

a fault, it was self-consciousness. He had an admiring way of looking down at his knocker-knees and flat feet whenever he found himself in the society of ladies. The admiration, no doubt, was really intended for the latter, and, in time, this was so well understood, that when Denny cast languishing eyes at his legs, the girl with whom he happened to be talking at the time would blush and bridle, for Denny was a most desirable *parti*.

But Denny's mother, who came of a good stock, was uneasy about her son. She could see that he wanted polishing; and in order to fit him for the sphere in which she hoped one day to see him move, Mrs. Cronin, at the expense of many words and tears, prevailed upon her husband to send the hope of their house to Cleggan for a short summer season.

Cleggan is the county town, a decayed sea-port, where the militia trains and the county people—such of them, at least, as are resident victims of duty or bad times—come for change of air.

Thither then came Denny, and he was not there long before he developed the taste common to the youth of his class and country. His ambition was to dress so as to be mistaken for a subaltern of the line—a modest ambition enough if you look into it—and with the aid of the local Smallpage, he succeeded in looking like a ready-money bookmaker's clerk. But for all that he began to have a great opinion of himself, and he would actually look the girls he met on the sea road—especially the pretty ones—well in the face, until he got close to them, when his eyes would drop and the faltering ogle expend itself upon his legs.

One very good-looking girl Denny often passed in this way; a tall girl with a fine full figure, clear red and white complexion, bronze-brown hair and violet eyes; eyes that one day looked admiringly at Denny—so he thought. He had no difficulty in finding out who she was. Miss Fitz-Urse was well known. She and her two sisters had taken Cleggan by storm a summer or two ago. And they did it in the teeth of all the powers by sheer force of beauty. For the Miss Fitz-Urses were the illegitimate daughters of a Galcommon squire, and as everybody knows, however tolerant Galcommon society may be of the bar-sinister when borne by the offspring of its nobility, it draws the line at a mere commoner's bastards, no matter how rich or well-born the commoner may be. So the Miss Fitz-Urses were ignored by the ladies of Cleggan; but the men—and it was the men that the Miss Fitz-Urses wanted—made up an hundred-fold for the neglect. Two of the sisters