

please to be serious, Morley. This is no joke I'm telling you."

"No joke! My dear O'Dowd, I should think not, indeed. What did you do?"

"When he saw me, I tell you, he pulls his cigar out of his mouth—"

"Eh! What? Cigar!"

"And comes towards me, roaring out. 'What are doing out o' bed, O'Dowd? Go home with you. You've got chawbercles in your lungs. Go home!'"

"The tiger said," I gasped out.

"Tiger! What are you after, Morley?"

"Who said you'd got tubercle?"

"Who? Why, O'Flaherty!"

"Oh, confound O'Flaherty!" I said. "Why the plague are you always bringing his name in? Tell me about the tiger."

"What tiger?" said O'Dowd. "In the name of mystery, what tiger?"

"Why the tiger we're going to shoot O'Flaherty."

"Shoot O'Flaherty! What are you going to shoot him for?"

"Why, didn't you understand? He told me I'd got chawbercles."

"And so this precious note of yours," said I, producing the epistle, "was to tell me that you're going to fight O'Flaherty?"

"Faith! and you may say that," replied O'Dowd. "I thought I'd put it delicately."

"By Jove! you put it so delicately that I thought it all referred to tiger shooting."

"And did you so?" said Dennis, with some pride. "Begad! I always was a neat hand at letter-writing."

"But you're not serious, I hope, O'Dowd," I said. "You don't really mean that you intend to shoot O'Flaherty?"

"I'll be shot if I don't," returned O'Dowd, very decidedly. "He told me I'd got chawbercles in my lungs."

"And there was very little doubt that O'Flaherty was right. A few years afterwards the fact became fatally evident. Death, and a P. M. examination, put it beyond all question. But even if there had been no grounds for it, the idea of shooting of shooting a man for such a reason as this was absurd."

"My dear fellow," said I to O'Dowd, "this must not be allowed to go on. I can't consent to act as your friend in such a case as this. It would be a different matter if he'd given you the lie, or—"

"Given me the lie!" said O'Dowd. "Didn't he tell me I'd got chawbercles, when I haven't anything of the kind. Isn't that giving me the lie, to all intents and purposes; giving me the lie in the throat as deep as to the lungs, as Shakespeare says, eh? Once for all, will you undertake the matter?"

"I'd rather be excused," I said.

"Very good," said O'Dowd; "then I wish you good morning. I'll go and call on O'Grady."

"O'Grady! The most determined fire-eater in the empire. If he called on O'Grady it would end in a fight as certainly as doomsday. If I undertook it, we might perhaps come to some arrangement; so, with much reluctance, I told Dennis that he might command me."

"I knew you'd never spoil sport," said O'Dowd. "Now, look here, Morley, you go at once to O'Flaherty, and give him to understand that I require—"

"Far heaven's sake, my dear O'Dowd," said I, anxiously, "don't be too hard upon him. Put it as peaceably as you can."

"Just what I'm going to do," said O'Dowd. "You go to O'Flaherty, and tell him I require a written apology, which must contain a confession that he was drunk at the time of speaking, and a declaration of

his full belief that I've no more got chawbercles than he has. If he declines to give immediate satisfaction. I can't put it more peaceably than that, now can I?"

"I certainly thought it possible, but as O'Dowd adhered to his own opinion, that did no good at all. So, armed with this peaceable message, I took my way to O'Flaherty, whom I found sitting lazily upon a cane-bottomed chair, and surrounded by soda-water bottles."

"Ha! Morley," said he, delighted to see you, upon my conscience. Will you take a peg? No! You'd better. I've done little else ever since I got up. Well! yes, I was a little sprung last night; just a dappie in me ee, as that Scotch fellow says in his infernal brogue. Begad! looking back upon last night's proceedings, reminds me of those dissolving views, where each picture gets misty, and runs into the next."

"I suppose, then, you have no very distinct recollection of the people you met last night, have you?" I inquired.

"Faith! no," said he; "my memory might be clearer."

"Well, the fact is, I'm come upon a very unpleasant mission. You don't remember meeting O'Dowd, do you?"

"It's O'Dowd you mean!" said O'Flaherty, thoughtfully. "Begad, then, I don't."

"Ah, you did meet him though and he says insulted him greatly."

"And did I insult him?" said O'Flaherty, taking up a soda-water bottle. "That's mighty curious. How did I do it?"

"Well, it seems you said something about his having tubercle of the lung, and he does not like it. He's rather touchy about his chest, you know."

"Ay, I know. And did I tell him that?"

"Yes, you told him that he'd got tubercle; and he took the speech so much to heart, that I am come from him to say that he expects an apology."

"Begad, and were you told to say that?"

"I was indeed; and I'm sure, my dear fellow, you must see how extravagantly absurd we shall all make ourselves if this affair proceeds any further. Every mess-room in India will be laughing at the 'Tubercle duel. I am sure you must perceive the truth of this, or the absolute necessity of putting a stop to it at once. By Jove, sir, we shall never hear the last of it till the day of our death."

"You may say that, indeed," said O'Flaherty, laughing. "Faith, it won't be only O'Dowd who'll be troubled with chawbercles, will it?"

"No, that it won't. It's not generally considered an infectious disorder, but it will infect us, at any rate," said I.

"Change of air will be the only thing for us," said O'Flaherty.

"Then, look here, my dear O'Flaherty," said I, pushing a writing-case toward him; "just scratch two or three lines to say that last night you were, as you've just said, troubled with a drappie in your ee; and you may add—it's as well to do the thing handsomely while you are about it—that you have perfect faith ha! ha! in the integrity of O'Dowd's lungs. Come, what do you say?"

"Pop went the soda-water."

"That," said O'Flaherty.

"That! Explain, please."

"That's all the apology yo'll get from me."

"But, my good sir, if you don't ap— explain in some way, O'Dowd insists upon fighting."

* As it may not be among the things generally known, I ought perhaps to expect that in India the word 'Peg' means soda water and brandy. The full phrase is 'another peg in your coffin,' alluding to the deleterious effects of the drink.

"And by the blessed St. Patrick," said O'Flaherty, his speech becoming ten times more Irish than before at the mention of the national pastime;—"and by the blessed Saint Patrick, I'll humour his fancy. If it's fighting he means, I'll fight him with all my soul—with all the pleasure in life, bogad. Ye can't fright Tim O'Flaherty into an apology by telling him that fighting's the alternative, I promise ye."

"Fright you," said I; "I never dreamed of frightening you. But reflect for a moment upon the absurdity of the whole affair. Come, old fellow, stretch a point, and save us from universal ridicule."

"Faith not I," said O'Flaherty; "the prospect don't trouble me at all to speak of."

"Then you decline to apologize altogether?"

"There, if you haven't stated the case exactly."

"Then I have no resource but to ask you for the name of your friend, if you really will not be persuaded to—"

"I can't really undertake to be persuaded, my dear friend. Are you going? Well, good-bye; I'll send one to call upon you in a twinkling."

"Disgusted exceedingly, I took my leave and returned to my quarters. The idea of two fellows shooting at each other for no better reason than that one had accused the other of having diseased lungs, was so confoundedly ridiculous, that, setting aside the unpleasantness of being engaged in an affair of this kind at all, I would have given anything to be able to wash my hands of it. But what was to be done? When the two principals—both of them Irishmen, too—were resolved on fighting, what could stop them? Perhaps O'Flaherty's friend, who would, of course, be of my mind about the serious farce in which we were compelled to act, might be able to hit upon some means of getting out of it. I would see what could be done when he arrived. It was really such utter nonsense, that a peg was the only thing to restore a fellow's equanimity, after two such interviews."

"Before I had finished the peg O'Flaherty's friend made his appearance. He was unknown to me. We both bowed.

"Mr. Morley, I believe."

"Upon my life, another Irishman; and my hopes of a peaceable termination to the affair took flight at the very sound of his voice."

"Allow me to introjuice meself—Lieutenant Doolan,—th Regiment. I come from Mr. O'Flaherty."

"Oh, yes," said I, affecting to have been momentarily forgetful of that little matter. "Very happy to make your acquaintance, though I could wish it had been under pleasanter conditions."

"Not at all," said Mr. Doolan, in a tone of the most perfect contentment: "not at all. It's not meself that going to quarrel with the conditions."

"This might be only politeness towards me, but I thought it sounded much more like satisfaction at his mission."

"Mr. O'Flaherty has, no doubt instructed you fully as to how the matter between himself and Mr. O'Dowd stands."

"Quite so, quite so," said the lieutenant.

"Then I feel certain, Mr. Doolan, that you must agree with me that this affair cannot be allowed to proceed."

Doolan simply stared.

"You can scarcely avoid feeling," I continued, "that the cause of quarrel is too slight for us to permit our friends to peril their lives about such a trifle."

TO BE CONTINUED.