

REDMOND O'HANLON

An Historical story of the Cromwellian Settlement.

CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED.

"What, then, do his statements, as they affect me, amount to? ... "That Kathleen Fitzpatrick is not what I supposed her to be; what my father believed her to be, when he encouraged me to win her affections. ... "Kathleen Fitzpatrick, instead of being what I supposed, one of the largest fortunes in Ireland, is solely dependent for a dowry upon the good feeling of her aunt, a lady so young in years, and so jovial in disposition, that the great probability is, she will marry again. ... "It is well I have not committed myself with any formal declaration of love—without a regular proposal of marriage; and if I had," said Lord Arran, with some bitterness of feeling, and stings of selfish vanity—"remembering what happened to-day, there is a chance that the son of the Lord Lieutenant would have been rejected by a portionless country girl! ... "As it is, I am free, and I can cast back my eyes upon the past without reproach. I can, therefore, as a disinterested person, look to the circumstances disclosed in this letter, not as they reach me, but as they touch the interests of Kathleen. ... "Rich or poor, she is a lovely girl, and is worthy of having a friend, though I cannot sacrifice myself, my position, and my prospects, by becoming her husband. ... "If I believe this letter-writer, there are two persons, either of whom being living, she has not the smallest claim upon the property to which rumour had declared her to be entitled. ... "Either of these claimants, as a matter of course and right, will dispossess her. ... "And yet, let me think; if her claim be, as I fear it is, without a shadow of foundation, or a probability of success, how comes it that there is some dark undescribed conspiracy against her—a conspiracy in which that other girl's name is mentioned, in which the tall, black-joking Amazonian's father is a participator? or how is it that my father, the Lord Lieutenant, an actor in the affairs of Ireland for the last forty years, who must have known old Colonel Fitzpatrick, and must have heard the strange story of the son; how happens it, that he, so grave, so reserved, so cautious, so far-seeing, and so prudent, should have recommended me to seek for this young girl's hand, because with that hand would be transferred to her husband the richest lands and the finest fortune in Ireland? ... "One safe conclusion as regards myself I can deduce from it all, and that is, to be guarded in my advances—not to commit myself by word or look with Miss Kathleen Fitzpatrick; to act as the young lady herself has already told me she wishes I should conduct myself—that is, as a very well-behaved young gentleman—not to act the lover, but the friend. ... "With the knowledge I have of the maiden's expectations, it will not be necessary to repeat the warning; at least, I shall consult my father before I turn another compliment to her beauty. ... "Heigh ho! I wish she had the fortune she was represented to possess; for after all, I find I love her more than I wish; and that she has got such a hold on my affections, that I shall not be able, without a long and painful struggle, to shake her off. ... "I will sacrifice for her everything but myself; rather than make her my wife, without a fortune, I will endure the pangs of absence, the pain of regret, and many long nights of inconsolable sorrow. ... "Here are noble, generous resolutions. I must watch myself, or I shall never have the strength to keep them. ... "Meanwhile, what advice should I give to this fair maiden with respect to this anonymous letter? ... "To treat it seriously, or as a fabrication? ... "If I desire her to look upon it in a serious light, then I must always advise her to show the letter to Lady Diana; and the instant she finds any danger threatens her niece, or herself, through her niece, then she will—I know her well—at once fly to England; and so deprive me of these thousand agreeable telegrams, and of the chance of becoming the husband of Kathleen, supposing Kathleen should eventually become possessed of a great fortune. ... "On the other hand, if I treat it altogether as a fabrication, Kathleen is too shrewd and sharp-witted to be blinded by me. I should lose the confidence she now reposes in me. ... "What then is to be done? To say that the matter is not so serious as that it is necessary to alarm her aunt about it; but that one useful lesson may be drawn from it—to be more cautious for the future; not to go abroad; never to venture outside the park-walls without a strong armed escort, and to allege as a reason for this, an unusual attack of nervousness caused by the alarming reports she has heard of the fearful exploits of Redmond O'Hanlon. Yes, that will do; and meanwhile I have the advantage of possessing a secret in common with the enchantress Kathleen, a circumstance of no slight importance, should subsequent events render it desirable for me, and beneficial as regards herself, that I should publicly become a suitor for her hand. Yes, that will do; and now for the fair Kathleen, and a sonata in the drawing-room—an excellent whet for one of the amiable Diana Massey's luxurious dinners. ... "Lord Arran was thus thinking upon his future plans, as he advanced towards the mansion, when he suddenly found his steps arrested by a fashionable and handsome dame, who seemed approaching to the middle age, and whose mature beauties were on the present occasion heightened by the hectic flush in her cheek, and the more brilliant light in her jet black eyes. "Oh, my Lord, my Lord!" she cried, in a voice of alarm, "what a horrid country is this we live in! better to be a man than a woman in Ireland. They do not run away with men, and they do with women. Oh, the horrid Irish!" ... "The difference in Ireland between men and women," said Lord Arran, smiling, "is this; the men capture the women, but the women act with still greater cruelty, for they not only captivate the men, but sometimes kill them with their cruelty." ... "My Lord of Arran, this is no time for jesting," said Lady Diana Massey. "I have been informed that this moment of a frightful case of abduction; and you must have seen, no later than last Monday, the lady upon whom this awful outrage has been perpetrated." ... "An abduction—on Monday last—I must have seen the lady. I entreat of you, Lady Diana, speak more plainly; for at present, all I can say is, that I am utterly at a loss to comprehend the cause for your alarm."

"The lady I allude to is, as I am informed, a Miss Judith Lawson—a person of low birth, but large fortune." ... "Judith Lawson!" exclaimed Lord Arran. "Why, she has been before now the subject of conversation in this very spot. Strange that a name before unthought of, or unknown, should on a sudden be mixed up with events that may affect the whole future course and action of a life. What of Miss Judith Lawson; for I certainly did see her at the race-course on last Monday?" ... "I have just received a letter," said Lady Diana; "in which it is stated that Miss Lawson was, on her way home, attacked by Redmond O'Hanlon's gang near Drogheda; that her female attendants, and her two male servants, who were in waiting upon her, were robbed of their horses and money, but not otherwise injured; whereas Miss Lawson, not carried off, and it is now supposed, concealed in some of Redmond O'Hanlon's hiding places—but what will become of her no one knows, and no one can ever guess. ... "She may be detained to be the hundred-and-first wife of O'Hanlon, or she may be retained for the purpose of being sold to some poor royalist, on account of her large fortune; or she may be merely kept in safe custody for the purpose of extorting for her release a large ransom from her father, who is reported to be enormously rich. Whatever be her destiny, one cannot but pity the fate of the poor girl, and shudder to think what would be the lot of what in the world, for instance, would become of me, my Lord, if I were to find myself made the hundred-and-second wife of Mr. Redmond O'Hanlon?" ... "That you would find Mr. Redmond O'Hanlon for once in his life telling the truth," said Lord Arran, "and on his knees making, if you required it, his solemn oath, that his hundred-and-second wife surpassed in beauty all the hundred-and-one charmers who had preceded her." ... "Oh! it is all very well for you men to joke on such a subject; but for a poor, lone, and not very old woman as I am, the thought of such a terrible termination to one's career is enough to freeze the very soul in one's body with terror. At least," said Lady Diana, "I will not submit to it. I will not stay a week longer in this abominable, inhuman, woman-persecuting country. Before I am two days older, Kathleen and I shall be on our way to England. On Saturday next, your lordship will, I expect, be bidding us farewell, at the Ring's End, from which the passenger-vessel takes its departure." ... "Can you be really serious, Lady Diana, in thinking of flying from Ireland, because a young woman of low birth has been run away with, and, for aught we know, run away with by her own consent, and in accordance with an arrangement to which she was a consenting party; for such things I do, with all my respect and veneration for the fair sex, assert have happened from the days of Helena of Lacedaemon down to the present hour? Why, my good lady, I have seen the damsel by whose rumored misfortune you would guide your own destiny. As a gentleman, I am bound to say I saw nothing to her discredit; but as an observer of mankind—ay, and of womankind too—I would say, judging of her by her appearance, her jaunty dress, her bold mien, and her saucy face, she is exactly that description of an Helena who would not run away from a Thebes, in order that she might be forced afterwards to choose a drivelling Meneleus for a husband. Nature does not write with a true hand, if it has not stamped upon the face, feature, and figure of Judith Lawson the courage of a soldier, with the form of a woman. Be certain that the man who ran away with that lady against her will must, if he had common sense, have made his own will, before he ventured upon so perilous an enterprise. There was no abduction, be certain, in the case of Miss Judith Lawson. It was an unwise match, and called—for the purpose of saving the lady's honor, and to reconcile her father to a misfortune—an abduction." ... "Well! well! what stupid and lying fables are circulated about the plainest facts," sagaciously remarked Lady Diana Massey. "It must be as your lordship says. It was no abduction at all, but a runaway match, for which all the preparations had been, no doubt, made before the young fugitive appeared on the race-course; and I dare say, that Mr. Redmond O'Hanlon, upon whose broad shoulders every misdeed that occurs in Ireland is fathered, had no more to do with the abduction of Miss Judith Lawson, than he had with the flight of that naughty lady who ran away with one of your ancestors, an ill-behaved King of Leinster." ... "I repudiate the connexion with Mac-Murrough, although I cannot undertake to vindicate the reputation of the celebrated chieftain, Count Redmond O'Hanlon, who, whatever his faults, his errors, and his crimes, cannot be denied to be, both by birth and education, a gentleman. We, Lady Diana, who can claim for ourselves purity of blood, and noble descent, should be the last to deny those advantages to one's enemy, when he is rightfully and justly entitled to them. My father, I know, would willingly see Ireland well rid of Redmond O'Hanlon, whether by rope or gun; by stratagem, the law, or open force; but saying so much against that notorious partisan, I am bound also to say, from all I have heard of the Count, that he would not, for the world's wealth, demean himself by a marriage with one whose birth was so low, or rather so sordid as that of Judith Lawson. But I hope," added Lord Arran, "I have said enough to change your determination as to leaving Ireland; that you will remain, as you have done here, in perfect peace and security, and, occasionally, I hope, more frequently for the future, gazing my father's court with your presence." ... "No, my Lord," said the lady, gravely shaking her head, "you have not changed my determination, for it has not been hastily adopted. I have, for some time past, been thinking of carrying it into execution, and the incident we have been speaking of has but served to provoke its sudden announcement, and speedily fulfilment. We are not sufficiently protected where we are. I am not old enough to be the sole protector of one so young, and so fair, and of such wealth as Kathleen will, when she comes of age, be mistress of. Affairs in Ireland, the state of anarchy into which society has been cast, and from which even the wise and prudent administration of your father, the Duke of Ormonde, has not yet been able to extricate it—the insecurity of life, of property, the frequency of such a crime as that of abduction,—all are warnings to me to batten myself to England as a place of safety, of security, of peace, of repose, of—"

nor property, nor liberty in England! What do you mean?" ... "Simply what I say," replied Lord Arran. "Has not your ladyship heard anything from your friends of the Popish plot?" ... "To be sure I have," replied the lady. "I have heard that some vile impostor, a notorious swindler, named Oates, combined with other persons, already convicted of villainous offences, have been concocting an improbable tale, in which all sorts of incomprehensible and impossible falsehoods are blended together; and I have heard that a fanatic named Dr. Tongue, and that notorious rascal, the Republican Ashley Cooper,—the same base man who sat as a judge, and condemned to death men who had been participants in his own crimes of high treason against the late King—I have heard that these persons have been disturbing the public mind in England with tales of terror about what they call 'the horrid, hellish Popish plot.' But how does that affect me? or why should such a lying tale be of the smallest interest to me, neither I nor my niece being Roman Catholics?" ... "Lady Diana Massey," said Lord Arran, in deep solemnity, and showing by his manner that he was deeply affected by what he said to her, "I pledge you my honor as an Irish peer, that if you had repeated in England the words you have just spoken to me had you thus ventured so to speak of the Rev. Dr. Oates, or Mr. Bedloe, or the Rev. Dr. Tongue, or my lord Shaftesbury, or expressed but a thousandth part of the doubts you have uttered to me as to the truth of the accusation now made against the Roman Catholics, you would, most probably, be torn to pieces by the mob, you would certainly, if you escaped with life for the moment, be conveyed to the most fetid dungeon in Newgate, and most probably be tried at the next sessions upon a charge of being a participator in 'the horrid, hellish Popish plot.'" ... "Whatever Oates might invent and swear against you, and that Bedloe would swear and corroborate, would be believed by judge and jury, though you had a thousand witnesses to contradict them, and you would, before three months had passed away, be convicted and executed as a traitor. There is not a man of common sense in England who does not think as you do of Titus Oates and his confederates; but at the same time, there is not a man of common sense who would place himself in the hands of his enemies, by expressing aloud what in his heart he believes respecting them, their perjuries, and their plot. England is, at this day, laboring under the feverish heat of a popular mania, and a universal delusion, and that mania and delusion are now comprised in the same words—the horrid Popish plot—a plot in which the accused are the victims, and the accusers the real conspirators; but upon the whole story, the application is this—that true or false, credible or incredible, possible or impossible, it all comes to a case, where the multitude are taken captive in their imaginations, and have no longer any other rule, measure, will, or liking, than what they draw from the dictate of their leaders. And who are their leaders? A fanatic madman named Tongue, a canting knave, Titus Oates, and an unbelieving hypocrite, Shaftesbury, of whom it has been most justly, truly, and aptly said, that 'he was as good a Protestant as any one can be supposed to be who could atheistically call the New Testament the new cheat.' I may add, that to give these several leaders or concocters of the Popish plot their due, there has been nothing wanting to their purposes that either fraud, industry, confidence, or hypocrisy could furnish. And you, Lady Diana, propose to exchange the comparative quietness of Ireland for the purpose of plunging into the midst of the sanguinary tumult that now pervades all parts of England. I tell you, in all sincerity, that with your outspoken honesty, you could not calculate upon a day's repose, or an hour's repose in England. As yet we are free to speak what we think of the Popish plot; but how long we may be so is more than I can venture to promise. That the attempt is making to extend the flame to this country, I am certain; for I see the proofs of the pressure upon my father by the proclamations he has been issuing against Popish priests, bishops, and Jesuits. Better, however, for you to live in a land governed by him, than to place yourself in the power of the English Privy Council, and within the reach of a warrant corroborated with the ready and corrupt oaths of an Oates, a Bedloe, a France, or a Dangerfield." ... "Oh dear! oh dear!" cried the now-terrified Lady Diana, "how numberless are the anxieties and how great the dangers that beset a poor woman who has lost her husband! What a sad thing it is to be a widow!" ... "Excuse me, Lady Diana, for differing in opinion from you," said Lord Arran; "but at present you are much safer as a Protestant widow, than you would be if your first husband were still living, and you never had been a widow; for he was a Roman Catholic, and his wealth and position would have rendered him an object of suspicion, and you, as his wife, would be involved in the same danger to which he was exposed." ... "Then your lordship's advice to me is to remain in Ireland," said Lady Diana. ... "Decidedly so," answered Lord Arran; "but as your ladyship honors me by asking my opinion as to the course you should adopt, I would take the liberty of recommending to you, considering the state of this country, how its roads are beset with highwaymen, and how many men of desperate fortunes are to be met with in every province; that neither you nor your niece should ever venture abroad unless attended by an armed escort, on whose vigilance and courage you could rely." ... "I will do exactly as your lordship suggests," replied the lady; "but I have detained you too long in the open air; let us proceed towards the house." ... "Honor me by resting on my arm," said Lord Arran, as he walked onward with the lady; "and now as your ladyship has so favored me with your confidence, and as you cannot but be conscious how deeply I am interested in all that affects yourself and the honor of your family, I would take the liberty of asking if you have ever heard a rumor of Colonel Fitzpatrick and of his son being both still living." ... "They are idle rumors, my lord," replied Lady Diana; "they are the vague and baseless visions of the Irish peasantry, who are attached to a child-like truth and fidelity to the ancient owners of the soil, and who, wishing the Colonel and his son were both living have readily circulated an idle tale, as if it were an unbounded fact." ... "Is there any possibility of your ladyship being mistaken?" asked Lord Arran, with an anxiety he could not conceal. ... "Not the slightest," replied the lady. "If the Colonel, or the Colonel's son, were living, I should be the first to hear of them. There is no reason why either should conceal from me the knowledge of his existence. On the contrary, I ought to be, and I am sure I should be, the very first person to whom such a communication would be made. But supposing an impostor in the case, supposing some knave desired to set up a false claim to the property, then the last person he would wish to see or to communicate with would be myself; because I must be, beyond all others, in a position to detect the impostor." ... "Lord Arran's heart bounded with delight, at the positive declarations from Lady Diana. He walked on for some time in silence, considering within himself whether the present was not a propitious moment for avowing himself a suitor for the hand of Kathleen; and it was with the intention of leading to such a declaration, that he thus resumed the conversation.—

"I have heard such rumors as I have referred to; but henceforth I shall know how to treat them; or any one venturing to support them. I hope that the time, the place, and the opportunity may be afforded to me, when I may meet face to face either the person calling himself Colonel Fitzpatrick, or the son of Colonel Fitzpatrick, and on the instant I will denounce such persons as knaves, and publicly brand them as impostors." ... "As Lord Arran gave utterance to these words, he felt himself struck suddenly and sharply on the cheek, and at the same instant perceived that the blow was inflicted by a glove that had been flung at him. As he did so, he perceived a man standing within a thick clump of trees and close-set bushes, which he had just passed. His assailant, he perceived, was a tall, fair-complexioned young man, in the riding dress of a gentleman of the day, and that he stood with one hand grasping his sword, and the fingers of the other hand to his lips, as if challenging him to a combat, and at the same time warning him to be silent. ... "Such was the interpretation Lord Arran put upon the incident that had just occurred; and (therefore, concealing as well as he could his emotions from the lady, he walked on leisurely with her for about a hundred yards, and trying to occupy her attention with a conversation so vague, that he could not tell the substance of it when it was over, he stopped suddenly and said, 'I beg your ladyship's pardon, I wish to return for one of my gloves which I dropped in the park; I am sure I know the very spot where I can find it again.'" ... "One of your gloves, my lord!" said Lady Diana; "your lordship is laboring under some delusion; why, you have, at this moment, both your gloves on your hands." ... "Oh! true, true," replied Lord Arran, stammering and confused, "but the glove I wish to find again is a riding glove. There are some circumstances connected with it, which would cause me great grief if I could not recover it. I pray your pardon, Lady Diana, I shall be with you again in ten minutes." ... "Lord Arran, as he spoke, hurried back to the spot where the glove was still lying. Before he could reach it his assailant advanced from the clump of trees in which he had been concealed, and taking up the glove stood there, holding it in his hand, and awaiting his lordship's approach. ... "A thrill of surprise passed through his lordship's frame, as he regarded the stranger, a man about thirty years of age, and in height nearly six feet, with broad shoulders and well-knit frame, alike indicative of great strength and activity. It was not, however, the stranger's manly form and noble bearing that excited the surprise of Lord Arran; but it was his likeness in features to Kathleen Fitzpatrick, and beyond all things, in his long, flowing, flaxen, yellow ringlets, which covered his shoulders, and in his luminous large blue eyes. ... "I presume, sir," said Lord Arran, "you are the owner of the glove, which was flung at me." ... "I am," replied the stranger; "and by my hand it was cast at you." ... "With the intention of insulting me?" said Lord Arran. ... "Yes," answered the stranger; "I repelled an insult with an insult." ... "Insult you, sir!" said Lord Arran. "I never saw you in my life before this moment." ... "An offence can be more strongly conveyed by words than looks," remarked the stranger. ... "You are aware, I presume, from your appearance, of the consequences of what you have done," said Lord Arran, and his color slightly changed as he spoke. ... "Certainly—and ready on the instant to encounter them," answered the stranger, jaying his hand on his sword. ... "Not here, sir—not now, at all events," replied Lord Arran, "for here we would be liable to interruption. You compel me, sir, to embark in a quarrel that cannot be appeased without bloodshed; I have a right to know that I risk my life with an equal." ... "I did not, until this moment," said the stranger, with a somewhat scornful voice, "suppose that a Butler would bear a blow from an inferior; that an offence given would level all distinctions, in the estimation at least of the offended party. But be satisfied, my Lord, although I do not bear a title, I am, as a gentleman, your equal." ... "And your name is—?" said Lord Arran, eagerly. ... "Vincent Fitzpatrick," replied the stranger. ... "Well, Mr. Vincent Fitzpatrick, meet me in the park to-morrow evening at five o'clock, with one other person to vouch for you as the person you describe yourself to be, and then we shall cross swords with each other." ... "Be it so," replied Vincent Fitzpatrick; "but as it is not your lordship's convenience to dispose of this quarrel at once, and where we stand, may I venture to suggest, that mutual friends may arrange for us both the time and the place where they and we may be secure from that interruption of which you are now apprehensive." ... "Very well, sir," answered Lord Arran. "Let me know where you are to be found, and a friend shall wait upon you." ... "The hotel in Cook-street, of which a man named John Elliott is landlord," said Vincent, as he turned away from Lord Arran. ... "This is no impostor," said Lord Arran to himself. "There can be no doubt he is what he calls himself. His look—his very voice, are the same as his cousin's. His quarrel is a just one; but then he has struck me, and that blow must be avenged, and can alone be wiped out with blood. Would it were not so; but the laws of society are inexorable; and before to-morrow's sun has set, he or I shall be one of its victims."

few phials of medicine. The room was boarded on all sides, and it appeared to be one of many small rooms, which had been, like the boxes in the coffee-room, made out of one large apartment; by being divided from each other by thin partitions. ... "Her ladyship's right hand swathed with linen bands, and his cheeks, more pale and begrimed than usual, showed that he had gone through much bodily pain and weakness in the course of the last few days. ... "I had hoped to find you better and stronger," said Ludlow, as he clasped the outstretched left hand of Lawson within both his own; "I had even hoped I might have found you out of bed, and able to betride a horse for some hours; because, in all my experience of men, whether soldiers or civilians, I never knew one, where an enterprise, requiring courage and skill, was to be undertaken, upon whose strong hand and cool head, I could place such unhesitating reliance as Ebenezer Lawson." ... "Reserve your compliments for those who attach value to them," sulkily replied Lawson, his brutal temper irritated by the pain of his wound, and the weakness of his body. "I am as God made me, a sure friend, and an unrelenting enemy. Instead of speaking of me, tell me of yourself, what you have done, and what you are prepared to do." ... "I have had the house and park at Palmers-town, where Kathleen Fitzpatrick resides with her aunt, beset with spies day and night; I have ascertained the number of domestics, male and female, in the house; I have found out in what part of the house are the sleeping apartments of the ladies; I have discovered what are the habits of all in the house; their time for going forth and returning home; the time spent by them in the park, and I have also ascertained that the only person of consequence who is a constant visitor at the house is Lord Arran, the second son of the Lord Lieutenant." ... "What age is the second son of the Duke of Ormonde?" asked Lawson. ... "Five-and-twenty." ... "And unmarried?" ... "Yes." ... "Then be sure," said Lawson, "that the cunning sly old fox, the Duke of Ormonde,—he who never yet did anything for King or Commonwealth, but with a view to his own interests,—has marked out Kathleen Fitzpatrick as a wife for his son, Lord Arran. Our wily old Lord Lieutenant is as proud as Lucifer; and rest assured, he never would consent to his son marrying a woman without a title, unless she had fortune sufficient to purchase a coronet." ... "I care not what may be the schemes of the Lord Lieutenant," observed Ludlow, "provided my simple plan of abduction be crowned with success, and of that—"

you have first to do, is to have prepared a safe place to retreat upon, a place with which you have no connexion, a place in which the lady's friends would never think of seeking her; or of finding you, suppose by any accident you were suspected of being a participator in the putting upon her person. I can, without a moment's reflection, suggest a better place than yours; for here I have the means to aid you. What think you of carrying the young dame to my house? You know how lonely is its situation, how few ever resort to it." ... "Take her to your house!" repeated Ludlow, musing over the unexpected proposition just made to him. ... "Yes, take her to my house," added Lawson. "You are aware the only mistress it possesses is my daughter Judith. I can easily invent an excuse—a trip for a few weeks to England, for example—to induce her joyfully to abandon the place for as long a time as you may want it. Take my word for it, many days will be required to reconcile a young lady, who expects to be married to Lord Arran, to the change of accepting in lieu of such a lord, one of your age and appearance, as a husband." ... "I am more disposed for open force and undisguised violence. In such a case as this," said Ludlow, "I never expect to win the lady's love; all I am struggling for is the possession of her fortune." ... "I admire your sentiments, and, in this case, entirely approve of them," observed Lawson. "The desire of a brisk young fellow to revel in a lady's fortune is an excuse for any rudeness of which he may be guilty. At the same time, the less there is of open force and undisguised violence, the better; not that I object to them, you will observe, if they are indispensable—that is, if they are absolutely unavoidable. But say, do you approve of my plan for carrying away the lady to my house? because if you do I will on the instant write a letter to Judith, directing her to come with the waiting-maid, and the two men especially devoted to her service, at once to Dublin." ... "Pardon me, Captain Ludlow—forgive me, comrade Lawson, for intruding upon your private conversation," said the robust landlord of "the Cock"; "as he entered the room, his broad, honest face now clouded by an expression of grief that he did not desire to conceal. "Excuse me, I say, for this breaking in upon you; but there is at this moment a rumor circulating amongst the company below stairs, which is of such deep interest to one of you, that I could not refrain, even for a moment, communicating it, in the hope that he whom it most deeply concerns, may be in a position to contradict it." ... "Ludlow and Lawson looked at each other in mute surprise, and both nodded their heads to Elliott to proceed. ... "I fancied," said Elliott, wishing to break the intelligence he had to tell, as well as he could, "that I heard my former comrade, Lawson, say, as I opened the door, he was about to write to his daughter." ... "Yes, I did say so," replied Lawson. ... "And where," asked Elliott, "were you about to address a letter to her?" ... "To my own house in the country," answered Lawson, as yet without the slightest suspicion of the evil tidings that were about to be conveyed to him. ... "And when did you last hear from her?" said Elliott, trembling as he put the question. ... "Upon last Saturday, when she wrote, amongst other things, to say she was going to some grand festival at which the Lord Lieutenant was expected to be present." ... "Alas! alas! my poor old comrade! said Elliott bursting into tears. ... "What mean you, John Elliott?" exclaimed Lawson, bounding up in the bed. "Speak out—speak out; has anything happened to Judith? has she broken an arm, or a leg, or is she dead—dead—dead? Speak, I say, at once, or you will drive me mad; you see I am cool; I am collected; I am calm; I can say, I suppose, that Judith, my beloved Judith, is dead—dead; and yet you see I am firm, very firm, John Elliott. Speak out, man; say the worst at once; say she is dead, and there's an end on't." ... "Would that I could say she was dead," replied John Elliott; "she is worse than dead." ... "Not dead! and yet worse than dead," said Lawson, his faculties so benumbed that there was a long, solemn, and fearful pause between every word he uttered. "Not dead—and yet—worse than—dead," he repeated. ... "What can he mean? Why must grief be tortured with riddles? John Elliott, as you hope for salvation, as you always had the character of an honest man, speak out in plain language the rumor respecting her?" ... "The wretched man's voice trembled, for he felt he had not strength to pronounce the name of Judith.—Repeat, I entreat of you, whatever you have heard of her, in the very words they were told to you." ... "Well, then, so adjoined, my poor comrade," answered John Elliott, "I will tell you what I have heard; but though I believe it is not all truth, there is, I fear, too much truth in it for your peace of mind." ... "Speak on—speak on," said Lawson, scarcely able to articulate the words with his parched lips, and his voice choking in his throat. ... "The topic of conversation in the coffee-room," said Elliott, "is your daughter—Judith." ... "My daughter became the town-talk? O God!" cried Lawson, sinking back upon the pillow. "But proceed, John Elliott; you see I am calm—very calm—very, very calm, and so patient!" and as he spoke, he gnawed the sheets between his teeth. ... "It is said that your daughter, in returning from the races with her fire-woman and two men-servants, was attacked upon the road near Drogheda, by Redmond O'Hanlon and a large band of armed Tories and Rapparees; that the fire-woman fainted; that the two male-servants fled, or were in collusion with the leader of the gang, O'Hanlon; that Miss Lawson defended herself bravely, that she shot two of the assassins, and would have killed Redmond O'Hanlon himself, but that one of her servants gave her an unloaded, instead of a loaded musket." ... "My own brave daughter! my gallant, high-spirited, generous, and courageous Judith!" exclaimed Lawson. "Go on, Elliott, for as yet you have told me nothing but what is grateful to me to hear." ... "Ah, I wish my tale stopped there," added Elliott; "but, alas! I must proceed. Your daughter and the servants were taken prisoners by O'Hanlon's gang. The servants were robbed and sent away otherwise unharmed; not so with your daughter." ... "What mean you, Elliott?" cried Lawson, as Elliott here paused, as if to recover breath, before he proceeded. "What mean you? Assuredly they did not maltreat her; they did not commit any act of cruelty upon her, because she had courageously defended her life?" ... "I cannot tell you what they did with her, comrade," replied Elliott. "I have told you all that is known. What is certain is, that your daughter has been carried away a prisoner by Redmond O'Hanlon's gang; and the rumor is, that the abduction was a long-