

day—and Miss Clara—an' you—like to come? I suppose poor fellows like me have too much liking, so they have. They don't know how to curb themselves."

"Well, do you wish to come?"

"Yes, sir; but I don't want to follow the wish."

"Oh!"

"Ah, sir, the widow id be lonesome; an' I'm wantin' here, you know, about our own house; an' I dunno—somethin' about the Crag!"

"The Crag."

"Ah, sir, I'm afeard about the Crag. The old man is odd—and he's good in many things an' I'm not sure he won't require a man like me near him."

Meldon started.

"Oh, sir, make your mind aisy. I am enough for three score of the old man's enemies; an' I can tell you my own friends are among them that speak hard of old Mr. D'Alton."

"Your friend?"

"Yes, sir; they are there to guard and protect Amy's father."

"Guard the owner of the Crag as you would guard your father, Tom. The old man is dear to me—very dear."

"Well, the honest thruth, is I always saw the same an' said it; but there's not a neighbor from this to Piltown or Waterford that dos'nt love Miss Amy, sir, and would'n't lose a fall to save her wan single tear."

The preparations for departure were not extensive; and, indeed, with practised travellers preparations are always few. Amy was persuaded by old Mr. D'Alton that she "needed change;" and he declared that he himself would go to Bonmahon or Tramore, and stay at the hotel for a month or more. Nolly Nurse would mind him, and—

"Well, sir, what of my cousin?"

"He may go to——"

Mr. Giffard D'Alton had lately been having somewhat more of Mr. Baring than was well for Baring's position in Mr. Giffard D'Alton's good opinion; and of all persons who deserved ill of Mr. Giffard D'Alton, and of some who did not, that gentleman was ever ready to make that unmentionable, hoofed biped a present. In truth, he had been recently consulting some prudent people regarding the possibility of "breaking the

entail" by a "private act;" and Mr. Charles Baring had become aware of the same with something like dismay. That "friend and follower of the family," who gave Mr. Baring such wise counsel on a certain eventful night, came more frequently to his mind than ever.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE journey to Dublin was to commence on the morrow week of the day of the conversation last detailed; and on the day before the departure of the tourists all the packages were duly arranged and duly labelled, and the hour for Amy's presence at Mr. Meldon's fixed sufficiently early to enable the family to reach a morning train from Clonmel. The father and daughter, and Alice Hayes, sat down in the pleasant drawing room and indulged the anticipations born of such a moment. Very likely the young people were excited by the expectation of many novelties and much pleasure, and Mr. Meldon enjoying that luxury of a kind nature—the pleasure he was going to bestow.

Three heavy knocks at the hall door startled the little company. The noise of "grounded arms" was then heard,—done with a will as if to proclaim ponderous power. "Crichawn" was at the door in a moment. Mr. Meldon arrived immediately after, and found himself in presence of a dozen policemen.

"What is the meaning of this, gentlemen?" asked Mr. Meldon, when the police had entered the hall.

"We have been informed that Mr. M—— is harbored in your house."

"My house! who could have been so mad and so false as to name my house?"

"We cannot say," replied the sergeant. "We ourselves do not believe it, but we obey orders."

"And you wish to search?"

"We have been directed, if you pledge your word of honor that Mr. M—— is not in the house, to proceed no further."

"No, no; no 'word and honor' in this case. The information has been given likely enough to deceive you, by putting you on a wrong scent, or to annoy me; though I do not know how I could have made an enemy. In any case you must search!" Without fur-