

LLOYD PENNANT.

A TALE OF THE WEST.

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CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED.

When the day arrived, and as the hour appointed for the letting approach, he conjured up the appearance which the master's office presented, and pictured to his mind's eye the pettifogging malignity of Pincher; the coarse remarks, the jilting sneers, and matter-of-course callousness of the opposing solicitor; the ravening desire of some greedy land-shark to obtain the place at a bargain; the anxiety of Pepper; the commiseration felt by some, perhaps expressed by others, or the bystanders at his unmerited and unexpected reverse of fortune; the bidding, the competition, the final decision.

"He sat, watch in hand, from the time the proceedings were to commence until an hour had elapsed, and then the observation involuntarily stole from his lips, "Now, perhaps, I may be a homeless outcast!"

The next day saw the Colonel more composed, but the following morning found him early at the gatehouse, and anxiously watching the road by which the postboy must approach. At length the lad appeared, urging the jaded mule on which he was mounted to its utmost speed. His master advanced—impatience to learn his fate impelled him on—but when the boy, flinging himself from the saddle, presented the bag, supposed to contain the result of the letting, the poor gentleman could scarcely muster resolution to undo the lock. At length he made the effort, and investigated the contents with bated breath. There was no communication from Pepper. As he stood, almost relieved by the omission, Mike emerged from the adjoining wood. His haggard appearance bore ample testimony to the sufferings of his mind. He, too, took comfort from the attorney's silence. "If anything unfortunate had happened, surely he would have apprised them of it."

Two more days elapsed, and still no information reached them. Then Colonel Blake wrote to express his astonishment and demand an explanation, but he received no reply. At length the postboy told Mike privately—that he heard in town that the master was bent, and the place let to Mr. Pincher. "The rumor was soon confirmed by direct information received from Mr. Pepper. "He lamented the result, but assured his client that he had bid up to the highest penny he thought the place was worth, and only desisted when he found Pincher determined to have it, no matter at what cost, and under such circumstances he considered it might be injudicious to irritate him by further opposition."

But a short time had elapsed after Johnson's trial when Pincher Martin became subject to annoyance from another quarter. Mr. Brown, his wife's half-brother, who had never been noticed by his new connections, took an opportunity of informing him that he had in his possession attested copies, in her own handwriting, of the letters which, by his mother's directions, he had delivered to himself and uncle at the time of his marriage. He promised to surrender them from maternal affection were he only handed over to him, and intimated that pending the negotiation, a loan of five hundred pounds would much oblige him.

On the discovery of the now dangerous edge Blatherwell, who was consulted, arrived at the conclusion that a disclosure of Brown's secret might be most prejudicial to Pincher's interests. He therefore suggested that the required sum should be advanced as a friendly accommodation, and without any reference whatever to the documents proposed to be given up, judiciously supposing that the best method to render them valueless in the eyes of the holder would be to appear to set no importance on their possession; while, by lending such a sum upon his bond as Brown might be unable to repay, Pincher would have the game in his own hands. Should his brother-in-law become too exacting, he might arrest him for the debt, and any subsequent publication of the papers would be attributed to revenge, when it could be shown that they were only brought to light to injure a benefactor who had already proved himself too willing to grant from motives of kindness.

Brown remained quite so long as the money he received lasted; then his opportunities were renewed, his necessities being occasionally, though not liberally, relieved. As time wore on and he became more confident of his position, Pincher's compliance with his requirements became more and more rare. When Dunseverick Castle was to be let, Brown's entreaties had charged to menace, and he openly declared his intention of seeking Colonel Blake and acquainting him with everything he knew. The threat produced an immediate supply, and an arrangement for the purchase of the letters. But it was an additional motive for Pincher's antipathy to Colonel Blake, and a further incentive to get him out of the country by any means and at any cost.

The Irish government professed to feel great alarm before the landing of the French under Humbert, and instructed all magistrates to exert themselves sedulously in seeking for such arms as might have escaped detection. Pincher Martin became one of the most active of their supporters, and one of the most trusted of their agents. He kept a strict surveillance over the sayings and doings of the gentlemen in his neighborhood, and constantly harassed the people by domiciliary visits. For the purpose of annoyance, and also with the intention of seizing that opportunity to dislodge the Colonel, he came to Dunseverick accompanied by a military escort. His approach being noticed by the peasantry, who suspected that he intended to arrest Master Mike, they followed him in crowds, determined to resist. He demanded admission in a formal and overbearing manner, and proceeded to ransack the Castle without offering the slightest apology or explanation of his conduct.

When every other room had been visited, he entered the drawing-room, where the Colonel and Mike had remained with the ladies, and abruptly demanded "when they meant to turn out?" He was paying rent for the place, and could not allow them to remain more than ten days longer; by that time they must be off. This announcement was a great shock to Kate, for, although she learned from the newspapers that the place was to be let and might ultimately be sold, she had not yet been informed of the result of the subsequent letting, and was now for the first time made acquainted with the necessity of at once quitting a home which seemed to grow more dear to her uncle as the probability of his being obliged to abandon it became more apparent. Preparations were made for the sale, and now the ruthless hammer must descend, scattering in a few hours the household treasures acquired during a life—perhaps the ancestral relics of ages. What dismal feelings are con-

jured up by the mere announcement of an auction! It proclaims the removal from amongst us, by death or misfortune, of it may be, the companion of our youth or the prized friend of maturer years. How the heartaches as each familiar object is knocked down amidst the jeering wits of the purchasers and the practised rattle of the thoughtless crowd dispersed, the naked and deserted rooms, once the abode of hospitality and refinement, perhaps the sanctuary of genius, stands in their nakedness, fitting emblems of the ruin wrought by the stern hand of death, by disappointed hopes, or senseless improvidence.

The Widow Murray was a particular favorite amongst those to whom Miss Bingham's charities and kindness were extended. This poor woman had lost her husband, and been left the sole support of five orphans, the eldest a confirmed idiot. The unhappy boy, as he grew up, evinced a taciturn and gloomy disposition, never mixed with other children in their play, and rarely spoke. Kate made many attempts to obtain an influence over his weak intellect, but all her attentions seemed to pass unheeded; he gazed steadfastly as she spoke to him, sometimes smiled, but rarely broke his accustomed silence. Although Miss Bingham's time was now fully occupied in making preparations for their departure, or in supporting the depressed spirits of her uncle, still her humble friends, who crowded to testify their feelings in the hour of her adversity, were freely admitted to her presence, and foremost amongst them came Mrs. Murray, with her son, "Body the Idiot."

After she had made her "wail," and cried over the altered fortunes of her benefactress, she took a pride in telling "her young mistress" that the whole country was in the deepest grief on account of all that happened, and that even her own 'poor Natural,' who hadn't sense enough to cry to his own father, God help him, was sorely fretted about her troubles.

The other children couldn't sleep from his moanings the whole night long, and his pillow was as wet in the morning as if he drew it through the river. Only the other evening," she continued, "the boys were talking about the family's going to leave, when Phelim Darcy said it was a burning shame to see the Colonel put from house and home without striking a blow in his defense, and he 'took his soul' that if he had but a few stout hearts to help him he'd burn Pincher in his own way. Poor Roddy jumped out of the corner where he was sitting, threw his arms about Darcy's neck, and kissed him. Ever since then, I declare, he does nothing but sharpen an old hatchet to kill Pincher, the villain, and he wouldn't be easy until I brought him up to show it to your honor."

The idiot's face brightened as his mother described his feelings, and when she concluded, he drew the hatchet from under his coat, and laughed loudly, replaced it again, and then ran from the house."

It so happened that while returning from Dunseverick on the last day of the auction, after all was sold, Pincher Martin had some time to spare, which he thought, could not be better employed than in making one of his accustomed forays. Being, as usual, accompanied by an escort, he took a line of country which had not been before visited, and while searching the haunts of a small farmer, his followers discovered a leather portmanteau, the most costly description. The man in whose possession it was found declared most artlessly and without hesitation that it belonged to a Mr. Edwards, who had lodged with him; that this gentleman left suddenly, and had not since returned; that all his goods being paid, he did not consider himself justified in opening it; and that he had kept it safe in the expectation that the owner would come some time or other to claim it.

The Royalists were well aware that Lord Edward had assumed the name of Edwards, and been concealed somewhere in this neighborhood, but although many searches had been made, his place of refuge could never before be discovered, and Pincher rejoiced at the prize so unexpectedly fallen into his hands. On the lock being forced, the first thing that met his eye was a letter addressed to Lloyd Pennant. Many others were found concealed amongst the wearing apparel, which he hoped might enable the government to discover the ramifications of the United Irish conspiracy and the names of its chief promoters. What a fortunate thing for him was so important a service! "It merited a baronetcy," which he determined to claim.

While reading the letter directed to Pennant, Pincher was at once terror-stricken at its contents, and delighted that so important a document had so happily fallen into his own possession. It was the confession of James Bradley, which he said, when dying, would be found in his pocket. The unfortunate man had dropped it at the Abbey on the night of his interview with Colonel Blake, and Lord Edward, who had picked it up there, had either forgotten or been unable to forward it (as had been agreed upon) to Mrs. O'Mahony. Pincher, merely remarking that the letter might have some political importance, ordered Sharp and the yeomanry officer, who were with him, to certify with their hands and seals on the cover that it was found in a portmanteau belonging to the late Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

This proved a happy day for Pincher. In the morning, before setting out, he had concluded his arrangements with Brown, and actually got possession of the long-desired letters. In addition, he now held the only other document which could support the claims of a rival. From the moment he read the confession he conceived the bold idea of utilizing its cover. He resolved, as a matter of course, to keep the enclosure, and determined to substitute in its stead a fabricated letter, purporting to come from Lord Edward, the tenor of which would clearly establish a connection between himself and Pennant, and serve to implicate the latter in the treasonable conspiracy. Being an adept in the art of imitating the writing of others, he soon succeeded in penning a short note corresponding in style with the address on the certified cover; this he carefully intermixed with occasional words in Lord Edward's usual hand, of which he acquired a knowledge from statistic reports found in the portmanteau; it would thus be supposed that the writer, while attempting to disguise his hand, had occasionally forgotten his intention.

On his arrival at home, Pincher occupied himself in overhauling the contents of the portmanteau, and in drawing up an account of his day's proceedings, which he determined to forward at once to the Vicero, lest his important information should be anticipated by others; and when, after sending two dragoons to meet the Dublin mail with a despatch, "on his Majesty's service," he felt overcome by excitement and fatigue, and betook himself to rest, he first carefully deposited his priceless papers on a table close by his bedside.

The auction was over, and the family assembled, on the eve of their departure, in the library, where a part of the furniture still remained. It might, perhaps, be the last night they should ever spend together under shelter of the old roof, and those only who have suffered the bitterness of such a situation can estimate the mental anguish which they endured. The door opened softly, and "Roddy the Idiot" peered cautiously in, but

he quickly withdrew on perceiving that he was noticed. Returning again in a few minutes, he ran directly to Miss Bingham, and laid a small wicker cage, containing a skylark, at her feet, then smiled, as he used to do when greatly pleased, and retreated as rapidly as he had entered.

Kate knew the bird, which Roddy had taken from the nest and reared himself. He was accustomed to carry it to some lonely bank, where he would lie for hours listening to its song. As he seemed more attached to his lark than any other living thing, she had often praised its notes in the hope of winning his confidence, and now the poor fellow brought his only treasure as a parting gift. She was deeply moved by such a touching tribute of affection, and raising the cage, placed it on her knee. The bird, as if proud of being noticed, clapped its wings, and carolled forth its merry notes. The idiot gazed peeped stealthily, then gave a loud, unearthly laugh, and fled at his utmost speed in the direction of his mother's cottage.

The party sat in silence, indulging those melancholy feelings which this incident and situation gave birth to. The shades of evening were closing around them, the lark had nestled on the small green sod which formed his bed, and Mike, to interrupt the current of their thoughts, was about proposing that they should retire to rest, when Phelim Darcy, who had returned home after Lord Edward's death, presented himself. He was a tall, athletic young man, of that Spanish cast of countenance so prevalent in the western counties; his complexion clear brown; his eyes dark blue, and deep set; his nose long and straight; his teeth white as ivory; and his jet black hair thick and curled; his neck was bare, and the opened shirt exposed to view a brawny, sunburnt chest; he stood before them an incarnate personification of daring courage and unswerving fidelity.

"Colonel, Master Mike, and Miss Kate," said their visitor, "I'm come, too, like the rest of the neighbors, to bid good-bye, and bless ye. I never broke your bread, and neither I nor mine ever lived under you or yours, yet Heaven knows how I feel, and what I'd do if I had the power. But the blessings of the poor must prevail, and ye have them, one and all of ye; so I tell you to be of good cheer, for there's times coming when every honest man will get his own."

Advancing to Miss Bingham, and falling on his knee, he took her hand and kissed it, bowed respectfully to the Colonel and Mike, and then, after receiving their united thanks for his kind wishes, withdrew.

CHAPTER X.

When Darcy left the Castle at the close of this interview, he struck directly into the woods and followed a pathway which led to a narrow part of the river, where the trunk of a tree thrown over two rudely-constructed abutments formed a rustic bridge for the accommodation of foot-passengers. More than once he fancied that he heard a footfall close behind him, but on tuning to ascertain if he were followed, no one could be seen. After crossing the bridge, Darcy felt for some object concealed in the grass, and then, after keeping along the river side for a considerable distance, he turned to the right, and made his way with difficulty through the dense underwood by which the ground was covered. The overhanging trees shut out the faint moonlight, and he soon paused for the purpose of ascertaining if he was proceeding in the right direction. A branch snapped close beside him, and a moment afterwards there was a rustling noise. Some one was on his track; yet he could see no object. The only break in the leafy canopy which covered him was where a cock lane intersected the wood some distance in advance, and the streak of light which it admitted was his guide to the point he aimed at reaching. He knew not how to act, or what to do. To strike might be fatal to a friend; to challenge might bring a spy upon him. He remained motionless. The deep silence which reigned around alarmed him. His heart beat as though it would knock his ribs out. The thought flashed across his heated imagination—'Could it be the fairies?' The fort lay not far off, he trembled like a frightened child, and unable to endure further suspense, gave a low, prolonged whistle, not loud enough to be heard at any considerable distance, but sufficiently so to be recognized by those who understood the signal and might be near him. The silence remained unbroken, his challenge unanswered. Seized with a sudden panic, he then rushed headlong forward, and never stopped until he reached the lane and stood clear of the overhanging trees. Here he paused again, and again the rustling noise could be distinctly heard slowly following in his wake. Running hastily towards the fort, which flanked the other side of the lane, Darcy removed a stone and drew forth a musket from the rabbit hole which it concealed. Then, kneeling under the shade of a large hawthorn bush, he awaited the appearance of his pursuer. The rustling noise had ceased, yet no one came. The sweat rolled from his forehead, as he muttered a prayer; there was a movement behind him; he sprung to his legs and levelled his piece.

"What the d—! I've you about, Phelim?" cried the foremost of a group of armed men, who advanced towards where he stood. "My curse on you Micky!" said Darcy, lowering his musket. "Was it you that give me such a fright? Why didn't you answer the signal? I don't like such tricks, and it's lucky for you that I didn't strike."

"I don't understand you," replied the other. "I gave you no fright."

"Didn't you follow me through the wood?"

"No."

"Then you passed the bridge before I came up, and where was ye?"

"We went to the dance-house, where Tim Daly staid, courtin' his sweetheart."

"And ye might have spared yourself the trouble of that same walk," rejoined Daly, "for I'd be here in time if I never saw ye ugly faces. The moon's only full on the lane now, and we'll be where we want to be before she's down."

"Then," said Darcy, lowering his voice, "we're spied, or the good people have been doin' their will upon me," and then he related all that had occurred.

After a short consultation, the party, now consisting of seven persons, moved off towards the river by a more circuitous, but less difficult, route than that which Darcy had taken, to reach the place of rendezvous. As they proceeded, they frequently looked back, to ascertain if they were dogged, but nothing occurred to excite their suspicions. They had now passed the bridge, and were about to turn an angle which would show them out from their view, when Darcy suddenly exclaimed:

"Mother of Mercy! it's a large black dog that's following us. I saw him cross the bridge this mornin'."

The men halted, looked in the direction he indicated, but could discern nothing.

"It's something not right," continued the affrighted leader.

"He couldn't cross running wather," whispered one of his companions.

"Not through it," rejoined another. "Over it he can, if there's a bridge."

"God defend us!" was uttered in chorus by

all, as they took off their hats and crossed their foreheads, and then they set forward again at a rapid pace.

As they passed from the open pathway, which they had followed for a considerable distance, into the skirts of a large wood, they paused and again reconnoitered, without discovering any cause for alarm. When they cleared the extensive plantation, through which their route lay, they stood close in front of Pincher's mansion.

A portion of Castlemore was of very ancient date, but modern additions had been attached to the massive square tower, and the style of the whole structure had been modified so as to resemble an Elizabethan manor house rather than an ancient Irish stronghold. In front, two stories only were shown, while in the rear, where the remains of the original building sprang from a small lakeside and leaned against a steep ascent, there were four.

Darcy thrust his hand into some ivy clustered round the trunk of an enormous oak, and drawing forth a handkerchief which he found there, whispered to his followers:

"All's well. Now, boys, off with your brogues and remain quietly at the hall-door until I open it. No noise, for your lives; you know there's sodgers in the house. Not a word when you come in, but let the first man hold by me and follow, and so on, one after another."

Then leaving them, he proceeded towards the side of the Castle, and raised a ladder, which he found amongst the shrubs, to an open window. He paused for a moment until the ladder stirred from above; then instantly mounting, he was received by a girl, who led him cautiously from the room. Darcy and his conductors had scarcely passed the door before another figure darted forward, sprang up the ladder, disappeared through the window, and followed closely on their steps. The leader of the party was conducted noiselessly along a corridor, which gave at one end on the first landing-place of the grand staircase leading from the hall to a spacious lobby, on one side of which was the bedroom-chamber of Pincher. When they had gained this point, his guide stopped. A dim light was perceptible in the lobby above from the large bay-window, of which the curtains remained undrawn, and in the hall below from the faint light which topped the door, while the intermediate space in which they stood was dark as pitch.

"Now," whispered the girl, "you can't go any further. The bolt is off, and the key is in the lock; the sodgers are all drunk. When you come up, your room is on the right; he can't get away, for the back passage is stopped, and you needn't be afraid, for the powder is wet in his pistols. I'll watch on the back stairs for fear any one should come up that way. But, Phelim, dear, don't kill him if you can help it."

Darcy groped his way cautiously to the hall. As he laid his hands upon the key some one stumbled on the stairs.

"O, murder! Nelly, you've destroyed us," he muttered. Then waiting a short time to ascertain if the accident had occasioned any alarm, and finding that no one stirred, he gently turned the key. His gang entered, and followed him in single file, as they had been directed.

When the leader of the party reached the lobby, he stopped until his companions were beside him; then throwing himself with all his force against the bedroom door, and meeting no resistance, he tumbled head-foremost on the floor. Springing to his feet, he rushed towards the bed, and flung himself upon its occupant, who writhed and struggled to relieve himself. The decaying turf fire flickered, and by its light Darcy recognized the face of "Boddy the Idiot," as he gasped for breath under the pressure of his iron grasp. A candle being quickly lighted, both rooms were diligently searched. "Boddy's hatchet lay buried in the pillow, but Pincher was nowhere to be found."

"Hell seize the fool!" cried the leader. "The villain has escaped. Hurry, my lads, every one take a coal; we'll burn the house at all events."

Fortunately for himself, Pincher had heard the noise, his slumbers not being tranquil. Springing from his bed, he made for the back passage, communicating with that part of the house in which the soldiers were stationed, and the door leading to it from his dressing-closet was fastened on the outside. Instantly retracing his steps, he reached the lobby just as the hall-door opened to admit the conspirators. The bustle occasioned by their entrance, slight as it was, prevented them from hearing their intended victim as he descended the stairs in the hope of escaping by the landing-place door. It, too, was closed, and before he could find the bundle to ascertain if it were holty, the men commenced ascending from the hall. Pincher's only chance of safety then lay in remaining quiet. He stood as closely drawn up as possible in the angle formed by the walls—the latrine creaked under the pressure of the assassins' grasp, and the stairs sprung under their feet as they approached him—their hands almost touched his body, and the breath from their nostrils fell upon his cheeks as they passed.

Taking advantage of the noise occasioned by the rush into his room, Pincher quickly opened the door and fled along the corridor towards that end where Nelly stood watching. Striking against her in the dark he wheeled suddenly, supposing that his enemies were there before him; then turning into the first open door and perceiving from the wind which blew freshly upon him that the window was raised, he made for it, intending to jump out, but his hand lighted on the ladder top; he descended in safety, and dreading to approach the house for fear of being interrupted before he could obtain assistance, he ran into the shrubbery and gained the cover of the woods.

Boddy the Idiot's anxiety to have "the first blow" saved Pincher's life, for he it was who followed Darcy so pertinaciously and whose fall so reasonably aroused the master of the mansion from his uneasy sleep. "The natural" had overheard the conspirators planning the murder, and with the cunning often evinced by unfortunates of his kind, he determined to dog the footsteps of the leader as the surest method of arriving in time to participate in the glory of the action.

Darcy and his party having set fire to all the upper rooms which gave upon the corridor, got clear of the house with the least possible delay, and having ascended a distant hill beyond the reach of pursuit, they sat down upon its summit to wait the result of their operations. Light gleamed in the distance, and the flames shot crackling through the burning timber in the still night and the shouts and curses of the drunken soldiers as they escaped. The workmen's bell rang an alarm, but no one came to render assistance at the summons; presently the fire burned through the roof and soon after it tumbled in with an awful crash.

Darcy remained gazing on the scene of destruction until the ruin of Castlemore was consummated; then rising to depart, he said mournfully: "Well, I never thought to see the day when I or one belonging to me would burn the home of the Martins."

Pincher continued his flight until he

reached a village some miles off, where a regiment of English fencibles lay, without daring to seek protection at the houses which he passed. "Neither his wife or child was at home," for Nelly, although quite willing to sacrifice her master, doggedly refused rendering any assistance, unless the mistress—who being of the old family she conceived had a claim on her fidelity—should be safe from all danger. The attack, therefore, was deferred until Mrs. Martin had set out on a visit to a relative living at some distance.

While Castlemore still burned Colonel Blake and his family were already on the road leaving it might be for ever, his ancestral residence.

Mike remained behind for the purpose of settling accounts and collecting outstanding arrears of rent from the tenants, which had not by Mr. Pepper's direction been noted on the rental returned to the receiver. He intended to occupy the castle as long as he was permitted to do so, and had arranged when dismissed to be the guest of Mrs. O'Mahony while business necessitated his stay in the neighborhood.

Arrived in Dublin, the Colonel called on Mr. Pepper, who warmly pressed him to remain at his house while in town. The invitation being declined he insisted on their dining with him the same day; they would then have an opportunity of talking matters over in the evening. Although indisposed to mix in society, the Colonel felt that on the present occasion he must sacrifice his private feelings to his interests. While waiting an interview he saw Mr. Pepper, so inaccessible to others, who appeared from their disappointment to have had important business to transact with him, that he doubted being able to lay his own views before him unless he acceded to the proposed agreement. He accordingly agreed to dine, supposing that he and Miss Bingham would be the only guests. Great, then, was his disappointment to find the drawing-room crowded with strangers, to each of whom his host, *volens volens*, presented him. They were mostly barristers engaged for Lord Brachin, or attorneys who had been employed as agents at the election. Mr. Pepper was in high spirits, but the petition which he had no doubt must prove unsuccessful was the sole topic of conversation during the evening. The Colonel remained at table until a late hour, in the hope of hearing something of his own affairs, but the wine had circulated freely, and when the other guests retired Pepper was not in a condition to transact business. He made a sort of rambling excuse for having asked so many persons, but "they were all such prime fellows that he couldn't help it." There was but one thing for it, his client must dine again with him to-morrow, all alone positively, when no interruption would on any account be permitted.

In a few minutes after the Colonel's arrival on the next day at Pepper's house, his host, apparently much excited, jumped from a hackney coach which drove rapidly to the door, and, on entering, ordered the chain to be put on the hall door, and gave special directions that it should not be opened to any stranger. Then running to the drawing-room, and dispensing with the ordinary salutation, he abruptly asked the Colonel if he had been in the streets during the day; and, on being answered in the affirmative, declared that he was the luckiest man alive. "Only think, sir, that rascal, Sharp, has obtained an attachment against you for contempt of court. It is actually in the hands of the law, who have been seeking you everywhere; luckily, I went into the sub-sheriff's office on some other business, and found out all about it. Catchem in a capital fault, a most particular friend of mine, and would do nothing he could avoid to injure my clients; he just gave me a pointer to the book, and left the room while I made a search (the proper way of doing it, mind, you know, for he couldn't tell us his own thing to secrecy); you must stay here until after twelve to-night, Colonel. It's out of the question that you could venture home before that, for if taken you might be in jail all your life, to-morrow will be Sunday, when you can drive down to the Pigeon House, and embark for England."

Neither the Colonel nor Kate had much appetite for their dinner, the latter having the door or pull at the bell threw both into a state of fear and trembling. Their most on every such occasion broke out into fierce exclamations against the tyrant and the tyrant, and swore he would retaliate on some of that gentleman's clients the moment an opportunity presented itself. When the clock struck and the water and candle prepared to leave, Pepper took occasion to inform him that the suit was an unusually expensive one, that he had already advanced him a considerable sum, and that Lord Brachin's affairs had thoroughly drained him, but that carrying it through was a necessary success issue being the only chance he had of recovering his money, and that he had a dismal account of his personal perplexities and pecuniary difficulties of declaring that he must pay him an immediate supply of three hundred pounds, or that he might never see the money. The Colonel, he could not any longer transact his business. He then proposed going to breakfast in his next sitting, when he hoped the money would be forthcoming, as he paid and was a *clie qua non* to secure his future services.

The Colonel had about five hundred pounds in his pocket, the remnant of the proceeds of the auction. He was unwilling to lessen the amount of his funds when going to a strange country, but what could he do? It was necessary that his affairs should be looked after, and he lay completely at Mr. Pepper's mercy, there being no time, were he so inclined, to employ any other agent; but were it otherwise, a change of solicitors would only create another enemy and draw down another yulture to prey upon his resources. He had already dilapidated his fortune, and he was already dilapidated. He gave the receipt and called on route for London. Always habituated to the elegancies befitting his station in society, and being so far from the seat of the government when the estate should be sold, or purchased, he had no objection to the ordinary borrowed part, the Colonel had no idea that an attachment in what he considered the ordinary manner would be necessary, and he therefore travelled in his own carriage and posted to his intended place of sojourn. By the time he reached the metropolis the contents of his original pocket-book were secured, and his original state of mind was restored.

This, however, was no cause for anxiety, for supplies were daily expected, and after passing the night at a hotel the family were settled in handsome apartments, including a number of fashionable squares. The excitement of travelling and change of scene effected a marked improvement in the Colonel's health and spirits, and, too, the influence of the bustle and splendor by which he was surrounded and almost ceased to regret a removal which released him from those annoyances and humiliations which had so greatly afflicted the latter period of his residence at Dunseverick.

Although Mr. Pincher Martin's lamentations on account of the destruction of his house were multiplied than real. The letters of Brown and the assessor's confession had undoubtedly been detected in his handwriting, and his own conscientiousness applied in each case should have been fixed to as a denigrated of him. The barrister and his client had been previously informed of their full value, and the amount of the policy would make no inconsiderable addition to the holding capital, of which it was his fixed determination to take advantage. He would have been a rich man if matters came to the point which he had in view, and he could live upon it out of the kingdom and be the reach of his enemies. The barrister, on the other hand, was a man of a different stamp, and, more over, furnished a plausible excuse for removing to Dunseverick, where he was most anxious to establish a business in a house of his own, and of equal value was very lax and there were frequent instances of mortgages on original mortgages and holding on in all their claims as creditors merged by law in the hands of the barrister. It was by this quiet and unobtrusive process that Pincher intended to appropriate the Blake estate to himself, and every necessary step had been taken to secure the success of his design. The receiver was his creature, and ruminous receivers still are to any property unfortunately placed under their control, they then possessed an infinity greater power, of,

ing evil. To account at all was rather unusual and his application to the Court frequently information touching his receipts or disbursements either to the proprietor who he was employed to manage, or to the Court by whom he was appointed, he was obliged to produce. In this case from any hostile little to apprehend was himself the sole creditor and the only person interested, except the inheritor, already driven from the Court by the superior of an attachment. He did not, however, intend to obtain possession, for it would be dangerous to the established state of the country to hazard a step which might add to the delay in the result. Mike might possibly be a man of the law and disposed of after the same fashion as the Colonel.

To the great public in general, and among them, he was allowed to remain unmolested, and the world gave great credit to the man who had been so long in the balance which he displayed on the occasion; but it obtained proof-positive evidence that Mike had interfered with the tenant very early in length this gentleman was prepared to give, but he obtained proof-positive evidence that Mike had time in taking advantage of the opportunity to trade all his designs.

All other practicing attorneys had at that time in their employment what was technically called "an affidavit man," in other words, a man always ready to swear to the service he had done, or to the receipt he had given, or, perhaps, so much as seen; and, though never instrumentally one of these easy-going fellows, an attachment was obtained against the unsuspicious person, and the affidavit man afforded the slightest intimation of his being this preliminary proceeding taken, Pincher prepared to act. He sent notice that he should present an affidavit in the Court, and that he should be sworn on a certain day, affording ample time to organize a resistance. On his arrival at the gates locked, the doors and windows closed, and the castle occupied by a small number of men, determined to oppose him. The officer was summoned to surrender by "the officer of the court," and the reply was a bullet, which passed through the chest of the man who had been deprived the Chancellor of a most efficient servant. Pincher and his party instantly retreated, and an application was forthwith made to the High Court, for a writ of habeas corpus to prevent the receiver in the discharge of his duty. The writ was granted, and the receiver was ordered to be sworn on a certain day, affording ample time to organize a resistance. On his arrival at the gates locked, the doors and windows closed, and the castle occupied by a small number of men, determined to oppose him. The officer was summoned to surrender by "the officer of the court," and the reply was a bullet, which passed through the chest of the man who had been deprived the Chancellor of a most efficient servant. 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