

LADY KILDARE

Or, the Rival Claimants.

CHAPTER XIV. Continued.

"One moment. Does he know?"
"Redmond! The secret, you mean! No, he does not know, and he must never know. Be guarded."

He lifted the curtains, and they re-entered the library.
The Lady Nora was still sitting by the hearth. Lord Kildare stood near her; pleading his suit in low, earnest, anxious tones. The girl did not seem to hear him, but she turned her bright eyes toward the lawyer and his housekeeper as they emerged from the alcove.

But neither of the couple was looking at her now. Mrs. Liffey had fixed her gaze in a strange intensity of expression upon Lord Kildare, and approached him with an agitated face.
"Lord Kildare," said the lawyer hastily, "this lady is Mrs. Liffey, a reduced gentlewoman, who is serving at present as my housekeeper. She is a most estimable and accomplished person, and will be a great help to us in this business."

Mrs. Liffey extended her hand to Lord Kildare, who took it coldly, and with some surprise. To his increased surprise, she grasped his hand warmly, and he could feel her large bony hand actually tremble in his.

Before he could comment on this singular incident, if he had wished to, Mrs. Liffey turned away, and faced the Lady Nora, with a grim and austere countenance, from which all traces of agitation had vanished.

"You still refuse to obey your guardian, my lady," she said questioningly.
The young girl did not reply.
"I think," said Mrs. Liffey, "that the housekeeper grins, 'that this young lady's spirit needs to be taken down. She ought to be shut up until she can act with proper submission. As you cannot shut her up in this house, we must take her elsewhere!'"

"Yes; but where?"
"There's the house of my husband left me, out of town a good bit," said Mrs. Liffey. "It chances to be empty just now, owing to the late tenant running away and its being a bad reason to let, and I have let my sister occupy it. It is partly furnished, and is that lonely that people have taken to calling it 'haunted.' We can take Lady Nora there, and my sister will take charge of her."

"It's just the place!" cried the lawyer.
"I remember it. I wonder I didn't think of it before. But how are we to take Lady Nora there?"
"Leave that to me. We must have a cab at the door at half-past eleven. It will be thought that that's to catch the late train. I will send Allen, her ladyship's maid, to bed, and also the house-maid."

She went out at once to execute these commissions. She was absent a long time, returning, at last, fully equipped for a journey.
"The maids have retired," she announced, "and I have ordered a cab. I have also packed her ladyship's box with necessary changes, and carried it down to the door. It is nearly time. Are you ready, Lady Nora?"

The young girl was still attired in street costume, and her hat hung on her arm. She arose, with a defiant look, exclaiming:
"Yes; I am ready. I am glad this farce is as near its end. I shall be glad to get into the street. You do not complicate the difficulty of this task you have undertaken. Your cabman has but to hear my appeal, and he will befriend me."

"But he won't hear it," said Mrs. Liffey.
"I am on my guard, my lady. You think a great deal of your word, no doubt, and you've got to promise me not to say a word to the cabby, and not to cry out for help, or I shall put this gag in your mouth before we leave this room."

She displayed a formidable wooden gag, and advanced a few steps toward Nora. The young girl's face flashed indignantly. She looked from the lawyer to Redmond Kildare; but both were pitiless and merciless.

To save herself the indignity and pain, therefore, of this alternative, the Lady Nora promised to keep silent.
"The cab is come," said Mrs. Liffey, listening. "Hasten."

She went swiftly down the stairs to the front door. Michael Kildare and the new Earl followed, bearing the slight form of the Lady Nora between them.

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. LIFFEY'S SISTER.

Mrs. Liffey, Michael Kildare's grim and elderly housekeeper, softly opened the front door of her employer's dwelling, and passed out upon the steps.
The night was pleasant, with mild air and starlight. In the semi-gloom, the cab which the woman engaged was standing by the curbstone. The cabman was in the act of alighting, to announce his arrival.

Mrs. Liffey ordered the man to take out the Lady Nora's box, which he hastened to do. While he was thus engaged, Lord Kildare and the lawyer hurried out their captive, keeping a close hold upon her, to prevent any attempt at escape, and put her into the cab. Both followed her into the vehicle, keeping a tight grasp upon her arms.

It was well for them that they were thus guarded. The Lady Nora's big brown eyes were bright and keen, and on the look-out for any chance of flight, and her little, slender figure, with nerves like steel, was ready to spring in any direction at the proper moment.

Mrs. Liffey scoured the house door, and came back to the cab, as the driver was mounting his box. She gave him the order in a low tone, and entered the vehicle, closing the door securely behind her.

The vehicle then bowed rapidly down the street.
They proceeded to the southward and westward, crossed the river Liffey, traversed the southwestern portion of the city, crossed the Circular road, and, once out of the town, sped along yet more rapidly.

The Lady Nora secretly noted all the landmarks by the way, with a view to her escape and return to Dublin on foot.
"We are on the road to Clonsilla," she thought. "That is Dringman Castle to the right. I have been out here before, and can easily find my way back to Dublin. Here is where the two roads cross. We are going to Clonsilla, and how much further I cannot guess."

The question was soon decided.
The cab came to a halt in the outskirts of the village of Clonsilla, before a small, plain, red brick cottage, which stood in the midst of a garden. A row of tall, funeral yew trees stood within the pallings of the tall fence, screening the cottage from more than casual glances. The garden was ample, shut in by high pallings on every side and by yew trees, and was not overlooked at any point by neighboring houses.

This gloomy, lonely place had been christened Yew Cottage, and was the property of Mrs. Liffey, her husband's legacy to her. It was usually let at a remunerative rate, out-

as Mr. Kildare's housekeeper had said, it was now vacant through the failure of its late tenant to meet his engagements.

Mrs. Liffey descended from the cab and approached the high garden gate. It was not locked, and she flung it open, holding it ajar while Lord Kildare and the lawyer assisted their captive to the ground.

"You can wait," said Michael Kildare, addressing the cabman. "There's a shilling, he added, tossing him a silver coin. 'No doubt you'll find a public-house open somewhere in the neighborhood. You can look for one and treat yourself, as soon as you have fetched in the young lady's box. We shall probably be inside about fifteen minutes.'"

Tightening his hold on the Lady Nora's arm, the lawyer hurried her within the grounds of Yew Cottage. Mrs. Liffey preceded the captive and captors up the lonely, dismal walk, and mounted the low stone steps, sounding the heavy brass knocker with emphasis.

Presently, just as Lord Kildare and the lawyer, with the Lady Nora between them, also mounted the steps, an upper window was cautiously raised, and a night-capped head protruded itself, and a hoarse voice asked, in trembling, gasping tones:

"Who's there? What are ye wanting at this hour the night? I'll call the police!"

"Whist, now!" said Mrs. Liffey in a low, warning voice. "Have you lost all your wits, Catherine? It's I—your sister, Margaret Liffey! Come down and let us in like a decent Christian woman, and don't be rousing the neighbors with your foolish paraverling!"

Mrs. Liffey's sister gave a great gasp of astonishment, and promptly slammed the window shut.

The cabman came up with the trunk and deposited it on the gravel walk, then hastened in quest of a public-house, as he had been recommended.

He was scarcely gone, when steps were heard within the cottage, and the door was opened from within by Mrs. Liffey's sister, who had hastily attired herself.

"My sister Mrs. Fogarty," announced Mrs. Liffey. "Catherine, I've brought you company. This young lady is the Lady Nora Kildare, daughter of the late Earl of Kildare. The young man who is with her is the present Earl. And this is Mr. Kildare, my employer, the famous lawyer of Dublin."

Mrs. Fogarty seemed overwhelmed at this announcement of the rank of her guests. Muttering a half inaudible greeting, she continued repeatedly, and then, taking up her candle from the shelf, led the way into the parlor.

The visitors followed.
The Lady Nora curiously looked at the tenant of Yew Cottage, but her heart sank as she studied her countenance. Even her hopeful spirit could find no grounds of encouragement in that hard, harsh face.

Unlike her sister, Mrs. Fogarty presented no indications of her rank as a "reduced gentlewoman." She was a tall, coarse, heavy woman, massive and bony, and without an unbecoming flesh. She had long, swinging arms and a heavy stride like that of a laboring man. Her low, freckled forehead was surrounded by a thick mat of red hair, which waved and kinked, and was with difficulty gathered into a tiny knot at the back of her head.

There was a certain air of elegance and imperiousness about Mrs. Liffey, an attempt at stylishness, an evident desire to appear as a great lady, but her sister presented a marked contrast to all this. Barron of every grace, hard, harsh, and angular, Mrs. Fogarty was the same in mind and heart as in person, and was the woman of all others to further the schemes of Lord Kildare and his kinsman.

"I am sure I never expected to have Lord and Lady Kildare under the same roof with me, and visit us like," muttered Mrs. Fogarty, placing chairs for her guests.

"This is an unexpected honor. I suppose your lordship and ladyship are just married?"

"Don't you know any more about the Kildare family than that?" interrupted Mrs. Liffey impatiently. "This young lady is the Lady Nora Kildare, and is married. The young man who is with her is the present Earl. And this is Mr. Kildare, my employer, the famous lawyer of Dublin."

"The Dublin papers have been full of this story, how that he's the son of the late Lord Kildare, and how his proofs of his identity were as strong as the proof of the Lady Nora's. Two whole kingdoms has been running with the story. They called it 'a romance in real life.' You surely must have read it!"

"But I haven't," interrupted Mrs. Fogarty. "I don't take the papers. It's a waste of money; and besides, why should I bother myself over other people's news, when it's nothing to me? I never read the papers. I never go, no good by doing so, and I can't see any use in it. But I took the young couple to be man and wife—I beg pardon. I mean—lord and lady."

"That's what we mean to have it," declared Mrs. Liffey. "Mr. Kildare is one of the guardians of the Lady Nora, the only guardian now, in fact, for since she's lost her fortune Sir Russell washes his hands of her, and won't trouble himself about her. As Lady Nora's guardian Mr. Kildare wants her to marry Lord Kildare. She is poor and his lordship rich. But my lady is nervous, and refuses to do as she is bid. She wants to marry a beggarly lord up to Arthur. Instead of this fine match. And so her guardian has brought her to you, Catherine, to be kept prisoner here until she gives in. You can bring her right up if any one can."

"That I can," asserted Mrs. Fogarty, her small eyes snapping viciously. "I can bring her to her duty. But what am I to have for my trouble?"

Mrs. Liffey reflected. Mr. Kildare, however, answered the question for himself.

"If you keep her so close a prisoner that none of the neighbors even suspect that you have an inmate here," the lawyer said in his soft mild voice, which had grown more terrible to Lady Nora than the loudest, fiercest utterance of another, "and if you compel her to accept Lord Kildare as her future husband, I will pay you the sum of one hundred pounds!"

Mrs. Fogarty's face glowed with greedy desire.

"You may depend on me," she cried. "I'll make her stay here so unpleasant that she'll be glad to take refuge in Lord Kildare's arms. A hundred pounds!"

"And if you succeed, Catherine," said Mrs. Liffey, all of whose ambitions and hopes were based on that success, all of whose future grandeur were built on the precarious foundation, "I will give you a title deed of this house. I shall be well able to spare it, and I'll give everything I now own in the world to see the Lady Nora Kildare the Countess of the young Earl."

The scheming housekeeper understood her sister well. This last offer, added to the former, quickened Mrs. Fogarty's resolve into an unyielding determination. Yew Cottage was to be her what the position as Mrs. Michael Kildare was to Mrs. Liffey. There was scarcely anything on earth she would not do to gain it.

"It shall be done," she said abruptly. "I will prepare her room while you are here."

She turned and strode heavily from the room, proceeding to a rear apartment, where she procured another light. She then clumped up stairs with a step like a grenadier's to the ground.

She was absent some ten or fifteen minutes, during which period the cabman returned, announcing his presence by a ring at the gate bell. There was a grim smile on her gaunt face as Mrs. Fogarty at last returned to her visitors.

"My lady's room is ready," she announced. "And your cab is here. We had better take her up stairs before you go."

The lawyer arose at once.

"Be kind enough to wait here, my lord," he said, addressing his kinsman. "I will be down directly."

He seized the arm of Lady Nora, but she flung off his grasp as if it had been the coil of a serpent.

Her young face was very pale, so pale as to starve her false guardian, and from out the dead whiteness her great sunny eyes glowed and burned like dusky stars. Every feature of her lovely countenance was instinct with a stern and terrible indignation.

"Do not touch me, Michael Kildare!" she said, in a suppressed and quivering voice. "Do not lay your finger upon me! False friend, false guardian, false kinsman! My father trusted you and loved you. I have trusted you too and loved you, and you have plotted against my peace, conspired with my enemies, robbed me of my inheritance, and now would deprive me of my liberty. Oh, Michael! It is worse than all the rest to learn your treachery."

A pitiless look crept into her sternly sorrowful eyes. Even yet, it seemed, she could scarcely believe in his baseness.

The moment of weakness and faltering had gone by for Michael Kildare.

His soft, full lips hardened into a cruel smile. His eyes, that had always looked so benignly upon his noble young kinswoman, shone with a hard glitter. His mild, benevolent face glowed with an expression of triumph and malevolent determination.

"You are theatrical, Nora," he said, the words sounding strangely when uttered in his gentle, melodious voice. "Your denunciations of me are worthy of the stage. I am surprised at your display of temper. You stand to me in the place of a daughter, and I am bound to do a father's part by you. I choose to shut you up here for your disobedience and contumacy; but in the hour you choose to submit yourself to my will, and marry the man I have chosen for you, you shall receive your freedom. And with your freedom you shall also receive a husband, a lord and title, wealth, a stately home, every good this world can give. My poor misguided child! It is for your good I am working now."

The Lady Nora put her hand in a gesture of angry dissent. A pained look convulsed her features, but her eyes were fixed steadily upon her guardian in increasing sternness.

"Michael Kildare," she said solemnly, "I see you at last as you are! Hypocrite! I know now that your whole life has been a lie! Under all your softness and sweetness have been hidden an iron nature. It is like a bank of hardest rock I saw once, wreathed over with vines and flowers. Under the mask of friendship to me you have hidden a deadly enmity!"

"By heaven, no, Nora!"

"You need not deny it. I should not believe your denial. I see you at last stripped of all the poetry of gentleness and softness. I know you at least for a viper, and I loathe and despise you."

The bland, smooth face of the little lawyer reddened. He looked grieved and shocked rather than angry.

"Nora!" he said reproachfully.

"Michael," he did not put that look of injured innocence," said the Lady Nora sternly and steadily. "You can no longer impose upon me. I know you at last, and she spoke with a slow impressiveness, 'as you are! I know, too, that this young man, now known as the Earl of Kildare, but in whose claim exists some secret defect known only to you—I know that he is but a cat's paw in your hands! You stand behind him, guiding and controlling him. You are like a chess-player, and this question of the ownership of Nora Kildare is the game you have in hand. It has pleased you to advance this man's claims, and to pose him off to the world as your true and rightful heir, but you know in your heart that I am the owner of Kildare!"

"This is nonsense, Nora!"

"It is heaven's own truth!" cried the girl, with sudden passionateness. "You know that I am no coward. You know that I cannot be forced to marry this man. You may as well spare yourself the trouble of attempting to coerce me. No amount of force can ever drive me into an act against which my whole being revolts!"

"This fine talk!" sneered Michael Kildare. "We will test the truth. A weak girl cannot hold out long against my will!"

A change passed over the young Lady Nora's face. A passionate pain looked from her sad, stern eyes, and showed itself about her sweet mouth. Despite all her high courage, all her faith in her own principles, she shrank from the ordeal before her. Her grief at her guardian's cruel treachery convulsed her soul again.

"Michael," she said, lifting her hands and her knees to him, "it is not too late to turn back! In the name of my dear father, who loved you, I entreat you to return to your duty! I am willing to forgive you, and overlook your wrong to me, if you choose to repent now. Restore me to my rights, and I will not only bless you, but I will reward you! Remember that I am an orphan girl, who was confided to your protection by my trusting father. You cannot betray the trust of the dead, and wrong the defenseless, without future retribution. In mercy to yourself and me, do what is right. Refuse," she added, as she met his cold, impressive glance, and realized that her pleading had been thrown away, "and when the hour of my triumph comes, as it will come, you may find me also merciless."

The lawyer's lips curled.

"This is mere child's talk," he said. "When your 'hour of triumph' comes, you will be Countess of Kildare, and will thank me for my present treatment. As to all your accusations, they are but accusations of an unreasoning, childish anger. I hope, when I come to see you, to find you in a better spirit. Now, if you please, we will go up to your room."

He led his small, fat soft hand on her arm, about which it closed like a vice. In obedience to a nod from him, Mrs. Liffey seized the girl's other arm.

Mrs. Fogarty, taking her extra light, bade them follow her, and led the way up stairs. The lawyer and his housekeeper half led, half carried the young girl between them up to the second story.

"This way, Mr. Kildare," said Mrs. Fogarty, taking her way to a rear chamber. "This is my lady's room. 'Tis a snug of a chamber for one that's used to suites of rooms in a big castle, but she can leave it for the castle any day she likes!"

"The dark room!" exclaimed Mrs. Liffey

approvingly. "A good idea, Catherine. I'd like to see my Lady Nora escape from that!"

Mrs. Fogarty then opened the door of the rear room, and passed in, holding the light well above her head.

The lawyer and Mrs. Liffey followed her with their struggling captive.

The room was small, being about nine feet square. It was simply the end of the hall partitioned off. It had been used by various occupants of the house as a dark bedroom, as a lumber-room, and as a store-room. It was now furnished barely and simply as a bedroom.

It had no windows, but was supplied meagerly with light through a small glazed ventilator over the door. The floor was covered with a threadbare carpet. There was a straight-backed chair of uncomfortable shape, a small table, and a narrow, low, iron bedstead, upon which was a hard though clean and freshly draped bed.

Nora's trunk had been brought up by Mrs. Fogarty, and stood against the wall.

Magister and Laura and dismal, with no outlook, with only the bare walls on every side, and no gleam of light save what struggled in from the hall, this was a terrible prison for the luxuriously bred young heiress of Kildare Castle.

Yet she walked into it proudly, when once she had been thrust within its portals, as a queen might walk to her throne.

Whatever her secret terror and anguish, she did not choose to betray them to these vulgar eyes.

"It is not too late to yield, Nora," said the lawyer coolly and pitilessly. "I would save you this terrible ordeal—this fearful experience. Men have gone mad in windowless dungeons like this. My poor Nora, you have but to say the word, to be restored to the light and liberty."

"I prefer darkness and imprisonment to a loveless marriage," said the Lady Nora coolly.

"Then you shall have a full trial of them," said Michael Kildare hastily. "Mrs. Fogarty," he added, turning to that woman, who was standing with arms akimbo, "when the Lady Nora yields and promises solemnly to marry Lord Kildare, I desire you to put her into a better chamber at once, and to send a messenger to me with a sealed letter declaring her submission. On receipt of such a letter, I shall come at once. And now, Nora," he concluded, again addressing his young kinswoman, "I will say good-by."

He moved toward her, all seeming pity, tenderness, and benevolence, as if to embrace her.

The Lady Nora regarded him in a haughty surprise.

"Do not touch me," she said quietly. "I am no longer imposed upon. I want none of your hypocritical caresses, you wolf in sheep's clothing!"

The lawyer quailed before the indignant fire of her eyes, and without a word stole silently out of the room.

Mrs. Liffey, with a swaggering, supercilious air and with a menacing look at the captive, followed him.

Mrs. Fogarty took up the streaming candle and went out last, halting outside to close and lock the door.

Then the young Lady Nora, in her close, dark prison, in the centre of which she stood with gleaming white face and wide dilated eyes, heard her three enemies go down the stairs, and watched through the ventilator over the door the fading gleams of their departing light.

And a few minutes later, still standing there, she heard her enemies depart, heard the rattling of the bolts and chains on the outer door, and heard Mrs. Fogarty tramp heavily up the stairs to her own room.

(To be continued.)

Do be a Gentleman.

No matter what sterling worth a young man may possess, if he is not versed in the little manner and attentions which distinguish the well-bred man from the boor, he will not succeed. Good manners are a passport everywhere and young men who wish to succeed will pay the utmost attention to them. Special care should be bestowed on table etiquette, as nothing stamps a man so much as his manner when eating and nothing so distressing to a person of refinement as to be obliged to eat at the same table with an ill-bred person. The following hints, if carefully observed and practiced, will enable any young man to mingle with his fellows without giving offense. And take heed, young men, these little things are of more importance to the girls than all your rough good qualities.

Do not drink with a spoon in your cup. Place it in the saucer. Nothing is more vulgar than this.

Do not drink your soup or coffee audibly. In fact, especial care should be observed in eating silently for nothing is more disgusting than noisy chewing and drinking, except eating with the mouth open.

Do not, under any circumstances, use the fingers to push food on your fork or spoon. Do not lean your arms on the table. Do not keep your elbows close to your side, and do not flourish them in the air. In raising food to the lips the lower part of the arm must be used.

Be careful as to the way you hold your knife and fork, for nothing will give you a more awkward and inelegant appearance than improper handling of these important articles. The knife should be held by the handle only. Do not touch the blade with your finger. The fork should not be held with the whole hand except when cutting. In raising the food to the lips hold the fork at the end of the handle, prong upward, between the first finger and thumb, the handle resting on the second finger. If you hold it otherwise you are obliged to duck your head and stick out your elbow in order to eat.

Never walk out of a room before a lady. Open the door, then stand aside and allow her to precede you. In this way you follow her out and close the door for her easily. Nothing is more rude and ill-bred than a violation of this rule.

Do take off your hat the instant you come in the house. Do pay attention to the foregoing rules—and believe that good manners are important.—Detroit Free Press.

It is better to endure the hatred of the wicked than to lose one's soul through a concession fatal to virtue.—St. Anselm.

One thing greatly needed in these times, said a clergyman recently in our hearing, 'is men great enough to be small.'

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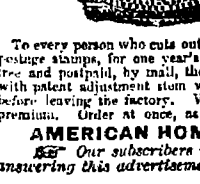
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YEAR 1900 NOT A LEAP YEAR.

An Explanation Which Will Demonstrate Why It Is Not.

The following explanation will show you why the year 1900 will not be counted among leap years, says the St. Louis Republic: The year is 365 days, 5 hours and 49 minutes long; eleven minutes are taken in every year to make the year 365 1/4 days long, and every fourth year we have an extra day. This was Julius Caesar's arrangement. You may ask: "Where do these eleven minutes come from?" They come from the future and are paid by omitting leap year every 100 years. But if leap year is omitted regularly every one hundredth year, in the course of 400 years it is found that the eleven minutes taken each year will not only have been paid back, but a whole day will have been given up. So Pope Gregory XIII., who improved on Caesar's calendar in 1582, decreed that every centennial year divisible by four should be a leap year after all. So we borrow eleven minutes each year more than paying our borrowings by omitting three leap years in three centennial years, and square matters by having leap year in the fourth centennial year. Pope Gregory's arrangement, however, has not been working and paying back balanced so nicely, that he borrows more than we pay back to the extent of only one day in 3,666 years.

BLOWN UP BY DYNAMITE.

A British Barque's Destruction at Sea—One of Her Boat's Crews Missing.

Nzw Bedford, Mass., January 14.—News has reached here that the magnificent iron barque British Monarch was blown to atoms by an explosion of dynamite on November 29th last, when within 700 miles of Cape Town, Africa. Early in the afternoon of that day, when the vessel was in lat. 37 deg. 58 sec. S, long. 50 deg. 02 sec. E, smoke was seen pouring from the bow of the barque. Ten tons of dynamite were stored forward in the bow, and immediately when it became known that all hands worked with desperation to extinguish the flames before they reached the explosive. The smoke prevented the men from entering the hold, and it was quickly seen that the vessel must be abandoned. At 4 p.m. the captain gave orders to take to the boats. Three boats were manned, one in command of the captain and the other two in charge of the mates. It was now the object of the men to put as long a distance as possible between them and the ship. The vessel was put off before the wind and her wheel lashed to keep her there, and the men rowed away.

The explosion did not come until 1 a.m., several hours after the ship was abandoned. Although the boats were so far away several of the men were thrown down by the terrible explosion. When morning came the second mate's boat was not in sight.

Capt. Town was distant ten days' voyage, but Capt. William Morrow and fifteen men were picked up by whaling barque Canton of this port on December 5, six days after the disaster, and taken to Cape Town. The second mate has not been heard