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"This is true Liberty, when Freeborn Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free."—Euripides.

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LITERATURE.

(*From Mrs. S. C. Hall's Sketches of Irish Character.*)

THE LAST OF THE LINE.

On a tranquil evening, in the summer month of June, a lady of no ordinary appearance sat at an open casement of many coloured glass, and overlooked a wild, but singularly beautiful country. From the window a flight of steep stone steps led to a narrow terrace, that, in former times, had been carefully guarded by high parapets of rudely-carved granite; but they had fallen to decay, and lay in mouldering heaps on the shrubby bank, which ran almost perpendicularly to a rapid stream that danced like a sunny spirit through the green meadows, dotted and animated with sheep and their sportive lambs. In the distance, rude and rugged mountains towered in native dignity, "high in air," their grim and sterile appearance forming an extraordinary, but not unpleasing, contrast to the pure and happy-looking valley at their base, where, however, a few dingy peasant-cottages lay thinly scattered, injuring, rather than enlivening, a scene that nature had done much to adorn, and man nothing to preserve. Half way up the nearest mountain, a little chapel dedicated to "our Lady of Grace," hung, like a wren's nest, on what seemed a point of rock; but even its rustic cross was invisible from the antique casement. Often and anxiously did the lady watch the distant figures who trod the hill-side towards the holy place, to perform some act of penance or devotion.

It was impossible to look on that interesting woman without affection; one might have almost thought her destined—

"To come like truth, and disappear like dreams."

Though she was young, there was much of the dignity of silent sorrow in her aspect; and it was difficult to converse with her, without feeling her influence,—not to overpower, but to soften. Her form was slight, but rounded to the most perfect symmetry, and an extraordinary quantity of hair, black as the raven's wing, was braided, somewhat after the fashion of other lands, over a high and well-formed brow; although such was the style of the time, she wore no head-dress, except what nature had bestowed; a golden rosary, and cross of antique workmanship; a few of the strings of the harp were broken, and a pile of richly-bound music gave no token of being often disturbed. Silken Ottomans, gilded vases, fresh-gathered flowers, and a long embroidered sofa, filled up, almost to crowding, the small apartment. In a little recess, opposite the window, a child's couch was fitted with much taste and care; the hangings were of blue damask, curiously inwrought with silver, such as the nuns in France and Flanders delight to emboss; there was also a loose coverlet of the same material, and a tassled oblong cushion at either end. I have said that the lady was seated at the casement; sometimes she pressed her small white fingers to her brow, and then passed them over its rounded surface, as if to dispel, by that simple movement, thoughts, "the unbidden guests of anxious hours;"—but still it was only for a moment her gaze was turned from her best treasure, her only child; her eye followed it as, in its nurse's arms, it enjoyed the evening breeze that played amid light and clustering hair; the baby had blue eyes and a fair skin, and if it sometimes, in the infantine seriousness that passed as airy shadows over a smiling landscape, resembled its mother, now, as it laughed and shouted, in broken accents "Mamma! mamma!" she thought how like its father it spoke and looked. Clavis Abbey—as the strange mixture of ancient and modern building, inhabited by the household of Sir John Clavis, was called—was wisely situated. The monks of old always chose happily for their monasteries; sites of their ruined aisles tell of the good taste, as well as good sense of their projectors. Hill, wood, and water, were even in their neighborhood and the red deer and salmon were always near, to contribute to their repast.

But the fair possessions had, nearly two centuries before our tale commences, passed from the hands of holy Mother Church. The marvellous tale of its exchange of masters is still often repeated, and always credited; it is said and believed that the stream, which runs through the valley I have described, is, every midsummer-night, of a deep-red hue, in mysterious commemoration of the massacre of the priests of that abbey, which took place as late as the Elizabethan reign. Certain it is that the projector of such indiscriminate slaughter never reaped the rich harvest he anticipated; for, unable from severe illness to visit the court of the maiden queen, he despatched his son's tutor on the mission, with communications of the services he had rendered to the state, and a petition for a grant of the lands he had rescued from "popery." The tutor, however, made himself so agreeable to the royal lady, that she either was, or affected to be, severely angered by the unnecessary effusion of blood; and, so far from approving, testified her displeasure, and bestowed the fair lands of the murdered monks upon Oliver Clavis, the false, but handsome, accessory of the priest-slayer. But no family could take possession of consecrated ground in Ireland, without falling under the ban of both Church and people; and notwithstanding the bland and liberal conduct of the new owner of the estate, then called Clavis Abbey, Oliver lived and died unpopular. Tradition says that none of the heirs male of the family ever departed peacefully in their beds, and much learned and unlearned lore is still extant upon the subject.

Somewhat about the year 1782, Sir John Clavis entered upon his title and property, in consequence of the sudden demise of his father, Sir Henry, who was drowned on a moonshiny night, when the air and the sea were calm, and he was returning from an excursion to one of those fairy islands that at once beautify and render dangerous the Irish coast. The people who accompanied him, on that last day of his existence, say that he had been in unusual health and spirits during the morning, and had fished, and sung, and drank as usual—that as the night advanced he became reserved and gloomy, and, as they neared the coast, insisted on taking the helm—that, suddenly yielding the guidance of his little vessel, he sprang overboard—that immediately the crew crowded to save him, but a black cloud descended on the waters, and hid his form from their eyes, and it was not until the boat had driven an entire mile (as well as they could calculate) from the spot, they were enabled to behold the sea and the sky. Some laughed, some surmised, but many credited the tale; for superstition had hardly, at that period, resigned any of her strongholds; and the peasantry, to this day, believes that Sir Henry Clavis acted under the influence of a spirit-guide, that had lured him to sudden death, conformably with the old prophecy—

"The party shall fail by Clavis led,
And none of the name shall die in their bed."

Sir John had just completed his college course when he was called upon to support the honours of his house and name. At Trinity he was considered more as an amiable, gentlemanly young man, than an *esprit fort*, one likely to lead in public life. At that period the college lads were a very different set of youths from what they are at present. The rude but generous hospitality, the thoughless daring, the angry politics, the feudal feeling, that characterized the gentry of the time, were not likely to send forth subjects submissive to college rule; and the citizens of Dublin were too often insulted and aggrieved by the insolent aristocratic airs of unfledged boys, ripe for mischief, who, half in earnest, half in jest, sported with their comforts, and often with their lives. Party feeling, also, ran (as unhappily *there* it always does) to a dreadful height; and the young baronet, whose father had invariably drank "The Glorious Memory," and "Protestant Ascendancy," every day after dinner, was frequently called upon to defend or support his party, although he invariably declared that as yet he was of none—that he must wait to make up his mind, &c. &c. It must be confessed that this extraordinary irresolution, at such a period, was more the effect of constitutional apathy than of reflection; he had a good deal of the consciousness of birth and wealth about him, but he disliked either mental or bodily exertion. As an only child, he had suffered nothing like contradiction; and had he horse-whipped and abused his servants (when at the age of twelve, he sported two of his own racers at the Curragh of Kildare), instead of speaking to them as fellow-creatures in a mild and kindly voice, it would have elicited no rebuke from his father, who secretly regretted that the youth was neither likely to become a five-bottle man, a staunch Orangeman, nor a member of Parliament—the only three things he considered worth living for.

The young baronet never could have resolved upon visiting the Continent—an exploit he had long talked of—but that an anticipated general election frightened him away, as he would certainly, if at home, have been expected to offer himself as a candidate, and make speeches. He hated trouble, and of the two exertions chose the least—committed his affairs, for twelve calendar months, to the management of Denny Dacey, his nurse's son, who had acted, satisfactorily, as steward, since the second childhood of the old and respected man who had for sixty years filled the situation; and left the Abbey, attended by only two servants and one travelling-carriage. This was a matter of surprise and conversation to many, more particularly as Sir Henry and his neighbour, Mr. Dorncliff, a Cromwellian settler, had arranged that their children should be united, when of sufficient age. Miss Dorncliff was handsome, and an heiress, and, it was said, in no degree averse to the union; they had been companions in childhood, but the lady, it would appear, was of too unromantic a disposition to remove the young baronet's indifference. As his carriage rolled past the avenue that led to her dwelling, he merely leaned forward, and cast a fleeting glance towards the house. Where he met, and to what precise circumstance he owed the possession of so lovely a wife as the lady I have endeavoured to describe, is still a mystery; his business letters conveyed no intelligence of his marriage; nor was it until the arrival of gay furniture, from a fashionable Dublin upholsterer, that the idea of such an event occurred to the inhabitants of Clavis.

When the baronet returned, and announced, as his lady, her who leaned upon his arm; when the domestics received her with that warm-hearted and affectionate respect for which Irish servants are so justly celebrated; and when the rumour went abroad that Sir John Clavis had married a Spanish lady, a Catholic, and "one who had little more English than a Kerry-man," great was the consternation, and many and various the conjectures. "What will become of the 'Protestant Ascendancy,' and the 'Glorious and Immortal Memory,' now that a popish mistress is come to Clavis?" said one party "Some chance of luck and grace turning to the ould Abbey, now that the right sort's in it," observed the other. Not a few affirmed that the lady had absconded from a convent; others asserted that she was picked off, with a few other survivors, from a wrecked vessel in the Mediterranean; those who had not seen her whispered that she was no better than she should be; but Miss Dorncliff—who, at first, perhaps, to show she was heart-whole, and afterwards from real regard, was often Lady Clavis's guest—generously declared that she was the most charming woman she had ever met, that she was highly accomplished, and, although a Catholic and a Spaniard, anything but a bigot.

Her want of knowledge of the language, when she arrived, prevented her joining in conversation either with those who visited her, or those at whose houses she was received. Perfectly unconscious of the rules and etiquette of society in our colder regions, she was sure to commit some grievous fault in the arrangement of her guests, which invariably threw her husband into an ill temper, that, after the honey-moon was over, he seldom thought it necessary to conceal. Sir John had shaken off a good deal of his *ennui* by journeying; and when he came home he no longer stood on neutral ground, but suffered the excitement of politics to take the place of that which is the accompaniment of travelling. He had now discovered that, for the honour of the house, it was necessary he should adopt his father's side of the question; and accordingly the gardener was ordered to fill the flower-beds with orange lilies, and the hangings of the spare rooms were garnished with orange bindings. Unfortunately, the members of an Orange Lodge were invited to dine at the Abbey, and Lady Clavis positively refused to wear their color, in any way, *because* she considered it as the symbol of persecution to the Catholic religion, of which she was a devout and faithful member. When her husband, after much contention, gave up the point, she ordered a green velvet dress for the occasion, embroidered with golden shamrocks; she did this with a view to gratify him, never imagining that the colour which emblems the beauty and fertility of Ireland, *could* be obnoxious to any body of Irishmen. What, then, was her astonishment when he, whom she had been so anxious to please, expressed a most angry opinion of her costume—which occasioned a flood of tears from one party, and from the other, an over hastily expressed desire that, as she could never understand the customs of the country, she would give up trying to do so. Matrimonial disputes are dreadfully uninteresting in the recital,—not entertaining as are lovers' quarrels, simply because there is no danger of a heart-breaking separation arising from them; it is only the two engaged in those unhappy differences can understand their bitterness; the world has, for them, but little sympathy. Enough, then, be it, that the innocent green velvet was the commencement of much real disagreement: the lady insisting that she had the dress made as a compliment to his party; the gentleman protesting that it could not be so, as green was always opposed to orange. This he repeated over and over again, without troubling himself to inquire whether his wife understood him or not. Many an unpleasantness grew out of this trifle, that continued silently, like the single drop of rain, to wear the rock of domestic happiness. Sir John persevered in drinking deeply of the bitter cup of politics, that universal destroyer of society and kindly feeling. He soon discovered, or imagined he had discovered, how perfectly a continental education unfits the most amiable woman in the world for the society and habits of our islands; and the very efforts Lady Clavis made to appear cheerful, were silent reproaches to him for not endeavouring to make her so; they had, however, still one feeling in common—affection for their child.

While the mistress of Clavis Abbey was engaged in watching every movement of her beloved daughter, as the nurse paced slowly beneath her turret window, the baronet was sitting *tete a-tete* with no other than Denny Dacey, who from being what in England is termed a bailiff to the estate, had risen to the rank of agent, under the title, as his correspondents set forth, of "Dionysius Dacey, Esq.," &c., &c. How this person ever acquired the influence possessed over his patron, must now remain a mystery: it is to be supposed that he insinuated himself into his good graces, as a weasel does into a rabbit-burrow, by various twists and windings of which nobler animals are incapable. It was no secret in the country that, although Sir John's political apathy no longer existed, he had not acquired the active habits that are so especially necessary where a gentleman's affairs are embarrassed, and where nothing but good sense, and steady economy, can retrieve them. During the young baronet's residence abroad, Dacey had exceedingly prospered; and though one or two shrewd landholders suspected he used means, not consistent with his employer's interests, to obtain both influence and wealth, there was so much plausibility about the man, that the most watchful could bring nothing home to him; his bearing was blunt and open; he affected honesty, but his look belied the utterance of his tongue, for his eye lacked the expression of truth, and, instead of looking forth straightly from beneath its pent-house lid, was everlastingly twisting into corners—with cat like quickness, watching a fitting opportunity, when those with whom he conversed were busied about other matters, to scan and observe their countenances. It has been to me an entertaining, though often an unpleasing, study, to attend to the varied expressions conveyed by the mere action of the eye, almost without reference to the other features; and I would avoid, as I would a poisoned adder, the person whose eye quivers or looks down.

The two *friends* (such is the usual term given to those who eat meat at the same board) were seated at either end of a somewhat long table, on which were piled papers of various dates and dimensions; a huge bowl of punch had been nearly emptied of its contents, and the baronet did not appear particularly fit for business. He leaned listlessly on the table, as if in reverie, and it was only Dacey's voice that roused him from his reflection.

"But, my dear Sir John," he commenced, with his peculiar drawl, while his eye was fixed on the punch-ladle; "My dear Sir John, 'pon my sowl it weighs upon my conscience, so it does, to be managing here, and you to the fore, with such a fine head and so much cleverness (a shy glance to see how the flattery took); 'tis a shame you don't turn it to yourself, for by-'n-by you'll, may-be, find things worse nor you think 'em, as I have told you before, God knows—"

"And will my looking over these cursed papers make things better? It is positively enough to set me mad—just at a time, too, when our grand county meeting is coming on, and the general election, and so much exertion expected from me; and the house will be full of English company from the castle, and Lady C. has not an idea how English people should be entertained."

"But sure Miss Dorncliff is coming to stop with my lady while they stay."

"Very true; she is a capital, good-natured girl, 'faith, and much better looking than she was eight years ago, when I left Ireland. Oh, dear! I wonder you men of fortune marry, Dacey!"

"Sir John, it is very necessary."

"Well, well, I suppose it is, but say no more about it; there are enough of disagreeable subjects on the table already." The baronet looked upon the pile of papers, and the agent glanced keenly up, but his eye was quickly withdrawn.

"My lady was in a convent, I believe, Sir John?"

"Ay; it was a fine exploit to get her out of it. Well, poor thing, she trusted to my honour, and was not deceived."

"Of course you were married by a priest?" (This was said cautiously.)

"To be sure we were, and by a jovial fellow too; he went with me to the convent-wall, and performed the ceremony at the foot of a beautiful old cross, by the way-side, as the moon was sailing over our heads, and the orange-trees were showering perfume around us. Poor Madelina?" he continued, almost involuntarily, "I found the withered orange-blossoms, which that night I bound upon her maiden brow, encased in a casket, with the hair of our child, only this morning."

"You had the ceremony repeated on your arrival in England?" inquired Dacey.

Sir John Clavis fixed his eyes upon the reptile, and, in a sterner tone of voice than was his wont, in his turn became the querist.

"Why do you ask?"

"For no reason, only that if you had a son it would be well to see that the marriage was firm and legal."

"Thank you," replied the baronet, drily, "there is not much chance of that being the case; and if there was—

A long pause followed the last sentence, which neither seemed inclined to disturb. Dacey gathered the papers towards him, and, pulling his spectacles from his forehead to his nose, occupied himself in sorting and placing them in separate piles; every five or ten minutes a heavy sigh escaped from his lips, the last of which was so audible, that Sir John exclaimed, "What the devil, man alive, do you growl for in that manner?—one would think that you expected the ghost of your uncle, the priest, to start forth from the papers, and upbraid you with your apostacy!"

"Sorra a *ghost* at all, then, Sir John among the papers; only the *reality* of botherin' debts, custodiums, thrown-up leases on account of the backrent, and the Lord knows what!"

"And whose fault is it?" replied the gentleman; angrily; "*did I not leave it all to your management?* The property *was* a good property, and why should it not continue so? I'm sure I can't think how the money goes; to do Lady C. justice, she spends nothing."

"There's the hounds, the hunters, and five grooms, of one sort or other, Sir John; to say nothing of town-houses, carriages, and—"

"My father always had the same establishment," interrupted John, "and never kept an agent to overlook matters either."

"More's the pity!" ejaculated the manager (the exclamation might have been taken in two ways).

"There's no manner of use in my keeping *you*, if I am to be pestered with these eternal accounts—accounts—accounts—morning, noon, and night. The simple fact is," continued Sir John, rising from his seat, "the simple fact is, money I want, and money I must have. After flying to the Continent to avoid an election, I find that now, at this crisis, I cannot help running into the very strait I endeavoured to steer clear of. My friends say it is necessary, and would even subscribe (if permitted) to return me free of expense; that I will never do—so money, Dacey, money I *must* have, that's certain."

"It's easy to say money," retorted the agent; "will you sell, Sir John?"

"What?" interrogated the baronet.

"There's the corner estate, that long strip, close by Ballyraggan; your cousin Corny, of the Hill, has long had an eye to it, and would lay down something handsome."

"You poor, pitiful scoundrel!" exclaimed Sir John, "do you think it's come to *that*, for me to sell *land*, like a huckster!—and to Corney, too, a fellow that gathers inches off of every estate, as a magpie picks fi'pennies!—a fellow who, basely born, and basely bred, has, nevertheless, managed to accumulate wealth like a pawnbroker, on the misery of others! I know that he has had an eye to that property this eight years, but look—sooner than *he* should have it, I'll beg my bread—I'll sell the estate to a stranger to prevent the possibility of his ever possessing an acre of the land."

"Please yerself, sir," replied the manager, sweeping some of the papers into a wide-mouthed canvass sack which he drew from under his chair. "Here's Mr. Damask's, the upholsterer, letter—swears if he's not paid, he'll clap on an execution like lightning; it's as good as £2,500 now, with costs."

"Fire and fury!" exclaimed the baronet, who, his apathy once shaken off, became terrible in his violence; "do you want to drive me mad?"

"Then I'll say nothing of Mr. Barry Mahon's little letter," continued the man of business, quietly, "who writes, that as you've decided on *standing*, in opposition to him, he'll trouble you for the money he lent you as good as four years ago, to complete some purchase or other; it ends very civilly though, by saying that it's only the knowledge that a gentleman like you will be a formidable adversary, which obliges him to strain every nerve to make his own step firm."

"A blight upon him and his civility!"

"Then here is—" Mr. Dacey was prevented from finishing his sentence, by Sir John's striking the table so violently with his clenched hand, that the very punch-bowl trembled, and the agent ejaculated, "Lord save us!"

"Look here!" said the baronet, "you have, *I know*—means, somehow or other, of raising money when you like; find me the sum of ten thousand pounds by this day week, and that very estate, so covetted by my cousin Corney, shall be yours for ever, at a peppercorn rent, provided the matter be kept secret; mind, *provided it be kept secret*, and you bind yourself never to let a twig of it into Corney's possession."

"It's easy to keep secret a thing that never happens," observed Dacey, rolling the cord of the bag between his finger and thumb; "is it me get money when I like?—and I obliged to go at credit even for these brogues on my feet!"—and he put forth a topped boot, well-polished and shining, as he spoke.

"The Corner estate, as it is called," repeated Sir John.

"At a peppercorn rent," pondered Dacey; "if a body could any way make up the money, I'd do a dale to oblige you, sir, and though I've neither cross nor coin to bless myself with, to be sure I know them that has, who, maybe, for a valuable consideration, might—though I don't know—the little estate—eh!—ten thousand—it's badly worth that, Sir John, unless, indeed, you'd throw the fourteen acres of pasture by the lock into it."

"Well!" exclaimed the indolent baronet, though perfectly conscious that the land was worth double the sum; "we'll talk about that, provided you insure me the money; and now gather your parchments, and vanish: I've had enough of arithmetic to last me for some months—and, Dacey!"

"Yes, sir."

"*After* the election, I will really look into matters myself; but, at present, when the good of my country is at stake—when we are threatened with invasion from without, and rebellion from within—the man must be basely selfish who thinks of self—Oh, Dacey! did you see the Madeira safely into the cellar?"

"Yes, Sir John."

"Good night, Dacey!—there—good night—you won't forget—ten thousand—hard gold—none of your flimsy paper—the Corner estate."

"And the pasture."

"There, good night," repeated the baronet, as the wily agent bowed himself out of the apartment. Sir John Clavis rose from his seat, and threw open the window which was directly under the turret that formed the boudoir of his Spanish wife; indeed, it was the sound of her guitar that had drawn him to it; and he recognized a favourite seguidilla, to which he had written words; he remembered having taught her to repeat them; and the full rich voice that had given them so much beauty—if in that twilight hour it sounded less melodious—had never fallen upon his ear so full of tenderness; its simple burden—

"Sweet olive-groves of Spain,"

brought the remembrance of what Madelina was to him, in the days when he playfully chid the mispronunciation of his poetry; and as the prospect of receiving the ten thousand, and not being plagued about money matters, had somewhat softened his temper (the idea that he was diminishing his property had no share whatever in his thoughts—possessing, as he did, the dangerous—nay, fatal, faculty of looking *only* on to-day), he thought, I say, of his wife, with more complacency than he had done since the affair of the green velvet. He was pleased when he heard Miss Dorncliff (of whose arrival he was unconscious) urge her to repeat the strain. She commenced, but at a line which he well remembered—

"I know no blessing but thy smile."

Her voice faltered, and the next moment he heard her friend chiding away her tears; his first impulse was to proceed to her apartment, and inquire their cause; but then he hated scenes; and vanity or curiosity, or both, prompted him to remain; and the broken dialogue which followed, happily for the repose of his soul, roused, in his wife's cause, the best feelings of his heart. Many were the affectionate expressions lavished by Miss Dorncliff on her friend, and many the entreaties that she would cease to agitate herself upon what, she insisted, was a surmise without a foundation.

"You would not say so," replied Madelina, "if you had seen his attentions, his tenderness, on the Continent—or heard his repeated promises that my religion should be held sacred; the little silver shrine that my sainted mother so often knelt to, I have been obliged to remove, even from this chamber, which it is mockery to call my own; and though I cannot understand all he says—and though his eye is bright, and his lip smiles, sometimes, yet he never looks upon me as he used; *to me his countenance is sadly changed.*"

"I'll tell you what, my dear," replied her friend, taking advantage of a pause in her complaint, "adopt the course I should have taken, if my good father's scheme had, unfortunately for me, been carried into effect. Assert your own dignity; if he looks as cold as snow, do you look as cold as ice—if he stamps, do you storm—if he orders, do you counter-order—if he says 'I will,' you say 'you shan't.' My life on it!—such conduct for one week would bring him sighing to your feet. Here you sit, with your baby, which, if he had the common feelings of a man, he would worship you for presenting to him—"

"Stop, my dear Margaret," said Lady Clavis; "do him not injustice: he loves his child as fondly as father ever loved a child; he has not changed to it—"

"*Yet*," interrupted, in her turn, the indignant Margaret, "he has not changed *yet*, but who can tell how soon he may? The man who would change to *you* must be base indeed."

"He is not base," replied the wife, in a sweet, low tone, which penetrated into the inmost recesses of Sir John's heart, "not base, only weak; he is surrounded by a parcel of flatterers, many of whom hate me because of my religion, and others for reasons which I cannot define; but look, Margaret, were he to treat me as a dog, were he to spurn me from him, and trample me to dust, even that dust would rise to heaven's own gate to ask for blessings on his head"

"She is an angel after all!" thought Sir John.

"You are a fool, my dear!" both thought and exclaimed Miss Dorncliff; "and I only wish I were big enough to throw him over the terrace of this old musty place, and I would soon choose you a husband worthy of your love."

"Upon my word, I am much obliged to you, Miss Minx!" murmured the baronet, as he cautiously closed the window, resolving to turn over a new leaf, and station himself, for the remainder of the evening, in his wife's dressing-room. He could not avoid thinking, as he passed through the winding corridors and up the staircases, "a very pretty wife I should have had, if it had been as my worthy agent seems to think it might be even now. The fellow means well, but he is mistaken; I should not have been able to call my life my own—the termagent! Thank goodness, I escaped her! I never valued my blessing before!"

He met his child in the lobby, and took the laughing cherub from the nurse's to his own arms. As he prepared to enter, "You may go down, Mary," he said, seeing the maid waiting to receive the child. "I will take Miss Madeline in myself."

How easily can a man make the woman who truly loves him, happy! It was enough for Lady Clavis that her husband was at her side—enough that he smiled upon her—enough that he called her "darling;" although it would have been better for them both, had she possessed the strength of mind to entitle her to the name of "friend," the most sacred, yet the most abused, of all endearing terms. Miss Dorncliff exulted in her happiness, though her more cool and deliberate temperament led her to believe that Sir John's "love-fit," as she termed it in her own mind, would not be of long duration. She little knew the service she had rendered Lady Clavis by her somewhat intemperate advice; nor the dread of the baronet lest any portion of that advice should be followed by his gentle wife.

As Mary Conway, Madelina's nurse, descended to the vestibule, she heard a voice, whose sound was familiar to her ear, repeat her name two or three times, and in various tones; she lingered for a moment, and then, as if gladly remembering that her infant charge was committed to its parent's care, turned into an abrupt passage, leading from the great hall to one of the archways, where dews and damps mouldered from day to day upon the massive walls.

"What are ye afther wantin' now, Mister Benjy?" she inquired, as the outline of her lover's (for there's no use in concealing the fact) figure became visible to her laughing eyes.

"Nothing particular, that is to say very particular," replied the youth, who was no other than Dacey's nephew; "only I'm going a journey to-night, and I thought I'd be all the better for your God speed, or, may-be, a bit of prayer to the saints you think so much of."

"A Journey—where to?" inquired Mary, with a palpitating heart.

"Why, thin, just to Dublin, Mary, honey. And it's glad enough I'd be to get out of this murderin' grand ould place, only just for one single thing."

"And might a body know what that is?" again inquired the maiden.

"Honour bright, Mary, because I shan't see yer sweet smilin' face for many a long day, may-be; for uncle says he has a dale o' business to transact in Dublin, and that he'll be wanting me to look after it; indeed, I'm thinkin' he has a notion we're keeping company, and don't over like it: though, Mary, darlin', it's more nor he can do to put between us."

Mary covered her face with her hand, and, though no sigh or sound escaped her lips, tears bedewed her cheeks. She was nothing more nor less than a frank-hearted, good-natured girl, with only three, or, perhaps, four, definite ideas in her pretty round head—the first of which was decided love for her mistress, and her mistress's child—a great portion of affection for Benjamin Dacey—and no small regard for finery, in all its branches and bearings; she consequently had not a multiplicity of objects to divide her attention, which was therefore steadily devoted to the service of her three or four several propensities. The idea of her lover's being sent away, and to Dublin too, overwhelmed her with grief, to which she would have given more audible vent, but that Benjamin had unwittingly observed, his "uncle didn't over like his keeping company with her,' which aroused the maiden's pride; she therefore said "that, indeed, Mr. Dacey ought to remimber when he once held two or three acres of land under her father," and that, "though she was at the Abbey, she was far from being a *rale sarvant*; she took care of Miss Maddy more from pure love nor anything else. Maybe, it was Mister Benjy himself that wanted to be off the promise—if so, she was willing and ready," &c. &c. But, in fact, these lovers' quarrels are the same in all cases; I could give a recipe by which people might quarrel, *agreeably*, ten times a week on an average—only, as love would be the principal ingredient in *my* prescription, I fear the misunderstandings would be too soon understood for your genuine downright-in earnest quarrellers. I must not tarry with those young people, during their parting scene, but only recount that "Mary," as she afterwards expressed it, "got a dale out of Benjy, which no one should be the wiser for; only her heart was fairly crushed—thinkin' what a misfortune it was to a boy like him to leave such an uncle;" even this she only communicated to her particular friend and companion, Patty Grace

When the expected company arrived from Dublin—from "the Castle," as it has been familiarly termed for ages—it was evident that Sir John had nerved his mind to some great undertaking to which he was secretly urged by Dennis Dacey. Indeed, the particular party which had once been led by his father, were anxious he should tread in the same steps, and they again regretted that his union with a Catholic was likely to cool his ardour in "the good cause;" they, however, did their best to urge him forward—and "the glorious and immortal memory" was drank so often after dinner, that those who sacrificed to the sentiment had neither glorious nor inglorious memory left. The humble parish priest never joined in these revels; and when Dacey, in Lady Clavis's presence, hinted at this circumstance, and had, moreover, the audacity to assert that his absence was a tacit acknowledgement of disloyalty, the lady roused herself in defence of her ancient friend, and told the agent that if religion was a proof of loyalty, he must be the worst of traitors, for he was a renegade from the faith of his fathers, and had changed for the love of filthy lucre. Dacey trembled and turned pale; but as he quitted the apartment he muttered a deep and bitter curse against the lady of Clavis Abbey. Not only had "the little estate" been secretly transferred to Dacey, along with the fourteen acres of pasture, and the ten thousand pounds paid for present relief, but other sums must, at this crisis, be advanced to relieve the necessities of the proprietor, and other lands sacrificed to feed the rapacity of the agent. Mr. Barry Mahon resolved to stand as the *people's* champion, and already were the addresses of the several candidates duly printed in the county papers. The Abbey became such a scene of interminable bustle and confusion, as the day for the commencement of the election approached, that it would be difficult to convey an idea of the strange persons and objects which crowded on each other. To Mary Conway's great delight, Benjamin unexpectedly returned; and, from the manner in which his uncle received him, it might be supposed that he was not particularly pleased at the circumstance; he, however, carved out for him the task of managing (dare I say bribing?) a few refractory freeholders at some distance; but the young man did not depart until he had whispered some words of moment into his true love's ear. The same evening, when Mary was undressing the little Madeline, Lady Clavis entered the room, happy to escape from a tumult she could hardly understand.

"I'm so glad your honourable ladyship's come in," said the girl; "I want so much to know what you'd have packed up to take into town to-morrow, my lady—as, in coorse, you mean to go with his honour to see the election and all that?"

"Indeed, Mary," replied Lady Clavis; "I have no such intention; I shall be but too glad to escape the bustle of it here—and I should be only in the way, Sir John says."

"Och, my grief! does his honour, the masther, say that? But no matter, Madam, dear; for the love o' God, as ye value yer own honour, and the honour of this sweet baby, go!—go, for God's sake!—or you'll be sorry for it,—mark my words!"

Lady Clavis was astonished at the girl's vehement manner and gestures, but still she remained firm to her purpose. She was suffering acutely from mental anxiety and bodily exertion; and as Sir John had continued to treat her with great kindness, she was anxious to show how willingly she would yield to his wishes—even where they were opposed to her own. But Mary was not to be thus satisfied. She "hushowed" her little charge to sleep, and descended to the lobby that led to her master's study. She paused for a few moments at the entrance, and inclined her head so as to catch any sound that might pass along, having ascertained that persons were speaking within. I cannot avoid lamenting that she was led away, by what might be called "natural curiosity," to draw near—very near; so near that her ear covered the key-hole—and listen—systematically listen—to whatever conversation was going on. She might have remained some fifteen minutes, in no very comfortable attitude, when she suddenly started up; but had hardly receded three steps from the door, when it was opened, and the round vulgar face of Dacey appeared, carefully prying into the darkness. Mary saw she could not escape unnoticed, so, with ready wit, she inquired, "Oh, Misther Dacey, have you seen my lady's Finny? I've been huntin' all the evenin' after the ugly baste, and can get neither tale nor tidings of it—Finny!—Finny!—Finny!"

"Can ye see in the dark, like the cats, Miss Mary, with yer fine red topnot?" said Dacey, earnestly.

"Troth you may ask that," she replied, "for my candle went out."

"And where's the candlestick, Miss Mary?" persisted the keen querist.

"No wonder ye'd inquire, but sorra one have we been able to lay hands on these three weeks, for the shoals o' company, so I just used the same candlestick my father and your father, Misther Dacey, war best acquainted with—my fingers, w'ay!——Finny!—Finny!—Finny!"

She was receding, calling the dog at the same time; when Dacey, whose ire was roused, followed her nearly to the end, and said, "You'd better not turn yer tongue against my family, Miss Impudence, for ye're mighty anxious to get into it, I'm thinkin'."

"Not into your family, Misther Dacey," retorted Mary proudly. "Anxious, indeed! I don't deny that Benjy and I have been keepin' company, though my true belief is, he's no nevvy of yours. Ye'd think little of *adoptin'* any man's child or property either."

"Hah!" he exclaimed, seizing her arm, and pressing it firmly, "is that the news ye're afther?—ye'd better——" but the girl prevented his finishing his threat by screaming "Murder!" so loudly, that Sr John Clavis rushed out, with a candle in his hand, to inquire into the nature of the disturbance.

Dacey looked extremely foolish, while Mary lifted her apron to her eyes, and, with well-feigned tears, declared, "It's a shame—and I'll tell my lady, so I will, that when I was looking for little Finny, he came out of your honour's study to kiss me, yer honor—a dacent girl like me—I'll tell my lady, so I will. Finny!—Finny!—Finny!" And off she marched triumphantly, leaving Dacey to explain his equivocal situation as he best could.

(*To be concluded next No.*)

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS.

ADRIFT ON THE ICE.

FEARFUL ADVENTURE ON NIAGARA RIVER—ONE MAN DROWNED AND TWO WONDERFULLY SAVED—THE SURVIVORS AFLOAT ON CAKES OF ICE FOR THREE HOURS, DRIFTING SEVEN MILES TOWARD THE FALLS.

(*From the Buffalo Express, Jan. 16.*)

We have to recount this morning one of the most fearful and extraordinary stories of perilous adventure, death and suffering, that has ever been our lot to make public. Of the three actors and sufferers in it, one is a prominent and widely-known gentleman of this city, William A. Thompson, Esq., the proprietor and now Vice-President of the new Erie and Niagara Railroad, running from Fort Erie to Niagara. We have obtained our particulars of the story from the lips of Mr. Thompson, who survives to relate such an experience as few men in the world have passed through.

It seems that on Saturday afternoon the quantity of ice passing down the river from the lake caused the ferry-boat plying between Black Rock and Fort Erie to suspend her trips. Mr. Thompson, who was on the other side and desired to cross to this, accepted the offer of a coloured boy named William Bartlett to row him across in a small boat, not realizing at the moment the difficulty of the passage, occasioned by the movement of ice. Subsequently he was joined for the trip by a man named Warren, foreman under the contractors of the Erie and Niagara Railroad, who was very anxious to reach this side in time to take the 6 p. m. train to Suspension Bridge, going home to his family at Prescott, C. W. On reaching the river side Mr. T. saw the hazard of the attempt at crossing, and would have receded, but Mr. Warren pressed him to go on, and he was prevailed upon by his companion's anxieties.

About half-past 5 o'clock the three pushed out into the stream. They found much difficulty in making their way through the ice, which ran close to shore, and again Mr. Thompson advised a return. But presently getting through the shore pack of ice they found clear water, and went forward confidently, meeting no obstacles until they again neared the shore on the American side, near the Erie Mills, when the ice pressed about them thicker than in the first instance. Mr. Thompson then gave an imperative order to the boy to back away and return, but it was too late. They had entered so far that return was impossible. They were caught by the ice, wedged fast between its grinding cakes, and could go neither forward nor back. Another moment, and it had crushed the sides of their boat, so that it began to fill rapidly and sink.

The three immediately leaped out upon a cake of ice nearest at hand, which proved to be but a small one, scarcely larger than a door, and drew the boat partly upon it after them. Their hope was in being able to turn the craft bottom up and mount its keel, in which position they might be floated by it; but the mass was not large enough to permit such an operation. Mr. Thompson then attempted to bail out the boat with his cap; but while doing so, the boy Bartlett cried out that the ice was upon them again, and they had barely time to throw themselves into the half-filled boat when the piece upon which they had stood was crushed by another mass coming down upon it. An instant more and the boat also struck, turned bottom upward, and Mr. Thompson and Mr. Warren plunged into the water. The negro boy succeeded in leaping upon an ice cake. Mr. Thompson sank once and came up, when he clutched the boat, made his way to the stern and climbed upon the keel. Here he saw his companion Warren sinking for the last time, a short distance away, and drowning before his eyes, while he was utterly powerless to help. He had scarcely witnessed this, when death rushed upon him again.—The boat was once more struck and rolled over. Again he sank, and again, on rising, he clutched the boat, which again had righted itself. Climbing into its stern, which sank with his weight two or three feet below the surface, he sat for a time with the water to his chin.

By this time it had long grown dark. He could see but little about him. Presently, a cake of ice drifting down upon him, he put out his hand to ward it away, and feeling it to be several inches thick and apparently of some size, he concluded it best to escape, if possible, from the boat to the ice. He very nearly failed in doing so, barely getting his breast upon the cake when he sprang from the boat, and finding it impossible to lift his body above that position. Providentially, however, the boat in rising just touched his foot and gave him a slight push forward, after which he was enabled, by long and exhausting efforts, to crawl upon the cake. Here he stood upright, and, not knowing the size of the ice raft, dared not move. Hailing the boy Bartlett, he found him still afloat upon his bit of ice, 100 or 200 yards away, loudly engaged in almost frantic prayer.

And now began the wonderful voyage of the river, through the darkness and the storm of freezing sleet which fell upon their trail rafts of ice. Those who were out Saturday evening will remember what a bitter night it was. A fine rain, driven by keen north winds, stung the face of the traveller, and cased everything exposed with a quick mail of ice. To all this pelting storm, these wet and exhausted cast-aways, drifting along the cold waters of the Niagara, with the horrid dread of imminent death to freeze their hearts within them, were exposed for three mortal hours. Mr. Thompson had lost both cap and gloves. His clothing was frozen into the rigidity of iron armour, and he became incapable of motion except as he slightly swung his arms to keep them flexible. All that he could do for himself was to shout and cry for help, which he did steadily, and with the whole strength of his lungs for hours. Fortunately, possessed of a magnificent *physique* in every respect, his voice was capable of the exertion. Once, somewhere in the vicinity of Lower Black Rock, he received a response from shore, but to his appeal for rescue the voice, out of the darkness, replied that it had no oars and could do nothing. The miserable fool, or worse, who heard and hailed, seems to have made no effort to rouse his neighborhood and sets its energies to work for the rescue of the perilled men who appealed to him. And so they drifted on beyond Black Rock, beyond Strawberry Island, past the head of Grand Island, and steadily on toward those currents of the great cataract where no hand could save them. Steadily the cry for "help" rang out across the water and through the black night, and no ear heard and no tongue answered. Three hours had passed—seven miles of the river traversed—it was 9 o'clock of the night. Hope began to die in the heart of Mr. Thompson, stout and strong as it was. He called to his companion, the negro boy, and gave him a message for his wife and children, if it should be his lot to escape. His thoughts, as he describes them, were very quaint and curious. They were too busy to give an opportunity for fear, and death was faced calmly and coolly.

And so they drifted steadily down, between Grand Island and the American shore, until Tonawanda was passed, and the last houses upon either shore from which help could come before help should be too late, were going by. But their, at the last, by the good providence of God, help did come The shouts were heard on the Grand Island shore. Lights began to move from house to house. The neighbors were running together. Presently the gleam of a lantern moved upon the river, and they knew that boats were coming out.

Mr. Thompson, when reached, had to be rolled into the boat like a log. Another boat rescued the boy Bartlett. The boy, being thinly clad, had nearly perished when taken off; but Mr. Thompson, a man of large, robust frame and great vitality, felt himself capable of enduring an hour or two more of the bitter trial. Astonishing to say, neither were seriously frozen, and Mr. Tompson, whom we saw yesterpay, appears little the worse for his extraordinary experience. Mr. Warren, who was drowned, was an elderly man of about 55 years of age. He resided at Prescott, C. W, where, we understand, he leaves a family.

REMARKABLE NARRATIVE OF A YOUNG GIRL'S ESCAPE FROM THE MORMONS—HER SUFFERINGS, &c.

A correspondent of the Cincinnatti *Commercial*, writing from Petersburg, Ohio, gives a long account of the adventures of a young girl named Louisa Black, who recently escaped from the Mormon community in Salt Lake City, and endured terrible suffering. The substance of the story is as follows:—

"On Thursday evening, 4th inst., as a boy was returning from school, across the fields near Petersburg, on nearing a couple of haystacks he heard plaintive moans, apparently proceeding therefrom, accompanied by faint articulations of a human voice. He distinctly heard the ejaculation, "My God! my God!" The boy hurried to his home, which was in sight, and told Mr. Davidson what he had heard. *Mr. Davidson* at once started back with him, and meeting two neighbours on the way, took them along to the stack of hay.

"On reaching the spot, and going round one of the stacks from whence the sounds proceeded, they discovered some rags protruding from the base, and, on investigation, what was their surprise to find a young girl, an entire stranger, literally burrowed in the hay, seemingly helpless and in a dying condition. She raised a pair of blue eyes to the gentleman's startled face, and implored them not to move her, to let her lie there and die, for she was frozen and starved, and aid had arrived too late. However the gentlemen raised her as gently as they could, and, though the slightest motion aggravated her sufferings, succeeded in carrying her back to Mr. Davidson's farm-house. She was evidently not more than sixteen years of age, and scantly and miserably clad. A tattered dress clung round her, and a garment that had once been an underskirt she had torn in two, one strip being tied about her head, and the other wrapped about her feet.

"She avers that she resided in Missouri until the fall of 1864, when her father became infatuated with the Mormon faith (a number of Mormons settled near them), and in opposition to the wishes of his wife and family, made preparations to remove to Salt Lake City. As he could not be turned from his purpose, his family reluctantly accompanied him, and were numbered among the inhabitants of that city, while Mr. Black was at once enrolled among the "saints." They had been there for six months, during which time matters had been growing from bad to worse, when the crisis arrived, in the shape of Mrs. Black, No. 2. The family were now wrought up to desperation, and Mrs. Black, No. 1, with her three daughters resolved to make their escape from Utah, at the same time being cognizant that the way was rife with danger, and that if captured death would be their doom. Louisa goes on to say that they succeeded in eluding vigilance, and made their escape from Salt Lake City on the 10th of last June, with only twelve dollars in their purse, and turned their faces towards the States.

"The girl says they kept mostly to the woods and ravines, and all covert places to avoid discovery, and gave their former home in Missouri a wide birth for fear of the many Mormons there. At length one of the sisters died from exposure and privation, and covering her up in the woods, they still wandered on. Soon another sister perished, and Louisa and her mother alone pursued their flight. At length Mrs. Black lay down, never to rise again. Louisa thinks it must have been in the vicinity of Cleveland that her mother died. Instead of asking any assistance she wandered onward alone. She tells of being at Greenville, Pennsylvania, and of finally arriving at Middlesex, where she says she lay for three days on the farm of Mr. Edmonson. This was about the 9th of December.

"She proceeded to relate that she was here found by a couple of horse thieves, and we next find this young girl, on the eve of December 11, employed as an emissary by those rogues to ride off a horse they had just stolen from Mr. Edmonson's field. She states that they instructed her to go to Oil City, and gave her directions how to get there; also that one of them gave her two bills, a ten and a five, with which to procure subsistence for herself and the horse on the route. When asked what she did with the money, she at first did not seem to recollect, and at last said she spent it, but did not say what for. However, it is supposed she lost the money. These thieves told her that they would take another route to Oil City, where they would meet her, and take charge of the horse, and also that their gang had their head-quarters there and that they had run off many a horse to Oil City. They furthermore boasted that they had stolen a span in Cleveland worth $400. They placed her on the horse, and started her off, and that is the last she saw of them. Instead of taking the prescribed route, Louisa changed the programme by taking a route of her own choosing. She finally took refuge in the hay stack, where she was found badly frozen.

REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES REVENUE COMMISSION.

EXEMPTION OF MANUFACTURES RECOMMENDED.

New York, Jan. 29.—The report of the revenue commission recommends a revision of the present revenue system, looking to the entire exemption of the manufacturing industry of the United States from all direct taxation, distilled or fermented liquors, tobacco, and possibly a few other articles, excepted. This should be done gradually, as experience satisfies us of our ability to substitute other and objectionable means of taxation. The commission, after making allowance for a possible reduction of duties and increase of free list, estimate the revenue from customs for the year 1867 at one hundred and thirty millions. They recommend a reduction of the tax on distilled spirits from $2 to $1, and estimate at that rate a revenue of forty millions from that source. The tax on fermented liquors of $2 per barrel of