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Love's Silence

(See frontispiece.)

A flash of azure ; a folded wing ;
A waft of song on the winds of spring ;
Listen ! I hear the bluebird sing.

A feathered arrow ; a bolt far thrown ;
The silent flight of a form swift flown ;
A pause—and I hear the wood-dove's moan.

Bluebird, hued like the plains above ;
Summer's messenger, fleet-winged dove ;
Hath autumn never a song of love ?

And the one replies from a bough breeze-swung,
And the other the still green glooms among :
" Sweet, oh, sweet, are the songs unsung ! "

—HENRY CHARLES LUDERS.

Catching a Colonel.

The colonel of the Red Hussars was an Irishman, who was as proud of his nationality as it is possible for an Irishman to be, and that is not saying a little by any means. He carried his patriotism so far as to aver that not only were the Irish the finest, the most courageous, the most gifted, of the four nationalities, but that nearly all the really great Englishmen were really Irishmen. He justified this Hibernianism by a mode of reasoning that was highly original, but not wholly convincing. It would have provoked shouts of laughter in the mess if it had proceeded from the lips of a subaltern, but the colonel was an altogether different person to deal with. It would be dangerous to quarrel with him, and he was as peppery as a London frog, or an old maid who has been jilted by the curate. It was considered far more advisable "to give him his head," and let him exhaust himself by the violence of his own efforts.

When he launched out on his favorite topic, therefore, he was listened to in disrespectful silence by his subordinates, but in revenge it was the greatest delight of the wags of the regiment to mimic his voice and manner, and to represent him as uttering the most astounding Hibernian falsehoods, garnished with numerous expressions of a wholly profane character. This was called "doing Old Pat," and was a very popular amusement in every mess-room where the colonel's personality was known. His real name, of course, as the army list will tell you, was Col. Dominick Sydney Power, but this is a trifling detail. He had been nicknamed "Old Pat" at a very early stage of his military career, and "Old Pat" of the Red Hussars was almost as well known throughout the service as Cox's Bank or the cold-meat train to Woking.

Therefore, when the Red Hussars heard that Sir James Macleod had been gazetted from the Blues to their own regiment, conjecture ran very rife among the officers whether Sir John would contrive to hit it off amicably with "Old Pat." It was generally felt that the stranger would probably prove a Scotchman of the deepest dye, with a very large allotment of Scotch pride and patriotism, while, no doubt, after his experience in the Blues, he would be inclined to regard a mere colonel in a Hussar regiment with more compassion than reverence. Under these circumstances, there seemed to be every prospect of some lively scenes when the colonel should deem it fitting to take the Scotch baronet into his confidence on the important subject of national distinctions.

"It will be great fun if he goes for Old Pat, and gives it him hot when he begins his usual rot," said young Fanshawe, with a broad grin, and it was generally agreed among the junior officers of the regiment that it would be great fun indeed.

While his subordinates were coming to this insubordinate decision, Col. Dominick Power was engaged in reading a long letter from an old schoolfellow of his, and a former brother-officer of Sir James Macleod's, to whom he had written in order to make some inquiries with regard to the new importation into the mess-room of the Red Hussars, and the baronet's motives for effecting the exchange.

"A woman is at the bottom of it, as usual," wrote Capt. Fletcher, of the Blues. "Macleod was very hard hit, and she threw him over for no reason that any one can divine. Pure deviltry, that is all. He knew that you were ordered abroad, and he wants to get out of the country without appearing to run away. That's the bait. He is a capital fellow, no damned nonsense about him in any way is a good sportsman, A1 shot, and very popular in the regiment. There is only one point on which I had better caution you. *Don't bet with him.* He is a very devil at bets, and always wins."

"Is he, indeed?" mused Colonel Power ; "and he may be the very devil himself for all he'll get out of me. It's meself that would like to see the colonel of the regiment betting with a mere whipper-snapper of a subaltern."

Sir James Macleod proved to be a tall, fair young man, whose long features and high cheek-bones testified very clearly that the place of his birth lay beyond the Tweed. He was not remarkably good-looking, but he carried himself with such an air of distinction that it seemed wonderful, as young Fanshawe said, that any woman could throw over "such a dasher, and a real, live baronet to boot." His manner, however, was that of a man of the world ; and it is not remarkable, under the circumstances, that he got on at once with the young men who were to be his companions for the future.

"We thought you would be no end of a heavy swell," said young Fanshawe, in a day or two, during which friendship had ripened into familiarity, "but you ain't a bit."