

LORD KILGOBBIN.

By CHARLES LEVER.

Author of "Harry Lorrequer," "Jack Hinton the Guardsman," "Charles O'Malley the Irish Dragoon," etc., etc.

"I tell you one thing I do hope which is, that the next time I set out on a twelve miles walk, I'll have a companion less imbued with self-admiration."

"And you might and might not find him pleasanter company. Cannot you see, old fellow, that the very things you object to in me are what are wanting in you? They are, so to say, the complements of your own temperament."

"Have you a cigar?"

"Two—take them both. I'd rather talk than smoke just now."

"I am almost sorry for it, though it gives me the tobacco."

"Are we on your father's property yet?"

"Yes: part of that village we came through belongs to us, and all this bog here is ours."

"Why don't you reclaim it? labor costs a mere nothing in this country. Why don't you drain these tracts, and treat the soil with lime? I'd live on potatoes, I'd make my family live on potatoes, and my son, and my grandson, for three generations, but I'd win this land back to culture and productive-ness."

"The fee-simple of the soil wouldn't pay the cost. It would be cheaper to save the money and buy an estate."

"That is one, and a very narrow view of it; but imagine the glory of restoring a lost tract to a nation, welcoming back the prodigal and installing him in his place among his brethren. This was all forest once. Under the shade of the mighty oaks here, those gallant O'Carneys, your ancestors, followed the chase, or rested noon-tide, or skedaddled in doublequick before those smart English of the Pale, who, I must say, treated your forebears with scant courtesy."

"We held our own against them for many a year."

"Only when it became so small it was not worth taking. Is not your father a Whig?"

"He's a Liberal, but he troubles himself little about parties."

"He's a stout Catholic, though, isn't he?"

"He is a very devout believer in his Church," said Dick, with the tone of one who did not desire to continue the theme.

"Then why does he stop at whiggery? why not go in for nationalism and all the rest of it?"

"And what's all the rest of it?"

"Great Ireland—no first flower of the earth or gem of the sea humbug—but Ireland great in prosperity, her harbors full of ships, the woolen trade, her ancient staple, revived; all that vast unused water-power, greater than all the steam of Manchester and Birmingham tenfold, at full work; the linen manufacture developed and promoted—"

"Of course, that should be first of all. Not that I object to the Union, as many do, on the grounds of the English ignorance as to Ireland. My dislike is, that for the sake of carrying through certain measures necessary to Irish interests, I sit and discuss questions which have no possible concern for me, and touch me no more than the debates in the Cortes, or the Reichskammer at Vienna. What do you or I care for what rules India, or who owns Turkey? What interest of mine is it whether Great Britain has five iron-clads or fifty, or whether the Yankees take Canada, and the Russians Caboul?"

"You're a Fenian, and I am not."

"I suppose you'd call yourself an Englishman?"

"I'm an English subject, and I owe some too, but I owe a great many things that I don't distress myself about paying."

"Whatever pour sentiments are on these matters—and, Joe, I am not disposed to think you have any very fixed ones—pray do me the favor to keep them to yourself while under my father's roof. I can almost promise you he'll obtrude none of his peculiar opinions on you and, I hope you will treat him with a like delicacy."

"What will your folks talk, then? I can't suppose they care for books art, or the drama. There is no society, so there can be no gossip. If that yonder be the cabin of one of your tenants, I'll certainly not start the question of farming."

"There are poor on every estate," said Dick, curtly.

"Now, what sort of a rent does that fellow pay—five pounds a year?"

"More likely five-and-twenty or thirty shillings."

"By Jove! I'd like to set up house in that fashion, and make love to some delicately nurtured miss, win her affections, and bring her home to such a spot. Wouldn't that be a touchstone of affection, Dick?"

"If I could believe you were in earnest I'd throw you neck and heels into that bog-hole."

"Oh, if you would!" cried he, and there was a ring of truthfulness in his voice now there could be no mistaking.

Half ashamed of the emotion his idle speech had called up, and uncertain how best to treat the emergency, Kearney said nothing, and Atlee walked along for miles without a word.

"You can see the house now. It tops the trees yonder," said Dick.

"That is Kilgobbin Castle, then?" said Joe, slowly.

"There's not much of the castle left about it. There is a square block of a tower, and you can trace the moat and some remains of outworks."

"Shall I make you a confession, Dick? I envy you all that! I envy you what smacks of a race, a name, an ancestry, a lineage. It's a great thing to be able to 'take up the running,' as the folks say, instead of making all the race yourself; and there's one inestimable advantage in it—it rescues you from all indecent haste about asserting your station. You feel yourself to be a somebody, and you're not hurried to proclaim it. There now, my boy, if you'd have said only half as much as that on the score of your family, I'd have called you an arrant snob. So much for consistency!"

"What you have said gave me pleasure, I'll own that."

"I suppose it was you who planted those trees there. It was a nice thought and makes the transition from the bleak bog to the cultivated land more easy and graceful. Now I see the castle well. It's a fine portly mass against the morning sky, and I perceive you fly a flag over it."

"When the lord is at home."

"Ay; and by the way, do you give him his title while talking to him here?"

"The tenants do, and the neighbors and strangers do as they please about it."

"Does he like it himself?"

"If I were to guess, I should perhaps say he does like it. Here we are now. Inside this long gate you are within the demesne, and I may bid you welcome to Kilgobbin. We shall build a lodge here one of these days. There's a good stretch however, yet to the castle. We call it two miles, and it's not far short of it."

"What a glorious morning! There is an ecstasy in scenting these nice fresh woods in the clear sunrise, and seeing those modest daffodils make their morning toilet."

"That's a fancy of Kate's. There is a border of such wild flowers all the way to the house."

"And those rills of clear water that flank the road, are they of her designing?"

"That they are. There was a cutting made for a railroad line about four miles from this and they came upon a sort of pudding-stone formation, made up chiefly of white pebbles. Kate heard of it, purchased the whole mass, and had these channels paved with them from the gate to the castle, and that's the reason this water has its crystal clearness."

"She's worthy of Shakespeare's sweet epithet, the 'daintiest Kate in Christendom.' Here's her health!" and he

stooped down, and filling his palm with the running water, drank it off.

"I see it's not yet five o'clock. We'll steal quietly off to bed, and have three or four hours' sleep before we show ourselves."

CHAPTER XIII.

A SICK-ROOM.

Cecil Walpole occupied the state-room and the state-bed at Kilgobbin Castle; but the pain of a very serious wound had left him very little faculty to know what honor was rendered him, or of what watchful solicitude he was the object. The fever brought on by his wound had obliterated in his mind all memory of where he was; and it was only now—that is, on the same morning that the young men had arrived at the castle—that he was able to converse without much difficulty, and enjoy the companionship of Lockwood, who had come over to see him, and scarcely quitted his bedside since the disaster.

"It seems going on all right," said Lockwood, as he lifted the iced cloths to look at the smashed limb, which lay swoolen and livid on a pillow outside the clothes.

"It's not pretty to look at, Harry, but the doctor says 'we shall save it'—his phrase for not cutting it off."

"They've taken up two fellows on suspicion, and I believe they were of the party here that night."

"I don't much care about that. It was a fair fight, and I suspect I did not get the worst of it. What really does grieve me is to think how ingloriously one gets a wound that in real war would have been a title of honor."

"If I had to give a V. C. for this affair, it would be to that fine girl I'd give it, and not to you, Cecil."

"So should I. There is no question whatever as to our respective shares in the achievement."

"And she is no modest and unaffected about it all, and when she was showing me the position and the alcove she never ceased to lay stress on the safety she enjoyed during the conflict."

"Then she said nothing about standing in front of me after I was wounded?"

"Not a word. She said a great deal about your coolness and indifference to danger, but nothing about her own."

"Well, I suppose it's almost a shame to own it—not that I could have done anything to prevent it—but she did step down one step of the stair and actually cover me from fire."

"She's the finest girl in Europe," said Lockwood, warmly.

"And if it was not the contract with her cousin, I'd almost say one of the handsomest," said Cecil.

"The Greek is splendid, I admit that though she'll not speak—she'll scarcely notice me."

"How is that?"

"I can't imagine, except it might have been an awkward speech I made when we were talking over the row. I said: 'Where were you? what were you doing all this time?'"

"And what answer did she make you?"

"None; not a word. She drew herself proudly up, and opened her eyes so large and full upon me that I felt I must have appeared to be some sort of monster to be so stared at."

"I've seen her do that."

"It was very grand and very beautiful but I'll be shot if I'd like to stand under it again. From that time to this she has never deigned me more than a mere salutation."

"And are you good friends with the other girl?"

"The best in the world. I don't see much of her, for she's always abroad,

over the farm or among the tenants; but when we meet we are very cordial and friendly."

"And the father, what is he like?"

"My lord is a glorious old fellow, full of hospitable plans and pleasant projects but terribly distressed to think that this unlucky incident should prejudice you against Ireland. Indeed, he gave me to understand that there must have been some mistake or misconception in the matter, for the castle had never been attacked before, and he insists on saying that if you will stop here—I think he said ten years—you'll not see another such occurrence."

"It's rather a hard way to test the problem, though."

"What's more, he included me in the experiment."

"And this title? Does he assume it or expect it to be recognized?"

"I can scarcely tell you. The Greek girl 'my-lords' him occasionally; his daughter, never. The servants always do so; and I take it that people use their own discretion about it."

"Or do I in a sort of indolent courtesy as they call Marsala, sherry, but take care at the same time to pass the cecanter, I believed you telegraphed to his excellency?"

"Yes and he means to come over next week."

"Any news of Lady Maude?"

"Only that she comes with him, and I'm sorry for it."

"So am I—deuced sorry! In a gossiping town like Dublin there will surely be some story afloat about these handsome girls here. She saw the Greek, too, at the Duke of Rigati's ball at Rome, and she never forgets a name or a face. A pleasant trait in a wife."

"Of course the best plan will be to get removed, and be safely installed in our old quarters at the Castle before they arrive."

"We must hear what the doctor says."

"He'll say no, naturally, for he'll not like to loose his patient. He will have to convey you to town, and we'll try and make him believe it will be the making of him. Don't you agree with me, Cecil, it's the thing to do?"

"I have not thought it over yet. I will to-day. By the way, I know it's the thing to do," repeated he, with an air of determination. "There will be all manner of reports, scandals, and falsehoods to no end about this business here; and when Lady Maude learns, as she is sure to learn, that the 'Greek girl' is in the story I cannot measure the mischief that may come of it."

"Break off the match, eh?"

"That is certainly 'on the cards.'"

"I suspect even that wouldn't break your heart."

"I don't say it would, but it would prove very inconvenient in many ways. Danesbury has great claims on his party. He came here as Viceroy dead against his will, and depend upon it, he made his terms. Then if these people go out, and the Tories went outbid them, Danesbury could take—ay, and would take—office under them."

"I cannot follow all that. All I know is, I like the old boy himself, though he is a bit pompous now and then, and fancies he's Emperor of Russia."

"I wish his niece didn't imagine she was an imperial princess."

"That she does! I think she's the haughtiest girl I ever met. To be sure she was a great beauty."

"Was, Harry! What do you mean was Lady Maude is not eight-and-twenty."

"Ain't she, though? Will you have a ten-pound note on it that she's not over thirty-one?"

"A delicate thought!—a fellow betting on the age of a girl he is going to marry!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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B. B. B. Cures Bad Blood.