

"What a strange romantic story," said one to the other, "is this that Hartland gave me on his tablets. Did you hear it?"

"No—what was it? That Hartland is a fine clever fellow, in spite of his infirmities. Did it in any way concern him?"

"Well, I believe from his agitation while writing down the story, that he had been an admirer of the lady's. But this is the tale:

"Miss Sternfield, a grand-daughter of old Dennis Doyle, of Dublin, whom you and I knew so well, when we were boys, ran off lately with that wild, ne'er do well, Maurice Doyle. A damned unprincipled fellow, but handsome, and audacious enough for anything. The girl it seems is heiress to some ten thousand a year; and Ireland for ever, when money and beauty are to be exchanged for a little blarney, and cool impudence—he persuaded the girl to go off with him to Gretna Green, but in attempting to ford the Esk, the carriage was overturned, and the young lady was unfortunately drowned. Doyle passed the night in the utmost distraction, and then left the place, and has not since been heard of. It is supposed that he destroyed himself."

"Not very likely that," sneered the other. "Who ever heard of an Irish adventurer dying for love? But what has Hartland to do with all this?"

"Why, there's the rub—Hartland will not believe that she is dead, and actually came here in the hope of finding her."

"The man's mad," said his companion. "Yours is a sad tale—let us in, and drown the recollection of it in a bottle of claret. If I were lucky enough to persuade an heiress with ten thousand a year to run away with me, I would take good care not to let her slip through my fingers."

They turned back into the hotel, and Pat Dolan came up to the astonished Rosamond with the jaunting car.

"I hope you have been amused by that fine romance, Miss Sternfield," whispered Doyle. "I wish Mr. Hartland success in his wild-geese chase. Little he thinks, that his divinity is so near."

Rosamond smothered a bitter sigh, and they commenced their journey.

After three days travelling over the most dreadful roads, they at length reached the place that Doyle had destined to be the prison and the grave of Miss Sternfield. The old tower stood upon a rocky eminence that overlooked a romantic valley among the mountains, but so completely shut in on all sides with high rocks and hills, that none but those acquainted with those parts, would have been able to find it.

Maurice congratulated Rosamond on having at last completed her long journey, as he led her into the interior of the place.

Before a large turf fire, in the lower part of the dilapidated building, the family of the Cogans were gathered together, to witness the arrival of their master, and the stranger. Tim Cogan was a big-boned, broad-shouldered, red-haired man, with a very wide mouth, projecting teeth, and light grey eyes. A broad, short nose, and a curved chin, gave him a repulsive, and deceitful expression, which his wife, who was nearly related to him, shared with him, in common. A brood, of six bare-legged, dirty, freckled, carrotty, sun-burnt boys and girls, of all ages, from twelve years to two months, were disposed in various attitudes around the fire, but upon the entrance of the travellers, they all turned round to stare at them at their leisure. The woman and man pressed up to Captain Doyle, and with the most violent gesticulations, and doubtless, lots of the blarney, welcomed him in their own tongue, to the home of his infancy.

Captain Doyle took the man to the other side of the room, and continued with him some time, carrying on a conversation in a low voice, scarcely above a whisper. Rosamond felt certain that she was the subject of their conversation, from the sinister glances that from time to time the peasant cast upon her. The woman, after a long and deliberate investigation of her person, pushed towards the fire a three-legged stool, and motioned Rosamond to take it. Cold and weary, she silently accepted the uncouth attempt at hospitality; and burying her face in her hands, to shut out the dismal scene, she remained in a sort of stupor, until Captain Doyle touched her shoulder and said,

"Come, Rosamond, and partake of a real, (real I should say) Irish supper."

"I am not hungry."

"Oh! nonsense—you have taken no food all day. It will not be an act of wisdom to starve yourself—that you know, would preclude all hope of escape—of being rescued by the gallant Lord of Oaklands. Besides, as a daughter of Erin, you should certainly patronise the pratees, the fruit of the Irish soil, which give life and energy to so many brave soldiers and sailors, to fight the battles of their tyrant England."

"Leave me—to mention England in this place is an insult. Be happy if you can, Cousin Doyle, and make a jest of the misery you inflict. This is the hour of my desertion and sorrow. But yours, cruel man, is coming."

Table in the apartment, there was none. A large wooden bowl heaped up with potatoes, hot