

face, for Napoleon eyed me more narrowly still, and looked displeas'd at my eagerness.

"You are pleas'd, sir, at leaving the army," he remarked, sternly.

"To go to my native land, sir," I said, in some confusion.

"He deliberated for a moment; then took up a packet of papers before him, and handed it to me, saying:

"You have your instructions there. Go immediately, and do not stain my confidence. That is all."

"I bowed, and, taking the packet, left the tent."

"So far, at all events, Fortune was your most obedient servant," remarked the priest.

"So far,—yes," said O'Dwyer. "But I'm afraid, I must recur to another of your tumblers, Father John, to fortify me for the sequel."

CHAPTER XVII.

ITS MISFORTUNES.

The punch having generously smoothed the way, Gerald O'Dwyer proceeded:

"I lost no time, you may be sure, in resigning my commission in the legion, and hurrying back to Paris, where as I took good care to procure due confirmation of my title to the castle, I readily found a market among the rich adventurers whose trade it was at the time to traffic on the conquests of the army. Haste being all important, I made over my title to a Jewish money-lender for 200,000 francs in ready cash, a sum ridiculously beneath the value of the property, but still ample for all my purposes.

"I had then leisure to consult my instructions, and was agreeably surpris'd to find that they refer'd me to an intimate College friend of mine, who was in Paris at the time as agent of the revolutionary party in Ireland. He inform'd me—what I have no hesitation in informing you—that Ireland was being organized for another attempt at revolution—that the people could no longer endure their abject state of slavery—and that the French Republic would assist them to shake off the English yoke by an invasion upon an enormous scale. I knew well that Napoleon was long looking to Ireland as the weak point in the armour of his arch-enemy, England, and that for some time he had been despatching officer, after officer to report on the practicability of an invasion. A similar mission was to be mine. I was to inquire by personal observation into the disposition of the people and the extent of the revolutionary organization: to supply to the First Consul ac-

curate information as to the nature of the country, and its capabilities of defence and attack; and if I found any tangible organization to place myself with other French officers, at the disposal of the Revolutionary Directory and forward their preparations. You will be surpris'd to hear how little concern I felt at turning rebel to England."

"I am rather surpris'd you felt any," cried Father O'Meara.

"I had long satisfis'd myself that if ever our poor people were to be happy, it cou'd only be by absorption into Britain, which was impossible, or by successful revolt, which, up to that time, seem'd equally chimerical. But it was quite another thing with the enchanted power of Napoleon on their side. He had only to point his finger and Victory obeyed him. Much as I knew of the horrors of an invasion, hardly any conceivable fate seem'd to me so inhuman as that of a whole people wallowing helplessly in the very vilest degradation. In short I embraced my mission ardently, and, from the restoration of Kilsheelan, my hopes widened till they embraced the renovation of a grand old people.

"It was a perilous thing to trust my treasure to the uncertainties of such a voyage, but to leave it behind with society shifting its moorings by the hour, and the prospect of a long war to sever communication between Britain and France, was fully as dangerous. I had it pack'd in the smallest possible space, and with a carelessness calculated to disarm all suspicion of its value, and one fine summer's night, we dropp'd out of a little creek near Bardeur, in an Irish coasting smack, having on board two French officers disguised like myself, the captain and two sailors and my treasure. We succeeded in eluding the English cruisers, but we were hardly in the Channel when the wind and waves seem'd to conspire for our destruction. All that night our little craft was toss'd like a cockle-shell in a furious tempest; we were hurried we knew not whither, every moment expecting to be engulf'd. Morning brought no abatement of the storm. Fortunately none of the English fleet were in sight: but the waves seem'd determin'd to do their work. A day of agony brought a night more dreadful still. The crew lost all control of the vessel, which fled and groan'd like a demon in the midst of the storm. To his dismay, a flash of lightning reveal'd to the captain a low coast-line right ahead. He had hardly hail'd it, when the ship was dash'd furiously on a rock."