

that behind all the jolity there is an aching heart and a consuming pain.

Nobody but Mr. Albin Artslade, who hugs his mortgage-deeds, and counts the days until his triumph!

And while the fortunes of Kilsheelan are thus hurried to a crisis, the fortunes of Ireland took an equally critical turn. The project of a Union with Great Britain, promoted without scruple by the minions of the Government, discovered an amount of corruption in the Irish Parliament that would have justified its destruction, if the instruments of its fall were not more scandalous still. The first mention of the project evoked a storm of indignation that threatened to overwhelm its proposers: but Lord Castlereagh and his chief knew too well they were dealing with a Parliament which represented only a distracted faction, with whose doings or opinions the mass of the nation had but little sympathy. They deliberately set themselves to purchase a majority, flooding the country with such a system of bare-faced corruption as to stamp the whole transaction with eternal infamy. How they succeeded with the bundle of needy placemen, lawyers and profligates, who formed the bulk of the Irish Commons, all the world knows.

And yet, pitiful as was the degeneracy of the time, it produced examples of romantic virtue which, were fate as merciful to Ireland as Jehovah was to the cities of Segor long ago, must have saved her nationality from annihilation. They were of the old aristocracy for the most part: those big-hearted, chivalrous ne'er-do-wells, to whom an Irish Parliament was as essential a principle of existence as debts, or fox-hounds, or whiskey-punch, and whom the assembled forces of earth and hell could not induce to budge from the ship, which sooner or later, they all knew, must sink. With them Patriotism was rather a sentiment than a reasoning conviction: handed down, like the family portraits, from generation to generation, accepted without much reflection, and guarded with their lives. The whole character of their lives and opinions was that of a forlorn hope—not so much fitted to command success, as to die cheerfully and gallantly where their cause died with them: an army with only the discipline of instinct. Against so unpractical a sentiment, Lord Castlereagh made easy war with all the weapons of stratagem and interest which they despised. Yet there were those among them whose fervid enthusiasm rallied the unpurchased allegiance of the nation around

the falling Parliament, and sanctified its death with an interest which in life it little merited. And so much is purity, however eccentric, superior to corruption, however powerful, that against this loose organization of enthusiasm, the Unionists threw their compact columns month after month in vain, trying argument, *perfidy* and *menace* by turns to conquer the antipathy to the Union, and only forcing it into more uncompromising, if more hopeless bitterness.

But the contest could not last. Lord Castlereagh planned and purchased and bullied and inveigled, till he assured himself of success, and then determined to strike boldly and swiftly once for all against the patriots.

One raw, cold day in January, some nine months after Gerald O'Dwyer entered College, the last session of the Parliament of Ireland was opened. Though there was no official intimation that the scheme of a Union, defeated in the previous session, would be revived, some presentimental little bird whispered to the nation that the crisis was come: and in the capital especially, the opening of the session was attended with an excitement that was nearly a fever: for, however faded the rest of the country, Dublin at least was the petted darling of Parliament, beautified by its prodigal votes and enriched by its splendid society. In all the city, in Castle, mansion and cabin alike, the great heart of the community was throbbing wildly for the issue of the day.

The wide area in front of the Parliament House was occupied by troops of all arms, among whom swarmed the excited populace, scrutinizing eagerly each new arrival, in carriage or on foot. Every official suspected was received with a howl of execration, and every member of the opposition saluted with deafening applause. And so they poured along, peers and commoners—ministerialists and patriots—to preside over the fate of a nation.

Suddenly, from the river side, there travelled news, at first murmured indistinctly, then shouted from end to end of the masses. The opposition contingent from Tipperary had arrived. 'Tipperary to the rescue!' ran from mouth to mouth, and with a tumultuous movement away rushed the crowds towards the quay.

When they got there they found the Tipperary contingent haranguing fresh crowds that darkened the whole river-front, and truly, a remarkable contingent it was.

In the midst of the people halted a dissipated