

LORD KILGOBBIN.

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

CHAPTER XXXIV.—Continued.

"I do not," cried Nina, boldly.
 "Marriage, my dear. One is marriage by special license, with a bishop or a dean to tie the knot; another is a runaway match. I forget what the eggs signify."

"An unbroken engagement," interposed Donagan, gravely, "so long as none of them are smashed."
 "On the whole, then, it is very promising tidings," said Kate.

"It may be easy to be more promising than the election," said the old man.
 "I'm not flattered, uncle, to hear that I'm easier to win than a seat in Parliament."

"That does not imply you are not worth a great deal more," said Kearney, with an air of gallantry. "I know, if I was a young fellow, which I'd strive most for. Eh, Mr. Daniel? I see you agree with me."

Donagan's face, slightly flushed before, became now crimson, as he sipped his tea in confusion, unable to utter a word.

"And so," resumed Kearney, "he'll only give us a day to make up our minds! It's lucky, girls, that you have the telegram there to tell you what's coming."

"It would have been more piquant, papa, if he had made his message say: 'I propose for Nina. Reply by wire.'"

"Or, 'May I marry your daughter?'" chimed in Nina, quickly.

"There it is now," broke in Kearney, laughing; "you are fighting for him already! Take my word for it, Mr. Daniel, there's no so sure way to get a girl for your wife as to make her believe there's another only waiting to be asked. It's the threat of the opposition coach on the road keeps down the fares."

"Papa is all wrong," said Kate. "There is no such conceivable pleasure as saying No to a man that another woman is ready to accept. It is about the most refined sort of self-flattery imaginable."

"Not to say that men are utterly ignorant of that treemasonry among women which gives us all an interest in the man who marries one of us," said Nina. "It is only your confirmed old bachelor that we all agree in detesting."

"Faith, I give you up altogether. You're a puzzle clean beyond me," said Kearney, with a sigh.

"I think it is Balzac tells us," said Donagan, "that women and politics are the only two exciting pursuits in life, for you never can tell where either of them will lead you."

"And who is Balzac?" asked Kearney.

"Oh, uncle, don't let me hear you ask who is the great at that ever lived!"

"Faith, my dear, except 'Tristram Shandy' and 'Tom Jones,' and maybe 'Robinson Crusoe'—it that be a novel—my experience goes a short way. When I am not reading what's useful—as in the Farmer's Chronicle or 'Purcell's Rotation of Crops'—I like the 'accidents' in the newspapers, where they give you the name of the gentleman that was smashed in the train, and tell you how his wife was within ten days of her third confinement; how it was only last week he got a step as a clerk in Somerset House. Haven't you more materials for a sensation novel there than any of your three-volume fellows will give you!"

"The times we are living in give most of us excitement enough said Donagan. "The man who wants to gamble for life itself need not be balked now."

"You mean that a man can take a shot at an emperor?" said Kearney, inquiringly.

"No, not that exactly: though there are stakes of that kind some men would not shrink from. What are called 'arms of precision' have had a great influence on modern politics. When there's no time for a plebiscite, there's always time for a pistol."

"Bad morality, Mr. Daniel," said Kearney, gravely.

"I suspect we do not fairly measure what Mr. Daniel says," broke in Kate. "He may mean to indicate a revolution, and not justify it."

"I mean both," said Donagan. "I mean that the mere permission to live

under a bad government is too high a price to pay for life at all. I'd rather go 'down into the streets,' as they call it, and have it out, than I'd drudge on, dogged by policemen, and sent to jail on suspicion."

"He is right," cried Nina. "If I were a man, I'd think as he does."

"Then I'm very glad you are not," said Kearney; "though, for the matter of rebellion, I believe you would be a more dangerous Fenian as you are. Am I right, Mr. Daniel?"

"I am disposed to say you are, sir," was his mild reply.

"Ain't we important people this evening!" cried Kearney, as the servant entered with another telegram. "This is for you, Mr. Daniel. I hope we're to hear that the Cabinet wants you in Downing street."

"I'd rather it did not," said he with a very peculiar smile, which did not escape Kate's keen glance across the table, as he said: "May I read my dispatch?"

"By all means," said Kearney; while, to leave him more undisturbed, he turned to Nina, with some quizzical remark about her turn for the telegraph coming next. "What news would you wish it should bring you, Nina?" asked he.

"I scarcely know. I have so many things to wish for, I should be puzzled which to place first."

"Should you like to be Queen of Greece?" asked Kate.

"First tell me if there is to be a king, and who is he?"

"Maybe it's Mr. Daniel there, for I see he has gone off in a great hurry to say he accepts the crown."

"What should you ask for, Kate," cried Nina, "if fortune were civil enough to give you a chance?"

"Two days' rain for my turnips," said Kate, quickly. "I don't remember wishing so much in all my life."

"Your turnips!" cried Nina, contemptuously.

"Why not? If you were a queen, would you not have to think of those who depended on you for support and protection? And now should I forget my poor heifers and my calves—calves of very tender years, some of them—and all with as great desire to fatten themselves as any of us have to do what will as probably lead to our destruction?"

"You're not going to have the rain anyhow," said Kearney; "and you'll not be sorry, Nina, for you wanted a fine day to finish your sketch of Croghan Castle."

"Oh! by the way, has old Bob recovered from his lameness yet to be fit to be driven?"

"Ask Kitty there; she can tell you perhaps."

"Well, I don't think I'd harness him yet. The smith has pinched him in the off forefoot, and he goes tender still."

"So do I when I go afoot, for I hate it," cried Nina, "and I want a day in the open air, and I want to finish my old Castle of Croghan, and, last of all," whispered she in Kate's ear, "I want to show my distinguished friend, Mr. Walpole, that the prospect of a visit from him does not induce me to keep the house. So that, from all the wants put together, I shall take an early breakfast, and start to-morrow for Cruhan—is not that the name of the little village in the bog?"

"That's Miss Betty's own town-land—though I don't know she's much the richer of her tenants," said Kearney, laughing. "The oldest inhabitants never remember a rent-day."

"What a happy set of people!"

"Just the reverse. You never saw misery till you saw them. There is not a cabin fit for a human being, nor is there one creature in the place with enough rags to cover him."

"They were very civil as I drove through. I remember how a little basket had fallen out, and a girl followed me ten miles of the road to restore it," said Nina.

"That they would; and if it were a purse of gold they'd have done the same," cried Kate.

"Won't you say that they'd shoot you for half a crown, though?" said Kearney, "and that the worst 'Whiteboys' of Ireland come out of the same village?"

"I do like a people so unlike all the rest of the world," cried Nina, "whose motives none can guess at, none forecast. I'll go there to-morrow."

These words were said as Daniel had just re-entered the room and he stopped and asked: "Where to?"

"To a Whiteboy village called Cruhan, some ten miles off, close to an old castle I have been sketching."

"Do you mean to go there to-morrow?"

asked he, half carelessly; but, not waiting for her answer, and as if fully preoccupied, he turned and left the room.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A DRIVE AT SUNRISE.

The little basket carriage in which Nina made her excursions, and which courtesy called a phaeton, would scarcely have been taken as a model at Long Acre. A massive, old wicker cradle constituted the body, which, from a slight inequality in the wheels, had got an uncomfortable "lurch to port," while the rumble was supplied by a narrow shelf, on which her foot-page sat *dos-a-dos* to herself—a position not rendered more dignified by his invariable habit of playing pitch-and-toss with himself, as a means of distraction in travel.

Except Bob, the sturdy little pony in the shafts, nothing could be less schooled or disciplined than Larry himself. At sight of a party at marbles or hop-scotch, he was sure to desert his post, trusting to short-cuts and speed to catch up his mistress later on.

As for Bob, a tuft of clover or fresh grass on the roadside was temptation to the full as great to him, and no amount of whipping could induce him to continue his road, leaving these dainties untasted. As in Mr. Gill's time he had carried that important personage, he had contracted the habit of stopping at every cabin by the way, giving to each halt the amount of time he believed the colloquy should have occupied, and then, without any admonition, resuming his journey. In fact, as an index to the refractory tenants on the estate, his mode of progression, with its interruptions, might have been employed, and the sturdy fashion in which he would "draw up" at certain doors might be taken as the forerunner of an ejection.

The blessed change by which the country saw the beast now driven by a beautiful young lady, instead of bestrode by an inimical bailiff, added to a popularity which Ireland in her poorest and darkest hour always accords to beauty; and they, indeed, who trace points of resemblance between two distant peoples, have not failed to remark that the Irish, like the Italians, invariably refer all female loveliness to that type of surpassing excellence, the Madonna.

Nina had too much of the South in her blood not to like the heartfelt, outspoken admiration which greeted her as she went; and the "God bless you—but you are a lovely creature!" delighted, while it amused her in the way the qualification was expressed.

It was soon after sunrise on this Friday morning that she drove down the approach, and made her way across the bog toward Cruhan. Though pretending to her uncle to be only eager to finish her sketch of Croghan Castle, her journey was really prompted by very different considerations. By Dick's telegram she learned that Walpole was to arrive that day at Kilgobbin, and as his stay could not be prolonged beyond the evening, she secretly determined she would absent herself so much as she could from home—only returning to a late dinner—and thus show her distinguished friend how cheaply she held the occasion of his visit, and what value she attached to the pleasure of seeing him at the castle.

She knew Walpole thoroughly—she understood the working of such a nature to perfection, and she could calculate to a nicety the mortification, and even anger, such a man would experience at being thus slighted. "These men," thought she, "only feel for what is done to them before the world; it is the insult that is passed upon them in public, the *soufflet* that is given in the street, that alone can wound them to the quick." A woman may grow tired of their attentions, become capricious and change; she may be piqued by jealousy, or, what is worse, by indifference; but while she makes no open manifestation of these, they can be borne; the really insupportable thing is that a woman should be able to exhibit a man as a creature that had no possible concern or interest for her—one who might come or go, or stay on, utterly unregarded or uncared for. To have played this game during the long hours of a long day was a burden she did not fancy to encounter, whereas to fill the part for the short space of a dinner, and an hour or so in the drawing-room, she looked forward to rather as an exciting amusement.

"He has had a day to throw away," said she to herself, "and he will give it

to the Greek girl. I almost hear him as he says it. How one learns to know these men in every nook and crevice of their natures! and how, by never relaxing a hold on the one clew of their vanity, one can trace every emotion of their lives!"

(To be continued.)

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HIS LAST SENSIBLE SPEECH.—"How is our patient this morning?" inquired a physician. "Oh, he is much worse," answered the sick man's brother. "He has been delirious for several hours. At two o'clock or thereabouts he said, 'What an old woman that doctor of mine is,' and he hasn't made a rational remark since."

Teacher: What is the meaning of the word "contiguous?" Pupil: Dunno. Teacher: It means "touching." Give an example of a sentence containing the word. Pupil, after a prolonged mental struggle: The "Babes in the Wood" is a very contiguous story."

Mrs. Plutus: John, I want you to take Fido for a walk on the parade. John: If you please mum, Fido won't follow me. Mrs. Plutus: Well, then, you must follow Fido.

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