

answered Carry, as she moved away.

"What's that?" cried Fitzhenry, coming up.

"Only a rap on the knuckles," I answered, "for my presumption in having asked if a luckless wight might venture to show himself at the house of Mrs. Fitzhenry."

"And Caroline says 'No,'" he rejoined, laughing.

"Caroline intimates as much. It was only asked in jest, Fitzhenry."

"Then I tell you what my boy," he exclaimed, shaking my hands in his usual impetuous pleasant manner, "I'll take upon myself to give you an invitation beforehand, and a cordial one, too. No one shall be made more welcome than you. if you will only find time to come to us—and the sooner the better."

"And your wife—allowing that I took you at your word?"

"I hope and believe that my wife will start few difficulties of this nature when once she is mine."

He did not know Caroline as I did.

"Fitzhenry," I resumed, "you are a favorite with Mrs. Dashingly—and with the priest."

"Have they been saying so?"

"And have, I believe, some influence over them."

"They over me, you mean?"

"I wish you could persuade them to see the monstrosity of this scheme of theirs regarding Lina: Not an argument that I could advance would be even listened to—but with you it is different."

"What scheme?" he inquired.

"The sending her into a convent. Not that the thing ever can, or ever shall, be carried out—the very idea is ridiculous. But if they could be persuaded to settle the matter amicably, it would be much more desirable, especially for Lina, than our being obliged to come to a blowing up about it. Will you exert your influence on her behalf?"

"What, and deprive her of the opening prospect of becoming a Roman Catholic!—of dedicating herself to the Virgin?"

I looked at him, and for the life of me could not tell whether he was in jest or earnest. There was nothing in his tone or countenance to indicate the former.

"No," he continued, after a pause of deliberation, "I will oblige you in any other way that I can, but to remonstrate with Mrs. Dashingly, or with the holy father, about this convent business, is clearly what I have no right to do, and I must decline all interference. You will allow me, however, to express a hope, that whatever steps may be taken with regard to your sister, they may be the means of securing her happiness."

"I had deemed her a favorite of yours, Fitzhenry."

"She is now—as being nearly connected with my future wife."

Did anybody ever happen to be in a house the day before a wedding? If so, they have been in it—that's all. Cutting up wedding-cake; tying and sealing up cards; burning old billet-doux of other suitors, and laughing over their locks of hair; tying on bonnets; twisting up wreaths; making up favors; packing up trunks; writing letters for the morrow's post, announcing the happy event which will then have taken place; cooking dishes for the breakfast, till the house smelt like all the restaurants of the Palais Royal condensed into one; ejaculating notes of admiration at the arrivings presents; overwhelming the servants with a confused mass of directions, who in return are run-

ning into every corner but where they ought; and happy relations publically lamenting and privately rejoicing at their approaching separation from the interesting aide.

Caroline wrote lots of letters, glad enough to be able to do so at last—she had waited for it for years.—her distant friends were numerous—it was believed she had some in every town in the United Kingdom—and all were favoured with an epistle, short and sweet, conveying the glad tidings.

Carry was far from being jealous, that's certain, or she would not have liked the whispered conversation between Fitzhenry and Lina all the time she wrote, or that duet in the other room. It was nothing to me, but, upon my word, the captain's stolen intercourse with Lina looked a deal more like love than his paraded attentions to Caroline. My private opinion was, that he had scented his bride's fluting propensities, and was playing off a bit of revenge. However, the morrow must end it. I'll be shot, too, if he did not kiss her! To be sure, he kissed Caroline at the same time, and said something about her and Lina being only a few hours off cousinship; but I know this, that if Lina had been my lady-love instead of my sister, I should have found my rest disturbed by visions of coffee and pistols.

It was a beautiful day for a wedding. The sun shone, the bells tinkled, and the carriages rattled bringing up the guests. The first arrival was Dr. Cram with his lady, the latter's bird-of-paradise nodding to the wind as she alighted from her chariot, all splendid in a robe that, to uninitiated eyes like mine, was composed of pea-green bugles and gold wire. Sir Popperton Jeffs dashed up with outriders. He bore a splendid case of pearls as a present to the bride, and a similar set for Lina. Mrs. Dr. Cram, who liked to have a finger in everybody's pie, told him it was not etiquette to bestow upon the bridesmaid a like present to the bride's. But Sir Popperton, who was a fiery man, observed that Lina was his niece as well as Caroline, and that etiquette might be—we never knew what, for he choked down the conclusion.

Everybody was in high feather—-aunt herself like the rising sun. A most splendid scarlet dress, quite dazzling to behold, and a white satin bonnet surmounted by a scarlet plume. Captain Fitzhenry looked very handsome and very happy—strange that he had not a chosen bride more worthy of him! Coffee and tea were handed round for those who liked to partake of them, but the breakfast was to come afterwards.

We were to set out for the church at ten, but that hour struck before Caroline made her appearance. Dr. Cram had twice looked at his watch—he was thinking of the collation—and Sir Popperton had demanded whether the ceremony was to be to-day or to-morrow, when a bustle and a rush of white satin and lace proclaimed the bride's presence. Several damsels were in her train, but next to her, as chief bridesmaid, walked my gentle sister. The room fell into a roar of congratulations, and Carry's gratified eye told that they were welcome. I never saw her look so well. Her dress, exclusive of jewels, must have cost what would keep me for six months. Lina was in a quiet, pale sort of silk, that I unfortunately called "stone," upon which Mrs. Dr. Cram indignantly snapped me up, and asserted that it was "poor gray." Her bonnet was the same as Caroline's,

except the orange-blossoms, and she wore no jewels. I heard afterwards that the whole of Caroline's dress had been Lina's present.

Captain Fitzhenry advanced and did homage to his bride, *sotto voce*. She received it with a genuine affection of timidity, and turned away to shelter her blushes behind aunt's fiery petticoats. The captain then spoke to Lina in the same low tone, when she burst into tears, and nearly sobbed herself into hysterics. Thinking she was going into them out and out, I got two bottles of Preston salts ready, and called out for a can of water; but the symptoms went off. I did not care for the hysterics, but I did care for Lina, and felt convinced of her misplaced passion for Fitzhenry.

"Never you mind, dear," said Mrs. Dr. Cram, patting Lina on the shoulder, "it will be your wedding next."

With great parade we sallied down to the equipages. But, elaborately as the procession was planned before hand, the programme, amidst the bustle and excitement, was not strictly carried out. It often is not.

The first mishap was with Fitzhenry's chariot. The coachman had received orders to place but a pair of horses to each carriage for church, and his appeared with four; but it was too late to remedy it now. The second blunder consisted in aunt's being bowed by Dr. Cram into his chariot, instead of Fitzhenry, and off they started. Fitzhenry stepped into his own, and there, behold! some bungler had planted Lina. So they went next. Then followed the bride, Sir Popperton by her side, with Alfred and Mrs. Dr. Cram opposite to her, the bird-of-paradise's tail tipping out at the window to gladden the admiring spectators; and the rest of us followed anyhow, just where we could scramble. There were ten in our coach.

Caroline was placed at the altar. The reverend doctor, in full canonicals, stood facing her, with open book in hand, and we were all waiting on the tiptoe of expectation to hear the first word of the service. But there seemed a strange delay. I was standing quite behind, and could see nothing but the bird-of-paradise and the top of aunt's scarlet plume.

"What's he waiting for?" whispered I to Uncle Popperton, pulling him behind, as I nodded to the place where old Cram ought to be.

"What the deuce, boy!—would you marry her to herself? The captain is not yet come."

"Why, his carriage went second—next to the parson's. Lina was in it. Is she not here?"

"Can't you see she's not?" grumbled Sir Poppington; "it is plain enough."

I dare say it was to him, who was six feet two in stockings; but I counted five feet nothing in boots.

"Nephew," whispered aunt, "go to the door and see. There is some dreadful accident. I fear; he always would drive such spirited horses."

"But he came next to you, aunt—before the rest of us. If there had been any accident, we must have seen it."

"Those fools of postillions of his have driven him to the Catholic chapel, then," answered aunt, in a fever. "Do go and see."

I made my way in haste to the Catholic chapel. Father Ignatius was there, but I could see no trace of Fitzhenry. The Cram footman stepped up to me as I was going back.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said, touching his hat, "but the captain's carriage went this