

## CHAPTER XLI.

## DAWN.

SIMON MACTAGGART went out possessed by the devils of hatred and chagrin. He saw himself plainly for what he was in truth—a pricked bladder, his career come to an ignoble conclusion, the single honest scheme he had ever set his heart on brought to nought, and his vanity already wounded sorely at the prospect of a contemptuous world to be faced for the remainder of his days. All this from the romantics of a Frenchman who walked through life in the step of a polonaise, and a short season ago was utterly unaware that such a man as Simon MacTaggart existed, or that a woman named Olivia bloomed, a very flower, among the wilds! At whatever angle he viewed the congregated disasters of the past few weeks he saw Count Victor in their background—a sardonic, smiling, light-hearted Nemesis; and if he detested him previously as a merely possible danger, he hated him now with every fibre of his being as the cause of this upheaval.

And then, in his way, that is not uncommon with the sinner, he must pity himself because circumstances had so consistently conspired against him.

He had come into the garden after the interview with Argyll had made it plain that the darkest passages in his servant's history were known to him, and had taken off his hat to get the night breeze on his brow which was wet with perspiration.