

"Never mind now," said he; "one trouble's enough at a time for any man; too much for a fellow like me—as weak as water." He was not so strong in mind as in body, certainly; still this judgment passed on himself by Michael Quinlan surprised me not a little. He went on impatiently.

"The money is gone, and I'm accountable. I don't know what to do. I did not tell her, because I thought if you could not help me to trace it, it would be time enough to confront her with the facts when it was discovered that we were ruined."

"Certainly," said I, "quite time enough. Sit down and tell me all the particulars."

There were no remarkable features about the Tubber branch of the Universal Bank of Ireland. The incident which I record here took place before the era of decorative furniture and artistic fittings. The two rooms which formed the bank premises, supplemented by a kind of den in which the messenger passed his time, opened on one side of a rather broad hall, with an inner swing door. On the other side were the two sitting-rooms occupied by Michael Quinlan's family, and the small apartment in which our conference was being held. The "bank parlors," as the outer and inner offices were called, had barred windows, and in the inner room, in addition to a door of communication, there was a contrivance for the effectual protection of privacy, consisting of a sheet of glass in a hinged frame let into the wall, in fact a square glass door, about two feet wide, just above the writing-table, with desk and drawers, at which Michael Quinlan was in the habit of sitting when occupied in the inner room. By means of this honestly-avowed peephole, he could at all times command a view of the outer office, see all comers and goers, and observe the proceedings of the two assistants who, with the messenger and himself, constituted the staff of the Tubber branch of the Universal Bank of Ireland. Let into the wall at the end of this room was an iron safe, with the appearance and arrangements of which I was quite familiar. A few heavy chairs, and a sofa covered with black hair-cloth of most uninviting aspect, placed under a gray and fly-spotted map of Ireland, broke the blankness of the wall opposite to the windows. The condition of the room remained entirely unchanged since Michael Quinlan's discovery of the robbery, and it was quite clear it had been effected without any violence. It opened the safe, and showed me the spot where the money had lain—a locked cash-box and some small account-books were on the shelf. I inquired into the circumstances and nature of the deposit. The money had been received in two sums, from two persons, on two several accounts, and had been placed in the safe in due course by Michael's own hands. In those days it had not yet been made the rule in country banks to enter the number or specification of notes sent for deposit, and Quinlan could not give me exact information concerning the perished money. He was perfectly certain of only two facts: that there was a Bank of Ireland note for one hundred pounds and a Bank of England note for one hundred pounds among the number, and that they had both been paid in by the same person. The largest amount in Universal notes was twenty pounds, but there were some tens, and several one-pound notes. Both depositors were farmers, whose farms were within a few miles of Tubber, and from each it would have been possible, no doubt, to obtain exact information on these points. But maintenance of secrecy, for the present at all events, was of the first importance to the chances of detection and to the prestige of the bank. I said very little while Quinlan was explaining the unfortunate occurrence to me, and every moment his manner became more and more embarrassed, and less like that of a man talking to a friend. He felt the influence of my official capacity, and so did I. That was indisputable, inevitable; our common-sense forbade our struggling against it.

I questioned Quinlan closely concerning his keys, and the carelessness of his custody of them. His replies increased the difficulty of accounting for the robbery. The key of the safe was kept in the centre desk of the writing-table, whose patent key Quinlan wore on his watch-chain. He was positively certain that he never was without the chain and the key; he slept with his watch under his pillow always, and the key of the manager's room lay on a table by his bedside. He had hardly been out of the manager's room during the day on which he had placed the money, since stolen, in the safe, and he had discovered the theft within twenty-four hours. What had he been doing in that time? He gave me an account of his proceedings, with the difficulty and hesitation which we should probably all experience if called upon for a narrative of every hour of a day which, during its passage, we had no reason to suppose would be distinguished in the future from other days; but with an additional trouble and disheartenment in his manner, arising from the relative position in which he and I were placed. I was quite aware that the question which it was on his lips to ask me, but which he had not the courage to utter, was:

"Do you suspect me of having taken this money?"

On my part, the answer which I should have dearly wished to make was, "Not only do I not suspect you, but I am absolutely certain you are innocent." But I could not speak any more than he. I had no right to listen to my strong prepossession in Michael Quinlan's favor. It was my duty to conduct the investigation of this loss according to the rule in these cases, first considering where the opportunity for guilt lay, and proceeding thence to the motive which would presumably have led to the utilization of the opportunity. In the present instance, the opportunity was certainly Quinlan's, and supposing him to be guilty, the crime must be relegated to one of two categories, the transparently simple, or the superlatively audacious. That Michael Quinlan discerned something of my thoughts was plain to me. The distance of his manner increased; he made no reference to the excitement of feeling, the confidence of friendship, which had induced him to send for me, but when I paused in my prolonged and painful questioning, he kept a constrained silence.

The unavoidable delay in my arrival had complicated Quinlan's position by inducing him to defer the intimation which ought to have reached headquarters before this time, and in this there was a serious element of danger. That he should make up the deficit, I knew of course to be impossible. Without having a definitely accurate knowledge of Quinlan's circumstances, I felt certain he had no savings, and I knew his wife had had no "fortune," as the smallest pittance used to be called in Ireland in those days. Nothing but black unmitigated ruin awaited him, even if he were not suspected of the robbery, which seemed almost inevitable; for I could not hope to inspire others with the confidence that, under a surface uneasiness, I knew I really felt in his innocence. It was only instinctive, and one cannot impart instincts.

Having heard Quinlan's narrative, I proceeded to question him about the other persons in the service of the bank, and I may as well simplify matters at once by remarking that only one of them is necessary to my narrative.

To be continued.

HOW SHE LOST "OLD PORTER."

BY KITTY.

"A masquerade ball! Well, I suppose it is right for young people to enjoy the night," said old Mr. Porter; but I think Kitty might have mentioned she was going. Since we are engaged, I'd have put on anything she wanted me to wear, and gone too. I suppose," continued old Mr. Porter, a little crossly—"I suppose Kitty thought me too old to go."

"Oh, dear, no, Mr. Porter!" cried Mrs. Grundy, who was herself many years the junior of her prospective son-in-law. "Surely not. But it was very sudden. Her cousin, Mrs. Rash, stopped here with Mr. Rash, of course, and she put on a lace domino and went. Why don't you go, too? She'd be so charmed. She'll be so lonely with only married folks."

And Mrs. Grundy, with a vivid remembrance of her Kitty's parting remark of, "One evening without old Porter, at least," rubbed her hands and tried to look candid.

"I could, I really could," said Mr. Porter,—"I could hire a costume—a Louis the Fourteenth, or something of that sort—get a carriage and follow. How was she dressed?"

"In white lace," replied the mother; but she wore those cameo bracelets you gave her yesterday. You'll know her by those."

"Yes, yes," said the delighted Porter. "I know her. Poor little thing, she will be lonesome going down to supper with old married folks. How glad she will be to see me!"

"I hope I haven't done any mischief," said Mrs. Grundy, as she smiled him out of the door. "If he finds Kitty, he'll stop that flirtation between her and young Winkle, and it's high time. Dear me, what trials mothers do have to bear, to be sure! What a match Mr. Porter is! Three streets of houses, a country seat, and a mint of money! I'm sure I would have tried for him myself if I hadn't known that a man of sixty-five never looks at anybody past eighteen. Now, young Winkle really quite admires me, and he's only one-and-twenty, but the older they are the younger they want. I couldn't let it slip out of the family. I'm sure he'll ask me to live with them. Kitty ought to be so thankful."

Remembering, however, with a shiver that Kitty was not Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Grundy again hoped piously that she had done no mischief.

"When she's married," thought the good lady, "I'll manage to get a little gayety myself. No doubt Mr. Porter will have an opera box at least. And Kitty isn't mean about money. I'll have my room in blue and gold, and wear black velvet all winter."

Meanwhile Mr. Porter had hurried to a costumer's, arrayed himself in trunk hose, a short cloak, and a hat and feather, a wig with long curls, and a mask; and thus adorned, proceeded to the academy, purchased a ticket, and entered.

Myriads of beautiful creatures flitted past him. He strained his eyes to see his beloved one, who at that moment was seated in a bower of artificial roses, *tête-à-tête* with a charming young Andalusian, who, however, spoke no Spanish.

Gypsies, cavaliers, soldiers, old apple women, dominoes of all colors, flitted past.

The obliging cousins had amiably wandered away, and they could talk as they chose.

The Andalusian sat very close to the white-lace domino, and played with the pretty bracelet of yellow-tinted cameos linked together by chains of amethysts which adorned her arms.

"There she is," said to himself a cavalier with a top-heavy white hat and feather, and very large trunk hose, who approached the bower—"there she is. I know the bracelets. But who

is that fellow? These may be masked-ball manners, but I don't like them. I will watch."

And Mr. Porter assumed a careless attitude, and leaned against a column which supported the bower.

He was a very short, slender old gentleman, and the costume was intended for a tall giant; but it was all the more a disguise.

His face was, of course, hidden by his mask, and he was, fortunately, very sharp of hearing. He had no need to look at his betrothed to know what she said.

"What a lovely waltz that was!" said the Andalusian. "I have been so miserable, and it was such joy to hold you in my arms once more."

"Oh, indeed, was it?" asked Mr. Porter, under his breath.

"Ah!" sighed Kitty.

"Were you not also happy?" asked the Andalusian.

"Alas! I have no right to be!" said Kitty.

"Well, she has some sense of propriety anyhow," commented Mr. Porter.

"But were you not?" pleaded the Andalusian.

"Oh, Richard, I was!" sighed Kitty.

"Hang it!" remarked Mr. Porter, under his breath.

"But I shall soon be another's, and I am wrong, very wrong, to confess it."

"Isn't so much her fault. I'll take care there's no more waltzing," said the cavalier to his white feather.

"Then you really are going to marry that old hunk?" said the Andalusian sorrowfully.

"I'm no such thing!" indignantly commented Mr. Porter.

"I'm going to marry Mr. Porter," said Kitty.

"I can't help it. I've promised. Ma drove me into it. You see, he is immensely rich, and we are using up everything we have. We've come to the last thousand. I couldn't sew for a living, could I, or go into a shop? And you have only ten dollars a week, if your family is good. Ma talked and talked, and he coaxed and coaxed. He isn't so hateful as you might think. He's generous, and—well, it's all settled."

"Rather sensible," thought Mr. Porter. "She is young; I must make excuses. I'll take lessons in waltzing and go to balls with her."

"Settled!" replied the Andalusian. "No, Kitty, no! It will not be settled so easily. I shall take my own life, and my blood shall be on your head."

"Oh, Mr. Winkle!" sobbed Kitty.

"His gold has won your heart," continued the Andalusian.

"No, I hate him!" said Kitty. "How can I help it, he's so old and ugly!"

"Confound it, this is pretty!" said the cavalier, grinning with rage under his mask.

"It's only because I must that I marry him," proceeded Kitty. "And, Richard, ma says that as I am eighteen and he nearly seventy, I am sure to be a young widow, and then—"

"I shall go crazy!" said the bridegroom elect, clenching his fists.

"Kitty," replied the Andalusian,—"Kitty, my love, promise me that when he dies you will marry me, and I will wait if it is ten years."

"Oh!" cried Kitty, suddenly, "what is the matter with that funny-looking cavalier in the crimson velvet cloak and white hat?"

"Too much champagne, I guess," said Mr. Winkle.

It was very late.

Mrs. Grundy sat enjoying her magazine, when the door-bell rang.

The servants were gone to bed.

She opened it herself, expecting to see Kitty.

Instead, a small cavalier, in a white hat and feather and a crimson cloak, stalked in and clutched her by the arm in melodramatic fashion.

"Oh!" screamed Mrs. Grundy.

The cavalier removed his mask.

"Why, it's dear Mr. Porter!" cried Mrs. Grundy. "Didn't you find Kitty?"

"I found your daughter," said the old gentleman, "and you'll tell her that the cavalier in white and scarlet who leaned against the column while she talked to that confounded Spaniard was me—me, ma'am—she'll tell you why I desire never to see her again. There'll be no necessity for waiting ten years. She may say to Mr. Winkle I shall be no obstacle in the future."

And he dashed away banging the door after him.

"Gracious!" sobbed Mrs. Grundy. "I have made mischief. I had a presentiment I should."

"It's all your own fault, ma," said Kitty, when she heard the news. "I remember now the cavalier's legs were the shape of old Porter's, but I did not imagine he was there. Good-bye to my hopes of being rich, I suppose. And it is not as if I'd been in earnest with Winkle. I wouldn't marry him for a kingdom. I only liked the flirtation. It's fun to be sentimental. Old Porter wasn't so bad as people think. I declare it's dreadful!"

And Kitty moistened her pillow with tears of rage and repentance for many nights, but all in vain.

She had lost old Porter and his fortune.

A PARISIAN *on dit* speaks of a marriage being arranged between the daughter of Baron and Baroness de Rothschild and Baron Alfred de Rothschild. The young lady is only eighteen years of age, and remarkably pretty. She will, naturally, have some money for her dower.

ECHOES FROM PARIS.

PARIS, January 20.

MISS CHAMBERLAIN is among the distinguished beauty visitors at Cannes.

Two women who have been feted for their beauty, and are in fairly affluent circumstances, by agreement fought out a quarrel the other evening before a crowd of invited spectators, who were men moving in good society. One woman was of powerful frame and stature, the other small and delicate. Armed with but their fists they entered the arena, and freed of all costume from their waists upward fought out a horrible contest until one of the spectators thought it prudent to interfere between the blood-streaming bodies. What is to be said of the social condition that this fact proclaims?

A GREAT commotion has been occasioned throughout Italy by the demand made by one of the greatest savans of the country for the privilege of ransacking the tomb of Tomasina Spinola, known in history as the "*Calendula*" or platonic love of Louis XII. By the order of King Louis, Tomasina was interred with the greatest pomp and ceremony, and by the same royal command the whole of her jewels, supposed to have been of the greatest value, were buried with her, as well as the great gold medal struck in her honor by the same monarch. Louis is said to have dreaded the effect of the publicity which would have been given to his unwarrantable extravagance had the magnificent jewels and valuable ornaments he had bestowed upon his *calendula* been made known to the people after her death, and so thought it wiser to have them buried with her. The magic wand of Madame Cailhava might surely be tested here with some effect.

The ruins of the Tuileries Palace are now in the hands of the workmen engaged to clear them away. Parts of the ruins are found to be comparatively untouched by the flames which devoured the rest; thus, the staircase which led to the first floor of the palace, entering from the Place du Carrousel, and the gallery running around the floor resisted the conflagration; a number of columns with their capitals of *bas-relief* and other decorations, are in a perfect state of preservation. The large and massive columns supporting the gallery which surrounded the former chapel of the palace have disappeared, with the remainder of the masonry in the interior of that sacred precinct. The former Hall of the Marshals, so richly and magnificently decorated, is now a mass of blackened ruins, among which only one vestige, a scutcheon bearing the name "Léna," remains to recall the former glories of the spot. Hopes are entertained that as the work of demolition progresses, innumerable objects will be found to have escaped the flames; under the dense mass of burnt and blackened fragments which encumber the ground, it is highly probable that many articles will turn up which have not lost their value.

CANNES Regatta was a poor affair after all. The weather was very bad, and consequently the grand battle of flowers, which was so much talked of, did not come off, and has been postponed till carnival time: decidedly more appropriate. Mentone has, however, been extremely gay—balls and dinner parties have been plentiful. The most numerous attendants, and, perhaps, the liveliest, was the ball at the Hôtel des Bles Britannique. Some excellent private theatricals have also been at the Cercle Philharmonique, which attracted all the best of the British colony and a number of foreigners, who came to laugh, but remained to applaud. The programme was *Anything for a Change*, and *Dearest Mamma*. In the former piece the parts were distributed as follows:—Swappington-Swappington, Captain Twynam; Margaret, Miss Wray; Honeyball, Colonel Henchy; Eliza, Miss Hapworth-Dixon; Mrs. Honeyball, Mrs. Henchy; Jerry Census, Mr. Allen. *Dearest Mamma* was sustained by Mr. Kennedy, Capt. Twynam, Miss Harvey, Capt. Boyce, Miss Wray, Mr. Trotter, and Mr. Stewart Robertson.

FATHER HYACINTHE has been lecturing on Gambetta at the Théâtre des Nations. Though the prices of admission were relatively high every seat was occupied, and numbers were turned from the doors. The famous preacher reiterated the eulogiums which have of late been delivered over the deceased. It would be difficult even for an orator of his varied acquirements to say aught that had not been already said on a subject which has been worn threadbare. Father Hyacinthe extolled in glowing terms the patriot's heroic efforts to retrieve the national honor. He deplored his inability to appreciate the blessings of religion, but defended him from the obloquy caused by his solemn warning, "*Le cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi*." This was directed against the invading spirit of the Church of Rome—the temporal sovereignty, which was as unchristian as anti-national; but he held that materialism, positivism, and freethinking were also enemies equally dangerous, as they furnish modern society with excuses for hesitating to resist the encroachments of the clergy. Father Hyacinthe was frequently interrupted by loud plaudits, and was hailed at the close of his oration with enthusiastic vociferation.