

THE HALF SIR

By GERALD GRIFFIN

CHAPTER VI.

Delay the bride? Bid Our friends disperse and keep their mirth un- waded For another morn? Fie! fie! Have you a name To care for? What a scandal will it bring Upon your fame!—A youth, brave, noble, for- tunate, worthy as fair a fate as thou couldst offer. Were it made doubly prosperous. What, think you, M'ke you and absolute?

The haughty independence of spirit which she loved to indulge, or to affect, returned with more than its accustomed force on the heart of Emily Bury, when she learned that Hamond had finally and fully effected the half marriage which his letter contained. She could hardly blame him, and she would not blame herself, so that her only resource lay in resuming the general air of indifference which she had relinquished so instantly, on discovering the mistake in which Hamond's silence originated. In this she succeeded so well that her friend Martha was once more at a loss to conjecture what was the real effect of the disappointment she had experienced. Miss Bury, however, was perhaps too clever for her own interest; for the perfect ease and carelessness of her manner exposed her more than ever to attentions which made her heart sick, and solicitations which she feared on- ly to discourage, even while her soul turned in disgust from their dull and passionless monotony. She dared not, however, suffer this secret feeling to become in any degree apparent, for she dreaded, beyond all other evils, that now lay within the range of probability, any diminution of number or brilliancy in the train of her admirers. The system of duplicity (though she would esteem the term hardly applied) in- volved her in many difficulties. She lost, in the first place, the confidence, and in a great measure, the friendship of Miss O'Brien, who, though she could not penetrate Emily's secret, was yet quick-sighted enough to know that her little share of influence on the mind of the latter no longer existed. Neither could she hope that the fashionable love which she had excited in the heart, or in the head perhaps, of young E— would continue to grow and flourish on absolute coldness; and she ventured, in the fear of a second and doubtful encouragement, which he took the liberty of estimating at a far higher worth than she intended. He became importunate—she toyed and shifted her ground—the blockade—she pointed; her friends first wondered at her, and then blamed her—and at last persecuted her. Every body said that young E— wronged himself—that he was entitled to a far higher union—and that he was exceedingly ill-treated—Miss Bury should know her own mind—she was taking very strange airs upon her, etc. And so to relieve her conscience—and to satisfy friends—and to reward her swain for his perseverance, Emily drew a long deep sigh, and promised him marriage.

she should spend some months in a foreign climate, where the air, more temperate and lighter than that of her native land, might agree better with the subdued tone of her constitution. These months turned out to be years. E— refused to accompany his wife, lest it should be supposed that he was putting his estate "to nurse;" and migrated to the British metropolis, as the representative in the lower house of an Irish county, where, it was said, he did not scruple putting his honour "to nurse" in the lap of the reigning minister. New connections, or a dislike of the old, contributed to render him a permanent absentee, while Lady E— deterred by the continuance of her ill health, and not a little by a reluctance to encounter the revival of many painful associations, seemed to have cast the last idea of revisiting the land of her birth. Her guardian (her only relative in Ireland) had died within the year after her departure, and she had no friends in that country for whose society she would endanger the shattered remnant of her peace of mind, by exposing it to so many rude remembrances as must necessarily present themselves to her senses on her return. Martha, kind and good as she had always been, until her friend thought proper to cast off, was now the happy and virtuous wife of a sensible man (who understood nothing of romance, and hated pride, although he was a Scot), and the careful mother of a pair of chubby little Munster fellows. Without having one black drop of envy in her whole composition, Lady E— could not help feeling that Martha, the matron, would not be the pleasantest companion in the world for Emily, the forsaken and the neglected—and she had her doubts, moreover, whether that lady would herself be anxious to renew the early friendship that had constituted the happiness of so many joyous years to both. She made no overture, therefore, and in a few years more, Emily Bury, her husband, Eugene Hamond—and the story of their strange courtship, were perfectly forgotten in the circles in which they had mingled during their residence in Ireland.

We love not to dwell longer than is necessary to the development of our tale, on the history of feelings (however interesting from their general application to human nature), in which no opportunity is afforded for illustration of national characters—that being the principal design of these volumes. The reader, therefore, will allow us here to return to our own Munster, congratulating ourselves on our escape (if indeed we have escaped) from our adventurous sojourn in a quarter of Ireland which is rendered formidable to us by the prior occupation of so many gifted spirits—and where, last of all in the order of time, though far otherwise in the order of genius, the vigorous hands that penned the O'Hara Tales, have rung from the Irish heart the truest melodies of its character, and left it a dry and barren subject to all who shall succeed them. We return, then, with pleasure, to Munster—an unsifted soil, where we may be likely to get more than Gratiano's two grains of wheat in a bushel of chaff for our pains.

CHAPTER VII. Let me know some little joy— We that suffer long annoy And content our hearts with thought Through an ill-wrought thought. The Woman Hater.

We have our own good reasons for requesting that the reader may ask us no questions concerning the occurrences which filled up the time between Hamond's flight and the year preceding that on which our tale commenced—a year which is still remembered with sorrow by many a childless parent and homeless orphan in Ireland, and which appears to have been marked by a train of calamities now even to that country—a famine—a plague—a system of rebellion—the most fearful, silent, and fatally calm that the demon of misrule ever occasioned, and which seemed as if all the hereditary evils with which the land was ever afflicted had welled out from their poison from new sources upon its surface, to present a diabolical contrast to the hideous pageant with which it had suffered itself to be mocked on the preceding year.

In the spring, or, rather, early in the summer of this year, on a red and blowing morn, the surface of that part of the Shannon which lies between Kilrush and Loop Head, was covered with a craft which is peculiar to the river, the heavily laden and clumsy turf boats. Galway hookers provided with flin for the Limerick market, large vessels of burthen going and returning to and from the same city, and revenue cutters, distinguished by the flatness of their bows and the whiteness of their sails from the black and lumbering craft above mentioned, and presenting, by such variety, a very lively and animated picture on the often dreary and monotonous face of the sheeted river. The red clouds, which became massed into huge and toppling piles upon the western horizon, and confronted the newly risen sun with an angry and threatening aspect, afforded an indication, which experience had taught him to appreciate, of the weather which the boatman was destined to contend with in the course of the day. All seemed to be aware of this and the utmost exertions were made by the helmsmen to accomplish as much as was possible of their progress before the southerly gale should become too heavy for their canvass.

On the forecastle of one of the Galway hookers, a tight-built little vessel, which, by the smallness of its bends, its greyhound length, and gunwale distinguished by a curve inward (technically called "fankle home") was enabled to bear a heavier sea and make a much faster progress than the other open boats of the river—on the forecastle of such a vessel, two men were placed; one, who belonged to the boat, as appeared by his blue frieze jacket ornamented with rows of horn buttons, coarse canvass trousers, red comforter, battered and bludgeoned with a bit of old cloth, and the about with a bit of linen as a sudatorium for a hat band; the other seated on the fluke of the anchor, in a thread bare brown coat

and cord knee-breeches, old brown hat and dark striped woolen waistcoat, and making it sufficiently manifest by his odd staring manner and raw questions that he was a passenger, and a stranger to the part of the country by which he was sailing.

DAN RILEY'S WILD RIDE.

WM. A. BOWEN.

The crimson glare of the semaphore at Welmer made but a faint glimmering pathway through the cold mist, and a halo shone around the light inside the office window. It was the only light office between Seguin and Schulenberg. An all-night man had to be kept there because there was an up grade over two miles long just west of the depot. Here heavy freight trains were frequently stalled, and had to roll back and beyond the station to take a header for the hill and force the grade.

thing can prevent terrible now!" "Can't you stop 101 at Kew asked Jim, although he knew able reply. "No operator there! Per suddenly sick to-day." Jim lunged out the red light, rushing down to the end of form where he lived, awakened and little boy and quickly the situation. "You may be a help some he said. "Get up and di you run and awa' up th I'll be ready for 71." As the boy started tra rattling one hundred yard the tank one of the brakem station down from a box car. "Who's pulling you to nig "Riley." "Dan Riley? What's he ing you? I thought it was way that train dashed in an "Why, there was a lot ishable stuff, and all the were out. Dan was han and they nabbed him wit wheeler. Jim rushed down to the shouted: "Riley, come t quick! Have your fireman to pull out, and I'll have h while we get orders!" Riley told his fireman t ready and then ran the office. He himself raced foot. To the wondering crew at the office, Jim expla Just as he had finished, a in half dressed carrying case. "Riley, there's no tim said Jim. "You must be Here are the other do now! Somehow I feel a going to take a way out of In reply, Riley turned man: "Ned, I'm going to 101 before she gets to W You needn't go unless yo can fire and run her, too. You doctors who ain't must be prepared for the trip you ever took! T hundred people on the only way to save them catch that Limited—and flying to-night!" As he talked he was engine, the others inst lowing. Dan, Ned and tors silently got into the placed the doctors wh hold on and not be in just behind him, one s apron between the top and holding on to the right-hand side, and the same position on the left side. The great m ticking the news to beac The steam-gauge pounds, and Ned began coal. Riley slowly pul open and threw his lev the engine fairly lowfo sparks over the telegra seemed to gather hers plunge into the night. As the drivers began gently pulled on his th his lever a notch, g her steam as the pist in and out faster and an incarnate force for in silhouette against thrown back from the doctors stared at th they felt an awe creep The bell kept ringi Ned was shoveling co hot throat of the iron few seconds of the th appearance of the sh to stand aside. Before the first switch at the more than a half mile the engine was almo the rails in mighty t steady, regular pul Riley kept his eye gleam of white that sm mist into walls of each side of the tr appeared like two cr less through which light from unknown d He pulled his lever quarter notch, drew to the last cog, and l It showed one hund pounds, and the pop The time was no Many farm houses th their windows, and c people heard the shrieking whistle an pop valves, and rem Limited has just gon By the time the o Sandy bridge, the si so fast that they l only up and down, a peared like giant solid iron. To keep upright with all their streng and lurching every opened mouth, th black that was str serve as a reflector faces and forms of venturing against sudden death. Suddenly Ned pop and began shoveli Riley pulled his t cog, and the machi pulling leap. Ned two red end light deeper, but they and the Limited w of more than fifty Southern Pacific ballasted and sm country, but it wa night. The pursers k fifty miles, and r that flying train. White's switch sh fourteen miles sh Coa; the buck floor; the buck n stand up and h