

"Pretty near!" said Captain Breagh, and began to unfold his newspaper.

"I get little enough time for reading things that are useful," said Mrs. Breagh, as the Captain dipped into the crackling sheets. "It was my bounden duty to speak, and I've done it! And if you think you are doing your duty by the child—let alone his mother——"

She broke off, for the Captain bounced in his chair, and dashed down the newspaper. "Haven't I told you I won't have poor Milly's name dragged into these discussions! She's dead!—and so let her be!"

If a lady can be said to snort, Mrs. Breagh gave utterance to a sound of that nature.

"I'm willing, Alexander, I'm sure! But all things considered, I must say I think it's a pity her ladyship died and left you a widower!"

"And you're right there, begad you are! And how many times have I told you she was merely an Honourable, and not her ladyship!" He left the newspaper sprawling on the hearthrug, and mechanically reaching down his pipe and tobacco-pouch from the corner of the mantelshelf, proceeded to fill the well-browned meerschauum, and when his wife lighted a spill and held it to him as an olive-branch, he thanked her in an absent way. What did the Captain see as he pulled at the gnawed amber mouthpiece and stared into the red-hot heart of the fire, communing with that other self that dwells within every man?

II.

I THINK he saw young Alex Breagh, a junior Lieutenant of the Grenadier company of the Royal Ennis Regiment of Infantry, winning his spurs of manhood under Gough and Hardinge and Gilbert on the plain beside the Sutlej, where stands Ferozshahr.