

prefers to quit political life altogether rather than be perpetually at loggerheads with his own party."

"He's a wise man," said John, thoughtfully. "It's internal strife that eats the vitals o' mony a great cause."

"It is," said the millowner, with a sigh. "Things, I confess, are looking black for Ireland. I shouldn't wonder if August saw a general election in the heat of it. One thing, Robert, I could not satisfy Captain Byrne about. Are you a shorthand writer?"

"Yes, sir."

"I see you have equipped yourself thoroughly, and it will repay you. What Captain Byrne wants is a modest, unassuming fellow, who will not be above doing as he is bid. He could get many in England; but he has his own ideas and peculiarities, and has a contempt for the ordinary college-bred youth. He was interested at once when I told him about you, and I see no reason why you shouldn't suit each other admirably, and be of great mutual benefit."

"I will do my best, sir," said Rob, quietly, but with a good deal of earnestness. "I don't know how to thank you. I shall try to be worthy of your recommendation."

"We may all live to be proud of you yet, who knows?" said the millowner, genially. "Well, John, I was delighted to hear from Mrs. Bremner such good accounts of your wife. I haven't time to pay my respects to her to-night. I am afraid she won't thank me for enticing her son away. Tell her I'll come and make my peace with her one of these days. Good evening, Robert. I'll send a message from Halliwell when Captain Byrne comes, appointing a time for you to come up to Halliwell and see him."

"Thank you, sir," said Robert, and his face wore a