

hilate his pultry wrath. Every ancient token of an ancient line seemed to rebuke his littleness,

Mr. Artslade felt humiliated; but his humiliation was one against which his soul mutinied. He could have buried the whole scene in destruction; he would have gloried in tearing down the haughty old castle, stone by stone; he could have uprooted every oak in the park; strangled every proud deer that roamed there. Even the blue Gaites behind, offended him, for were they not old and dignified? Had they not a history which poured the lustre of eventful centuries around Kilsheelan? Were they not all partners in the conspiracy to blast the ambition of his life?

And yet in spite of himself, there was a stamp of greatness upon all these things, even as upon their haughty master, which awed an idolator of greatness such as Artslade was, and made him sigh rather for participation in their grandeur, than triumph in their annihilation. Fain would he embody himself in the picture, rather than efface it.

"If there was any way of conciliating O'Dwyer," he reflected, his passion giving way to imbecile sycophancy. "Would anything induce him to vote for this Union? If so, I would be at once his confidant and his benefactor! He's high beggary—it is in my power to make him a rich man again, and that for one paltry vote. 'A precious end is worthy precious means.' So says the Secretary. It means riches—title—anything. Will he accept? Pshaw! am I mad?" he cried suddenly. "O'Dwyer Garv accept a favor from me? He'd burn in hell's flames first. Be it so; he shall accept, or quit Kilsheelan."

Going to the *escritoire*, Mr. Artslade unlocked it, and from one of the drawers produced a roll of parchment deeds, which he untied and perused glomtingly.

"Poor fool!" he exclaimed. "Little he thinks what an asp he was dealing with when he trod me under foot. Little the Secretary thought what a good quarter he was applying to for information of his debts. 'O'Dwyer Garv is known to be ruinously in debt. If by any means his creditors could be discovered——' Ha, ha! His creditors! Say rather his creditor, for there isn't an acre of land in Kilsheelan that isn't mortgaged in these," and he laid his hand triumphantly on the deeds. Not an acre! "Little notion he has of who his London creditor is. He doesn't mind debts, forsooth!—never thinks of paying them! He never will, but he'll pay the forfeit! By heaven he will!"

And if the fate of Kilsheelan lay in those parchments, woe indeed for its glories!

"Mr. Sackwell sir—called to see you, sir—shall I say your up, sir, sir?" said the valet, popping his head into the room.

"Sackwell—oh! yes. Show him in," said Mr. Artslade, refolding the mortgage-deeds hurriedly and replacing them in the *escritoire*. Then to himself: "If I loathe anybody more than myself it's this smirking hypocrite—he seems to be forever grinning behind my back while he robs my pocket. Never mind, he's an aristocrat, and doesn't spit upon me like the rest. He's come in good time, too; I must sound him on this Union business; of him, at any rate, I'm sure."

Before the door opened, Mr. Artslade found time to restore to his countenance that seeming of slavish complaisance it wore in the world.

"My dear sir, I'm so honored—so delighted," he muttered, with a profusion of bows and awkward wriggles, as he ushered into a seat a blooming old gentleman, whose face was like some intricate piece of smile-making machinery. Eyes and eye-brows, nose, mouth, checks and chin combined to produce one all-embracing smile, a gentle-blooded smile; none of your vulgar guffaws, but a sedate essence of benignancy and good-breeding.

The smiling gentleman was Mr. Sackwell of Monard, who possessed three grand classes of earthly property—the smile aforesaid, a numerous family, and an empty exchequer—to harmonise which was the business of his life. In purple youth he had been a patriot and a spendthrift—shouted with Grattan, vowed with the Volunteers, roystered right royally at Monard—but Mrs. Sackwell, and a succession of baby Sackwells, with all their expensive appurtenances, had changed all that, and had set to him the serious puzzle how to reconcile rank with broken fortune. He was neither a good man nor a bad man, had neither principles nor antipathies, save only as far as they affected this one grand problem; but, whatever complexion his thoughts had, his face beamed with a sempiternal proclamation of "pence on earth to men of good will."

Mr. Sackwell shook hands very daintily with his host, and ensconced himself with dignity in an arm-chair.

"Very warm, isn't it?" was his first remark, "I declare I'm quite exhausted with the walk."

"Certainly!" exclaimed Mr. Artslade. "You must be exhausted. Will you try brandy?"

"Oh!—dear no!" said Mr. Sackwell, rather