

"Did I hear you say anything about Miss Artslade?"

"Oh! yes, she was over this morning to see me—she is very kind and good."

"They have returned from London, then?"

"Dear! you don't forget I told you yesterday of their coming?"

"Ah! true, my memory is bad, very bad—unless in some things, Rose—some things I can remember all my life! Rose, I want you to like Sir Albin Artslade."

"Like him!"

"My child, I want you to try and love him—love him as you love your father," the old man said, solemnly.

She was about to seek some explanation of this strange request, when a footstep in the passage called her thither.

It was the tall, wretched looking woman we have seen in the circle round the forge fire. She came to beg "jist the laste sign in life o' new milk," to make whey for her little boy, Dinny, whose skull had been opened the day before as one of the pastimes of the enthusiastic gentlemen from Clonmel.

"Poor boy," said Rose, gently, "what did he do to provoke them?"

"Wisha, I dunno, asthore, unless it might be he was hungry, an' in no humour to shout for thim that left him an empty stummach. The dirty spawn o' H—, may the curse—"

"Hush, hush, do not curse. We all have our trials and ought to bear them patiently."

"I axe God's pardon an' your's Miss, but 'twould take the angels out o' Heaven to bear wid'em, the murderin'—"

"There, now, say no more. Is the boy very ill?"

"Alanna, he's dyin' o' the drooth intirely, an' I wid no more than a dhrink o' cowlid wather to fetch him. Wirristhree, I'm indhred its a faver he's in for, God help him!"

"Stay a moment and I'll go down with you to see him."

And in a few moments, Rose Marton was hurrying along to the village, with a little basket of delicacies under her cloak so absorbed in Dinny Doyle's troubles that she quite forgot her own.

Old Richard struggled to the door and watched her till she disappeared behind the trees. Then he said:

"If ever there was an angel on earth that's she. Ay there was one more—her mother."

And hobbling back to the old arm-chair, he stirred the fire, and fell a-thinking again.

CHAPTER XXI.

MR. LANGTON'S LITTLE PARADISE.

Lest the world should have any dark misgivings as to the fate of Mr. Langton, the valet, whom we last saw alive (and kicking) in a plebeian dung pit one summer evening long ago—lest a dire whisper should go round that he never rose from this untimely grave, unless to go to Heaven—and lest a calamity so dreadful should convulse the universe, we hasten to assure whom it may concern that head-ache and some dirty linen, and some enlightened ideas about Ireland and the Irish were the worst results of that unhappy adventure.

In witness whereof, we only pray a visit of a mellow harvest evening to the kitchen of Ashenfield Manor-House, where that distinguished personage is discovered discussing with the cook and housemaid a skeleton turnkey and a ham that has seen better days, with a little delicacy in a brown jug which is *not* spring water.

"Happiness" was not painted in large capitals on Mr. Langton's forehead, but what dullard need be flogged into reading it, plain as print, in the expression of sublime philanthropy (the Irish always excepted) which suffused his face, in the flowers of Christian content which blossomed over his nose, and in a placid expanse of flesh which heaved beneath his waistcoat? The cook, who relished a drumstick and did not disdain beer, setmed immeasurably vulgar in his neighbourhood, and the housemaid, who was sentimental, gazed on him with a respectful rapture which seemed to say, "Isn't he a duck?" There was dignity, repose—everything that could satisfy his gentle ambition (for ambitions spare not even minds like his) that, if society were arranged with any eye to the proprieties, he knew who would be master of Ashenfield and who would be valet. Nor did these high thoughts ruin his appetite, which absorbed turkey and ham with appropriate washings—down to an extent that convinced the housemaid, after all, that human lions, like their brothers of the menageries, have their feeding-hours.

These happy externals were only the reflections of Mr. Langton's good fortune for the last few years. His star was in the ascendant every where. His Irish enemies were degraded; his master exalted to his heart's content. Then there were the London seasons, which now restored him regularly to Cockaigne—the glittering society of the squares—the "Sundays out" at Camden Town—the gorgeous scarlet and