

REDMOND O'DONNELL

OR LE CHASSEUR D'AFRIQUE. PART II.

CHAPTER X.—CONTINUED.

They rarely found much to say to one another when papa was present; they had got past the talking stage, and one word or two or three looked like the business now. There was music, and silence, and bliss; and at ten o'clock it was all over, and time for him to go.

The last night! She gave him her hand shyly and wistfully at parting, and went up to her room. The earl gave him a friendly clasp.

"To-morrow," he said, with a smile, "until to-morrow, Redmond, my lad, good-night." The November wind was howling wildly through the moon-light splendor; he saw nothing, thought of nothing now but Lady Cecil Olive. What a night that was—what a long to-ing and fro-ing, of hope, of fear, of longing. He did not despair—he was young and sanguine, and he had the best of it. He knew she loved him; had not looks, smiles, and blushes, a thousand and one things upon her face never told, assured him of it? And to think of an angelic being like that was the dream of wealth, that it should stand between two devoted hearts? Thirty thousand a year—the Cornishman had that—how he hated that Cornishman! Well, thirty thousand per annum is a good round sum, but there was wealth in the world for the seeking, and the labors of Hercules were as nothing compared to what he was ready to undergo for her sake.

An O'Donnell had made his mark in Spain—McMahon in France—a Wellington in England—all Irishmen good and true; what they had done he would do. Yes, the Cornishman and his fortune might go *ex diabolo*; she would be true to her love and to him; she would trust him and wait.

Next morning, lest he should be tempted to break his promise, and his feet, in spite of him, take him to the cottage, he mounted Kathleen and went aloping over the hills and far away with the first peep of sunrise. The afternoon was far advanced when he returned; the last slanting rays of the autumn sunset were streaming ruby and orange over the smiling moors as he knocked at the cottage-door.

It was opened by grave, gentlemanly Mr. Gregory. Mr. Gregory in hat and greatcoat, and everywhere litter, and dust and confusion. Carpets taken up, pictures taken down, packing cases every where—an exodus evidently.

He turned pale with sudden terror. What did it mean? Where was she? His heart was throbbing so fast, it seemed to stop his very breath.

"Where is Lord Ruyland?" He turned almost savagely upon her. Gregory, with pale face and excited eyes, but all the well-known from Derry to Cinnabright were not going to meet the equanimity of a well-trained English valet.

"One, Mr. Redmond, sir—a sudden summons. I believe it was. His lordship left about nine o'clock this morning, sir—Lady Cecil has, which there is a note for you, Mr. Redmond, sir, which is a doubt explains. Wait one moment, if you please, and I'll fetch it."

He never spoke a word. He leaned against the door-post, feeling sick and giddy, all things seeming in a mist. Mr. Gregory returned, the note in his hand, a look of mingled amusement and pity struggling with the national and professional gravity of a Briton and a valet. Did he expect the truth? Most likely—servants know everything. He placed it in his hand; the young man went forward a pace or two, and the white door shut very quietly and decidedly behind him. He tore it open; it contained an enclosure. The earl had very little to say—half a dozen lines held Redmond O'Donnell's sentence of doom.

"My Dear Boy—I spoke to Cecil after you left. It is as I feared—you have deserted your life. Her promise, however, she has no wish or intention to break it. And she had no idea of the state of your feelings. She joins with me in thinking it best for all parties should go on one—another meeting, but she has no intention of doing so. With real regret, and best wishes for your future, I am, my dear boy, sincerely yours, "RUYLAND."

The enclosed was in the slim, Italian tracery of Lady Cecil—strangely cold and heartless words.

"My Aunt—I am inexpressibly distressed. My promise is given, and must be kept. It is best that I should go. Farewell! My eternal gratitude and friendship to you, "CECIL."

Only that—so cold, so hollow, so heartless, so false! The golden sunshine, the green lime-trees, the violet hedges turned black for an instant before his eyes. Then he completed the letters in his hand and walked away.

Mr. Gregory was watching from the window. Mr. Gregory saw him stagger like a drunken man as he walked, and some twenty yards from the cottage flung himself downward on the waving heath, and there he lay a stone. Mr. Gregory's masculine sympathies were touched.

"Poor young chap," he soliloquized. "Master's been and given him the slip. He's fell in love with her ladyship, and this 'ere's the upshot. Saves him right of course—poor as a church mouse—still he's a nice young fellow, and I quite pity him. I remember 'ow I felt myself when 'Arriet Leachur long ago jilted me."

"He lay there for hours. The sun had set, the night, with its stars and winds, had come, when he lifted his head off his arm, and Mr. Gregory and the packing cases were miles away. His haggard eyes fell on the notes he still held, and with a fierce imprecation he tore them into atoms and scattered them far and wide.

"And so shall I fear her—laid, heartless, mocking jilt—out of my life. Oh, God! to think that every smile, every word, every look was mockery and deceit—that she was fooling me from the first, and laughing at my presumptuous folly, while I thought her an angel. And here while I live I'll never trust man or woman again!"

Are we not all unconsciously theatrical in the supreme hours of our lives. He was not, although there was a heart throb in every word. And with them the boy's heart went out from Redmond O'Donnell, and never came back again.

CHAPTER XI.

LADY CEIL then was heartless—you say a flirt, a deceitful flirt, from first to last—being with innocent eyes and soft, child-like smile, even at sixteen, only to fling her victim away the moment her conquest was made. Wait.

been half so happy before in all her life, and that Ireland was fairer and lovelier than the "Islands of the Blessed" themselves.

"Good-night, papa," she said, taking her candle and turning to go.

"Oh—wait a moment, Queenie, will you?" her father said, somewhat hurriedly; "I want you to do a little copying for me before you go to bed."

"Copying?" She sat down her candle and looked at him in wonder. He did not choose to meet those large, surprised brown eyes. "Yes, my dear. Don't look alarmed; only a line or two. Here it is. Copy it off, word for word, as I dictate."

"Write 'Mon Ami!'" She wrote it. "I am inexpressibly distressed. Papa has told me all. What he has said to you is true. My promise is given and must be kept. It is best that I should go." Here Lady Cecil came to a sudden, alarmed stop, and looked up with a greatly disturbed face. "Go, papa," she said; "what does all this mean?"

"Be kind enough to write on, and never mind asking questions," her father retorted, impatiently; "best that I should go." You have that? "Go on then. Farewell! My eternal gratitude and friendship are yours. Now sign it, Cecil! That will do. Thanks, my dear. What a very pretty hand you write, by the way."

"Papa," his daughter began, still with that disturbed face, whom is this written for? "What does it mean? I don't understand."

"Don't you? Please don't ask too many questions—curiosity has ever been the bane of your sex. Remember Eve and Lot's wife, and be warned. Perhaps I want your autograph. Apropos of nothing," he was very busily folding the note now. "Therese will wake you early to-morrow morning. We start immediately after breakfast for Ennis-killen."

"Ennis-killen!" She said it with a sort of gasp. "Papa, are we going away?" He laid down the letter, and looked her full, keenly, steadily in the face. Her eyes shifted and fell under that pitiless scrutiny.

"And if we are, Queenie—what then? If I had said we were going to the antipodes you would hardly look more agast. Your attachment to—ah, Torryglen, of course—must be very strong, my dear, since the thought of leaving it affects you thus."

She shrank away from his sneer as though he had struck her. Her sensitive lips quivered, her face flushed. Again she took her candle and turned to go.

"Good-night, papa." Her voice sounded husky, and the earl watched the slight, fragile figure ascending the stairs, with compressed lips and knitted brows.

"Not one second too soon," he thought. "Another week and the mischief would have been irrevocably done. Given a lovely country house, and two moderately well-looking people, thrown constantly into proximity, a love affair invariably follows. My young friend O'Donnell, I thank you for speaking in the nick of time. You have a pride that burns in proportion to your purse or prospects, and I think those two points little notes will effectually wind up your business."

Lady Cecil slept very little that night—she had seized her. Going away! Did he know? Would she see him to say good-by before she left? Would they ever meet again? And that note—what did that cold, formal note mean? Whom was it for? Her cheeks were quite white, her eyes heavy, her steps slow, her tones languid, when she descended to breakfast. She was already in her riding-bout and the horses were saddled and waiting. During breakfast her eyes kept turning to the door and windows—up the valley road leading to the O'Donnell's ruined keep. Would he come? The earl saw and smiled grimly to himself.

"No, my dear," he said, inwardly. "You strain your pretty brown eyes for nothing—he will not come. A handsome lad and a brave, but you have looked your last upon him."

They rose from breakfast—the hour of departure had come. Then out of her despairation Lady Cecil gathered courage and spoke with a great gulp:

"Papa—does Mr. O'Donnell know we—?" She stopped, unable to finish the sentence.

"Mr. O'Donnell," with bland urbanity, "well, I'm not quite positive whether I mentioned to him yesterday our departure or not. I shall send a note, however, of thanks and a farewell. Of course it wasn't necessary to tell him, my dear—a very nice fellow indeed, in his sphere, and much superior to the rest of the peasantry—a little presumptuous, though, I fancy of late. Come, Cecil, the horses wait, and time is on the wing."

What could she say?—what could she do? There was passionate rebellion at her heart—pain, love, regret, remorse. Oh, what would he think? How basely ungrateful she would appear in his eyes. How unkind—how cruel of papa, not to have spoken last night before he left, and let them say good-by, at least. She could hardly see the familiar landscape for the passionate tears that filled her eyes. Here was the river—only a placid stream now, where he had so heroically risked his life to save hers, under the steep, black cliff up which he had scrambled at the risk of his neck, to gather a cluster of holly she had longed for. There were the grim, rugged, lonely towers and buttresses of the once grand old Irish castle, there the spot where she had sat by his side hundreds of times sketching the ruins. And now they were parting without one word of farewell—putting forever!

They rode on; the tower was reached. All the way she had scarcely spoken one word—all the way she had been watching, watching vainly for him. They dined at Ballynagart, and started in the afternoon for Ennis-killen. They made no stay—only that one night; in two days they were in London.

They remained a week in the metropolis, at the residence of a friend. The earl returning home to dinner one evening, sought out his daughter, with an interesting item of news. In Regent Street that day he had come suddenly upon whom did she think?—their young Irish friend, Redmond O'Donnell.

She had been sitting at the window looking out at the twilight street. At the sound of that name she turned suddenly. How was and this she had grown in a week—how dull the bright brown eyes. Now a sudden light leaped into them—a soft, hot flush of joy swept over her face.

great spirits, and quite wild to be off. But he might have found time to call, though, all the same, I think, or even send you a message. It's out of sight, out of mind, with these bare-brained sort of people, though, always. Go the diakens to do any one a service, and forget them for good the instant they are out of sight."

Dead silence answered him. He tried to see his daughter's face, but it was averted, and the gathering twilight hid it. He need not have feared. She had all an English girl's "pluck." Her eyes were flashing now, one little hand clenched hard, her teeth set. She had liked him so much—so much, she had not known one happy hour since they had left Ulster, for thinking of him; and now he was in London, and refused to come to see her—talked to her father, and would not even send his remembrances—on the eve of departure forever, it might be, and could find no time to call and say good-by. She had thought of him by day and dreamed of him by night, and he returned it—like this!

"I'll never think of him again—never!" she said, under her breath. "I am glad, glad he does not dream how much I like him!"—a great sob here, "I'll never think of him again, if I can."

If she could! One thing is certain, she never uttered his name from that hour, and slowly the sparkle came back to her eyes, the joyous ring to her laugh, and La Reine Blanche was her own bright, glad smile once more. "Love's young dream" had come and gone, had been born, and died a natural death, and was decently buried out of sight. But this also is certain—no second dream ever came to replace it. Good man and true bowed down and fell before Lord Ruyland's handsome, dark-eyed daughter; names, titles, hearts, fortunes, and coronets, were laid at her feet, to be rejected. The world could not understand. What did she mean? What did she expect? She felt a sort of weary wonder, herself. Why could she not return any of this love so truly lavished upon her? Men had asked her to be their wife whose affection and name would have done honor to any woman, but she rejected them all. Many of them touched her pity and her pride—not one her heart. Her father looked on patiently, quite resigned. None of these admirers were richer than his favorite, Sir Arthur Trengenna. Sir Arthur Trengenna, when the time came she should marry.

In all these years of conquest, and triumph, and pleasure she had heard nothing of or from her Irish hero. Long before, perhaps, his grave might have been made out yonder under the burning Arab sky; dead or alive, at least he was lost forever to her. She could even smile now as she looked back upon that pretty, poetic, foolish idyl of her first youth—smile to think what a high he had been in her eyes—how willingly she would have given "all for love, and thought the world well lost"—smile to think what simpatons love-sick girls of sixteen are.

And now six years were past, and he stood before her. Stood before her changed greatly, and yet the same. It was a superbly soldierly figure—tall, stalwart, erect, strong but not stout—mucular, yet graceful. The fresh, beardless face of the boy she remembered she saw no longer; the face of the man was darkly bronzed by the burning Algerian sun; a most becoming, most desirable burn beard and mustache altered the whole expression of the lower part. It had a stern something of a tired look, the lips a cynical curve, the blue eyes a keen, hard light, very different from their old honest simplicity and frankness. No; this bronzed bearded, Algerian chasseur was not the Redmond O'Donnell she had known and liked so well, any more than she was the blushing, tender heart of six years ago.

She stood for an instant looking at him. The surprise of seeing him here, as suddenly as though he had risen up out of the earth, almost took her breath away. But for the Lady Cecil Olive to lose self-possession long was not possible. A second later, and she held out her hand to him with a smile and glanced as bright, as frank, as pleasant as any that had ever been given him by the Lady Cecil of Torryglen.

"It is—it is, Captain O'Donnell. And after all these years! And so changed by time, and whiskers, and Algerian campaigning, that I may well be pardoned for doubting his identity."

He bowed with a smile over the little hand a brief instant, then resigned it.

"Changed, no doubt—and not for the better; grown old, and gray, and grim. And you, too, have changed, Lady Cecil—it might seem like flattery if I told you how greatly. And yet I think I should have known you anywhere."

Queenie has grown tall and doesn't blush quite as often as she used at Torryglen," her father interposed. "You have had many hair-breadth escapes by flood and field since we saw you last, but I don't think you ever had a narrower one than that evening when we saw you flatter the idoncy."

Captain O'Donnell laughed—the old, pleasant, mellow laugh of long ago—and showed very white teeth behind his big trooper's mustache.

"Yes, the risk was imminent yesterday; my nerves had hardly yet recovered the shock of that—tempting in a teapot. I am glad to find the lady I rescued so heroically from that twopenny-halfpenny squall is none the worse for her wetting."

"Here she comes to answer for herself," returned the earl, as his niece came smiling up on the arm of Major Frankland. "Major Frankland, behold the preserver of your life from the hurricane yesterday. Lady Dangerfield has already thanked him. Major Frankland, my friend Captain O'Donnell."

Major Frankland bowed, but he also frowned and pulled his whisker. Why need the fellow be so confidently good-looking, and why need women make such a howling over a trifle? He hadn't even risked a wet jacket for Lady Dangerfield—he had risked nothing in fact; and here she was for the second time pouring forth her gratitude with an effusion and volubility sickening to hear. Captain O'Donnell bore it all like the hero he was, and stood with his "blushing honors thick upon him," perfectly easy, perfectly self-possessed.

"So you were the knight to the rescue, Captain O'Donnell?" Lady Cecil said, with a laugh that had a shadow of her father's sarcasm in it. "I might have known it if I had known you were in the neighborhood at all. You have an amiable mania for saving people's lives. First person singular, he saves my life, second person singular he saves his life—meaning Sir Arthur over yonder. Really, if the tournament and tilting days were not over you might ride forth a veritable knight-errant with visor closed, and corselet clasped, and lance in rest, to the rescue of fair maidens and noble dames in danger. But all this while, papa, you do not tell me what good fortune has sent Captain O'Donnell to Sussex, of all places in the world?"

"And why not to Sussex, Lady Cecil? One could hardly select a finer county to ruralize in. However, the chance on this occasion was not mine, but my sister's. She

wished to come—why, Heaven knows—I never presume to ask the reason of a lady's whim. She wished to come to Sussex, to Castletford, and—bore we are."

"Your sister?" Lady Cecil said, interested.

"Yes, Mr. Wyatt told me in town she was with you; in ill-health, too, I am almost afraid he said."

"In very ill-health," the chasseur answered, gravely; "and I set her anxiety to visit this place down to no blag but an 'avard's meaning'less whim. My great hope, is that its gratification may do her good."

"Your sister here, and sick, Captain O'Donnell?" Lady Dangerfield cut in, "and me not know it? Abominable! Where are you staying?"

"In very pleasant quarters," with a smile at her *buquerie*; "at the Silver Rose."

"Very pleasant for an Algerian soldier, perhaps—not so pleasant for an invalid lady. Your sister comes here, Captain O'Donnell—oh, I insist upon it—and shall make Scarswood her home, during her stay. You too—Sir Peter and I, will be most happy; indeed we shall take no excuse."

But Captain O'Donnell only listened and smiled at inextinguishable smile of his.

"Thanks very much; you are most kind; but of course, it is quite impossible."

"No one ever says impossible to me, sir," cried his lady, imperially. "Miss O'Donnell—is she Miss O'Donnell, by the bye? She is. Very well, then, Lady Cecil and I will call upon Miss O'Donnell to-morrow at the Silver Rose, and fetch her back with us here—that's decided."

"Gad my dear," interrupted Lord Ruyland, "if you can prevail upon O'Donnell to say yes when O'Donnell has made up his mind to say no, I even give you a greater diploma than I ever gave you credit for. 'Pon my life you should have seen and heard the trouble I had to induce him to honor Scarswood with his presence even for a few moments to-night. Said it wasn't worth while, you know—intended to leave in a week or so—didn't want to put in an appearance at all, by George, even to see you again, Queenie, one of his oldest friends."

It is characteristic of Captain O'Donnell to treat his friends with profound disregard. Not over flattering to us, is it, Geneva? By the way, though, I should have thought you would have liked to see Sir Arthur Trengenna again, at least. He certainly would have put himself to considerable inconvenience for the pleasure of meeting you."

"What!" O'Donnell said, his eyes lighting with real pleasure. "Trengenna here! You are right, Lady Cecil, I shall be glad to meet him again—the best fellow!—Ah! I see him—very pleasantly occupied he appears to be, too."

"Mirthing with the governess," put in the earl, stroking his iron-grey mustache. "Miss Hernecastle must have something to say for herself, then, after all; she has succeeded in amusing Trengenna longer and better than I ever saw him before since he came here. How is it she comes to be among us to-night, Geneva? Her first appearance, is it not?—and very unlike your usual tactics."

"Queenie would have it," Lady Dangerfield answered, with a shrug; "she persists in making the governess one of her family."

"Oh Queenie would have it, would she?" the earl retorted, thoughtfully looking at the earl's daughter. "Very considerate of Queenie, and she likes to have the governess amused—naturally. Captain O'Donnell, you honor Miss Hernecastle with a very prolonged and inquisitive gaze—may I ask if you have fallen a victim as well as Sir Arthur?"

"A victim? Well, no, I think not. I am trying to recollect where I have seen Miss Hernecastle before."

"What?" cried Lady Dangerfield: "you too? Oh, this is too much. First, Lord Ruyland, then Sir Peter Dangerfield, now Captain O'Donnell, are all transfixed at the sight of my nursery governess, and insist that, dead or alive, they have met her before. Now where was it you knew her, Mon Capitaine? Surely not in Algiers?"

reading compared to her. Really, if she keeps it," gazing longingly in this way, I greatly fear, Lady Dangerfield must send her away. A living ghost can't be a pleasant instructor, as of you."

"She does not seem to frighten Sir Arthur Trengenna, at least," said Squire Talbot, beginning to recover from his sudden shock. "And so she is only the governess. I never saw such a resemblance, never in all my life. What would Edith say, I wonder, if she could see it?"

"My sister, you know used to be Katherine Dangerfield's bosom friend and confidante, married now, you know, De Vere of the Plungers and gone to south of France for her health. Gad! I don't think it would be safe to let them meet she's nervous, Edith is, took Katherine's death, poor girl very deeply to heart; and if she came suddenly upon this fac-simile, by George! of her friend, I wouldn't answer for the consequences. Never saw such a striking resemblance in all my life."

And then they whirled away in their waltz. How strange! how strange! Lady Cecil kept thinking. Perhaps that was why her eyes rarely wandered from these two at the table. No one interrupted them. It was a most pronounced flirtation. Even Captain O'Donnell declined the request of his hostess and the earl that he should go up and speak to his friend."

"By no means," he said with a smile; "that can wait. It would be a pity to interrupt him, he seems so well amused."

It was Miss Hernecastle herself who broke up the tete-a-tete. Sir Arthur had become so interested, so absorbed in his compassion and the pictures, as to quite forget the flight of time.

Women never forget the proprieties, less conveniences, in any situation of life. She arose, Lady Cecil still watching her with a curious look and interested expression, spoke a few last half-smiling words, and hurried away. Like a man awakening from a dream, she saw Sir Arthur rise. No, Lady Cecil, you never succeeded in holding him spell-bound in this way, with all your beauty all your brilliance. Then from an inner room she saw the tall chasseur make his way through the crowd, and approach. She could even hear his deep mellow tones. "Trengenna, my dear fellow, how goes it?" Then with a look of real pleasure lighting up his grave face, she saw the Cornish baronet clasp the hand of the Irish soldier of fortune. Was there anything in the sight of the comital hand-clasp of those two men unpleasant to the sight of Lady Cecil Olive? Over the fair face an irritated flush came, into the brown, bright eyes a sudden, swift, dark anger passed. She turned away from the sight of her next partner, and for the rest of the night danced and flirted without intermission. Her laugh was gay, her eyes brighter, her cheeks rosier than any there had ever seen them before. Light at all times, some touch of feverish impetuosity and anger within, made her positively dazzling to-night.

The "fative hour" drew to a close; the guests were fast departing. The music was swelling forth its last gay strains, as for the first moment she found herself alone. No touch of fatigue dimmed the radiance of that perfect face; that stately light gave her eyes the gleam of dark diamonds; the fever rose tint was deeper than ever on her cheek, when looking up she saw approaching Lady Dangerfield on the arm of Captain O'Donnell—Sir Arthur, stately and dignified, on her other hand. Her brilliant ladyship was vivaciously insisting upon something, the chasseur laughingly but resolutely refusing.

"Oh, here you are, Queenie!" her ladyship impatiently cried. "What an inveterate dancer you are becoming. It was fascinating only to watch you to-night. Perhaps you will succeed where I fail. You and Captain O'Donnell appear to be old friends; try if you can prevail upon him and overcome his obstinacy."

"To overcome the obstinacy of Captain O'Donnell I know of old to be an impossible task. But to please you, Geneva! On what particular point is our Chasseur d'Afrique obstinate now?"

"I want him to leave the inn at Castletford, with his sister, and come here. The idea of stopping at an inn—a lady, too—preposterous! Sir Peter insists, I insist, Uncle Roubin insists, Sir Arthur insists—all in vain. And I need to think Irishmen the most grateful and yielding of men—could not possibly say no to a lady if they tried. I shall have another opinion of Captain O'Donnell's countrymen after to-night."

"You will come," La Reine Blanche said, with a glance of her long, luminous eyes, that had done fatal service ere to-night. Few men had ever the moral courage to say no to those bewitching eyes. "You will. Our motto is 'The More Merrier. We will do our best not to bore you. Scarswood is a pleasant place than the Silver Rose. You will come—I wish it."

"And nobody ever says no to Queenie," Lady Dangerfield gaily added; "her rule is absolute monarchy."

He looked down into the beautiful, laughing, imperial face, and bent low before her, with all the gallantry of an Irishman, all the debonairity of a Frenchman.

"I can believe it," Lady Dangerfield. And that La Reine Blanche may have the pleasure of a new sensation, permit me to say it—no mortal man would do that? In this trivial matter she will, however, let me have my own obstinate way. If the Peri had never dwelt in Paradise, she would not have wept in leaving. I may be weak, but past and experience has taught me wisdom. I take warning by the fate of the Peri."

His tone was very gentle, his smile very pleasant, but his will was invincible. The velvet gloves sheathed a hand of iron; this was not the Redmond O'Donnell she had known—the impetuous, yielding lad, to whom she had but to say "come," and he came—"go," and he went. Was she testing her own power? If so, she failed signally. As he turned to go to the cloakroom she heard him humming a tune under his breath, a queer, provoking half-smile on his face. She caught the big end of the words:

"For the bird that struts in the tolls my dear, Can never be caught without chaff?"

sombre, blue eyes, under their black brows and lashes, reminded you of her brother; the rich, abundant brown hair, that was but a warmer shade of black, was also his; but otherwise there was no resemblance. In the expression of that wan, "small face," was one of settled sadness; at intervals, though, lit up into a smile of wonderful brightness and sweetness, and then she was more like her brother than ever. She wore gray silk without ribbon, or lace, or jewel, and she looked like a little Quakeress, or a small gray kitten, coiled up there in her black chair. She was quite alone, her delicate brow knit in deep and painful thought, her hands clasped and unclasping nervously in her lap, her eyes fixed on the passers by, but evidently not seeing them.

"This is the place," she said to herself, a sort of whisper; "this is the town, at Scarswood was the house. At last—at last! But how will it end? Must I go on to grave knowing nothing—nothing—whether he be living or dead, or am I to find out here? If I only dared tell Redmond—my best brother, my dearest friend—but I do not. If he be alive, and they met, he would surely kill him."

An inner door opened, and her brother, straw sombrero in one hand, a fishing-rod the other, came in with his sounding troupe, tread.

"Rose," he said hurriedly, "I did not mention it at breakfast, but I was absent last night. I met an old acquaintance, and insisted upon taking me with him. I spent the evening at Scarswood Park."

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"Yes, I chanced to do her some trifling service the other day—absurdly trifling, make such a fuss over—and she insists upon magnifying a mole-hill into a mountain, saying I saved her life and all that. She is all the more hospitable lady I ever met, and I want to insist upon both pitching my tent in Scarswood. For myself, I decline to do so still, of course; but for you—I have been thinking of it over, and am not so sure. This isn't just the place of a lady in a park, you can't be agreeable to a well-constructed female mind. They are going to call to-day, and if they insist, and you prefer it, why not with them, if you will."

"They—Sir Peter and Lady Dangerfield—do you mean?"

"No; Lady Dangerfield and her cousin, Lady Cecil Olive. By the bye, I neglected to mention that I knew Lady Cecil Olive's father, Lord Ruyland, years ago, in Detroit. They're very civil and all that, and if they insist, and you prefer it—"

"Her large eyes lit with an eager light. "There can be no question as to my preference, brother; but if you object to it, it's away—"

"Oh I don't object. I would just as soon—sooner, indeed—you went, as I insist on staying in this place at all. I shall insist on my own here, and run down to see you every day until you have had enough of Castletford and Scarswood. And now, an revoir to-day—I'm going fishing."

He left the room whistling, flinging his sombrero carelessly on his dark curls, and throwing his fish-rod over his shoulder. His sister watched his tall figure out of sight.

"So he knew this Lady Cecil years ago, Ireland, and never told me! Old! I wonder if Lanty knew her! I shall ask."

As if the thought had evoked him, end Lanty Lafferty, a brush in one hand, a pair of his master's riding-boots in the other, dashed in by an Algerian sun, otherwise not a whit changed by the wear and tear of six years' soldiering. He deposited the boots on the hearth-rug, and stepped back, like a true artist, to survey his work.

"This is the thing," said Lanty, "an' p'obberly till ye might 'a' saved yerself in this murrud rose, alama! Is ther anything in the murrud wild I can do for ye? Since we've every heart's broke intirely since we kem to this place, wid your hand's turn to do for me, murrud 'till night."

"What! And you complain of that, Lanty?" his young mistress said, with a smile. "Now, I should think you would be glad to holiday after your active life out in Algeria. Surely you are not longing so soon to be again soldiering."

"Sodgering, is it? Oh, thin, it's wisht to wall in for sodgering. Some luck or grace is thin about such murrud work. I'm not sayin' 'agin fashin' mind, 'thin wasn't a boy in the barony founther of a nate bit at a performance—himself, but out there among thin black bayhins 'an Arabs, an' thin little swamin' girls 'an Frinchin, that wor with nor anythin' bayhins—h, thin, sweet had luck in it all! Shure, what the captain can see in 'ates me intirely. As if it wasn't had enough to be starved on black bread an' blacker 'er, an' if ye said 'pays,' about it, called up an' a court-martial an' shot in the chappin' an' ye hands. Fith, it trows me stomach this mite, uthe I think av all the tidy boys I've seen ordered out at day-break to knee' at their own collars, an' be shot down like snipe, or mebbe stickin' a friendly Arab, or givin' a word av divilment or divarshun to their superior officer. My old Nick 'av myse' 'an Akiers an' all belongin' to it afore Miss Redmond takes it into his head to go bad thin zeala. It's little I thought thin six years that I'd ever set out in it or any other haythin 'an' like it, thin Master Redmond an' that beautiful young squire, the lord's daughter, wor courtin' 'ayant in Torryglen. Fith I'm murrud I thought they'd be long av my day ago, wid mebbe three or four children growin' up about thin an' murrud dhray-nurse to thin same. But, oh, murrud shure the Lord's will be done!"

Mr. Lafferty, with a sort of groan over the hollowness of human hope, shook his head, took a last wistful look at the glitter of the numbers boots, and then turned to depart, but the young lady detained him.