

LORD KILGOBBIN.

By CHARLES LEVER.

Author of "Harry Lorrequer," "Jack Hinton the Guardsman," "Charles O'Malley the Irish Dragoon," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LI.—Continued.

"Read it out!" cried the viceroy, as Walpole coned over the paragraph somewhat slowly to himself.

"I think, my lord, when you have heard a few words of explanation from me, you will see this charge has not the gravity these newspaper people would like to attach to it."

"Can't be explained—nothing could justify—infernal blunder—and must go."

"Pray, my lord, vouchsafe me even five minutes."

"See it all—baldersdash, explain nothing—cardinal more offended than the rest—and here, read." And he pushed a letter toward him, dated Downing street, and marked private. "The idiot you left behind you has been betrayed into writing to the rebels and making conditions with them. To disown him now is not enough."

"Really, my lord, I don't see why I should submit to the dignity of reading more of this."

His excellency crushed the letter in his hand, and puffed very vigorously at his pipe, which was nearly exhausted. "Must go," said he, at last, as a fresh volume of smoke rolled forth.

"That I can believe—that I can understand, my lord. When you tell me you cease to endorse my pledges, I feel I am a bankrupt in your esteem."

"Others smashed in the same insolency—inconceivable blunder—where was Cartwright?—what was Holmes about? No one in Dublin to keep you out of this cursed folly."

"Until your lordships patience will permit me to say a few words, I cannot hope to justify my conduct."

"No justifying—no explaining—no regular smash, and complete disgrace. Must go."

"I am quite ready to go. Your excellency has no need to recall me to the necessity."

"Knew it all—and against my will, too—said so from the first—thing I never liked—nor see my way in. Must go—must go."

"I presume, my lord, I may leave you now. I want a bath and a cup of coffee."

"Answer that!" was the gruff reply, as he tossed across the table a few lines signed: "Bertie Spencer, Private Secretary."

"I am directed to request that Mr. Walpole will enable the Right Honorable Mr. Annihough to give the flattest denial to the inclosed."

"That must be done at once," said the viceroy, as the other ceased to read the note.

"It is impossible, my lord; I cannot deny my own handwriting."

"Annihough will find some road out of it," muttered the other. "You were a fool, and mistook your instructions or the constable was a fool, and required a misdirection; or the Fenian was a fool, which he would have been if he gave the pledge you asked for. Must go all the same."

"But I'm quite ready to go, my lord," rejoined Walpole, angrily. "There is no need to insist so often on that point."

"Who talks—who thinks of you, sir?" cried the other, with an irritated manner. "I speak of myself. It is I must resign—no great sacrifice, perhaps, after all—stupid office, false position—impracticable people. Make them all Papists to-morrow, and ask to be Hindoos. They've got the land, and not content if they can't shoot the landlords!"

"If you think, my lord, that by any personal explanation of mine I could enable the minister to make his answer in the House more plausible—"

"Leave the plausibility to himself, sir," and then he added, half-aloud: "He'll be unintelligible enough without you. There, go and get some breakfast. Come back afterward, and I'll dictate my letter of resignation. Maude has had a letter from Atlee. Shrewd fellow, Atlee—done the thing well."

As Walpole was near the door, his excellency said: "You can have Guatemala, if they have not given it away. It will get you out of Europe, which is the

first thing, and with the yellow fever it may do more."

"I'm profoundly grateful, my lord," said he, bowing low.

"Maude, of course, would not go, so it ends that."

"I am deeply touched by the interest your lordship vouchsafes to my concerns."

"Try and live five years, and you'll have a retiring allowance. The last fellow did, but was eaten by a crocodile out bathing." And with this he resumed his *Times*, and turned away, while Walpole hastened off to his room, in a frame of mind very far from comfortable or reassuring.

CHAPTER LII.

"A CHANCE AGREEMENT."

As Dick Kearney and young O'Shea had never attained any close intimacy, a strange sort of half jealousy, inexplicable as to its cause, served to keep them apart; it was by mere accident that the two young men met one morning after breakfast in the garden, and on Kearney's offer of a cigar, the few words that followed led to a conversation.

"I cannot pretend to give you a choice Havana, like one of Walpole's," said Dick, "but you'll perhaps find it smokable."

"I'm not difficult," said the other; "and as to Mr. Walpole's tobacco, I don't think I ever tasted it."

"And I," rejoined the other, "as seldom as I could—I mean, only when politeness obliged me."

"I thought you liked him?" said Gorman, shortly.

"I? Far from it. I thought him a consummate puppy, when I saw that he looked down on us as inveterate savages."

"He was a favorite with your ladies, I think."

"Certainly not with my sister, and I doubt very much with my cousin. Did you like him?"

"No, not at all; but then he belongs to a class of men I neither understand nor sympathize with. Whatever I know of life is associated with downright hard work. As a soldier, I had my five hours' daily drill and the care of my equipments; as a lieutenant, I had to see that my men kept to their duty; and whenever I chanced to have a little leisure I could not give it up to ennui, or consent to feel bored and wearied."

"And do you mean to say you had to groom your horse and clean your arms when you served in the ranks?"

"Not always. As a cadet, I had a soldier-servant—what we call a 'Bursche'—but there were periods when I was out of funds, and barely able to grope my way to the next quarter-day, and at these times I had but one meal a day, and was obliged to draw my waist-belt pretty tight to make me feel I had eaten enough. A Bursche costs very little, but I could not spare even that little."

"Confoundedly hard, that."

"All my own fault. By a little care and foresight, even without thrift, I had enough to live as well as I ought; but a reckless dash of the old spendthrift blood I came of would master me now and then, and I'd launch out into some extravagance that would leave me penniless for months after."

"I believe I can understand that. One does get horribly bored by the monotony of a well-to-do existence; just as I feel my life here—almost insupportable."

"But you are going into Parliament; you are going to be a great public man."

"That bubble has burst already; don't you know what happened at Birr? They tore down all Millars notices and mine; they smashed our booths, beat our voters out of the town, and placed Donogan—the rebel Donogan—at the head of the poll, and the head-centre is M. P. for King's County."

"And has he a right to sit in the House?"

"There's the question. The matter is discussed every day in the newspapers, and there is as many for as against him. Some aver that the popular will is a sovereign edict that rises above all eventualities; others assert that the sentence which pronounces a man a felon declares him to be dead in law."

"And which side do you incline to?"

"I believe in the latter; he'll not be permitted to take his seat."

"You'll have another chance, then?"

"No; I'll venture no more. Indeed, but for this same man, Donogan, I had never thought of it. He filled my head

with ideas of a great part to be played, and a proud place to be occupied; and that, even without high abilities, a man of a strong will, a fixed resolve, and an honest conscience might, at this time, do great things for Ireland."

"And then betrayed you?"

"No such thing: he no more dreamed of Parliament himself than you do now. He knew he was liable to the law, he was hiding from the police, and well aware that there was a price upon his head."

"But if he was true to you, why did he not refuse this honor? why did he not decline to be elected?"

"They never gave him the choice. Don't you see it is one of the strange signs of the times we are living in that the people fix upon certain men as their natural leaders, and compel them to march in the van, and that it is the force at the back of these leaders that, far more than their talents, makes them formidable in public life?"

"I only follow it in part. I scarcely see what they aim at, and I do not know if they see it more clearly themselves. And now what will you turn to?"

"I wish you could tell me."

"About as blank a future as my own!" muttered Gorman.

"Come, come, you have a career; you are a lieutenant of lancers; in time you will be a captain, and eventually a colonel, and who know but a general at last, with heaven knows how many crosses and medals on your breast?"

"Nothing less likely: the day has gone by when Englishmen were advanced to places of high honor and trust in the Austrian army. There are no more field-marshal-like Nugent than major-generals like O'Connell. I might be made a drill-master and if I lived long enough, and was not superannuated, a major; but there my ambition must cease."

"And you are content with that prospect?"

"Of course I am not. I go back to it with something little short of despair."

"Why go back, then?"

"Tell me what else to do—tell me what other road in life to take—show me even one alternative."

The silence that now succeeded lasted several minutes, each immersed in his own thoughts, and each doubtless convinced how little presumption he had to advise or counsel the other.

"Do you know O'Shea," cried Kearney, "I used to fancy that this Austrian life of yours was a mere caprice—that you took 'a cast,' as we call it in the hunting field, among those fellows, to see what they were like and what sort of an existence was theirs—but that being your aunt's heir, and with a snug estate that must come to you, it was a mere lark, and not to be continued beyond a year or two?"

"Not a bit of it. I never presumed to think I should be my aunt's heir—and now less than ever. Do you know that even the small pension she has allowed me hitherto is now about to be withdrawn, and I shall be left to live on my pay?"

"How much does that mean?"

"A few pounds more or less than you pay for your saddle-horse at livery at Dyers."

"You don't mean that?"

"I do mean it, and even that beggarly pittance is stopped when I am on my leave; so that at this moment my whole worldly wealth is here," and he took from his pocket a handful of loose coin, in which a few gold pieces glittered amidst a mass of discolored and smooth-looking silver.

"On my oath, I believe you are the richer man of the two," cried Kearney; "for except a few half-crowns on my dressing-table, and some coppers, I don't believe I am master of a coin with the queen's image."

"I say, Kearney, what a horrible take in we should prove to a mother with daughters to marry!"

"Not a bit of it. You may impose upon any one else—your tailor, your boot-maker, even your horse-gent that jobs your cabriolet, but you'll never cheat the mamma who has a daughter on sale."

Gorman could not help laughing at the more than ordinary irritability with which these words were spoken, and charged him at last with having uttered a personal experience.

"True, after all!" said Dick, half-indolently. "I used to spoon a pretty girl in Dublin, ride with her when I

could, and dance with her at all the balls; and a certain chum of mine, a Joe Atlee—of whom you may have heard—undertook, simply by a series of artful rumors as to my future prospects—now extolling me as a man of fortune and fine estate, to-morrow exhibiting me as a mere pretender with a mock title and mock income—to determine how I should be treated in this family; and he would say to me: 'Dick, you are going to be asked to dinner on Saturday next; or: 'I say, old fellow, they're going to leave you out of that picnic at Powles Court. You'll find the Clanceys rather cold at your next meeting.'"

"And he would be right in his guess?"

"To the latter! Ay, and I shame to say that the young girl answered the signal as promptly as the mother."

"I hope it cured you of your passion."

"I don't know that it did. When you begin to like a girl, and find that she has regularly installed herself in a corner of your heart, there is scarcely a thing she can do you'll not discover a good reason for, and even when your ingenuity fails, go and pay a visit; there is some artful witchery in that creation you have built up about her—for I heartily believe most of us are merely clothing a sort of lay figure of loveliness with attributes of our fancy—and the end of it is, we are about as wise about our idols as the South Sea savages in the homage to the gods of their own carving."

"I don't think that!" said Gorman, sternly. "I could no more invent the fascination that charms me than I could model a Venus or an Ariadne."

"I see where your mistake lies. You do all this, and never know you do it. Mind, I am only giving you Joe Atlee's theory all this time; for, though I believe in, I never invented it."

"And who is Atlee?"

"A chum of mine—a clever dog enough—who, as he says himself, takes a very low opinion of mankind, and, in consequence, finds this a capital world to live in."

"I should hate the fellow."

"Not if you met him. He can be very companionable, though I never saw any one take less trouble to please. He is popular almost everywhere."

"I know I should hate him."

"My Cousin Nina thought the same, and declared from the mere sight of his photograph that he was false and treacherous, and Heaven knows what else besides, and now she'll not suffer a word in his disparagement. She began exactly as you say you would, by a strong prejudice against him. I remember, the day he came down here, her manner toward him was more than distant, and I told my sister Kate how it offended me, and Kate only smiled and said: 'Have a little patience, Dick.'"

"And you took the advice? You did have a little patience?"

"Yes; and the end is, they are firm friends. I'm not sure they don't correspond."

"Is there love in the case then?"

"That is what I cannot make out. So far as I know either of them, there is no trustfulness in their dispositions; each of them must see into the nature of the other. I have heard Joe Atlee say: 'With that woman for a wife, a man might safely bet on his success in life.' And she herself one day owned: 'If a girl was obliged to marry a man without sixpence, she might take Atlee.'"

"So—I have it; they will be man and wife yet."

"Who knows! have another weed?"

Gorman declined the offered cigar, and again a pause in the conversation followed. At last he suddenly said: "She told me she thought she would marry Walpole."

"She told you that? How did it come about to make you such a confidence?"

(To be continued.)

HAVING SUFFERED over two years with constipation, and the doctors not having helped me, I concluded to try Burdock Blood Bitters, and before I used one bottle I was cured. I can also recommend it for sick headache. ETHEL D. HAINES, Lakeview, Ont.

"Well, I'm not going to run any such risk, my dear." "That's just like you, John. Ever since you got your life insured you've been awfully afraid you'll get killed."

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