

LORD KILGOBBIN.

BY CHARLES LEVER.

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

CHAPTER XXVII—Continued.

"Wrong in every one of your propositions—wholly wrong," cried the other. "The party that will send you in won't want to be bribed, and they'll be proud of a man who doesn't overtop them with his money. You don't need the big families, for you'll beat them. Your religion is the right one, for it will give you the priests; and your politics shall be repeal, and it will give you the peasants; and as to not knowing what to do when you're elected, are you so mighty well off in life that you've nothing to wish for?"

"I can scarcely say that," said Dick, smiling.

"Give me a few minutes' attention," said Donagan, "and I think I'll show you that I've thought this matter out and out; indeed, before I sat down to write to you I went into all the details."

And now, with a clearness and a fairness that astonished Kearney, this strange looking fellow proceeded to prove how he had weighed the whole difficulty, and saw how, in the nice balance of the two great parties who would contest the seat, the Repealer would step in and steal votes from both.

He showed not only that he knew every barony of the county, and every estate and property, but that he had a clear insight into the different localities where discontent prevailed, and places where there was something more than discontent.

"It is down there," said he, significantly, "that I can be useful. The man that has had his foot in the dock, and only escaped having his head in the noose, is never discredited in Ireland. Talk parliament and parliamentary tactics to the small shop-keepers in Moate, and leave me to talk treason to the people in the bog."

"But I mistake you and your friends greatly," said Kearney, "if these were the tactics you always followed; I thought that you were the physical force party, who sneered at constitutionalism, and only believed in the pike."

"So we did, so long as we saw O'Connell and the lawyers working the game of that grievance for their own advantage, and teaching the English government how to rule Ireland by a system of concession to them and to their friends. Now, however, we begin to perceive that to assault the heavy bastion of Saxon intolerance, we must have spies in the enemy's fortresses, and for this we send in so many members to the Whig party. There are scores of men who will aid us by their vote who would not risk a bone in our cause. There is a sort of subacute patriotism; but it has its use. It smashes an Established Church, breaks down Protestant ascendancy, destroys the prestige of landed property, and will in time abrogate entail and primogeniture, and many another fine thing; and in this way it clears the ground for our operations, just as soldiers fell trees and level houses lest they interfere with the range of heavy artillery."

"So that the place you would assign me is that very honorable one you have just called a 'spy in the camp'?"

"By a figure I said that, Mr. Kearney; but you know well enough what I meant was, that there's many a man will help us on the Treasury benches, that would not turn out on Tallaght; and we want both. I won't say," added he, after a pause, "I'd not rather see you a leader in our ranks than a Parliament man. I was bred a doctor, Mr. Kearney, and I must take an illustration from my own art. To make a man susceptible of certain remedies, you are often obliged to reduce his strength and weaken his constitution. So it is here. To bring Ireland into a condition to be bettered by Repeal you must crush the Church and smash the bitter Protestants. The Whigs will do these for us, but we must help them. Do you understand me now?"

"I believe I do. In the case you speak of, then the government will support my election."

"Against a Tory, yes; but not against a pure Whig—a thorough-going supporter, who would bargain for nothing for his country, only something for his own relations."

"If your project has an immense fasci-

nation for me at one moment, and excites my ambition beyond all bounds, the moment I turn my mind to the cost, and remember my own poverty, I see nothing but hopelessness."

"That's not my view of it, nor, when you listen to me patiently, will it, I believe, be yours. Can we have another talk over this in the evening?"

"To be sure; we'll dine together at six."

"Oh, never mind me; think of yourself, Mr. Kearney, and your own engagements. As to the matter of dining, a crust of bread and a couple of apples are fully as much as I want or care for."

"We'll dine together to-day at six," said Dick, "and bear in mind I am more interested in this than you are."

CHAPTER XXVII.

A CRAFTY COUNSELLOR.

As they were about to sit down to dinner on that day a telegram, redirected from Kilgobbin, reached Kearney's hand. It bore the date of that morning, from Plumnuddin Castle, and was signed "Atlee." Its contents were these: "H. E. wants to mark the Kilgobbin defense with some sign of approval. What shall it be? Reply by wire."

"Read that, and tell us what you think of it."

"Joe Atlee at the viceroy's castle in Wales!" cried the other. "We are going up the ladder hand over head, Mr. Kearney! A week ago his ambition was bounded on the south by Ship street, and on the east by the Lower Castle Yard."

"How do you understand the dispatch?" asked Kearney, quickly.

"Easily enough. His excellency wants to know what you'll have for shooting down three—I think they were three—Irishmen."

"The fellows came to demand arms and with loaded guns in their hands."

"And if they did? Is not the first right of a man the weapon that defends him? He that cannot use it or does not possess it is a slave. By what prerogative has Kilgobbin Castle within its walls what can take the life of any, the meanest, tenant on the estate?"

"I am not going to discuss this with you; I think I have heard most of it before, and was no impressed when I did so. What I asked was, what sort of a recognition one might safely ask for and reasonably expect?"

"That's not long to look for. Let them support you in the county. Telegraph back. I'm going to stand, and if I get in, will be a Whig, whenever I'm not a Nationalist. Will the party stand by me?"

"Scarcely, with that programme."

"And do you think that the priests' nominees, who are three-fourths of the Irish members, offer better terms? Do you imagine that the men that crowd the Whig lobby have not reserved their freedom of action about the Pope, and the Fenian prisoners, and the Orange processionists? If they were not free so far, I'd ask you, with the old duke, how is her majesty's government to be carried on?"

Kearney shook his head in dissent.

"And that's not all," continued the other; "but you must write to the papers a flat contradiction of that shooting story. You must either declare that it never occurred at all, or was done by that young scamp from the Castle, who happily got as much as he gave."

"That I could not do," said Kearney, firmly.

"And it is that precisely that you must do," rejoined the other. "If you go into the House to represent the popular feeling of Irishmen, the hand that signs the roll must not be stained with Irish blood."

"You forgot; I was not within fifty miles of the place."

"An another reason to disavow it. Look here, Mr. Kearney; if a man in a battle was to say to himself, I'll never give any but a fair blow, he'd make a mighty bad soldier. Now public life is a battle, and worse than a battle in all that touches treachery and falsehood. If you mean to do any good in the world, to yourself and your country, take my word for it, you'll have to do plenty of things that you don't like, and, what's worse, can't defend."

"The soup is getting cold all this time. Shall we sit down?"

"No, not till we answer the telegram. Sit down and say what I told you."

"Atlee will say I'm mad. He knows I have not a shilling in the world."

"Riches is not the badge of the representation," said the other.

"They can, at least, pay the cost of the election."

"Well, we'll pay ours too—not all at once, but later on; don't fret yourself about that."

"They'll refuse me flatly."

"No, we have a lien on the fine gentleman with the broken arm. What would the Tores give for that story, told as I could tell it to them? At all events, whatever you do in life, remember this—that if asked your price for anything you have done, name the highest, and take nothing if it's refused you. It's a waiting race, but I never knew it fail in the end."

Kearney dispatched his message, and sat down to the table, far too much flurried and excited to care for his dinner. Not so his guest, who ate voraciously, seldom raising his head, and never uttering a word. "Here's to the new member for King's County," said he, at last, and he drained off his glass; "and I don't know a pleasanter way of wishing a man prosperity than in a bumper. Has your father any politics, Mr. Kearney?"

"He thinks he's a Whig, but, except hating the Established Church, and having a print of Lord Russell over the fire-place, I don't know he has other reason for the opinion."

"All right; there's nothing finer for a young man entering public life than to be able to sneer at his father for a noodle. That's the practical way to show contempt for the wisdom of our ancestors. There's no appeal the public respond to with the same certainty as that of the man who quarrels with his relations for the sake of his principles; and whether it be a change in your politics or your religion, they're sure to uphold you."

"If differing with my father will insure success, I can afford to be confident," said Dick, smiling.

"Your sister has her notions about Ireland, hasn't she?"

"Yes, I believe she has; but she fancies that laws and acts of Parliament are not the thing in fault, but ourselves and our modes of dealing with the people, that were not often just, and were always capricious. I am not sure how she works out her problem, but I believe we ought to educate each other; and that, in turn for teaching the people to read and write, there are scores of things to be learned from them."

"And the Greek girl?"

"The Greek Girl"—began Dick, haughtily, and with a manner that betokened rebuke, but which suddenly changed as he saw that nothing in the other's manner gave any indication of intended freedom or insolence—"the Greek is my first cousin, Mr. Donagan," said he, calmly; "but I am anxious to know how you have heard of her, or indeed, of any of us."

"From Joe—Joe Atlee. I believe we have talked you over—every one of you—till I know you all as well as if I lived in the castle and called you by your Christian names. Do you know, Mr. Kearney—and his voice trembled now as he spoke—"that to a lone and desolate man like myself, who has no home, and scarcely a country, there is something indescribably touching in the mere picture of the fireside, and the family gathered round it, talking over little homely cares, and canvassing the changes of each day's fortune. I could sit here half the night and listen to Atlee telling how you lived, and the sort of things that interested you."

"So that you'd actually like to look at us?"

Donagan's eyes grew glassy, and his lips trembled, but he could not utter a word.

"So you shall, then," cried Dick, resolutely. "We'll start to-morrow by the early train. You'll not object to a ten miles' walk, and we'll arrive for dinner."

"Do you know who it is you are inviting to your father's house? Do you know that I am an escaped convict, with a price on my head this minute? Do you know the penalty of giving me shelter, or even what the law calls comfort?"

"I know this, that in the heart of the Bog of Allen you'll be far safer than in the city of Dublin; that none shall ever learn who you are, nor, if they did, is there one—the poorest in the place—would betray you?"

"It is of you, sir, I am thinking, not of me," said Donagan, calmly.

"Don't fret yourself about us. We are well known in our county, and

above suspicion. Whenever you yourself should feel that your presence was like to be a danger, I am quite willing to believe you'd take yourself off."

"You judge me rightly, sir, and I'm proud to see it; but how are you to present me to your friends?"

"As a college acquaintance—a friend of Atlee's and of mine—a gentleman who occupied the room next me. I can surely say that with truth."

"And dined with you every day since you knew him. Why not add that?"

He laughed merrily over this conceit, and at last Donagan said, "I've a little kit of clothes—something decanter than these—up in Thomas street, No. 18, Mr. Kearney; the old house Lord Edward was shot in, and the safest place in Dublin now, because it is so notorious. I'll step up for them this evening, and I'll be ready to start when you like."

"Here's good fortune to us, whatever we do next," said Kearney, filling both their glasses; and they touched the brims together and clinked them before they drained them.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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