

shocked at the rudeness with which his hint was taken. "But if—you don't like Canary, do you?"

"Canary? Oh yes, very much," said the other, running to the bell. "Langton, let's have a bottle of Canary."

Which having been supplied, and quaffed with due relish by Mr. Sackwell (who liked it so well that, on behalf of Mrs. Sackwell, he accepted a case of it for Monard), the conversation turned on other topics.

"By the bye, Mr.—Mr.—" commenced the M. P., fidgetting in seeming confusion for a name he had good reason to remember.

"Artslade, sir, Artslade," suggested the owner of that name, with ill concealed disgust.

"Oh! my dear Sir—of course it's Artslade," cried Mr. Sackwell with one of his sweetest smiles, "I forget names sometimes in a most astonishing way. But I was just going to say I met my Charlie, and your dear little daughter down near the wood as I was coming. They were picking primroses, I think, or something of that sort. She's a lovely child, Mr. Artslade," he said, with the air of a man ready to defend his assertion with his life.

"Thank you, sir. She is a nice child," said Mr. Artslade, with a modest smile; adding mentally "I see this fellow through and through now—he thinks my heiress would not be a bad catch for a young pauper. Still, he's Sackwell of Monard."

"Pity you don't let her go more into society, Mr. Artslade," persued the M. P., with winning innocence.

Well he knew how deep a wound his words caused; but they served his purpose, and they were eminently courteous—two qualities that almost made up perfection in his eyes.

Mr. Artslade cursed deeply within himself but made no reply.

"If she would come over occasionally to Monard, Mrs. Sackwell and the girls would be delighted to see her," Mr. Sackwell said, overflowing with gracious bows and motions.

"I'm sure, sir, you're very kind," said Mr. Artslade meekly, all the while chafing under the helplessness imposed on him by those cruel kindnesses.

But he could bear it no longer. He felt he had the means of turning the tables and making himself the benefactor instead of the insulted beggar. He was not long or delicate in turning it to account.

"Mr. Sackwell," he broke in suddenly, "I wish to speak to you on a very important matter."

There was just a shade of uneasiness on Mr. Sackwell's benignant countenance, for he was not sure that the "very important matter" might not have reference to a certain mortgage, whose period of redemption was just expiring.

"They say you're going to vote against the Union," said Mr. Artslade, just as abruptly.

"Well, yes,—oh! yes, certainly—that, is unless"—said Mr. Sackwell with a very peculiar smile "unless I see very good reason to change my opinion."

Mr. Artslade saw his object was won, and, as he was no great master of diplomacy, he left the despatch itself from the Under-Secretary to do the rest. He produced the letter and handed it to Mr. Sackwell.

"Read that, sir," said he, already feeling somewhat of the confidence of power.

Having placed his gold-rimmed spectacles with enough nicety and deliberation to impress on Mr. Artslade that, if the despatch was his death-warrant, it would not disturb *his* serenity, the member for Tipperary, glanced leisurely over the writing, expressing his emotion only by a single "Hem!" which did not commit him to anything. He refolded it just as leisurely, and returned it to its owner, whose vulgar glee was a good deal sobered by Mr. Sackwell's coolness.

"Ve—ry singular!" mused the latter, half in soliloquy. "The Union has become a necessity to the government, as, indeed, to all good citizens, that I regard as the pith and marrow of the whole thing."

Mr. Artslade thought about "precious ends and means;" but, of course, Mr. Sackwell was not sordid enough to notice that part of the communication.

"The Secretary did not write that without grave cause" continued Mr. Sackwell, subduing his smile to a befitting seriousness.

"Decidedly not, sir," said Mr. Artslade.

"The country must be in danger. Perhaps another Popish rebellion brewing?"

"Nothing more likely" said Mr. Artslade.

"I tell you what, my dear sir, I hope I'm as great a lover of the old land and all that sort of thing as any man"—Mr. Sackwell drew out his handkerchief, but, remembering there was no occasion for tears, only blew his nose sentimentally—"but I say, and I have always said"—which was a lie—"authority must be supported at all hazards. Cripple authority and what security have we, the oldest or the highest of us?"

"Very true" assented Mr. Artslade, who, though he was behind the scenes in the pantomime, saw that all this mumminery had its meaning.