

I cannot tell or guess the reason why, I could wish this marriage were off."

"How full of contradictions is the animal man!" exclaimed O'More. "Here's this fellow, with a handsome patrimony, about to marry a beautiful woman with fifteen thousand pounds; and yet he is not happy—he is discontented. And here am I, the descendant of kings and princes, or whatever the deuce they were, deprived of the last acre of my patrimonial estates, and yet as jolly as a lark, defying dull care to break down my spirits, and defying all the powers of darkness and solitude to crush me. I warrant, now, this lucky dog would actually change places with me."

"That would I, Charley," exclaimed the other with sudden vehemence. "That would I, with all my heart."

"I thought as much. Oh! treason to bright eyes! Oh! treason to as smooth and soft a cheek as lucky mortal ever leant his own against. Oh! treason to lips so sweet, I doubt not, that the bees might ravish honey from them. Shame on you, Edward McManus."

"Sir Charles O'More," replied his friend, with a momentary touch of mock gravity, "is welcome to chaff his old school-fellow, and to enjoy all his privileges of youth and heart-freedom. But, seriously, Charley," he added, with a more troubled look, "I want to consult you on this matter. With all pretended levity, you are the wisest, most sensible, most cautious, most self-contained fellow I know, where the interests of a friend is concerned."

"Yes, having now no interests of my own to look after," put in Sir Charles, with that merry laugh which showed his beautiful teeth. "My father and grandfather sweated away our ancestral estates, which it took, Heaven knows how many Protestant friends to preserve, including your own grandfather, Ned. And now the only thing I can offer to the son of our friend is—advice."

"And, confound it, old boy," replied McManus, "that is all I want. A fellow can raise a thousand or two any moment from old Solomons or Lazarus, in Marlborough Street, or from our clever friend (a thoroughly honest man in his line) who hangs out not far from the statue of King William, on the

Green—I wonder when there was anything green there! They talk of the cannie Scots, Charley; but if you want the model of a thorough-paced scoundrel, or an out-and-out honest, faithful man, commend me to a North of Ireland man. Whatever he goes in for he goes in for vehemently; and let me once secure his friendship, it lasts for life. I am Southern bred myself—all Ireland is, as it were, at my finger's ends—but I love those men of the North—thorough celts, with a touch of the Scandinavian in them, and wherever I meet them, I love to clasp their hand. They are rough diamonds, I grant, but rough and ready. And I would wager my life upon their spirit and manhood at any time."

Sir Charles O'More raised his glass between him and the wax-lights which were burning on the table. I had better explain that both the wax-candles—Frenchmen call them *bougies*—and the wines were brought from Dublin by the thoughtfulness of Mr. Patrick Casey; the mountain mutton was born on the spot, and mountain mutton is the only thing of the kind worth eating till your haunch of venison is "high," or "smells." The whisky, too, was native; but our two young friends did not touch or taste much of it.

"Why, Ned," said the baronet, "I did not think you were hard up. You must have been borrowing money not far from the Bank of Ireland, or you would not talk so enthusiastically of the Northern men."

"Not a sou, Charley. I am in better condition to lend than to borrow. But, coming back to what we were first talking about, that is no love-letter."

He flung the open letter across the table as he spoke. His friend took it up. It contained little more than a dozen lines; and these were devoted to a commission for the purchase of certain yards of Limerick lace, and a dress of tawny, for the manufacture of which, the fair writer said, Dublin was famous.

"Well," said O'More, as he handed the letter back, "it is certainly more realistic than romantic."

"And there's my love match," said McManus with a sigh. "It was arranged by our fathers before we could think for ourselves; and I solemnly