

The lovers had to meet furtively of late; for, though Mr. Maher had not forbidden Frank his house, still there was a coldness in his manner that impressed him with the belief that a change of circumstances had produced a coldness on his part. Besides, he told his daughter that she should not encourage the young man to be neglecting his business.

Mrs. Hogan was Alice's adviser. She sympathized with the young lovers, and warmly entered into all their little plans. Alice loved Frank with all the true devotion of an honest, generous heart. They went to school together, they plucked flowers, and roamed the fields together in search of birds' nests, and now, when their hearts were united, was fortune to separate them?

After one of these passionate love meetings with Alice, he was returning home. His uncle's car had come a part of the way with him, and then, with his gun upon his shoulder, he set out to make a short way through the country.

Alice had told him, with tears in her eyes, that her father had ordered her not to meet him again. Their interview was a sad one.

"Frank, love," said she, after relating all to him, "what am I to do? I cannot disobey my father, and yet, Frank, I will miss you so much that I would rather be dead than not see you."

Frank held his hands, to his face and groaned.

"Don't fret, Frank," said she.

"O Alice! Alice! I could bear the loss of wealth well, for I'm young and strong, and there is a wide field of enterprise in other lands; but to lose you, to lose you is losing all that binds me to life; and my poor father, and mother, and my darling sisters. O Alice! O Alice! but aor you I could smile at the world; frown at the loss of fortune; I could scorn all!"

"Frank! Frank! don't fret so; let what will come we will not be separated. No! God never made two honest, loving hearts to make them unhappy. Don't fret, Frank!" and she gently pulled his hands from his face.

"O Alice," said he, "there are times when I picture the future radiant with sunshine; you my own sweet wife; our home hallowed by love, and all the domestic virtues. And now, such a fair, bright dream, to be but a dream. Indeed, oh! it's enough to drive me mad! I have read of men who, unable to bear the loss of so much happiness, penetrated the dark mysteries of the future, sooner than live a worthless, hated life."

Alice looked up and shuddered.

"Only that I have hope in the future, only that I have your love to sustain me, only that I have domestic ties that bind me to life, I fear I should become one of these."

"O Frank! Frank! don't say so, or my heart will break. Let us part now, Frank and not meet too soon, unless you have very particular business with me, as I do not wish to disobey my father. When you want to see me, you can send Shemus to Mrs. Moran, or to me."

"Be it so, love; I suppose if your father ordered you to marry some one else you could not disobey?"

"Frank!" said she, "I did not expect this from you, after all my promises of devotion. You know my father has hitherto encouraged our love. Now, when my young heart is yours, if he ordered me to wed another, I would be justified in refusing him. No, Frank, if I'm not yours, I'll never be the wife of another."

"Alice, forgive my unjust doubts; you know the unfortunate are always suspicious."

It was after this interview that we met Frank returning home. His heart was full of a deep love, and yet the uncertainty of the future oppressed him. He did not for a moment doubt Alice's love, yet he knew that if he lost his property he would not get her father's consent. He had little faith in Mr. Ellis; for, in order to put him upon his guard, Mary Cahill told him what Burkem had said. Though he looked upon this as an idle boast, still he knew so much of Mr. Ellis's unprincipled character that he did not altogether disregard it.

As Frank was passing by Mrs. Butler's he heard the sounds of mirth inside.

Mrs. Butler's establishment had undergone a great change for the worse. The ruddy horseman had fallen from his perch; the windows were all broken and stuffed with rags; even Mrs. Butler herself had lost her bloom, and now looked thin and faded. The times were telling upon her, and, to use her own words, "she wasn't herself at all." She managed to keep a few gallons and a drop of beer somewhere for the boys whenever they called, which was seldom indeed.

Frank stood at the door listening to the Rover, who had just commenced a song.

The Rover was something of a poet, and a great politician. He wrote most of the rough political ballads for the boys. He had a strong, sonorous voice, so that he did full justice to his doggerel verses.

"Well done!" said Frank, opening the door and walking in as the Rover finished his song. "Where have you been this time back?"

"Not far, Mr. Frank. How is every inch of you, sir?"

"Very well, though I can't say times are going on well with us."

"I'm sorry to hear so; for it was you kept the good, plentiful house, full of lashins and lavin's; but we'll have a change soon, Mr. Frank. Our day is coming, believe me. That was a great meeting the clubs had in Dublin. It won't go