

been laid aside for his two younger children, Caroline and Alfred. Some meddlers insinuated that it had taken it all, but Mr. and Mrs. Dashingly maintained a freezing silence upon the point, so nobody knew for certain. What further glorious works in the architectural line Mr. Dashingly would have accomplished, never was ascertained, since the envious destroyer, Death, stepped in, and put an end to him and his good deeds, without warning. Not much change had since gone over Dashingly House, which would still be enjoyed by Mrs. Dashingly, as a residence, until her demise. Tryo Dashingly, Esquire, the eldest son, had espoused a rich widow, and had, literally, gone to Rome, where he was still sojourning. Alfred was away playing the rake, as usual, and Caroline pursued her conquests and her flirtations. It was quite an event when Lina came. Mrs. Dashingly's first solicitude about her was to make her and her thirty thousand pounds the property of Alfred, with a little delay as convenient; her second was to worry, lecture, and persuade Lina to abjure her heretical training, and embrace the true faith, as they had done. Against both of which propositions, Lina, undutiful girl that she was, rebelled. Two or three suitors had sought her hand, but the moment their wishes became known, aunt had sent them off flying the way she did me, when I presumed to fall in love with Caroline. It was an understood thing now, all over the county, that any boy else, except Alfred, daring to aspire to her, would be warned away in like manner. Aunt had it all her own way, unfortunately, until Lina should be of age, and as yet she was only nineteen.

Lina came running down the steps when I leaped out of the chair. They had tried hard to prop her up with a little of their own form and stateliness, but it would not do. The tears stood in her large blue eyes as I kissed her cheek, fair and pine as ever. Aunt and Caroline had remained in the drawing-room; the former could not, and the latter would not, have leaped down the steps for the world. Mrs. Dashingly was very cordial; to make amends, probably, for former grievances; she actually gave me what she called a kiss—a slight cheek of the lips about a foot off my face. Caroline was exceedingly gracious and dignified in right of her exalted position as bride-elect.

"Were you surprised at my summons?" demanded Mrs. Dashingly, when I returned to the drawing room, after taking off my boots and some of the travelling dust.

"A little, aunt. I am not yet acquainted with the cause of it, you know. May I inquire?"

"Ahem!" cried aunt, her tuban standing on an end with the dignity of the announcement she had in store for me, whilst Caroline's pink train rustled out like a vain peacock's. "The event of a marriage in the family does not occur every day. I am about to part with my only daughter, and I thought that the pleasure of being at the ceremony, with a week's holiday from your dreary college, would be gratifying to you."

Very gratifying, indeed.—When, some months ago, I had been dying for her myself, and was still, for all aunt knew.

"And so I am to congratulate Caroline upon becoming Mrs.—what is the bride-groom's name?"

"Captain Fitzhenry, of the Forty-seventh," bridled aunt; "of good family and immense fortune. He is passionately fond of Caroline."

"And when are they to be tied up?"

"For shame! don't use such expressions."

rebuked Mrs. Dashingly; "just as if you were speaking of hanging. The marriage is fixed for Tuesday next. Lina is to be bridesmaid."

"And when will it be your turn, Lina, darling?" I said, bending over her; at which she blushed so very deeply, that, egad! I thought it could not be far off.

"There's no hurry about Lina," interrupted the old lady, shortly. "Let us get Caroline's wedding over first, and then it will be time to think of her."

"Now Lina, how does it all go with you?" I inquired, drawing her into my room for an instant, upon an excuse to aunt that I had some letters to show her. "And what mean those tears?" I exclaimed, as she sat herself down on the bed, and fairly broke out into impassioned sobs. "Lina, Lina, my sister," I indignantly uttered, "I can see they have been making you wretched?"

"Yes," she said, scarcely able to speak, "ever since I came; now twelve months ago. I have been fearful—I declare to you, brother, I have been actually fearful that my aunt would marry me to Alfred by main force; and I am sure, if we lived in less enlightened times, when such things were not unheard of, it would have been done."

"Where's Alfred now?"

"Oh, he has been away some months. He got angry and cross with me, for I held out against their plans—I would and I did, though my courage was near failing me. Not that the scheme is abandoned—he and my aunt both say that they never will give it up. And the worst of it is," she indignantly continued, "that he a good as told me one day, when he was in one of his passions, that he did not care for me, only my fortune was necessary to repair his extravagance. I wish, brother, the money had never been left to me! I wish I had it in my power to make it over to you! I should at least have escaped persecution, not only from that quarter, but from another."

"Any one else been persecuting?" I asked, as I kissed her tearful cheek.

"They persecute me about becoming a Catholic, persecute me always—my aunt and Father Ignatius—the father more especially. If I were but poor! He would leave me alone fast enough. My benighted soul, that he is everlastingly deceiving upon, might get to Heaven in its own way."

"He may have your good at heart," said I, trying to soothe her.

"And his own interest. Any way, he gains. If I had married Alfred, two thousand pounds would have gone to his church on the wedding-day."

"Two thousand pounds! what for?"

I don't know. A sop in the pan for them, I suppose, because I am a Roman Catholic. Before they were aware I should decline to marry Alfred, the never ceased talking to me about their tolerance in suffering him to wed a Protestant. That the arrangement was made by my aunt and the priest, I can assure you, though it came to my knowledge by accident.

"Very generous of them to give away your money!"

"My aunt, as you may believe, is terribly angry with me for my obstinacy, and it has been arranged," she whispered, clasping my arm with her trembling hands, "that I am to have one more chance given me. Alfred comes home on Monday, and my consent is to be again formally demanded. If I still decline, they have agreed to shut me up in the Convent of Mercy—you know it—some ten miles from here."

"Stuff and nonsense, Lina!" I cried, bursting out into a laugh when the full meaning of the words came upon me; "such things are not heard of now-a-days. They have no more power to shut you up in a convent than they have me."

"Brother, reflect," she said gravely. "My aunt has the power of appointing my residence until I am of age; if she chooses to place me in a religious house, who is to interfere with her? I don't mean, recollect, that I am to be placed in one of its dungeons or cells, but to go as a boarder. Father Ignatius is in ecstasies, calls me his lamb and his dove, and all sorts of saintly names. But he knows that those convents are much easier to get in at, than to get out of; and again, I ask you, who has the power to interfere with Mrs. Dashingly? I am not a ward in Chancery, remember," she continued smiling.

"Lina, come hither," cried my aunt, putting in her head; "I want you. And nephew, it is upon the stroke of the dinner hour."

"So, Carry," I whispered, leaning over her chair when I got back to the drawing-room, where she sat alone, "I thought you were to remain true to me for ever and a day."

Caroline tried to get up a blush. She had promised the like to a few score of admirers.

"Ah! you took yourself off so suddenly. Who was going to remain faithful to a run-away lover?"

"Took myself off! I think the loot was on the other leg."

"And you never wrote, or anything," pointed Carry, willing to attempt an excuse.

"It would have been all the same if I had, when the gallant captain m. de his appearance—eh, Carry?"

"Get away, sir?"

"He is very handsome, I suppose?"

"Mamma and I ain't his, so."

"In the Mars style or the Adonis?"

"You can decide that point for yourself when you see him."

"A large fortune, now, I understood, and a barony in prospect?"

"Just so."

"Well, cousin mine, you are a happy woman. Am I to give you away?"

"You, indeed! Alfred's coming home, partly for that, partly to make love to Lina."

"But Lina does not like him," I answered, anxiously.

"Oh, I don't know. Those quiet, savoury girls, such as Lina, seldom know what they do like. Alfred will make her as good a husband as anybody else. He has been extravagant lately, but he is looking for a place under government. I suppose he will get straight after a bit, and your sister has plenty."

"What is this whisper that I hear, of a convent being Lina's alternative if she rejects him?"

"Who told you that?—Lina,?"

"What if she did?"

"She need not have brought up the subject now, when the house is occupied with more agreeable matters."

"Selfish as ever, Carry!" I muttered.

"But how comes it that a Roman Catholic convent will admit her, a member of the Established Church, within its walls, or that its governing priests will sanction her entrance?"

"They graciously waive the objection in Lina's case, in consideration of her near relationship to mamma. And from her residence in our family, and constant intercourse with Father Ignatius, I dare say