

spring weather now invited him. There was invigoration in the mountain air—in the toil of the ascent, the clambering over rocks and the jumping through the underwood—in the robust youth of the leaves and mosses—and in the sound of the streamlets trickling down to the valley. He felt the inspiration: it changed the fever of his thoughts to vigour.

At a considerable depth in the wood there was a large, circular *curran* or mound with spreading beeches planted in a ring on the top, and a clearing for some distance around, which left the whole valley visible from its summit. Here, on the mossy side of the mound, Gerald found repose. Under its shade of leaves and briers he half forgot the present in thinking of the past, when Cressy Artslade was his companion in this same retreat, and when the flowers, and the play, and two sweet cherry lips filled his cup of pleasures.

Did he miss his little companion? Assuredly: she connected him with times of innocence, which the world had hurried him far away from, yet to which his inmost wishes looked regretfully back. Did he love her? Perhaps he did: perhaps he knew only the calm love of a brother and a playmate, for in his heart there was still an Arcadia. It was a joy to love some one—some one so bright and pure and true—and to be loved in return, just as it was a joy to hear the wood-birds chirping their consolations in his ear, and to see the wide valley lying as sunny before him as when he was a child: why shut out this ray of sunshine with analytical bolts and bars? Why, when Cressy Artslade like his father, and like the Castle, and like the birds, and like the valley, would soon be lost to him forever?

For in one determination he was fixed: to leave, and that at once, the scene of his family's ruin and to shape his life in other moulds than those of bad tradition. Nor did he care to return among his College companions in the character of a reduced gentleman to be slighted in his poverty, or, worse, pitied. With the Union had perished the last virtue of Irish society, that air of venerable unselfishness and chivalry which ennobled even its vices. Nothing remained but on the one side an army of corrupt official despots and upstarts; on the other the low murmuring helpless millions with whom alone he could sympathize: but only sympathize, for were they not wholly lost?

He looked beyond his own unhappy land, and saw the young Republic of France, fresh from its bloody baptism, astonishing Europe with its

pro prowess: through all the revolting horrors of its infancy, there shone a splendid scheme of Manhood, which, changing its first dress of Liberty, robed itself in Glory, and drew to its worship the young enthusiasm of the world. Gerald O'Dwyer was not placed by age or disposition beyond the range of this phrenzy. Though his reason showed him many a patch and many a tinsel fraud in the finery of the Revolution, it was change, adventure, power; and he thirsted for all three. They were the elements of success in his mission: fate might combine them into a force to reverse the present and restore the past. And France began to be the back ground of his plans.

Much more did his thoughts busy themselves in this direction till they slid into dreams, and he was only roused from a deep sleep a few hours after by the sound of voices at the other side of the mound.

He listened and found they were familiar to him: they were the voices of Cressy Artslade, and her sober-souled squire, Charlie Sackwell.

Gerald was quite screened from their view, and after what had past the previous evening between them, he wished above all things to avoid another meeting with Cressy. But it would be hard for him to attempt an escape without attracting their notice. So he waited in silence, perhaps with some vague curiosity to see how far Cressy had forgotten her resolution of eternal fidelity.

CHAPTER XII.

ACROSS THE TUMBLERS.

Poor little Cressy! She was sitting utterly disconsolate, though the birds twittered gaily around her and the bees hummed their tunes among the blue-bells and fox glove. There was a great void in her heart which dulled her senses to all the old joys, or tuned them into sad reminders of joys that were no more.

A congenial companion in such a mood was Master Sackwell, who said little and thought less. Indeed, it would be hard to say whether Cressy or the bull-pup held the highest place in his esteem. Certainly Snoozler seemed to him the more amiable character of the two; for, while Cressy teased, Snoozler only rolled his stupid eyes about and basked in the sunshine in as well-bred fashion as a *dilettante*.

"Don't you think the Wood is as lonely as a graveyard to-day without Gerald?" queried the girl, wearily. "I know I do."

"I don't," said Master Sackwell, bluntly.

"Oh! you cruel boy, I say it is lonely. I