

he answered impatiently. "I know what I am about, and must warn you, Isabel, against mixing yourself up in these affairs; I will brook no interference on your part—"

"But, dear papa, it is my strong fears for your safety that induce me to say a word in the matter. I know well what lawless acts have been committed by ejected tenants. Have I not reason to be afraid?"

"I tell you, no!—they will bluster and threaten, but dare not act. Curse them for a cowardly, cringing, deceitful set!" and Mr. Crofton, having vented his passion in these complimentary words, stalked away to the stables, with the intention of taking his accustomed evening ride, leaving his daughter meditating painfully on what had occurred.

This display of her father's real character pained her deeply. His indifference to the well-being of others, his want of consideration for their feelings, his selfish regard for his own interest, his passionate temper—flashed a startling revelation on the daughter's mind, making her feel how insecure were the hopes of happiness she had so fondly cherished. Of her father she had seen little since her childhood. After her mother's death she had been consigned to the care of an aunt who lived near Dublin, and the last six years had been spent at a fashionable boarding-school. Mr. Crofton, during his occasional visits to see his daughter, had taken care only to exhibit the bright side of his character. The late outburst of ill-temper had taken her by surprise, shewn her what she had in future to expect, and cast a shadow across her young life. Her fears for her father's safety, too, filled her mind, and, in spite of his assertion that he had nothing to dread, she gave way to the gloomiest forebodings. Whilst Isabel was lost in this painful reverie, the sun had descended in the western sky, and was now resting his crimson disk upon the glittering quartz peak of Muilrea—the highest mountain in Connaught—as if taking a view of

the magnificent scenery below, varied by hill and dale, mountain, glen, and lake. She looked very lovely as she sat there, all aglow in the brilliant sunlight, the golden rays glinting on her wavy hair, the colour on her rounded cheeks deepened by her late excitement, and so thinks that handsome pedestrian, who, emerging from a mountain gorge, is now rapidly making his way up the elm-walk leading to the house. The lithe, manly figure soon caught the eye of Isabel Crofton, and the vivid blush of pleasure crimsoned her face. "How becoming that clerical costume is!" she thought, as she watched his approach, "and how glad I am to see him! Just the one to confide this trouble to about papa."

This was not the first visit the Rev. Maxwell Butler had made to Elm Lodge since the arrival of Isabel Crofton. The impression she had made upon him at Barrington House had been deepened by every succeeding interview, as he got a deeper insight into the generous and noble nature of the girl whose grace and beauty had first attracted him. Very often about this time he had been in the habit of coming to spend an hour at the Lodge before returning home from his round of parochial visits. It was now some weeks since his acquaintance with Isabel commenced. No words of love had yet passed his lips, but the language of the eye, though mute, is eloquent, and Isabel learned to know the cause of his frequent visits, and to look forward to them with eager anticipation. As Mr. Crofton was usually absent at this time enjoying his daily ride, he seldom met the clergyman at his house, but he was aware of his attentions to his daughter and did not discourage them, and his absence was never regretted by the young people, who could enjoy their pleasant *tête-à-tête* and talk sentiment, unrestrained by his presence. On this evening, however, their conversation was on a graver subject.

"I am so glad you have come. I wanted