horizon—and whirr! whilst he was yet looking at it the train had once more bounded into it, and was passing at tremendous speed over a road built on a foundation wherein the remains of Irish oak and antlered deer, which the same sunlight warmed and the same airs freshened thousands of years before, reposed!

But his reflections were suddenly broken in upon by a singular gleam of light in the West—on before him whitherwards the pacing train swept. It lay like a vast gleaming belt of steel—like a huge curved scimitar of Damascene work, wielded by some great Saracen in days when Moslem horsemen swept the bold Crusaders before them or clove them from helmet to chin. "What could it be?" was the query that addressed itself to his half-awakened mind.

“The Shannon! Good heavens! it is the Shannon!” he exclaimed, in high delight. “What was I thinking of? I must have fallen asleep in the heat of the morning.”

As indeed he had. For the belt of burnished steel, resolving itself into gleaming Paynim’s sabre, was but the long, broad, winding stream of the ancient river, showing in the distance like a silver belt.

“There’s the Shannon, indeed—once more! Like an old friend; always the same—changeless and unchanging. How beautiful it seems to me! How grand its stream, how broad its waters, how like Norah’s eyes as it sparkles towards me! Brave Shannon! mother river! I salute you! May eyes less glad to see you than mine never live beside you—and your waters flow by no hamlet or homestead with heart heavier. For, thank God, since the day I first saw the light I don’t think I ever bore heart lighter or less free from care. Very odd that, too,” he continued, as his thoughts took a fresh direction. “Here I am with the world before me, without a prospect before me in it, without the slightest knowledge how I am to carve my way through it, and my heart is light and gay as a feather; whilst it was heavy and downcast when my future was bright, promising, and well assured. What a curious thing is the mind of man, and how little control he can exercise over it. It seems as if it were—and were not—part of ourselves and under our control.”

The shadows of eve had fallen when the traveller reached the station nearest to the termination of his journey. Thence he took a car, which placed him within a few miles of his destination. His way thereafter—his nearest way—lay across a heathy mountain district, barren of habitation, where but the pheasant and the grouse were likely to break the stillness of the June night. The moon had risen; and the prospect of a walk over the mountain solitudes had an especial charm for him. He had had so little of active exercise ever since,

nearly twelve months before, when he had fled from Arranmore, and the blood flowed so healthily through his veins, that a few miles—or ten or twenty—would have but little terrors for him. What mattered the distance to him, with the warm welcome of surprise that awaited him at the end! What danger of weariness, with the sweet face and brightening eyes to greet him when he arrived at its termination! None.

With bounding step and light heart he leaped the meandering brook that separated the road from the heathy moors that, lying beyond it, stretched away to the base of the hills which lay even now clothed in mists rendered snow-white by the moon. With unfaltering step he crossed the rushy plains and clomb the side of the hill. The way, as most travellers find, was longer than he had anticipated, and midnight had come before he reached the summit of Carrigmore, and looked down upon the valleys at the other side.

The moon was at its zenith. In the centre of the cloudless heavens it sailed in all its beauty and glory. No mists or fog—he had left them behind at the base and sides of the hill—obscured its glory. Serene and alone it hung in undiminished glory above him. It poured below him on the sleeping plain its silver rays; on silent valley, where the farm house reposed; on the scattered groves whose leaves glimmered in its brightness; on the island like a mantle of silver light; but, most beautiful of all, on the distant sea that lay like a sheet of burnished silver—gleaming in its pure sheen with a radiance bright as light of Paradise—save only where the long line of surf breaking on the coast gave a varied rim of ever-changing sapphire to its sleeping splendour.

“This is indeed beautiful,” he said, as he took his seat on a mossy stone, the heather under his feet—“this is supremely beautiful! What a magnificent scene! Yonder is Arranmore House. How white and stately it looks in the moonlight. There is the grove in which I often rambled with my gun at

this hour. And there is Glenheath. Yes, there it is, with the moonlight sleeping over it and around it! Norah is sleeping too—dreaming mayhap. I wonder what she is dreaming of? Does she dream of me? Does she think I am so near? I shouldn't wonder if she did—the dear, faithful girl! Well, I shall soon see her—soon clasp her tiny hand in mine. Here goes! I have rested long enough. I shall have one look about again before dawn comes, and see what the place looks like. A couple of hours will take me there. I feel a renewed life within me, whether it is the air, the exercise, or perhaps the pleasant morning to come.”

Maurice scarcely felt himself, with the force of his rapturous thoughts, until he was in the neighbourhood of the cottage. There he thought he would walk through, for old association sake, the orchard-path that led to the cottage. He crossed the stile where on the eventful evening that had led to his troubles Norah had laughingly given him the apples and told him that she was protected by the fairies. The blossoms of the apple-trees fell on him in a shower as he passed through and touched them with his hand. How beautiful and quiet the sleeping cottage looked, the moonlight making its white walls look still whiter—and whiter still by contrast with the gloom of the leaf-shaded orchard. Afraid that any noise he might make should disturb and alarm the sleeping inmates, he satisfied himself with a hasty survey—and with an unspoken blessing on those within—and proceeded towards the harbour. There with the silver wavelets rolling at his feet he lit a cigar and, gazing at the sailless waters, and the pale moon slowly sinking in the skies, walked and smoked for a time in happy solitude and meditation.

The standing stock-still, and the slow motion after his long walk, had at last the effect of chilling his blood and making him feel tired and sleepy.

“I shall finish this cigar,” he thought, “and then have a

rest in the Abbot's Seat, where last I saw Norah. I shall rest until the dawn comes. I shall rest all the pleasanter when I remember how Norah used to tend me there. I shall think I see her face there again."

He was not long in putting his purpose into execution. He clomb the thick masses of ivy, holding on by the stems and resting his feet on the huge joints and knots of the twining plant. His olden activity stood him in good stead, and in a few minutes he was resting himself on the seat, to which another layer of leaves and moss had been added since last he lay there.

"This is a comfortable rest," thought he. "It is grand of a summer's night, with the moon for a silver lamp. If I had some more of the ivy to make a pillow I should sleep happier than the king on his throne."

He clutched at the ivy branches that clung to and covered the sides of the Rest. It was with difficulty he could detach any of them, for they clung to the broken wall with great force, and had wormed themselves and grown to it outside, giving them a firmer hold.

At last some of them gave way suddenly, and he fell back on the moss as a jingle of metal fell on his ear.

"What in thunder is this?" he asked himself, as he recovered his feet, and looked down whence the jingling noise arose. A cluster of specks brightly reflecting the rays of the moon was at his feet. He stooped down and took them up. They were coins—and heavy. He scanned them closely.

"Good heavens!" said he, in astonishment, "they are gold. What could have brought them here? Where did they come from? Let me try and find out. It must be from the wall."

He ran his hand along the arm of ivy-branch which he had disturbed. His search was rewarded after a little. The loosened ivy had firmly closed up an aperture, and out of this the worn and jagged ends of a leathern bag protruded. As



he felt it, a few more jingling coins dropped from it. He stood back in amazement, and thought for a few seconds.

“I have it—I know what it is now,” he cried aloud involuntarily. “This is the treasure the old Dutch captain hid in the ruin and forgot where he hid it. This it is and nothing else. How strange if this should really be the case! What a curious thing that I should come rambling back here by moonlight only to find it! Of all the marvellous things that have happened to me since I left here this is most surprising! I shall make myself more certain in the morning; meantime I shall cover it carefully up again and put these in my pocket. And then for a sleep—which I need so badly.”

In a flutter of excitement, more from the singular train of circumstances that led to the discovery than from any rejoicing at the find, of which as yet he knew neither the amount nor value, he thrust the half-rotten valise farther back into the aperture, which latter was caused by some stones that had fallen or had been in the course of ages rooted out of the wall; but the ever-growing and thickening ivy had covered it up, and being higher than any person not having a special motive was ever likely to reach up to to explore, had remained there hidden from view, unnoticed and unknown.

“If this be, indeed, the lost treasure of the Dutchman,” he said to himself, as he restored the ivy stem and branches to their places, “it is little wonder that in his excitement and half-drunken mood he should have forgotten it, though I wonder the climbing up did not make him remember it. But I suppose he was so used to climbing ropes and masts that the matter did not catch on his mind. Anyhow, here goes for a sleep. I feel very weary, and if I think more about it I shall not sleep till morning, and shall be fit for nothing all day.”

He pulled the leaves into a heap for a pillow, and lying down was soon fast asleep.

Whether he had been dreaming, and if so what his dreams ran upon, Maurice could not remember when he awoke. For when he did, the sun was high in the skies. The lowing of the cows in the grassy pastures beneath awoke him. With a start he raised himself on his elbow and looked around. The sea was bright with the freshness of the morning. The white Gothic towers of Arranmore arose in the distance above their surroundings of embosoming woods. But he heeded not these. He glanced towards Glenheath Cottage with a strange palpitation at his heart. The old housekeeper was—just as if it were only yesterday since he was there before—passing from the orchard into the house. He could see a face at the parlour casement—he was certain he could. He could, in the flutter of his beating heart, have sworn that he saw a radiant face—the sweet, the inexpressibly sweet face of Norah—thereat!

Without taking heed of the danger of detection he ran, he raised himself from his sleeping-place, shook the dew from his clothes and eyes, and descended. It was only then he discovered how tired and faint and weak he was; remembered that he had scarcely stopped to eat anything since leaving London, and that the unaccustomed night-climb over Carrigmore had been too much for one who had not been, with the exception of a few days, off a vessel's deck for twelve months. The fact of sleeping under the night-dews and in the open air, after his heated walk, made his limbs and joints uncomfortably stiff, and even the bounding pulse that throbbed and beat at his heart could not restore their wonted suppleness.

“I shall be all right after a rest,” he thought. “But first of all to see Norah—dear Norah! What a surprise she will get! How shall I enter? Through the orchard, by the gable-end and under the windows. I shall then take her completely by surprise.”

With this purpose forming in his mind he deflected from

the straight course, once more entered the orchard, then came by the gable-end, and, stealing stealthily under the windows, passed into the open door.

As he stood in the doorway—a smile of rejoicing and supreme delight on his face—the old housekeeper, who had been looking another way, turned to see what was barring the sunshine and throwing a shadow inwards on the floor.

A cry of terror and sorrow and agony—more pitiful than ever came from funeral-caoiner's lips—burst from her.

“Oh, Maurice O'Donnell! Maurice O'Donnell! Masther Maurice O'Donnell!”

“It is I, indeed, Molly—don't be frightened!” cried Maurice, startled immeasurably by this unexpected wail; and on the moment believing that it arose from fear of his sudden appearance—from a belief that it was his ghost that was appearing. “It is I—Maurice O'Donnell—come back alive and well, to see his old friends and to greet them.”

“Maurice O'Donnell! Maurice O'Donnell!” cried the old woman, in no way taking note of his words, or heeding his advance with outstretched hands—“Maurice O'Donnell! Where is Norah Desmond?”

“Where is”——

He was about to repeat in his astonishment the sudden question, but even mechanically he was unable to do so. The query came so wholly unexpected, it was so beyond all conception startling, it was voiced in tones that had such a strange blending of sorrow and anger and hopeless despair in them, that on the moment his throat and lips grew parched as if a simoon had swept by.

“Masther Maurice O'Donnell, where is Norah Desmond? Where is she gone?. Where is she taken to? You were not like the rest of your family—there was always a drop in you that was not as black as in the rest. Will you, in the

name of God, and for your dead mother's sake, tell me where she is gone—where she is taken to—where she is?”

This powerful appeal, couched in tones of indescribable agony and trouble, did not take more than a few seconds to say. Yet it seemed to Maurice, as he stood there lost to all else but the terrible import of the question, that hours must have passed whilst the query was being delivered. He had time to notice vaguely, and as if in a trance, the hollow lines of suffering and sorrow that had forged themselves in her once comely face, and the unmistakable look of terror or trouble or misfortune or something, that was in her eyes. Similarly, without turning his gaze off her face, he was able to see the appearance of neglect and inattention the cottage exhibited—that curious air of not having the usual tending and careful hand over it. All this he saw vaguely and as with a sort of second sight, for surely no action of his eyes brought it to his mind.

“Is not Norah here?” he asked, in utter bewilderment.

“Don't you know very well she is not? Is it here and of me you should ask the question?”

“I do not know, Molly. I only landed on Irish soil yesterday. Where is she?”

A cry of sorrow—pitiful enough—was the only answer to his question.

“Molly,” said Maurice, as he stepped over and placed his hand on her arm, “for God's sake tell me what is this all about! What is amiss? Where is Norah Desmond? I came back to see her—under heaven, for no other purpose. Where is she!”

“Gone.”

“Gone! Gone where?”

“No one knows, if you don't. She was taken away—lured away from here weeks ago—no one knows how or why!”

It seemed to Maurice, in the revulsion of feeling this sudden news caused him, as if the ground were slipping away from him. He felt a cold dew burst on his temples and felt it descend on his face. With a weak effort he managed to reach the settle that stood by the wall, and sat down. A blinding mist descended upon his eyes, and the strength all at once departed from his limbs. A strange feeling was settling rapidly upon him, as if the world were fading from under him and he was falling into nothingness, into pure space.

“What ails you, Maurice O'Donnell?” cried the old housekeeper, whose grief had given way to the newer surprise as she saw his face and eyes gradually whitening, and whose womanly instincts were at once aroused. “God bless us!—he has fainted!”

It was indeed even so. The weary journey, the joyous excitement and anticipation that had prevented him from taking food, the sleep under the weakening and exhausting night-dews, but, most of all, the sudden and unexpected vanishing of all his delightful hopes, had done their work.

The housekeeper quickly untied his neckerchief, bathed his forehead and neck and face with cold water, poured a few drops of brandy between his parted lips. After a short time signs of returning animation became evident. The faint flush of returning strength slowly grew into his death-white cheeks and lips, and the sight into his dim eyes.

“What has happened me, Molly? I am very weak and ill. Has anything happened me?”

“You'll be all right presently. You're weak with long travelling. Take a drop of this; it will strengthen you.”

He was unable to hold the tumbler in his hand, so the old woman placed it to his lips. The few drops he did take strengthened him.

“What has happened me, Molly? I think I must have had a fit.”

"You have had a little weakness, but you are all right now. I'll make a cup of tea for you. You are wearied with travelling. You want rest. A cup of tea will refresh you."

"Stay, Molly," said the scarcely recovered youth, as the housekeeper was moving away to get him the much-needed refreshment; "don't leave me yet. Don't leave me for a moment. Talk to me. You were saying something about Norah. It is gone out of my head. My mind is as weak as my body. What was it you said?"

"About Norah?"

"Yes; where is she?"

"Alanna, she is not here," said the old housekeeper—who, with a woman's ready instinct, divined how the matter lay. "She is gone."

"I remember now. You told me so before I grew weak. Where is she gone to?"

"Ochone! poor boy—God help you an' her!—who can tell where she is? But don't talk about it now"—she had noticed the whitening expression growing again over his face—"until you are stronger."

"I am stronger now," said he, with an effort forcing back his failing energies. "I shall be all the better for having this suspense removed. What has happened her?"

"I will tell you later on—when you have taken some refreshment. Don't speak of her now, aroon."

"I am afraid I must, Molly. Forgive me—but I have travelled hundreds of miles to see her. She was very dear to me"——

"I know—I know—aroon!" said the old woman, pathetically. "I guessed that long ago, an', God forgive me, I thought it was you that took her away."

"Took her away! Oh! merciful heavens! did I come back to hear that? Tell me how it was, Molly. I am not able to stand up or I should go distracted—should seek elsewhere to

inquire. As it is, I think my heart will smother unless I hear it all—and quickly. Tell me all. Is there no hope for me? Tell me before my senses leave me again.”

“Avich! God help you! Take a drop of this an’ I’ll tell you all.”

Fearful lest in his still weak state he should let the measure fall, she again held the reviving liquor to his lips.

“Maurice O’Donnell!—Norah was”——

But at this juncture the daylight was once more barred out; a shadow thrown across the floor once more attracted Molly’s attention; and a cheerful voice was in her ears:—

“Molly! Molly!—do I see you again? And—God between us an’ all harm!—is this Master Maurice O’Donnell? Oh! Norah Desmond! Norah Desmond! if you were here now! If you were only here now!”

---

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### UNEXPECTED NEWS.

THE form that stood in the door darkening the sunlight and throwing a shadow inwards was that of Sally, and the voice that cried: “Molly! Molly! do I see you again? And—God between us an’ all harm—is this Masther Maurice O’Donnell? Oh, Norah Desmond—Norah Desmond!—if you were here now!” was Sally’s also.

As the housekeeper looked up and recognised the figure of the young girl at the door, she was not a little startled too. Her sudden disappearance on the memorable night some weeks back, and at the same time—or nearly so—as Norah’s, had created much surprise naturally enough, and given food for much conjecture.

“Good God! this can’t be you, Sally,” cried the old woman,

doubting the evidence of her senses, and advancing towards the new-comer to satisfy herself that what she saw and heard was really and, in sooth, true:

"It is indeed me, Molly," said Sally, cheerfully, entering and shaking hands with her, "an' you may well ask if it's me—considerin' that you never laid eyes upon me since the night I left this to go to the shore."

"Where—where were you all the time since, Sally?" was as much as the old woman could with difficulty get out.

"Faith, I was many a place, Molly dear, all the world over. It's myself had the queer ramblin' of it since. Sorra word ov a lie I'm tellin' you."

"Sally—Sally," whispered the old woman, with painful and imploring breathlessness—"where is Norah Desmond? Do you know anything ov her?"

"Faix I do, Molly, and of George, too," whispered Sally with unabated cheerfulness. "They are as well as ever they wor in their lives—an' better."

The housekeeper fell on her knees and lifted up her hands in thankfulness.

"Where are they? What became of her?"

"Oh! as to that," said Sally, in a whisper, "I'll tell you another time. But as to where she is—faix she's in London if she's not on the high seas, and lookin' twice as handsome as ever you saw her afore."

"I can hardly believe you're tellin' me the truth, Sally."

"Faix an' if you don't believe it you may, and if you don't, sure you will when you see the real beautiful presents she sent you. They are at the railway station. I could not take them with me because I was in such a hurry—me and Ned—to come see you and tell you about her. And so this is you, Mather Maurice O'Donnell, that I thought was in London all the time!"

Maurice had taken no note of the whispering that went



on between the two. His mind was revolving vacantly and mechanically round one thought alone—that Norah was gone, how or why there was no information—and that she was lost to him.

It seemed to him, in his stupor of mind, as if in the absence of her beauty and winsome face, all the graces and attractions and brightness of life had been suddenly cut off, and that nothing but perpetual gloom and darkness lay before him in the future. From this condition of thought he was suddenly aroused by Sally's exclamation and address.

"I *was* in London," he said, mechanically.

"To be sure you were. Didn't we see you? Didn't I know well it was you? Going down Waltham-street and turning the quays. I told Norah it was you. But you were gone in a minit, an' we couldn't find you in the crowds."

If an electric battery had been suddenly applied to Maurice it could not have startled him more than did this somewhat incoherent mention of Norah's name.

"Norah!" he repeated.

"An' 'twas you, I'm sure now—though I had my doubts of it at the time—they saw in the theatre a few nights before I left, I was goin' to say a few nights ago," added Sally, parenthetically, "but my head is so dizzy with the train and the steam-boats that I think it must be nearly a year ago since I left."

"You don't mean to say that Norah is in London?" said Maurice, in the extremity of astonishment and rapidly recovering from his stupor.

"I mean to say," said Sally, "she is there if she hasn't left it. If she is not there she's somewhere else."

Without at all seeing that this somewhat general statement did not convey much information, Sally rapidly launched into a statement of their general movements in London, delicately skipping over the previous occurrences that led to the journey.

Tea was soon ready, and during this welcome refreshment Sally detailed at greater length the reminiscences of her London experience. Maurice was never weary of hearing of Norah—everything that happened in which she was concerned had abiding interest for him—and his heart throbbed with unconcealed delight at the girl's rapturous description of her beauty; throbbed with still greater force as Sally described in simple language the intense anxiety there was on the part of the three friends to see him, and the mortification they experienced when they failed to discover his whereabouts. So interested was he, indeed, that it was only after a long spell of listening that it occurred to him to ask where they were and how they were when she left.

"Captain Reinor was going to some place in France, and Norah and her brother to America."

"To America! How were they going?" was Maurice's immediate and following query.

"Well, its curious enough," said Sally. "But they met a gentleman in some place in London, who offered them a passage in his ship."

"What's that you say?" interrupted Maurice, on whom a new light was breaking. "An offer of a passage in his ship. Who made it?"

"That's what they didn't know. Sorra a bit of him would give his name. But he must be a rich gentleman, and a right good one, or he wouldn't do it."

A groan of regret and sorrow burst from Maurice, as he laid his arms on the table and hid his face in them, whilst a convulsive movement shook his frame.

"Woe is me!" he said, as he lifted his pale face. "They were leaving London whilst I was hurrying across here to see them. The *Albatross* sailed yesterday."

"That's the very name of the ship," broke in Sally.

"What evil genius was around me that I did not accept

Walton's invitation to meet his guests! How little I knew that the beautiful girl of whom he spoke was Norah? Who could have thought that the path of our destinies crossed so closely and yet were so wide and far apart? To what portion of the wide American land is their journey directed? What evil fate kept us apart and we so near to one another?" In some such way as this Maurice lamented his untoward fortunes.

But tired nature asserted itself, and as he had made up his mind to hasten back to Walton, it was necessary to retire to rest the better to prepare himself for his journey. A bed was prepared for him, shutters closed, and he had scarcely laid his head on the pillow when he was fast asleep. Not in dreamless sleep, however, for airy visions of bright blue eyes and winsome smiles, and a face of heaven-born beauty came on his dreaming brain; with which were incongruously mingled scenes of warfare, of thundering guns, rolling clouds of smoke, drowning ships, and ever and anon the exulting cheers of conquering combatants. Also there came curious fancies of hidden wealth, and landscapes sleeping in wondrous light.

But always and ever—come and go as other scenes and incidents might—there rose before him, sometimes in natural sequence, at other incongruously, the dear and thrice-beloved vision of Norah Desmond!

Losing no time in retracing his steps, and without bestowing even a passing thought on the treasure in the Abbot's Seat, Maurice found himself a few days after stepping out of the train into the platform of the Euston terminus.

Jumping into a hansom he directed the driver to take him at once to the hotel where Walton stopped. As he expected, that gentleman had gone, but had left a note for him in case he should return. It merely said he was gone to Liverpool, where he should be for a few days.

Hastily reading this note and placing it in his pocket, Maurice drove to the hotel at which Sally had told him George and Norah were staying. It was a hopeless visit; but, though he knew it was, he still hoped against hope that something might have interfered with their departure. How firmly, how ardently, he prayed that the yacht might not have been ready; that she might have lost her masts; that she might have taken fire, and been burned to the water's edge; that anything—good, bad, or indifferent—might have happened her so long as she did not bear from him the one loved form.

But as he had, with anguish enough, expected, they were not there. They had been gone some days. They had just dropped into London for a brief stay—as hundreds of thousands do every day—and might have come from the clouds for aught any one knew or cared. They had gone away, and similarly, for aught anyone knew or cared, might have been buried in the depths of the ocean. A few units, more or less, were as nothing among the busy millions of London.

With a sinking heart Maurice O'Donnell was once more in the hansom for the docks, this time in equally fruitless search.

The *Albatross* had sailed.

Had sailed, and left him alone in the wilderness of London.

“What was he to do?”

He would seek out Walton and having seen him, start at once for America. Wherefore he desired the cabman, who, by this time, thought a lunatic had engaged him, to drive to Euston station.

“This will never do,” he thought, “Walton is gone and so is Norah. Had I been only a few days sooner!—or had I waited but a day later to go to Ireland! What shall I do now? I have no business here. There is no one in London I know. I shall go straight to Liverpool and see Walton

once more. Thence with him, or to New York—one or the other.”

The evening was still early when the express train, panting after its rapid run from London, drew up at the Lime-street station. Maurice had but little *impedimenta* in the shape of luggage, so shaking himself awake after his long sleep, he descended the steps of the railway station, turned into the street; and, uncertain where to go, inquired the direction of the quays, and went there.

What purpose he had in going there instead of to one of the hotels, where his friend would more likely be had, he would have found it difficult to say. Probably it was his past London experiences. Probably because it was there the shipping was. Probably because he had no more definite object in his head.

He felt tired, however, when he reached there. Moreover, the extraordinary length of the quays and the massiveness of the docks and the huge quantities of shipping, showed him at a glance what a small chance there was of meeting his friend. He might have a thousand friends, and in that huge hive of commerce and trade and shipping the chance of meeting any of them was infinitesimal. It was the proverbial searching for a needle in a bundle of straw.

Weary and tired and thirsty he turned in to take something to drink. He was in that mood of indifference and desire of concealment that the first place that came to hand as he walked along he selected and entered.

It was a low vault—led into, downwards, from the street by stone steps. A sawdusted floor lay before him, and around this were a number of small railed-off apartments, lighted from the street by dusty windows over which the hand of the cleaner but seldom passed. It was just the place he desired—free from observation and where he could rest himself at his ease. Calling for a pot of ale and lighting his cigar he began

to think. He threw out a coin to pay for the liquor. The latter was good, excellent, and so was the cigar; and he was, therefore, disposed to remain some time and refresh himself before proceeding further down the miles of quays that stretched before him.

He was not allowed, however, as much retirement and repose as he expected. The door of the little compartment was opened, and a strange face presented itself for a moment, glanced at him, and as he raised his eyes to look at the intruder, withdrew. He had hardly begun to think himself into a reverie again, when the door was once more pushed open, and another face presented itself thereat, glanced at him again and withdrew. This occurred so often that at last it attracted his attention.

"I must be occupying a favourite compartment," he thought, "and keeping others unnecessarily from their place. I feel quite refreshed now and shall leave. The evening is wearing on and I did not come here merely to sit down."

Finishing his most grateful liquor, and throwing the stump of his cigar on the floor, he left the compartment and turned to the door leading up to the street. His foot was on the first step of the stone stairs when a hand touched his elbow. It was the waiter with his change. He had quite forgotten it. Thrusting the silver into his pocket he walked up the steps and into the street. Thence he walked down the quays to their whole length with a keen eye for the faces he met to see if he could recognise Walton's among them. But he did not. He walked rather more swiftly back, but with a similar result. "I should have gone to the hotel," he said to himself soliloquisingly, "that would be the most likely place to find him."

The lamps were beginning to be lighted by the time he arrived at this resolve, so hailing a cab he desired the driver to set him down at the principal hotel. Arrived there, he

looked over the register of visitors, but Walton's name was not entered thereon. Too tired to go farther that night, he had some refreshment, smoked a cigar in the smoking-room, and went to bed.

Next morning after breakfast Maurice paid a visit to the different hotels in the city; but his searches were fruitless. The name of his friend did not occur on any of their registers. He called at several of the shipping-offices with like result. Towards evening once more he bent his steps to the quays as still the most likely place—if any place could be called likely under these discouraging circumstances—and mingled with the crowds pouring along. Happening to pass the cabaret wherein he enjoyed such refreshing drink the previous evening, he thought he could not do better than rest himself there once more. The evening was hot, his feet weary, his spirits low, and the remembrance of the grateful ale came refreshingly to his mind.

He turned in and re-seated himself, but, remembering how frequently he had been disturbed the previous time, selected another compartment—one which looked out, or up, on the street.

Indifferent as he was as to what anyone thought of him—and indeed too much disappointed and depressed to care much as to his personal appearance—he could not help observing the interest with which his entrance was noted by the landlord behind the bar and the waiter outside.

He had not been long there when to his intense delight and astonishment, among the passing crowd a face well known to him met his gaze. It was that of Captain Walton!

Springing from his seat at once, throwing the cigar away, and opening the door of the little apartment, he rushed out to the entrance. The action was so sudden that it scarcely occupied a second's space of time. But, quick as it was, he had scarcely gained the first step when a rough hand was

laid firmly on his shoulder, with a grasp whose vigour there was no mistaking.

"Let me go, fellow!" said Maurice angrily, at this interruption, and in great haste to overtake his friend before he should be lost to view. "Take your hand off me."

As he spoke, and without looking around, he endeavoured in his haste, with an impatient movement, to shake off the delaying grasp. But the effort was insufficient; the hold was much too firm to be so readily unloosed. Surprised at the determined hand that was laid upon him, and that was delaying him in his movements, Maurice turned round quickly to see who it was that thus rudely accosted him.

"What are you holding me for, man? Let me go! I am in a great hurry!"

"I suppose you are," said the other coolly, and relaxing not in the slightest the vigorous character of his grasp. "I suppose you are. I thought you would. But you are not goin' to—not this time."

There was no time on Maurice's part for reasoning over the matter. The urgency of seeing his friend before he was lost to view was too great. So, putting some of his Galway practices into operation, he stepped back from the step on which he was half standing, turned swiftly round on his assailant, caught him by the shoulders, and with a trip and a swing that had the combined advantages of strength and suddenness, broke his hold and sent him with a headlong pitch that was only stayed when his head struck against the resounding boards that formed the frame of the counter.

It was done with great rapidity; and, without staying to see what the effect of the fall was, Maurice raced up the steps once more in violent haste to make up for lost time. But quick as were his movements he had not gone more than half way when he was seized once more—this time not by one hand, but several, and dragged back again.



“What is the meaning of this? Who dare commit this outrage? Is there no law in this place?”

“There is law, as you will find to your cost,” said one of the party, producing a pair of handcuffs. “I daresay you would be glad there is’nt—but there is. You are my prisoner; put on these handcuffs, men?”

“What for? What do you arrest me for?” inquired Maurice, in much amazement, the current of his thoughts completely changed by this new and unexpected development.

“You will learn that time enough,” said the detective, as the key turned in the handcuffs, locking them. “At present you will come with me. Call a cab, men, and bring your prisoner to the street.”

The cab was hailed from the hazard, and whilst they stood waiting for it a considerable crowd collected around them in which various surmises were freely bruited in his hearing.

Turning from the speakers, at the motion of his captor, he stepped into the cab. Thither he was followed by three of the detectives, a fourth taking his seat on the box with the driver.

The cab was driven quickly to escape the crowd, who, agitated by the various rumours that had been put afloat, had already begun to groan the prisoner. Scarcely able to realise the fact that he was a prisoner, and completely dazed by these sudden and unexpected occurrences, the captured youth looked out mechanically through the window. He was quickened into realisation of his present position, as they came on the outskirts of the crowd. For there, apparently asking of a passer-by the cause of the unusual mob, was—Walton!

Maurice made a movement to let down the window and hail him, but his manacled hands prevented him, and in a second the opportunity was past. The cab drove for some distance along the quays, turned up one of the streets that debouched on to it, passed thereafter through numerous

others, until finally they drove in through large iron gates which swung open to receive them and closed with a clang after them, over a gravelly courtyard, and to a large wooden door barred with flat iron bars and studded with iron bolts. They descended from the cab; and Maurice, in the midst of his captors, was ushered into a large building, and into a small bare room therein—a whitewashed room, with a wooden seat running around the walls, and no other furniture, unless the barred window at top which admitted the dim light could be supposed to be portion of the furnishings.

He felt certain that he had been recognised by some of the Irish detectives, that he had been tracked from Ireland by them, and that he was now to answer for the life that had been lost on the night when the smuggling *Grisette* anchored in Innisbeg.

How bitterly he cursed the impatience that hurried him from Walton's side, and from the chance of meeting Norah. Half an hour's walk on that evening would have changed the whole tenor of his life. Now—years might pass over before he could see her, and thousands of miles of stormy space would soon roll between them. Tortured by unavailing regrets, he threw himself on the plank bed, when they had shown him into his cell, and, abandoning himself to his fate, ceased almost to think.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE BIRD FLOWN.

WHEN Taylor Harden and Henry O'Donnell parted, and were lost to the listener's vision, the former betook himself reluctantly enough to see his aid and confidant in the business, from whom he received distinct assurance that Norah was safe and well, awaiting him at the Killeries, and that trusty persons would be there to receive him when he arrived. Whereupon he proceeded direct to Galway with the intention of posting to the Killeries from there, leaving, however, previously a large sum of money with Sam.

But he had scarcely left when Henry O'Donnell had taken his place. With a hearty laugh at the simplicity and guilelessness of the attorney, they rigged out a boat and prepared to face the angry space that lay between them and Grey Arran.

Henry O'Donnell congratulated himself on the ease with which his intentions had been carried out without any danger to himself or without his being suffered to appear in the matter. He could now pose as her saviour and protector; and on the way occupied himself with thinking of how best he should appear in the light of her rescuer. The storm had much abated, the sky had grown brighter, and he had time to think over what was best to be done.

They landed at the Killeries, passed up the ruins; and, nearing them, Sam advanced alone to the place in which Norah was. Presently he appeared with white face:

"The door is open; the place is empty; and Norah Desmond is—gone!" he said, breathlessly.

"Gone!" cried O'Donnell, staggering back against the

wall where he had been sheltering, and doubting that he had heard aright. "Gone. Where, gone?"

"She is not where we left her this morning; there is no one there—no one about. Someone must have been here and rescued her."

O'Donnell stood aghast—perfectly paralysed. Here was a fine ending to the dreams and anticipations of an hour before! Here was an unlooked-for termination to the skilfully laid plans on which he so much prided himself.

"This is a strange business," said he, pausing for a moment in deep thought. "What could have become of her?"

"Unless the devil flew away with her," said Sam, "I don't know where she could have gone to."

"Where is the old woman who had charge of her? *She* might give some intelligence of her."

"If she can, then, by the eternal flames! she shall now, for here she is," said Sam, clutching fiercely the old woman, who just then turned a corner beside him.

The latter, astonished, gave a scream; but, looking up, recognised the face of the speaker, and was relieved. She had fled from the cries and complaints of the frightened girl—the reason of whose imprisonment she was but dimly aware of, believing it indeed to be mainly with her own consent and connivance—and had returned some time after to find the place empty and the caged bird flown.

"I say," said Sam, "where is the girl we left in your keeping?"

"I don't know. I left her here locked in. I couldn't bear her cries, and, when I kem back, she was gone!"

"Gone! She couldn't fly, could she? She couldn't bury herself among the dead people in the graves—could she? See here! By the"— Sam swore an oath, as he let her go, and uplifted his hand, that might have appalled a stronger-minded person than she who stood before him. "I'll dhrag

you down to the say an' dhrown you av' you don't tell me the thruth."

"I'll tell you the thruth. I'm telling you the thruth," cried the old creature, in trembling dismay.

"Tell me id now—as you value your life. Where is the girl that was given to you this mornin' to mind and take care of? For if anything happened to her you'll swing as high as Haman. You will, by"——

"She was cryin' an' shriekin'," said the old woman, who, now that she found her tongue, was voluble enough, "an' I got frightened an' locked the doore an' left her."

"An' took the key wid you?"

"I left the key in the doore."

"May the divil fly away with you for an old witch! You did? Well?"

"When I kem back, the doore was locked—an' she was gone."

"Dy'e hear this?" shouted Sam, turning in fury and dismay to O'Donnell, where he stood a silent but by no means uninterested spectator of the proceedings. "Did anybody ever afore hear the like ov this?"

"Let her alone, Sam," said O'Donnell, who knew instinctively that she was telling the truth. "Ask her if she made search for her."

"Ay—did you make saarch for her?" asked Sam, repeating the question in the woman's ear in a voice of thunder, although a whisper would have sufficed.

"Saarch, is it? Everywhere. She's not athin these ould walls nor anywhere about—wherever she's gone to. There couldn't be a mouse in the place but I'd ha' found out be this, much less a young girl."

"Did you see any wan about? Did you see a boat anywhere on the say this mornin'?" inquired Sam, in desperation to find the clue somewhere to this strange *denouement*.

"I did."

"You did?" cried both, simultaneously, in sudden alarm and surprise. "Where? When?"

"Out beyant the reef."

"What time?"

"In the mornin'."

"That's it, Sam," whispered Henry O'Donnell. "That explains it. There has been someone here. Let the old woman go."

"You may go now. And see, if ever you spake a word about this morning's work you'll sup sorrow for it. Go home now, an' bless your stars it isn't to gaol you're agoin'."

The old woman hobbled off, and the two accomplices conferred together.

"What does this mean?"

"It manes that there's been someone here afore us."

"That's clear. Who could it be?"

"Who could id be but Taylor Harden?"

"I declare," said O'Donnell, after a grave and serious pause, "that must be it. But how could he come here? He couldn't have been here in the time. Could he?"

"He might; but if he couldn't, it was aisy enough for him to get others to come. He has money enough to pay men to do id for him."

"I think you are right. That is the explanation of it. No one else was in the secret. What is to be done now?"

"He'll be here soon. So he said. An' he will if he, or some wan for him, wasn't here afore. It's worth waitin' to see. Isn't it?"

"It is, Sam," said O'Donnell, in whose breast all the fires of anger and disappointment and non-success flared up side by side with those of lost love and furious jealousy. Forgetting wholly that the disappointment he experienced was

of his own making, and that the abduction, whose successful termination in his rival's favour was now causing a feeling more deadly than revenge to crop up in his heart, was of his own bringing about, he resolved to wait and see whether or not it was his rival's hand that had been before him and had borne away the beautiful captive.

Heedless of all danger, and careless of all weariness and fatigue, they waited—their boat rocking meanwhile in the little harbour.

But the hour at which Taylor Harden promised to be present arrived; and he came not. Along the miles of rocky and tortuous road that led to the river home of the ancient monks, no carriage appeared. Nor yet later on. Nor even when dusk fell.

The silences, around the gray ruins and the watchers in them, were unbroken—and continued unbroken when close at midnight, thoroughly wearied and worn with watching, and consumed with a fire of murder, of hell, which prevented his feeling how distressed he was, Henry O'Donnell turned the prow of the boat towards Innisbeg, and, having landed there, made the best of his way to Arranmore Castle!

When Taylor Harden left Galway for the Killeries he did not anticipate the hindrances that attended a carriage drive through the wild districts and bad and unfrequented roads that led to the remote seaside.

It was absolutely necessary for them to go slowly because of the dreadful uncertainty of the way, which latter sometimes led through a dreary waste of bog, from which no guarding hedge or wall separated it. In truth, the greatest care was necessary to permit their keeping to it, so much alike and so little distinguished from the surroundings it was. Being the merest car track, and not infrequently crossed by others of a similar character, the greatest caution was necessary not only to enable them to keep on the straight

way, but to prevent their being led into quagmires and turfpits on either side.

The moon, too, surrounded and overswept with clouds, from its obscuring and illusive light, more hindered than aided them when night fell.

It was a tiresome and wearying pursuit after love, but the attorney was made of good stuff, and held unyieldingly on his way. Patience and perseverance by degrees overcome all obstacles, and sometimes accomplish more than, if they do not change themselves into, miracles; and so when the moon had paled away in the sky or had been lost in the clouds, and the dawn was beginning to break, they came within sight of the grey ruins of the Killeries and heard the dull roar of the breaking waves on the Skerry rocks!

Leaving the carriage in the distance, Taylor Harden proceeded alone to the ruins.

There was no one there! No one.

Search as he might or call as he might, there was no one present, no voice responded—no noise save the dull splash of the waves on the coast.

He waited for an hour or more to convince himself that there was really no one there. He sought along the cliffs. No boat was moored within the cosy shelter of the landlocked harbour where he had been led to expect it. A feeling grew upon him—a vague, undefined feeling at first—that he had been humbugged and deceived. It grew stronger with his sense of disappointment, until, finally, it culminated in one frantic desire for revenge—and revenge upon the man who had led up to and contrived it.

That man was no other than O'Donnell—though why or wherefore at the moment Taylor Harden could not imagine.

It was on first thought scarcely possible, for it was of the very first importance to him that he should act straightforwardly and honourably, as far as honour might be in the case,



with the dread of the foreclosure of the mortgage hanging over his head; and yet the attorney at once suspected *him*—never the fisherman.

It would be difficult to describe the feelings that pervaded the lawyer's breast as he returned from the ruins, and, entering the carriage, bade the coachman return to Galway—so compounded were they of disappointed love, baffled ambition, and burning hate.

Passing the village before mentioned, not yet awaked from its slumbers, the face of a hooded old woman appeared at the carriage door.

"It's yer honour that was late in comin'," said the old woman; "we expected you yesterday."

But the lawyer's habitual caution had returned, and, gloomily wrapping himself up in a corner of the carriage, vouchsafed no reply.

"It's Mr. Harden I'm spakin' to—isn't it?" asked the old woman, peering earnestly at him.

A gruff "No," from the occupant of the carriage alone answered her.

"Because Mr. O'Donnell kem yesterday mornin', and afore"—

A sudden whip of the coachman sent the horses spinning forward, and no matter how much the attorney might wish to hear what else she had to say, the occasion for doing so was lost. He pondered for a moment as to whether he should not return and hear what she *had* to say—whether he should not stop the coachman for that purpose.

But her statement, broken and abrupt as it was, had only confirmed his previous impression. He had been deceived, and by O'Donnell. That was enough. So the carriage swept onward as best it might, and finally reached Galway. There he took the train for Dublin, and, arrived at the King's-bridge, took a cab, and reached his home in Merrion-square.

Before he retired to rest, however, wearied and worn as he was, he descended to the office of the firm—from which the clerks had long departed—and opening a tin case therein took from it a deed. It was old and frayed, and mildewed, and the seals were frittered and obliterated. But, nevertheless, he gloated over it as miser never gloated over his hidden and hoarded treasures. He read every word of its scrivined writings from the preamble to the concluding proviso.

Then he folded it up and replaced it.

“It is due earlier than I expected,” he said. “One year, or a little more, will bring its provisions in force. The effluxion of time narrows more rapidly than I thought. Twenty thousand pounds! I wonder how they will raise it. The lordly castle is not worth the money it would cost to take it down—not even the bricks and mortar, or perhaps I should say the marble. Their woods and forests would not fetch a tenth. Their boglands and—well, Mr. Henry O'Donnell, you have had your triumph! Mine will come, and—look out! that's all. Look out! And now to bed.”

---

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### RETRIBUTION.

It was some weeks afterwards when Taylor Harden sat in his private office, immersed in business.

It was in the evening, late, most of the clerks had gone, and yet he sat busily at work. His thoughts had not been of a pleasant character of late; private worries had interfered with his attention to business, and to make up for lost time and distracting influences he was at work later than was his wont.

The silence of his office was disturbed by a rap at the door.

In answer to his "Come in," the clerk last in attendance entered.

A strange gentleman wanted to see Mr. Harden:

"Let him come in. It is a late hour, but let him come in," Mr. Harden says, looking up from his work. "Let him come in. And you—you may go home."

Strange gentleman does come in, in compliance with request, the while Harden bends his head again over his interrupted work.

Looking up again, the stranger stands noiselessly and motionlessly on the rather worn carpet of the floor. Mr. Harden starts with surprise—starts with such surprise, in fact, that he pushes the table away from him, and lifts himself unconsciously to his feet!

For before him stands, looking at him with an expression to which it would be difficult to find a clue—but wearied and depressed, and whiter than usual—Henry O'Donnell.

"To what am I indebted for the—the—honour of this visit?"

The query was Taylor Harden's. It was a very usual one under various circumstances, and had often been used to clients and others by Mr. Harden. It should, therefore, have freely come from his lips. Yet it did not. It came with much halting, difficulty, and embarrassment.

"I got a letter from you."

"Not from me—not from me, I think," said the attorney with growing composure, now that the first start was over.

"Yes, from you. Is not this your name?"

"It is," said the attorney, "the name of my firm."

"So I said."

"But it is not addressed to you. Be good enough to take a seat. It is not addressed to you. You perceive it is addressed to Sir Hugh O'Donnell. That is not your name, I think."

"It is all the same."

"Pardon me, it is not all the same. On the contrary, it is quite different. Two different persons altogether."

"For the purposes of this visit the same," said O'Donnell, seating himself and opening the letter on the table before him. "This letter says"—

He looked up and glanced under his eyebrows at the attorney.

"You need not take the trouble to read it. I know its contents."

"This letter says," pursued O'Donnell, not heeding, and very probably not hearing, the remark of the other, "that unless the amount of the mortgage deed is paid up within a certain date you will take steps to foreclose the mortgage. Is that so?"

"Is it in the letter?"

"It is."

"Then I suppose it must be so."

"Do you mean that?"

"My firm does, I suppose."

"Why?"

"Why?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Really that is a question I can scarcely answer; it is, if you will pardon me for saying it, so foolish."

"I ask you again why you write this letter—why you threaten to foreclose the mortgage?"

"That is not a question you are entitled to ask, but I shall answer it—premising, however, that I answer no others. We shall foreclose the mortgage if the money be not paid, because—the money is due."

"It is not due."

"Practically it is."

"Then you told me falsely when you said it would not for two years to come."

"Falsely is not the word to use. I had not the deeds with me then. But even if it were—what then? You are not the person to complain."

"I am the person to complain, as you very well know. But it is not exactly of that I came to speak. Or, if in connection with that, of something more pertinent to myself at present."

There was a pause, during which O'Donnell coolly, determinedly, and sternly thought over what he was about to say and how to commence it. During which pause also Taylor Harden knew as well as he could possibly know anything in this world, what other thoughts were about to come from his visitor's lips.

"I came, Mr. Harden," said O'Donnell in a whisper across the table, "to speak about another matter. I won't dally further over it, as you, being an attorney, might. I came to speak about Nora Desmond."

It was just as the attorney thought. He had come to reply to his letter in reference to the foreclosure of the mortgage with a boast of triumph over him—that other sore and rasping point. This added fuel to the fire already quietly smouldering in his heart.

"What of her?"

The question came so coldly and impassively from the attorney's lips that O'Donnell was at first rather staggered by it. A stranger to the two men hearing the question would have at once concluded that the lawyer had but a rather indistinct remembrance of the matter.

"What of her?" iterated O'Donnell.

"That was what I said: what of her?"

"Do you ask me that question?"

"I ask you no question. You introduced the subject."

"And I shall continue it. Where is she?"

"I should think you can answer that question better than anyone else."

"You took her away—you brought her away. And you had now better be prepared to account for her. Things like this cannot be done in the face of day with impunity—even by an attorney."

"I see you come to add insult to injury. You come to remind me of what a false and perfidious friend I found in you."

"That is beside the point. I came here to know, and I insist on knowing, what became of that young girl."

"And I reply that no one knows the answer to that question better than he who asks it."

"You decoyed her away from her home."

"At your suggestion."

"No; not at mine. And you took her away from the Killeries."

"Rather *you* did that. It was, as I said before, a perfidious thing to do, but I have long since banished the matter from my head."

"More of attorney's fraud and lies! But it will not do here. I shall insist upon having the matter traced up and searched out. Under false statements and under cover of night you decoyed her away from home. She has never been heard of since. She may be drowned—or—or murdered for anything anyone knows."

"I should not be surprised—though I should regret it—considering the hands she has fallen into," said the lawyer coolly, but with whitening face.

"Whose are they?" inquired O'Donnell, entirely mistaking the meaning of his statement.

"Yours."

"Mine?"

"Yes."

"This is more of your attorney chicanery. But you will find," said O'Donnell with growing anger, "that these sub-

terfuges will not save you from the consequences of your deeds."

"Hearken to me, Mr. O'Donnell," said the lawyer, rising and placing his hand on the mortgage deed which lay on the table. "You are much too clever—with that sort of cleverness that leads sometimes to beggary and as often to the gallows!"

Henry O'Donnell stood up likewise and made a motion forward—but whether of surprise or offence could not be determined, for the lawyer with white lips and bated breath and hissing words resumed:

"You induced me by many suggestions and by many ways to consent to her being persuaded under, as you say, false statements to leave her house. You sent your agents to do the work. When she had left she was brought, Heaven knows where, by you and by your agents—and I tell you now that the words 'drowned or murdered' come with dangerous significance from your lips."

"I often heard," said O'Donnell, aghast with the coolness and effrontery, as he thought, exhibited by the other, "that attorneys were all liars, that it is their business to be such, that it was their contemptible trade and profession, but I never thought that even they would tell falsehoods in the presence of one who knew them to be so."

He was standing, white with suppressed passion, before Mr. Harden. All chance of reconciliation now gone, he gave his rage and tongue free scope.

The other merely glanced at the deed he held in his hand. It was the lawyer's argument—the unanswerable one: I hold your bond and you must pay it. The Shylock answer to his impecunious debtor over again. O'Donnell understood the situation at once and dealt with it.

"You belong to a profession—profession, no, a trade—to which that of the man who cleans the sewers and sweeps the

kennel is respectable ; to one that lives and prospers by, and fattens on, the vices, the follies, the misfortunes, or the poverty of men ; whose office doors are open, like those of the harlots, for the plunder and robbery and stripping of those that may chance, in an evil hour, to enter. What could you, or any of your vile tribe, know of the instincts of a gentleman ? ”

“ The words ‘ drowned or murdered,’ ” continued the lawyer, unheeding the other’s words, and, indeed, not hearing them, “ suggests a new light to me. Miss Desmond has never been heard of—I know it, for I made inquiries concerning her—since that night. It is hardly possible, even in your keeping, but that, if nothing sinister had happened, some word or tidings should have come of her. Yet there have been none. It will be necessary for me at once and without delay to put the law in motion on the matter. I shall, not later than this very afternoon, or if too late to-night, to-morrow, have the authorities informed on the subject.”

“ I shall save you the trouble,” said O’Donnell. “ I shall at once lodge informations against you. I shall state fully to-night—this night—at the detectives’ office all the particulars of the matter. I have, believing it would be necessary—mark you!—believing, knowing it would be necessary—because of your trickery and chicanery—brought from Galway the necessary witnesses for the purpose—those that you employed to decoy and entrap the poor girl. In two hours from this I shall have the matter fully stated unless ”——

“ Unless what ? ”

“ Unless you let the girl free, unless you give her her unrestricted liberty. That in the first place. In the second place ”——

He paused, for his temper and passion, made the more furious from being long repressed and restrained, now bursting forth, prevented his utterance. The coolness and audacity of



the attorney in not only denying so unhesitatingly and barefacedly all knowledge of the whereabouts of the lost girl, but in seeking to fasten the guilty knowledge on himself—nay, more, in imputing to him the terrible offences named—sent the stormy flood of anger flushing from his heart to his head and brain, and for the moment paralysed his tongue.

“In the second place?” suggested the lawyer, watching him narrowly and closely.

“In the second place, unless you hand me over the mortgage deed, and under your hand and seal surrender all rights in it to me.”

The lawyer looked at him a while, and laughed a scornful laugh.

“It won’t do, Mr. Henry O’Donnell,” he said—“it won’t do. There is no use trying that on. The plea of insanity won’t save you from the consequences of the law if anything wrong or foul or evil has happened the girl. You are now trying to get up an air and appearance of insanity—attempting to counterfeit the lunatic—but I know the pretence. I shall be ready to prove the contrary. You see that mortgage deed?”

He held the parchment document up.

“That deed is the mortgage deed of Arranmore and the lands belonging thereto. As soon as that deed becomes matured—as soon as the term mentioned therein expires, which will be very shortly now—Arranmore, every stick and stone of it, every square inch of ground, will be sold, and the heir of Sir Hugh O’Donnell will be a houseless pauper—if, indeed, the gallows does not set its mark on him before then!”

It would be difficult to describe the air of cutting insult and venom with which the attorney uttered these words, or the unalterable hate with which he uttered the menace.

He flourished the deed in his hand in further emphasis of his words.

In some way, without exactly knowing why or intending it, but in a purely mechanical manner, O'Donnell put forth his hand as if to take hold of it—did indeed take hold of it lightly. The attorney swept it out of his grasp, and struck him in the face with it!

It needed but this to put his angry feelings into action—to translate his consuming hate into deeds. Almost as quickly as the insulting action was performed, O'Donnell struck him a violent blow in the face, which staggered the lawyer.

Recovering himself, the latter seized a revolver that lay on the table beside him, and presented it.

Before he had time to draw the trigger O'Donnell snatched a knife which lay on the table—it was a steel one which, with fateful negligence, the lawyer had been accustomed to use instead of the ordinary paper one—and plunged it into his breast—right into his heart!

The revolver dropped from his hand upon the table. With a cry—a wild despairing cry—that seemed to echo again and again with strange metallic echo from the tin boxes piled around!—the lawyer threw up his hands, staggered, and fell with leaden thud backwards on the floor!

In the midst of the rush of conflicting thoughts on his mind—of terrible dread and fear and horror and remorse—one thought predominated in O'Donnell's breast. Unaccountably, it weighed down or overbore all the others. The mortgage deed had fallen from the dead man's hands on to the table. He would seize it.

Unconsciously he snatched it up, placed it under his arm, and, with frightened glance at the form quivering on the floor, and fast hardening into the dread rigidity of death, hurried to the door; opened it; closed it sharply after him; and flew across the square hall-way to the street door.

He found some difficulty in opening this, but at last he succeeded; and, leaving it open, passed into the street.

He mingled with the passing crowd and walked slowly like one in a dream, until he reached the corner of the square. A cab was passing; he hailed it, and, jumping inside, desired the driver to drive him to the Broadstone Station. There he got out, dismissed the cab, and walked back into the city again.

He was wild with pain and remorse. His heart, throat, brain, and lips were afire and athirst!

Where was this Sam promised to meet him? He remembered now. He would go there at once. It was a low drinking-house on the quays.

He had hardly entered there when he found that he had lost the mortgage deed. It had dropped from him somehow or somewhere.

Curiously enough, with the blood of the slain man staining his hands even yet, the loss caused him a surprise that nearly banished his remorse. Perhaps it was because he had not time to realise that the dead man *was* dead, perhaps it was because the thought of the mortgage and the fear of foreclosure had been the one harassing thought for months, and that it still retained its hold on him; whatever was the reason, the unaccountable loss of the deed added fuel to the fire of terror, awe, and disappointment that burned fiercely and redly at his heart—making his face whiter and his breathing thicker and more choking.

“What ails you, Master Henry?” asked Sam. “You look as if ——. Did you hear anything of Norah Desmond?”

“Sam,” said O’Donnell, breathlessly, “I must leave Ireland.”

“Why?”

“To escape the gallows! Taylor Harden is dead! And—my hand did it!”

“We’ll go together, Master Henry, then,” said Sam.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### WITH THE SOUTHERN ARMY.

MAURICE awoke from an unrefreshing sleep. And the morning—so far as morning could be seen through the barred windows—was come. Some persons were in the room with him.

“This is one of your fellows—is he?”

The query was addressed by one of his visitors to another.

“I cannot see his face,” said the second. “Waken him up—What? O'Donnell!”

Maurice, scarcely awake, turned around, and looked up. It was the mate of the *Ocean Wave* who spoke. Except Walton's, no other more welcome face could present itself to his eyes.

“What in thunder brings you here?” continued his questioner.

“I really cannot say. I have not an idea,” Maurice dreamily said.

“What is it for?” he asked the governor of the prison, who was with him. “Pooh! Nonsense,” said he, when he had heard the charge. “This is absurd. Stolen gold, indeed! Concerned in a French robbery! Absurd!”

“I think I know how the misadventure came,” said Maurice (whose heart jumped with delight at the words), delightedly whispering into his friend's ear the story of the find, but omitting details. It was not for murder, after all—it was for that strange gold that Von Homberg had left behind him, and which, presented in payment to the landlord, had excited his suspicion.

“To be sure. Of course. Just think of it! I came in

search of one of our men who got into trouble and—find you! But you must come out of this. I shall settle the matter at once.”

“Before you go,” said Maurice, as the young gentleman was moving away for the purpose. “Where is Walton?”

“Walton sailed last night.”

“Where?”

“Heaven knows. I only came from London in time to miss him.”

“And you?”

“I am going back to the Southern States as soon as possible. To-morrow if I can. And you must come with me. I shall see to your liberty at once.”

“Von Homberg’s gold,” thought Maurice, “has not been lucky for me so far. Confound it! only for it I should be sailing with Walton now. It seems like an evil destiny.”

The mate was as good as his word, and in a few hours they were strolling through the streets together. After dinner they went out again, and within a few hours had made arrangements for their passage to America. Maurice was anxious to go to the North; but his companion was anxious to go to the South, and persuaded him to accompany him thither.

During the voyage, Maurice learned many particulars of his friend which he had not previously known.

“If you have a strong desire you shall see Brooke—or perhaps, I should call him Walton; you will know him better by that—very soon after we reach the South. For I mean to look after his whereabouts, and for that purpose I shall call to his residence.”

Maurice was more than glad, and as it was not difficult to reach the Mexican coast of the Confederacy, some weeks afterwards found them in sight of it.

One fine morning saw them, therefore, on the quays, or

levees, as they are called, of New Orleans. The glorious southern city, bright in the glory of a tropical climate, glancing with sunshine and picturesque as the home of so many different races should be—still outhung the banners of secession. But, numerous as the attractions therein were for the travellers, they did not dally there—merely inquiring the trains which should bring them nearest to the place of their destination.

The fame of Colonel Brooke's mansion and the wealth of his plantations were household words in the South. They had but little difficulty in finding it out.

Nor did the appearance of the palatial mansion belie the accounts of its magnificence. A noble façade, designed by its owner after a Venetian palace, raised its head among groves of orange trees—sumptuous verandahs, lined with the bright flowers of that glorious country, running along the entire length of its marble front. The fields of cotton, whitening in the sun, extended for many a mile, far as the eye could reach, in all directions.

The lady of the mansion received the visitors kindly, her only regret being that her son was away serving the Confederacy; but where or how, she could not state. She had not heard from him for months.

Nevertheless, the place did not want for company. Great military movements were taking place in the South. Armies were hastening with forced marches through Carolina and every Southern State to the banks of the Potomac, in far-away Virginia, where the great events of the war were taking place. The tread of armed men resounded on every Southern highway, and the call to arms beat in every Southern city.

The great chiefs of the South marshalling and directing their forces, had made the mansion of Colonel Brooke for the time being their head-quarters. The famous names of

Secession were all there; and Maurice at once was plunged into the very midst of the great leaders who shook the American Continent with the thunders of their prowess.

As a stranger and friend of one of the most gallant of Southern seceders, and one who had survived the blowing-up of the *Georgia*—whose bold effort was a household story in the South—he was warmly welcomed amongst them; and the views and prospects of the South were discussed in his presence with a freedom and frankness which very much surprised whilst it pleased him.

Amongst those who extended their friendship and kindness to him was one whose name was then famous and honoured wherever chivalry and dauntlessness found an echo in men's hearts—General Stewart. A very strong friendship grew up between them.

So much so, indeed, that when, some weeks after he had arrived, Stewart said to him:

“We leave to-morrow for the North, O'Donnell. Have you ever seen what battles are like—what it is to see hundreds of thousands of men in deadly conflict—to see hundreds of cannon hurling iron balls over miles of front—to see the miles of gleaming steel as they sweep onward to their work of destruction? If you have not, come with me—you shall see all this in a day or two where the Rappahannock flows.”

Maurice made up his mind promptly to accompany him, and the next day, with many kindly farewells to their hospitable hostess, they were off for Richmond and the front, in which he was to see many curious things, and to see for once what war really meant.

Richmond was *en fete*; and its streets, as the rebel columns poured through, were something wonderful to behold.

All day and all night the tramp of marching men was in the ears of the citizens. They came from every railroad

debouching on the city—from Georgia, from Carolina, from Alabama, from the far Mississippi.

Leaping from the cars, they hurriedly formed in the streets, and with muskets shouldered and bayonets gleaming sunnily in the light of the Southern sky, fell into order; and, without beat of drum or martial panoply of any kind, marched through the streets towards the Northern station, where the railway was to bear them to their gallant brothers on the banks of the Potomac.

But there were warm hearts, teeming with Southern hospitality, to greet them on their quick march.

Everywhere along the streets through which they passed tables laden with viands, and meats, and fruits, were outside every door. The pavements were filled with them from doorstep to kerbstone. The white hands of Virginian ladies were there to tend the hurrying men, and with beating hearts and bright smiles pressed their not unwanted refreshments on their brothers thus marching to the defence of their beleaguered capital and to the aid of those at the front.

Where the men could not stay to partake of their hospitality, or could not eat, flasks and sandwiches, and parcels of cigars, carefully made up, were handed them. Repeatedly the ranks were broken as some fair Southern girl, as modest as impetuous, rushed through, to place her present around the neck of some stalwart Mississippian or bronzed Carolinian, the while her throbbing breast scarcely reached to his elbow.

Never was there such enthusiasm seen before in threatened city; never such bold hearts—or beaming glances to greet them.

From early morning the trains with their armed freights came whistling in; from early morning, therefore, the tread of men and clank of accoutrements went steadily on.

And never did the hospitality of the Southern hearts tire.



Relays after relays appeared at the refreshment tables; and it seemed as if they had made up their minds—as, indeed, they had—that none of those hurrying to battle for them and whose gallant hearts would, many of them, lie cold and still and pulseless on the battlefield before many hours were over, should pass through without helpful and welcome greeting.

Winding through every street, debouching from every passage, the gleam of serried bayonets came pouring continuously, unceasingly on.

The moving host had come from many quarters; had been detached from many separate armies; had come in many conditions of circumstances.

That was shown by the uniform of the troops, no less than by their colour and appearance. Here marched a regiment with breathless and excited energy, their uniforms, like Joseph's coat, of many patches and colours, and their feet barely cased by their torn boots, showing the stormy paths in which they had been moving for weary months. But, tattered and torn as their clothes were, they bore their forms erect; their eyes were bright and confident; their arms were clean and gleaming; the musket barrels and steel bayonets were bright and polished, showing that if their trials were hard, their enthusiasm and endurance kept parallel with them. And as one of these vigorous and tattered regiments wheeled into a street the cheers of the watchers were something to hearken to.

Rough and uncouth they looked in their grim array.

So did not think, however, the Southern ladies—for panoplied knight at kingly tournament, mailed warrior proceeding to the Crusades, or belted General gorgeous in Victorian Stars or crosses of the Legion of Honour, never met such welcome from rosy lips and smiling eyes. The windows were white with waving handkerchiefs, were bright

with cheering faces, were redolent with girls' voices, as these tattered and ragged soldiers passed through.

Similarly it was as regards colour.

Here and there amid the passing ranks of tall, vigorous men—black and bronzed by reason of their Southern climate, but still more black and bedizened from the smoke of guns and the dust of marches of many months—came some whose original blackness there was no mistaking. The thick lip, the totally black face, the curly hair of the born negro was in palpable evidence. So with the mulatto, so with the creole, so with the quadroon. There was no difficulty in picking them out from their companions. But welcoming eyes along the Richmond streets knew no difference of color,—or, if they did, only to shower kindness on the gallant hearts that stood shoulder to shoulder with their white brothers in defence of Southern rights and Southern homes.

"See, Roland," said Stewart to a brother-officer who had just joined him, as they sat at a window in the hotel in the leading street; "isn't this magnificent? Was ever hospitality or enthusiasm to match this? What can beat our Southern people now?"

"Hearken to this!" said Roland, as over and above the tread of troops below came the dull concussion of heavy guns in the distance. "Iron bolts and bursting shell are more than a match for enthusiasm any day."

"You are but a Job's comforter at the best," said General Stewart, cheerfully. "I say, and I maintain it, that such human power and force as we see below can make iron bolts and bursting shells and smoking guns as things of naught any day. My horsemen will shortly send their guns limbering up in swift haste, and see their cannoniers, rammer in hand, running for their lives."

"I hope so," said Roland.

"Hope so!" said the other, angrily. "Don't you know it

is so. Don't you know—but 'seeing is believing,'” said the famous horseman, hitching his sword-belt to one side, “and, as we have lingered long enough here, the readiest way to prove what I say is to get to the front as quickly as we can. Don't you think so, O'Donnell?”

Maurice smiled an encouraging smile; it was the only thing he could do, wholly unknowing of the circumstances surrounding.

“Well, gentlemen,” said General Stewart, relaxing his features into a smile also, “I see I have not much encouragement to meet here. The guns yonder”—pointing in the direction of the rolling thunders—“seem to have a disheartening effect just now. But wait until to-morrow evening—wait until yonder sore-footed fellows come to ford the banks of the Potomac. But enough—our time has nearly come. Yonder is an aide-de-camp with a message waving. It is a letter. Without seeing it, I know what it is. Come, gentlemen; to-morrow for Fair Oaks, and see what the God of battles will send us there!”

Tightening his sword-belt around him, the General descended the stairs. As he reached the halldoor, the officer whom he had mentioned broke through the ranks on horseback, and, handing the General the letter, whispered a few words into his ear.

Stewart listened attentively and nodded at its conclusion without speaking.

“Come, gentlemen,” he said, quietly turning to his friends who were watching the hurrying battalions, “follow me. Things are moving fast at the front. We must try and reach the depot as best we may—but reach it we must, and as soon as possible.”

Hurrying by side-ways and by-streets, now and again, perforce, mingling with the crowding troops, but breaking off wherever an opportunity allowed, the three men directed their steps to the depot bearing Northwards

It was a strange scene, that railway station—or, in American *parlance*, depot. It was surging with armed men. Far as the eye could reach on the Summer afternoon, the lines of rolling stock extended. Far also as the eye could see, the smoke of the departing trains dotted the lengthening vista of the horizon, bearing their crowds of swarming combatants to the threatened frontier. Spot by spot, gust by gust, their puffs could be seen—here mounting up from a valley, there, further on, rising over the side of a wooded mountain, but all hastening on whither, beyond the horizon, the heavy boom of artillery arose.

Fast as one engine with its train of carriages had departed, another with empty cars puffed into the vacant space. And, speedily as it came, more speedily still poured in the soldiers, piling up their bayonets in one corner, and addressing themselves to their cigars or tobacco.

There was no selection, there was no classification; privates, captains, and generals passed into the same compartment. There was but the one impulse amongst all, the one great potent feeling which has worked miracles the world over amongst resolute and trusty men, the stirring thought—"the country is in danger."

Banners bearing that emblem in black letters on a white background, hung suspended over the railway station and its approaches—hung, for the matter of that, over every principal building and monument in the fair Southern city.

"This will do as well as any," said Stewart, as he stepped into one of the cars of the first train that glided up to the platform on which they stood—stood only after vigorous efforts to reach it, so great was the press of thronging men.

"I think so," said Roland. "The sooner we get to the front the better. If the thunder of the cannon all the morning be sign sufficient, Lee must be pretty hotly engaged."

"If he does not move too soon, and is not forced to show

his hand, he will strike an effective blow as soon as his reinforcements come to hand. His army in a day or two must muster up to a large total."

"Whose troops are these passing through Richmond now?" asked Maurice.

"Lawton's Texan Brigade, and Whitney's division of Carolinians; Longstreet's division of twenty thousand passed through yesterday."

"When does the battle open?"

"At once. General Lee is determined to strike a heavy blow. For this purpose he has been for several days quietly drawing reinforcements from the South and massing them behind the fortifications of Virginia. When he bursts from behind them it will be a pretty hard time on M'Clelland and his forces.

"It seems to me," said Roland, "as if he had already done so. The air is heavy with smoke, and the sound of continuous firing has been in the air all the morning."

"Scarcely. His arrangements are not nearly perfect yet."

"Who takes command?" asked Maurice, again.

"Lee himself. Jackson is to move down by the Valley of Ashland rapidly, and debouch therefrom on the Chickahominy. It will take him some time to build bridges across for the passage of his men and ammunition. Once over he can flank the enemy by moving on Mechanicsville. General Hill at the same time will cross lower down, and, following him as swiftly as may be, Branch and Longstreet will hasten to his support."

"It is well designed."

"It is. If no hitch occurs, M'Clelland's army will be hurled back a more broken and routed host than they were at Bull's Run."

"And you?"

"I shall move in advance with my horsemen to cover the

attack. The advance must be so masked that our batteries will be ready to open on them before they think we are in motion."

The train in which they were sitting had been in motion during this conversation, and, notwithstanding the huge amount of rolling stock on the line, had been going rapidly and bringing them nearer to the front. The noise of the train prevented their hearing other sounds; but when it stopped at a way-side station—where long lines of batteries of field-guns were spreading away into the distance—the heavy roar of artillery was full in their ears; the concussion of the air was manifest, and the rumbling sound was distinctly palpable in the ground under their feet.

"This is something more than usual," said Roland. "This heavy cannonading is no mere artillery duel."

"I fancy so," said General Stewart, as he listened for a time and grew impressed with the warring sounds. "It cannot be that General Lee has found it necessary to move earlier than he intended!" said he, as he descended from the train, followed by his companions, and stood on the narrow platform.

"Well, Rainey, what is it?" he asked, as a cavalry officer, booted and spurred, and hot and splashed with long riding, pushed his way through the crowded station up to where he stood.

"The army is passing the Chickahominy," was the officer's breathless answer.

"That is earlier than Lee intended," said Stewart, startled at the announcement.

"It is. McClelland was making some movements in his forces, and the General was advised that the moment to strike was when their operations were uncompleted."

"I am sorry it took place so early, Rainey; but I suppose it is all right. Where are the Generals?"

"Jackson, with thirty thousand men, is passing as fast as he can through Ashland. Hill is crossing the stream and is attacking the divisions of Morell, Sykes, and Fitz-John Porter at Mechanicsville. It is tough work, for they are strongly posted and their batteries are well protected."

"That is terrific cannonading. Our men must suffer heavily, having to make the attack."

"So they are. But if Hill and Longstreet can hold the ground won until Jackson debouches on their right, there is an end to M'Clelland and his army."

"What brings *you* here, Rainey?" said Stewart, after a pause in which a more than usually loud and prolonged roar of cannon interrupted their conversation.

"Upon my word," said Rainey, laughing, "your questions put my business completely out of my head. I came here from the General to hurry you up to the front. There is active work for your horsemen, for the next few days, I fancy."

"Have you horses?"

"My squadron is outside. You can have as many as you require. You will need to take a good circuit, for every road direct or indirect leading to the front is packed thick with troops and wagons."

"And you?"

"I remain here. The batteries of the Mississippian Guard are here. I must get them forward. Their guns must cross the bridges over the Chickahominy to-night, and open on the left of the enemy at daybreak. I must see that all men and artillery are hurried to the front as soon as they arrive. Meantime there is not a moment to be lost. Harken to that!"

"Volley firing!"

"Yes; and by divisions too."

"That seems hot work, Rainey."

"You may depend on that. General Hill will find it pretty hot work advancing in the face of the terrific fire from their batteries. But you had better hasten, General Lee is most anxious to see you."

Outside the station a squadron of cavalry were dismounted. Selecting the three strongest horses they could find, the three men mounted and were soon on their way to headquarters.

As the staff officer had said, it was necessary for them to make a wide detour. Every road was crowded with marching men—marching at the double wherever the road admitted of it, as the continuous roar of field-pieces told them plainly enough of the terrible struggle in which their brothers were engaged.

As Maurice looked at the men, as he occasionally crossed their direction, there was no evidence anywhere but of high-hearted enthusiasm. Every face was full of life and pluck, and every eye, as they passed forward, was bent on the cloud of smoke that arose in the North-West. Trains of ammunition wagons filled the roads far as the eye could reach, and parallel to them through the fields the artillery, the wheels sinking into the soft ground to the axles, moved in far extended array. Each gun was drawn by eight powerful horses, and as soon as one grew tired or fell, another was ready to be put in its place. Active sappers were at work along the route to level hedges, and fill up ditches and remove obstacles from before these powerful but inanimate friends.

For, whatever else remained behind, it was most essential and indispensable that the cannon should go forward.

These guns—rifled artillery—the most powerful yet that rolled along any road on earth—were to thunder at early morning against the foes of Southern freedom. Their round-shot and hurtling grape and bursting shell were to clear the fair lands of Virginia and Maryland from Northern foes—were to carry death and destruction to their ranks. Where-



fore it was necessary they should go forward without stop or stay. And right eagerly the willing hands worked ; and as Stewart rode alongside them for a portion of the time a rejoicing cheer rose along the line, as cannoniers, and drivers, and officers recognised the famous Southern horseman.

With a parting wave of his plumed hat in recognition of their hurrah and in encouragement of their exertions, General Stewart dashed spurs into his horse and broke across the open plain, followed by his companions. There was not much time for converse, for the General went at his fastest speed, until at the edge of the little prairie the thick woods appeared. Soon, at the rapid rate they were going, they came near it, and as the dusk began to grow over them they reached the fringe of the woods.

Several bridle-paths led through it, at various intersecting angles—tracks made by the cayotte or the bear through the ancient untrodden forest.

“Do you know the place, Roland?” asked the General, as he descended from his horse to drink at the clear stream running through it.

“Fairly well.”

“Do you think you will be able to guide us?”

“I think so.”

“These paths are very confusing.”

“We can hardly fail if we go straight on.”

“But the night will fall rapidly in these dark woods.”

“The bivouac lights will guide us a little later on.”

“You’re right there, Roland. I had not thought of that. But query, shall we be able to see them with the trees?”

“We can see the light overhead, and the bugle call will be a further guide, when we get more advanced.”

“How many miles are we now away?”

“We must be some eight or ten.”

“That means two or three hours’ riding here. How

suddenly dark it has grown. And, listen! the sounds of the cannon have died out. I wonder how our army has fared to-day?"

"I hope they have won a vantage-point for to-morrow. I trust they have been able to cross the Chickahominy."

"If they have," said Stewart, thoughtfully, "we shall double up the Northern armies to-morrow, and send them broken and retreating on Washington in worse array than we did at Bull's Run. But I am all impatience to know how our efforts to-day have fared. We had better push on. Do you know how to make your way through midnight forests, O'Donnell?"

"No," said Maurice. "We have no forests in Ireland to practise in."

"True. I might have known that. An Indian or trapper from long practice makes his way even through a strange forest—one that they have never seen before—with unerring certainty and readiness. Lead on you, Roland. You are the best guide here."

Roland drew up, and going first, led off in a sharp canter.

After a short time they had to abate their speed, for the branches of the trees overlapping the path struck them on the face, with imminent danger to their eyes. As they advanced it grew darker still with the darkening eve, until they at last could only advance in a walk.

Thick darkness was around them. The floor of leaves above them was as impervious to light as a woven mat. It grew impossible to continue riding, whereupon they dismounted, and, leading their horses by the bridles, continued their way on foot.

"This is slow movement," said Stewart gravely, as they stopped to consider the position. "The night is wearing on, and it is absolutely essential to reach headquarters without delay. Do you think we are on the right road?"

"Who could say? There is neither light," said Roland, "nor sound to guide us. But the wisest plan is to keep moving forward. We must come eventually on the lights of the army, or fall across some of the advancing columns."

"You think so?" asked General Stewart, anxiously.

"Of course I do."

"I am not so sure of that," said the other. "I have known of men—I have experienced it myself—marching around in a circle in one of these confounded forests all night."

"That might be where there were no indications to guide you; but we must, by continuing, come on some signs of our army."

"You are right," said Stewart, cheerfully, "and, as nothing can be gained by remaining here, we had better mount, and, at all risks push faster on."

The three men being tired of walking, this counsel was acceptable, and, leaping into their saddles, they once more set forward.

The lonely echoes of the woods were around them; and although two hundred thousand men lay at arms not many miles from them, no sound broke the solemn stillness. Save the startled birds flying through the branches, or the squirrels hopping from branch to branch, they might, for the unbroken silence around, be some of the first explorers that marched in amazement through these gigantic solitudes.

All at once a cry burst from Roland.

"Stewart, the lights!"

"Where?" cried Stewart, eagerly, riding up to him.

"See."

The General looked, as did also Maurice. Through a vista in the woods the lights appeared.

In multitudinous array and far as the eye could reach, the bivouac fires of the two contending armies shone! Gleaming

here, gleaming there—now faint and almost undistinguishable, now flaring up as if they were huge bonfires for some festive and peaceful event.

The General surveyed the long array of fires for some time.

“Thank Heaven! we have come in sight of them at last. What a striking and magnificent sight! I wonder what position will they hold to-morrow night.”

“Or what position will those lie in who now rest on their arms around them?” said Roland.

“Tut, Roland. No soldier should ever let such words fall from his lips,” said the General, rebukingly. “It is a soldier’s business and a soldier’s duty to die. But I am glad we have come within sight of our destination. Now, gentlemen, the way is clearer; let us put spurs to our horses and hear what victories the Southern Generals have won to-day.”

A short ride brought them clear of the woods, and across the open country their way lay clearly.

“Who goes there?” broke on them sharply, as they emerged from the woods and turned their horse’s heads in the direction where nearest them the greatest cluster of lights lay—Roland apprehending that that would be found to be General Lee’s headquarters.

“What are we to say, Roland? Do you know the password?”

“No, I do not. Heaven knows what it is,” said Roland, in a whisper.

“Who goes there?” came in quicker and sharper accents, and the clicking of a trigger broke on their hearing.

“I am General Stewart, my friend,” said the General, advancing his horse a step or two. “I come from Richmond, and”——

“Stand back, whoever you are!” said the voice, roughly. “Advance another step and”——

The lights of the distant fires or of the stars above shone with unpleasant gleam from the levelled musket and glinted coldly from the burnished steel of the sharp bayonet.

"Don't fire, man!" cried the General, as he saw the soldier's movement. "I am General Stewart."

"Who calls General Stewart?" said a second voice in the darkness, and a horseman rode up to them. "Who calls General Stewart?"

"It is I—Lawton."

"Why, bless me, so it is—General Stewart. What brought you here?"

We lost our way coming from Richmond. You came just in the nick of time. We did not know the password and were in great peril."

"Not knowing the password you certainly were," said Lawton, "for strict injunctions have been issued to shoot any one attempting to pass without it. I rode out to look for our supports. They are not coming this way?"

"No, the road by which they come must be some five or six miles to the east. They are marching as rapidly as they can."

"Will they be up by daylight?"

"Daylight? They will be brigaded in their positions in an hour or two at furthest. Ride on, Lawton, as you know the road. I want to see General Lee immediately. Tell us what came of to-day's work."

"Easily told. We crossed the Chickahominy in the face of a terrible fire and under cover of our batteries on the bluffs over the river. General Hill's engineers threw across three bridges in a very short time, and Mahone and Ransom's batteries galloped over in splendid style. They were half an hour passing, but the rain of shot and shell around them was terrific.

"It seemed a stiff contest—to judge from the firing."

"Tremendous. Our losses were very heavy. Our dead lie thick in front of the Northern position."

"You have not succeeded, then?"

"We hold the ground we won. We should have done better, but Stonewall Jackson failed to strike their flank at the appointed time. His division did not move through the valley as rapidly as we thought."

"He will strike them to some effect in the morning."

"If his work is well done at daylight there won't be a Northern foot on Virginian soil when the sun sets to-morrow evening."

They reached, without much obstruction, General Lee's quarters. They consisted of a huge wooden building, hurriedly thrown up by the engineers out of timber from the woods beside. It was all alight from base to garret as they came near, and crowded in every one of its spacious rooms with superior officers.

If there was not much elegance displayed in its structure, it had, at any rate, the merit of having plenty of room; and the crowd of military officials busy writing could work without pressure or inconvenience. Maurice marvelled to see the long rows of men in undress, in their shirt-sleeves, writing away at long tables, each man with a cigar in his mouth, and wondered what ream after ream of paper written upon and docketed up could be for.

"Why, O'Donnell," said Stewart, "in answer to his questioning, "you must remember there are nearly one hundred and fifty thousand troops under arms before us. Think of all the arrangements necessary for brigading and settling the positions of all of these so that there shall be no confusion. Think of the thousands of tons of food, of clothing, of powder and shot and shell needed for all these. Think of the record alone of the dead and wounded that sleep beyond the Rappahannock to-night that has to be carefully kept, that

Southern homes may know where their friends have died like heroes. The wonder is not so many are needed, but that the work could by possibility be done at all."

The passages and lobbies and drawing-rooms were crowded with general officers awaiting orders for the next day, or conferring with one another about the events of this. The names most famous in the war—who had won their spurs in the South and West—were there. Representatives of the chivalry of Virginia, with clanking sword and jingling spurs and flashing uniform, mustered together in serious converse. The first families of the Southern States, whose plantations were to be measured not by acres but by hundreds of square miles, were represented by beardless boys whose names were afterwards to be famous from end to end of the American continent—with diamond rings scintillating on their fingers and fragrant cigars exhaling from their lips; and were there also the renowned leaders Stonewall Jackson, Longstreet, and the two Hills.

Beauregard had hurried up from Charleston, and, traveling by special train, had arrived to take part in the momentous deliberations. Generals Ewell, Starke, and Lawton, whose brigades—lying under arms in front of the Northern defences—were the first to attack in the morning, and Generals Fields, Trimble, Forno, and Baylor, who were to lie torn and mangled in the redoubt at that hour the coming evening, were gaily discussing the chances of next day's work.

Numerous were the greetings given Stewart, as the tall, handsome, dashing cavalry officer made his way through them to the bureau of the Commander-in-chief.

"We wanted your horse badly to-day, Stewart," said Longstreet, as he passed.

"You must have had a pretty hot time of it."

"Very. But it was only a preliminary burst; to-morrow the real work commences."

"Have you got instructions?"

"Yes. The plan of to-morrow's battle is made out. I open the ball at daybreak. By the way, the Commander-in-chief wanted to see you badly. Where have you delayed?"

"I went astray in these confounded woods."

"What a pity! However, your work has been assigned—of which Lee will tell you more anon. Good-bye! I am off. I must get a little sleep before the *reveille* sounds."

"I hope we shall have good news to-morrow night."

"If our ears be not too dull to hear it," said Longstreet, tightening his sword-belt, as he laughed gaily.

"I hope not. We should do badly without you."

"It will be a stormy spot in front of my brigade twenty minutes after the first gun speaks," said Longstreet, shaking his head pleasantly. "But there is no time for discussion. Good-bye, Stewart."

"Good-bye, old fellow; and success!"

With a warm shake-hands the two parted, and Stewart strode on towards the apartment in which was General Lee.

It was difficult to get forward with the numbers that were about; and now and then a breathless aide-de-camp, flushed and bespattered with long riding through miry and worn roads—cut into holes and ruts with the endless trains of cannon wheels—pushed his way vigorously and unheedingly past. At other times officers carrying despatches to the Generals in command of the more distant positions passed out with equal haste and energy.

At last they reached the apartment. The door stood open. The night was hot—a Virginian Summer night—and not a breath stirred the air. The windows were thrown up, and the cloud of fragrant cigar-smoke wafted thereout like incense from the windows of a cathedral.

"Remain here, O'Donnell, while I go in," said Stewart, "I shall be out presently."



Maurice glanced inwards. The opened door admitted of no privacy, and he could see the motions of those within, though he could not hear their voices. He could see the burst of enthusiasm that met the renowned cavalry leader, as he strode up to where the Commander-in-chief, with his handsome massive face and silver-white hair, sat at the head of a table covered with charts and maps. Like all others around, General Lee, too, carried a cigar in his lips, which he not infrequently used to point out or trace a line on the map before him.

It was clear to him, as he stood outside, that high spirits and enthusiasm pervaded the crowd of general officers gathering in groups within. The merry laugh and exultant voices proclaimed their belief that the eve of overwhelming Southern victory had arrived. There was, it seemed to him, no doubt that their banners should march, as the great Frenchman phrased it, on the morrow with charging step from victory to victory.

Evidently General Stewart was engaged in important business, for after some time he drew a map towards him, and, taking his seat beside the Commander-in-chief, bent carefully over it. General Lee, in the pressure of his thoughts, laid his cigar on the table beside him. Other Generals came over and bent over the maps, or joined in the discussion, which, as the moments went on, grew more excited and vigorous.

Finally, as the point or points in dispute became clearer, the discussion grew to a head, and the matter seemed settled. The programme for the forthcoming day being finally determined, General Stewart pushed his seat back, rose up, lit a cigar, and, shaking hands cordially with General Lee, came out.

He was perspiring with the heated atmosphere of the room, or with excitement.

"Well, O'Donnell, you here!" he said. "I had nearly forgotten you. Come with me; you must be very tired."

"I *am* tired," said Maurice. "Very tired."

"I am sure you are. You must be. You have not the exciting causes to keep you up that I have. Come away. We have been long enough here! What! You again here, Lawton!"

"Yes. I couldn't come earlier. I was busy elsewhere. But I thought I should come to meet you before you left. We may not meet again—at least soon."

"No; I don't think we shall. No matter, Lawton, we shall do our duty, I hope."

"That is not quite the reason I came to speak to you. This is not a time for the exchange of idle compliments. I came to ask you—will you and your friend pardon the liberty, Stewart?—I came to ask you if you would take supper with me at my quarters?"

"Take supper, Lawton. You must be a very angel from heaven that came to make the request. I had not thought of it until now with the excitement of the times, but I do feel, now that I *have* time to think of it, both tired and weary and hungry."

"I thought as much," said Lawton. "You and your friend must come with me, therefore. My quarters for a few hours are close at hand—and supper is ready. Come along!"

It was no unpleasant request to Maurice, who was hungry enough, neither was it to General Stewart, as we have seen; and so the three men passed out of the crowded passages and lobbies—passed into the cool and refreshing night air, where once again the shining stars were overhead, the multitudinous lights of the bivouac fires in their front, and the confused hum of thousands of voices from the far and faint distance in their ears.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### ACROSS THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

“MAURICE O'DONNELL! Do you hear me? How soundly you sleep! Do you hear? Awaken, and come along. The day is breaking. Its gleams are in the south and east.”

The words came on Maurice, as such words always do come on sound and wearied sleepers, with unpleasant effect. But he was quickly alive to the situation. Jumping up from the rude planks on which he lay, he was beside the speaker at once.

It was General Stewart that spoke.

He was standing beside his horse, ready to mount; his long line of horsemen could be seen fully caparisoned, their drawn swords gleaming over their shoulders in the first faint rays of early dawn. Silent and motionless they stood, as their ranks in quadruple column extended over the valley before, and across the hill in the distance—their extreme end being hidden behind its summit.

“Leap into your saddle, O'Donnell. The morning is moving on. The troops are under arms already. Look yonder!”

Looking yonder with eyes but half recovered from sleep, Maurice saw the massive infantry columns, in far extended array, deploying down the bluffs and passing hurriedly across the numerous bridges that the sappers and miners with untiring energy had during the night thrown over the river. Noiselessly they swept over the brows of the cliffs; dipped into the river valley; passed across the bridges and ascended the far summits; thence in to the table lands that spread

beyond, where their comrades lay still in front of the Northern trenches fast asleep.

Similarly, the artillery with their wheels bound in straw ropes, and their horses' feet clad in rough cloths, more cautiously moved down, crossed over, and with untiring labour ascended the cliffs on the other side and passed also into the table lands.

More than a mile in length of their field-pieces had already, in serpentine array, crossed over before the awakening words had fallen on the sleeper's ear.

"Come, O'Donnell, look alive! Your horse is beside you. Leap into the saddle man, and follow me!"

Maurice, with true Galway practice, whilst yet but half awake, leaped into the saddle, and, dashing spurs into his horse's sides, was fast after his leader, who was galloping towards the river. His officers, taking cue from him, had already set the force in motion, and the multitudinous array of horsemen were breaking into a trot, the sheen of their swords flashing a farewell as they dipped into the valley or disappeared at the off side of the hill.

Maurice came up with the General as they drew near to the bridge, whose numerous arches showed the wonderful labour and perseverance exercised during the night.

It was very difficult to make passage on account of the crowding infantry that passed with steady tramp continuously across; but the presence of the General soon attracted notice, and amid enthusiastic cheers the ranks passing over closed up, making room for himself and his followers as their steeds sprang across the vibrating timbers.

In the space of a short time they reached the summit of the bluffs at the other side, and cantered sharply, without speaking, across the plains until their horses were well nigh blown. Then they stopped to rest, and looked around them and back.

The faint grey dawn was breaking coldly in the East—

had broken, indeed—for the clouds in the far horizon were turning white and red with the rays of the yet unrisen luminary, and had reflected them to the earth.

Far as the eye could reach behind them, the long columns of moving men, sharply defined by the multitudinous array of bayonet points, came crowding towards the river banks. The refracted rays of the dawn were glancing with a hundred thousand varying flashes as the columns debouched from the shelter of the woods and swept down towards the bridges. Beside them rolled in still longer array the burnished guns, smart and trim and bright-looking, as if hurtling shot and bursting shell had never flown from their mouths.

All was quiet. Save the undistinguishable hum that is always in the air when multitudes of men are anear, there was nothing to indicate the presence of war. They had not come within reach yet of evidences of yesterday's conflict. Not a bugle sound arose on the air, not even a roll-call from the concentrating regiments broke the stillness of the morning. Silently and noiselessly, as a snake winds itself forward, the long lines of glancing bayonets appeared above the bluffs of the Chickahominy, and, dipping below, disappeared in the valley of the river.

"Look, Lawton," cried Stewart, as he turned to survey through his glass the Federal position, addressing that officer, who had ridden up to them. "There is some movement afoot with the enemy. They are marching their columns about curiously."

"They are retreating. They are abandoning the position," cried Lawton, "and falling back on Gaine's Mill."

"This is an unpleasant move for us."

"Yes, it means a further advance of several miles. We must fasten them where they are and make them fight there. They must not retreat—or be allowed to retreat—until they retreat in rout."

"They must be stayed at once," assented Stewart.

"Longstreet does not know of this movement. I shall ride and tell him," said Lawton, eagerly.

"Whose batteries are in front?"

"Wilcox's rifled battery of Virginian guards."

"The sooner they open fire the better."

"So I think."

"I hope the General will think so too. Ride fast and tell him."

Lawton put spurs into his horse and was soon out of sight in a dip of the undulating ground. Whilst Maurice and the General were watching the front, or the advancing columns of the regiments that brightened the roads behind with their gleaming steel, a sudden burst—as if the thunders of heaven had opened—shook the ground under them!

It came so quick and so violent that the bluff on which they stood seemed to vibrate with its intensity; while the sound, rumbling along the ground, passed underneath their feet like waves!

Maurice stood amazed at the exceeding violence of this sudden outburst. Mechanically he turned round, and just as he did so a long low roll of white smoke arising from the earth for the breadth of half a mile or so, far in front, showed where the Southern guns were facing the foe.

He had scarcely time to fix his attention on this when quick flashes of light, small and faint in the distance as match-lights, struck out in strong relief against the brightening sky—scintillations that appeared in some places in clusters, in others singly, on the level ground, high up on hillsides, or flashing brightly against a dark background of beech-forest.

His eye had just noted this when—there arose a report that seemed to him like the crash of warring worlds. The guns of the enemy in position had replied to the outburst of Lawton's batteries with overwhelming force, and far in the

front as the eye could reach, the dots of smoke arising—like those from clustering farm-houses in more populated and peaceful lands—showed where the murderous engines of war were at work.

Simultaneously with these thunder-bursts, which did not occupy altogether twenty seconds, a host of other sounds filled the air and broke the previous silence. Bugle calls rang sonorously on the morning air from a hundred different quarters; the roll-call of different regiments rang merrily out; the cries of artillery officers to their men; the oaths and exhortations of the drivers to their horses as they urged them on faster to get the guns into position; the clank of thousands of muskets as the columns broke into the double to bring them the faster to the front; and the rolling volleys of musketry that began hoarsely to grow on the cliffs and valleys before them; made up a pandemonium such as has been rarely witnessed in the world.

That the onslaught was terrific there was no mistaking, for the roar of artillery had grown continuous and sustained in front—sometimes when both sides were firing at once rising to a pitch that completely buried and extinguished all lesser sounds!

Regiment after regiment crept up the bluff from the river, re-formed on the table land, and with swinging step passed by and disappeared into the clouds of smoke in front. Battery after battery, with their long teams of horses at full gallop, bumped and jumped and leaped across obstacles, as the guns swept past with the speed of lightning and disappeared also therein.

“This is furious work,” said Stewart to Maurice, as the last of Longstreet’s division of thirty thousand men passed them by. “I wonder I do not hear Jackson’s division to the left. He should be ready to strike them by this.”

But there was no sound anywhere but in front and to the

right, where the din raged with unabated fury and the canopy of smoke made a gloom as of night.

"I wonder I am not hearing from Rowton or Hill or Longstreet. There must surely be some work for the cavalry," said Stewart, uneasily, as he glanced to the left, where the long array of horsemen stood motionless awaiting orders—sitting silently and stately as statues, save when a horse champed its bit or moved uneasily; but every eye fixed on the ominous war-cloud growing thicker and thicker and mounting higher and higher in the angry North. "This is not a time for Southern horsemen to sit silently looking on! Do you know the way to General Lee's headquarters, O'Donnell; or would you be able to recross the bridges in face of the hurrying regiments? I fear not. Stay! who is this coming? He wears the uniform of the Texan Hussars. He comes this way. He has orders, I doubt not."

The officer in question, mounted on a splendid charger—a cross between an Arabian mare and a mustang, with the speed of the one and the endurance of the other—emerged from the rim of smoke that enveloped the plain, rode to an acclivity, and looked around him. Sweeping the plain with his glass, he noted where General Stewart and his companion stood, and, striking spurs into his horse, sped forward towards them.

"General Stewart?" he said, as he rode up, holding a pencilled paper in his hand.

"I am he."

"This message is for you."

The General glanced at it.

"Where are they retreating to?" he asked, after a pause.

"To Gaine's Mill. They are evidently afraid of Jackson taking them in flank and crushing or doubling their forces up. So they are falling back—but in good order. Division after division moving off steadily as if on parade."



“Our men are making no impression?”

“Very little; they cannot with a retreating force. You must see and interrupt them, and harass them, and prevent their taking up positions until Stonewall’s division arrives.”

“He is unaccountably late.”

“He must have found it difficult to move the guns and wagons in the miry bottoms of the Aveland Valley,” said the officer. “But he will be in position by mid-day. Meantime it is essential that the retreat of M’Clellan be impeded or stopped.”

“It shall be done. Tell Longstreet so.”

The officer spurred back, and disappeared within the canopy of smoke.

“Follow me, O’Donnell. Here’s to lend a hand to drive the invader off Southern soil.”

Stewart’s steed at the motion of the rider sprang forward, and went at a rapid gallop over the spreading uplands. Maurice had much difficulty in keeping within reach of him, so swift was his pace.

In a few moments the array of horsemen had formed up in battalions, and were in quick motion forward.

Marching was difficult. The country through which they were passing, though long settled and within easy reach of the capital, was but little cultivated. This arose partly from the swampy condition of the ground, partly, also from the brushwood that covered it, which, taking root, grew again as quickly as it was burned down or hoed out.

It was necessary, therefore, that to strike at the huge columns of retreating men Stewart’s cavalry should make a wide detour.

Putting spurs to their horses, therefore, the cavalry galloped forward, and after a few hours’ hard riding in a semicircle formed themselves again in front of the mid-division of the enemy’s forces.

With but little semblance of order—when was order observed or kept in a beaten army?—the immense masses of men were moving rereward. Their rifles were carried in their hands horizontally, or slung over their shoulders, or not infrequently used after the manner of walking-sticks—butt to the earth—to help them over the ruts the long lines of baggage-wheels going in front had cut in the soft earth.

In the midst of the dense columns the artillery crept slowly back. The horses were tired dragging the cannon, which sometimes sank up to the axles in the yielding clay, and their condition was not improved by the heavy rain which had begun to fall. Every step or two necessitated a delay and block in the long lines, as some gun heavier than the others sank deeply and beyond the power of the powerful team of eight horses to pull it out.

It was in this disastrous condition of things that Stewart and his horsemen debouched from the screen of a wood on the retreating forces.

His eager eye saw the opening there was for him. The bugle rang out the order to charge, the command passed from officer to officer, and, before the Northern troops were able to form up, the charging columns of horsemen were upon them, riding down the broken columns, and sabring mercilessly as they tore along. The traces of the guns were cut, and the torn columns were huddled on the top of one another in woful confusion. For a time the slaughter was terrific.

But the Northern troops, though retreating and taken at a disadvantage, were not beaten. They had right good stuff in them.

A line of resolute men rapidly formed, and opened with their rifles on the sabring horsemen; cannon were rapidly wheeled into position, shotted with grape, and turned upon them. Men and horses fell rapidly under the withering fire, and in less than a quarter of an hour after their first burst

of flashing sabres the bugle sounded the retreat, and, after inflicting heavy loss and disaster on the Federal lines, the cavalry were in rapid and broken fragments galloping off.

The crush of retreating horsemen, their swords red with Northern blood, separated Maurice from the General.

He looked around for him. At the moment the whiz of a shell came on his ears; a second after its thud was heard where it fell on the soft earth: and instantaneously a blinding flash of red light lit up the rain-laden atmosphere, and a quick, violent explosion nearly burst the tympanum of his ear.

In the midst of falling men and horses, a splinter struck his own horse in the head. With a leap upwards and sideways the gallant steed fell on his side, burying his rider under him, and for a few moments stunning him.

---

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### IN WASHINGTON.

THE bursts of cannonading from five hundred iron mouths had produced the result usual in all such great artillery duels. The clouds gathered, the atmosphere darkened, and the rain descended in torrents. The heavens seemed to have opened their floodgates. The rain fell not in showers but in sheets; and ammunition, tumbrels, horses, men, clothing, everything, were drenched as completely as if they had been drawn through a rushing river.

At the base of a cliff, whereby the road ran, Maurice lay. His hip was quite stiff with his fall, and he was unable to stir. Ready hands lifted him into an ambulance. The long train of retreating wagons extended for miles, sometimes sunk up to the axlewheels in mire, at others climbing

slowly and painfully along the side of a precipitous cliff. The crash of bursting shells in the distance and the intermittent roar of musketry bursting at times on his ears gave token of the determination with which the rebel forces followed up the retreat.

It was but two o'clock on a summer's day, and yet a pall as of night had come over the scene. Through the smoky cloud which seemed to follow and surround them the rain poured down. The train of wagons, at all times moving slowly, became blocked, and finally stopped.

"Where is that Southern prisoner?" asked a General officer, as, epaulettes and uniform drenched and spattered with riding through the torn roads, and with his splendid steed covered with foam, he reined up beside the ambulance.

Some answer which did not reach distinctly on Maurice's ear was given.

The impatience of the officer was apparently extreme, and the answer was unsatisfactory; for in a loud and hurried manner he said:

"Where is he? Speak up! Where is he?"

"In the ambulance."

"There are a hundred ambulances. There would be a thousand needed this accursed day! Which of them!—what number? Why don't you speak?"

"No. 150."

"Where is that? Oh, I see! Pull back the tumbrels until I see him."

The drivers, seated like postilions on their horses' backs, vainly endeavouring to lash them forward, here jumped off and tugged at their horses' heads to shove them out of the way and let the officer approach.

Maurice awaited curiously the appearance of the stranger whose voice fell on his ears.

Very soon the form of a cavalry officer appeared at the

mouth of the tent, his uniform steaming with the impetuous descent of the rain.

“You’re the prisoner, are you?”

“I am,” said Maurice, endeavouring to lift himself.

“An Irishman?”

“Yes, I am.”

“It does not matter,” said the other, impetuously, and as if angry at the frivolousness of his own question. “How long have you been in the South?”

“Only a short time.”

“How long with the army?”

“Only since yesterday?”

“Since yesterday! Confound it! You know nothing, then, of the Southern forces?”

“Very little.”

“See, sir!” said the officer, in a high state of impatience, “you must know this. I caution you to tell me the truth if you do. With thousands of our men dying on the line of retreat, we cannot allow sullen enemies in our ambulances. Whose guns are those thundering now on our right?”

As he spoke there seemed in the distant West, through the rain-cloud and the beetling mist and fog, sharp scintillations, and the dull boom of heavy guns came with a curious concussion on the air.

“Jackson’s division!” said Maurice, with, in spite of his pain and weariness, a half feeling of malice and vindictiveness.

“What Jackson’s? General Stonewall Jackson’s?”

“Yes.”

“Are you quite certain you are not mistaken there,” said the officer, with a sense of anxiety in his face.

“I don’t think I am,” said Maurice, noticing with no small pleasure the alarm expressed in the other’s countenance. “These are his guns.”

"You were with Stewart—were you not?"

"Yes."

"You were taken prisoner in the charge of his cavalry?"

"I was."

"Had he—we are informed he had—batteries of light field-pieces with him?"

"No, not a gun."

"Not a gun?"

"Not one."

"Are you quite sure of that?"

"Quite."

"And you think this is Jackson's force attacking our right?"

"I have no doubt of it."

"Well, I have—in fact, I don't believe it. But I am not disposed to settle this of my own motion. Are you able to bear rapid motion?"

Without waiting for an answer to his question the officer, still in a great hurry, turned his head aside to give some orders. What these orders were was rapidly shown by the speed with which several tumbrels were unhorsed, and the best of their steeds selected and harnessed to that in which Maurice lay.

Precisely as the roar of cannon all around burst with force as fresh and stunning on his ears as if it were the first time he had heard the sounds, the horses, lashed by the drivers, plunged forward at great speed, separating themselves from the regular lines of the retreating forces—the questioning officer, muffled up as well as he could from the bewildering rain, riding swiftly beside.

All at once the plunging ambulance stopped; all at once a scene of endless confusion appeared; all at once red lights flashed in circles and the thunders of battle once again swelled and raged around him. Hundreds of Remington

rifles rang with incessant discharges; long lines of advancing troopers, with gleaming swords, appeared; and a forest of glittering bayonets broke through the cloudy, gloomy, smoky rain on his sight.

Jackson's division had struck right on the line of the retreating forces, and, aided by Stewart's division of cavalry, had fairly divided the Northern army into two sections. The danger was terrific for the Union forces; and accordingly their retreating batteries wheeled around, took up positions, unlimbered and swiftly opened fire on the enemy. It was necessary to turn and fight, unless they were ready to submit to the loss of half their army.

It was a marvellous sight to see from every bluff and hill-side around, in a few minutes, the belching flashes of the cannon, to hear the whiz of grape and the crash of bursting shells as they vainly sought to stay the onrush of the impetuous Southerns.

Whatever the intention Jackson had, or whether he had any or not, his columns advanced with intrepid bravery to the attack, and in a short time the artillery ceased, for Southern horsemen and Southern bayonets covered the ground and surrounded the guns. The Northern army was in complete rout. The great army that had been directed on Richmond was in full retreat; and the first of the seven days' retreat of M'Clellan had commenced!

Maurice was extremely anxious that the ambulance in which he was should be seized by the Southern horsemen. But their efforts were directed to the capture of the guns; and accordingly rank after rank of sabres swept down upon them—only, however, to be met by volleys of musketry from the riflemen behind them.

During one of these fights, in which the chivalry and force of the passionate Southern hearts bore down all Northern opposition, and the cries and cheers of conquering

men rent the air, Maurice felt the ambulance move; the horses, surrounded by cavalry who pricked them with their sabres to make them go faster, leaped forward with a gallop; he was once more amid the lines of Northern troops retreating in hot haste; and he found all chance of getting again within Southern lines impossible.

They had come to the bank of a small river, dull and sluggish and oozy in ordinary times, but now, swollen by the incessant downpour, the stream rushed furiously, and Maurice could see where at several places thousands of willing and skilled hands were at work building bridges for the passage of the retreating troops.

"Make way, men!—make way there!" cried an officer at the head of an escort, galloping up, making a passage for himself at the head of his men. In their midst was a wounded officer, whose bent form, scarcely able to sit on his horse, showed the dangerous character of the wound he had received. "Lift the General in. Easy there, boys. He will not bear much hard usage."

They lifted him in, and, as his cloak fell off, disclosing his face white with agony and pain, Maurice saw that it was the officer who had lately questioned him. He had been parted from him but a short time. His eyes were growing dim and sightless, and the cold drops of perspiration, begotten of his wounds and perhaps of coming dissolution, stood out thickly on his unconscious brow. What a change in a brief interval!

"Let the ambulance be the first to pass," said the officer, authoritatively; and accordingly, as soon as the last planks were hammered down, the horses attached galloped across.

An hour's rapid driving brought them away from the scene of the contending armies, and among the reserve of the Northern forces.

It was General La Hore who had thus been injured, and



after a hasty inspection of his wounds the surgeons of the reserve determined to send the wounded officer to Washington. With the murderous scenes of carnage and conflict going on in front, these gentlemen knew that their hands would be too full the next day for special attention to be paid to anyone in particular, no matter how high his rank and famous his name.

Maurice being with him, and, in the confusion of the hour and the occasion, no note being taken of his being a prisoner, and there being nothing indicative of his character about him, he with another was despatched to Washington in charge of the wounded General.

Once there, General La Hore was placed in a hospital ward—from which he was destined never again to go forth a living man—and Maurice, wholly unthought of and uncared for, was free to wander whither he would. Telegrams of the battle had been sent at intervals from M'Clellan's headquarters during the day, and announcing, as they did, a retreating movement on the part of the Union forces, filled Washington with dismay. A repetition of the disastrous day of Bull's Run was dreaded; and the anxiety no longer was as to how the Northern armies would enter Richmond, but as to whether there would be soon an army left to defend the Northern capital at all.

An excited population filled the streets. The outside of the Government and newspaper offices were besieged by crowds waiting to see the publication of any bulletin that would throw light on the outcome of the terrible struggle raging on the Southern border.

“Attack on Gaine's Mill! The Federal forces in retreat! Porter's division cut to pieces! Twenty thousand men dead on the field of battle!! M'Clellan's army destroyed!! Washington threatened!!!”

These were some of the headings that fell on his eyes from the newspaper placards that attracted crowds everywhere.

Many believed the chances of the North were now hopelessly lost. Others thought that it was a question of only a few hours until the conquering legions of Stonewall Jackson would be tramping through the streets of the capital. Excited men believed they could hear the thunder of the hostile cannon echoing through the night from the distant Virginian hills.

A buzz of excitement was in the crowded streets, and scarcely any, in the stirring news of the hour, remained in their houses.

"I guess it's all up with the North," said one.

"I rather fancy Jeff Davis will be at the capital afore the week is out. M'Clellan aint agwine to keep him out—he aint," remarked another.

"They ought to throw up defences around Washington," suggested a third.

"Is there any confirmation of the news? Is M'Clellan really beaten?"

Among the many remarks made in O'Donnell's hearing, the latter question attracted his attention from the foreign accent with which it was said and from the familiar strain that ran through it.

He turned his head around. An exclamation of surprise and delight broke from him.

"Reinor!"

"Who calls me?" said the latter.

"I, Maurice O'Donnell," said Maurice, in an ecstasy of delight.

"Why, so it is. Good Heavens! Is it here we meet again? Maurice, man alive, how are you? I am so glad to see you. Where have you been all the time since?"

"I have been many a place," said Maurice, hurriedly; "but if you had asked me where I was twelve hours ago I could have answered—within the Southern lines."

“Hush!” said Reinor, in a warning whisper; “don’t even breathe that here; they would tear you limb from limb. Come with me where we can talk more freely.”

They proceeded to a hotel in a side street, where they, sitting alone at a small table, could converse at their ease.

“Were you really within the Southern lines?”

“I was, indeed; but we can talk of that again. Where is Norah Desmond, Reinor?”

“Somewhere in New York. At least George and herself went there, in a yacht that——

“I know, I know,” said Maurice, impetuously; “but do you know her whereabouts?”

“No; not yet. I had no time to find out. I only entered New York with my vessel, and whilst she was unloading hurried here to see some of the Government officials for whose service it is intended. But I am going back in the morning.”

“I shall go with you, Reinor,” said Maurice, rapturously.

“I shall not ask a pleasanter companion. But let us have dinner; you look wearied and tired.

“So I have good reason to be. One that rode with Stewart’s horsemen in the morning, and in a Northern ambulance at noon, and thence to Washington, has good cause to look wearied.”

They had much to speak of during dinner. It was not long, counting it by months, since they had parted at Innisbeg; but how much had been compressed into Maurice’s life during that time.

Dinner and their conversation for the time over, they turned into the city again.

“Why, Reinor,” said Maurice, as they entered the main thoroughfare, “there must be some extraordinary news come since we left. What is it? Not the news of defeat, for they had that all day.”

The streets, if crowded before, seemed ten-fold more

crowded now. There was a sense of excitement in every man's face—seen by the gleaming lamps—and in every man's eyes. People spoke under the influence of great wonder and dreadful anticipations. The air was electric with excitements and evil forebodings.

“There is the reason, Maurice—look there!”

Maurice looked, as directed.

High up on a balcony, on the second floor of one of the evening newspaper offices, a poster, half advertisement half bulletin, stood. Illuminated from behind with the electric light, it threw its news so vividly that it could be read at a great distance.

“Retreat of General M'Clellan! Destruction of the York River Railroad by Stewart's cavalry! Destruction of all the Federal stores by our retreating army!! Five thousand wounded left behind in the hospitals. Stoneman's cavalry flying down the Peninsula. Rebel forces preparing to attack again to-morrow!!!”

These were the significant headings of the placard.

“By Jove! this is awful news. This is a sad day for Northern folk, Maurice. The street is no place for strangers on such a night as this. I vote we go back.”

“I am quite with you there. I feel dreadfully stiff and tired. I should not have attempted to stir out at all. Harken to that!”

A roar burst along the street, taken up again and again, but for what reason, or through what motive, neither of the two men could realise. It might be one of rage, mortification, revenge, or frantic enthusiasm, for all these different emotions seemed blended up in it. But it grew with astonishing force until the hoarse diapason of a hundred thousand human voices made the air vibrate, and, in its trembling, seemed to make the houses at either side quiver!

“What is up? What the devil is in the air? What

further news has come?" asked Reinor with difficulty of Maurice, as a sudden rush of people jammed them suffocatingly together.

"I don't know," said Maurice.

"There must be some tremendous fresh news."

"It is not posted up."

"No; but yet what else is the excitement for?"

"Heaven knows! The people, I think, are going mad."

"Stay a moment. Look here! By heaven, there are Southern troops entering!"

"Where?"

"See! the head of the column coming down the street."

Coming down the street they were indeed—but not Southern troops.

Alarmed by M'Clellan's hurried telegrams during the day, and his nervous call for aid, notwithstanding that he had under his command over a hundred thousand men, with over a thousand field-pieces to face the impetuous Southern Generals, the terrified authorities at Washington had made strenuous efforts to come to his assistance with men and guns. The news that his huge division was in retreat—always fighting, but always retreating—that forty miles of trains of forage, ammunition, food, &c., were slowly moving backwards through the bad roads or no roads of the Peninsula, difficult to guard, and at any moment liable to be struck and captured by the conquering Southern, called up all the vigour they could give.

This long column of troops whom Reinor pointed to were the first to answer the call; and as their steady tramp, full of courage and undismayed confidence, came on the ears of the assembled citizens, and as their countless bayonets gleamed and shone in the lamps overhead, as they extended in far-reaching array, the wild enthusiasm of the spectators knew no bounds.

Horses were unharnessed from the lumbering cannon, and active hands, hauling the traces, drew them along lightly, as if they were made of cork-wood.

"That shows fine pluck in this hour of black disaster," said Reinor, admiringly, as he watched the vigorous stride of the troops.

"They will need all their courage and all their power, I fancy," was Maurice's thought, as he remembered the enthusiasm with which the Southern troops poured through Richmond a few days before.

But he had seen so much of marching men and gleaming bayonets, the cries of enthusiastic multitudes had been so often in his ears during the past two days, the tramp of cavalry, the rumble of guns, the volleying musketry and the fierce diapason of bursting shells had imprinted itself so much on his brain, that he was tired and dizzy. He was, indeed, half asleep on his legs.

But he was startled into wakefulness, as in the swinging pace with which the solid columns swept by, a pair of eyes flashed a look of recognition on him thereout; a face that he knew, for a moment, shone under the sudden gleam of a torch-light; and a voice called out:

"Maurice!—Maurice O'Donnell!"

"Why—good heavens!" cried Maurice, in astonishment, "that is my brother Henry! What could have brought him here?"

"Your brother! Absurd, Maurice! He was in Arranmore when I was off the coast. So George told me."

"But it is he, if he be living," said Maurice, making frantic efforts to get through the crowd to where he saw the face before the column had passed—"it is his voice, it is his face. Henry!—Henry!"

But the dense and striving crowds on the footpaths prevented his gaining access to the front, or his call being heard,

and the hurrying column passed on—swept steadily on with unceasing flow, for their succour was sadly wanted in the imminent danger that overhung the land. The terrible time of peril for the Northern cause, known as the seven days' retreat from Richmond, in which each day was fought a pitched battle, had set in, and no one knew where it might end.

What a time of calamity it was for the Northern troops may be instanced by the fact that Colonel Cass's Irish regiment of artillery, but a fortnight before, took three hours to cross the bridge leading from Washington on their way to the South, and at the expiration of the retreat, when the beaten army got once more within safe entrenchments, Cass and his fine regiment were unknown. They slept in front of the defences at Gaine's Mill, at Fair Oaks, or Malvern Hill, or some of the other terrific struggles where the retreating army stood up and did manful battle.

"You have been mistaken, Maurice; it couldn't have been he."

"It could, and was," said Maurice, emphatically. "Why couldn't it?"

"Because," said Reinor, emphatically, "we left him behind us in Ireland, and he could scarcely have come here and become a soldier since."

"No, he couldn't have learned the drill in the time," assented Maurice, after a moment's consideration. "But it was extremely like him. He called my name. Who could it have been?"

"That I cannot tell you. But there's one thing you may rely on. It is not your brother, O'Donnell; for it would be impossible. So, as it is useless to speculate further, what say you to retiring for the night? I feel tired myself; *you* must be completely worn out."

"I am. I feel as if I were sleeping where I stand."

Leaving the crowded streets and the columns hastening through them to the battle-fields, the two friends retired to the bar, and, after partaking of some drinks, they were about to proceed to their apartments when, on entering the drawing-room, Maurice O'Donnell stood fairly still with surprise!

What form was that, seated in an arm-chair by the window, gazing out into the street? Whose face was that—oh! so radiant and so winsome—that turned so suddenly towards him? What voice was that—more welcome to his ears than would have been angel-tones from Paradise—that called in trembling accents of astonishment and delight—“Maurice—Maurice O'Donnell?”

---

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

THE voice—so musical even in its throbbing cadences—started Maurice from his state of paralysed surprise, and in a second more his arms were around her slender form to prevent her falling.

“Norah! Is it really you I see? Is it you I have in my arms or am I dreaming? Oh, Norah! beloved of my heart! what good genius brought us at last together?”

But Norah was insensible to his voice; she had swooned away. The suddenness and unexpectedness of the meeting was too much for her; hopes long deferred and disappointed had been too suddenly realised; the light fled from her eyes.

Perhaps it was the voice of her brother who had entered the apartment, spoken also in tones of immense wonder and astonishment, that recalled her failing senses. Perhaps it was the sense of joy pervading her heart that restored its throbbing pulses. Whatever was the reason her illness was but momentary, and in a short time she was herself again.



Was there ever such delightful meeting? Was there ever, since friends first met on this round globe of ours, such ecstatic greetings exchanged? What questions were asked and answered! What narratives and stories told! How Maurice hung on Norah's accents as she told him—always reserving with gentle delicacy the distressing event that led to it—of their stay in London, and of his mysterious appearances and disappearances. How her colour came and went, thereby making herself perfectly bewitching in his eyes, as she narrated their anxiety to meet him, and their sense of disappointment when they failed! How beautiful she looked when her face became white as the lily; how positively radiant and entrancing when it crimsoned again with the returning pulse—the crimson light of the sunset on a surface of spotless snow.

What merry laughter there was when Maurice, having recounted his adventures by flood and field, told of his voyage to London with Walton, and Norah broke into a slight scream as she found an unexpected elucidation of the mystery of her portrait on board the strange vessel. What conjectures there were as to what would have happened, or what their several careers would have been, had Maurice but remained another day in London.

No such delightful meeting had ever been in that Capital since Washington first planned its streets. The daylight was peeping in through the curtained windows before the gentlemen thought midnight had come, and it was with infinite reluctance even then that they retired to their several apartments, Norah having withdrawn some hours earlier.

Maurice was scarcely in bed when he was fast asleep—sunk in dreamless repose what time the beaten Northern army, after a night of retreat through White Oak Swamp, so frightful and disastrous as men's eyes had witnessed never before, pulled themselves together foodless and worn, and

turned once more to face the victorious pursuing foe. He was tired and wearied beyond all bearing, and—heedless of the clamour in the street beneath him, unknowing of and uncaring for the state of excitement in which the Northern Capital was plunged—did not waken until the shadows of the summer evening were beginning to fall.

When he awoke he could not for some time remember where he was. Neither could he tell whether he was awake or dreaming. So many strange events had been crowded into the past forty-eight hours that he could not tell whether the incidents that floated in his awakened memory had really happened or were but fancies conjured up by his dreaming brain.

Norah, radiant and beloved! How often had he dreamt of her before! How frequently had she been present to him, in imagination, vividly as if she were beside him—her blue eyes making the sunlight dim!—only to find that it was his wandering brain that was at work.

Oh, mocking dreams that lift the soul to heaven and leave it sunk in the depths of despair! Oh, misery of disappointment——

A rustle of the bed-curtains disturbed his half-awakened reverie, and a voice, rousing him completely from sleepfulness, said—

“What a sleep you have had, Maurice!”

“George!” said he, lifting himself up. “You! Thank God, I have not been dreaming. It has then really happened?”

“What, Maurice?”

“That you and Norah have been here?”

“There is no doubt at all about that,” said George Desmond, gaily. “I see you are dreaming still. Arise! The evening has come, and we are all anxious to see you among us.”

Maurice was quickly up and dressed. He was too delighted to remain a moment away from his new-found friends.

If Norah looked beautiful the night before, wearied with her long journey from the Empire City, she was positively enchanting now. Her new-found happiness had added a new light of beauty to her face, and the glance of delight and pleasure from her eyes made the summer's day positively look brighter.

The next few days were abandoned to sight-seeing. The unexpected pleasure of their meeting was too great to permit of anything but enjoyment of the present—all considerations of the future were abandoned. Indeed it would be difficult for Maurice to think of the future in Norah's presence—or of anything else but her bewitching self. And when, as they passed through the streets or visited the various scenes of interest, wondering eyes followed the attractive Irish girl, or strangers, with the chivalry and courtesy of American gentlemen, made way for her, Maurice felt pleased beyond expression. The Capital of the warring States was not without its quota of handsome girls, but in exquisite beauty, in rare and attractive grace there was none such as she. All eyes followed her with wondering admiration.

So the days passed in a dream of happiness. The scenes he had passed through, the uneasinesses he had undergone, were more than counterbalanced by these hours of delight.

Reinor had completed his business with the authorities at Washington, had got paid and settled for his cargo, had entered into arrangements with them for further freight to New Orleans—now in the possession of the Northern forces—and their time in Washington was therefore drawing to a close.

One evening, about this time, he and George had gone to the Capitol on business connected with the projected voyage,

and Maurice and Norah were left together in the gardens. It was but rarely they were alone, for George was most constantly with them. But now they had some hours of undisturbed happiness. They moved slowly over the velvet sward, under the trees, through which the summer sun poured down his rays, throwing broken patches of golden sunlight here and there. It was a time favourable to soft influences; and the beauty of the scene surrounding added to the delight dwelling in Maurice's heart. But there was a feeling of anxiety growing up therein too; there is no unalloyed joy in the world—there are no roses without thorns, and so a bodement that their days of enjoyment would be soon over was finding a place in his breast.

“Norah,” he said, pausing in his walk beside her, “is it not a pity these times should ever cease? They are so happy—so exquisitely happy.”

“But will they? Why should they?” asked Norah, innocently, turning her blue eyes to his face in wonderment.

“Why should they! Surely they must, Norah! You and George are going to the South with Reinor—are you not?”

“There is nothing to be done here,” said Norah. “We are utter strangers here. Our friends and relatives are in the South. They have position and influence. It is there we should go. Are you not coming with us?” she asked, in anxiety. “I thought you were.”

“I don't know, Norah,” he said, after a pause. “You have friends there. I have none. I could hardly accompany you as a mere acquaintance. It would be an irksome, and hardly a manful position to take up. *My* friends are in front of the Northern position on the Potomac, and there I should go, too—but for one reason. For one reason, Norah—I should have to leave you.”

He paused, and Norah remained silent. They moved on very slowly together without speaking. At last he resumed:

“Yes, Norah, I should be beside Stewart again if it were not for that. I could not bear to part from you—indeed I could not. I have too often thought of you—dreamt of you—when I lay tossing the long sick night through in Charleston Bay, to give you up now that I have found you. How often have your eyes looked in upon me through the darkness of the night, like an angel’s peering out of Paradise! How often has your voice, in imagination, made music in my ears. And your silken hair, Norah, was stronger to bind my heart to you and Ireland than the strongest steel cable in the American fleet. No, Norah, I cannot; it is impossible. I cannot go with you, and—I cannot leave you.”

There was another pause, during which they walked again in silence, until, coming to one of these spots where the golden sunlight shone, Norah unconsciously stood within it. The glorious light fell whitely on her, changing her into a beatified being, adding to her wondrous grace, and turning her hair into silken masses, every hair of which was a strand of gold. How superbly beautiful and graceful she looked as she moved with eyes bent on the brightening sward, her soft footfalls scarcely bending the white flowers beneath!

“Norah,” said he, breaking the silence again; “I have to ask you a question, and may as well ask it here as elsewhere, now as at any time else.”

He paused, his voice faltered a moment, but he hastened to continue—

“Perhaps the light that falls on and surrounds you, Norah, makes augur of fortune and happiness to me—to us. I have not much of my own, heaven knows, at present to offer anyone; but what I have—an honest heart, and, I trust, a fearless one, and a love such as filled no man’s breast ever before—these I offer to you. Will you accept them? I know they are not worthy of you, but—they may become so. Will you accept them, Norah, so that the shadow of parting

may be evermore removed from us? Say, oh, Norah—say that you will!”

She lifted her face to his. Was it the sunlight falling on it that caused it to turn so pale? Was it some curious refraction of its rays that suddenly changed it to crimson again? Had the beautiful light, streaming down from heaven, anything to do with that look of undoubting affection and unfaltering trust that flashed from her eyes, as she placed her hand in his, and said, soft and low—

“I will.”

---

## CHAPTER XXX.

### A SUDDEN DISAPPOINTMENT.

A NEW life seemed to have grown thereafter into the heart of Maurice O'Donnell—a new happiness breathed into his views. His two friends were informed by him, during the course of the afternoon, of the turn matters had taken, and the information was received with the warmest congratulations. Thenceforward, Norah and he were free to wander about sight-seeing whither they would.

Whatever sad hearts may have been in the capital of the New World at the untoward turn matters were taking between the opposing forces on the Virginian frontier—and they were not few; whatever mourning homes there were—and they were many—for the gallant men that had fallen before the Southern batteries; there were two at any rate for whom the world was full of sunshine and glory, and happiness. Their future was bright with love and mutual affection; and no cloud seemed to obscure or darken the sunny path, strewn with roses, that spread itself out before them.

It was a time of delirious joy to Maurice. With Norah on his arm, her sweet face beside him, her blue eyes looking

so trustingly up to him, her musical voice ever in his ear, he considered himself, and indeed was, as near to the perfection of human joy as it is given to man to reach. They were to be married in New York, and as soon after as might be, they were to sail with Reinor for New Orleans. Whatever might be their course there, there was, at any rate, nevermore the shadow of parting to darken upon their hearts. Whatever in the uncertain future of that Southern land might cause them to be awhile sundered, they were and should be but one for ever. Distance would but strengthen their love, danger but make it the more fond and perfect. Even if he were to, as perhaps he might, find himself by Stewart's side again, he could not call that parting. His heart, his love, would be behind in the precious trust and keeping of her who was bound to him by silken ties that no power on earth could rend or break.

The time at last came for them to leave. Reinor had completed his arrangements with the Federal Government, and George and he had gone to look after some necessary matters in the city. Norah was busy packing up, and Maurice, having nothing to do, strolled into the streets to have a last look at the city, promising to meet them at the railway depot for New York at the appointed time in the afternoon.

For the first time for some days, he had leisure to bestow his thoughts upon what was going on in the threatened city; to note the sense of peril and of defeat—no, not defeat, but of determination to reverse the fortunes of war—that reigned on men's faces, and to see the efforts that were making to place the capital in a position of defence against the forces, flushed with victory, that menaced them on the Rappahannock—not many miles off. To further see these he strolled towards where, on its Southern border, earthworks were being, with hot haste, erected.

Thousands of men with pick and shovel were, when he arrived there, digging entrenchments and throwing up redoubts; engineers were busy placing huge guns in position, and on every side there seemed to be an amount of disciplined haste that showed how great was the threatened danger and their determination to anticipate it.

He watched with such interest the placing of the guns that the time flew by unheededly. He glanced at his watch, and found that it was time to leave. After another glance around he was about leaving, when a hand was placed on his shoulder, and a voice said:—

“Stranger, didn't I see you afore?”

“Probably you did,” said Maurice, unconcernedly. He had no time, and was in no mood, for conversation with strangers.

“Oh yes, I did,” said his accoster, quietly. “Yes, I did; I helped to put you into the ambulance at White Oak swamp; you were with Jeb Stewart's cavalry. What brings you here? It's a fair question, I guess. What brings you here?”

The man's words, though quietly spoken, were not unheard around. Men came from their work, with their implements in their hands, and stood around. It occupied only a minute or so, and yet a crowd of sullen, silent faces had gathered around.

“Weren't you with Stewart's Cavalry?” again quietly asked his accoster.

Maurice could not reply. He could not say no; he dared not, in face of the serious, silent faces around, say yes. The occasion had come too suddenly on him.

“Yes; I know you were. I helped to lift you into the ambulance when the darned rebs were driven off. What brings you here?”

“I merely strolled in to see the works. I am an Irishman, and”——said Maurice, hesitatingly.



“You may be, stranger ; but you are something more—you are a spy. That’s just what you are, I reckon. You came from Jeb Stewart’s staff, and I find you here. Why? For what purpose? For I’m agwine to know.”

In face of this serious accusation, which he could not repel, and of the determined, watching faces of the surrounders, who now threw away their implements as they gathered closer around him, Maurice felt that no explanation could be given, or, if given, would be unheeded. How dangerous, how perilous, was the accusation. he knew well. There was none other that could be more so. The very name of “spy” was pregnant with danger. What! here in a city, menaced with attack from a victorious foe—the smoke from whose batteries might at any moment appear on the horizon—was it to be permitted that a secret foe should be watching their movements, and taking notes of their means of defence! Men had been summarily taken out and shot for less; men had been lynched for less, and their corpses left dangling—a warning to all secret emissaries and traitors! What was one man’s life—rightly or wrongly taken—compared with the safety of the army, of the capital, of the Union itself? Nothing; of no account whatever. Maurice saw at once the peril he was in; knew it as well as if he saw it written on the shining sky overhead. He was no coward at any time; but now the bead-drops grew upon his brow. It had come so sudden. What news there would be for Norah to hear in the morning—if his fate were as that of so many others! His life hung upon a thread—on the turn of a moment.

A happy inspiration seized him.

“I have been in the Southern army, but I came here with a wounded Northern officer. Take me before your General. I can explain it.”

A sudden reaction set in among the threatening, silent, watchful faces around. The answer was fair and manly and

straightforward enough. The determination for sudden violence as suddenly ceased ; but not the resolve to have the matter tried. He was hurried at once before the officer in charge, and without delay before the General commanding ; those who arrested him still accompanying him.

Much anxiety as Maurice was in, he could not forbear wondering at the exceeding readiness with which they intruded on the General's presence ; nor, again, at the unpretending demeanour of the latter—who sat in an open room, before a rough deal table, writing and smoking.

“Well ?” said the latter, as they entered, Maurice in their midst.

“This man has been found in the entrenchments taking note of the defences. He was with Stewart's horsemen ; was supposed to be wounded, made prisoner and taken in an ambulance. He is now found here ; he is not wounded, and we conclude he is a Southern spy.” Thus said the officer, introductoryly.

“I guess he is that,” said the man who had first accosted him. “I helped to carry him into the ambulance, believing him to be wounded. But he was not. It was a dodge to get here, I calculate—a clever one, too.”

“How do you account for yourself ?” sharply asked the General, turning to Maurice.

“It is true I was with General Stewart, but as a mere visitor,” said Maurice hurriedly, “and that I was taken prisoner. I came here in attendance on General La Hore.”

“What !” cried the General, “do you dare make such a statement to me ? *You*, a rebel prisoner, in attendance on La Hore !”

“It is true,” said Maurice ; “you can ask the General himself.”

“You may readily tell me to do so, for General La Hore is dead and in his grave—as you well know—for some days.

But, assuming for the moment your words are true, how did you come to be his attendant?"

This was a question which Maurice had considerable difficulty in answering. The matter had arisen in the hurry and excitement of the time naturally enough; but told now, and under the present circumstances, it would bear a vastly different interpretation.

He was about making a reply, confusedly enough, when he was interrupted by his captor.

"I guess, if he came with General La Hore, he knew what he was coming for. I calkerlate the man who, being a prisoner, could manage to come to Washington in attendance on a Northern General, *must* be a smart man. Durn me if he aint!"

The words seemed an echo of the General's thoughts. He looked at the speaker thoughtfully, and from him to Maurice, as if to say: There must be some dangerous move behind this. How did he come here? by what subterfuges did he manage it? and what secret game lies behind it? What danger threatens Washington? What did Stewart or Jackson send him for? What game is afoot?

"This must be inquired into," said the General slowly. "This is no case of an ordinary spy. Take him to the military prison; let him be safely secured, and see that he holds no communication with any person."

Maurice was about to reply, but a detachment of the regular troops entering, interrupted him. His arms were fast bound, and between the files he was hurried off. On the way he had to pass by and through the working parties, who rested on their implements to have a look at him. Scowls and curses, and hisses, greeted him on his way. A spy was a hateful character under any circumstances, but now, in the hour of national peril and defeat, detestation of him amounted to absolute loathing.

The prison doors opened to receive him, and he was hurried roughly along from corridor to corridor, until he was finally placed in a cell remote from the entrance, and apparently at the back of the building, for no noise or sound save the departing tread of the guards' feet, when the door was firmly locked and bolted, came on his ears. His hands were still handcuffed, and for aught of light or noise that came to him, he might as well have been miles under ground!

Meanwhile the vigilance of the General commanding and his officers were thoroughly aroused; the lines of pickets were pushed miles further in the direction in which Jackson or Stewart, or some of the other Generals might make a sudden advance and attempt to seize the city; and a brigade was promptly under arms, and marched out with several batteries of artillery to encamp on the plains in front. With M'Clellan's army beaten and powerless, huddled together in entire disarray, under the protection of the gunboats on the James River, there was no telling where the impetuous Generals of the South might strike a sudden and telling blow. The crisis—the fortunes of the North—was tremendous, and the danger imminent and deadly!

Left alone, the prisoner threw himself on a seat, and began to think. He could scarcely realise what had happened him. Even now he could only believe that he was the victim of some extraordinary freak of fancy—that his mind had somehow given way. The entire darkness surrounding favoured the idea. It was all so sudden. It was not half an hour since he stood in the sunlight. Could it be all real and actual?

The click of the handcuffs brought his thoughts back to the reality of his position—only to fill his heart with overwhelming sorrow and trouble. He absolutely grew paralysed as he thought of Norah and his two friends awaiting him at the railway depot. A thrill of agony passed through

him. Norah! What would she say of him—what would she think of him? What would she do when the time came and he was not there? Would she proceed without him? And, if not, how would she feel when the night fell, and he came not—when the morning came and he did not appear? In the agony of his great torment, he bent his head on his handcuffed hands and on his knees, and moaned aloud.

There is no agony like that which encompasses a man when he knows that sorrow is coming to—encompassing—those that he loves, and he cannot aid them. He watches its slow incoming and cannot stay it—sees their torture and perplexity, and cannot relieve it—incapable as if he were under the spell of a hideous nightmare. The very powerlessness to move eats into the heart with a bitterness and a bitingness all its own.

Would Norah find out where he was? Would she by some inscrutable means come to learn of it? No. It was impossible. The matter was as unlikely in the exciting condition of the city, in its tossing and swarming population, added to every hour by fresh accessions and diminished by the thousands hurried to the front, as it would be to select a special grain of sand on the beach when the angry waves are throwing up tons of drift. No, she would never hear of him—never know what happened him—never be able to excuse to her own heart his sudden and mysterious disappearance.

What an afternoon and a night that was the prisoner spent! How gladly at any time, as the hours wore on, and he thought of Norah's wonderment, and perplexity, and terror, thought of the suffering her gentle heart must undergo, of her agonised suspense—he would have heard the tread of the soldier's footstep, and the clank of his musket, at the door outside beckoning him to his doom. Anything, that he should be spared the horror of his powerless and unavailing agony.

If he had not met Norah—if even these words so softly spoken had not bound them together with eternal bonds—Maurice would have accepted his fate with the cheerfulness of a man always ready to face the ups and downs, the vicissitudes of life. Even if she knew what had happened him—if his absence could be accounted for to her—if he only knew that she still relied on his faith and truth, and fealty, he would even now care little for the worst that could happen him. But there was no chance of that. 'The life of one, or of a score, or of a hundred, were of little moment at a time when thousands strewed the plain after each bloody battle fought daily not two score miles away. No, she would never know. If the worst came to the worst, and that the sun now rising should be the last that should ever grow in the sky again for him—what would she think of him? How would she regard his memory?

Surely, of all the score thousands men, in all degrees of suffering in that thick-strewn battle-ground that covered the many miles between Malvern Heights and Harrison Landing, there was none so tortured or so wretched as he!

In the midst of his sleepless reflection—sleep! he might as well seek to sleep on living cinders—the tramp of feet was heard outside; the key heavily turned in the lock; the iron bars were flung off, the door opened, thereby introducing an inrush of daylight and a gleam of muskets; and a harsh, grating voice said:—

“I guess you'd better come with me, if you're awake.”

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### SENTENCED TO EXECUTION.

It was not, however, Maurice soon found, for purposes of trial, nor yet for sentence, that he was brought out of his prison cell. His capture, uninjured or nearly so, from the Southern forces; his introduction to General La Hore, now dead; his coming to Washington without apparent authority; his presence in the defences now hastily being thrown up in front of the city; and his being in plain clothes all the time; seemed to the military authorities at Washington so extraordinary that they resolved on sending him to the headquarters of the army at the front for further investigation and trial. Accordingly he was sent forward at once with a military escort—still handcuffed, for who could trust such a clever and formidable foe from making an attempt to escape?

It was late in the evening when they reached the outskirts of the beaten army at Harrison's Bar, whither they had retreated. The railway was blocked here and there with carriages laden with wounded soldiers being borne to the hospitals at Washington. At other times they had to remain for hours at a siding, whilst trains laden with men, with guns, with ammunition, with food and clothing, drew their long length slowly and laboriously in the opposite direction. And what a sight that was when they did reach it! Tents and tumbrels, caissons and cannon extended in every direction—the wheels of the latter covered with mud to the axle, and, in numberless cases, broken and shattered. Guns that had been in the heavier actions were dented with the bullets that had struck them. Dead horses, cartridges, cannon balls, splinters of shells were in thick profusion along the line of

the last retreat; and, alas! in spite of the vigilance of the burying parties, dead bodies were numerous enough, too, on the way.

There was less noise and less confusion, however, in the camp itself than Maurice had anticipated. A curious silence—the silence of defeat—had settled over the place. The roar of the guns, the rifle-fusillades, and the cheer of warring men, that had been in the air for seven days, were succeeded by an equally strange repose. The men were borne down by over-fatigue, were worn out by harrassing and unceasing marches; and, under shelter of the gunboats on the James River, were reposing by brigades, by divisions, wherever they could, and in such manner as they could. For miles around the tents of the great army spread—like the numberless tents of a nomadic tribe on the desert lands of Asia—as picturesque and almost as silent.

It was nigh midnight when he was brought before the permanent council of war that sat to try and decide such cases. It consisted of a number of officers seated in a wide and spacious tent, nearly in the centre of the camp. Their faces, as they turned them on Maurice, when he was ushered before them, seemed to be those of men made worn and stern and earnest by the experiences of the past few days.

They listened in complete silence, but with great attention and interest, to the statement made by the officer of Maurice's guard. Evidently they were much impressed by it.

Turning sharply towards him, when the informant had finished his statement, the President of the Council said—

“You have heard the statement. What reply have you to make?”

Though there was in the tones with which this question was asked an evident assurance that *his* mind was at any rate made up as to the truth of what he had heard, and that nothing Maurice could say was likely to in any way alter



it, the latter addressed himself to the task before him. He told, as fully as he could, the circumstances under which he had found himself with the Southern forces, and how he had, in the confusion and tumult of the time, been despatched to Washington. It was not without a sinking of heart that he saw, as he went along, the faces of the President and members of the council hardening against him, until at last, when he mentioned the carelessness and utter want of intention that brought him within the improvised defences of the capital, an angry flush of disbelief grew at once and simultaneously into their faces.

There was no need, when he had concluded, for the President to ask the votes of the others on the matter. That and the verdict was clearly enough expressed in their countenances.

“Prisoner,” said he, with a more than judicious coldness—that sank like the echo of the tomb into Maurice’s heart, “there is no doubt whatever that you are what you are accused of being—a spy—a spy within our lines for Southern objects. If matters were other than they are at present here, we should investigate the circumstances that led to your arrival in Washington, and find out who are the other traitors in our lines that lent you aid and countenance. But that is impossible, even if we had not more pressing work on hands. The sentence of the court is—That you be taken to the outskirts of the camp and hung!”

A silence for a second or two weighed over the company; but it was speedily dispelled by the President producing some papers from his desk and proceeding to other business. Maurice, in the supreme despair of the moment, made an effort to address the court, but a motion of the President’s hand to the guard prevented him; he was quickly hustled from the tent out into the night, where ten thousand pale stars on high, and innumerable lights around, met his vague and unobservant eye.

Hung! Was he then to die? Was his life to be cut short, so early and so ignominiously? Would the dawning light never grow in the skies for him again? Were the sands of his life, even now, running out with fearful haste?

What a journey that was—on foot, too—through the fields and roads ploughed deep with cannon-tires, over ground hardened into the consistency of granite with the tread of countless cavalry: stumbling here, falling there, his hands fast manacled, and his brain obtuse and dull and vague and purposeless with long unrest and worry. His mind seemed to have grown asleep or comatose, for it was but little alive to surrounding objects or to his present condition. Hardly the gleaming lights of the camp fell on his eyes; and but little the sullen roar every now and again from the gunboats, on the James River beside—like baying watch dogs—as they searched the inner wood on the south with a monster shell for chance-advancing rebels—came on his ear. His thoughts were elsewhere. Instead of the lights around, there arose before him the rare and radiant face of Norah—her blue eyes, her welcoming delighted smile, her white neck, and her throbbing heaving breast. How beautiful—how beloved beyond all thought or conception, or expression—was she now when he knew he should never, in this world, see her!

Would she ever know what happened him? Would she bear him in memory? Would she be true to him—but no, he could not expect that! It was out of the range of probability that she should sacrifice her young life for him. Some other would fill the place of the forgotten lover, sleeping in an unknown, dishonoured grave in the pathless swamps by the James River, and take the place in her heart vacated by him. This thought was most terrible of all. This added the fuel of despair to the other tortures that assailed him!

If he were only going to a death on the battle-field, whence

his name might be mentioned with weeping and honour, if he were going to die on the scaffold in an honourable cause, whereby his friends might feel proud of him—how gladly would he go, for he knew that Norah's breast would enshrine his memory for ever.

But here! dishonoured, alone—his fate unknown! his sudden disappearance remaining unexplained for ever, the thought was maddening! Hell itself could produce no tortures to equal.

His distressing thoughts were brought to a termination by the sudden halt of his guard. They were on the outskirts of the camp. The stars had died out of the sky; the night was lightless, and the waning fires behind them but added to the gloom before and around.

Torches were hastily improvised, enabling them to see.

Before him stood the rough-hewn pine supports, with horizontal beam at top, from which a rope dangled. It was the place where malefactors in the camp—and they were not few—were swung up. From that hideous noose at the end how many in the past few days had gone to the dread account! And now, he was to rank among the number. The broken tumbrel, from which they were shoved off, was being dragged in silence to its position.

How fast and far his wandering thoughts sped. To Arranmore, with its tall towers lifting themselves above the embosoming woods!—to his young midshipman days on board the *Trafalgar*—to the little landlocked harbour, with the tall masts of the *Grisette* lying snugly ensconced therein—to Reinor and Walton, and, by swift succession, to Norah Desmond! Would that he had gone down with the brave fellows who died in the explosion of the *Georgia*. Would that Northern bullets had sped his life what time Stewart's horse were launched on the cannon of the retreating enemy. Would that——

“Step up here!”

The order interrupted the current of his feverish thoughts. The tumbrel was ready—placed under the noose of the dangling rope. Mechanically, he turned towards it, as he was ordered. A soldier on each side took him by the arm to help him up, because of his handcuffed wrists.

Suddenly a noise came on their ears—it is unheard by him; but they hear it, and pause.

“What is that? What noise is that?”

“It is the tramp of the cavalry pickets going their rounds,” the officer in charge says from beside. “Hurry with this cursed business, and get it over.”

Urged by their arms he mounts a step or two firmly. The worst having come to the worst, he may as well meet his fate resolutely. Even here, and with a few careless observers, it would ill become an O'Donnell to die otherwise. As, lifting his head for one last look at the few lone stars in the sky overhead, before his eyes should darken for ever in this world——

All at once there broke out of the gloom in front a hoarse command; all at once the jingle of accoutrements and the tramp of horses hoofs were heard: and before the two men had more than time to leap from their place beside him to the ground, the flashing of sabres was in their eyes, and—Southern horsemen were among them!

“Yield yourselves prisoners!” cried a well-known voice—as a horseman, superbly mounted, in the uniform of a Southern General—his plumed soft hat with diamonds in its golden centre flashing back in bright scintillation the glow of the torches, betokened his careful attention to appearance even amid the adventures and turmoil of war—galloped in.

“Stewart! Stewart!” cried Maurice, in delight and astonishment.

“Who calls my name?” asked that officer, looking around.

“Why, what is this? An execution. Why, who have we here?”

“It is I—Maurice O’Donnell,” cried Maurice, in a perfect ecstasy.

“Good heavens! No,” said the General, in amazement. “It cannot be. Yes—it surely is! What is all this for? But we have not time for explanation. Unbind him, men. Give him a horse to mount. Come with me, Maurice. Bring your prisoners away, men.”

Without waiting to realise what had befallen him, Maurice leaped into the vacant saddle.

“They are too strongly posted and concentrated here to attack them,” said Stewart, as he paused for a moment, and glanced at the lights. “We should only lose men uselessly. We have done them enough injury already. Ride with me, O’Donnell.”

They turned their horses into the gloom, and rode off, the others following with their prisoners. In a few minutes Maurice was surprised to find them come upon a long array of Southern horsemen standing silent and noiseless in the darkness. Stewart had begun his famous raids, in which he frequently rode right around the Northern army, destroying their lines of communication, burning their stores, spiking and disabling their guns, and capturing prisoners. This was one of them, and the commencing one.

After a few whispered commands to his aide-de-camp, the long column of horsemen moved off with as little noise as possible, and it was not till they were a mile or two away that they gave reins to their horses, and broke into a canter, and that Stewart found himself at liberty to speak.

“Where have you been, O’Donnell, since the battle of Gaine’s Mill? and what was the meaning of the position in which I found you?”

“If you had come two minutes later,” was the reply, “you

would have had the answer—you would have found me dangling from yonder scaffold. You came in the nick of time—in the last moment of extremity.”

“So it struck me,” said the General. “What was the meaning of it? What was it for?”

“Why, they took me for a spy, and they were about giving me the reward of one.”

“No?” said Stewart, reining back his horse a little, and bursting into a hearty fit of laughter. “You a spy, O'Donnell! Surely not that.”

“I am speaking quite seriously,” said Maurice, “and I can tell you it was anything but a laughing matter with me less than half an hour ago.”

“I beg your pardon, O'Donnell,” said Stewart, restraining his laughter, for which latter, indeed, Maurice saw very little reason, and would have felt offended if he were not under such immense obligations, and if his recent deadly peril had not subdued all lesser feelings—“but it can hardly be possible they could be guilty of such a stupid blunder.”

“It was very near being an irretrievable blunder, as far as I was concerned,” said Maurice, not without a shudder.

“What fools they must be, these Northerners,” said Stewart, more gravely, “to think our Intelligence Department go to work in that way. Why, our scouts, as we call them—the clever ones, that is—would think nothing of penetrating to their council chamber in Washington—would think nothing of donning a General's uniform and sitting at M·Clellan's council of war. I shall tell you some stories further on of what manner of men these are, and what they have done. Meantime, tell me how you fared since that day we rode in on their retreating forces.”

Maurice proceeded to relate his adventures, until interrupted in their midst by a great flare up in the sky to their right, extending in a long line.

“What is that?” he asked, suddenly.

“That, Maurice, is Northern stores burning. We struck the York Valley railroad on our way, capturing several trains filled with stores and ammunition, and our fellows have not lost time, you see, for they are all aflame. Aflame, too, are the railway bridges leading from Washington; and I rather think the Grand Army of the Potomac will starve where they rest, or will have their provision brought by water for a good while in the future.”

“What an awful destruction of property,” said Maurice, somewhat thoughtfully.

“Better than the destruction of life,” said General Stewart, by no means offended—the rather to the contrary—and laughing gaily. “Destruction, indeed! So much the better, How many gallant Southern hearts would go down, think you—how many Southern homes be in mourning for them—before those tons of powder now exploding, before those shells bursting, as you may hear, in the fierce heat? Property, indeed!”

“The Northern troops must have suffered heavily in their retreat,” said Maurice, anxious to change the conversation to which he had led by his unfortunate remark.

“Heavily! There are no words to tell it—no tongue or pen can describe it. We shall rest presently in the wood yonder. Our horses are greatly blown by our long ride; we have come thirty miles since sundown. If you wish to see how they have suffered—how their Grand Army of the Potomac was tumbled headlong and helplessly back, read this. It is an account by one of themselves, and in one of their own papers.”

The long column halted in a clearing, dismounted from their horses, and picketed them in orderly rows over many a rood extending. Mounted sentinels were despatched to keep watch for miles around; and then, having fed and refreshed

their horses, the wearied men lay on the ground and stretched themselves in sound repose.

“Read that, Maurice,” said the General, as he held a candle for him, “and see what yonder barefooted, ragged soldiers, that you saw march through Richmond, have done.”

Maurice read :—

“Huddled among the wagons were 10,000 stragglers. For the credit of the nation be it said that four-fifths of them were wounded, sick, or utterly exhausted, and could not have stirred but for the dread of the tobacco warehouses of the South. The confusion of this herd of men and mules, wagons and wounded, men on horses, men on foot, men by the roadside, men perched on waggons, men searching for water, men famishing for food, men lame and bleeding, men with ghostly eyes looking out between bloody bandages that hid the face—turn to some vivid account of the most pitiful part of Napoleon’s retreat from Russia, and fill out the picture—the grim, gaunt, bloody picture of war in its most terrible features.

“It was determined to move on during the night. The distance to Turkey Island Bridge, the point on James River which was to be reached by the direct road, was but six miles. But those vast numbers could not move over one narrow road in days ; hence every bye-road, no matter how circuitous, had been searched out by questioning prisoners and by cavalry excursions. Every one was filled by one of the advancing columns. The whole front was in motion by 7 p m , General Keyes in command of the advance.

“I rode with General Howe’s brigade, taking a wagon-track through dense woods and precipitous ravines, winding circuitously far around to the left, and striking the river some distance below Turkey Island. Commencing at dusk, the march continued until daylight. The night was dark and fearful. Heavy thunder rolled in turn along each point of the heavens, and dark clouds overspread the whole canopy. We were forbidden to speak aloud, and, lest the light of a cigar should present a target for an ambushed rifle, we were cautioned not to smoke. Ten miles of weary marching, with frequent halts as some one of the hundred vehicles of the artillery train in our centre, by a slight deviation, clashed against a tree, wore away the hours to dawn, when we debouched into a magnificent wheat-field, and the smoke-stack of the Galena was in sight ! Xenophon’s remnant of the Ten Thousand shouting ‘The Sea ! the Sea !’ were not more glad than we.”



“That was on the seventh day of their retreat from Malvern Hill to where they now rest,” said Stewart; “fine handling our ragged and torn men gave their Grand Army.”

“That is an eloquent description,” said one of the staff, who had come up. “What is it from?”

“One of the papers we found in the captured train,” said Stewart, “the *New York Tribune*.”

“He is a vigorous writer.”

“I should risk a battery of rifled guns to lay hold of that fellow,” said the General, “if only to get him to describe one of the charges of our Brigades. And now, gentlemen, we had better partake of the Yankee refreshments. Here’s their health, though they did not intend them for us!—and to rest for an hour or two.”

The brandy taken from the captured trains was handed around, and in a few moments, save the champing of the horses bits, or the uneasy tread of a steed wounded in the long ride, there was not a stir in the sleeping camp. Maurice, from long unrest and mental torment, was so obtused that he could scarcely realise what had been lately occurring to him, but a general feeling of happiness and safety and thankfulness pervaded him. He, too, lay down, and in a few minutes was sunk in slumber—sound and heavy and dreamless as that of the dead.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### WITH A SOUTHERN PRIVATEER.

NORAH and her brother met Captain Reinor in the afternoon at the depot of the railway leading to New York. They were there betimes, for the journey was a long one, and it was necessary to be early to secure comfortable places. They were much surprised to find that Maurice was not there, for he had promised to be in waiting. They were more surprised as the time passed and there was no sign of his presence. Passengers came streaming in through many avenues to the broad platform; carriages, cabs, vehicles of all description, came up and discharged their fares; piles of luggage accumulated on the platform; yet to their watchful and anxious eyes no sign of Maurice appeared. Their anxiety grew greater and deepened as the time grew nearer, and the minutes intervening till the departure of the train lessened. As usual with people waiting at such places, they spoke little, but watched and waited with ever-increasing suspense for his coming.

At last, as the first bell rang, and the multitude began to take their places, Reinor said impatiently—

“It is very strange that he does not come. Where can he be? Can it be possible he will disappoint us?”

“He will not,” said Norah, confidently. “Something must have delayed him; but he will be here in time.”

“He is wearing out the time very fine,” Reinor remarked, as the passengers, having nearly all taken their places, the numbers on the platform grew thin and thinner.

“He will not go by this train, whatever has kept him,” said George, decisively, as the engine gave premonitory signs

of starting. "What shall we do? We cannot go without him."

"No, certainly not," said Reinor.

Norah was too much surprised and disappointed to speak.

Presently the engine whistled, emitted two or three white puffs, a slow jerking motion of the carriages succeeded, and the train was off.

"What can have happened him?" asked Reinor, after they had watched in silence the train vanishing in the distance. "Something must, or he would have been here."

"He may have been taken suddenly ill," Norah hazarded.

"That is the only explanation I can see," said George, perplexedly. "We cannot leave this evening. Let us go back to the hotel. We shall probably find that he has arrived there."

There was nothing else to be done, and their thoughts all tended in that direction. Thither they accordingly drove.

But there was no Maurice there; neither did he come that night. What had become of him? Whither had he gone? What unknown misfortune had dogged his footsteps? To all or any of these questions—and they were unceasingly asked—there was, there could be, no answer. What a perplexing night that was!

Morning came, and he came not. Noon came, and he did not appear. Reinor and George sought out all the places where it was in the least likely he could be, but unavailingly. Norah was in great distress and perplexity, but she kept her thoughts to herself.

"In my opinion," said Reinor, when the afternoon came without throwing any light on the mystery, "he must have mistaken the train, and gone by an earlier one, expecting that we were travelling by it too."

"He would have telegraphed when he found that we were not," said George.

"No, for he knew we were certain to follow by the next, or to-day."

Norah unhesitatingly accepted the chance explanation. It was the only one that could be offered, and was in itself far from unlikely.

And accordingly, that afternoon they left for New York, Norah's heart bright with high hopes and expectations. But they were doomed to be disappointed. Maurice was not, as they had vainly led themselves to believe, at the depot at New York to receive them, nor yet at the hotel where they had previously resolved on putting up.

Now thoroughly alarmed, they telegraphed back to the hotel at Washington, only to find that he had not been there.

Days and days passed in pain and perplexity to all, but to Norah in agonized suspense; still at neither place was any account received of him. Reinor had an advertisement kept constantly in the papers of both cities addressed to him, acquainting him of their whereabouts. No response came to it. The time passed by, and there was no account of him. Further searching or seeking, it was clear, was hopeless.

The roses rapidly faded from Norah's face, and the clear bright light from her eye, as the days rolled by, and there was no cessation to her pain.

"Whatever has happened him," said Reinor, one day, when, his cargo being completed, it was time for him to sail, "there is no chance of his turning up. Further waiting is useless. If he should come—as please heaven he may—we can leave our future address in New Orleans, here, and in Washington. He will know where to write and to come. We cannot wait longer—even if it were not perfectly useless to do so."

Reinor had seen with deep regret how the suspense and trouble was telling upon Norah, and rightly conjectured that continued waiting would but add to it. Change of scene and change of air were absolutely necessary to her. So he told

George, and George agreed with him; there were so many things on board ship that would change the current of her heart-breaking thoughts.

They waited till the last moment; and even then, with infinite reluctance, left New York for the South.

As Reinor conjectured, Norah's health and spirits grew brighter at sea. Even if she never ceased—and she did not—thinking of Maurice, she was at any rate able to conjecture more hopefully of him. He might have, by some strange change of intention, gone to the front; he might even have been conscripted, as thousands had been, despite his being even a British subject.

They hugged the shore—seldom being more than a few hours steam from it—on their way. But as they passed and re-passed vessels, and held communication with them, curious news began to turn up—at first strange rumours, almost incredible of belief, but by degrees repeated with marvellous persistency and constancy.

Southern privateers were afloat! Cruisers appearing now here, now there, now disappearing for a time, but only to return again—but always doing incalculable mischief to Northern merchantmen. Stories were current among the passing vessels that led one to believe that the days of the Phantom Ship had come again. As they came further South the news grew stronger and more alarming.

Vessels by the score had been captured and plundered and burnt at sea. Their crews had been landed here and there and elsewhere by the mysterious corsair. There was no ship safe on American waters. Passing merchantmen had seen the hulks of vessels burned to the water's edge—tossing, black ruins, skeletons, on the heaving waters. But most mysterious of all, no commissioned Northern vessel could come within sight of her. Liner and frigate and gunboat had been despatched in search of her. She eluded them all. They

came, indeed, upon traces frequently enough of her terrible doings, but no sign of the sea-rover came to their vigilant look-out. If this thing went on no vessel flying the Federal flag were safe on American seas—American commerce were a thing of the past.

Reinor was more than alarmed for the safety of his vessel and cargo; and he was not less so, as, when they came off the Coast of Florida, and bore out into wider waters to round Cape Hatteras into the Gulf of Mexico, very few vessels appeared, and none at all bearing the Northern flag.

“My vessel is a French one, thank heaven,” says he, “and I shall fly the French flag. The corsair will respect that.”

George and he had been talking the matter over as they leaned across the poop one afternoon, looking over the limitless space of sunlit sea, on which not a sail appeared.

“It is curious what one single vessel can do in the way of terror,” said George; “there is not a vessel in sight.”

“And yet we are in the very track of the shipping, for we are now in the Gulfstream. But stay! Yes, there is one. See yonder on the very verge of the horizon.” said Reinor, opening his sea-glass and applying it to his eye. “And carrying the United States flag, too. Thank heaven that someone is bold enough to float it—that all have not skeddadled in fear.”

Looking through the glass George could see on the horizon the steamer indicated. Somehow it conveyed a sense of companionship on these lonely waters that was very pleasant to him. After a short time both strolled below and rejoined Norah.

It was some hours after when they came on deck again. George marvelled much to see the mate and some of the sailors standing on the fore-castle, gazing intently seaward at some object; but he was still more surprised to see the strange

vessel of some hours before coming at right angles with them, and right athwart their course.

Reinor saw it, too, and his eyes were soon fixed on it.

"Yonder vessel," said he, "is bent on hailing us. There must be something wrong on board."

"What could it be?" asked George; "we are not very far from land."

"But we are a long way from port. Some accident has happened; she has sprung a leak, perhaps."

"We shall see presently," said his companion, "she is advancing pretty rapidly."

She was, indeed. The long cloud of smoke from her funnels arching far behind, darkening the sea over which the eve was beginning to throw its shadows, showed that.

"She evidently means to hail us," said Reinor; "she is coming right athwart our course. I can see the Federal flag with the naked eye. Can you?"

"If you can," said George, quickly, "you will not see it long, for, by heavens!—See!—there it comes rapidly down, and there goes in its place the banner of Secession!"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when a white puff of smoke from the side of the steamer arose, and a round shot came tearing up the surface of the water in their front.

"By heavens! this is the privateer of which we have been hearing so much," said Reinor. "Put on all the steam possible," added he, addressing the mate, "else we are lost. Make haste. There is not a minute to be wasted."

"It is too late," said George, as he watched the corsair speeding across their path like a long black snake, and the sparks flew up from their own funnel fast and quick. "There! I told you so! There goes another gun, and close, too!" as a ball passed not very far in front.

It was followed by another, which went clean over their funnel. Another, aimed lower, would pierce their hull.

"No; there is no chance of escape," said Reinor, with infinite annoyance in his voice. "We must lay to, but I shall trust to the French flag to protect me."

In obedience to his order the vessel ceased her motion, and the prow of the corsair headed for her.

In a short time she came near, and a boat was speedily let down, manned by a crew, and rowed towards her. The officer in charge was soon on deck.

"What vessel is this?"

"The *Grisette*—a French vessel," said Reinor.

"And American built," said the officer, with a sarcastic smile.

"She sails under the French flag," said Reinor, with no small misgiving.

"So do a great many vessels now," said the officer, with imperturbable coolness, "whose timbers were never within cannon shot of the *La belle nation*."

"But"—

"There is no use discussing the matter with *me*; you must come on board the *Tullahassee* and tell the captain whatever you have to say—you and your crew. I shall take charge with my men until I hear further."

With the guns of the privateer turned broadside on to them, there was no alternative; and so Reinor and George were fain to go aboard.

They were ushered downstairs to the cabin, where some officers were seated at dinner. As they passed along, Reinor, with a motion of his hand, indicated a large case to his companion. It was full of valuable ships chronometers, the only remains of vessels that had been plundered and burnt. A look from George intimated that he saw and understood.

"Where from?" queried the President of the mess-room, laconically.

"New York," said Reinor, "but"—



"Where to?" asked he, interruptingly.

"New Orleans; but the vessel sails under"——

"Cargo?" abruptly demanded the captain.

Reinor hesitated. The cargo! Why, it was all shot and shell and provisions for the Federal forces at that city.

"Cargo?" queried the officer, angrily, looking up from his dinner for the first time.

Reinor reluctantly told.

"Let the ship be fired," said he, addressing a young officer beside him; "or, stay," said he, on second thought, "that cargo may be useful to our people. Could she be run ashore anywhere on the coast, think you?"

George Desmond stood still with astonishment, but it was not at the order which he had just heard. Where had he seen that face before? It was quite familiar to him. Where had he seen it?

Suddenly a light breaks in upon him, and he advances a step, for he had been standing behind Reinor.

"Pardon me for the interruption. I do not know your name," said he, "but I think it is incumbent on me to return you thanks for the favour you did me so lately."

The privateer captain glanced at him unrecognisingly.

"I am the person," said George, "to whom, and my sister, you gave passage to New York in the *Albatross*."

All at once the stern, cold, impassive look vanished from the captain's face, and a bright smile of recognition beamed thereon instead.

"I remember the incident perfectly," said he, rising from his seat, and advancing to shake hands with him, "but your face had quite passed out of my memory. And that fair girl, your sister—she was your sister, was she not?"

"Yes," said George.

"How is she?"

"If she is not worse than she was a few minutes ago, when

we left her on board the *Grisette*, she is very well," said George, now confident and assured they had found a friend.

"Aboard the *Grisette!*" said the captain, in mingled astonishment and delight. "This is a most singular meeting. Let me have the pleasure of welcoming her on one of my ships again. Nay," said he, as George, in great delight, was about moving off, "I shall have the pleasure of escorting her on board myself."

But George, anxious to prepare Norah for the interview, insisted on going himself, and prevailed.

"It were worth while being a rover of the sea—unpleasant life as it is—if we could often capture such prizes as this," said Walton, as, with extended hands, he received Norah over the side of his vessel. "Not often we welcome on board ocean queens or sea-goddesses, or fairy princesses arisen from the foam."

In truth, Walton's laughing and airy compliments, however enthusiastic as being the outcome of his chivalrous nature, were not at all so very far-fetched. So, at least, many of the younger of his privateer officers standing behind him thought. They could scarcely believe it was a veritable girl that stepped on board the white decks of the *Tullahassee*, and not a sea-divinity. To the snowy palor which grief and suspense had brought into her face there was now added the soft rosy blush which the excitement of the moment produced, which made a most bewitching combination.

"And so fate has brought us together again," he said, as he held her hand in his.

"George tells me that he has already thanked you, Captain Walton, for your exceeding courtesy and kindness to us. I have now to add my thanks."

"Thanks!" said he, warmly. "Don't even mention them. The deck of the *Albatross*, I feel, was brightened by your presence thereon."

"It was all the more dear to us," said Norah, with unaffected pleasure, "because we since learned that a very dear friend of ours had previously sailed with you."

"Sailed with me!" said Walton, ponderingly. "I do not remember. No; I think not."

"Oh, yes!" said Norah. "So we have learned. Maurice—Maurice O'Donnell."

"What!" cried Walton, fairly astounded. "Maurice O'Donnell! It is not possible you know him! The brave, gallant, and chivalrous fellow! Yes, he sailed with me. And most delightful companion he was. But stay a moment," he said, as the current of his thoughts ran in a new channel; "your name is not Norah Desmond—is it?"

"It is, indeed," said Norah, with a smile hovering on her lips and a light in her eyes at the same moment that seemed to Walton's young *aides* far brighter than anything the sun could attempt.

"I should be inclined to say Princess of the Mexican Sea," said Walton, in great delight; "but now I remember, he spoke of you and your brother. Spoke of *you* repeatedly. And now I understand what puzzled me many a day and oft. I could not recall to mind where I had seen you when I saw you in London, your face was so familiar. I now know. It was the one O'Donnell sketched in an idle mood, and an idle day, on our voyage to England. Yes; that was it. But I am delaying you inhospitably long here. Come below, and see what a pirate-ship, as our Yankee friends would call us, is like."

They descended to the cabin, and on the way Walton laughed merrily as Norah told him of the surprise she experienced at seeing her own portrait, with her own name underneath, in the sketch-book on board the *Albatross*.

The cabin had been promptly cleared of the dinner things by the black servants by the time they reached there, and

Norah was not a little surprised at the richness and magnificence thereof.

But there were other surprises awaiting her; for, as she stood under the gleaming silver lamp that hung from the ceiling, and as its rays fell on her face, illuming it, something in it seemed to have struck on Walton's thoughts, for he quickly said—

“By the way, referring to your name—it is very odd that I inherit that name too.”

“Desmond! Surely a strange name for an American,” said Norah. “It is thoroughly Irish.”

“I know it is. But the Irish—as you are evidence of, and as I am glad and thankful to see—do not always stop at home. They wander sometimes. I believe it is in their nature; and so it comes to pass that my mother came from the Kerry sea-board, and that her name was Desmond.”

“My mother's sister was married to a Carolinian,” said Norah, with a curious palpitation at her heart, “but his name was not yours—yours is Walton, Maurice O'Donnell told us.”

It was so. For Maurice, in the multitude of things he had to tell, had forgotten altogether to say that there was another name—that there were many names—attached to his friend. It was not an extraordinary thing to omit, considering what other wonderful things he had to say, but the omission was to be amply atoned for now.

For in the next few minutes Norah became acquainted with that fact, as also that his mother came from Carrigower, on the Kerry coast, whence also her's had come. It was a time of very curious coincidences and revelations, nor was it made less interesting by Walton's story of how familiar Norah's likenëss, as drawn by Maurice, had seemed, and how still more familiar her own face had struck him when he had seen her in London.

It did seem as if there were something almost providential

in the meeting of relatives on board of a corsair in the southern seas, and no words could describe the pleasantness of the conversation that occurred. It was exceedingly agreeable to the chivalrous Southerner in that he had met such a striking and handsome girl for a near relative; and it was quite as much to Norah, because Maurice had spoken so much and so strongly of Walton as to lift him into the position of a veritable hero in her eyes—a very Paladin of Romance.

But the thread of conversation was suddenly broken in upon by Reinor, who said—

“I rather think that I also may claim some acquaintance here. You and I have met before, M. Reamour, or I am much mistaken.”

Walton lifted his eyes, rather annoyed at this interruption at first, but when he heard the name a curious interest grew into them.

“I am not aware how” —

“Oh, yes, you are, M. Reamour,” said Reinor, lifting up his hand, the two fingers of which were shorn off. “Yes, you are. The Roi de France at Marseilles. You remember?”

“What!” cried Walton, a new light growing into his eyes.

“Ay, the same,” said Reinor.

“Why! God bless me! Yes, to be sure. Now I remember. Ten thousand times welcome. Who could have thought of this? We met in a troublesome quarter last time, but” —

“So I have good reason to remember,” said Reinor, giving him his hand with a vigorous clasp, which was as warmly received.

“Yes, perhaps so,” said Walton, laughing. “At any rate, I thought so then; but if I had passed through as much as I have since, perhaps I should be less” —

“Less afraid of the perils we were in, would you say.”

“Well, no ; perhaps not,” said Walton ; “but less ready to get into it. But, setting aside that, I am delighted to meet an old acquaintance who was a very friend in need, and to give him welcome on board my ship.”

“Rather an unceremonious welcome you have given, I should think,” said Reinor, cynically.

“Well, never mind that,” said Walton, laughing again ; “we shall make the *amende honorable* presently. Meantime this conversation needs something in which to pledge it.”

A motion of his to a black waiter standing by brought up champagne ; and this portion of the conversation—Walton being so anxious to speak with Norah—was brought to a close.

It was succeeded by a more general one, in which the hours passed very delightfully, until it was time to come to business. The *Tullahassee* was remaining much too long in one place, and it was necessary to determine matters finally.

Which determination being arrived at, meant—that Reinor should proceed on his course and that Norah and her brother should proceed with their new-found relative.

Which they did, to be finally landed, however, at Savannah, where they found comfortable quarters for the present, whilst Reinor proceeded on his voyage, the only one of the Yankee merchantmen whom the *Tullahassee* had left unharmed.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE RAID ON WASHINGTON.

THE column of horsemen commanded by General Stewart having rested themselves, got into their saddles again, and were on their way to the new headquarters near Richmond.

There Maurice was glad to rest himself for some days, sometimes, delighted with the sense of security around him, but quite as often filled with anxious thoughts of Norah.

One afternoon he was resting in his hammock, swung between the trees of their encampment, when Stewart came to him.

"Well, Maurice," said he, "you have had a fine rest. So had we all. What say you to another ride. Your past experiences haven't cowed you—have they?"

"No," said Maurice, waking briskly. "I am, on the contrary, getting tired of this lethargy."

"That's right. I am glad to hear you say so. Get ready and mount, for we are off at once. You need no preparation, I suppose?"

"No, I am at your service at once, General" said Maurice.

In a short time they were in the saddle. Whither, Maurice did not know.

But whereto he cared not, for his mind had grown reckless in his late perils. And presently the long lines of mounted cavalry were moving along in the evening sunset; moving along above the swamp, into which the fetlocks of their horses sank. Again, above the higher lands covered with tangle and brushwood. And, further again, through darkening forests. They were on the eve of one of their famous raids.

The night darkened, but the men kept silent. They were of the fine race of Texan horsemen that needed no commands for silence or for watchfulness. Nor were the officers much inclined for talk either. So, with almost uncomfortable sombreness, they rode forward. Finally, they came to clearer land, where the trees had been cut down, or possibly had never grown, and then they gradually grew into a canter.

Maurice thought they were again going on one of their rounds by the beaten army. But no; they were not. They were on the road towards Washington.

"Look here, Maurice," said Stewart, one time breaking a long silence, in which the horsemen before him, with the batteries of artillery moving beside, seemed like a dream, and the cloaked horsemen near him like shadowed ghosts; "we shall give the Yankees to-night a surprise they will never get over."

"Why?" asked Maurice.

"We shall capture Washington. We shall ride through her streets as conquerors before the dawn rises."

"No."

"Yes, we shall. Wait until you see. Our men are in great heart, for which we may thank your native land."

"Ireland? That seems strange. Why?"

"It is strange; but amongst the plunder taken from the captured trains the other night what do you think we found?"

"Heaven knows! How could I say?"

"Well you could hardly even guess. We found over a hundred puncheons of whisky made in Dublin, which the Federal Government were sending for the use of their troops—such drink as was never before tasted in the South.

"Dublin is famed for its whisky," said Maurice.

"So I have heard—but I never had opportunity of proving



it before. It is unrivalled drink for worn and wearied men. It is actually life-reviving."

"Whose brand was it?"

"The name on the puncheons was 'William Jameson, Marrowbone-lane, Dublin.' Did you ever hear of it?"

"Thousands of times," said Maurice. "Who in Ireland has not? They are the oldest firm in Ireland, established in 1752. They are the best makers of whiskies in Ireland, or, I believe, in the world."

"If they constantly make such spirit as what we have had the rare luck to capture, they must have a large business, I should think."

"They have. Their name is as well known in Great Britain as that of Jefferson Davis in the South. Their distillery is well worth a visit if ever you should come to Ireland. Their brewing tuns are the largest in the world, containing forty thousand gallons each, and their drink is, as you say, unrivalled."

"Well, Maurice, when this war is over I mean to visit Europe and Ireland, and I shall certainly visit that establishment which has been the unwitting cause of such good fortune to us."

"That puts me in mind to ask you why your men are in such heart."

"Why? Because this drink has thrown new life into them; because their courage and spirits rise under it; and because the sick and wounded grow rapidly better under its influence. It has all the effect of a victory in restoring the heart and strength of the men. Why the Texan fellows would consent to lose half their number for such another fortunate raid."

"I am delighted to hear that," said Maurice, "and that you are indebted for something to Ireland."

"Yes, it is marvellous stuff for long and dangerous marches.

And now, as I must ride forward, what say you if you have some of it from my flask? I shall not see you again for some hours. My place is in front of the column."

Maurice assented, and General Stewart filled a measure from his flask for Maurice, then another for himself.

"Here's your health, William Jameson, of Marrowbone-lane, and I thank you," said Stewart gaily, "for your unintended but magnificent present. I should almost be as glad to capture another train laden with your whisky as Washington itself. And now, Maurice, good-bye! I shall see you when dawn comes, if not before."

With which the General, putting spurs to his steed, disappeared in the gloom.

Maurice had plenty of time for thought as they rode forward in silence, for before he saw General Stewart again hours had passed. They had crossed bridges, forded rivers, rode through valleys, and over mountains, and were passing through a half cleared forest, when a sudden uproar took place beside Maurice; his horse reared, and a red light nearly blinded him,

"Shell," said an officer, laconically. "The enemy are in front. Ride forward."

In a moment the silence was laid aside, the horsemen threw off their cloaks, moved forward at a trot, and presently the dark arch of the sky was alight with hurtling shells—shearing, gleaming athwart it.

Evidently, the Southern General had caught a Tartar—had been surprised or fallen into an ambush.

Riding hastily forward with the officers, Maurice found himself where the Southern batteries had been promptly drawn up, and artillerymen were busy throwing up hurried earthworks. Where, also, other artillerymen were busy unlimbering and loading the guns. And at the same moment their horsemen, who had ridden across the clearing, came

galloping back in confusion before a destructive fire of musketry.

It was a moment of great peril and confusion. For out of the woods, over the rough clearing in front of them, came a brigade of Northern infantry. The Southern guns opened upon them with grape and canister, to save themselves and to give the horsemen time to form behind them; but, undismayed by their fire, the Federals came on undauntedly. They did not seem to know what death meant, so regularly and unflinchingly they advanced.

Clearly, they came to capture the guns. And there seemed but little to prevent them, in the sudden confusion of the cavalry.

A round or two rammed home and fired, and their bayonets were nearly touching the muzzle of the guns, behind which the artillerymen had run for protection.

But the cheering voice of Stewart was heard, just as they were bayoneting the gunners, and a line of horsemen swept down to the defence.

It was a terrible struggle—a hand-to-hand struggle. Like all the other officers, Maurice, in the excitement of the moment, rushed to the fight. He wanted no incitement to go forward to the protection of the menaced Southern guns, for his blood was up—and, was he not fighting for his friends and against his enemies—against those who would have hanged him?

The gun nearest him was nearly overwhelmed. The gunners were nearly all bayoneted where they stood.

One man of the Federals there was, a private himself, that seemed, in the absence of the officers, who were most of them shot down, to lead them. He was active, vigorous, and watchful. And as the men swarmed over the guns he chanced to face for Maurice. His bayonet was raised to pierce him, but at the moment the sabre of a Texan officer

clove his head. In the last extremity, whilst falling back, he raised his eyes, and Maurice cried:—"Henry! Henry!"

But his brother, with one faint look of recognition in his glazed eyes, fell over the gun, dead; whilst a hurrying tumult of fighting, cheering men succeeded; sabres flashed, and muskets roared; and Maurice's horse, shot through the head, fell under him, throwing him heavily. Fresh Northern troops rushed in, and the guns were captured. The Southern horsemen, pressed by overwhelming forces, retreated.

"Maurice!—Maurice O'Donnell!" cried a voice, as Maurice, partly stunned by his fall, got himself with difficulty to his legs.

"Who speaks?—Who are you?" he asked, eagerly, blinded by the smoke, and thinking it was one of his Southern friends wounded and hurt like himself.

"Sam, Sam of Innisbeg. Don't you remember?" said a voice in his ear. "But come away! You are my prisoner. Come with me! D'ye hear? Come with me."

Maurice remembered, and, in a vague way, understood.

"But, Henry"——

"Don't mind that now. He's dead; an' we can do him no good. See! there's the Southern horsemen come again, and our fellows are retreating—come? Do you hear me? Wrap this about you, an' come."

Not knowing what he was about, Maurice suffered himself to be hurried away.

The Southern cavalry charged again only to be beaten back again, and their own batteries opening upon them, were soon galloping off in confused and final retreat.

"Maurice, you're badly hurt. See! the blood is streaming from your temple," said his new companion, when they had gained the shelter of the woods. "So am I, too; but that's nothing. Change your dress. There now; you are a Northern! Come! The ambulance is close at hand!"

By a singular succession of circumstances Maurice thus found himself once again in a Federal hospital.

This time he was more badly hurt than before, and it took many weeks before he was able to move about. But he had an excellent attendant, who, though himself wounded, with faithful, and almost fosterhood-friendship, attended upon him.

"Sam," said he, one day, when he had been some weeks in the hospital, and was just beginning to recover strength, "when are we going to leave this?"

"Any time you like, an' that you are strong enough. They have no further need for us; they have too many like us; and we can leave any time we like."

"They won't know me?"

"God help your foolish head! No, they won't. How could they? You don't suppose they'd know you here? As Sir Hugh would know one of his tenants?"

"No, I suppose not," said Maurice, wearily, looking at the hundreds of wounded men near. "But where shall we go?"

"Where," said Sam, eagerly, "but to Arranmore. Do you think we are going to stay here with nothing but blood and fighting around us?"

Maurice was not displeased with the advice, and, accordingly, in a few days they found themselves in New York. Sam would'nt have been worthy of his Galway accomplishments if he found any difficulty in accomplishing that.

"Look here, Masther Maurice," said Sam, a few days after, when they were about taking shipping for Dublin, "see this," handing him a paper, with an announcement in it, which ran:—

"Among the killed in the Federal forces in General Stewart's late raid was Henry O'Donnell, an Irish gentle-

man, said to be son of Sir Hugh O'Donnell, of Arranmore, Galway, Ireland."

"And look here:—'Among the deaths in our Irish Exchanges, we find recorded that of Sir Hugh O'Donnell, of Arranmore, Ireland.'"

Maurice closed up the paper, and hid his face in his hands.

---

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### TO IRELAND.

SAVANNAH was a pleasant city enough, bright and agreeable to strangers from the delightfulness of the climate, and the crowded condition of its streets owing to the refugees from the war; and would have been so to the brother and sister did not the former begin to find idleness pall on his hands, and the latter to grow pale again, thinking, wearisomely, of her lost lover.

Wherefore, it was not without a surprised delight that one day a knock came to their door, and following on the knock came a well-known face—Reinor's.

After the first burst of rejoicings were over, Reinor said:—

"You must sail with me to-night. Walton's vessel has been rather badly handled by a Yankee frigate, and though she got away through her superior sailing he must needs go to Liverpool to refit. He wishes you—I have had the luck to come across him again—to go there, or to somewhere in England where he can meet you. Will you come?"

To be sure they would, both said. And the next day they sailed.

He gave them, during the voyage, a long account of the adventurous secessionist. He had repeated his daring and destructive feats hundreds of times; had swept fairly the

American mercantile from the sea; had been chased by Yankee men-of-war, but had eluded them; till, at last, he had been caught by one of them, and after a long fight, badly worsted. His vessel had, therefore, newly painted and completely transchanged, been obliged to seek a refuge at Liverpool for repairs and shelter.

But in the meantime Federal troops had burst in on his ancestral domains, and ravaged them. Some of Gen. Butler's troops had made a foray, and done more mischief than years of incessant labour could restore. It was one of the incidents of war, and no help there was for it. Whereupon he expressed the wish that he should meet his friends in Liverpool or in Ireland, as he could not hope to afford them a home in the South until the secession banner had become victorious.

"Captain Reinor," said Norah one day when they sat at the prow of the steamer, and looked over the broad surface of the sea, whereupon somewhere beyond its most distant horizon—hundreds of miles beyond—the coasts they were bound to lay, "are you pressed for time, very much pressed for time?"

"Well no, not particularly," said he; "I am returning without cargo. Why do you ask?"

"Because," said she, sunk in deep thought, "if you were not I should be glad you could put around once more to Innisbeg. I should like to see the old place again after the wandering life we have had; home is so pleasant, you know, and Irish skies are so sweet;—if it would not be too much trouble."

"Well, Miss Desmond," said Reinor, after a short and sharp glance at her face, "if you so wish it, certainly; I shall put round there with great pleasure. But what good can come of it?"

"I don't know," said Norah, dreamily; "but I should be glad to see it again. I should, indeed."

"And you, George?" asked Reinor.

"Well, I should like it too," said he.

"And the danger?"

"We shall take chance for that."

"Then I am at your service. There are some that I should like to see around these coasts, too."

Whilst they were on their voyage Maurice O'Donnell and his companion had landed at Dublin, and, with little delay, proceeded to Arranmore. The former had little doubt, now that he had inherited the title and estates, that there was but small danger to him from the authorities. They did not often hang a baronet in Ireland, nor yet the possessor of large estates—a belief in which Sam strongly shared. Of the incidents which had brought himself and Henry O'Donnell to America, Sam had only related the fatal quarrel between the latter and Taylor Harden, attributing the cause of it to money matters. Of Norah's night voyage to the Killeries he told him nothing, and of other kindred matters he was discreetly silent.

How well Maurice remembered the occasion of his last visit. How well he remembered the bright bend of the Shannon, looking like Paynim's scimitar, breaking in on his dream; so, too, that walk across the mountain in the moonlight, and his subsequent disappointment.

He could not help feeling a natural regret over the deaths of his father and brother; but, after all, death must come sooner or later, and death had been dreadfully frequent around him of late.

So, too, he could not help wondering what had become of Norah—indeed she had but seldom been out of his head—and he made resolves that as soon as matters were settled at Arranmore he would speedily trace her out.

Arrived near, they took a car and proceeded to the mansion. It was night when they reached and drove up the long



avenue, over which the trees were throwing deep shadows, and the leaves were thickly falling. It was silent and noiseless—unlike other days, when numbers of servants, work-people, and peasants would be going or returning along it. When they came near the mansion, it too was silent, noiseless and dark.

“Why there seems to be no one here,” said Maurice, as, having reached the hall-door and dismissed the car, he knocked with nervous hand, long and loud, without response.

The leaves were whirling in heaps over the marble steps, and around the *couchant* lions in front brought at huge expense from Italy in days of greater prosperity.

“No, not one,” said Sam. “There’s not a soul in the house.”

Impatiently, Maurice knocked again and again, each time louder, and listened. Finally, a light seemed glimmering in one of the windows of the far angle, and presently a step was heard, the heavy bolt was withdrawn, and the door was partially opened, but not unchained.

“Who’s there?” asked a gruff voice.

“I am,” said Maurice.

“Who are you.”

“Maurice O’Donnell—open the door.

“We don’t want any O’Donnells here,” said the man, still more gruffly.

“But I am Maurice O’Donnell—Sir Maurice O’Donnell, owner of the place, son of the late Sir Hugh. I have only just come back.”

“Then you might as well have stayed where you were. No O’Donnell owns this place—unless he can buy it.”

“What do you mean?” asked Maurice, in great surprise

“Mane! I mane the mortgage is foreclosed, the mortgagees are in possession, and the place will be sold in ten days from this.”

"Good God! Sam, do you hear this?" said Maurice, in utter bewilderment. "I say," said he, again addressing the bailiff; "here's a sovereign. Let me in for a moment, and tell me all about it."

Perhaps it was the gold, or perhaps it was some sympathy with the anxiety that was in the young fellow's voice, but the gruff janitor did open the door, and admit them. And, resting in the spacious hall, Maurice heard the story over again of the slaying of the attorney by his brother, of the abstraction of the mortgage deed, and of its being found in the street afterwards, where the flying slayer had dropped it unwittingly, and of the foreclosure now, and the stern resolution to sell unless twenty thousand pounds with accumulated interests and costs were forthcoming.

Maurice sat wearily on the oaken bench in a sort of dull amazement, as he heard this news. It seemed as if disappointment and misfortune were always to dog his footsteps.

To come back, and see his ancestral home in the hands of strangers! To return from his wanderings to find himself more an outcast than when he stood in the streets of Washington! It was hard, very hard, and he could scarcely realize it.

"Well, Masther Maurice," said Sam, "what will you do? It is clear enough you cannot stay here."

"I don't know," said Maurice, depressedly, "what I *can* do. I have no place to go."

"Then come with me," said his companion, "you will not want for a night's shelter or sleeping place, at any rate. Who knows what may turn up? Come."

It being evident from the bearing of him who had admitted them that he considered they had remained long enough, Maurice arose and left the place. He stood on the steps outside for a moment, when the hall door had closed after them, and looked mechanically around. The last time, perhaps,

that he should ever gaze on that stately mansion or its embosoming woods!

"Come away, Masther Maurice," said Sam, as he noticed his depressed and absent manner, "there is no use in remaining here. An O'Donnell of Arranmore shouldn't let his heart down no matter what comes."

They walked across the lawn under the tall oaks by nearly the same route which Maurice had taken on that evening when he heard his father's angry words—and in the direction of the strand.

When they arrived at the orchard, Maurice, full of old recollections, took a seat to rest himself.

"There is nothing so bad, Masther Maurice," said Sam, "bnt it might be worse. You were often in as bad plight afore. Cheer yourself up with a smoke. Here's some Tullamore tobacco; there's nothing in the world like it for soothing away trouble. Many a night in the Northern trenches, afore Richmond, I'd have died with home-sickness but for it."

"That is curious, Sam," said Maurice, with a faint smile. "America is the land of tobacco."

"Aye, for growin' it," said Sam, glad to see that his master's thoughts had turned into a new channel; "but they can't manufacture it. They have not the secret they have in Tullamore. Anyhow, I never met its aiqul in America, nor did any of the Yankees themselves that I gave it to."

"Very well, Sam, let me have some of it, so."

They sat smoking in silence for some time, Maurice resolving within himself to leave Arranmore for ever on the morrow and take his chance again on American soil. What was to keep him in Ireland? Nothing. There was about as much chance of his redeeming his estates or of preventing their being sold, as of reaching the moon. What a mockery the title was, under these circumstances!

In the midst of these sombre reflections he fell into a doze.

Suddenly he woke up.

"Go to the Abbot's Seat!" he exclaimed. "You're quite right, Sam. Why did I not think of it before! What put it into your head?"

"Put what into my head?" asked Sam, with not a little surprise.

"To tell me—Go to the Abbot's Seat. You said that—did you not?"

"No," said Sam, "I said nothing. I didn't speak."

"Somebody spoke."

"Not one. If there did, I'd have heard it."

"Some one said it," said Maurice, with a curious feeling growing over him. "Some one said the words in my ear."

"Not a living soul spoke a word," said Sam, decisively.

"Come there, at any rate," said Maurice, with sudden impulse. "It's very strange. I certainly heard the voice. Come."

"Where to?" asked his companion, uneasily.

"Oh, never mind. To the Abbey. Come with me."

As they passed beneath the old ruins, Maurice looked up. A faint ray of moonlight fell on the nook where he had rested during his illness; where also he had slept on the occasion of his last visit. It seemed a very beacon of hope. Why had he not thought of it before?

"Sam, Sam!" said he, clutching his companion's arm with fervour, "How forgetful I have been. There's hope after all for me."

"Is there?" asked Sam, much surprised at this sudden change in his manner. "What is it about?"

"Oh, Sam, if it were only morning—if only the dawn had come."

"It will be here soon enough now," said Sam, "if that will do us any good. It can't be very far from it now."

"Sam, we will rest in the Abbot's Seat until it comes," cried Maurice, in ecstasy.

“In the Abbot’s seat!” exclaimed his companion, believing that his unexpected troubles had driven him temporarily deranged. “In the name of heaven, what would you do that for?”

“I shall tell you, Sam, when the dawn comes.”

“An’ would it not be better,” said Sam, “to walk about under the trees until then? What sort of rest would we get there?”

Sam was by no means prepared to take up such an elevated and risky position with one whom he believed had grown partially insane.

Maurice reluctantly assented to this course, and so they walked to the strand and back until the first rays of morning began to appear in the skies—the former so absent in his mood and manner of conversation as to confirm the impression his companion had conceived in reference to his state of mind.

“Now, Sam,” said he, in a state of great excitement, “I shall show you why I wanted to rest in the Abbot’s Seat. Climb up.”

“No,” said his companion, with great disinclination. “You go up. I’ll remain here.”

Maurice promptly ascended by the ivy trunk so well known to him.

There was no change in the place since he had been there last. Evidently, no one had come in the interval. Nothing had been touched. He clomb up to the aperture so well remembered now, though so absolutely forgotten before. Displacing once more the ivy branches that closed it, he thrust in his hand, and pulled out the valise. As before, some golden coins fell at his feet, but in the valise itself, stuffed as full as it could hold, were—rolls of paper! He opened one of these. A glance showed them to consist of notes on the Bank of France for fabulous amounts!

“It is quite as well Sam did not come up,” he thought,

as he placed the shining gold in his pocket, and tied up the valise as well as its mouldered condition would permit, and paused to collect himself and think. His heart was throbbing wildly and his brain seemed afire.

“Well?” said Sam, when he had descended. “Was it for this old thing you wanted us to rest up in that crow’s nest. What is it anyhow?”

“Oh, never mind,” said Maurice, quite unheeding his companion’s contemptuous demeanour and expressions. “But, listen Sam. We must get back to Dublin at once. It is absolutely necessary.”

“To Dublin!”

“Yes. There is no use remaining here. Whatever I can do to save the place must be done there. Nothing can be done here. Don’t you see?”

Sam did see.

“All right, Masther Maurice. Whatever you like. Shall we go at once?”

“Yes, without an hour’s delay,” was Maurice’s decided answer. “Every day now is worth a year another time.”

---

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

ARRIVED in Dublin, Maurice lost no time in proceeding to the office of the family solicitor.

The latter was not a little surprised and delighted to see him; for, besides his professional connection, he was an old friend of the family, and had been much pained and troubled to know what to do or what effort to make to save the estates in the absence of the only surviving member of the house. In his anxiety he had caused advertisements for the wandering

heir to be inserted in the newspapers in Ireland and England, but without response. It was, therefore, with feelings of the highest delight that he saw him enter his office.

After the first few words of welcome and pleasure, Maurice proceeded to put him in possession of his news. There was no time for delay if the sale of the property were to be stayed. They proceeded to count up and enter the notes. Totted up, they were found to be of very large amount.

"Why, Sir Maurice," said the solicitor, "these are sufficient to redeem the property five times over. Come with me to the Bank of Ireland. We shall lodge them there to your account. They will serve us in our need now, and we can afterwards make arrangements to pay the amount over to the real owner or his next-of-kin, if such there be. I congratulate you on your good fortune, and I am glad that the estates of Arranmore should descend to one so worthy of them."

Maurice expressed his thanks to his warm-hearted old friend, and accompanied him to the bank, where the necessary account was opened and the money lodged.

"Now," said the lawyer, when this had been accomplished, "draw me a blank cheque. I shall see the mortgagee's solicitor at once, and arrange with him. It must be done this very day. I shall be glad if you will dine with me this evening; and meantime, as I shall be very busy over this business all day, you can amuse yourself through the city with an easy mind. The estates of Arranmore are safe for another generation at least."

With a warm shake hands they parted, Maurice promising to be with him at the time mentioned. Then he went in quest of Sam, whom, when he found, he took for a walk.

Returning they went in the direction of the quays, for Maurice was curious to see the hostelry at which he had so inadvertently put up on the occasion of his first visit. Having found it, he entered with his companion; and there, seating

himself in the same place in which he had fallen asleep before the fire, called for something hot to drink.

"It is astonishing how little change there is here," he said to Sam, when they had refreshed themselves. "This is the very chair I then sat in, and I almost think it is the same fire that is burning still. How much change I have gone through, and how little there is here. It was on that table I found, when I awoke, the pocket-book that brought me into connection with——"

"With one who is delighted beyond all measure to renew the connection now," said a voice behind him, and a hand was at the same moment laid on his shoulder.

Maurice leaped to his feet in extremest surprise.

"Walton!" he cried, quite dazed.

"Ay, Maurice—don't look so surprised—the same. And glad as ever to meet you. What brought you here? Where did you come from?"

"I have come only just now, never dreaming that I should meet you here again. I am so glad—so delighted to see you. Only think of meeting you, of all other men, here!"

"Well, the surprise is mutual," said Walton, laughing in his cheeriest and brightest manner. "But sit down, Maurice, and let me hear the news. What's that you are drinking? Whisky hot. Let me have some of it.

"Yes, Marrowbone-lape whisky, William Jameson maker. Do you know where I drank it last, Walton?"

"On board the *Georgia*," hazarded Walton.

"No," said Maurice, laughing. "Had you it there?"

"Oh, Maurice, if you were only to know the quantity of it that went into the blue air when that unlucky shell sent the *Georgia*, and Captain Walton, and Maurice O'Donnell, sky high!"

"I was not aware you had it on board."

"Why it was that I was loading here the memorable night



we first met: safely stowed on barrels of gunpowder, too, the *Georgia* carried it.

“An explosive cargo, as I had some reason to know,” said Maurice, laughing. “But no, Walton; it was not on board the *Georgia* I partook of it last. It was with Stewart.”

“Oh, yes. Norah told me you had been in the Southern lines!—How I envy you your time in Richmond!”

“Norah!” said Maurice in extreme surprise. “Norah told you! What Norah?”

“Norah Desmond—your friend and shall I say?—*my* lover,” said Walton, gaily.

“What nonsense, Walton,” said Maurice, offendedly; “this is much too delicate a matter to be joking about.”

“Upon my word and honour, I assure you I am not joking, Maurice,” said Walton, seriously. “I have seen Norah and her brother—spoken with them, sailed with them. Who else could have told me what I know?—that you were in the Southern States, that you were in the Battle of Fair Oaks, that you rode with Stewart’s horsemen; that you were taken prisoner by the Northern troops, were brought to Richmond, and escaped. Who could tell me, moreover, that you disappeared from your friends most mysteriously, and never”——

“Oh, Walton!” said Maurice, almost imploringly, “where did you see her?—for I know now you *must* have seen her.”

“No,” said Walton, with an air of judicial authority, “I shall give you no information about her until you account for yourself. Why did you abandon your friends in Washington—and very nearly cost a gentle and beautiful girl her life? Answer me that?”

“Yes, certainly,” said Maurice, impetuously, “but tell me first how is she? Where is she? Is she well?”

“I shall answer your last question first,” said the Captain, with difficulty restraining a good-humoured smile at the

excited query of his old companion, "she *is* well—perfectly well—at least she was when I saw her not long since."

"Where?" asked Maurice, eagerly.

"No not a word more of information about her, until I hear your explanation. Where did you go? What became of you? Why did you so mysteriously disappear?"

"I was about to tell you, when I made mention of the whisky just now. I was within the Southern lines, and with Stewart's horsemen again.

And thereupon, in almost breathless haste, he put his friend into possession of all the incidents that attended him from his arrest at Washington till his capture by Sam on the defeat of Stewart's force in the night raid—to all of which Walton listened with the greatest interest.

"Well," said the latter, as the hurried narrative drew to a conclusion, "I have had a rather adventurous time of it myself of late, but your experiences beat mine completely."

"And now, Walton, said Maurice, "tell me all about Norah. I am dying to hear about her. How is she? How does she look? How did it come to pass that you met her?"

"Captured her," said Walton. "Captured her, Maurice, from the wave and the storm—a very princess of the sea."

And thereupon he proceeded to narrate the events already referred to in these chapters. If Walton had listened with interest to Maurice's narration, his attention was nothing at all to the breathless manner in which the latter hung on his words.

"Oh, glory to high heaven!" said Maurice, when he had concluded, "what a weight of anxiety you have lifted from my heart. And so the dear girl is coming to Dublin?"

"To Dublin or Liverpool—to the British shores at any rate," said Walton. "If Reinor is as skilful a seaman as he used to be, they should arrive in a week at latest. But your

drink has grown cold. Renew it if you please; this talking is dry work. And I have much to talk about."

The drink being renewed, and some cigars being provided, the conversation was continued. How much they had to speak of! How pleased Walton was to hear Maurice's description of his home in Alabama, of his reception by his mother, of the famous Southern chiefs he had met there; and how his heart beat as Maurice described the gallant troops marching through Richmond to guard the menaced fords of the Rappahannock.

"The brave fellows!" he would say. "Was ever such matchless devotion to freedom and fatherland shown before?"

Tears of pride and home-devotion stood in his eyes as he listened.

With not less interest did Maurice follow Walton's account of his wanderings at sea; but most of all when he again touched on' his meeting with Norah on the lonely Southern seas. How his heart throbbed when Walton told him of the manner in which she mourned for that lover whom all believed had in some mysterious manner gone to his death.

It was far in the night when they ceased speaking—before they wearied of conversation.

"I suppose we had better retire for the night," said Walton at last. "Shall we remain here or go to a hotel?"

"Here, of course," said Maurice. "If it were good enough for shelter on that night long ago, it ought to be good enough now. But I am in Sam's hands. I am still his prisoner—for I don't think I have ever been released—and must obey his orders. What say you, Sam?"

Sam was inclined to stay where he was, for he was tired, and had but faint interest in their conversation, and was saying so when a hurried and impetuous knocking came to the door.

"Hallo! who comes at this unseasonable hour," said Walton, "in this peaceful land?"

They were not kept long in suspense, for the waiter in attendance on them quickly opened it, and immediately after introduced into the apartment—the only one available at the moment—a young man heavily wrapped up.

"I am sorry to disturb you, gentlemen," said the new-comer, cheerfully; "but I have just come by the Liverpool boat, and, needing rest and seeing a light here, thought——But, good heavens! What!—Maurice O'Donnell!"

"Charlie Steadman!" cried Maurice, in utter amazement.

"The very same," said the new-comer, shaking hands warmly with him. "And what a surprising meeting this is, and how glad I am to meet you! Wait until I take off these wrappings and have room to see and speak with you. Good heavens—to think I should meet you here!"

With which statement, delivered in the cheeriest voice and manner possible, he proceeded to divest himself of his heavy overcoat and muffler.

"This is the young officer," said Maurice, filled beyond measure with surprise and pleasure, and not a little dismay at this unexpected meeting of two unconscious foes, "of whom I told you: that saved my life after the explosion of the *Georgia*."

"I am delighted to meet him," said Walton, with a hurried gesture to Maurice to preserve his incognito, and shaking hands very heartily with the new-comer.

"You may be and are, I am sure," said the latter, addressing Maurice, "surprised to see me here. But I have been engaged in a fruitless quest in the English seaports and dockyards, after that Southern privateer, the *Tullahassee*, which we were informed has taken refuge somewhere—being badly worsted in a runaway encounter with one of our frigates."

Maurice and Walton exchanged hurried glances, the latter again lifting his eyebrows warningly.

“Did you succeed?” asked Walton.

“No,” said the young officer. “As I said, my quest was a fruitless one. So I came across from Liverpool this night, on my way to join my ship, the *Tuscarora*, which now lies at anchor in Galway Harbour, after scouring the seas in quest of the Corsair.”

Walton laughed a dry good-humoured laugh, and said: “The *Tullahassee* is by all accounts rather ubiquitous”——

But Maurice, feeling that the conversation was taking a dangerous turn, and that the unsuspecting young officer might speak too unguardedly, here interposed:—

“Charlie,” said he, “this is but a sorry return you are getting for your hospitality on board the *Minnesota*. You are tired and hungry. Take this seat before the fire, and have some refreshments. Your own hand was not easily stayed in Charleston Bay. And not a word about professional matters until due respect is paid to hospitality. I forbid it.”

“All right, Maurice,” said the young fellow; “do bring me something to eat, for *I am* tired and hungry.”

Having satisfied the latter, they resumed their seats (except Sam, who retired to bed) and continued talking until the clear daylight warned them to take some repose. Maurice had much difficulty in keeping the conversation general and in harmless channels, but he skilfully managed to do so; and no three ever retired under the same roof to rest with better feelings towards one another, or with a greater sense of having passed a pleasant time, than Maurice and his two friends—the one, a firm believer in the Union; the other, a vehement and enthusiastic supporter of Secession.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### CONCLUSION.

“WALTON,” said Maurice, next day, “you must come with me to Arranmore. I really must return the hospitalities of Alabama, and I wish you to see what our western land is like.”

“With the greatest pleasure,” said his friend. “But where is my agreeable foe of last night?”

“Gone. Left his apologies for you. Gone by the first train to rejoin his ship.”

“I am glad I made his acquaintance here, and not on the high seas,” said Walton, pleasantly. “The *Tuscarora* is a rather ugly customer to come across.”

“I was placed in rather an unpleasant position between you last night. I was afraid the open-hearted young fellow, in the confidence of the moment, and not knowing in whose presence he was, might reveal some professional secrets to his injury.”

“I should not have taken advantage of a word he said,” said Walton, haughtily. “I would have done my best to prevent disclosures from him. I should have hoped you would think higher of me than that. I do not make use of private friendships for public purposes, not even for the cause I have at heart.”

“Forgive me, Walton; I am sure you would not. But it was not easy to stop the flow of his information; he was so frank and open in the belief that there were none but friends around him—friends to his cause, I mean. But enough of that. I ought, and do, know you better. Shall we start to-day?”

Walton's vessel needing repairs which would take some time, he was quite at liberty for a few days, and said so. Whereupon Maurice called upon the solicitor in reference to the proceedings of the day before, and to apologise for not keeping his engagement. The latter informed him that the mortgage had been taken up, that the men in possession had been withdrawn, and that the halls of Arranmore were ready prepared for his reception. And accordingly, that evening Maurice and his two companions proceeded thither.

It was as the lawyer had said. The mansion of the O'Donnells had its doors once more open to him and his friends. It was free alike from debt and intruders.

Walton was delighted with the place, with the scenery, and with the deep woods around. He proclaimed it to be absolutely enchanting; and his time being limited, Maurice took occasion to show him all the most exquisite scenes and views around. The *Tuscarora* being still anchored in Galway Bay, Maurice paid her a visit, where he was most warmly received, and was delighted to find that many of the officers of the *Minnesota* had been transferred to her. His old friends were delighted to see him, and many were the congratulations offered him. The vessel was to sail next day, but, at Maurice's pressing entreaty, the Captain agreed to remain for a few days longer to enable them to accept his invitation to Arranmore. Walton, deeming that it would not be fair or honourable that he, under the guise of friendship, should avail himself of this opportunity of inspecting the build and equipment of a hostile vessel, refused to accompany him, and remained at home.

It was late in the afternoon when Maurice returned. His mind was full of the entertainment which he was about to give to the American officers, and which he was resolved should be of the richest and most magnificent that money could afford. He was determined that for splendour and lavish expenditure nothing like it had ever been seen before

in the west of Ireland. As he thought of their kindness to him in the days of his distress, his heart warmed to them with more than brotherly affection.

All this he told Walton as they stood, on his return, at the windows of the drawingroom looking over the distant sea. But he was quite surprised to see how little attention his friend paid him—his thoughts seemed to be otherwise occupied.

“I hope, Walton,” said Maurice, after a pause, “that you do not feel uncomfortable at the idea of meeting these gentlemen. But that they are old and true friends of mine I should not”——

“My dear fellow,” returned Walton, “nothing of the sort. I am delighted to meet them. But the truth is, I am rather put about this evening; nothing but a long walk will cure me. What say you to one?”

Maurice readily assented, and they turned their steps seawards. They were deeply engaged in conversation anent the *Tuscarora* and her officers, and they came to the stile leading into the orchard before Maurice was aware of it; but his attention was suddenly awakened by Walton saying:—

“Maurice, lift your eyes and look! See who is here. Don’t cry out or exclaim, but look!”

Astonished by his friend’s sudden words, and his manner of saying them, Maurice lifted his eyes, and——

There before him, standing inside the stile, with the rosy tints as of the setting sun on her face, with an entrancing gleam of delight and welcome in her eyes, looking more superbly radiant and beautiful than she had ever looked before, was—Norah!

A cry of delighted surprise, which he could not, and did pause to control, burst from his lips, and bounding over the steps he had the beautiful wanderer in a moment folded in his arms.



“Norah! Norah! is it possible I see you again? Has Heaven been so kind as to bring us together once more? Never to part more, Norah! never to part more! I can hardly believe”——

“I can hardly believe that Sir Maurice O’Donnell would receive his friends so coldly,” said a voice beside him.

“What, Reinor! You, too! And George. Why, was there ever such delightful meeting as this?” said Maurice, in raptures. “Walton, you ought to have prepared me for this.”

“You have been so accustomed to surprises that I thought I should like to see how you would bear this one,” said Walton nonchalantly, as he kindled a cigar.

\* \* \* \* \*

If anybody were to say that under any roof anywhere, in any land, since houses were first built, and men and women abode in them, was assembled a more rejoicing group than gathered in Arranmore House that night, I shouldn’t believe him. If anybody were to say that more pleasant festival was ever held at wedding since that day when in the dim centuries ago the primal one took place in the cedar alleys of Eden, than that celebrated at this western mansion, I should not believe him either. But if anybody were to say that more radiant, entrancing girl than Norah ever knelt at the altar and plighted the simple word, “Yes,” with such unflinching love and truth, I should promptly set him down for what he is.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sir Maurice and Lady O’Donnell still live in Arranmore, and if one can prophecy from the young people who call him father, and in whose eyes there is much of the brightness that once flashed from Norah Desmond’s, I don’t think there is much danger of the title becoming extinct.

Captain Walton died in the breach at Fort Sumter, when

the Northern ironclads, with a rain of shot and shell, smashed its walls and bastions into dust ; and George Desmond succeeded to his property and plantations in that gallant Southern land.

Charles Steadman is one of the highest officers in the American Navy. May he never have to fire a shot against the flag of a Southern State again ; and if he ever have to train his guns on a foe, may it be for the fair cause of freedom and in aid of an oppressed nation.

Reinor still sails his vessel ; and the very last vacation but one I sailed with him from Dublin to Bordeaux. The worst I wish my most inveterate enemy (and I have one or two) is that he may never have such a pleasant voyage or taste such nectar as the jolly Captain keeps stored in his locker.

THE END.

# CARMELITE COLLEGE, TERENURE, DUBLIN.

---

**T**HIS College was founded by the Carmelite Fathers, in 1860, to promote Catholic Intermediate Education, and the number of its Students who have become eminent men in the learned professions, &c., is the best guarantee of its efficiency.

It is situated in the midst of a fine demesne in one of the most healthy and beautiful suburbs of Dublin.

The religious training of the Students occupies first attention. Great care is also taken to instil habits of order, neatness, and gentlemanly demeanour.

A skilful Matron has charge of the junior boys.

Students are prepared for the Royal University, Intermediate and other Examinations. Special attention is paid to those branches required for Commercial life.

---

**The Pension is 30 Guineas per annum,  
paid half-yearly in advance.**

---

For further particulars, apply to

REV. THOMAS BARTLEY, O.C.C.,  
*President.*

CROWLEY & HUMPHRIES,

Public Accountants and Auditors,

**73 DAME-STREET,**

DUBLIN,

Are engaged in all matters of Accounts in Chancery,

Bankruptcy, Partnership Accounts, Rentals, &c., &c. ;

also in opening the Books of Public Companies in

accordance with the provisions of the Joint Stock

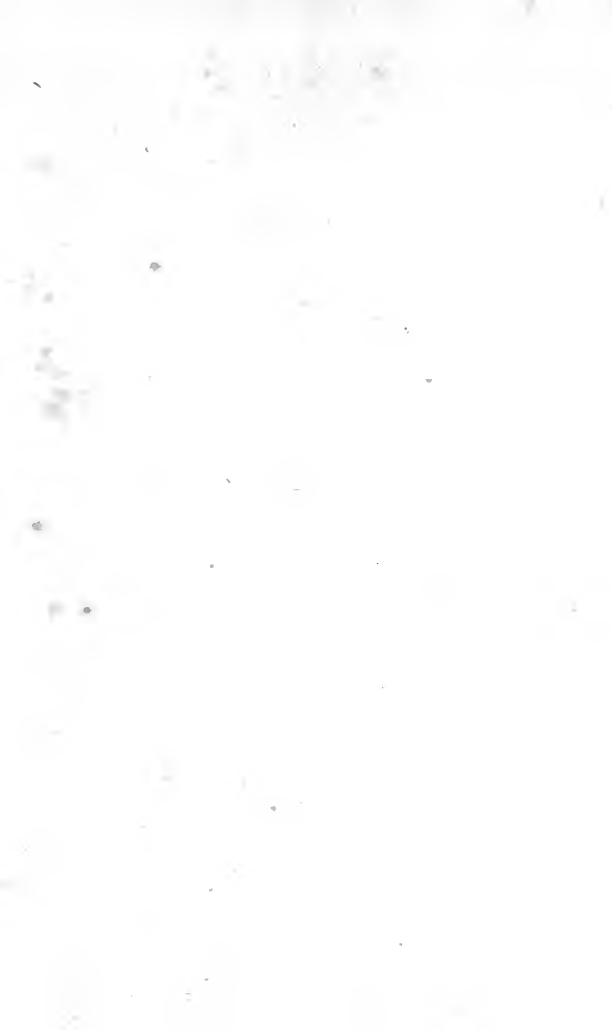
Companies Act, winding up Estates as Liquidators,

acting as Auditors, &c., &c.











*WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

---

**The House in the Rath.**

**Hugh Roach, the Ribbonman.**

**The Forge of Clohogue.**

**The Shan Van Vocht.**

**Convict No. 25.**

---

May be had from all Publishers and Booksellers, and at all  
Railway Stalls.









