

LORD KILGOBBIN.

BY CHARLES LEVER.

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

CHAPTER XLVII—Continued.

"Don't I know it? don't I guess?" cried the Greek. "Have not your down-cast eyes told it? and that look of sweet humility that says: 'At least I am not a flirt?'"

"Nor am I," said Kate coldly.

"And I am! Come, now, do confess. You want to say it."

"With all my heart I wish you were not!" and Kate's eyes swam as she spoke.

"And what if I tell you that I know it—that in the very employment of the arts of what you call coquetry, I am but exercising those powers of pleasing by which men are led to frequent the salon instead of the cafe, and like the society of the cultivated and refined better than—"

"No no, no!" burst in Kate. "There is no such mock principle in the case. You are a flirt because you like the homage it secures you, and because, as you do not believe in such a thing as an honest affection, you have no scruple about trifling with a man's heart."

"So much for captivating that old hussar," cried Nina.

"For the moment I was not thinking of him."

"Of whom, then?"

"Of that poor Captain Curtis, who has just ridden away."

"Oh, indeed?"

"Yes. He has a wife and three nice little girls, and they are the happiest people in the world. They love each other and love their home—so, at least, I am told, for I scarcely know them myself."

"And what have I done with him?"

"Sent him away sad and doubtful—very doubtful if the happiness he believed in was the real article after all, and disposed to ask himself how it was that his heart was beating in a new fashion, and that some new sense had been added to his nature, of which he had no inkling before. Sent him away with the notes of a melody floating through his brain, so that the merry laugh of his children will be all discord, and such a memory of a soft glance that his wife's bright look will be meaningless."

"And I have done all this? Poor me!"

"Yes, and done it so often that it leaves no remorse behind it."

"And the same I suppose with the others?"

"With Mr. Walpole, and Dick, and Mr. O'Shea, and Mr. Atlee, too, when he was here, in their several ways."

"Oh, in theirs; not in mine, then?"

"I am not a bungler in my explanation. I wished to say that you adapted your fascinations to the tastes of each."

"What a siren!"

"Well, yes—what a siren; for they're all in love in some fashion or other; but I could have forgiven you these had you spared the married man."

"So that you actually envy that poor prisoner the gleam of light and the breath of cold air that comes between his prison bars—that one moment of ecstasy that reminds him how he once was free and at large, and no manacles to weigh him down? You will not let him even touch bliss in imagination? Are you not more cruel than me?"

"This is mere nonsense," said Kate, boldly. "You either believe that man was fooling you, or that you have sent him away unhappy; take which one of these you like."

"Can't your rustic nature see that there is a third case, quite different from both, and that Harry Curtis went off believing—"

"Was he Harry Curtis?" broke in Kate.

"He was dear Harry when I said goodbye," said Nina, calmly.

"Oh! then I give up everything; I throw up my brief."

"So you ought, for you have lost your cause long ago."

"Even that poor Donogan was not spared, and Heaven knows he had trou-

bles enough on his head to have pleaded some pity for him."

"And is there no kind word to say of me, Kate?"

"Oh, Nina, how ashamed you make me of my violence when I dare to blame you! But if I did not love you so dearly I could better bear you should have a fault."

"I have only one, then?"

"I know of no great one but this—I mean, I know of none that endangers good-nature and right feeling."

"And are you sure that this does? Are you sure that what you are faulting is not the manner and the way of a world you have not seen? that all these levities, as you would call them, are not the ordinary wear of people whose lives are passed where there is more tolerance and less rain?"

"Be serious, Nina, for a moment, and own that it was by intention you were in the approach when Captain Curtis rode away, that you said something—perhaps both—on which he got down from his horse and walked beside you for full a mile."

"All true," said Nina, calmly. "I confess to every part of it."

"I'd far rather that you said you were sorry for it."

"But I am not; I'm very glad—I'm very proud of it. Yes, look as reproachfully as you like, Kate! 'very proud' was what I said."

"Then I am indeed sorry," said Kate, growing pale as she spoke.

"I don't think, after all this sharp lecturing of me, that you deserve much of my confidence; and if I make you any, Kate, it is not by way of exculpation, for I do not accept your blame. It is simply out of caprice—mind that, and that I am not thinking of defending myself."

"I can easily believe that," said Kate, dryly.

And the other continued: "When Captain Curtis was talking to your father, and discussing the chances of capturing Donogan, he twice and thrice mentioned Harper and Fry—names which somehow seemed familiar to me; and on thinking the matter over when I went to my room, I opened Donogan's pocket-book and there found how these names had become known to me. Harper and Fry were tanners on Cork street, and theirs was one of the addresses by which I had occasion to warn Donogan, I could write to him. On hearing these names from Curtis, it struck me that there might be treachery somewhere. Was it that these men themselves had turned traitor to the cause? or had another betrayed them? Whichever way the matter went, Donogan was evidently in great danger; for this was one of the places he regarded as perfectly safe."

"What was to be done? I dared not ask advice on any side. To reveal the suspicions which were tormenting me required that I should produce this pocket-book, and to whom could I impart this man's secret? I thought of your brother Dick, but he was from home, and even if he had not been, I doubt if I should have told him. I should have come to you, Kate, but that grand rebukeful tone you had taken up this last twenty-four hours repelled me; and, finally I took counsel with myself. I set off just before Captain Curtis started, to what you have called waylay him in the avenue."

"Just below the beech-copse came up; and then that small flirtation in the drawing room, which has caused you so much anger and me such a sharp lesson, stood me in good stead, and enabled me to arrest his progress by some chance word or two, and at last so far to interest him that he got down and walked along at my side. I shall not shock you by recalling the little tender 'nothings' that passed between us, nor dwell on the small mockeries of sentiment which we exchanged—I hope very harmlessly—but proceed at once to what I call my object. He was profuse of his gratitude for what I had done for him with Walpole, and firmly believed that my intercession alone had saved him; and so I went on to say that the best reparation he could make for his blunder would be some exercise of well-directed activity when occasion should offer. 'Suppose for instance,' said I 'you could capture this man Donogan?'"

"The very thing I hope to do," cried he. "The train is laid already. One of my constables has a brother in a well-known house in Dublin, the members of which, men of large wealth and good position, have long been suspected of

holding intercourse with the rebels. Through my brother, himself a Fenian, this man had heard that a secret committee will meet at this place on Monday evening next, at which Donogan will be present. Molloy, another head-centre, will also be there, and Cummins, who escaped from Carrickfergus. I took down all the names, Kate, the moment we parted, and while they were fresh in my memory. 'We'll draw the net on them all,' said he; 'and such a haul has not been made since '98. The rewards alone will amount to some thousands.' It was then I said, 'And is there no danger, Harry?'"

"Oh, Nina!"

"Yes, darling, it was very dreadful, and I felt it so; but somehow one is carried away by a burst of feeling at certain moments, and the shame only comes too late. Of course it was wrong of me to call him Harry, and he, too, with a wife at home, and five little girls—or three, I forget which—should never have sworn that he loved me, nor said all that mad nonsense about what he felt in that region where chief constables have their hearts; but I own to great tenderness and a very touching sensibility on either side. Indeed, I may add here, that the really sensitive natures among men are never found under forty-five; but for genuine, uncalculating affection, for the sort of devotion that flings consequences to the winds, I'd say, give me fifty-eight or sixty."

"Nina, do not make me hate you," said Kate, gravely.

"Certainly not, dearest, if a little hypocrisy will avert such a misfortune. And so, to return to my narrative, I learned as accurately as a gentleman so much in love could condescend to inform me, of all the steps taken to secure Donogan at this meeting, or to capture him later on if he should try to make his escape by sea."

"You mean, then, to write to Donogan and apprise him of his danger?"

"It is done. I wrote the moment I got back here. I addressed him as Mr. James Bredin, care of Jonas Mullory, Esq., 41 New Street, which was the first address in the list he gave me. I told him of the peril he ran, and what his friends were also threatened by, and I recounted the absurd seizure of Mr. Walpole's effects here; and, last of all what a dangerous rival he had in this Captain Curtis, who was ready to desert wife, children, and the constabulary to-morrow for me; and assuring him confidentially that I was well worth greater sacrifices of better men, I signed my initials in Greek letters."

"Marvelous caution and great discretion," said Kate solemnly.

"And now come over to the drawing-room, where I have promised to sing for Mr. O'Shea some little ballad that he dreamed over all the night through; and then there's something else—what is it? what is it?"

"How should I know, Nina? I was not present at your arrangement."

"Just so, Kate—sensibilities permitting; and, indeed," she said, "I remember it already. It was luncheon."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

HOW MEN IN OFFICE MAKE LOVE.

"Is it true they have captured Donogan?" said Nina, coming hurriedly into the library, where Walpole was busily engaged with his correspondence, and sat before a table covered not only with official documents but a number of printed placards and handbills.

He looked up, surprised at her presence, and by the tone of familiarity in her question, for which he was in no way prepared, and for a second or two actually stared at without answering her.

"Can't you tell me? Are they correct in saying he has been caught?" cried she, impatiently.

"Very far from it. There are the police returns up to last night from Meath, Kildare, and Dublin; and though he was seen at Naas, passed some hours in Dublin, and actually attended a night meeting at Kells, all trace of him has been since lost and he has completely baffled us. By the viceroy's orders I am now doubling the reward for his apprehension, and am prepared to offer a free pardon to any who shall give information about him who may not actually have committed a felony."

"Is he so very dangerous, then?"

"Every man who is so daring is dangerous here. The people have a sort of idolatry for reckless courage. It is not

only that he has ventured to come back to the country where his life is sacrificed to the law, but he declares openly he is ready to offer himself as a representative of an Irish county, and to test in his own person whether the English will have the temerity to touch the man—the choice of the Irish people."

"He is bold," said she, resolutely.

"And I trust he will pay for his boldness! Our law officers are prepared to treat him as a felon, irrespective of all claim to his character as a member of Parliament."

"The danger will not deter him."

"You think so?"

"I know it," was the calm reply.

"Indeed!" said he, bending a steady look at her. "What opportunities, might I ask, have you had to form this same opinion?"

"Are not the public papers full of him? Have we not almost a daily record of his exploits? Do not your own rewards for his capture impart an almost fabulous value to his life?"

"His portrait, too, may lend some interest to his story," said he, with a half-sneering smile. "They say this is very like him." And he handed a photograph as he spoke.

"This was done in New York," said she, turning to the back of the card, the better to hide an emotion she could not entirely repress.

"Yes, done by a brother Fenian long since in our pay."

"How base that all sounds! How I detest such treachery!"

"How deal with treason without it? Is it like him?" asked he, artlessly.

"How should I know," said she in a slightly hurried tone. "It is not like the portrait in the *Illustrated News*."

"I wonder which is the more like," added he, thoughtfully, "and I fervently hope we shall soon know. There is not a man he confides in who has not engaged to betray him."

"I trust you feel proud of your achievement."

"No, not proud, but very anxious for its success. The perils of this country are too great for mere sensibilities. He who would extirpate a terrible disease must not fear the knife."

"Not if he even kill the patient?" asked she.

"That might happen, and would be to be deplored," said he, in the same unmoved tone. "But might I ask whence has come all this interest for this cause, and how have you learned so much sympathy with these people?"

"I read the newspapers," said she, dryly.

"You must read those of only one color, then," said he, shyly; "or perhaps it is the tone of comment you hear about you. Are your sentiments such as you daily listen from Lord Kilgobbin and his family?"

"I don't know that they are. I suspect I'm more of a rebel than he is; but I'll ask him if you wish it."

"On no account, I entreat you. It would compromise me seriously to hear such a discussion, even in jest. Remember who I am, mademoiselle, and the office I hold."

"Your great frankness, Mr. Walpole, makes me sometimes forget both," said she, with well-acted humility.

"I wish it would do something more," said he, eagerly. "I wish it would inspire a little emulation, and make you deal as openly with me as I long to do with you."

"It might embarrass you very much, perhaps."

"As how?" asked he, with a touch of tenderness in his voice.

For a second or two she made no answer, and then, faltering at each word, she said:

"What if some rebel leader—this man Donogan, for instance—drawn toward you by some secret magic of trustfulness—moved by I know not what need of your sympathy—for there is such a craving void now and then felt in the heart—should tell you some secret thought of his nature—something that he could utter alone to himself, would you bring yourself to use it against him? Could you turn round and say: 'I have your inmost soul in my keeping. You are mine now—mine—mine!'"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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