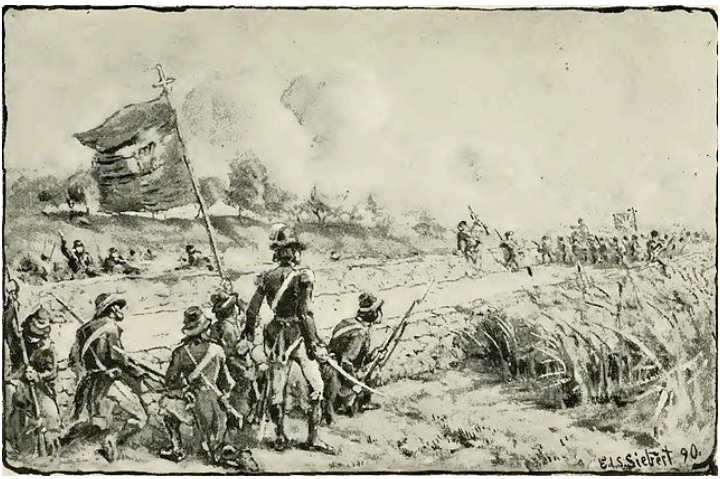
IRELAND!



translated especially for this journal by

SARAH E. HOLMES

from the French of the great novelist,

Georges Sauton.

The author weaves into a drama of unusual poignancy and melancholy power the story of one of the heroic struggles of the sons of Erin to lift the accursed yoke of the English,—the English who have stolen their lands, burned such cities as resisted too vigorously, exterminated entire and inoffensive populations, and established as an axiom this monstrosity:

IT IS NOT A FELONY TO KILL AN IRISHMAN.

He also gives the bloody history of the repression of this noble attempt at deliverance, terrible, frightful, cowardly repression, by exile, banishment, and execution without trial.

IRELAND!

CHAPTER I.

Now Paddy Neill breathed freely again: He travelled no longer in the darkness, like a thief, passing the day crouched in the branches of trees, hid in the bottom of a ravine or in the caves of beasts to escape the English emissaries who were scouring the country.

Neither soldiers nor spies had yet pushed their *reconnaissances* in this direction, and he no longer dreaded being informed against, as a dangerous Irishman, on account of his run-away garb, his vest in tatters, his breeches spotted with mud, and, above all, his face, frightfully scarred, like the canvas of a torn portrait,—cruel stigmata of the torments which he had suffered the previous month, in the dungeons of Dublin.

He slept during the night, and walked from daybreak, taking the roads or foot paths at his fancy, tending, however, to the shorter, being in haste to reach again his village, in the region of Cork, left nearly a half year since, and to which he brought grave news and instructions.

Ireland fermented from one end to the other, perturbed at many points; already the people were rising in arms, announcing themselves "formidable." The poor old woman, as her children sadly called Ireland, lived yet, showing her teeth, and soon would set them in the pitiless heart of these cursed tyrants. The atrocity of the preventive repression did not dismay her.

In the name of George the Fourth, they had in vain multiplied tortures, the whip, the stake, summoning to the thresholds of their houses and shooting without warning peaceful citizens, putting caps of pitch on the heads of suspected persons: these savage proceedings succeeding only in kindling the spirit of the lukewarm, and in exasperating the more ardent.

The cap of pitch had been Paddy's fate, and he counted absolutely on the ignoble ravages of his face to revolutionize every man down there at Bunclody and in all the country where they knew him; he doubted only one thing,—the not being disfigured enough to excite sufficient wrath; so he was devoured by curiosity to get to his hut and see himself in the bit of looking-glass ornamented with the green Shamrock leaf and hung in the chimney corner under the colored image of Saint Patrick.

Since he had left the hands of the torturer, traversing no village in his flight, systematically avoiding habitations, he had seen neither glass nor window, and, having met no living soul whose degree of fright had informed him, he could not at all render to himself an account of his condition. The only cottage he had entered (being thirsty) was wholly without panes to the windows which shook in the wind; and, more than three-quarters blind, the old octogenarian who was mechanically knitting within, judging him by the mildness of his words, had experienced neither terror nor repulsion.

Feeling his scars with his hand, he fully realized that the pitch, in fusing, had corroded and shred his eyelids, cutting the skin of the forehead; his lingers penetrated into the sinuous furrows and pressed the swellings of the flesh; but he could not picture adequately to himself the whole of these horrors, and he deviated sometimes from his path in search of a spring or brook which would reflect his image.

He discovered none, the unusually hot summer having dried up the water as it had consumed the foliage of the trees and devoured the grass of the meadows, casting desolation over all the country.

Tired at last, Paddy leaned against the side of a knoll and looked on at scenes of real tragedies.

Miserable cows, in a pasture without a shadow of vegetation, turned towards the pale autumnal sun their noses parched with fever. Yawning with hunger, pushing back parched lips over their long, yellow, shaking teeth, they exhaled lamentable lowings like a doleful appeal for help, to which, at last, responded the far-away voice of a man. Aroused by the noise, one beast, more consumptive than the rest, made an heroic effort, to rise, accompanied by a grievous lamentation, only to tremble and almost immediately drop down, exhausted, on the soil arid and naked as an empty sack.

The others, doubtless aware of this fall, redoubled their bellowing; and the man whose voice—gently encouraging in spite of the characteristic accent of sorrow—drew nearer, appeared behind the slashed hedge, where now not even the skeleton of a leaf remained. The animals ran to him at a panting trot of their feeble legs, the flabby hide flapping on their hollow flanks, but, immediately wearied, they slackened their speed, proceeding with a painful gait. They surrounded him affectionately, licking the hands which caressed their rough and withered hide.

A sharp sadness seized the countryman; by turns he contemplated the dull stretch of meadow, bare as a cloth that shows its thread, and the knotty spines and skeleton frames of the cows whose bones showed with such painful sharpness.

"Would it not be better to kill them at once?" murmured he, loud enough, however, for Neill, in the silence of this solitude, to understand.

He appeared himself emaciated by privations; and, very gloomy, powerless to alleviate this deplorable distress, he hastened the *dénouement,* exciting by some deceptive words the dying animal to stand on her feet, helping her with a supreme goodness; then slipped a leather strap under her belly, so supporting her in her unsteady step; and together they left the field.

Here also misery allied itself with the English. Paddy had hoped that it would be otherwise; but, since the evil existed, he believed that this complication would hasten the insurrection; the famine would come sooner, and the wolf more readily spring from the forest.

Having again set out on his way and passing by the side of the enclosure, the cows which were left, bellowing their desolation in a despairing rhythm,

came towards him. Whether by chance or because he was a stranger to them, when they saw him at their side, they stopped suddenly as if stupefied. He attributed their attitude to horror, and went on his way, enchanted.

Decidedly, he would produce on his friends a strong impression, and, to enjoy as soon as possible this result, he lengthened his steps, regretting his pause and rest which had delayed him. By taking short cuts he calculated to reach the end of his journey in five good hours by wasting no time, never stopping to stare at the rooks which in black bands flew swiftly cawing toward the regions where the murderers strewed the pavements of the streets with corpses.

Barely four hours and a half sufficed, and he reached Bunclody as the setting sun encircled the top of the steeple from which the Angelus had just finished sounding.

The country nearer the sea, refreshed by its humid breath, had suffered less from the drought than most of the other regions: it preserved yet some green thickets, and an appearance of harvest, very incompletely ripened, waved in the breeze, balancing on the ears of corn a multitude of sparrows that were stuffing themselves, regardless of the immoderate gesture's of manikins rigged upon poles.

These represented vague types of the English, and the timid attempts at rough caricature pleased Paddy Neill, who smiled.

They had not, since his departure, lost their hatred of the oppressor; quite the contrary, as he received proof some minutes later.

The last vibrations of the Angelus died away in an imperceptible hum as a murmuring, rumbling sound of voices reached him: voices of youths, delicate but *positive,* at intervals suddenly grave with solemn inflections, or as if stifled in their throats, breaking forth unexpectedly in irritated exclamations.

"The truant school of Treor!" said Paddy to himself, and in his heart surged spontaneously the memory of his forgotten childhood.

He ran over his twenty-seven years, and again it was Treor who, in the shade of the flowering hedges, on the cool river banks, had instructed himself and his comrades in rebellion against the law, the odious law which forbade the sons of Erin to read elsewhere than in the Anglican catechism.

Going by the side of the road, in the field within the thorny fence, they did not see him approach; the sound of his steps deadened by the fallow ground, he drew near without betraying his presence, and through the network of branches perceived a dozen young boys, the sons and brothers of his old schoolfellows, grouped by the side of a ditch around the proud old man; while a little farther on, his little girl Marian, a sweet and serene face, taught the younger ones, those of five or six years.

With eyes opened wide, at the recitals of the master, the older ones read the lesson on his lips before hearing it, and, shuddering, their clear foreheads contracted, they seemed in the strong anger which swelled their breasts already like men.

Most assuredly, Treor was speaking to them of their country, of her ruins, her sufferings, her griefs, and her bondage, and in this way rousing their generous, exuberant emotion. Neill listened.

"Then," said the volunteer tutor, "Cromwell, having found in Drogheda a fierce resistance, burned the town relentlessly."

A pale little fellow, with the veined face of a sickly girl, cried out, in a hissing voice:

"At least, he is for all eternity in the flames of hell!"

"After which," continued the old man, "the Protector tried to sell the whole of Ireland, at auction, to the Jews!"

"The Judas!" exclaimed a patriot of thirteen years, with a blazing face. I And all the pupils, in a noisy uproar and confusion of questions, begged for enlightenment on points still obscure to them. Treor, probably for the hundredth time, retraced for them in a rapid *résumé* the whole history of the contest undertaken by the rapacious Albion: her lords joining in a scramble for the land, building their castles on the battle-fields still drenched with blood mixed with crushed flesh; at the least manifestation of discontent on the part of the conquered, depriving them of all chance of retaliation, all hope of an equitable restoration in the future, by exile *en masse,* transportation *en masse,* massacres, slaughter of inoffensive populations, veritable unclean butcheries with only incendiary fires everywhere to purify the air!

"At last," concluded Treor, who was growing enthusiastic amid the increasing tumult of hearts, "they soon drove all the natives from the right bank of the Shannon as if they were penning up a flock, and the fate of whoever ventured there was death, death without sentence, the unpunished, applauded death of game by the hunter! The adage with which you are familiar is borne out by experience and the height of the hecatombs: 'It is not a felony to kill an Irishman!'" During this time, the teaching of the little ones, calmer but yet patriot like, was going on, and, to repay them for their sustained attention, the young teacher repeated to them the always applauded legend of Ireland surviving, like the ark, the deluge; and of her inhabitants, rescued from the waters, repeopling afterwards the neighboring islands.

And the marvelous legend provoked this logical reflection from an infant as chubby as the cherubs in church paintings:

"In that case, it is England that ought to belong to us."

Slow and melancholy, the speech of the young girl seemed to disengage itself from the midst of tears; her whole look breathed intense grief, restrained and forced back, and the, oblique rays of the sun which was disappearing kindled a faint light in her wet eyes. Paddy Neill remarked at the same time, in the neighborhood, a castle window illuminated by the same sun, and this chance coincidence recalled to him what he believed to have discovered before his departure,—the love of Treor's little girl for the son of Newington, deceitful, fatal love, without issue, devoted to sorrow, reprobation, and despair.

Sir Richard Bradwell, who was its object, was as forbearing and humane, as his father was harsh and hateful to the Irish, but he belonged none the less to the odious race, and the sons of hangmen do not marry without profanation and sacrilege the daughters or sisters of their victims.

So Neill exulted once more in the thought of his mutilations; when Marian should see him, when he should explain to her in detail the torments, the refined atrocities, of the torturers, it would be impossible that she should keep for one single instant longer her heart's passion for a man speaking the same language as the wretches who commanded these tortures or the brutes who executed them.

To listen to the words, "I love you," pronounced with the accent of the beings who were guilty of such atrocities,—no, Paddy could not admit that Marian, so tender, so delicate, could tolerate even the thought.

He formulated his opinion to himself, but with such warmth that some words escaped him, and two or three children, turning their heads, saw him, and, uttering screams of fright, trembling, livid, took refuge in Marian's skirts. She sprang up, pale, haggard, horrified, and stood quite motionless, her lips half open, without articulation, no sound whatever issuing, her look riveted on the apparition by an unconquerable force,—the fascination of the hideous.

Repenting the trouble he had caused, which exceeded all his previsions and calculations, Paddy advanced in order to make himself known to her and to reassure her; but, at the first step, she threw herself backward, all at once, like a statue from its pedestal; and, as he sprang forward to support her or to lift her, the hand of Treor, who had run with his young pupils, grasped him nervously by the back of his neck, brutally hurled him to the earth, and sent him rolling away.

At the same time the, most hot-headed of the old man's scholars flung themselves on him to secure him and bring him to justice. But, while struggling, he succeeded in announcing himself: "Paddy Neill, the cartwright, son of the dead Mat Neill," and he made a comic explanation of Marian's accident.

"The English have scalded me like a calf; the sight took her breath away, I beg pardon for it. I ought not to have shown myself without warning."

"It is his voice, let him go!" said Treor, who, encircling his daughter's waist with his arm, was supporting her inert body on his knee bent on the ground.

He pressed his cheek against her mouth, watching the faint breath that showed it to be a simple fainting fit. The children, gathered in a group, elbow to elbow, stared, petrified, at this monster who had suddenly risen up as if vomited by the soil; and he himself, as if he had seen Medusa's head, could not remove his gaze from this cranium of a skeleton, naked and dazzling; from this death-dance mask, where the new flesh of the forehead and nose displayed itself by repellent whitish spots, like the juice of a poisonous herb; where, without lashes, the ball of the eye, streaked with blood, appeared a disgusting, living sore.

And, surely, the worst of all was in the contrast between such deformity and the strength of the face which now tried to correct its expression by mildness.

Marian gave sign of life; sighs mingled with feeble wails came from her breast, her jaws parted, she tried to draw breath, moving her hand from the painfully contracted heart to the swollen neck where the tension of the muscles gave her the feeling of strangling.

Paddy understood that, recovering her senses, she ought not to find herself *vis-a-vis* with the same phantasmagorical image, and he widened his mouth in a smile which, disclosing formidable rows of enormous teeth, became the summit of ghastliness: the nose of a dog, of a flayed wolf that laughs.

Faith, he should have taken himself off! His good sense told him that, but, stupefied by the incident he had occasioned, confused by the clamors of the countrymen who ran up, he had not the energy.

They shook spades, mattocks, and pitchforks at him, covering him with abuse, without knowing it; the women picked up stones to pelt him. Treor, calling out to them who he was, saved him from blows and mortal injury, and the unfortunate man inwardly exulted in the discomfiture of the chance comers.

Paddy Neill! this spectre, this vision from another world, was this Jesus possible? And most of them doubted, examined him with distrust, recognizing him not by any vestige of his features, but rather by some peculiarity of his clothes, in spite of their rags and the dirt that covered them. The women seemed shocked; then, letting their arms fall, they stiffened into tearful attitudes, standing straight as stumps, exclaiming, "My God! My God!" till satisfied. They rattled off harangues, certain ones adding a lamentation, "What a misfortune!" remembering the Paddy Neill of old, with skin fine and smooth as a girl's, laughing, sparkling eyes, and such a merry temper!

"Paddy!... Paddy!" ... came in a stifled whisper from a pleasant, rosy-cheeked gossip of twenty years, Nelly Pernell.

Not long before she had been suspected of having deceived her husband, to Neill's advantage, a short time after her marriage; but by chance had escaped slander. Wan and bloodless, she stood there with folded hands, the fingers clenched so tightly that they cracked; with an admirable *naïveté* and exceeding candor of remorse seeking confusedly and stammeringly for words with which to ask of her lover a pardon she dared not hope. She had provoked Paddy to court her and had yielded readily, ardently desiring her fall. Heaven's punishment ought then rather to have fallen on her.

Now she reflected also on all the possible, dreadful consequences of her fault. Imagine that she had conceived a child of sin! Instantly, because of the shock which she had received, the scars of the father would be imprinted on the face of the little being! She kept herself on her feet by a miraculous effort, struck with a sort of mental paralysis, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, yet because of those present keeping herself from falling like Marian. Marian had the right to faint, being innocent.

Recovered from their first repulsion, the comrades of the disfigured man crowded around him affectionately, fraternally, and seized his hands, growling vehemently about the authors of these outrages, those damned Saxons. And they menacingly shook their fists in the direction of England, gradually lifting them higher and higher as they were made familiar with the history.

Having bound him, arms, thighs, and ankles, the ruffians, four or five in number, bent his head between the knees of the torturer, and shaved his hair nearly off. Then, the steel having surely and unceremoniously notched the skin, while he, blinded by the flow of blood, asphyxiated, snorted wildly, the cap filled with boiling pitch was clapped down over his ears. Ah! Ah! the smart of the razor lasted no longer.

He was interrupted by vociferations and outcries; throbs like an inward rain of intolerable sufferings permeated the flesh of the women, who felt under their own hair the cold and cut of the steel. With widely dilated eyes, the children, even the little ones, with their extraordinary gift and power of imagination, discerned through space and time the living scene of torment.

Seeing them so violently moved, they wished to send them away. Paddy, to spare them, ceased his story, but they drew themselves back that they might not be led away and begged him to go on, calling out greedily:

"What then? what then? tell us. We must have vengeance!"

Neill hesitated, then answered negatively, promising the conclusion later when their excitement should be lessened; in a few days, perhaps tomorrow.

But, with a great tumult, they set themselves against all delay.

"No: immediately! Go on!"

"Then?" urged one, who was dying of impatience.

"Finish, then!" added another.

"Yes, finish!" said a voice, pressing and imperious, that rose above the general uproar.

They looked round: it was Marian, readjusting her unfastened dress, and coiling up her hair, which had fallen during her fainting fit.

Neither melancholy nor fright remained longer on her face, but in their place only determination, an inexorable will to know all.

She scrutinized without swooning and with increasing pity Paddy's poor grimacing face, the sores badly healed in places; and an immeasurable indignation took possession of her, body and soul, against the authors of this nameless crime!

"Finish!" she reiterated, in a voice doubly strong and peremptory.

Still Neill hesitated. He interrogated the silent Treor, who nodded assent.

"The end!" continued he then, "the end, heavens! it is very simple. The pitch, cooling, shaping itself to the skull, stuck well. Ugh! they took off the cap and the skin with it and the flesh with it; the bones would have followed if they had not been well fastened in."

The men swore, and, among the women, almost the whole village being collected there, arose a kind of howl, a prolonged rattle exhumed from the

depths of their hearts; their commiseration doubling, as it had done before, in proportion to the physical sensation of the torments described.

Under their hair, from the neck to the eyebrows, they all experienced absolutely the atrocious impression of a brutal tearing off of their own skin, their own flesh. This personal agony calmed, they related to each other the sensations they had experienced, told of the cold sweat which still ran down their backs and over their skin parched as by a violent fever. Then they exchanged reflections on the event which had come to this unfortunate boy. Next followed their comments—analogous or contradictory, timid or angry, according to the temperament of each—on the results which would ensue.

The majority demanded instant retaliation, returning like for like, implacably; they would take it in hand, would show themselves more furious than the men. The timid foresaw the work of vengeance and that they would not be the stronger party. What would follow? They would expiate their revolt with unspeakable chastisements; cottages demolished, conflagrations everywhere, people basely killed, disemboweled, women, old people, children, without distinction, the whole history taught them by Treor, all that they had themselves seen these two years, all which had been practised in various sections of the country since the terrible year of '96.

But all these wasted their preaching; they were only interrupted and forbidden to reply.

Edith Arklow, a woman of fifty years, gloomy and restless, drying the tears she had been silently shedding, said a few plain things in favor of action.

"My son Michael is a little younger than Paddy Neill; not much, a few months. They have drafted him into the English army, and sent him to India. Being an Irishman, they molest him, torment him perhaps. Who knows if I shall ever see him again? He might cry out sometime: 'Long live Ireland!' in the presence of his general, before the gun-barrels levelled at him. When Paddy was telling of his tortures, it seemed to you that you suffered them yourselves. For me, I imagined that it was my child, my Michael, who endured. So my mind is for revenge."

Marian applauded her warmly; but a poor neighbor warned the mother of her imprudence; the enemy held him as hostage, this son whose memory she was invoking. And, disconcerted, struggling between her generosity and her dread, Edith grew silent, bathed in new tears, suddenly dried by the fire of this agonizing thought:

Michael, ordered out to be killed; a dozen balls in his breast, in his dear face, breaking his bones, all this because of the advice she had been giving.

Among the men, a similar debate was going on as to the course to be adopted; Treor, whom she called to the rescue, and Paddy were the only ones who counselled delay. The mass, with a unanimous voice, demanded that they act and that they should begin by an immediate march on the castle, talking of blazing the fir trees which shaded it, like a forest of wax-tapers around edifices transformed into cenotaphs.

"Not at all! not at all!" insisted Paddy Neill; and Treor argued that this would only be to incur inevitable defeat, a most disheartening failure, and compromise the general movement which was in preparation.

They refused to listen, molested them turbulently, and made objections, twenty at a time. They declared that, on the contrary, this daring example would drag the reluctant by its contagion, and that the initiative work of vengeance, of liberation, would constitute an eternal glory for the men of Bunclody.

In presence of this undisciplined blindness of courage. Paddy decided to disclose his mission, but, disliking to unfold it so publicly; he lowered his voice, saying:

"I have orders for us to wait."

The circle again gathered round him, curious, palpitating, in the solemn and religious silence of mysterious initiations; but Neill moved his tongue only to say:

"Somewhere else than on the road."

"There are only brothers here," urged an impatient one, "brothers and the birds who have gone to sleep."

All were not asleep.

The heavy flight of a partridge gaining a neighboring thicket beat the air ten steps behind them, and at the same time the furious yelping of the dogs which were held chained broke forth, reinforced by redoubled blows of the whip and furious oaths of the valet, whom they pulled about, tugging at their collars.

"Hunter Gowan!" said Treor.

A brute, cruel as his master, Newington, and singled out for the righteous blows of popular vengeance at the day of reckoning; they could hear distinctly what he said to his beasts.

"If it is to set your fangs in the carcass of the party below, I'll let you loose; but no, you would die poisoned by such crow's meat."

Treor repressed the keen retorts with which they started to lash him, and advised them to treat him with silent scorn; but when Gowan, coming nearer, distinguished their attitudes of sovereign contempt, he railed at them directly:

"They will make you look at us from a higher point yet, presently,—from the top of the trees where they will hang you!"

Through a notch in the hill which hid the sun, a ray of light illuminated suddenly Paddy Neill, and the abusive and malicious pride of the valet turned into rough hilarity.

He coarsely reviled the Irishman.

"It is not near enough to the holidays to wear masks, and too far from the summer to have the head shaved."

"Ah! I see," he continued, "the fellow has had a quarrel with his lady-love, and she has pulled his ugly head of hair out by the roots."

The muttering which grew louder, precursor of an irrepressible explosion; the threatening attitude of all in the group,—did not intimidate him, but rather stimulated his stupid and silly wit, and he continued:

"Really, friend, I pity you; with such a muzzle, you will not soon find a woman who will consent to embrace you."

"You deceive yourself!", said Marian, in whom, in a moment, a tempest of feeling had risen; and advancing in the midst of the moved and respectful admiration of every one.

And while Gowan's surly dogs violently shook their leash in an effort to break it and throw themselves on Paddy Neill, Treor's little daughter kissed with her virgin lips the martyr's lacerated forehead and his eyes, through which a fountain of blood seemed to be coursing.

CHAPTER II.

As he saw, for the third time that evening, a gentle half-opening of the heavy tapestry curtain which covered one of the entrances to the hall where he was receiving the report of Hunter Gowan and that of Casper, the gelder, the Duke of Newington, quite beside himself, his furious voice filling the lofty room and making the suits of armor under the ancestral portraits resound, demanded: "Who is there? Who is there?"

Receiving no answer, he rose hastily, kicking his dog Myrrha, who lay curled in a ring near his chair, and hurried to the door in order to unmask the intruder, the inconsiderate man, perhaps the spy who had either been betrayed by his own stupidity or else defied him.

He grasped furiously in his fingers his hunting-whip, which never left him, and through the thickness of the carpet the floor groaned under his enormous-weight that multiplied the fury of his gait. Woe to the man whom he in his apoplectic rage should strike a single blow of this whip or of his boxing-glove which broke in two the tavern tables.

But, half way to the curtain, it opened wide, and, in the angle of light cut off thereby, the white profile of the Duchess Ellen, smiling and mocking, framed itself.

"You!" said he, astonished, but reassured, amused, brightened up, this virulent giant having in regard to this extraordinary young woman, proud and feline, at once the mildness and rapture of a lion subdued and fawning.

"Me," said she, entering; "curious about what is going on, and waiting till you should be alone in order to find out."

"Are there, then, secrets from you, watchwords which do not fall when you present yourself?" demanded he, with reproach in his tone, in his attitude.

"Oh!" she answered, "I do not meddle with the affairs of State. My women have told me of trouble in the village, laughing to kill themselves at a scandalous and ridiculous scene of which Gowan was a witness; just tell me whether we are in any immediate danger."

She spoke without any emotion of irritation or fear; she inquired without the least real curiosity. With evident indifference to the facts which she related and to the possible peril, her mind wandered elsewhere.

Then, suddenly, the vermillion arch of her sensuous mouth stretched and became pallid, expressing ferocious vindictiveness; her bushy eyebrows met, crossing her disdainful face with a hard red line and shading the clearness of her eyes, as changeable as the sea; her sensitive nostrils quivered, and her high and prominent bosom lifted with hurried breaths the silvery brocade of her dress; so many phenomena indicating a vehement anxiety.

And suddenly, perceiving that the Duke was looking at her with solicitude, she resumed her former smile, like a closed flower which opens again, and, foreseeing embarrassing questions, drew away to retire, yielding prettily and with an amiable *abandon* her hand to Newington, who imprisoned it in his.

"I will return immediately," said she.

At the same time she lent a listening ear to steps along the middle corridor, the sound of which caused her nervous shocks, and she fretted at finding herself captive in the strong pressure of her husband's hands, who, finding her skin burning hot and her pulse abnormally accelerated, begged her not to alarm herself in this way.

"Yes, there are footsteps that way, but it is one of the tenants, or perhaps Richard who is returning."

"No," interrupted she, briefly and ceasing to listen, weaker, more feverish, forcing Newington to relax his hold, "it is not Sir Richard."

"And you fear that it may be, say it, what? an assassin?"

Dismissing Hunter Gowan, the Duke ordered him to go and see, and to make a minute patrol everywhere in order to prove that every door was well bolted and carefully barricaded.

Vainly the Duchess declared this luxury of precaution needless, and tried to keep from trembling with fear. What was she experiencing? Why this uneasiness, this fever, these irregular pulsations? And her confused features, this sentinel-like vigilance, this hearing as acute as a sentry's?

At last she admitted—with a bad grace, it is true, and as if to cut short all observations—that vague apprehensions haunted her; but they would disperse, quite of themselves, later, at daybreak.

The Duke comprehended them; in the heat of the first instant, the rioters had declared an intention of charging on the castle. But they would not venture; they were more brawlers than brave men, and well knew how they would be received.

With the end of his whip he pointed out conceitedly the overwhelming panoplies which decorated the walls, where glittered the steel of all imaginable weapons: sabres sharp enough to cut stones; lances pointed like fishbones; pistols of all sizes, muskets of all patterns, not to mention the pikes, the arrows, the spears, and boarding-axes newly ground and glittering like a gull's wings; clubs thicker than a man's thigh.

A complete orchestra, irresistible to make the Bunclodyans and their relatives and comrades living near dance with the frogs of the ditch!

Quite silent, the Duchess had turned to a window, and, leaning her forehead against the glass, the cold of which refreshed her, looked into the dark court and over the top of the trees which were dimly defined and through which the wind moaned, into the open country where the darkness was still more dense.

"You are bent on assuring yourself that the enemy is not preparing in the darkness to make an assault on us," said Newington; and, full of earnest solicitude for her, he proposed—it was very simple—that the servants should light the environs with torches, and, if they chanced to encounter tramps, wandering about instead of sleeping, they should cover them with rosin and light them like lanterns.

"Give the order, Casper!"

The gelder shook his head and, without moving, criticised the idea, calculated to frighten the parishioners, while it was desirable, on the contrary, to fill them with a mistaken sense of security while they were plotting their conspiracy: unless, indeed, it were better to capture the bird in the nest.

He convinced the Duke; but the young lady, who had appeared not to hear, suddenly thanked Newington for his perfectly ingenious proposition, and accepted it, save in that which concerned the living torches.

"Yes, yes, light in profusion," said she, with enthusiasm, "especially at the entrances of the village streets. The chief counsellor is Treor, they tell me; let them flood his house with light."

Opinionated and stubborn, Casper only looked grim, twisted viciously his cap of otter in his short, fat, hairy fingers, and did not stir, swearing that the Duchess was quite wrong in her anxiety, that she might sleep night after night as calm as the leopards in the coats-of-arms, carved on the sides of the towers and embroidered on the tapestries.

"The revolt is hardly born yet," concluded he; "it must grow, and, in any case, cannot bite till it is unmuzzled."

The Duchess not comprehending this metaphor, Casper went on to elucidate:

"The signal for the explosion will come from Dublin; at present, we are organizing ourselves."

"We!" This man belonged then to the conspirators. Ah!... good, this was a traitor. The Duchess Ellen scrutinized him. Dirty, sickening, in the blotched wrinkles of his unhealthy flesh lodged all manner of vile instincts, and on the pimply skin of this squint-eyed and sullen drunkard were traced the thousand infamies of an existence which was, doubtless, as criminal as intemperate. A man who followed the trade of a traitor was capable of no matter what crime! Up to this time her restless eyes had certainly been filled with some absent image; but now, softening the contempt which deluged her, she let her gaze hover about this miserable wretch.

"Move yourself, then, Casper, and obey," said Newington, irritated by the inertia of this block. "Torches in both hands: fifty through the fields and over Bunclody; let the cocks wake up and crow, believing that the sun has risen."

But Ellen had changed her mind, and hoped now to hear reports on what had already taken place, what was planned, and the names of the conspirators,—all, all, without exception; above all, be it well understood, above all if there were among the number friends, servants, or residents in the castle!

"Do you suspect any of our people?" questioned the Duke, suspiciously.

"Who knows?" she said.

And the gelder, now in his element as informer, narrated complaisantly and with all the details what he knew.

The emissary of the secret committee seated in the capital, Paddy Neill, the mutilated, had transmitted strict orders from the leaders. Far from acting hastily, the future rebels were to feign absolute calmness, indifference to injuries, pardon to outrages; opposing to all vexations, all direct provocations, only the resignation of the conquered, of Christians ready for martyrdom; but, by means of this appearance of peacefulness, to reunite clandestinely, in isolated places, at unseasonable hours of the night, in order to take account of their numbers, encourage each other, preserve the determination to demand their rights, and fan the flame of retaliation without mercy!

And the knave sneered at the thought of these illusory precautions, when he assisted at all their councils.

"They have commenced this evening their dark work," said the Duke; "with grand preparation, inviting their God to the ceremony, swearing solemnly, on the Bible, to unite for the deliverance of their country, though it should cost the property of those who have any, their liberty, their lives, and even the risk of infernal tortures."

"On the Bible!" repeated the Duchess, who was visibly interested in this news, and only simulated an indifference which she did not inwardly feel.

"Is it only the men who have bound themselves by oath, or the women also?" demanded she.

"The women also!" responded Casper; "imagine them in that atmosphere of nauseating fumes of gin."

"The women, faith!" commented the Duke in an outburst of frankness and humanity very unusual with him. "They are the ones who seem to me most in need of a change. Death would be, on the whole, better than their situation, and their torment is to devote themselves from daylight till dark, without rest, to hard and fruitless labor on the land, or to bleach out at the bottom of some hovel in the stench of housekeeping; for they always have a litter of children."

He caressed paternally, and like the head of an adored child, the silken neck and cool nose of Myrrha, who lolled at his feet, and felicitated her on not being one of those Irishwomen obliged to get their living by digging in the earth, or to mould with their litters in some filthy corner!

Meanwhile Casper enumerated all those who had taken the oath of deliverance, had promised on the sacred book to sacrifice, in the common cause, their lives, their families, their hearts.

Lawrence Murphy of the tumbled-down hut near the pond where the cattle drank freely; the widow of Effy Padge, who lived in a veritable pig-sty opposite the tavern, and who idled the whole blessed day among the yellow books, preferring the scrawl of a printed leaf to a morsel of bread.

Lady Ellen, before a Venetian glass set on the shelf of an Italian credence, busied herself in re-arranging in coils a heavy tress that had fallen from her neck to her heels, and, unskillful, turned it indefinitely about the sheaves of fawn-colored hair upon which the light of the chandelier threw its sparkling reflections.

She wearied her arms with this work, but the impatience which she showed and which arched the curve of her imperial nose proceeded from the exasperating delay of Casper in pronouncing, instead of those which were indifferent or unknown, the one single name which signified anything to her, and which was on the end of her tongue.

He continued monotonously to file off his list in chronological order, as the oaths had succeeded each other.

Nathaly Durk, the wife of the peddler, whom the soldiers had thrown into the waters of Bann to drown books and French revolutionary journals which he refused to part with; Edith, who, in a pressing need of motherhood, had adopted Paddy Neill as a son while waiting the return of the real one, now in the service of the devil.

At this paroxysm of humor, the Duchess, unable to wait longer, inquired directly about the matter which tormented her unceasingly:

"And Marian, did she take the oath?" affecting a perfect indifference, but without success.

"Treor's little daughter?" demanded the gelder, "because there are several Marians."

"Yes, that one."

"She swore."

"How?"

"How? What do you mean? She extended her hand and repeated the same formula as her comrades:

"'Before God who sees our acts and who will judge us, I swear to consecrate myself, in thought, in word, in action, to the work of the United Irishmen. I swear, by God who has sacrificed himself for our redemption, to labor for the success of this work, without a complaint, without a regret, without faltering; having, until success is achieved, no other aim, no other passion, no other love.'"

"Admirable!" said the Duchess, whose face lighted up a minute; "but what I am curious to know," added she, the dark look returning, "is in what way she recited this lesson. With warmth? volubility? the same passion that she showed in the scandalous scene just before? or very gravely, coldly? or perhaps juggling the words, with regret just when she was promising to feel none? Was she sad, and was her voice sure or trembling?"

She awaited in a profound perplexity Casper's response. He was in no haste, dallying purposely, maliciously, while a perverse joy gleamed from his eyes under the bloated lids.

He decided, however, to reply, excusing himself for his delay in furnishing the information requested by the necessity of recalling perfectly the scene which he now retraced as if it were still before him.

"Certainly the young lady did not seem joyous; in reality, she brooded rather as in a reverie and a sadness; but she conquered both, and said it all very fluently, only with a voice that was, at moments, a little husky. On the whole, she took her oath like one who sacrifices much, but who will not fail in keeping her promise."

He scrutinized the fixed eyes of Ellen persistently and with a very complex expression, into which entered an offer of unlimited connivances; but the Duchess did not analyze it; a wholesome relaxation took place in her mind, driving out all the feverishness which had accumulated. Now Newington applauded the metamorphosis which became outwardly apparent. The frown disappeared, and the whole face relaxed and blossomed into a smile.

She had quite recovered her serenity, manifesting the calm of one from whose breast an enormous weight had been lifted and whose lungs once more performed their function. A trace even of frolic appeared in the corners of her sly mouth and sparkled in the contracted pupils of her eyes, and her whole look seemed turned again to thoughts which made her gay.

Casper put on his cap and gained the door, which Newington indicated to him by a sign; she wished to detain him, would rather retire herself, having, without rhyme or reason, disturbed an interview which was, perhaps, important.

"No, no, let him go!" ordered the Duke, resolutely. "He remains at my discretion, but as for you I consider it a rare good fortune to have you near me."

"Really?"

Usually, when he proffered this complaint, she slipped away, never at a loss for pretexts, or repulsed him sharply; but this evening she did not run away when he testified—oh! sweetly, and with the accent of a prayer—the audacious desire to keep her alone with him. Her face did not even cloud when he went so far as to touch slightly with his leg the folds of her skirt and to possess himself anew of her perfumed hand, caressing with his fingers the soft flesh.

She even pushed her condescension so far as to excuse herself for having left him to take supper alone in the dullness and anguish of waiting; but they had ventured so far with Richard that the horses, covered with sweat, panting, worn out, would have returned foundered or even have died on the way.

And she gayly rehearsed the sequel of their Odyssey.

"Behold us quite out in the country, quite in the woods, dismounted, constrained to return on foot, tired, lame, bruised by the rough stones of the road, losing our way, and tempting the knife or bullet of the assassin. The horses rested themselves in the inn before a plentiful provender, and we profited by the occasion to eat, on a rickety table, the most infamous cookery."

"Which you did not touch..... they shall bring you a lunch."

"Thank you; on the contrary, I ate ravenously."

"Accept: some delicate game, preserved fruits, and light cakes,..... and if you will not admit me to your table, I will serve you."

"Like a blonde and curly-haired page."

"Oh! cruel lady, to laugh at me for my white hairs when she gave them to me by her severity."

"Admit that the gift is in keeping with your age. Sixty years!"

"One would think me twenty more by the filial distance at which you hold me."

"I could grandly pass for your daughter."

Newington, sighing with sadness, touched to the heart by this remark so unceasingly revived by Ellen, would have liked, anticipating it, to escape its sound, and he lifted a fine steel hammer on the clear dome of a large bronze bell to summon a lackey. She stopped him.

She had need of nothing, absolutely, except a little rest; admitting that her adventure had left her with a certain lassitude.

"That is just it," said Newington, without too much concealing the vexation he felt. "It is for another to escort you with a party in which you shine, in the intoxication of the open air, of the ride which stirs your blood, of the obstacles which you overcome; and for me, you grant me on your return, bruised and slightly... cross, moments which you measure with parsimony."

Lady Ellen merited the reproach and avowed it; only, he would not deprive her of distractions when they were so few and so little varied?

"By no means," observed the Duke; "but why not associate me with them rather than Richard? Am I not worth as much as he for an attendant? He has never possessed my fearlessness, nor conquered savage horses, nor crossed Ireland at one stretch, nor kept in the saddle for weeks, dismounting only to change horses!"

"Yes, you accomplished all those feats, but formerly, at his age," insinuated the Duchess, not without malice.

"I defy him still," replied Newington, "and I suspect that you simply find more pleasure in his society than in mine."

"Well!"

"Really, if he was not my son, I should be actually jealous of him, and conceive a hatred for him."

"Seriously?" demanded the Duchess, who, doubtless to punish him for this blasphemy, added:

"See what inevitably happens to those old men who, having sons in a situation to establish themselves, commit the presumptuous imprudence of marrying all the young ladies themselves..."

Whether it was meant as a jest, or a lesson in which was mingled the bitterness of a regret, Newington took the remark amiss, and answered it sharply, as cutting in his turn:

"In any case, my dear, Sir Bradwell is even less suited to you than I am."

"For what reason?"

"Because he is younger than you, and with his twenty-five years he has a right to a *fiancée* of seventeen."

"Of seventeen! Marian's age," murmured (this was too much for her) Lady Ellen, biting her lips; and under her pointed teeth trickled the pearls of her blood.

"Pardon!" said, presently, the Duke; "let us stop this quarrel in which we mutually exasperate each other. It is quite in vain, since evidently, if you preferred Richard to me, you would not inform me!"

And he offered her his hand, he solicited peace; but she preserved an obstinate taciturnity, keeping her ear open, as at first, to the sounds from without and trembling every second.

"You are sulky with me?" interrogated Newington.... "No.... You art thinking of something else."

"I, nothing!"

The stifled tones of her contralto testified to the contrary, and the Duke insisted.

Then she pretended that it was the wind that howled *rinforzando* in the woods; she mistook it for outcries, and, as if incredulous of the belief which she professed, Newington shook his head.

"I assure you," said she; "and in your castle, moreover, perpetual terrors thus assail me. In summer, at night, if I lean out of my window to breathe the perfume of the flowers which are scattered through the garden, suddenly the aspect of a monster in the heavens, having the air of barking at the clouds or at the stars, draws from me a cry and chills my blood. These are chimeras, emerging from the battlements."

"We will dispel them tomorrow."

"No, for you would have to destroy the whole structure and its dependencies. Everything there causes me sudden frights,—the dancing shadows of the towers, the sound of steps on the flag-stones of the corridors, the resonance of voices under the arches of the cathedral, and suddenly, when one expects it the least, in the cold and dark winter evenings, the flapping of wings, the doleful outcry of a night bird which starts up beside one and flies away frightened by the lights."

"Oh! well! We will raze the stones of this terrible manor haunted with so much that is frightful," said Newington, deliberately, "and build in its place a comfortable and pleasant habitation; moreover, this plan will better suit your beauty and grace, and harmonize more with your tastes."

"And the insurgents would penetrate it as they would a mill. Does it not seem to you, then, more practicable to emigrate into some one of your properties in England?"

Lady Ellen, in propounding this question, which expressed the favorite idea that she had had steadily in view for months, used all her customary flatteries,

but with no happier result than usual; the Duke responding, as always, with some dilatory plea.

Today, above all, when sedition was muttering, what cowardice! what disgrace to put the channel between one's self and the danger! This desertion before the enemy, he would not counsel even to her, a woman. Nevertheless, if her courage could not lift itself to the height of events; if she apprehended that her nerves would prove unequal, when the time came, to the thunder of battle, the sight of massacres, he would not force her in any way to remain, he would accede entirely to the proposition that she should go to England; she could remain there till the complete, definitive restoration of peace!

Such an accusation of cowardice, the scorn in which the Duke enveloped his authorization to run away from the quarrel, these lashes veined with purple pallor of her skin under the powder, and, in the delirium of a rage which blinded her, she had a mad desire to reveal to him, brutally, impudently, the real reason for which she abhorred this residence at Bunclody and why she spoke so unceasingly of exile.

The avowal, which would have avenged the injury of which the vivid redness of her face still bore token, lay close to her agitated lips that trembled like leaves in the wind; but she reflected in time on the thundering wrath it would unchain in Newington. She had never drawn it upon herself, but had often witnessed it, and violences without name signalized it. He would strike her surely, he would drag her by the hair, he would be in a frantic, wild rage over her aching, expiring body; he would kick her, he would pound her; he would kill her with the fiendish pleasure of a savage and a madman.

So, fretting inwardly, swallowing this dangerous confession, dissimulating as best she could a rancor that she inwardly promised herself to satisfy with usury later, she approved her husband's opinion, so thoroughly in accord with the laws of honor.

Then, pleading anew her fatigue, she bowed ceremoniously, and, pushing with her satin shoe the stiff train of her dress, she walked unsteadily toward the threshold of the room.

But the Duke stopped her, pleading, with his arms humbly extended.

No, she ought not to leave him without a reconciliation, without a proper explanation. Too long had she refused herself, insensible to his claims, to his timid requests, to the court of a timorous admirer who humbled his pride, to the sorrows of a bashful lover. Would it be eternally the same?

"However," sighed he, at the end, "I work with all my might to make myself endurable."

"Not at this instant, nevertheless," responded she, dryly, "since I plan to go to my apartments, and you prevent me."

"I will not prevent you if you permit me to accompany you."

"I know the way!"

"As for me, I forget it, and I insist on learning it again."

He grew excited; a trace of irritation rose in his prayer; the Duchess took offence at it.

"Oh! Oh! 'I insist,'" repeated she twice over, emphasizing the word which he had never used to her before.

By an attitude pleasantly repentant, in which passion played the part of submission, the Duke tried to extenuate the offence which had vexed Ellen,—justly, on the whole,—not being one of those wives who are driven to their sensual obligations as a slave stifled in a harem.

But she received too haughtily this apology, judging it a hypocritical and mocking comedy; she divested herself neither of her queenly stateliness, which had outraged, nor of her marble coldness, and still exaggerated the wounding of her forgotten dignity, promising in her incensed pride to harbor in herself eternal resentment.

Then the patient giant who had been gentle and self-restrained, became exasperated; the crouching lion kicked.

And, peevish, pushing her back regardlessly into the room, Newington let loose all the rancor he had been storing up.

He had respected her caprices, endured her whims, patiently—with an angel's patience—believing that she was passing through a crisis now that her thirtieth year was approaching; but condescension and duplicity had bounds; she had driven him to them. So much the worse for her! Hereafter, she would recognize in him a master!

Surprised, giddy, amazed by such invectives following such an explosion of physical violence, Lady Ellen questioned herself. Had she understood right? Did she comprehend the meaning of the phrases which succeeded each other, hurried, sharp, brutal? Was it to her, the Duchess, that Newington addressed thus with this insolent authority, this voice of which the tumult drowned the fury of the tempest roaring through the corridors, and which, overhead, on the roofs, threatened to demolish the chimneys?

Wounded in her vanity as a woman flattered, heretofore, by all,—the Duke as well as others,—touched in her glory of a queen abjectly courted, a revolt arose in her, covering her skin with quivering *papillae.*

The last words, above all, sounded in her ears with all the resonance of a convent bell:

"A master!" she recognize in Newington a "master"!

A master in this man whom she had cordially detested already, and whom she hated with all her might now that he had treated her harshly. A master, and not only one who would demand an account of her time, but who would dictate to her how she should employ it, would order her to give up her rides over hill and valley where she escaped from him and principally in order to be alone, without annoyances, without witnesses, free from surprises, in the deserted country, in the depths of deaf woods, in a *tete-a-tete* with her lover!

Yes, her lover, Sir Richard, her lover for some months, notwithstanding the difference in their ages. Only five years, that is not an abyss? And never,—they

said it to her daily, and she did not doubt it,—never had she possessed so many charms; never had her beauty, now at its height, been so enticing, so strong! Ah! the sarcasms of the Duke *apropos* of her thirty years fell flat! Richard, on that account, had been averse to making her his wife!

He had taken her for a mistress while waiting, waiting to marry her later on the death of his father, very soon perhaps, for one dies easily after the sixtieth year, and when one is passionate and does not always confine one's self to strict sobriety! Now that the Irish had taken up the matter, tormented, like her, with haste for the disappearance of a tyrant, things would precipitate themselves, surely!

She hoped it at least, so intensely that it seemed to her that her wishes ought to constrain fate to obey. And it was at this moment, it was in the midst of this altitude of her mind, that the Duke, awkwardly, in the manner of a boor, of a drover speaking to his wife, to his female, notified her to consider him as her master!

Her master, this soldier rated as a horse-jockey, demanded of her marks of tenderness, and would, at a fixed time,—whenever a frenzy should stir his blood, by night, by day, on leaving his homeric repasts, with color brisk, ear crimson, and mouth moist with lust, force her to submit to his kiss, his entwinings, his embrace!

Never!

In the play, in the clouding of her face, and by an easy intuition, Newington divined both her aversion and her supreme resolution, and, seizing her rudely by the shoulders, drawing her close to him abruptly, he answered, with his hot breath in her face:

"Directly, if I took the fancy."

She struggled, throwing her hands forward, essaying an instinctive movement of recoil.

But she reassured herself at the same time; no lust was painted on the old man's face, filled only with wrath, and from his thick cracked lips, between which yawned numerous toothless cavities, she had to fear only another outburst of passion, and not an abasing kiss.

"These repulsions," he went on, actually without breathing, "these repulsions should have been manifested four years sooner, before binding yourself, when, in the paternal house, you were free to choose and to reserve yourself. But at that date you cared little about the old age or the youth of your husband, his beauty or his ugliness, or anything else except his rank and his fortune!

"Ambitious for a title, greedy for wealth, how you dismissed every suitor who was unable to take you out of your humble position, to offer you the grand, brilliant life of your dreams! The daughter of the poor minister, Thomas Wood, had become a legendary character, more difficult to win than a princess in an Oriental fairy-tale. They said she was waiting for the son of a king or the king himself."

"And, like the bird in the fable," interrupted Lady Ellen impertinently, after having too long played the disdainful, "at last, that I might not be an old maid, and die cross and crabbed... I accepted...."

"A boor? It is false! it is false! it is false." exclaimed Newington, his voice breaking with the strain upon it, ceasing to hold Lady Ellen in the clutches of his two hands, but shaking his right forefinger before her face in a continual menace, or else crossing his arms and speaking into her eyes, the blast of his breathless utterance blowing the floating locks off the young woman's forehead.

"It is false! You welcomed me with enthusiasm, as the Messiah of your unpoetic ideal, as practical as that of a London merchant, and calculated the number of pleasures, of luxuries, which my millions would procure you; the prerogatives, the satisfactions of vanity which the title of Duchess would be worth to you! Well! It was give and take: in other words, I have made a dupe's bargain! I am robbed!"

A hoarse cry rattled in Ellen's throat. She felt suffocated, and her face suddenly became fiery red, only to change its color immediately afterwards to a livid, greenish, death-like line.

He went on nevertheless:

"You always wear your crown; pay for it! You continue to draw from my coffers without stint. What do I get for my money, madam?"

Probably through fear of going so far as to use harsh measures, the Duke, lost in a stag's passion, wandered to and fro in the room, overturning chairs in his way, crushing, in the vice-like grip of his fingers, the delicate objects scattered about on the furniture, pounding the walls, kicking the stools which fell to pieces, or staving in the panels of chests. He reeled as if intoxicated by alcohol; and Myrrha, her nose in the air, anxious, followed him closely, barking plaintively at each of his steps.

She abandoned him for an instant to lick the hand of the Duchess; but Lady Ellen, overexcited and having an aversion to this caress, sent her away rather sharply, and Newington, quite beside himself, his brain congested, suddenly stopped tramping up and down like a caged tiger, and took his post opposite his wife.

There, stupid, grasping her skull behind the ears with his two hands, he shook it like a little bell, stammering through the splashing foam of his saliva an order not to touch his dog.... or if you do!

"If you do, I will return the blow!"

He pushed her back rudely then; but the Duchess, erect, haughty, surveying him with an expression of unspeakable disgust, the epileptic bounded on her, with raised fist:

"Do not look at me like that," he stammered, turning red; "you understand: do not look at me like that, I beg you.... or else!" He hesitated, then finished.

"Or else.... I will crush you!"

She held her own for some seconds, but her appearance of coolness concealed simply a confused countenance. She felt in her shoulders, near the

collar-bones, in the muscles of her arms, about her wrists which grew blue, the increasing pain of the bruises he had given her, and, observing his convulsed features, growing black with extravasated bile, she was positively afraid. Afraid of his blows, of new contusions, and even afraid that he would knock her down.

"God damn me! do not look at me so!" repeated he, in the midst of his madness, dropping his fist.

Then, in the consciousness of her weakness, of her evident powerlessness, in her shame at, being subdued, Lady Ellen hid in the hollow of her hands her face bathed in tears, tears of rage, and inwardly pitied herself, and violently reproached Bradwell Newington in the tumult of visions which assailed her with the rapidity of a dream.

Ah! why had she wished to penetrate into this den? The hope of meeting Richard whom his father wished to consult concerning passing events! Simpleton! Ought she not rather to imagine him in sorrow over his unfortunate Marian, and roaming about the approaches to the village, to spy her among the groups gliding about in the darkness.

Intoxicated by the sound of her steps, which he distinguishes among all the others, following in her wake, he draws in the air through which, a minute before, this creature had passed, and which preserves for him a sweetness, that of her cheek and the fragrance of her young body. She reenters with Treor, and before the closed door he sets himself, his ear fixed against the planks, drawing breath after her voice as after celestial music, and, the light extinguished and windows darkened, he does not move, piercing the walls of stone by the magic of his love and admiring her still in her repose, bending over her bed and murmuring passionate words in her ear!

The tempest lulled at intervals; in a calm, the creaking of a gate which opened and closed reached the Duchess's ears; she said to herself:

"There he is! He is tired; he has learned the oath which she has taken, and, in vexation, is returning.

"In vexation! ah! no matter, as long as he comes back.... Now is my opportunity to prevent his returning tomorrow, his ever returning, to make him stay with me. I call him: I denounce to him the shameful brutalities of Newington, his outrages which are worse, and I place myself under his protection. The Duke drives us both away; no more Newington, no more husband to claim his rights, and impose upon my flesh unjust duties; no more Marian, soiled by the kisses of the flayed man".....

But it was not Sir Bradwell, it was Gowan, inspecting the enclosures and scolding some one. Moreover, Richard would not have helped her, would have denied their relations. He trembled before Newington with remorse at his crime; perhaps he would have thrown himself on his knees in repentance, submissive to the punishment that the other would have imposed.

My God! In the presence of this cowardice of men, must Lady Ellen then drain, without complaining, her cup of wormwood to the dregs?

A sob escaped from her throat, but presently she lifted her face, calmed, placid, and almost smiling.

In the extended darkness produced by the bandage which her little hands formed, she had just seen, confused at first, then distinctly, the picture of her revenge:

Lord Newington, prostrate, with the death rattle in his throat, breathing his last in cruel agony; and this death, which she relished, her own work!

Astonished, nonplussed, the Duke looked at her.

"We are both very guilty," said she, without any rancor; "let us have the frankness to admit it; you, of an unworthy passion, I, of having, if not given birth to, at least preserved and exasperated it."

"No! no! It is I alone with my furies, my delirium of sickly wrath, who have caused all."

And, disarmed, humbled like a schoolboy at fault, he implored her to forgive and forget this unlucky evening.

"There will never be any more question of this between us?" asked the Duchess; but in vain he begged her to remain a little time with him that he might be quite sure that she did not carry away the least remembrance of this miserable scene.

"It is a necessity," objected she, gently, "that sleep may efface the memory as promptly as possible."

Agreeing to this, the Duke kissed her fingers gallantly, radiant, flattering himself perhaps—who knows?—in his own mind, on this victory due to his firmness.

On her side Lady Ellen went away triumphant, and, without a fibre trembling in all her being, without a shiver, she descended the dark steps of the long staircase which led to the park of the castle, and wandered for a long time in the darkness, notwithstanding the north wind, the screeching of the owls, the sinister roaring in the distance.

She was waiting for Casper, delayed in the kitchen, where he was drinking.

CHAPTER III.

"Rascal! robber! thief!"

These three dishonoring epithets, hurled one after another in a stentorian voice at a rider keeping pace with a puny pedestrian with whom he was talking, struck him in the back, but without moving him more than if they had been flies buzzing about his neck.

"Robber! thief!" cried the voice, twice as loud as before, coming from a man who, panting, blowing, emerged from a path through the fields, with shoes plastered over with mud. "Give me my horse, thief, or I will unsaddle you!"

The rider was robust; but the new-comer being a man of solid muscles and powerful limbs, a struggle between them was possible; and the countryman

rushing forward to execute his threat, which had had the effect of hurrying the halting pace of the person on foot.

But a kick of the horse, furiously spurred between the thighs, struck him, and the hoofs, bruising and cutting him, broke his left leg above the knee and his right in the middle of the tibia.

He rolled on the ground; without ceasing, however, to demand his rights. "Thief! thief! my horse!"

"Run after him!" noisily sneered the wretch to whom he appealed, and who barely favored him with a look over his shoulder.

"What a savage!" ejaculated the rider's pedestrian companion, and the former, looking at him with no amenity, growled, as amiable as a watch-dog:

"Who is the savage?"

"This individual, faith!" snuffed the cripple, who lifted his unequal and crooked arms to heaven to attest it.

Then, he added, in a reproachful way, and with a grimace of his hang-dog face:

"One does not put such questions between us, my dear Mr. Gowan. If I blamed *you,* it would be for magnanimity."

"Thief! thief! thief!" cried the other unceasingly, and still more vehemently, loud enough to be heard two miles away.

"He insults you!" continued the personage with the air of a fox; "my authority as a magistrate does not permit me to be gentle; his name! that I may indict him!"

"Sir Archibald Owens," yelled the wounded man, "I require and summon you to arrest Hunter Gowan, whom you are humbly escorting; it is to the gallows that you ought to take him and, more than that, refuse him the consolations of your ministry; but I cry in the wilderness, alas! you two are a pair of rascals and murderers."

"He insults my double function of judge and ecclesiastic," said the little man between his teeth, growing pale and red by turns, notwithstanding his sun-burnt skin, which gave him the look of a Southerner.

"I am called Emeric or Barl Barleitt," resumed painfully the poor wretch, whose suffering was now taxing his strength.

"Retrace your steps, Gowan," insisted the magistrate, "and take him on with you; when we reach the village, we will hang him with the reins."

"It is not worth the trouble or the pains."

"I authorize you, in that case, to finish him."

A feeble groaning from Barleitt, who was fainting, reaching them, Archibald Owens, grown suddenly quite bold, started backward, pulling the horse's bridle; but a suggestion from Gowan made the priest decide to abandon his design.

Was it not preferable that, first, the rascal should suffer hell torments with his broken bones, piercing the flesh like incandescent needles? Once cured, he could not scamper away immediately; they could catch him again and then see easily what torment to inflict on him.

"Perhaps by that time some punishment will have been invented as yet unknown."

"So be it," said the judge, who was pleased with this prospect, and, turning about, they resumed their way, talking constantly.

Naturally, the incident of the moment sufficed at first for their conversation as good travellers, going at an easy pace, digesting and getting an appetite, and killing time by exchanging impressions and news. And without any reluctance or the shadow of a scruple this keeper of the hounds admitted that the horse belonged, in reality, to Barleitt: Emeric Barleitt, of the farm of Niklosein, near the borough of Chamrand; only he, Gowan, had made requisition for it some nights before, about two o'clock, for the service of the king and of England.

About two weeks since, the keeper of Newington's dogs, resigning his low office, had set himself up as the leader of a body of men, in view of approaching hostilities. Of forty scoundrels of his kind, recruited from the mire of the city, in low places and on the threshold of jails, he had formed a company of police, and equipped and mounted it by means of pillage within a radius of twenty leagues.

Whoever did not comply with the requisition with docility received immediate punishment for his detestable insubordination, and the band was ravaging in this manner the country, although the latent insurrection had not yet discharged a pistol, or even, for that matter, uttered a seditious cry, or hummed a war-song.

"They have already christened us the 'Infernal Mob,'" said Hunter Gowan, conceitedly.

And, to justify the right of his gang to this ignominious appellation, he cited facts supporting it:

"Recently, in the suburbs of Dalton, meeting a young man who, having gotten out of a public carriage some distance off, was hurrying towards the centre of the city, my blood-hounds, full of zeal, scented some important emissary of the directing; committee. "Stop there!" they called out. "Why?" "Because".... A horseman leaps to the ground, seizes him; he struggles; they bind his wrists and fasten him to a tree; then, the platoon taking the field, each man, one after another, discharges his rifle at the prisoner. He was named Garett Fenuell and carried no orders,—was not, it seemed, affiliated with the association: he was simply coming to embrace his father and his family on returning from a business journey."

"But, quite surely, he would have affiliated shortly," said the pastor with a conceited air; "you have done good work!... Only"...

"This was not the opinion of a neighbor. The volley had drawn him to his window; he closed it immediately with an exclamation of horror. Quickly, ten of my boys invaded the lodging. A woman, with five brawling, crying children who clung to their breeches, did not move them to pity; on the contrary. Rrran! My man flattened his nose on the floor, spurting blood through ten openings, made

wiser by this blood-letting which took the exaltation out of him, and having now in his head the lead that he needed to make him circumspect."

"He survived?"

"O no, I was joking! Do you find fault with their killing him?"

"Far from it: to terrify is quite in accordance with my system; so I...."

"Wait, I have not finished. His name was James Farcy. After some days I learn that they have carried the two bodies into the chapel and that the families of the friends are watching there in tears, in complaints, and in curses upon the assassins. Good! What do I do? I give orders to the comrades: 'To horse!' and we gallop across the country to Alton, where we set fire to the chapel! A real bonfire!"

"A deed absolutely meritorious and for which you will be recompensed on high, since you destroy the altars of superstition and the asylum where the Revolution is tempered for the struggle; for this death watch was at the same time, do not doubt, an armed watch. In your place, I should even have proceeded to the arrest of the participants in this manifestation."

"And it would have been better to surprise them at the foot of the coffins and to shoot them in a lump!"

"To shoot! always to shoot!"

Sir Archibald scowled disapprovingly.

"What then? Should we have shut the doors and burned them alive?"

The minister, without passing his judgment and without showing the least repugnance in regard to this monstrous proposition, explained himself.

He professed an invincible aversion to all execution in which human blood is shed; this sentiment, instinctive in him and which was a result of the wholly feminine delicacy of his nature, was all the stronger because it was a matter of religious conscientiousness with him. For the eternal torments, he thought that the dead ought to arrive at the tribunal of God in their integrity.

Quite recently, Mr. Cope, the pastor of Carnew, had presided at the execution of twenty-eight heads of families. They made vague charges of conspiracy against them: Gowan had surely heard it spoken of. No?

Among the number figured Pat Murphy of Knakbrandon and William Young, a Protestant, by the way; but many Protestants were already affiliated on the ground of patriotism. In short, Mr. Cope had them ranged in a file and shot till there was no longer an "Oh!" from the mass.

"Perfect!" said Gowan, smacking his tongue as if he were tasting a liquor.

"Oh, well! As for me, I would have hung them," concluded Sir Archibald Owens, "or strangled them, garroted them as in Spain, smothered them under mattresses, crucified them, or burned them, faith, as you said just now, because, in burning, they suffer on this earth the same torments for which they are destined in another world."

After some steps in silence, during which he seemed absorbed by the solution of a difficult problem, he added:

"And my personal judgment leads me to believe that their souls do not disengage themselves completely from the tunic of flames in which they are wrapped at the moment of death, so that"....

But the chief of the "Infernal Mob" was not listening; along the road the amaranthine trunks of young ash trees were swaying, and Gowan remarked that over a long stretch they had lopped off the tops and branches; he indicated them with his finger to his companion, who understood:

"To furnish handles for the pikes!" said he, concisely.

"And the heads of the pikes imply blacksmiths," resumed Gowan. "Beginning with this afternoon, I shall make of these rebellious Vulcans who would bother us too much, a general sweep, including the workman with the work."

"Act most promptly, my friend; unfortunately, I cannot, with my limping leg, keep up with your horse, and it would make your load too heavy to take me on behind: but with a carriage I shall arrive in time to pronounce my sentence"...

"Or ratify that which I shall have executed. Let me follow my own course."

"Then, do not shoot, I beg you! Respect my weakness and my principles!"

Suddenly Gowan brightened up.

From afar, in the silence of the country, came the vibrating echo, clear and piercing, of an anvil which they were beating.

Snuffing the air like a ravenous beast who scents his prey from afar, the ex-lackey of Newington rose in his stirrups to take his bearings, and scrutinized the gray road.

At the horizon a thick cloud of dust was rolling along with a roar of a breaking wave. It was the soldiers of his company, who, according to their orders, were advancing to meet the captain sent for the night before by Sir Archibald.

"Perfect!" said Gowan.

And, wishing Owens an excellent end of his journey, he applied both spurs, drawing blood from the flanks of his horse, that he might the sooner join his men and lead them, without delay, by a branch road, to smash the bellows of this forge which was working more actively every instant, and then the chest of the blacksmith.

"Do not shoot!" cried out vehemently the gentle and rigorous pastor... "I forbid it explicitly, ex-plic-it-ly, you understand?"

At first Gowan, disturbed by this prohibition, replied by muttering a filthy insult; then, mimicking Sir Archibald, he promised to conform, ex-plic-it-ly, ex-pli-cit-ly, preferring that course!

An idea occurred to him which would command general approval and do honor to his imagination.

The proverb tells us it is a bad thing to put one's hand between the hammer and the anvil. So Gowan would take care not to put his hands there; but those of the blacksmith, that was quite another thing! Those, on the contrary, should be

placed upon the anvil, and whoever liked might forge them for him, with all his might, to try his strength.

They should forge them slowly at first, to warm them; then more quickly, more briskly, to flatten them, and, once warm, to make them throb; then the fingers would separate like so many spear-heads, and they would keep on forging, mangling the joints and crushing the very marrow out of the little bones in the hand!

And imitating the vibrating sound of the steel which they were hammering: "Bing! bing! bing!" the captain of the "Infernal Mob," the noxious Hunter Gowan, accelerated the gait of his beast, in a hurry to gratify himself with this recreation, to hear his victim bellow like an ox at the slaughter-house, and to contemplate his twisted mouth. Comical! exhilarating!

He disappeared very soon in the cloud of dust which enveloped the band and which flew suddenly to the left in a dark whirlwind, and the melancholy magistrate also hastened his steps as much as his feeble resources would admit.

The isolation of the road extending as far as one could see between monotonous meadows weighed upon him like a burden fastened to his back, and. under the cold, dry sky, tormented him, at the same time, with sudden frights.

Hp pictured to himself Barleitt simply bruised, getting up again, and attempting with great strides to overtake him and avenge himself on him for Gowan's cruelty and his personal failure in his duty as a judge.

And just then a hasty trot sounded behind him, approaching at a good pace, while, at the same time, the snuffing of a broken breath became more and more perceptible, and Sir Archibald said to himself that he should feel its warmth in his neck before long if he did not start upon a run himself.

Surely this was the angry farmer, ready to do anything; in a few minutes, he would stretch out his infinite arms, and, in a trice, my pastor's neck would be twisted, and he would be kicking about and biting the dust.

So, with the courage of fear, he began to hop like a wounded bird, which was his way of running, fretting at having forgotten his bill-headed dogberry cane with which to support himself.

But in vain did he exert himself, in vain did he feebly brace himself up to leap ahead, the trot now sounded as if it were within ten paces of him, and was supplemented by a rattling of iron and a rumbling of wheels.

Heavens! They had picked up Emeric, they had lifted him into a vehicle, and now he would have to face not only his wrath, but that of the people who were carrying him.

Sir Archibald stopped, pierced by an excessive pain in his side, his spleen distended, and inwardly regretting life, sighing, whining, a hideous, comical caricature: he recommended his soul to God; but a big, pleasant voice hailed him:

"Won't you have a seat in my carriage, reverend sir?"

The discomfited magistrate ventured a half turn of his head, gave a timid glance toward the questioner, and discerned, under the hood of the carriage, a large round face, ruddy, open, and bright, which at once inspired confidence.

He was about to accept the polite offer made him, when he perceived at the left of the vehicle the crescent-moon face of Sir Richmond, the parish priest of Bunclody, and he moved his lips to decline the invitation; the priest did not give him time.

"If it is my society which displeases you," said he, unctuously, to Sir Archibald, "I will get down; I am rested."

"You will remain," affirmed the owner of the vehicle,—who made a third occupant, his clerk, give up his seat,—"and if the pastor fears a theological dispute which may degenerate into a quarrel, I will seat myself between you two."

Sir Richmond protested.

No discussion would arise; he would promise on his part; the present hour was not for religious controversy; the political question unfortunately dominated all, and on this point he would much surprise the pastor by assuring him that he did not in the least approve the agitation which was spreading among the masses.

This declaration conquered the hesitation of Sir Archibald, and, William Grobb, the clerk, consenting, with as good grace as he could command, to take a seat in the back of the carriage, on a footstool, he prepared to get up; but first the patron, lifting his cap of knit wool, presented himself:

"Tom Lichfield, of Canterbury, merchant, member of the Philadelphian Society of Glasgow, of the temperance societies of Southampton, Merioneth, Dolgelly," etc., etc.

Sir Archibald saluted him, and then his colleague of the Catholic faith, who, introducing him, told off his titles and functions,—already previously announced by him to Lichfield, when, in the rear, he had recognized the pastor's profile. Clinging to the apron of the carriage and the hand that Tom held out to him, he installed himself on the seat, at the right of the driver, who judged it more prudent, all the same, to separate the two priests.

A precaution absolutely needless, as, barring some slight differences, they immediately fell into accord.

The priest of Bunclody was returning from administering the sacrament to a miserable victim of the civil discords, whose left breast had been almost entirely cut off by one of Gowan's agents, causing a fatal hemorrhage.

"I condemn always those who shed blood!" protested the pastor, quickly and in good faith; and, in exchange for this good word, which in no way pledged its author, the priest confessed that the barbarism had an excuse.

"They rebelled against the troop *apropos* of a harness which they seized; a requisition, however, which was rather abrupt and informal; but soldiers are not diplomats; these especially, of necessity, for one does not form a corps of police and desperadoes from the superior classes! They pushed on, a big devil drawing his sword:

"'Room! Room!' Ah! yes, they crowded still more; the stifled horses neighed, pawed furiously, and reared, with smoking nostrils. A demoniac, a certain

Breigh, seized the horse of the big devil in question by the mane, the rider by the hip. The latter drew his sword, but Breigh's wife had seen the action, turned it aside from her husband, and received it herself..."

"Then," said Lichfield, "the soldier was not culpable."

"They pretend, indeed," resumed Sir Richmond, "that he let fall some unfortunate comments; he might have said, 'Now, you will nurse no more little rebels!' She carried at her breast a child which was miraculously saved! Really, it would have been wholly censurable if he had used such language. I maintain, in any case, that he had slandered the unfortunate woman; I knew her, she censures the exaltation of mind, the violence which they no longer always restrain."

"And the affiliations with the United Irishmen?" added Sir Archibald.

"Ah! an association!" faltered the priest, simulating surprise.

But the pastor-judge assured him that he made a mystery of facts which were secret, to no one, and the priest of Bunclody, convinced, admitted knowing, in truth, of this association, and combatted it with all his might by word and deed.

"Yes!" said he, "I preach submission, obedience; I reject pitilessly from the confessional whoever has joined in the work of emancipation, of which the only effect, finally, will be to fasten firmly the yoke on their necks; I will hereafter consecrate no union of members of the society, I will refuse baptism to their newly-born and the holy oil and the prayers of the sacred office to their dead."

"Very good! father," applauded the pastor, warmly.

And the priest of the Apostolic Church, Catholic and Roman, desirous of completely winning the approbation of his brother of the English Church, terminated by a profession of faith.

King George might practise a different religion from that of the Irish; he was none the less their sovereign, by the grace of God; and every individual who rebelled against his law revolted against celestial authority itself.

Tom Lichfield acquiesced; but he pleaded extenuating circumstances. Misery, a misery dark, odious, unspeakable, afflicted the population. These gentlemen were in a position, through their priesthood, to see it every day. He, Lichfield, did not suspect it before having set foot on the territory of the sister island, and penetrated, by right of his commission as member of the Philadelphian society, into the huts of these people, these wretches!

Just then, at the side of the road, a dark hut appeared, a ruin, a pile of rubbish, a mass of dirt, looking, in the distance, like a swelling of the ground. Built of branches and of a mortar made of mud and pebbles, it was exposed to all the blasts of the north wind and the showers of rain. The summer sun made crevices in it; the deluge of rain, during the winter, filled its walls, so much that at all seasons those who took shelter there were exposed night and day to the risk of their falling in.

All three—the priest, the pastor, and the merchant—turned aside from this sorrowful picture with a movement of repulsion, their touched hearts rising to their lips.

"And to think," resumed the Englishman, snapping his whip briskly, "that they swarm about in there, some eight or ten of them, lying on the hard ground or in the mud when it has rained, smoked like herrings or pigs with their primitive fireplace (two rough stones laid together), fed, shall we say, on raw or half-cooked vegetables, and of what variety?"

"Usually turnips which they do not even pare, in order to lose nothing," said the priest, between two lines of his breviary, which he had begun to read with contrition. "They set the kettle on a bench, and each dips into the dish."

"Sometimes there are potatoes, but never bread except at Easter," added the pastor, who was devouring ginger lozenges to facilitate the work of his laborious digestion. "I have visited," continued he, "those who ate grass like the cattle, and on the sea-shore others who, not having strength enough to fish, ate sea-weeds thrown up by the tide."

"And the years of famine," said Lichfield, "neither potatoes, nor turnips, nor anything; the choice between unclean beasts, balls of clay to chew, or tough and spoiled meat,—that of relatives and friends succumbed to hunger."

"Horror!" exclaimed simultaneously the two priests, but faintly, in a minor voice, with the drawling, nasal tone in which they were accustomed to read their services, with no real emotion, in their certainty of never seeing themselves reduced to this extremity.

"So," resumed Lichfield with conviction, "let a demagogue summon them to rebellion, promising them a table set every day, with abundance of roast beef, fish, tarts, and each meal washed down with beer, wines, and liquors in plenty, and, with their hearts in their stomachs and rage in their teeth, they will rush upon society like hordes of barbarians, packs of ferocious hounds."

The two ministers nodded assent, and the florid Englishman resumed:

"That is the point to which I wish to come; the agitators, really the responsible ones in an insurrection, are the criminals whose capture is of most importance, that they may be chastised in an exemplary manner."

The priest and the pastor gave another sign of assent; Lichfield had expressed an indisputable truth; it admitted, however, one limitation; the torment inflicted on the instigators should not prevent the punishment of those who allowed themselves to be drawn in.

"They are not less guilty for listening to a disloyal voice," said Father Richmond, forgetting for an instant his breviary.

"When the voice of God by our mouths," interrupted Sir Archibald, filling his nostrils—not without staining his lips—with some perfumed Spanish snuff, which he took from a little gold box, "forbids them to seek here below the degrading satisfactions of base sensual appetites."

"When the sublime higher aspirations," concluded Sir Richmond, "the blessings of the soul and spiritual riches are largely reserved for them."

Well and good! The Englishman shared their opinion; he insisted, nevertheless, that they should make the punishment of the leaders a hundred times stronger. This was, moreover, the opinion of the governor; he did not waste his time by setting a price on the heads of small fry, and he offered large premiums for those of the leaders.

"Ah!" said the priest and the curate, both at once.

Lichfield, whose insignificant china-blue eyes glittered like gold, stealthily observed them both; he resdfmed:

"Yes, amounts sufficient to assure tranquillity, ease, and even luxuries for the rest of his days to whoever gets the chance to lay his hand on the neck of one of these disturbers.

"For Harvey, the royal treasury will pay twenty-five thousand pounds sterling to whoever delivers him up, dead or alive."

"Really!" said the priest.

The curate protested that he would willingly apprehend the individual in question, if they really attributed such high importance to his capture; but he would make it a duty and refuse the money, believing that to touch the price of blood, no matter whose, would dishonor him; but neither of the two priests knew this precious Harvey from Eve or Adam; they heard his name for the first time.

"You have perhaps seen him without suspecting his personality," said the merchant; "according to the latest news, in the region from which I come, and through which he had passed, they pretended that he was shaping his course in this direction."

At their request, he began to give in detail his description: "a high distinction and an extraordinary resolution, the glance of an eagle, a courage that overcomes all obstacles."

"Precisely; so far many persons would answer to this compromising description," said the priest, with a comical inquietude and thinking of himself.

But Tom changed his mind, pretending the need of evidence more ample and clear.

Secretly he added:

"Evidently these two soothsayers have not perceived the bird, and it is useless, it would be absurd, to excite the desire to hunt on the same scent as ourselves."

Tom Lichfield of Canterbury, member of divers societies, Philadelphian and temperance, united other titles with these: he was, for instance, something of a spy in the service of England. Leaving to Madame Lichfield the management of his bazaar in Glasgow, he ran through Ireland, buried in his camlet seat, with open eyes and attentive ears, informing the government of Great Britain on what he saw, foresaw, observed, heard, and conjectured.

But if he was numbered among the agents of the secret police of King George, it was in the character of a benevolent and sharp merchant.

One afternoon he had returned to his domicile with beaming countenance, rubbing his hands and kissing on her smooth forehead his tall wife, whose complexion was that of ivory grown yellow with years.

"Good business?" the lady had laconically asked, without removing the goose-quill which she held in her jaws, while with her dry fingers she refolded an invoice-bill.

"Excellent! I leave in four hours for green Erin."

"A pleasure trip?" interrogated the shopkeeper, in stern astonishment.

"I!" said the big man, with an air of saying: "For whom do you take me?" angry that this other self misconceived him to this extent.

And in order to lose no time, time being money, he informed his wife immediately of the matter which occasioned his satisfaction.

"Forty thousand pounds at one stroke!" said he.

"Ah! in what length of time?"

"Two months, three at most."

"A little long! Forty thousand net?"

"Surely."

"On the sugars, the oils, the old laced coats?"

"On the head of Harvey, on which a price has been set; I had neglected to tell you about it; I must deliver it at the latest under ninety days, or else it will be an ordinary operation."

"Good!"

"You must know who this Harvey is."

"What does that signify?"

"A rascal who intends to throw off from Ireland the yoke of the metropolis."

"Go on, go on. That is his affair... Talk about ours..."

"To lessen for myself the difficulties of the duty, I have addressed to the lord-lieutenant a petition, bearing most respectable and most eminent signatures, offering to go to watch the action of the conspirators and to keep him informed; he accepts."

"Perfect! the reward?"

"Adequate: three pounds daily for travelling expenses, and two for incidental outlays."

"Whew!"

"Patience! At the same time, I wrote to my societies of Southampton, of Merioneth, of Dolgelly; I offered myself to the committee of Philadelphians, proposing likewise to make a trip of two or three months across the afflicted sister island to carry her the consolations, exhortations, and assistance for which her desperate situation makes her clamorous; they have complied."

"And will pay your expenses and something besides."

"Almost as much as the government, for distributing their aid among the most worthy."

"Perfect!" said Madame Lichfield, whose epidermis reflected for an instant the beaming radiance of her husband's face.

"Wait," said her husband, who squared himself triumphantly with swelling abdomen and a cunning smile on his artful face; "wait, that is not the entire combination."

But she, having a sudden intuition of what he was preparing to reveal, imposed silence upon him by a gesture, and said volubly:

"We will pack up and make into a bundle all the shop-worn goods that have been banished to the garret: earthen-ware, broken china; threadbare, stained, and moth-eaten cloth; battered utensils, full of holes; and there you will get rid of these in exchange for the money of those who have any, taking, in the case of the poor, the relief money which you will have charitably poured out; giving with one hand, seizing again with the other."

"Agreed," said Lichfield, who, for the second time, kissed his intelligent companion and associate.

And since he had set foot on Irish soil, success had generously favored his undertaking, promising soon to crown it.

Long ago rid of his stock of shop-worn goods, he had several times renewed it, and always realized enormous profits. In the towns he bought up all the odd remnants that he could find, and converted them into gold. Taking down from their hooks in second-hand clothing stores the ghosts of old garments, he covered with them the shivering bodies of ragged beggars, and, in return for his generosity, which brought him benedictions accompanied by fast-flowing tears, he pocketed sums which would have paid for clothes from the shops of the best makers in London.

As for Harvey, he had at several tunes failed to nab him, to use his expression, missing him only by a few hours, devouring space with his unpretentious, snorting, and freaky steed, which still kept something of the rapidity which had formerly won him twenty prizes on the race-course, in addition to an extraordinary endurance.

Today he counted on surprising the agitator at Bunclody, or in the vicinity; and not missing him; he had even commenced a letter to Madame Lichfield, in which he announced to her the good news, in a handwriting whose characters danced madly up and down the pages, in his joy at having at last attained his object.

In approaching the village, they had now reached a point where the mud huts rose one above another, and forms of angular spectres, emaciated and cadaverous, outlined themselves timidly at the doors and windows, attracted by the noise of the vehicle, and held by the spectacle of the two priests flanking Tom Lichfield in shocking fraternity.

"Permit me, gentlemen," begged the merchant, several consecutive times, speaking to his fellow-travellers and stopping the vehicle. Then, a bundle under his arm, decanters in his pockets, he effected with these shadows one of his customary little transactions, selling at the most exorbitant prices a waistcoat, a pair of breeches, or a cap; then, selling them a drink of gin, he resumed his

place, the copper, silver, or gold of his societies jingling clear and cheerfully in his pocket.

With the waiting at these stations, or lulled by the roll of the carriage, the ecclesiastic and the minister at last went to sleep, Sir Archibald's mouth still stretched in a yawn wide enough to break his jaws, Sir Richmond's lips closed in the picas kiss he had given his breviary, which now lay under his shoes.

They were suddenly wakened by a wild croaking, something like a chorus of frogs and crows in a quarrel, and they started up from their sleep, dishevelled, livid, rubbing their eyes, not knowing what peril assailed them.

It was only William Grobb, who, without warning, as they went through the street of Bunclody, cawed and croaked his clap-trap merchandise.

"Knives, scissors, thread, needles, kitchen utensils, forks, skillets, saucepans, brooms, dusters, stockings, skirts, cloaks, caps, head-dresses, shoes."

"Be quiet!" cried out his patron.

But, bewildered by his own uproar, he continued his enumeration, and went through the whole customary rigmarole:

"Men's coats, waistcoats, trowsers, coffee, whisky, brandy, smoking tobacco, and pipes of all shapes..."

"Silence there!" roared Lichfield, inwardly laughing at the piteous look of the priests, who were scandalized by this not exactly triumphal entry among their flocks, offended in their priestly dignity by this canticle of trumpery intoned without deference to their character before they had left the carriage!

"Knives, scissors, needles, kitchen utensils," began the clerk again. He had gone no farther, when Lichfield, springing from his seat, struck him a fearful blow with the strap across the calves of his legs.

But no public laughter greeted the representatives of the Most High here below, and, as they descended from the carriage with bulging backs that they might not have to face the scoffers, discreet though they were, their faces were suffused with blushes up to their ears, and even under the caps which they had pulled furiously down over their heads.

Notwithstanding the clap-trap of William Grobb, almost no one appeared at the doors or windows; only three or four women interrupted their preparations for supper to learn the cause of this unusual howling.

Tom Lichfield, who kept an eye on everything, remarked, at the first furtive examination, an abnormal anxiety on the faces, explicable only by the gravity of the moment, the imminence of the conflagration.

Freed from all constraint by the departure of the holy men, who took each his own way without thanking him, the ingrates, he pushed through the village, now inviting his clerk to recommence his song of "scissors, knives, needles," and mingling with the young fellow's deep baritone, which, however, was as thin as a clarionet, his own tenor, surprising in such a pumpkin.

Nevertheless, they modulated their couplets in the most enticing ways, setting them off with *appoagiature,* without rousing the inhabitants, for the

peremptory reason that the inhabitants had almost entirely deserted their houses for their rendezvous in the woods with the agitator.

That morning Paddy Neill, visiting all the houses, less to stimulate their zeal than to exhort them to prudence, had appointed the meeting for nightfall; and, in little bands of three or four, by twos, or singly, the Bunclodyans, disarming dangerous suspicion by taking twenty different ways, directed their steps toward the appointed place, Dead Man's Quarry.

They reached there only by widening the paths followed by stags and deer, by almost tumbling down the steep inclines, clinging by the branches of shrubs and tufts of heath. The quarry, at its base, was hollowed out into caves accessible to hundreds of individuals.

During the previous insurrections, after their defeat, the people of several hamlets and two villages had lived there, eluding all search; only to find, on the return of peace, their huts razed to the ground, and to be caught and exterminated *en masse,* in consequence of regaining confidence too soon. The rest had been transported or exiled.

As the agitator was not at liberty to choose his road, patrols of the English regiments and, above all, of the terrible regiment of Ancient Britons furrowing the roads and running over the fields, rummaging through the underbrush, three Bunclodyans waited for him at three different points to lead him to this quarry: Paddy at Chanvrand, Treor at Fornclos, and Casper, the gelder, at the farm of Emeric Barleitt, the countryman whose legs Gowan had broken.

But it was several mortal hours past the time when they conjectured approximately that he might arrive, according to calculations which took account of a thousand possible delays.

The expanse of sky faded perceptibly; among the bushes the beasts began to move towards the meadows; rooks flew about before going to sleep, and, scenting this mass of men below, uttered cries of fear, filling the air with an ominous clamor.

With the twilight, anguish took possession of all hearts, and those who kept silence most obstinately in order not to demoralize the others decided to tell what apprehensions tortured them.

The blood-hounds of the "Infernal Mob" were very keen, always in the saddle, this evening here, tomorrow thirty leagues away, fantastic, demons! They did not sleep; they heard, at incommensurable distances, imperceptible noises; they had the eyes of birds of prey, and the cunning of sorcerers at divining a secret.

"Or inventing a torture!" said Arklow, Edith's husband.

"That is true!"

And Arklow, to support what he said, cited the case of the shepherd, Vill, whom they had tied to four horses, because he refused to indicate a hollow in a pasture where the patriots hid some ammunition.

"With Casper," growled Pat Burn, the ironmonger, "it will not be necessary, I am afraid, to tear him to pieces to make him blab."

When the lot fell upon Casper, among the three to go to meet Sir Harvey, Pat Burn had insinuated that the gelder smelt like a traitor.

And he now repeated his suspicions.

"He never looks you in the face," added he; "and, of all the United Irishmen, he is the only one who keeps on drinking; he swallows gin like a goat's skin, while the others, even those in most need of caution, have restricted themselves to a rigorous *regime* of water. And then where does he get the money that he spends in the taverns? He does not work!"

Many protested, without going *so* far as to vouch for the gentleman, simply to avoid confessing that they must agree with their comrade's opinion, and also to keep from giving way to discouragement.

The contagious fear, nevertheless, attacked them, and enervated, one after another, the whole company. Before the evening was fairly set in, they resolved to send out scouts, and appointed for this object Arklow and five or six resolute young men.

They decided to distribute themselves in all directions where there was any chance, in consequence of forced retreats and *detours* necessitated by the course of the enemy, of meeting the chief and his escort, and, failing to find him, they would rally at Bunclody.

They shook hands; they might meet the English riflemen, or Gowan's wretches, and their fate in either case would be sealed. If a man was alone at this hour beyond the open roads, his business—especially since the last week—was clear.

Arklow clambered up a steep foot-path which led by the side of the farm of Nicklosein, where they had sent the gelder. An old sailor, used to climbing, he came out very soon on a plain which commanded a view of an immense stretch of country, and, in the darkness which reigned, he tried to distinguish some one.

He perceived no one any where; but flashes of light were tinting the horizon and tongues of fire were licking a curtain of smoke which grew in height at first, then in breadth, as the wind unrolled it. A conflagration? Where? Doubtless at Neyrandy. At least it was in that direction.

To better his view, he looked about for a tree to climb; there was none at hand; but the gigantic cross of a calvary rose, unfolding its arms; he hoisted^ himself up as if he were climbing the mast of a ship; as he passed over the Christ, the rust-eaten nails gave way, and it fell to the ground.

Vexed by this accident, he nevertheless finished his ascent, and took observations more at his ease. Neyrandy was not burning; the flames, more intense, more lofty every second, devoured, beyond, the hamlet of Tiffenhos.

"Probably on account of the blacksmith!" said Arklow, in sorrowful wrath.

And, still vigilant, he kept peering in every direction, endowed with a rare acuteness of vision acquired in his capacity of a sailor, who had been obliged to take observations in thick fogs and darkness.

The land everywhere—earth, grass, bushes—grew darker and darker, except the roads which remained pale and the great stones which still glistened in their

whiteness; a man walking became difficult to distinguish from a tree swung by the wind; nevertheless, Arklow distinguished a moving human mass.

It went along by the side of the road with an uncertain gait, as if stumbling over the stones; at last it went heels over head, got up again, staggered, and fell again to rise no more.

"It is Casper!" said Edith's husband.

And he scrambled down from his observatory in order to run to the spot, and learn from the drunken fellow, whom he would shake, whether Harvey had joined him.

The road being winding on account of the hills, Arklow cut across lots, across meadows, across woods, leaping over trunks of uprooted trees which barred his way and over fences, jumping in the darkness from heights of fifteen or twenty feet. Often the earth fell in at the top under the weight of his spring, and below under the weight of his fall.

Once it seemed to him as if he were leaping into space, and would break his skull on fragments of rock, or bury his head in the sand up to his chest. But by an unprecedented exertion of strength, he fell on his feet like a cat, continued his course without a sprain, without dislocation, without a scratch, and went on in the darkness, the intensity of which constantly increased, like a phantom hunter, displacing, as would a water-spout, the vibrating air, startling the game squatted on the edge of its burrows, crushing under the soles of his boots the crackling branches, and now and then throwing out sparks under his feet.

In his haste he lost his way, but found it again very soon, settling upon a mark and setting out again more bravely, more swiftly, ah! yes! than a breathless horse, his elbows at his sides, in a wonderful way for an old sailor, not as familiar as other people with *terra firma.*

When he came out on the road, at the place where this beast of a Casper was working off his disgusting drunkenness, he did not see him anywhere; but the blackguard, though he had been able to regain his legs, had not been able to drag himself very far; he lay close by; Arklow listened; a snore which sounded like the noise of a flail guided him; the gelder, in the *scoria* of his drunkenness swept by his seal-like breath, short and oppressed, lay asleep, on his stomach, with clenched fists, at the side of a ditch, stuck in the mud, his head lower than his body.

Unquestionably, apoplexy awaited him; it swelled his arteries; he would die soon, giving up his unclean life in a hiccough or a repulsive vomiting. Arklow asked himself if he should help him, if he should not leave him to die so, if it would not be a beautiful death compared with that which he would suffer as a traitor if Burn's suspicions should be confirmed!

But humanity prevailed, as did also the desire to be enlightened, however incompletely, however stingily, on the subject of Harvey!

"Hello! hello! Casper! Dirty pig... wake up."

But he saw upon reflection that these amiable appellations, even accompanied by a succession of blows on his shoulder-blades or the roughest sort of punches, would have no effect.

"Casper! Casper!" he cried in his ear, "here is a glass to drink; say, will you empty it? Where did you so fill yourself to overflowing?"

The tympanum of the drunken man, which no other summons would have reached, moved, and a growl testified that the stupefied brain of the deplorable personage had comprehended the invitation.

At the same time, he tried to rise; with much assistance he managed to get himself in a horizontal position on the road, and his head level with his heels; but this was the only result of his forced energy, though vainly lashed by Arklow, who whipped him, defied him in vain to drink, calling him a coward, an idler, a brat at the breast, who cared more for milk than for gin!

He turned him over on his back, tickled his face and nose with a wisp of grass moistened with dew, and grasped locks of his hair and pulled them hard; but no result! Nothing but the snoring, which began again, sonorous, guttural, hoarse, interrupted only by occasional snorts.

Arklow surely would not get a word out of him; so, charitably pushing him back into the ditch, that an improbable carriage might not drive its wheels into his flesh, he set out for the farm.

But a singular phenomenon arrested his attention, puzzling him. At the distance of perhaps a league fluttered in the black plain a saraband of lights. They advanced with very great speed, judging by their growing intensity, then ran right and left, fading away to glimmers, minute burning points, and then disappeared. Suddenly increasing, they appeared at a distance of perhaps only a mile, dancing about, and again disappearing, suddenly, like a fire which is blown out.

And this sport lasted, passing again through the same phases, the same alternations of appearance, growth, aberration, and disappearance.

Old women would have piously crossed themselves, imploring the Lord in behalf of these wandering and outcast souls; younger ones would have run away, their teeth chattering, or crouched down in some thicket, praying to heaven on their own account. Arklow believed neither in ghosts nor in will-o'-the-wisps, and for this reason, infinitely more perplexed, foreseeing the reality of a danger, he desired to solve the enigma, and directed his steps towards the mysterious vision.

It approached, and now to the luminous display was added a confusion of vociferations, blasphemies, a stamping of horses' hoofs, neighings interrupted by cries of anger, blows furiously applied, and clashings of drawn swords and scabbards rattling at the sides of the wearers in their mad haste.

"The Gowans, the Infernal Mob!" said Arklow.

He was not mistaken. It was really Gowan's band.

It whirled in a frenzy of furious madness, veritably possessed, not only morally, but physically, and the blows which rained more thickly and with

excessive fury, the collisions between horsemen, and the exchange of challenges to temporary duels made the Bunclodyan hope that he might finally witness the fitting destruction of the bandits by themselves.

His illusion, alas! was not prolonged. Gowan, calling his men, each in turn by his name, threatening to blow their brains out or crack their skulls if they did not follow him without protest like faithful dogs, awed them, disciplined their madness, and led them at full speed.

Arklow had only time to take refuge behind the trunk of an enormous tree; the charge passed like a hurricane, the noise of the bushes breaking under it sounding like a succession of gunpowder explosions.

They tore up the stones, which flew as terrible as bullets. One of the soldiers bruised his thigh against the tree which shielded the old sailor, making a noise that sounded like the discharge of a piece of artillery.

"But they are drunk!" said Arklow.

And by the smoking light of the lanterns which certain ones carried fastened to the points of their sabres, by the glimmer of the lights fixed to the saddle-bows, attached to the stirrups, and hung to the breastplates and cruppers, he could see that not one could keep his equilibrium.

They rolled in their saddles, swayed on the backs of their beasts, oscillated forward and backward; movements too abrupt threw them back their whole length, and, as they did not slacken the reins, but, on the contrary, tightened them, the horses reared as if they would scale the heavens, scattering the light, increasing the shadows, and enlarging the profiles into gigantic proportions.

Five or six together were lying on the neck of their horse; he half relieved himself of them; some beat the air with both arms, as if about to fall; the others appeared to go quietly to sleep.

They did sleep in fact, their fingers set into the horses' manes, borne along in the general sweep of which Arklow perceived no longer anything but the confused mass and noise; a vague uproar of remarks and reflections communicated in an undertone.

One of the fellows wheeled about and went back. Gowan, who was watching him, denounced him in abusive language borrowed from the vocabulary of galley-slaves or prostitutes.

"We are still on the wrong road," said the man.

"Hold on! Take the road to Paradise!" answered sharply the ex-valet of Newington, pulling the trigger of his carbine.

The frightened rebel, scratched by the projectile, turned about, took his place in the file, and the gang henceforth continued to move on with no new incident, following always the track of the flames of the lanterns which were beginning to detach themselves, having burned their strings and cruelly bitten the horses, wounded also by the fragments of glass.

Arklow stood frozen to the spot, surprised, dazed; but he recovered himself promptly, pulled up his feet, and rushed in pursuit of the guerillas.

The discharge of the weapon lighting up still more the leader of this mob. Edith's husband had perceived a human body, extended like a mantle across the shoulders of Gowan's horse, and a sudden, intense foreboding said to him that it was the body or the corpse of Harvey, hung by Casper, and that the intoxication of the gelder and of all his acolytes was the result of the libations poured out in honor of this capital prize!

In his turn, he swore.

Why had he not seen and divined sooner, when the gang filed past him? He would have thrown himself between the horse's legs; he would have seized him by the nostrils, overthrown him, choked him, and, in the uproar produced by this unexpected attack, who knows? perhaps he would have saved the prisoner?

In any case, he would have done his duty. They would have knocked him down, they would have killed him, no matter! remorse at having failed in sagacity, in initiative, in presence of mind, weighed upon him more than death under those conditions.

Now what presumption to keep his already diminishing and fading hope of overtaking the highway robbers! He could hear no longer the gallop or the voices; the last lights that they carried were successively extinguished. He put his hand to his forehead; a fever was mounting there; he set his nails in his temples; the thought occurred to him that, if he could kill himself, his self-reproaches would not torture him longer; but this weakness seemed to him unworthy; he began to run again.

The others, meanwhile, rushed straight on, without hesitation, without making a halt, or giving a breathing-spell to the tired horses, whose pasterns were stained with blood from contact with the briars and projecting stones; several, annoyed by pressure on the curb, ran away, and several fell down; but the unbridled course of the others went on none the less in the silence and torpor of the last stage of drunkenness. No more brawling, no more irritation, no more madness: a torpidity of mind and body! The memory of the day's events lived no longer in them, nor the consciousness of their actions. Inert, all rode on without knowing or asking why or toward what end. They would have continued indefinitely without trout ling themselves, without complaining, about the length of their journey. Had there been an abyss under their feet, they would have fallen into it without feeling any impression of their descent, going to their death as peaceably as to the stable.

Gowan, however, in his capacity of leader, did not lose himself entirely. A misty instinct of his responsibility floated in his leaden brain. An obliteration of important facts which he tried to seize again rose before his eyes; but what facts? They related to this body which hit him in the knees and forced him to sit uncomfortably and insecurely on the extremity of his saddle; but the connection escaped him.

For what motive, then, had he burdened himself with this encumbrance?

The corpse of the blacksmith they had completely mangled on the anvil; after the hands they had forged the head, which, not being malleable, had broken under the first blows of the hammer.

He stooped down, stretching out his hand and passing it over the whole length of the body which he carried. The head hung intact; to whom did it belong?

A very dim recollection crossed his mind; the face of Casper outlined itself and then that of an elegant and fine gentleman,—Sir? Sir! Sir! Hov... Herv... Ber.... Harvey!

Harvey! Harvey!.... But the name signified nothing to him, nor the personage.... although he well knew, although he recalled in the mists, in the night, in the darkness of his drunkenness, that the name and that the individual had a significance of the first order! His horse suddenly stopped, frightened; he had just perceived, by the smoky light of the last lantern, the calvary and the cross where, an hour before, the sailor Arklow had hoisted himself.

"Oh! oh!" said Gowan, recognizing the instrument of execution, and struck with an idea,—one of those ideas which he never lacked,—"oh! oh! we will have some fun!"

Sure enough, the gibbet was vacant; the horse kicked the fallen image. They would nail Sir Harvey in its place, and the devotees would lose nothing; they would rather gain by the change: the face of the Irishman, framed in an abundant head of hair and a fine red beard, like that of the Nazarene, was incomparably more prepossessing than the wooden face of the Christ, dark, flat-nosed, toothless, which was now lying prostrate in the dirt and whose worm-eaten frame was now crumbling under the horse's hoofs.

His beauty, to be sure, would pass away under the influence of the inclemency of the weather, and in the decomposition of death; but, for three or four days, perhaps one or two more on account of the sobriety of Irishmen of the upper classes, this picture would certainly edify travellers and ravens.

In imitation of Gowan's, all the other horses had stopped short, and two riders, thrown to the ground, picked themselves up bruised, one with his shoulder dislocated, and swearing.

The captain applied to each of them violent blows with the flat of his sabre, and, cutting the cords which bound the prisoner, he placed him in a sitting posture before him, like a child which one rocks in his arms and against his breast.

The feeble body could not support itself; Gowan shouted at him, shook him like a plum-tree or like a drunken man, as Arklow, an hour before, had done to Casper, as one shakes a decanter that is not transparent to discover whether it is empty or not.

"Thunder!" cried the brigand, disappointed, "there is nothing more in the bottle; life has drained away on the road from the drooping neck. We might have foreseen it!"

To crucify a corpse, a fine affair! He would not suffer; he would not experience the atrocious anguish of seeing the birds of prey swoop down to carve him alive; of hearing the howling pack of greedy wolves running to and fro in the darkness, and perceiving their flaming eyes, like burning coals, around the calvary; of feeling their fierce breath warm his feet, and, in miracles of ascension, these ravenous beasts, heaped one above the other, reach up to his legs and plant their fangs therein!

But from the lips of the patient a sigh exhaled, a feeble one, the sigh of an infant; a second succeeded it, others following, and the unfortunate man opened his eyes, trying to remember what had happened.

The infected breath of Gowan recalled it all immediately.

As he was preparing to leave the farm, at first the tumultuous invasion of these furies sweating with whiskey, cheeks on fire, speech thick and drivelling, laughing in their besottedness or vociferating in anger, staggering, and getting entangled in the sheaths of their sabres!... They had saluted him with an ironical deference, paying him military honors as to a general, and then asked: "Your name?"

"Yours?"

"Insolent fellow!"

"Blackguards!"

"Your name is Harvey. You are the one who excites the people to revolt."

"And to the hanging of bandits like you!"

With their hands gloved with clotted blood, washed off only in those places where their potations had splashed upon them, they brutally seized him by the collar; he pushed them back, called them assassins, deserving an ignominious death, and striking them in the face with his whip, he tried to force a passage.

They rushed upon him, hemming him in, and knocked him down with blows of their fists and the pommels of their swords; overcome and bound fast, they threw him into a corner, penning him between the wall and a rampart of benches, where a dog gently licked him in silence.

He had then witnessed a revolting orgie of beer, gin, brandy, obscene songs, bluster, cynical confessions of abominable crimes, disputes, quarrels, scuffles degenerating into embraces and revivals of friendship which were renewed in alcohol. That they might not forget him, they had picked him up again like a bundle and laid him on the end of the table, deafening him with their yells and flooding him with overturned liquor, which was flowing away in streams through several gutters.

Then, the table being suddenly overturned in one of their drunken transports, he remembered nothing more except the confusion of a mad ride in the darkness, a nightmare filled with bodily tortures and a succession of fainting fits. Now he found himself again in the red hands of Hunter Gowan! It was doubtless death this time, judging by the sneers of the sinister brute and the fury with which he shook him, almost turning his stomach. Divining his anxiety, Harvey settled it.

"I am alive!" said he.

"Admirable!" exclaimed the ruffian, who, in his usual tone of mockery, congratulated him warmly.

To die in a swoon was abhorrent to a Christian; he would prefer to look death in the face and first purify his soul to appear rightly before God! Unfortunately, the company lacked chaplains; it was, moreover, of the English Church. Nevertheless, if Harvey would condescend to tell his sins, he, Gowan, would repeat them to the priest of Bunclody on his honor, and, meanwhile, he would absolve them.

"I belong to tire Presbyterian church!" said the agitator, indignantly. An apprehension took possession of him. He dreaded neither death, nor the sufferings of the death-agony, nor the terrors of execution; but the future of the insurrection troubled him. Would he not fail his brothers!

In his reverie he seemed cowardly, and the chief of the band insulted him, shaming him, and offering him his gourd to drink bumpers of gin in order to cheer him up.

"See if my hand trembles!" said the Irishman.

And the disgrace of a resounding blow fell on the face of the bully, who roared. Foaming, stammering new insults and terrible threats, he seized Harvey, who, in his attempts to free himself, dealt him blows in the face with his clenched fist, and tried to grasp his throat.

But Harvey's muscles, enfeebled by his previous tortures, placed the combatants upon a flagrant inequality. He could not open his hands wide enough to grasp the bull-neck of the former keeper of the hounds, and his fists rebounded from the wretch's tanned skin without scratching him.

A rattle from Harvey's throat frightened him; he was afraid that it was the supreme rattle, and that he had lost his prize. Then, riding up against the calvary and ordering his dismounted comrades to hold his horse by the bit as motionless as a pedestal, he stood straight up on his saddle, lifting his prisoner by the joint of his left arm, and, with a skilful turn of the hand, bound him with what remained of the fetters to the upright part of the cross.

Cords which they handed up to him consolidated the ligatures, and, to finish his work, he ordered them to take out the nails from the hands and feet of the rusty Christ; these consisted, however, only of blunt fragments; what was to be done? Gowan thrust the blade of his sabre several times into a crack in the cross and broke it into as many pieces as would serve to pin the inert sufferer to the wood.

For a hammer he availed himself of the hilt of the weapon, and pounded gaily like a good workman; the warm blood which gushed out, filling his eyes, face, and even his mouth, did not hinder him.

He only spat it out, swearing at its insipidity, and, when he had finished, he rinsed his mouth with floods of gin.

CHAPTER IV.

That evening, after the sounds of the clarion and of military orders borne on the wind, cordons of fire were lighted on the hillsides of Chamrand, and, the next morning, from Bunclody, a festoon formed of the canvas tents of an encampment could be seen pointing to the sky.

On one of them, the highest and largest, floated the English flag, and officers and soldiers passed in and out incessantly, as if full of business.

The drums beat the call to fall in; squads came together, formed in line, received orders, buckled their knapsacks, unstacked their arms, which were flashing in the rays of the rising sun, and the mountain slopes were soon furrowed with red serpents winding in different directions.

"They are garrisoning the villages, the smallest hamlets," said Pat Bum; "they will give us a garrison, too; of course we must shut up our wives, our sisters, our daughters."

"Yes," said a young man, Brucelaun, "the Ancient Britons are in no way less cruel than Gowan's 'Mob'; but, more than that, they have gallantries...."

"Of lustful beasts," added Arklow.

"The whole soldiery let loose by the government on Ireland is made up of the worst elements of the army," said a third.

"That is so true," confirmed a fourth, "that Sir Ralph Abercrombie, not desirous of sullying his military glory by sanctioning with his presence all the crimes which are committed in addition to the rigorous measures ordered from high places, has resigned the general command."

A noise came from the castle of Newington; creaking of iron gates, caracoles, snorting of horses, oaths, farewells; the Duke came out, escorted by regular soldiers, with their officers, and the squadron started at a gallop towards the stirring camp, ascending the hill at a trot, receiving military salutes from the bands of troops which they met, and arriving in front of the flag where the superior officer lodged in the high tent awaited them, his lieutenants ranged about him.

Numbers of birds suddenly fluttered over the camp, in confusion, a sort of incomprehensible fascination; but the drums which beat and the clarions which sounded, rending the air, furnished the explanation of the phenomenon, which in fact all the Bunclodyans did not remark. Newington alone occupied them, absorbed them. The report which had been circulating some days was confirmed; he was to take the command of military operations in that region, and up there, at this very moment, was being invested with his rank.

Ranged in narrow and dazzling files, the motionless battalions presented arms, and the Duke, followed by a gaudily decorated staff, rode the length of the ranks, which were as compact as if made by the soldering of wooden soldiers; then, on the orders of the superior officers which their subordinates sang out by turns, like roosters and in the same guttural voice, the troops wheeled, and, by

rapid manoeuvres, prepared for the final march of the review, which began to the sound of music of brass instruments, strident, martial, victorious.

And while the greater portion of the troops regained their tents, laying down their arms, taking off their uniforms, putting on their vests, and, at their ease, prepared carefully, on hearths skilfully improvised, the plentiful repast which they must have,—even on the eve of battle,—the Duke and his gold-laced staff redescended the hill, talking together, pointing to the village, and raising their sneering and sinister voices.

Though far away, all this uproar and parade had, little by little, roused the curiosity of the Bunclodyans. Grouped on the door-steps, they talked together, interpreting the gestures and words of Newington and his companions, and replying sharply by invectives which were lost in space like the remarks of the others.

"The scoundrel!" said Pat Burn, commenting upon their odious enemy's animated pantomime, "see how he acts: that bar which he traces horizontally—with what energy!—that signifies that he will level our huts without leaving a stone standing, smoothing the soil like the surface of one of our lakes; and the trees which he points out with his whip,—it is as clear as the waters of the Shannon,—they will hang us to the highest branch in order to show us the shores of England!"

"Let him first take care not to leave his skin for us to make drums out of, the old *coquin!"*

"You mean: the old *cocu.* Just because of that, he will have a chance to escape us."

The horsemen entered Cumslen Park, where the flourish of trumpets received them, giving them welcome, and, on the steps of the castle, appeared in a magnificent scarlet costume, enriched with gold like a bishop's cope, the Duchess, accompanied by Sir Richard Bradwell.

Pat Burn and Brucelann smiled and exchanged jokes; but they remarked the bearing and attitude of the young lord.

While Lady Ellen wore a costume of her guests' colors, and testified to them with an eager grace her joy at their presence, Sir Richard appeared very stiff and reserved, very chary of demonstration, hardly bowing, keeping his hand free from all contact with theirs, and his dark clothes contrasted with the brilliant dress coats of the guests, making a cutting protest.

"The Lord forgive me!" said Paddy Neill, who joined with the jokers, "one could swear that he is in green!"

What a wonderful lynx! At a distance of several miles to discern the shade of a garment! They laughed at him, and he himself was amused at his pretension, declaring nevertheless that he had no pitch in his eyes. And, in any case, he had the right to presume that the son of Newington wore the colors of Ireland. He had often seen them on him.

"This is a joke, or a blunder of his tailor!" observed some one.

"Perhaps a way of showing that he is at heart with us."

"Oh!"

At the sound of a trumpet call, breaking out suddenly on the spot, started; fifty soldiers suddenly appeared, before any one had seen them approach.

Almost all of great height, with crabbed, cruel faces, projecting jaws indicating ferocious passions, they differed for the moment from Gowan's Mob only in discipline, in the habit of order which one might read in their attitude; but, when commanded, they would commit the same atrocities, as phlegmatically and methodically as they drilled, and, once unchained, let loose by their officers on the people, they would no longer hold themselves in check, but would henceforth know no bounds, and, drunk, lascivious, savage, would merit in all its fulness their abominable reputation, which equalled that of the men of the "Infernal Mob."

One only, a sergeant, did not appear in harmony with the sentiments and instincts of the band, and his reflective and charmingly gentle face was out of place in their company. For this reason all eyes were fastened on him, surprised at his attractiveness, and pitying him for the fate which had mixed him up with such people.

His sympathetic eyes wandered over those present, who with one movement approached to find out what he intended to do. A puppy of an officer, polished, laced like a woman, with hair carefully powdered, and cheeks painted carmine, summoned him sharply, perching on his young spurs, and invited him to perform his duty.

Then, with a sigh, he drew from a tin tube suspended at his side a parchment which he unrolled, prepared to read, while the officer, with the end of his cane, ordered the two trumpets to be blown.

And when the clear, superb, imperial blast was finished, with a trembling voice he read, at first in the midst of a death-like silence, then of barely restrained mutterings, the following decree:

"We, George the Fourth, by the grace of God king of Great Britain, profoundly disturbed at the spirit of revolt which animates anew our island of Ireland..."

The murmuring commenced.

"His island!" cried some one.

"As he would say his horse!" added Paddy, by way of emphasis.

"And resolved," continued the sergeant, "to make an end of the hope upon which rebellious subjects live of shaking off our yoke, inform the people that we shall use the utmost severity towards every Irishman who shows the least disposition to rebel; that every insurgent will be hunted like a wild beast and shot as soon as taken; that whoever shall have previously concealed him, or, knowing his retreat, shall not have informed against him, will be hanged and have his house burned."

A shudder ran through the crowd, which increased and raged in spite of Treor and Paddy.

"Was it not understood that we would be patient and submit to everything?" they wore out their lungs in exclaiming.

"Success can be purchased only at that price."

Yes! No one denied it, and all had listened, as they had promised, to these provocations without replying; but this invitation to treason was too much for them. To hear it and not reply exceeded the stock of inertia which they laid in from day to day. Even Paddy and Treor with difficulty bridled their tongues.

"In order to show our utter abhorrence," continued the unfortunate sergeant, whose voice hesitated and whose cheek crimsoned with confusion,—"in order to show our utter abhorrence of the guilty and encourage in serving us those of our subjects who remain faithful to our government and our royal person, we promise the sum of twenty-five thousand pounds to whomever will bring us the head of Bagenel Harvey, the recognized chief of the insurrection!"

A thunder of indignant outcries punctuated this conclusion; a roar of formidable wrath crowned it, and Paddy, to divert it, tried to find, against his wish, some way of exciting laughter.

"Sergeant?" asked he, "is what they have been saying true, then?..."

And as the soldier looked at him questioningly, he added:

"That His Majesty has no longer a head of his own, since he wishes to buy that of another."

In truth, a general hilarity applauded this remark, extremes meeting in the simple souls of these people still frank and ingenuous and of a childlike susceptibility to impressions.

The young officer, Sir Edward Walpole, withdrew. Invited to breakfast at the castle, where the bell was summoning the guests to the table, he hurried away; though desiring to remain until the end of the royal proclamation had been reached, he disliked to appear at the Duchess's breathless, crimson, the snow of his powder covering his shoulders, and his boots spotted with mud.

Besides, the Bunclodyans were taking matters well enough; after some clamor not unexpected and without import, they were calming down and indulging in jests, impertinent perhaps, irreverent surely, but such as John Autrun could check himself, if they carried the thing too far.

The little sergeant was not pleased with his office; he condemned sometimes, often, always, in his inner conscience, the severity which his commanders or the laws obliged him to apply; and yet, a slave of passive obedience, he executed his orders, with death in his soul and tears filling his throat, but promptly nevertheless.

Between the two camps, his sympathies leaned towards the enemy, and he avowed it; he acknowledged the right, the claims of the sons of the "poor old woman." Still he never forgot what uniform he wore, and to the sarcasm of his comrades who invited him to throw it to the Shamrock, he replied laconically:

"The time has not come!"

Being a mystic, he is expecting some absurd, idiotic prophecy, in which he really believes, to be realized, thought Sir Walpole. But so far his loyalty and his

scruples warranted reliance on him; so Sir Edward quietly set out for Cumslen Park, carefully picking his way, avoiding the pools of water, and, when dry ground released his attention, cleaning the rosy pointed finger-nails of his hands, as smooth and fair as a prelate's.

Less peaceful than their lieutenant, the Ancient Britons, though making sport of the monarch whom Paddy Neil had made the butt of his jests, were horrified by the muttering of the people, which excited their spleen, as bravado not properly punished. Such a fine opportunity to give themselves up to their appetite for slaughter, to thrust their bayonets into the breasts of men and the throats of women, to search for hearts and offer entrails for sale, as they said,—really they were wronged.

As well cut off their pay as deprive them of this perquisite of delicious satisfaction!

They grumbled, the gun-barrels rattled in their nervous hands, and one of the savages, indicating Paddy, muttered in his beard, as stiff as a wild boar's bristles:

"As for a head, we ought first to take his!"

"Faith," answered the mutilated man, amid the venomous growls of the soldiers and the laughs of the people, "I agree to it; it depends only on the price you offer for it. It is not pretty, like that of your baby officer,—a fresh April blossom under his flour-besprinkled wig; but the loss is due to the ardor of your comrades in Dublin; they kept my skin, you can ask it of them again!"

The flayed man was insulting their lieutenant now, and the sergeant tolerated it! A thrill of ill omen ran through the ranks, and some demanded the putting of the village "outside of the King's peace," that is to say, outside of the law, beyond the protection of any magistrate. All license being accorded to each, the property of the people, their liberty, their life, their honor would belong to whoever felt the desire to take possession thereof.

Plunder, conflagration, murder, rape, would become habitual; weariness alone would set the limit to these crimes.

"Yes, yes, outside of the King's peace!" began again in chorus several of the Britons, with great animation. They emphasized their clamors by striking the ground with their muskets, and the severe look of John Autrun did not intimidate them.

They had been drinking gin to excess, urged on by their leaders, and the fumes were now boiling in their brains; nevertheless, they submitted to the peremptory injunction of the sergeant, who avoided in this way an immediate collision.

The lust for women above all excited these satyrs of several weeks' abstinence, and their native impulses were exasperated still more by the food and drink with which they had gorged themselves.

Paddy, on his part, grown serious again, employed himself in calming the effervescence of his friends. Some soldiers unrolled a placard and inquired for a

place to post it, in full sight; it reproduced in inch letters the offensive terms of the royal edict.

So the wind would not carry away the revolting phrases of this infamous document; they were displayed on the walls of the locality, with their constant invitation to treason, which implied, on the part of its authors, the hope that some day or other certain Bunclodyans would succumb to the temptation.

Well! they would consent to pass for cowards, by maintaining their tranquillity in face of the provocation emanating from the Britons; but that any one believed them capable of this Judas deed,—to sell one of their own...

"Would you rather sell him really?" said Marian suddenly, in a low voice, unexpectedly appearing and placing softly on the arm of the most excited one her little hand, one finger of which she then carried mysteriously to her pale lips.

They were amazed, and she entered into some vague explanations.

But yes, a brawl, and all would be lost. Sir Harvey would go out to join them; he would fight, and be killed at their side!

"What! he is in the village?"

Many repeating this question, she signified to them an affirmative answer by half closing her eyes and whispering, and then said no more, having noticed the suspected merchant, Tom Lichfield, who had arrived at the inn and installed himself there a week before.

But, in their perplexity, many lacked the prudence to wait for the information; they begged clandestinely of one and the other details which the few initiated gave them, describing the crucifixion of the agitator, and how, exhausted by the hemorrhages, dying, he owed his salvation to Arklow, who, sublimely, providentially inspired, had found his scent, taken him down from the calvary, and carried him under his own roof.

Today, the patient was sitting up, convalescent, but trembling, feeble, feeble, his wounds barely closed; hence, as the young girl had just begged it of them, they felt the necessity of restraining themselves.

So quiet was established, and every one pretended to be quite indifferent to the bill-posting by the soldiers, who had first thought of the church for that purpose. Under the porch seemed to be the proper place for the placard, but the cemetery preceded it, and so the bill-posters preferred a less retired spot, especially as they knew that to the United Irishmen the priest virtually closed the house of God.

Nevertheless, in spite of themselves, in spite of their appearance of absolute indifference, the poor Bunclodyans betrayed the secret which they imagined shut up in the profoundest arcana of their discretion, as in a tomb heavily sealed.

At intervals, regularly, their looks converged on Arklow's hut, and, quickly as they were withdrawn, Tom Lichfield surprised them, and instantly suspected that here was the retreat of the agitator.

From Gowan, who had become furious as soon as he had sobered off, and who had run to the gibbet to take away his prisoner, the spy had learned the story of his discomfiture, and he did not doubt that the "bird"—to use the word of his choice—had not flown far, but had lodged somewhere in the vicinity; using his business as a pretext, he tried to thrust himself into the houses.

They had not resisted him everywhere; but Arklow's door, relentlessly closed, had awakened his mistrust; now, he did not doubt that his man was there.

What confirmed him still more in his opinion was the fright of everyone when the soldiers, charged with the posting of the everlasting placard, stopped before the threshold of the old sailor.

Suddenly, a deadly silence reigned, in which nothing was heard except the measured and rhythmical tread of the squads marching hither and thither in the vicinity.

And no one breathed till after the departure of the bill-posters. Tom Lichfield, applying his fore-finger to the rubicund side of his hollow nose, reflected on the way he would adopt to get his twenty-five thousand pounds.

But his preoccupation, his absorption, put a flea in the ears of the Bunclodyans, especially Paddy's.

Though Lichfield glanced more discreetly than the others at Arklow's door, his pupils sparkled with such an intense fire that they excited attention. Then he talked to himself, debated with himself, approved himself, criticised himself, now rubbing his hands contentedly, now snapping his fingers in spite.

"Business is not good, then?" asked Paddy Neill, suddenly; "or are you considering the plan of an operation which presents difficulties?"

Tom Lichfield looked at him. Was he expressing himself frankly, or was he setting him at defiance? With his devil of a face, it was impossible to be sure. And the other comrades who had drawn near with the mutilated man, and surrounded the merchant, were not frowning.

Nevertheless, he was not long in comprehending that the bantering Irishman looked upon him suspiciously.

As Lichfield, in the centre of this bulwark of men, which cut off his view of the precious hut, threw stealthy and anxious glances in that direction, Paddy interrogated him squarely.

"You have, then, no spectacles?"

"Pardon me! all sorts and excellent ones," responded he, mechanically, but instinctively disturbed about the motive of this odd question.

"In that case, why don't you put some on?" said Paddy. "You seem to be looking for something that escapes you."

This straight thrust excited in Lichfield a fit of coughing, but he would not be put out of countenance by such a small matter, and answered;

"Certainly, I am looking for customers. I have hardly made a sale for a week."

"And you will not make more, though you should stay here for years. I know but one article which they would willingly buy of you, and you will hold on to that for sure!"

"Tobacco, pipes, good Birmingham knives?"

"No, no," denied Paddy, at each object enumerated.

"Religious books?" continued the merchant.

"Pounds sterling at a shilling each."

"Oh! you joker!" exclaimed Tom, giving the flayed man a dig in the stomach. And, laughing with everybody, and putting on a jovial expression, he repeated his words.

"You joker! you joker!" said he; but he could think of nothing more to say, and his mouth was entirely dry.

Pierced deeply to the heart, knowing that he was seen through, the desire seized him to hasten the *denouement,* to cry out to the little sergeant: "Bagenel Harvey is there in that wretched hut!" But what would happen?

Instantly, the Irishmen would rush upon him, and at once strangle him like a dog; they would send him to kingdom come at the first word, at the first syllable. Dead, rotting under the grass in the cemetery,—that would be a fine way of earning the reward! They would pay it to Madame Lichfield, and, consoled, she, with little delay, would marry William Grobb, the clerk, for whom, yellow and dried-up, she had a fancy. He swallowed again his wish. Moreover, John Autrun gave the order: "Support arms, forward march!" and the Britons, executing an about-face, left the place, going back toward the camp.

Quite alone now in the bosom of the alert enemy, his problem was no longer how to precipitate events, but to get away without injury; a cold sweat moistened his skin, lifting his heart-breaker from his temple, and weakening his legs; he compared them to the cotton stockings which he sold over his counter, which three washes reduced to rags; his whole body seemed to him to be melting away, and he had the horrible sensation of becoming a soul floating without muscles, without bones, without flesh, in the wrappings of his clothing, which the first comer, at his pleasure, might do up in his handkerchief.

Ashamed of this unworthy weakness, and anxious that the trader should rise superior to the man, he lashed himself unsparingly. His cowardice he called by the worst name he could conceive; he made it equivalent to bankruptcy. They would judge him at Glasgow not as a victim of circumstances, of fatality, of forces superior to human energy; they would treat his memory with disdain; they would cite him as an incompetent merchant, incapable of guiding his bark, foundered miserably on the rocks, the danger of which they would purposely and dishonestly underrate.

And this when he had dreamed of having, on his return from his expedition, the unanimous esteem of his fellow-townsmen, and, rich and fawned upon, of finding the reward of his good fortune, of his intelligence, of his courage, of his talents, in honors, flattering distinctions, high places among his associates, and, perhaps—why not?—the supreme magistracy of his city, the patent of nobility

conferred by the sovereign in reward for his distinguished and important services.

Baronet, baron of Bunclody! What prestige, what pleasures, what prerogatives would result from this elevation! And all this flattering prospect to vanish in death, under the blows of mad-men! He nerved himself up, conquered his weakness, regained his tricky peddler's gift of gab, and proposed a glass of whiskey, of extra quality, such as King George did not drink at his gala dinners, and which he, Tom Lichfield, reserved for his personal use.

And, feigning secrecy, assuring himself, by careful survey, that the suspicious ears and eyes of the soldiers had disappeared, exhibiting his Philadelphian papers, his credentials from societies in sympathy with the miseries of the natives of the sister-island, he represented himself as hostile, even more so than themselves, to the tyrants. Ah! the vows that he framed for deliverance, for the extermination of the oppressors! Into the sea with all those who should not be destroyed! there must not a single one set foot again in England. Food for the fishes, all those who should escape massacre; any trap, any treachery, with regard to these monsters, would be justifiable in the sight of heaven.

But his insinuating eloquence, his perfidious violence, were all spent in vain; they sounded so false, and, besides, Arklow himself had enlightened Paddy in regard to the merchant.

Even at that moment, in Arklow's house and informed of the presence of this personage, Harvey was restating his opinion of him:

"He follows me so closely that his course cannot be the result of chance. At Tipperary I met him in the hollow of a road; it was not the desire to blow my brains out that he lacked; but I looked at him in such a way that, although he was travelling with his clerk, he refrained from doing so, and, being uneasy, even offered me, in an obsequiously wheedling way, his goods. I was amused by his fear and his hypocrisy, and I begged him to rent me a seat in his carriage; he pretended—quite disconcerted and his heart in his shoes—that we were not going in the same direction, and that he was in a hurry. Nevertheless, some minutes after, I heard him trotting at my heels."

"I don't know whether he is accustomed to war," said Arklow, "but, emboldened by the accumulation of troops in the vicinity, I dread him. I think it prudent for you to go away as soon as it is dusk; I will conduct you, through the woods, to a safe place, where a horse, all ready, is waiting every day. Do you feel stronger?"

"My feet are still excessively tender; fortunately, my body is reduced so much that it does not weigh upon them too heavily, and, once in the saddle, I will answer for it that I do not fall into the clutches of the bandits."

"Be careful! no rashness!" begged Edith, who showed motherly solicitude for the sick man.

"I promise you, brave, exquisite woman; I owe myself to the cause; my life, I believe, is necessary to it; I have yet to preach the good word in various places,

and I will double, like game, to escape the hunter, till the near day when we shall ourselves hunt the others."

"As soon as possible!" said Arklow. '"If the signal depended only on me, I should not delay it. But I, no more than you, my good friend, am the master of our destinies; they are in other hands than mine. I nave been intrusted for the present with the mission of preacher of the crusade; but my *role,* that which I am burning to fill, is the *role* of soldier. Ah! to lead you to battle, to victory, to deliverance: that is my only ideal, my one longing!"

"It is just that the Directory, as its name indicates, should judge the situation and decide the measures to be taken!" said the old sailor.

Edith was moving about in the house, preparing a collation: cold food which her guest could carry in case unexpected meeting, fear of ambuscades, or pursuits should compel him to wander about for some time at random. She rolled up strips of linen and got together some fresh herbs to be applied in compresses in case his wounds should reopen.

At the word Directory she interrupted her cares, and her heart beat violently as, forgetful of the reality, of Harvey, of her husband, and clearing distances, mountains, and vast seas, she suddenly discerned her son, her Michael, embarking free, radiant, and with his forehead, clear and high, turned towards his native land.

The Directory, at one of its first meetings,—and this was more than six months before,—had decreed the recall of all the sons of Erin, however far away chance or the rigorous necessities of life had exiled them. Especially those whom the despotism of England had forced into the king's armies must break their chain, and the youngest, most robust, and most valorous of Ireland must hasten to lend the assistance of their arms to their brothers dwelling on the native soil.

As soon as the news had reached down there,—she knew her Michael,—he had escaped and had braved all dangers, baffled all supervision, eluded all vigilance, and was now sailing over the ocean, and approaching the soil of a free State. Without rest, without weariness, moreover, sustained by love of country, by filial love, he would pursue his onward way. The sympathies of the nations for the persecuted island, the universal hatred of the peoples for Great Britain, the admiration of all for a patriot hurrying to perform his duty, would level all difficulties, and furnish him the means of regaining his country.

He would land at last, triumph over all obstacles, all snares, escape perils, and dash into the paternal house through the open door. "My son!"

She had pronounced this tender word, in a high voice, suffocated with happiness, moist with tears, and her arms ready for embraces.

"What is it, then?" said Arklow anxiously, believing her suddenly struck with mental alienation.

She excused herself, related her vision, her delusive mirage, and explained that the disappointment of the awakening had made her tears flow. But Harvey comforted her.

Certainly in six months the call of the committee could not reverberate to India, causing Michael to obey and cross the thousands of leagues between them. But they knew at Dublin from an authentic source that a number of the regiments in which the Irish recruits had been sent away had received the order to leave the colony and reembark.

The mother-country dreaded their contact with her conquered people of Hindostan, and feared lest a fraternal understanding might be agreed on between them. When she should order her oppressed of the East to be bound to the mouth of cannon, she was not sure that her oppressed of the West would not turn the cannon against her. Ships overburdened with troops had headed towards Europe; they would deposit their burden of men at Malta, at Gibraltar, whose garrisons would return to England, and the execution of this operation once completed, from Gibraltar, from Malta, Ireland would not be far.

"Thank you I thank you!" repeated the excellent mother, consoled, drying her eyes, and renewing her excuses for the trouble she had caused by her entirely personal emotion; she had not been able to control it, to force it back, to repress its outbreak.

Now, it would not appear again; she would abandon herself to her joys later, and she finished the packing of his provisions, bandages, and herbs, and even manifested impatience and anxiety, holding her ear against the window, whose cracked panes of glass were curtained fortunately with sheets of paper.

The deep voice of Lichfield's clerk thundered outside, bawling the list of wares: "Knives, scissors, thread, needles," and Edith was seized with fear for Sir Harvey, although Paddy and his friends still kept close to Lichfield; but those two, the spy and his clerk, so artful, familiar with all the tricks of rogues, constituted truly a serious menace.

And imminent!

Many times already had alarms by day and night filled her with terror; but none to the same extent as now.

"Hand-mirrors, looking-glasses, carpetings, table-covers, jewelry, laces!" chanted William Grobb like a drowsy chorister, whose interminable somnolent profile she perceived through a corner of the window-pane, and who drove for the love of God the horse and the van of his employer, without even turning round to see whether any customers were forthcoming.

"Hand-mirrors, looking-glasses!" Who then, in this miserable hamlet, had money for these superfluities? Mirrors, glasses, to reflect wan faces, made livid by suffering and privation! Carpetings? Shoes first. Table-covers? And what about bread?

Jewelry, laces! Go to! weapons for the struggle or a shroud in which to wrap the dead,—the dead from hunger and those fallen in battle!

No, no, no, even if there had been no warning, these merchants showed all too plainly that they had no desire to sell their stock; Harvey was their game, surely. Ah! Tom Lichfield drew close about his carriage the group in the midst of which he harangued, with his good-natured eloquence, and Paddy and all let

themselves be dragged along, docile victims of cajolery, one would have said, dazzled without doubt by the gleam of some gift. But this was complicity! Lichfield communicating with his clerk, Edith comprehended that the danger lay in this approach, and she urged her husband to run to avert it, to put himself in the way, and remind Neill, who was forgetting himself, of the critical nature of the situation.

But Harvey opposed it. He placed the most absolute confidence in Paddy; he could fall asleep on him, on his intelligence, on his generous cunning in the work of baffling Lichfield and defeating his plot.

Yes, he had learned the value of this boy in their interviews since his days of forced rest. Under his simple appearance, his lively spirits, he hid much practical sense and a calm mind, and under his frivolity a heroism proof against anything.

"His joviality, his sallies, his sarcastic or droll flashes," said he, "are the very essence of our nature, the particular mark of our race, a mark which is obscured in you and me by the consciousness of our distresses, of our slavery, of the horizon so dark with storms. He is younger, has more elasticity, is less depressed, and moreover his recklessness is principally on the surface, calculated to more thoroughly deceive this Lichfield."

"As you will," sighed Edith; "nevertheless I predict bad results of his complacent attitude towards the artifices of this person. You can see for yourself; the other fascinates him like a lark with the display of his four-penny goods."

Sir Harvey approached the window, and Arklow, at the renewed entreaty of his wife, went out to see, to correct the heedlessness of his comrades, if there was reason to. With his hands in his pockets, whistling a sailor's tune, his nose in the air, he directed his steps towards the van.

Paddy at this moment was bargaining for a coat, a marvellous coat, red and purple at the same time, like the sun setting in the sea; a coat, declaimed Lichfield, whose skirts, like the wings of the albatross, would last always; a coat, too, lately on the illustrious back of an admiral. The trace of the epaulets was still to be seen.

The merchant took it down from a peg and held it out at arm's length, spreading it over his shoulders; in order that Paddy, from a distance, might better judge its effect, he walked back and forth, and, William Grobb approaching in response to one of his winks, he tried it on him, talking all the while to his customer, but succeeding in surreptitiously slipping into the clerk's ear, a few words at a time, this admonition:

"Find a way of summoning the soldiers; Harvey is in the hut where the bill is posted."

And soon the long young man, divested of his brilliant paring which Paddy put on in turn, let himself down under the false pretext of picking up a piece of money which had fallen noisily from his breeches pocket, the lining of which he had just adroitly cut with the blade of his knife. On all fours, he searched in the

grass, so conscientiously, so dismayed, that they did not distrust him or trouble him in his task; they would rather have helped him, and Arklow did not perceive his absence till some minutes after his departure.

And Paddy, who, all this time, was strutting about, paraded in real peacock style, arching his back and spreading the flaps of the famous coat, like a glorious tail, prouder of this ornament than of a general's plume on an enormous, embroidered, gold-laced cap! The idiot!

"See!" said the distressed Edith, in the house, "he shares the ridiculous taste of many of our people for pompous garments, for loud colors; but red, the abhorred color of the English,—I can't forgive him for that."

She displayed against the poor boy, whom nevertheless she loved intensely and like a second son, a severity entirely unjust, and the final epithet applied to Neill by Arklow was also undeserved.

No: the cast-off clothes of the admiral did not tempt him; all the gabble of Lichfield would not distract his attention, or turn him aside from his aim, which was nothing else than to make the big Englishman pack off. William Grobb had run off already, so much the better; the place would be empty, and Harvey could escape from his retreat transformed into a condemned man's cell, and slip away to a safe spot.

At the instant when Edith's husband opened his mouth to lecture him, Paddy threw him an Irish phrase, which signified: "Let your guest decamp promptly, while I make space for him." And, taking to his heels, he scampered away, launching a sarcasm at Lichfield to excite the merchant to follow him.

"You do not lie: these are not flaps, but wings; they carry me, *je m'envole* (I fly)."

"*C'est moi qui suis vole* (it is I who am robbed)," cried Tom. And in his desire not to lose the three shillings which he had paid for this costume, threadbare and yellow, not fit for a mountebank in a show, and for which he would have been paid, in any case, from the relief fund, he lost his presence of mind, and, thinking no longer of Harvey, he pursued the runaway, railing at him, calling him all the synonyms of the words sharper and pickpocket.

When, at the end of a quarter of an hour, William Grobb brought back the company of Ancient Britons, whom he had found at the public house, drinking pint after pint, some of them emptying the jugs without touching them to their lips, Tom Lichfield had not returned. The soldiers, inflamed by the drink, and above all by the news which had caused them to be summoned, urged on their sergeant.

John Autrun, perfectly livid, seemed like a dead man walking; his legs trembled; he supported himself on his cane, lessening his pace in proportion as they approached the shanty toward which his men were driving him. For a second, with the design of escaping from his cruel duty, he had turned his back upon the sad, the lamentable house, and tried to gain time, under the pretext that the capture of the agitator necessitated the presence of his officers.

"Any wavering is equivalent to treason!" muttered a corporal.

Then, ceasing to evade, resolved, alas! on obedience, but offering prayers that Harvey might have disappeared, he struck Arklow's door with his stick, but in vain. No one came to open it, no voice answered.

He knocked again, louder, but with no more success.

"Break it in!" advised several Britons together, lifting the butt ends of their muskets.

He ordered them to put them down, and knocked again, this time with hurried blows and charging them to open: "In the King's name!"

Edith appeared on the threshold, pale through her tan, but calm, finishing the fastening of a neck-handkerchief about her, like a woman interrupted in the midst of her toilet.

"What does the King wish of me?" she demanded, in a voice which did not tremble. "The rebel whom you conceal!" The voice of the sergeant trembled.

"If I had concealed a rebel, it would be to save him from your tortures; consequently I should not give him up."

The Britons mockingly applauded the positive attitude of the woman. Ah! the clemency of the sergeant was growing difficult. Irishmen collected around, their hands cold, their bodies frigid, but their brains boiling; they all flocked to this spot in the anticipation that events might take an evil turn and put their patience to a test past their endurance.

Regardless of the last watchword, which still and always counselled resignation, abstention, they would never permit them to touch a hair of Edith's head.

John Autrun, who was choking with emotion, went on, his eyes fixed on the royal proclamation and reluctantly indicating it to Edith:

"Reflect: you are putting yourself in danger of the gallows!"

"Hanged!" said she, with a smile; "then I should be still less likely to speak."

"And your house in danger of fire!" added he, sadly.

For a brief, inappreciable moment she was silent, filled with sadness at this menace, reviewing all the. past miseries experienced under this roof of ragged thatch, behind these badly matched stones; joys, nevertheless, had lighted up this past: her marriage, the birth and growth of her son Michael, and pious memories were also connected with this wretched place,—memories of her father, her mother dead in the bed which afterwards became her son's and which now awaited him.

Nevertheless, she answered:

"Fire! remorse smarts more, and it is you who will be stung by that."

The Britons were getting angry. This trifling at the door was lasting too long. They demanded the performance, the conflagration immediately, and pushed on towards the little hut, hustling the crowd of people, who muttered, feeling in their clothes for their open knives, and marking the spots on the necks of the soldiers where they would bleed them like fowls.

Once more, the sergeant tried to pacify his men, who would no longer be restrained, and, not to exasperate them by any further deference, he added, imperatively:

"Bagenel Harvey, the agitator,—deliver him into my hands."

"Have you the promised twenty-five thousand pounds?" replied Edith. "I do not give credit to the king. He passes for too bad pay!"

The Irishmen laughed at this repartee; but the disgusted Britons crowded into the house, introducing John Autrun by force and careless of the cutting words of Edith, who cried out:

"Ah! the heroic soldiers! They win victories over a woman who does not defend herself."

Treor and Marian had hurried to the scene, and the whole village surrounded Edith; they would surely protect her against the desperadoes, who were making a frightful uproar in the house, breaking the humble furniture, scattering the few dishes about, and staving in the shaky window-frames.

They did not find the rebel; they ripped open the beds, and slashed the thatched roof; no Bagenel Harvey anywhere! They brawled, they yelled, and now—for the search was very quickly ended between four straight walls forming two gloomy rooms—the door vomited them forth like boiling lava, effervescing with a rumbling like thunder.

"The woman! the old woman! let's hang her!" they vociferated. "She has helped the leader of the rebels to escape."

From the midst of the Bunclodyans provocations answered to their menace, shouts of defiance were launched like projectiles, and a harvest of knives sprang up from their pockets.

"The old woman! the old woman!" repeated the Britons, "the old woman! We will make her dance, grimacing like a puppet, from the end of a rope of hemp!"

"First," was the answer, "we will make gashes in your stomachs; at the play one needs to be able to laugh heartily!"

And the rampart which protected Arklow's wife bristled with knife-blades; the soldiers, on their side, levelled their muskets, aiming at the enemy; they would fire into the mass. A salad! Already ten Irishmen had squatted down, preparing to crawl under the rifles and tear open the English without delay.

The sergeant exhausted himself in useless injunctions to avert the struggle; since they had found no one in this woman's house, she merited no punishment. His voice was drowned in the clamor; they disregarded him; he placed himself in front of their guns; so much the worse! they would fire at him with the others.

Spontaneously Treor and Marian placed themselves in the front rank to receive the first balls. Perhaps the fury of the soldiers once satiated by the fall of a certain number of victims, these wretches, their thirst for blood assuaged, would not complete the carnage.

The young girl held the hand of her father, and, courageous, with brilliant eyes, a poetic and vibrating image of patriotism, braved her executioners.

Miraculous! The muskets dropped of themselves, and all the transport of fury, all the blind wrath, all the frenzy of massacre which possessed these brigands, vanished, and was transformed into a noisy glee, a tumult of joyous cries.

But Marian, but Treor, but all their companions, regretted that they had not suffered the death which had faced them a moment before; for an erotic delirium had seized the Britons, inflaming their eyes and moistening their unclean mouths, which trembled with desire. And in place of the shower of balls which they had just promised, their gorilla-like hands, large and hairy, were throwing insulting kisses to the women, with sneering laughs, coarse compliments, and lascivious and filthy words.

"Let them be silent! Let them stop!" cried several Irishmen at once, "or we will bleed them like hogs."

A movement was made to lead away the unfortunate women whom the attitude of the soldiers was outraging; but the brutes assailed the group with blows from the butts of their muskets, pricking and pinking the men with their bayonets, using only so much caution in this manoeuvre as would prevent them from damaging their prey.

They must have the women, in short,—all the young, all the beautiful, all the passable; and in the midst of the scuffles, notwithstanding the retaliations and the wounds received from knives, they contrived to seize their skirts, catch hold of their waists, and clasp their forms. They laid their fingers on their throats, feeling about them with painful brutalities, and placing their polluting lips upon their cheeks and necks; and bites, when the poor creatures struggled too successfully, succeeded the disgusting caresses.

John Autrun, powerless to subdue these lecherous madmen, seizing the most infuriated, struck, himself, by these demoniacs, thrown down, and trodden under their boots, rose and made a last appeal, a desperate appeal, to their reason.

"If you do not immediately come to order," said he, "I will kill myself, and my blood will be on your head!"

Not one was restored to reason by such a trifle. Oh, well! he would bother them no longer; a pleasant journey! With his chastity, the sight of the angels would be enough for him. They were not satisfied with such thin bodies, and they did not care for wings! If he should recover, he could take his vows and become a Catholic priest; they were soldiers.

"Soldiers!" he answered, "never; the dregs of humanity, convicts escaped from the galleys, to which you will some day be returned!"

"To death with the sergeant!" they yelled as their only commentary, without interrupting their ignominious struggle, overpowering by their numbers the defenders of the women who were the objects of their frenzied lust, and incapable, moreover, of restraining themselves in the intoxication of their senses which touch, kisses, and stealthy embraces had increased to perfect paroxysms.

Then John Autrun took a pistol from his belt, and, resting it against his temple, discharged it; he fell his whole length, on his face, in his blood.

The surprise suspended momentarily the ignoble wrangle, permitting the Bunclodyans to take up the suicide, stanch his wound, and carry him into a house where they could dress it, care for him, and save him if possible, for he still breathed; but the interval lasted scarcely more than a minute or two, and the lecherous conduct of the monsters re-commenced, more tumultuous, more vile than before, since the disappearance of their chief, which had already proved so vain.

The orgie terminated with other excesses. One of the rascals had clandestinely set fire to Arklow's shattered furniture, to his mattress of dried ferns, and the fire was devouring the shanty; and when Edith anathematized them, certain ones proposed putting her into the smoking ruins of her home. They would be showing clemency; she would, by this means, die in her bed, under the roof of her ancestors... under her own roof, surely, since it would fall on her...

They seized her; and Treor, who contended with them for her, fell, stunned by the blow of a musket on his skull; other comrades took his place by her side; but now Marian, isolated, without any immediate defender, occupied, like Edith, in wresting herself from the hands of the ravishers, tempted the amateurs, and at once two of them rushed upon this "dish fit for a king," as they said, their mouths watering.

Their quarrel delayed for the young girl the horror and pollution of their touch, but for how many minutes? The rivals did not fight, but only exchanged proposals, expostulations, recalling the mutual concessions made by one to the other under similar circumstances, the sharing of the booty or a common use, and their quarrel terminated by an arrangement.

No more debate, a cordial, amicable understanding for the possession of the object, the sweet object at issue, and a drawing of lots to decide the order of succession of the occupants, when a third came up unexpectedly, citing the popular aphorism: "When there is enough for two, there is enough for three," and accordingly registering himself as the patient heir of numbers one and two!

Ah! the disgusting, frightful, infernal bargain! Marian looked longingly at a knife in the shrivelled hands of one of her wounded or dying friends, but had not time to pick it up, being pursued so closely. Besides, would death offer her a sure refuge against the outrages of these satyrs? She contemplated the fire, now at its height, consuming Edith's hut, and, lowering her head, started to leap into the living, roaring, red, ascending flames, which would consume her, leaving on the funeral pile no vestige of her body!

But she only reached the threshold, near enough however to singe the hair upon her forehead; the impudent soldiers, associated for fraternal gratification of their brutal passion, held her back by her dress, and she struggled in vain to free herself, to secure her salvation by drowning herself in the waves of fire; the one barred the way, and the other wrapped her in his arms.

"Help! help!" she cried, vehemently.

"Go on!" replied the one who held her, inhaling with delight the fragrance exhaled from her neck in the heat of her efforts; "go on, my beauty! you shall not escape, in spite of all the champions in the world who may answer your appeals."

"Even in spite of me?" asked some one, whose arm, like a bar of iron, fell upon the soldier, pushing him far away from the young girl.

"Sir Richard Bradwell!" pronounced the Irish and the old Britons in chorus.

CHAPTER V.

Sir Bradwell arrived with all the guests of Cumslen Park, who had risen precipitately from the table at the rumor of the arrest of Harvey. Lord Newington and his staff had hurriedly mounted their horses, which were still saddled and bridled; but Lady Ellen and Sir Edward Walpole had got into a farmer's vehicle which was standing near the kitchen, and Richard, sitting in front, had lashed the horse so vigorously that they arrived several minutes before the others.

He had leaped to the ground without taking the trouble to stop and while yet entangled with his reins.

"And I, Richard," cried the Duchess, "how am I to get out?"

She stood upright, shuddering and pale, in the very uncomfortable vehicle without any step, still calling Bradwell, without answering Sir Edward, who urged her, for greater safety, not to mingle with the crowd. But she would rather have jumped out at the risk of a sprain, and had decided to do so when the officer gallantly opened his arms and received her against his breast with delight. He did not, indeed, keep her there long; she touched the ground, agile and alert, disengaged herself, and immediately rejoined her lover.

Seeing her hurriedly, feverishly, with wildly dilated pupils, cross the space which separated her from him, Sir Walpole expected an exposure. The perspicacity of the lieutenant equalled his self-conceit, and having tried to draw the attention of his beautiful hostess at breakfast, he had discovered the secret of the intrigue between the son and the wife of Newington.

On the road, some words were dropped that clearly revealed to him the situation, the cries of the women accelerating the haste of Bradwell, excessively agitated; the Duchess, in spite of the presence of a third party, offered scarcely any resistance to a fit of wild jealousy, and begged him to stop, to drive more slowly, and not to pitch them headlong into a ditch.

For whom, besides? For the young girls yonder, to whom he feared that some misfortune might happen. And as Bradwell did not cease tormenting his horse, whose sides he striped with such terrible blows of the whip that the cart jolted abominably and, instead of rolling, seemed rather to sail on the crest of the waves of a rough sea, she grew angry, cursing Miss Marian, who was the

cause of this disorderly race, and she furiously described the young girl to the officer.

A silly, romantic jade, ridiculous in her affectation of dreamy airs, of inspired attitudes; a comedian, tragedian of the first order! Of the first order, she explained, in intention; not in execution,—that was pitiable.

And in confirmation of her criticism Lady Ellen related the scene with Paddy: an actress of the twentieth class, a strolling country player on the boards, would have played it incomparably better. Nevertheless, accustomed to the most insignificant roving mountebanks who every two or three years set up their stage on the village square between four lamps, the Bunclodyans were inexhaustible in their eulogies of her talent.

Carried away, they proclaimed her the very genius of the country, and she ensnared others, more intelligent, but innocent, innocent! Sir Richard Bradwell, for instance.

He did not answer, although he trembled with an angry shudder, but only redoubled his efforts to transfer into the muscles of his horse all his haste to reach his destination.

Once, the animal stumbling and almost plunging into the mud, Lady Ellen directly upbraided Richard, whose insensibility to her indirect raillery exasperated her.

"Ah! you are mad, my dear, or you have sworn to break our necks and bones."

He offered to put her down. She could return to the castle, which was a much more fitting thing to do than to go to look on, curiously, greedily, at these massacres and revels, as one views a tragedy over the footlights.

She made a pretence of smiling and jesting.

He did not wish witnesses of his chagrin and wrath as he fished his Marian from the midst of the brawl!

"You judge me wrongly," she said, "very wrongly," feigning concern, but still with a quizzing air. "I am as anxious as you to learn if this young girl has escaped the amorous fury of soldiers reputed as all that is tender and bold,—men superb and irresistible. Has she been able to resist? Has she succumbed? Will she extricate herself with simple rents in her clothing, get out of it with no further damage than her rumpled stomacher and a few embraces, the marks of which she can remove and which the oblivion of the sadnesses of the past will eventually efface?"

She finished her insinuating condolences just as, arrived at their destination, Bradwell threw himself from the vehicle, and Sir Edward did not doubt that she would do something to cause scandal. Her biting voice had just vibrated with the excessive, odious desire that Marian, violated, dishonored, polluted by the soldiery, would become for Richard, in spite of his love and on account of his love, the pitiable object of an insurmountable, eternal disgust.

And she arrived just in time to see the young girl escape, intact, the fate which she wished for her with all the strength of her hatred, and to know that,

but for Bradwell, this execrated rival would have suffered it or even met her death. Now, a communion would be established between the saviour and the saved in joy, tenderness, and gratitude!

She approached Richard, whom Treor's granddaughter was thanking effusively, while the soldier responsible for the affair struggled, resisted, questioning arrogantly this civilian intruder, without authority, who disturbed him in his pleasures. The arrival of Newington and his staff made an opportune diversion which allayed matters.

Sir Walpole gave the order: "To arms!" and willing or unwilling, the Britons massed themselves in line, turned away, casting surly glances at the women, and took up a position fifteen paces away, while the Duke called Lady Ellen to account for her imprudence.

To rush into this hubbub with such zeal, such impetuosity! It could not be curiosity alone. What other motive had she?

"Mercy, humanity!" replied the Duchess, impudently.

She had not seriously considered the risk of scandal; anger had pushed her on mechanically, and she congratulated herself on the event which had prevented her from going farther. Now it was better to meet this mischance courageously, and, to accomplish her ends, play—she who had accused Marian of comedy—this *role* of angel and of Providence.

"Mercy, humanity!" repeated the Duke, shrugging his shoulders: "I promise it to them. You have driven so fast that you have not been able to learn the news. The agitator, thanks to these fellows, has escaped."

"Ah!" said Lady Ellen.

"That is to say, thanks to them," resumed Newington, "the revolution which we should have decapitated in cutting off Harvey's head lives and breathes, though it had the miserable death-rattle in its throat and we should have crushed it under our feet, without difficulty, as one steps on a reptile whose venom-laden teeth have been broken. Clemency and humanity!

"We would have posted the head of the agitator on all the steeples by turns. His silent mouth would have preached submission after rebellion. If these madmen had lifted up their heads, they would have lowered them that they might not contemplate the picture. Ah! after two centuries, they dare to dispute our conquest, they demand the land. We will give it to them,—six feet each. In point of fact, they possessed it, and now wish to hold it, in common; we will bury them all in the same ditch!"

"Live the general!" yelled with a remarkable unanimity the company of Britons.

"Live the general!" growled also the Bunclodyans between their set teeth; but they added: "Provided it be not long!"

The trampled ground, the ragged, blood-stained garments on the backs of the Irish, certain uniforms slashed with knives told Newington of the gravity of the hand-to-hand conflict between the natives and the garrison, and he addressed warm compliments to these brave, heroic soldiers, the honor of the

army, of the nation, and the worthy, the noble supporters of the indefeasible rights ratified by the lives of their sires.

An explosion of hurrahs filled the air, and the echo, repeating them, deceived for an instant the Duke, who ordered all to be silent and listen.

Horsemen, sent out in pursuit of Harvey, were scouring the vicinity; he supposed that they had already caught the fugitive and were celebrating their success by shouts of triumph, and the disappointment stimulated his wrath to a second outburst.

Sir Edward questioned the sergeant, and the Duke, concluding that this riffraff of Bunclodyans, in league with the rebellion, were hiding the agitator, had slashed the soldiers of his monarch, and had this murder on their conscience, asserted that this passed all bounds, and, in order to punish them as well as to reward the faithful and devoted regiment of Ancient Britons, he, Horace William Newington, Duke of Montnorris, in the name of his very gracious sovereign George the Fourth, declared the village of Bunclody and the surrounding territory "outside of the King's peace!"

The neighboring mountains groaned under the weight of the uproar of hurrahs which broke forth anew, startling the eagles, the vultures lost in the depths of the sky, and drowning the request which Sir Bradwell was respectfully submitting to his father, to revoke this license, and try rather to win peace by persuasion, by mildness, by magnanimity.

Newington simply paid no attention.

Marian was leading Edith, who was completely overwhelmed, far away from her shanty, the ruins of which were still smoking, sad and funereal as a tomb in which she had laid away the ashes of all her own; but he ordered that she be taken back to the place of the disaster.

Inasmuch as her heart bled at the sentimental aspect of these ruins, well! let them keep her before them and let her exhaust her eyes with weeping. It was a happy inspiration that kept them from hanging her or roasting her in her own fire-place. From time to time moral torments would suggest themselves: these would contain more anguish, more suffering, than the other sort, and life itself, under certain circumstances, would become a Calvary more insupportable than the worst tortures.

Bradwell, leaning on Newington's saddle and taking his hand, begged him to show mercy. He spoke in a low voice that the pride of his father might not revolt against what the Duke might consider pressure upon and interference with the liberty of his soldier's will, or an infringement upon his authority.

He pleaded, as fruitlessly as Sergeant Autrun before the Britons, the innocence of Edith, in whose house had been found no trace of the agitator's stay.

What certainty was there, moreover, of the presence of Sir Harvey in the neighborhood?

On what evidence, what testimony, all this display of troops to track and arrest him? Perhaps the leader to whom they were attributing the insurrection had never even appeared in the region!

Lord Newington, as before, did not even wait for his son to finish. Disengaging his hand, he gave his orders.

The greater part of the company were to scatter themselves in squads about the village, entering houses and thoroughly searching them, sounding the walls and floors with the butt ends of their muskets, emptying closets, and running their bayonets through the coarse furnishings of all beds not occupied by invalids.

In all probability Harvey would not be found in these huts, but it was necessary to consider the possibility that, lacking the strength to fly, he had only sought a new hiding-place in the vicinity. And Newington, dismounting, and half believing in this hypothesis, left with his officers and soldiers to watch the operation, while four men brutally forced Edith to go back and station herself in front of the ruins of her house, where the black sparks, driven by the wind, fell upon her.

One of these men, whether by chance or by a change with a comrade and manoeuvre on his part, was the one from whom Bradwell had snatched Marian, and the young girl did not leave the poor woman whom they were treating roughly, pushing her ahead with their gun-barrels against her back. As she was on her knees and did not rise quickly enough, they lifted her by the hair.

"The cowards! the cowards!" cried Treor's granddaughter, interposing and receiving some of the thumps intended for the victim.

But the soldier in question advised them not to strike any more, as the blows would overwhelm the little one. He took her under his protection, the little dear, the pretty little dear, and in order that he might pay his addresses to her, he wished them to spare her old friend. He would be amiable, he would not act like a boor, but like a perfect and proper gentleman, like her rescuer, and he firmly hoped that she would be grateful to him, that he would not rue it, and that she would not make him wait too long.

Marian called her grandfather to her aid; they were dressing his wounds at the spring; she turned her eyes towards Richard to implore him anew, since she found herself defenceless, exposed to the ignoble gallantries of a wretch whom Newington's proclamation authorized to commit any attempt, any violence.

And Sir Bradwell, who asked nothing better than to interfere, approached, raised his fist, and opened his mouth to dismiss this scoundrel with the words: "Go, and never...." when the Duchess, placing herself between him and the soldier and clutching his arm, said to him furiously, but in a low voice:

"Hush! I want you to be still."

And before he could go on, she addressed herself to the Briton, and warned him against paying further attention to this young woman, today or ever, either by importuning her or by putting himself in her way.

"I am especially interested in her, and for any offence committed against her I will hold the guilty parties responsible, and will punish them severely and without mercy."

"Madame...!" stammered Marian, confused.

But Lady Ellen had already gone, dragging the nonplussed Richard with her, to whom she deigned to confess the secret of her generous conduct.

"Thank me, if you wish; in truth, I render you a never-to-be-forgotten service; the brute who had designs upon your Marian would have succeeded some day or other.... Do not protest.... Neither your big voice, nor your ill-usage, nor your vigilance could have averted the catastrophe. But all service merits reward; that which I ask is enormous,—your whole body, your whole mind, your whole desire. Far from me or near to me, I mean that you shall think of no others, that your heart shall beat for no others; that, even in dreams, you shall not see your Marian; your thoughts, your eyes, your lips, shall belong to me exclusively; you had given them to me, you have taken them again; now, you have no longer the right, for I have bought them of you."

"They are looking at us, they are listening," said Bradwell, disturbed.

"What do I care? Admitting that you may be wanting in scruples, that you, destitute of honor, may wish to be false to our contract, her gratitude assures me that she will not yield to you. I calculated on that when I covered her with my shield. She is my debtor; she owes me more than life: she owes me her honor, and she prizes it; the price which I demand of her is yourself! If, in spite of her kiss bestowed on Paddy, which was a token of her rupture with our race,—and it was that which it signified, was it not?—in spite of this act which I proclaim sublime, if nature should struggle in her to make her obey the attraction of her heart, of her senses,—for you are beautiful, Richard, you are desirable, and she loves you as surely as I love you!—and if gratitude should risk throwing her into your arms, well! she will be held by this consideration: 'Sir Bradwell is not free: he is Lady Ellen's lover.'"

"Speak lower, or, better still, cease to speak at all about these matters!"

"Though they should hear"...

"They do not need to hear; your animation, your feverishness, is enough to explain everything to the men, who are smiling and whispering."

"And to Marian, who is probably weeping. So much the better! I desire that she may have no doubts, that she shall be ignorant of nothing."

"But the world?"

"Well! sooner or later, will they not know when we are married?"

"Married! not tomorrow!"...

"Sooner than you think, perhaps"...

Newington returned in the midst of his staff, and in the humor of a hunter when he has found the bird flown.

He was storming and reminding his officers of the good time when famine weighed upon the country.

The poor died by thousands; they did not take the trouble to bury them, but simply, that they might not infect the air with their fetidness, levelled the walls of their huts over their putrefying bodies. Dens and bandits destroyed by the same blow, peace reigned for a decade in the island.

"We will try," said one of the perfumed officers, "to replace the famine and surpass it!"

"Married sooner than I think," said Sir Richard, solicitous, searching the brilliant eyes of his mistress for the meaning of this prediction.

"Yes," said she, "yes... soon."

"How so?" he asked, turning pale and refusing to see the dim light which was dawning on his mind, showing, in the near future, monstrous and impious scenes of murder.

"Is it not certain," she answered, feigning innocence, "that the Duke, who is sowing hatred, will reap the deadly fruits?"

"Yes, it was not only for the persecuted that I urged him to mildness, but in his own interests."

"Ah! really! in his own interests? I will remember the confession. It would determine me if I should hesitate "...

"At what?"...

"At anything."

"Ellen, you know something?"

"That Lord Newington provokes malediction upon him, and that some day it will show itself more effectively than by clamor or suppressed rage or idle appeals to heaven to punish him."

"You are aware of a plot against his life?"

"Which is more precious than my happiness, confess it, Richard! He does not disturb you, does he? You even find it convenient that he exists. It excuses you from passing all your time with me. See: be frank. You do not love me any more, you are tired of me, of my caresses..."

"I love you, but I do not wish..."

"That a whetted knife should pierce his heart, that an exasperated enemy should even now load his gun to punish him while at his work. By what right would you prevent justice from taking its course?"

Sir Bradwell, deaf to her arguments, approached his father; she forced him to stop, hanging on his arm, urging him not to go or to take her back to the carriage; they would depart.

"No, no," said he, trying to disengage himself, "Lord Newington is in danger, you are aware of it, your joy tells me so; it is my duty to warn him."

"Your duty as a son?"

"My duty as a man."

"On! because your duty as a son would be not to take me."

He removed her fingers, with which she was clutching his fore-arm so tightly as to dig into the muscles, and she began to complain. He hurt her, he

was bruising her joints, breaking her nails. She pulled off her glove quickly and showed him the blue marks, growing angry.

"You are as brutal as the Duke, there."

And treacherously, insidiously, exaggerating the facts to rouse and hold his jealousy, she began to tell him of the attempt to which she had been exposed on the part of her husband, in his apartments, the evening of the return of this Paddy Neill. In a passion, quite beside himself, a perfect madman in his paroxysm of sensual appetite, he expressed his desire to possess her, forthwith and henceforth, at his pleasure, forever.

"Oh, hush!" said Bradwell, starting.

He seized her delicate soft wrist, with its net-work of blue veins and contagious warmth. She gave a little cry, and, being set free, her bare hand glided into Richard's and doubled up there with a quivering caress, the fingers which he had just before been twisting now touching his skin softly and, as if playing on a magic key-board, sending through his whole being intoxicating sensations the intensely agitating effect of which was redoubled by the memory of radiant hours in the past.

A mist formed before his eyes, hiding Treor's granddaughter, and, in the place of that chaste face, numerous visions of Ellen were outlined, tender, wanton, voluptuous, exciting: his ears filled with a murmur of far-off music, which completed his subjugation.

Lord Newington was mounting his horse, he threw him a malicious glance, with bloodshot eyes, yet, nevertheless, suddenly, in a gleam of reason and cool judgment, started to run to him, calling out to him to look out for his safety.

The Duchess held him energetically, whispering with a terrible fluttering of her heart.

"You wish, then, to be killed in his place, or with him?"

At the same instant the report of a rifle rang out from the neighboring underbrush, and a ball whistled through the air, passing over the heads of the pedestrians, who greeted it with surprise.

No more whistling; it had reached its aim, and Lady Ellen stood by Newington, who said very calmly, as he settled himself in his saddle:

"They fired at me!"

His cap had fallen to the ground; the Duchess feverishly picked it up; the projectile had pierced the crown, and consequently had not touched the Duke, or, at most, had grazed his skull.

"Clumsy Casper!" she murmured. "This is all to do over again."

Officers and soldiers collected around the Duke, questioning him eagerly, and Bradwell inquired anxiously if his father was wounded.

"Not even scratched! not even grazed!"

No matter! They must not let this audacious attempt go unpunished and must show themselves more skilful than the assassin and not miss their mark.

Sir Walpole leading, twenty Britons entered the woods, uttering threats at every step of the way, with their bayonets lowered, and Sir Bradwell, in his bewilderment, joined them.

"Stay here," begged the Duke, "or, better still, take Lady Ellen home."

The Duchess refused.

"No," she said, simulating deep emotion, "I fear too much a new attack: I will return only with you, my lord."

Nevertheless she clung to Richard, and now, at Newington's entreaty, pushed her lover towards the vehicle, meeting no resistance from him. He was undecided, vacillating, demoralized, reproached himself for not joining in the soldiers' search, and, at the same time, trembled at the thought of aiding in the arrest of the poor devil, whether he were an avenger of Ireland's wrongs or an accomplice of the Duchess who might denounce her in order to save himself and escape the responsibility of his crime.

They got into the vehicle, and had nearly reached Cumslen-Park, when, in the forest behind them, they heard a frightful concert of furious yells of savage vengeance and cries of sharp pain, interrupted by vehement vociferations.

Lady Ellen experienced a brief feeling of weakness,—a desire not to enter the castle, but to go with Richard far away, abroad. But, perceiving the gelder going along quietly by the side of the road, twirling a stick in his fingers, and watching the confusion of clouds in the heavens brushing against each other like sheep, she reassured herself, breathing a sigh of relief.

The Britons, nevertheless, had captured some one on whom their blows were raining, and who was struggling boldly, obstinately, without weapons, against muskets, bayonets, and sabres.

In the first impulse of the discovery, the soldiers were going to kill him; but Sir Walpole had opposed it. Dead, the prisoner could not name his accomplices or disclose any of the things which it might be for their interest to know and of which they were now kept in ignorance, since Casper, viewed with suspicion by his coreligionists, no longer attended their secret councils.

But if they did not massacre him completely, they spared him neither blows, nor cuts, nor gashes, nor deep wounds. All over his body, wherever the wounds would not endanger some vital organ, they riddled him.

They plunged their bayonets into his flesh, legs, thighs, and trunk, and, using their muskets as clubs, showered blows upon his shoulder-blades, sides, and very powerful neck.

Why, then, did he resist? He railed at them; he seized the barrels of the guns and wrenched them from the hands of his cowardly aggressors; and by furious parrying, executed with as much skill as force, he cleared the ground about him, till a surprise from the rear put him again in check.

They called out to him to surrender, and he stoutly refused.

Surrender! On what ground? For what crime, what misdeed, what offence? For having fired at Lord Newington. And with what? He had no firearms. He had thrown away his gun? Let them show it to him, then.

"Here it is," said a Briton, who had remained in the rear, and who now ran up brandishing a hunting rifle, all warm yet, almost smoking.

"It is not mine!" said the captive..

In spite of his energetic denial, they would not believe him. In vain did he affirm that he would acknowledge the rifle if it were his, that he would accept the responsibility of the act with which they reproached him if he were really the author; they put no faith in his declarations.

"Hold," said he, to convince the incredulous, "I approve the attempt; did it succeed? No? I regret it. Ireland would have been rid of an odious despot. There you have a confession which is as much as my life is worth: shoot me; but that I have discharged a ball at Newington is not true!"

And, in the midst of the bandits' gnashing of teeth, of the insults which they threw in his face and of the blows which he could no longer parry, beginning to give out, he added:

"It was not I who shot at him; I am a better shot, and I would not have missed my good man."

All the time executing him with cruel punches, they drove and dragged him towards the village square, where Newington, hearing the tumult, called out to them to hurry themselves, and even to hurry the criminal into eternity. What need of sparing him? Why should they keep him alive? That his resistance might encourage others to imitate him, that he might pronounce last words which his comrades would engrave upon their hearts and repeat like those religious phrases that make martyrs.

None of these tomfooleries: death without phrases from the dying. Were they, perchance, so simple as to pretend to try him! Go to! death at once!

The prisoner emerged from the woods.

"Arklow!" cried the Irish.

"My husband!" said Edith, who sprang toward him so suddenly that the soldiers could hardly hold her.

"Kill him then!" commanded Newington.

And, obeying this abominable order, notwithstanding the clamor of unutterable horror from the inhabitants and the superhuman cry of protest which leaped from the breast of the poor woman, the savages, joyous, drunk with carnage, buried their bayonets at will, at pleasure, in the body of the old sailor.

They stabbed everywhere, but especially in those parts which they had at first been compelled to respect,—in the stomach, in the throat, in the face, and the implacable bayonets kept on in their work upon the corpse stretched upon the ground, with extended arms, in pools of blood which did not dry up.

The intestines exuded from the yawning abdomen; through the holes could be seen the heart.

"Cowards! ruffians!" repeated Edith.

And, kneeling down close to the dead, she turned aside the bayonets which cut her hands; she received thrusts in the back, mingling with her tears her blood in that of the victim of this most monstrous of murders.

"Enough!" ordered the Duke; and the lieutenant cried out again in the ears of his men, as if they were deaf: "Enough! enough!" perfectly furious at being forced to approach so near, in order to be heard, as to soil his boots in the red puddles which transformed the earth into a disgusting marsh.

More than the command of the general and the order accompanied by blows from Sir Walpole, the thunder of imprecations hurled at them by the Bunclodyans, who were advancing, sullen and exasperated, determined them to leave Arklow.

They turned upon the inhabitants, and, without waiting for instructions, before Newington had finished inviting them to "charge this herd," they pounced upon them, bounded on them like lions and tigers, roaring as if starving for human flesh, sniffing the odor of the blood which was flowing and for which they seemed thirsty. Balls flew; they ended by creating a panic; and, completely routed, the Bunclodyans, covered with wounds, their limbs broken, hurriedly picking up those who had fallen, re-entered their houses. And Marian and Treor, carried away in the whirlwind, in spite of themselves, abandoned Edith.

"Sentinels at the end of every lane," ordered the Duke, "and, at the opening of the first door or window, fire! fire! Fire! all the cartridges in the cartridge-boxes! and, if necessary, set fire to the dens and smoke out the animals within like foxes."

When all was quiet in the houses, and peace appeared established for the time, the Duke began to think about getting home, in order first to reassure the Duchess, and then to empty some bottles over the fortunate stranding of the attempt made upon his life, which his officers were still complimenting him upon having escaped.

But he had not gone far before he met the maledictions of Edith, still on her knees by the side of the dear dead body.

She straightened up, haggard, horrible, her face all bloody from the close embraces she had lavished on the dead, and, instantly, turned into a Fury, she leaped at the bridle of Newington's horse; he let his hunting-whip fall on her, lacerating her face, and, putting spurs to his beast, he overthrew the crazed woman, who cried out to him:

"I will avenge myself, and my vengeance will be terrible."

He broke into a trot, disdainful; she lifted herself, ran a few steps in pursuit of him, and then, with a last harsh virulent anathema in which there was a sound of prophecy, she faithfully resumed her pious post by the assassinated man, praying, now in despair, now in revolt, growing exhausted, shivering in anger, blaspheming heaven, shaken by sobs, or agitated by a frenzied desire for retaliation.

Long hours passed in these alternations, and the twilight came, enveloping all objects with its soft penumbra; but though ordinarily it calms the suffering of mortals, it did not lessen the terrors of the sad widow's distress.

Reports broke the silence at intervals, and doleful cries rose in consequence of the terror inspired by the soldiers. Edith did not move, entirely absorbed in her own affliction, telling over and over the same mournful story punctuated with sobs.

"They have murdered him! His whole body is but a rag, tatters of flesh. His mouth, stretched by the breaking of his teeth, is the smallest hole in his good and holiest face. His heart hangs from his breast, and, if I did not watch over it, the dogs and wolves would run to eat it. Ah! Newington! Oh! the ruffians who perpetrate for him these nameless crimes! Driven out of our shanties which they burn, killed, assassinated, our bodies left in the open air, we shall fail of our revenge!"

Wrought up to the highest pitch and springing up like a sudden apparition, erect and in an attitude for a sculptor, extending her arm tragically in the direction of the castle windows, which were now joyously lighted, she called on death, misery, all the miseries of humanity and all its shames, to fall upon this execrated place.

"In the fury of battle, may war overthrow the cursed stones, may an avenging hand consign it to the glaring flames, and may its guests perish in agonies like the most cruel, the most refined torments of hell!"

Treor tried once more to go to her, calm her grievous frenzy, and offer her his dwelling as a haven of rest and her dead the hospitality of a shroud. Several balls flattened themselves simultaneously against the walls, falling all around him or cutting the branches of the trees over his head, and Marian appeared on the threshold of their house to follow him, for he did not draw back. The soldiers rushed at them, drove them back with the force of a waterspout, and a sentinel planted himself before the house. At the first word of parleying, he would recall his comrades, and they would sack the dwelling.

So Edith watched the dead man alone, in the open air, in the night, without the light of a candle. The stars! they shone alike and without reluctance upon the assassins and the victim, as indifferent to heroism and abnegation as to the horrors of the unspeakable crime. The blood of the oppressed did not splash the purity of the sky; the smoke of the huts of the poor which the tyrants had burned did not sully its vault of stainless blue.

Even God, in his Paradise, his saints, his son, the mother of his son, and the angels and archangels,—the whole celestial world remained unmoved by the persecutions endured by the humble, by the weak; the great of earth and the great of heaven held each other by the hand, and those above would allow no punishment to fall on those below.

Or else the priests lied, the heavens were desperately empty, as she had seen old churches, unless the blacksmith was right. He claimed that Joseph of Arimathea and Mary and Mary Magdalene had made a mistake, consciously or

unconsciously, and that, taken down instead of Jesus, raised from the dead, borne aloft to heaven, and seated triumphantly at the right hand of God, the wicked thief governed men and favored his fellow-thieves, implacably hostile to honesty, to virtue, to all praiseworthy acts and sentiments!

In any case, they could count only on themselves for vengeance!

To think that her Arklow lay on the bare ground, and that they refused a decent pallet on which to stretch him! She lacked even a vessel to fetch water with which to wash from his face the blood which was drying upon it. Tomorrow, would they still bar all friendly doors? Who could tell? Perhaps they would even oppose the burial of the dead, but leave the body to decompose under the eyes of the public, for the sake of the example, to impress their imaginations, to terrorize. Ah! the impious! Ah! the sacrilegious! Ah! the wild beasts! Lord Newington, his officers, and his soldiers also, were simply so much mud and filth, formed and kneaded with bits of rock which served them as hearts!

She filled at the spring the hollow of her joined hands; the water flowed between her fingers; she soaked her handkerchief; it reddened instantly; and her journeys to the spring had to be repeated frequently. When Arklow's face, after long bathing, was clean, the poor woman could see still better than before the depth, the multiplicity, the hideousness of the wounds which the veil of coagulated blood had hidden to some extent, and her frenzy for retaliation again took possession of her, imperative and irresistible.

Groaning, turning over plans in her burning brain, she ran to her hut, and, from the mass of rubbish, seized an enormous stone, which she raised without effort and brandished at arm's length in the air, as easily as the Hercules of a fair. Now she would crush the English, as many of them as she might meet,—one, two, three, ten, twenty,—as long as her strength lasted and as she could herself escape from the rage of the others who would defend themselves.

Just then, in the darkness which the stars dimly lighted, a soldier in the red uniform approached. Ah! this one first. Heaven—surely there was one—sent him. Rapidly, silently, she went close up to him, without his hearing her steps, and, with a fury of savage satisfaction, she dealt him a terrible blow on the head with the immense rock, which, bounding off, dug for itself a bed in the earth.

The soldier fell without a word, without a cry; and in a transport of ferocious joy, Edith called witnesses with all the power of her voice, in which still vibrated deep-rooted, indestructible hatred!

"I have killed in my turn!" she exclaimed, emphatically, exultantly. "Come and see, Irishmen, I have begun the work of vengeance. Come and see, Englishmen, it is one of yours who this time measures on the ground the length of his grave!"

Swallowing their orders, abandoning their posts, the Britons crowded around, threatening, swearing, promising, in the absence of a magnificent funeral, to lay a thick carpet of blood to the cemetery for the procession to walk upon, and behind them a part of the population, curious but timid, fearing for themselves and for Edith the frightful consequences of her act.

"Make room there!" ordered the lieutenant, whose way they were obstructing, and who was accompanied by the corporal and a man provided with a lantern.

"Yes, let him come," said Edith, "and judge my work!"

The ranks opened; the light falling on the soldier on the ground, they saw that he was young in spite of his skin browned by an Eastern sun, and the widow bending suddenly, cried out, bewildered, overwhelmed by the crushing weight of the stunning coincidence:

"Michael! my son! it is my Michael!"

Then she bent over the mouth of the dying man, and feeling the breath, which still came, though spasmodically, she began to take hope.

"His heart beats," said the corporal, who, unfastening the vest, had slipped his hand under the shirt.

"In that case, lift him up!" ordered Sir Walpole, "and take him to the castle; he is a deserter!"

CHAPTER VI.

At Cumslen Park, notwithstanding the gravity of events, notwithstanding the alarms, the summary executions, the exemplary chastisements, the revenges waited for at the corners of the roads, the Duchess did not give up the pleasures of hunting which each autumn renewed, and which were followed by gala dinners, brilliant receptions, fancy dress balls, masquerades, comedies acted by the guests of the castle, in imitation of those customary in France, in the residences of the nobility and at court, under the reign of the unfortunate Louis the Sixteenth.

The parties of invited guests succeeded each other more gaily and noisily than in preceding years, this being due, with some, to the certainty of conquest which they felt, and, with others, to nervous excitement, the necessity of forgetting themselves, of stunning themselves into insensibility, of stifling under bursts of mad laughter the groans and moans of the persecuted, the harsh and frightful curses of the exasperated.

Every second day came hunts for hares, foxes, and deer, mad, tumultuous, dangerous runs across woods and plains, over steep mountain sides, along perpendicular descents, by the side of abysses into which a single false step or a stone rolling under a horse's hoof would hurl you headlong, torn by the brushwood and the ragged rocks, and at the bottom of which, though luckily benumbed by the fall, you would surely suffer fracture of your bones or skull, sudden and unrelenting death.

But with the intoxicating flourish of trumpets and the eager barking of dogs, the danger in the excitement, the emulation involved in the sport, only added to the pleasure; the giddiness bordered on intoxication.

To all these ordinary attractions the first hunt, signalized three weeks before by a sort of incidental death-dance, had added an unexpected excitement and the most piquant relish.

Breaking cover behind the deer on the square of Bunclody, the huntsmen had fallen upon the crowd of inhabitants collected around Arklow's coffin, which the priest obstinately refused to bless, barricading the door of the church so that the body could not be brought in.

His resistance had lasted two days; he yielded neither to the peaceful negotiations which they proposed, nor to supplications, nor to virulent denunciations, though pestilential odors were arising from the bier placed in front of the door, which the Irish were determined not to put into the ground without a bit of a prayer and the sprinkling of holy water.

They were bent on this less from religious scruples than from obstinacy, indignation at seeing their priest, like a Protestant pastor, make common cause with the oppressors and signify to them categorically that he would revoke his decision only on condition that they would abjure their damnable vow to liberate Ireland.

Edith took no part in the quarrel. Her mind was divided between the corpse and the prisoner at the castle, her Michael, of whose fate she was ignorant, and whose future haunted her like a torturing nightmare. She kept silent in consternation, now fixing her eyes on the catafalque and now turning them, wandering, moist, and full of anguish, in the direction of Cumslen Park.

A neighbor beseeched her to express herself in favor of renouncing the divine service and proceeding to burial. Edith scandalized her by her indifference; in reality, she preferred this delay, which prolonged the sojourn of the dead upon earth, and postponed the heart-rending moment of the last parting, the parting for ever.

Reaching this dramatic scene before the others, the Duchess kept the impression of the terrible picture which struck her; the gloomy lookers-on, angry and at last out of patience, determined upon a sterner policy; the inconsolable widow, the heart-broken mother, with her sinister and haggard face, lost in the immensity of her double affliction; the humble black pall, on which was embroidered the blessed shamrock; the bier, which the dense smoke of the resinous torches flaming at its four corners wrapped in funereal crape; and the worm-eaten wooden door of the church under the tottering porch, worn by the centuries, which in its modest simplicity assumed gigantic proportions, symbolizing the pitiless strictness and hopeless narrowness of an illiberal and morose religion.

Under the pressure of the mass frightened by the irruption of the chase, by the huntsmen blowing their horns, by the pack yelling as if possessed, by the horses piling upon each other or rearing in the hands of their riders or Amazons, suddenly the disjointed planks of this obstinate door burst apart, the crowd entered, and, with the surge, the coffin, lifted by ready hands amid a cry of triumph.

And while the huntsmen pursued their mad course, plunging into the woods, in the fury of the "who-hoop!" now close at hand, Lady Ellen stationed herself with some amateurs in sight of the tragedy going on within the church.

A unanimous chorus called the priest to his altar, summoned him to ascend and then come down, mumbling his litanies for the repose of the dead.

As he did not obey, as the messengers returned from the sacristy and the presbytery only to report that the priest, seized with fear, had disappeared, the wrath of the people was let loose, filling the arches of the church with angry blasphemies.

The uproar had turned into brutal manifestations; the more turbulent were tearing up the pews and striking the flag-stones with them, still calling for the priest, when a happy inspiration averted the rising tempest.

Paddy and his comrades lifted Treor on the steps of the altar, inviting him to take the priest's place, give the absolution, and preside at the obsequies. Consulting the assembly, the old Irishman received its permission; and immediately, amid the general hush, a silence which Father Richmond would never have obtained, he officiated, very soberly, in his own way, speaking the orisons, simple, touching, and grand, in the national tongue.

Approaching on her horse, Lady Ellen herself, under the influence of the general emotion, had forgotten to rejoin the hunt.

For several days she appeared thoroughly absorbed by the thought of this imposing scene, and then had done everything to forget it.

The representative, plastic, artistic, poetic side of the drama vanished, to leave with her, by day and by night, only the memory of the funeral trappings, which she seemed to see, the torches, the coffin, and the corpse, the fetid and lingering odor of which would not leave her, in spite of the perfumes with which she saturated her clothes and deluged her soft, rose-colored, silken skin.

Little by little, however, the impression was dissipated in the distraction of incessant merry-making, and now her one passion preoccupied her: she considered only how she could gratify it freely, and was happy at the thought of the approaching renewal of hostilities, which would necessitate long journeys to the other end of the province on the part of Newington.

His return the week before, alas! and his presence at the castle irritated her, and she had had several secret interviews with Casper.

She had had one that same morning; and after the cold quarry which had just been given in the court, between rows of footmen covered, like reliquaries, with liveries crusted with gold, each holding flaming torches, the guests left the balconies, threading the hall, which was illuminated and garlanded with foliage, and discussed the accident which the Duke had escaped by a miracle.

His horse, becoming suddenly frightened, shot off like an arrow, ran, flew like the wind, like a hurricane, so fast that Newington, though well in his saddle and, as usual, master of himself, could not check him.

The animal directed his steps, at an infernal rate, towards a precipice that was almost perpendicular, and two minutes later would have fallen fifty feet.

But all at once, quieting down, he slackened his pace, obeyed the bit, and gracefully turned his back upon the yawning gulf.

Lord Newington, for the twentieth time, explained how the accident happened: a fragment of blackthorn, introduced under the saddle, suddenly pierced the horse's flank like a pitiless spur, thrusting itself in deeper at each of the animal's bounds and cruelly and continually accelerating his painful speed. Then the point broke off, and, sliding over a bone, became fixed in a horizontal position, harmless and of no effect.

"In leaping a hedge," concluded the Duke, "I might have detached a thorn."

"Pardon me! pardon me!" said the sharp voice of a new arrival, Tom Lichfield, on whom all eyes were turned, surprised or scandalized.

He bowed obsequiously first in one direction and then in the other, and stepped up to the master of the house, who extended his hand and familiarly wished him welcome.

"Pardon me," repeated he. "Your honor makes a mistake—out of charity, doubtless—in not adding this to the offences of these rascals of Irishmen. Be sure of it: this was one of their tricks, and I, for my part, attribute the device to that monkey, that ugly monkey, Paddy Neill."

The big Englishman bore Paddy a grudge for making him lose Harvey, and was glad to make Newington suspect him. In support of his insinuation, which was almost as formal as an accusation, he told the story of the pranks played by the young rascal upon himself, who had been caught, as an old fox up to all sorts of tricks is sometimes caught by a hen. And, right in the middle of the race, slap! he sprawled upon the ground, in a way that did not often happen to him, his nose flattened and his stomach compressed like a fire balloon in distress. They laughed, but he went on:

"My tormentor had suddenly bent down and, with a neat trip, sent me to kiss his foot-prints, as he said, railing at me... I tried to rise, he rode on my back; I tried to call out, he gagged me. Struggle? Admirably tied up, better than a package to go to the East Indies, he dragged me over the ground among the stones and briers. I steeled myself against the pain, but suddenly there came a fright worse than the suffering; I found myself suspended at the end of a branch which bent under my weight over a deep pool of water, and the rascal advised me not to gesticulate, but to free myself from my bonds and regain my freedom of circulation. Otherwise, the branch, which he had slightly cut for this purpose, would detach itself from the paternal trunk and plunge me into the bosom of the water."

The hearty laughs which greeted his recital were on the increase, although some of the noble guests maintained their reserve, scowling at this insignificant personage so out of place in their company: such, for instance, as Lord Jennings, Sir Muskery, and my Lady Carlingford, puffed up with their quarters, their heraldries, their interminable genealogies, made famous by as many mean as glorious acts on fields of battle.

"In the bosom of the water... water which I should have drunk for the first and the last time if my clerk, roaming about either in search of me or to hide himself, had not come to my rescue."

They had been expecting new turns, more comical, more complicated, and at any rate prolonged, and the hilarity died out before this commonplace *denouement* of an adventure, amusing in itself, but which called for a progressive succession of comicalities.

And the groups which had gathered for an instant about the narrator, broke up, dispersed, questioning the excuse for the presence of as humble an individual at this party.

Withdrawing into a corner of the window, the Duke and the merchant talked in an undertone: Tom Lichfield, very voluble, half-closing his eyes, lavish of his gestures; Newington, interested, attentive, silent, taking passing notes of the information.

"You see," said Lord Jennings, with a bad grace, to my Lady Carlingford, "this cask set upon feet is a spy. Really, the Duke ought to spare us contact with such people."

"Do not despise Tom Lichfield," comically interrupted the giddy Miss Lucy Hobart, even giddier than usual, speaking disjointedly, wagging her delicate head, her eyes surrounded by deep circles reaching to the cheek-bones, her face as white as porcelain or a pearl-shell, and smiling without cause.

"Why?" asked the antique Lord Muskery, who never lost an opportunity to try to talk with her, pursing up his lips, and from whom she rebelliously fled before he, with his stiff old legs, could ever get to her!

"Because he is a magician!...."

"He!" gasped Muskery.

"Do you not see," resumed the young girl, "that I am under the charm? I step more lightly than a phantom, than the clouds, than a zephyr. My soul is divested of its flesh, of its rags."

"If one can so blaspheme the corolla of the most beautiful of flowers!" said the amorous septuagenarian, in an effort to be gallant.

"My wish is my law. I traverse space, I visit the infinite, just by wishing it."

"She is getting deranged!" exclaimed, wrinkling her withered mouth, my Lady Carlingford, near whom yelped a King Charles spaniel, with long silken hair that swept the carpet.

"No, I have been eating hasheesh," replied the delightful child; "Lichfield, this dear Lichfield, whom you despise, was kind enough to give me some."

But, while applying the most amiable adjectives to the big merchant, Lady Hobart, looking at him attentively, suddenly began to laugh, without any reserve, without any modesty, without any deference to "cant," shocking the prudery of a half-dozen ladies on the wane, puzzling the others, and annoying her near friends.

At dinner, it had been remarked that she ate very little. And it was not that she had been drinking: she barely moistened her lips with the sherry and claret which circulated around the table.

At all events, Lichfield did not cease to delight her; she unceremoniously pointed him out with her finger in the most unseemly way, and stooped, like a woman of the people, in order to enjoy in greater comfort the appearance of the merchant, whose legs, she pretended, were wasting away, while his head shriveled up like a little appendage of twisted wood.

Taken as a whole, he resembled, in fact, an immense pumpkin which all at once began to move in its native garden, rolled under the impulse of its own weight, and laid the vegetables around it flat on the ground, like ninepins.

The vegetables, into which the personages present were transformed, she named as fast as the ridiculous ball struck them: the Duke, a scarlet beet; Lord Muskery, a poor cabbage which had sprung up, all gnarled; Jennings, a hip-shot carrot; Lady Drowling, a bearded celery plant; and my Lady Carlingford, pitted with the small-pox, appeared to her like the watering-pot of a kitchen-gardener.

What a hue and cry on the part of those at whom the galleries were laughing, what disagreeable replies, what harsh recriminations, and what unreserved good humor on the part of the simple spectators, who urged the frolicsome miss not to stop, but to carry her play to the end!

For they imagined that she was feigning incoherence to amuse herself and entertain the guests; that it was only one of her thousand customary jokes.

But no: Lichfield admitted having given her—at her request—some hasheesh, as she called it, intoxication in a bonbon, happiness in a preserve, paradise in a pill.

"The intoxication of a cook, the happiness of a gardener, the paradise of Saint Fiacre!" fumed the Carlingford.

"Oh! I admit it," said Lichfield; "the first phase of the ingestion manifests itself in absurd visions, talk without head or tail, odd sensations, but the following phases transport you into a world exalted, beautified, sublimated; then follows ecstacy."

Rambling more and more, her eyes on fire, Miss Hobart, humming a tune, began to oscillate, and some of the gentlemen hastened to support her and lead her slowly into a *boudoir,* while, in the drawing-rooms, they censured her imprudence, and especially the culpable compliance of Tom, who, taken to task directly by several ladies, tried to excuse himself, affirming on his honor, as the worshipped head of Mrs. Lichfield, that Miss Hobart had forced him to it.

"Moreover, she will recover from it easily; it will only be an insignificant fatigue which the repose of a night and another morning will dissipate."

But why did he peddle this drug? Newington invited the merchant to explain to his guests.

"Lichfield," said he, "has based a whole governmental system on the use, by peoples, of this marvellous paste."

"Just the same as the use—and abuse, of course—of whiskey, opium, strong liquors,.... holidays and.... women in other countries. A king of France, who spoke wisely and whose name was Louis, had a sovereign recipe for reigning tranquilly, without quarrel or opposition to his will: 'Divide.' 'Stupefy' is still more efficacious."

"Very good!" came from several quarters, in the midst of an intense flattering murmur.

"Hasheesh," he continued, "produces prostration in its last stages. The whole Orient has reached that point. We will bring the Irish there, once this insurrection closes, so that in them may never again spring up the germ of future rebellions."

The voices of assent redoubled, warm and enthusiastic.

"In the present crisis," concluded he, "adroitly distributed among the disinherited, skilfully mixed with the tobacco for their pipes, which so often take the place of bread, the insidious hasheesh, by weakening their courage, relaxing their nerves, and benumbing their conscience, will aid us more than regiments, better than cannon, more surely than torture, to subdue the rebels, and all this without striking a single blow, without wearying ourselves with battles..."

Squarely, the delicate hands of the Lords applauded as if they would raise the roof, and, above the din of these frantic bravos, Tom finished his tirade:

"Without being tormented at our repasts by the trumpets or in our starry dreams by the noise of musketry."

"And at the same time realizing agreeable profits," concluded sharply, but not without good sense, Lady Carlingford, who was not disposed to allow undisputed triumph to this merchant, to whom she owed a grudge, to say nothing of his inferior station.

The laughers promptly went over to her side; but Lichfield, whose want of tact, in his eagerness to enjoy the incense of victory, had exposed him to this thrust, had already retired with Newington to the recess of the window, where they held mysterious consultation.

Muskery, in the absence of the object of his flame, displayed his senile graces to the Duchess, who, though forced to listen to him, kept her rosy ear open to the words of Lichfield and her husband, enabling her to hear the merchant say:

"I did not reveal to the company one detail of my disaster which concerns you alone, and which demands secresy in order that you may profit by it. I believe that I know the author of the attempt to murder you."

He lowered his voice, and Lady Ellen feared that she would hear no more.

Fortunately the Duke, in his surprise at the revelation, repeated almost aloud the name uttered in a whisper:

"Casper!"

"Positively," affirmed the big Englishman. "My gag did not blind me, and I recognized perfectly this unlicked cub who passed close by my tree, a little after the shot to which you were exposed. He was muttering and lengthening his

steps, I beg you to believe, turning from time to time to assure himself that he was not pursued."

"He simply apprehended, doubtless, the danger that his presence in the woods might cause him to be confounded with the guilty one."

"Not at all; here is proof that he was the criminal: he smelt of his feet and shook his big nose. Certainly they tainted the dust; he bathed them carefully in a pool of water, in which he also washed his face, on account of the flash of the pan, of which his right cheek probably still kept the odorous trace."

"Oh! in his natural perfume," said the Duke, "it would have been difficult to discern. However it may be, I risk nothing by questioning him. I will give myself that pleasure directly. Ah! he would play a double game; he will lose, I charge myself with that, my gelder; if I convince myself of your guilt, I will force you to exercise upon yourself the cruel talents of your trade."

The Duchess blushed slightly, crowning the felicity of the poor Muskery. Might he not impute to the tender warmth of his words the carmine which so exquisitely colored the face of the lady of the castle, and her hasty flight?

"She fears me!" said he, merrily.

He was not the less disconsolate because of her retreat and was preparing to pursue her, but he encountered Miss Lucy, who reentered as the Duchess left, and attached himself to the young girl.

The brown halo which encircled her eyes had developed still more, feeding now on her face, and her pupils flamed like candles; she walked like a somnambulist, listening afar off and directing her steps towards Newington.

"You do not hear, then?" said she, with astonishment, and a marked dash of reproach in her voice.

"What, miss?"

"Why, this woman at the door, who begs that it be opened in order that she may speak with you."

"A woman! What woman?"

"Edith Arklow."

And Lucy, half-opening the window, added:

"She is giving an account of herself for the tenth time, in order that they may describe her to you. Are you not moved to pity?"

"My ear is a little more lazy than yours," said the Duke, "and I hear no woman at the door, not at all."

"Nor I, nor any one!" said Lady Carlingford: "however, Miss Hobart, having ears a little larger than the average "...

"Under the influence of hasheesh," interrupted Lichfield, "the perspicacity of the senses increases in an extraordinary fashion, and I am strongly inclined to believe that the young lady is not deceived in the least."

"It is really so," said Sir Walpole, coming in; "it is the mother of the soldier; she begs to see her son Michael, and insists on soliciting your grace for authority to do so."

"Humbly?"

"Absolutely flat, weeping, with clasped hands; a little more, and she would be on her knees."

"Perfect!" said the Duke, preserving a stately composure. "Then, let them set the dogs on her!"

The effect, which he foresaw, was enormous.

They were imagining him touched by the request, the attitude of submission of the widow, and this sally, abruptly disconcerting their conjectures, excited their applause. He finished by joining in the general gayety which his barbarous order, formulated under such conditions, suggested.

Nevertheless, the evening grew tiresome. The stage erected in the hall continued to await the orchestra of the usual balls, the musicians belonging to which usually arrived at Cumslen Park the evening before, thus being able to rehearse fully the pieces of their *repertoire* and to give the necessary attention to such indispositions or colds as they had taken on the way.

But this time they had not appeared. Had they deserted the cause of those who always paid them generously? All of them being English, from the fife to the big drum, there was no reason to suspect that. No, indeed: the natives, those frightful natives, those savages, were massacring them perhaps at that very hour to teach them to amuse the enemy, to make him dance on the tombs of his victims. And condolences flew through space to these poor men who deserved well of their country.

"They have not massacred them," said Lucy Hobart, still at the window. "Look down there, on Blue Cloud Hill, among that mass of bright lights. Do you perceive the swarming, moving, fluttering multitude? Now, listen, listen: the word is given, the dances are beginning."

And, in truth, the wind brought, by puffs, bits of gay airs, to which the guests of the Duchess swayed their bodies and moved their heads, envying the peasants whom the gentlemen rudely cursed, talking of getting astride of their horses and running to plunge this ball of boors into an abyss from which they would not rise again to exult over the farce played upon those long shanks of the castle.

With the aid of glasses they could see them well, wheeling, dancing, in high spirits; and, when the piece was finished, in full chorus they turned towards Cumslen-Park, and, in that direction letting fly jests which they naturally did not explain, but the meaning of which could be imagined, they bombarded the guests with mocking hurrahs, sufficiently significant. They had intercepted the orchestra, and were using it in the face of the people for whom it was destined; this trick amused them enormously.

Several young ladies and almost all the young girls proposed that they should not be angry or sulky over this joke. In a carriage or on horseback, how long would it take to make the journey? In their opinion, this was the most sensible way of taking this piece of mischief. The Duchess? They called for the Duchess that she might approve this resolution and give orders accordingly.

They called her, they sought her in vain, and, willing or unwilling, they had to resign themselves to remaining; after all the airs of the English *repertoire,* the musicians were now beginning on those of the Irish *repertoire,* selecting the most characteristic, those having the most local color, and those considered seditious.

"To the harp!" they said to Lady Jennings.

And Lady Carlingford offered to play the instrument in place of Lucy, who persisted in leaning on her elbows at the window.

She perceived in the thick darkness of the court a singular movement of two united shadows: the one unsteady, heavy, staggering painfully along; the other slender, light, impatient, leading the way and hurrying as fast as possible, though evidently not making satisfactory progress.

And in spite of a dark hooded cloak which covered the latter, falling over her face and almost entirely concealing it, the young Lucy was not deceived; it was Lady Ellen, whom they had just been calling; as for her companion, it was an unclean individual, groaning under his fat, and basely polluted by the traces of a drunkenness now going through the phase of dull, disgusting idiocy, wallowing nausea, the swinish phase.

Nevertheless, Lucy Hobart saw very clearly all that passed between the young woman, elegant, superb, perfumed, and the hiccoughing, vomiting blackguard.

He staggered, held on to her skirt, and leaned on her delicate arm, which did not bend, stiffened to prevent an untimely fall on the pavement where the dogs, quarreling over the smeared bones of a stag, had left slimy tracks in which their feet slipped.

Leaning over him, without haughtiness, without apparent repulsion, the Duchess begged her filthy companion to hasten his steps in order to save himself from the vindictiveness of Newington, who knew all,—the two attempts on his life, that of the woods and that of the hunt,—and was preparing to make him pay dear for them, very dear!

Tired with walking, exhausted with hurrying, blowing like a seal, he brutally recriminated. By whom had he been driven to murder? By her! It belonged then to the Duchess to save him; it did not concern him; let them clear it up! If the Duke molested him, he would say: "Lay it to your wife!"

"Nothing more just, Casper," confessed the proud, irritable Duchess, who humbled herself, assumed a milder tone, and flattered with delightful cajolery the adipose, thick-skinned, filthy-souled monster.

At the same time, she coaxingly invited him to hurry, nevertheless. He would not regret it. She would put him forever beyond the reach of the frightful Duke and his vengeance.

"Quick, quick, quick," she repeated, "quick, my little Casper!"

He stopped to argue, turning over again his same stubborn drunkard's reasoning, in whose thick skull a stupid idea had become fixed.

"But it was you who ordered it!"

"Oh, well! I shall incur his wrath, but he will not spare you on that account. It would be better to escape, both of us, it seems to me, than to fall together under his blows."

She pulled him by the sleeve, a little roughly, principally in order to get out of the bloody mass in which he was splashing and in which she w& trying not to put her feet, not wishing to soil her dress, which she lifted with her skirts under her cloak.

"In a minute!" he said, striking his nose with his short fore-finger, solemnly.

She became fidgety and tried to draw him away; he sprawled on his back under the violence of the shake which she gave him, and lay swearing like a devil in a holy-water font.

Sure that he would be heard throwing himself about, Lady Ellen hid herself hurriedly in the shade, watching, shivering, and raging, while the situation at the house was growing worse for her every moment.

That marionnette of a Lady Carlingford pressed the harp-strings, with mouth screwed up and head thrown back, in poses far from artistic, the company thinking nothing of the lady and literally bursting out laughing. The duenna perceived this at last, and deserted the instrument and the hall. In her wake the laughs followed, finding full vent; but, after a while, they died away, having nothing to feed upon, and from the emptiness of the evening, after the fatigue of the hunt, a gloomy *ennui,* a contagious spleen, exhaled and spread.

"Yes, decidedly," said the young Miss Arabella Stagsden, a doll even fonder of moonshine than Lucy Hobart, "we must attack these Irish, who hinder us from dancing and are always setting us at defiance."

"And put the cap of pitch on some of them," added Lady Milet-Mill, who on this occasion appeared in society for the first time since her churching.

"Willingly would I shave them with my white hand," added a widow of twenty, of whom it was rumored that her strictness and extreme prudery had led her husband to his grave.

"My faith!" said the Duke, "I offer you this entertainment without having to disturb ourselves. I have a rascal under my cup whom we will scalp first and hang afterwards by the light of the torches."

"Bravo!" they exclaimed unanimously.

"Hanging!" objected with a delightful pout the ghastly blonde doll, "is a torture not at all original, and, among us all, I wager that we can find something newer, more piquant."

"Capital!" applauded several young women; and a prize was decreed for the strangest invention.

"And which will draw from the culprit the most entertaining grimaces and contortions," continued Miss Arabella.

"Well! let them bring in the condemned," said Lord Jennings.

The Duke motioned to a servant, and ordered him to bring in the gelder as soon as he was found.

Casper nosed about in the mud before being able to steady himself on his hands, and then on his feet; he succeeded, however, not without difficulty, sweating, reluctant to rise, but urged on by the Duchess, who, emboldened by the fact of nothing stirring, again commenced her selfish exhortations.

The applause, the bravos, the shouts in the hall, in the parlor, made her anxious.

"Quick, Casper, quick."

"There's no danger," he growled; "then, besides, I was only the arm which executed...."

Nevertheless, he lifted the points of his hairy ears, like an animal who foresees danger.

In the court lanterns were moving along by the buildings, and a crowd of servants were hurrying about inside, questioning each other. "Casper! Do you know what has become of him?"

"No, why?"

"The Duke has ordered that he be brought to him immediately, immediately!"

"What for?"

"To flay him, to torture him a bit, after the fancy of the guests, till death ensues, my faith!"

"That will be a famous amusement!"

"Hey! do you hear?" murmured Lady Ellen in his ear; "quick, come along."

But, having recovered command of his legs and becoming conscious of what threatened him, he flew into a passion, instead of gliding away silently, and prepared to heap insults on the servants and the master.

"Hush!" said the Duchess, placing over his drivelling mouth a hand which he bit.

"Quick, then!" she repeated, without the suspicion of a cry escaping her.

And now, he followed her at an Indifferent pace, turning round with the design which she checked of cursing the flunkeys who were opening the doors and inspecting the corridors, astonished at his disappearance. They had seen him just before, drinking and sleeping off his intoxication. A corpulence like his did not dissipate itself in the air, did not disappear through a mouse-hole; the cats had not swallowed him in a yawn.

"He must have felt the need of taking the air and emptying his too full stomach," suggested the head cook.

"Consequently," concluded he, "they are inquiring in vain for him in the interior of the castle, and they have only to search in the court to discover him in the midst of his vomit."

"The gang of drunkards!" growled Casper.

But once more Lady Ellen gently gagged him.

"Silence! silence and come, come!"

All the servants outside made such an uproar that the Duke approached the window and posted himself by the side of Miss Hobart.

"Well! no Casper!" said he, stooping; "hurry up, then!"

And, addressing Lucy, who seemed to be following in the darkness an interesting spectacle:

"Is it my man whom you see? With your acuteness and refinement of vision, it seems to me you ought to distinguish him where we can discern nothing. If he is wallowing in a corner, he must be snoring; if he is scampering away, he is certainly panting for breath, and the incomparable delicacy of your hearing can not fail to reveal him to you."

Miss Hobart, with half-opened lips, pupils dilated by her attention to what was passing at the end of the court, beyond the lanterns' field of light, in the dense shadow, did not answer; she did not breathe.

"What is it?" questioned the Duke.

"Oh!" said the young girl, closing her eyes, and moreover veiling them instinctively with her hand.

"What is it? What is it?" repeated Newington, impatiently; "speak!"

Just then the dogs, who had been moaning for some moments, snuffling and whining as at the approach of game, rambling about the entrance to their enclosure, all set up an infernal chorus, in which predominated fury, passion, excited appetite, breaking forth in wrangles, the noise of fights, the rage and pain of the conquered..

"Why, the quarry is beginning again," said the Duke, ordering his men to run and see. Zounds! That imbecile of a Casper, in his flight, had wandered into the dog-kennel, thrust himself into the den, and the pack were regaling themselves. After the venison, the meat of the domestic boar.

"Exactly!" said Hunter Gowan, who, in the hunting season, when he was not after human game, gladly resumed his former functions; "and no way of tearing it from them except in pieces!" he added.

All the windows were filled, but the drama escaped them: it was being enacted inside the kennel buildings, and a number of the spectators were already lamenting bitterly this mischance, when the Duke ordered that the culprit be at least pulled out upon the pavement of the court, in order that they might have the diversion of his agony and death.

"Good!" said Gowan, swearing and vociferating; and instantly whipping away the devouring beasts from their victim, he seized the gelder by a leg and dragged him outside, howling, his neck lacerated by deadly bites.

"Perfect!" said the Duke.

The manoeuvre having been executed adroitly and promptly, the gilded lackeys, their torches in their hands, ran to range themselves around the scene of carnage, as they had done just before for the quarry, and, grouped behind them, the trumpeters sounded clear, proud blasts, awaking joyous echoes in the neighboring mountains.

And the quarry began again, furious, sickening, hideous, chilling with fright and filling with disgust the least timorous, the least impressionable, at the fearful braying of Casper, at his howling like a hog being bled, mingled with the

cries of the faltering spectators; and the windows were closed while the sinister tragedy concluded to the sound of the dying flourish of trumpets.

"Oh, the frightful nightmare!" suddenly said the Duchess, who had re-appeared; and, appealing to the Duke, she reproached him for having sanctioned this bloody and gratuitous fancy.

Scandalized by such a dose of hypocritical assurance, Miss Lucy, folding her arms, walked towards Lady Ellen, ready to say to her:

"But you who opened the doors of the kennel buildings, who pushed the unfortunate man to the dogs, when the pungent blood on which he had just been treading allured the pack, still unsatisfied and eager for a feast."

And for an instant Ellen trembled visibly, paler than Miss Hobart, and with a mechanical prudence concealed in a fold of her dress the slight bite on her right hand which was still bleeding.

Suddenly, by a stroke of good fortune for her, Lucy heard the lamentable appeals of the widow Arklow in the distance.

Again she was calling for her son, her Michael, whom she urged, through space, to hear her, to answer her, if he had the strength, if he was not dying.

She hushed, waiting the solicited response; then, at the end of some minutes, hopeless, she reiterated in a voice still louder, more prolonged and sad, her evocation, which, in the silence of the night, assumed a character truly dismal.

And immediately, becoming suddenly circumspect, she forbade Michael, if he had the power, to reveal to her his existence, or heed her prayer.

"No, no," said she, "do not answer me. They would kill you."

But this did not prevent her from recommencing, the next instant, the distressing supplication of a weeping mother at bay.

"Michael!... Michael!... Michael!... My child... You are not dead?... I have not assassinated you?..."

"My lord!" begged the Duchess, "do accede to the request of this miserable woman; receive her, or rather, speak to her; her voice, which clamors in the solitude in such despair, rings in the depths of my heart like a knell."

The Duke for some seconds had been looking at Lady Ellen, whose abnormal paleness and strange look forced his attention.

"I could see that something was the matter with you," he answered; "but I believed it an uneasiness, not pity or sentimentality."

"But, my friend, this frightful end of Casper seems to me of a nature to overthrow the less hardened."

"Not me!"

"This event having imparted to my nerves a sickly susceptibility, the least commotion causes me perturbations which account for my paleness and from which I suffer frightfully."

"Then I consent to accord an audience to your *protégée."*

"My *protégé,* it is you rather who are that. Your insensibility in regard to this woman is liable to exasperate still farther the hatred already aroused. I, an

Irish lady, know well that the continual litany of this poor devil would touch me keenly, physically even, setting aside all question of sentimentality, and that I should swear your death. Listen to her."

"Since I have said so," said the Duke; and, dismissing Tom Lichfield, he added aside to him: "I do this still more willingly as I wish to speak with her; she presents herself just in time to serve me."

Smiling at a Machiavelian design, he prepared to give the order that they lead the woman in.

A new tumult in the court, the rush of a lively race, of a furious pursuit, drew the guests again to the windows, and they saw Edith, pursued by the soldiers with an agility not to be suspected at her age and from her rather clumsy look, leaping into the body of the castle, overturning a servant who barred her way, and elbowing aside others who tried to oppose her entrance.

"The Duke! I wish to see the Duke," repeated she; "I will see him!"

Profiting by a half-opening of the gates and a want of vigilance of the soldiers who guarded Cumslen-Park, she had intruded herself, by means of cunning at first, then by displaying inconceivable strength and agility as soon as they perceived her and tried to thrust her out.

Now she was climbing the staircase, still running, distancing all those who hurried at her heels.

They were just on the point of reaching her; on the landing-place, Sir Walpole, who had run in front of her, had planted himself solidly to throw her, if need be, from the top to the bottom of the stairs.

"No," said Newington, "let her come up; only beg these gentlemen and ladies to leave me alone with her."

"And with me?" asked Lady Ellen.

"You, dear, you owe yourself to your guests," said the Duke.

And, without waiting for the protest of his wife, who manifested the desire to be there in case the infatuated woman, armed perhaps, should resort to formidable violence, he made a sign to Edith to go into the next room.

"My son!" said she, hardly inside the door.

And as Newington encased himself in a lofty silence, she continued:

"My son... Will you answer?"

"When you question me in another tone, I will see what I shall have to answer," said he.

On this appropriate observation, changing her manner, suddenly softened, resuming in haste an apparently orderly bearing, in spite of her dishevelled condition, she began to explain, still, however, a trifle incoherent.

"It is true, I am wrong. All this time, at the entrance of the castle where he is imprisoned so cruelly in the darkness, I have remained in exasperation, although at moments very humble. Now I restrain myself! I curse no more: I implore... Have I killed my son? Tell me without reserve. This will be my punishment. Now then, speak, I beg you, I implore you..."

She looked at him with her immense eyes in which all her anxious soul dwelt, on the watch for a movement of Newington's face, desperately impassive.

"Answer! answer! answer!" she sobbed. "If he has escaped that death, have you been more merciful than I?"

To the anguish of her previous prayer, a flame of anger was now added in this interrogation.

"To a soldier who deserts?" answered the Duke drily, in his accent of authority which made the boldest tremble.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, woefully stunned, as if knocked down by a blow on the head or a thrust in the stomach; and, for some minutes, seeing nothing, tottering, her tongue paralyzed in her parched mouth, strangling, she could not recover her voice.

Then, stammering, with broken words, trying to appease the thirst for vengeance which was overcoming her, she said:

"You have executed him?... Answer, enlighten me... Executed a wounded man? Oh I no, you have not been capable of such cowardice... I express myself badly: I mean, of such severity... Father Arklow, my husband, you had him massacred in the fury of your first impulse.... You imagined that he had just fired at you. But, Michael, on the ground, unconscious."

"He lives!" said Newington.

She came near, anxious, happy, brightened.

"He lives! ah! repeat it, say it to me again. He lives... ah!"

She broke down now with joy.

Entirely artificial, her rapidity, her energy, of the moment before, was the result of a passing excitement of the nervous system, and, under the shock of the news that her son lived, she fell again into her usual feebleness. So much sorrow in such tragic circumstances had preyed upon her; her sleepless nights, haunted with funereal visions, and her continued fasting had exhausted her.

The Duke, who lacked patience, detested these fainting-spells, which he could scarcely tolerate in the ladies of his own society, and he coarsely invited her to stop this affectation.

Yes, her son existed; he would even recover. She had better luck than an honest woman.

"Thanks, thanks!" said she, with effusion.

"No, do not thank me. He will recover. He is up and in good condition. A hard head; but bullets will penetrate it, nevertheless; powder has more expansive force than the arms of an old woman, although animated by a mad desire for vengeance."

"You say that bullets?"....

She suspended her question, not daring to ask, and the blood hummed in her head, blinding her with a veil through which lights bewilderingly danced. "Certainly, bullets," repeated the Duke; "twelve."

"Oh!"

"That is the number for a soldier who deserts, and a thirteenth if the dozen are not sufficient."

Edith forced back her tears, which then flowed into her mouth, causing a spasm which choked her.

"My lord," said she, endeavoring to find words, and feeling the hopelessness of her cause, "Michael did not desert. I assure you, he came to embrace me. Yes, to embrace his mother."

"His mother Ireland!"

"No, no,.... you are mistaken,.... that is all. Torture me, kill me for having attempted the life of a soldier of the king, but let him live! let him live!"

Newington laughed, showing his ferocious teeth, and, shrugging his shoulders, continued:

"Ah! for what kind of a simpleton do you take me? Pay attention!"

"I swear to you...."

"Come, don't perjure yourself, especially as it is useless. He has submitted to an examination, and has confessed."

"Under the hideous pressure of the tortures which you inflicted upon him."

"By no means, of his free will. He even boasts of it."

"My God! My God!" exclaimed Edith, sobbing.

But she would have lost her time in weeping. Falling on her knees, with clasped hands, she dragged herself at Newington's feet. "Pardon for him!" she exclaimed; "pardon!"

"I am willing!" said the Duke....

"Ah! I bless you!"

"Wait a moment. It depends on you whether I accord it."

"On me!"

"Yes."

"Ah! You are cruelly jesting. Truly, you would not.... An unfortunate woman so tried."

"I speak seriously. Your son will not die if it is your desire that he live."

"If it is my desire! But do you doubt it? Is that the way to talk to a mother? Only do not make the imprisonment too hard."

"It is not a matter of imprisonment, or of transportation, or of exile, but of complete, untrammeled liberty, of the run of the fields, with the bridle thrown on his neck."

"You are not deluding me?"

"No. But all on one condition, understand."

"I accept it beforehand,—on the condition, is it not, that he will not think of avenging his father, that he will not bear arms against you? I will guarantee that he will not leave my house."

She remained a second confused, as she reflected on this promise. She had no house left. But she resumed directly:

"We will leave the country. With courage we will work, we will hire ourselves out on the farms."

"There is to be an important meeting on Christmas at Treor's house," interrupted the Duke; "I want to be present clandestinely, and I count on your help for this purpose."

"Treason!" cried the miserable woman, the blood mounting in her cheeks up to her forehead, causing her tanned skin to flame as deeply as if the rays of a blazing hearth had fallen upon it.

"You admit already that there is a conspiracy!" said Newington, inflating his voice and with his steely look withering Edith, who, thinking of her child, tried to brook the offence of the proposition which he addressed to her, and answered with gravity and dignity:

"To introduce anywhere one who wishes to conceal himself for the purpose of hearing what would not be said in his presence, and of capturing some secret or other, is to betray!"

"You find fault with it," said the Duke; "so much the worse for your son!"

"Oh!"

"You refuse?"

"I refuse."

"So be it!"

And the lord turned towards a door.

"Where are you going? What are you going to do?" asked Edith, running after him and seizing him by the elbow.

But Newington did not answer. At the entrance to the park a sentinel was watching. Pointing to a long wall in front, made white at night by the reflection of the castle lights, the Duke said:

"Let them take the prisoner from his dungeon and lead him down to the wall yonder, with a lantern on his chest!"

"No! no! I do not wish it!" cried the poor, unfortunate mother, turning towards the soldier and commanding him with a gesture not to obey.

"Twelve balls," pursued Newington, "will extinguish the candle!"

"No! no! I do not wish it, I do not wish it!" repeated she, and, clinging to the soldier, she prevented him from executing the order of the general, trying to move him to pity that he might refuse this murderous commission, this executioner's task.

But the Duke, elbowing her aside, quickly disengaged the soldier, to whom he gave again his pitiless command.

In vain by touching arguments did the poor woman try to soften the soldier as he moved away. She represented her son Michael to him as a comrade, a soldier also; and perhaps enrolled by chance in the same regiment, they might have become good friends! The soldier, inflexible, automatic, did not slacken his steps or swerve. She invoked his regretted mother, who was doubtless weeping at home over the thought that he was in the war; for, evidently, this was a war, or, if not today, would be tomorrow.

"In the name of that good woman, old like me, and whom you love, and whom you would like to embrace every day, and near whom you wish to stay!"....

"Enough of this!" interrupted the Duke, who thrust her back with a shove into the little room where they had just been talking.

Then, beside herself, she exclaimed:

"One may plunder, kill, unmercifully beat! It is the law of the strongest. But such bargains as this are another matter; they dishonor him who conceives and imposes them even more than those who accept them!"

And, speaking to herself, she added:

"The life of those who trust in you, against the life of your child. Edith! what a shame to believe yourself capable of hesitating! Michael, at such an ignominious price, would refuse with indignation.... My lord, you are an infamous wretch!"

Suddenly a fresh change of view humbled her, and she resumed with more gentleness and calmness:

"Pardon me, I am flying into a passion again. I am sorry. My mind wanders, do you understand? Pity! pity! I drag myself on my knees as I would before God!"

Newington walked the room rapidly backwards and forwards, silent, insensible. "Pity!" repeated she, "pity!"

He let her follow him on her knees, and, when he hurried his steps, she fell on her face on the carpet.

"Pity!" repeated she again while rising, having only this single word on her lips.

"Look'" simply answered Newington, stopping at last and pointing out to her with his finger, in the park dimly lighted by the glimmer of a lantern, the advancing funeral procession,—the execution platoon, and, in the middle, Michael, his forehead bandaged with linen, and wavering still on his feeble legs.

He marched proudly, and, notwithstanding his mother's cry, he did not tremble.

"There!" ordered the Duke.

They placed the condemned man against the wall and fixed the lantern on his breast, hanging it on one of the buttons of his uniform.

"Ah! this is horrible!" said Edith, hiding her eyes in her hands. "Decide promptly!" said the Duke; "bullets travel fast."

"The abomination!" exclaimed she, unveiling herself now, and looking on in stupor at this spectacle, at which she hoped to die. "Hurry yourself!" said Newington.

The platoon, taking the regulation range, aligned itself twenty paces from Michael.

"Grace! grace!" cried Edith, whose expiring voice was lost in the command of a sergeant, and whose blood the snapping of the gun-locks froze in her veins. "Present!" ordered the Duke himself.

"No, no," said the miserable woman, embracing Newington's knees. "Adieu, mother!" cried the young man, in a very firm voice. For her this was the

supreme test, and, going nearer to Newington, she said, in a faltering voice: "I consent!"

"For sure! Swear it to me!"

"I swear it to you!" she murmured.

The Duke made a sign to the soldiers, who put down their arms.

She rose suddenly, holding out her arms to embrace her child; but the platoon, forming in line again, led away the prisoner; and as she, in her astonishment, reproached Newington bitterly, with a look, for failing in his promise, the Duke exclaimed:

"I keep him as a hostage. He shall leave the castle, free, when I leave Treor's house."

"If you leave it, my lord!" whispered in the recess of a door the Duchess Ellen.

And she withdrew in haste, satisfied and so radiant that Sir Bradwell, when she again entered the rooms where at last the ball was really being organized after a fashion, stopped her in passing.

"You are the demon incarnate," he said to her, with a profoundly dramatic air, at which she laughed, with all her heart, finding him comical, a boy, a big ridiculous boy, and inviting him not to borrow the phraseology of the theatre to use with her, and especially of an old-fashioned, superannuated, silly theatre!

Then, changing her tone and manner, she asked seriously:

"Did I take you by force? Did I seduce you by a criminal artifice, tempted by culpable coquetries?"

Sir Richard sighed, evidently in repentance.

"Did I dream of you?" continued she. "All the joy of my new situation, of having attained the object of my existence, that is to say, as the Duke has reproached me, riches, luxury, power; astonished at my *role* of lady of the castle, fawned upon, feasted, rendered eager homage on all hands, and surrounded by all sorts of adulation—did I encourage you more than the other suitors? Did I distinguish you even among the crowd of gallants, young or old, who languished around me, strutting about or babbling their frivolities, telling of their hopelessness and gloomily lavishing their compliments?

"Love! I did not dream of it the least in the world. The brilliancy of the receptions, the excitement of the feasts, intoxicated me, fatigued me delightfully; and my heart, my faith, my senses, in the vortex of pleasures, the perpetuity of this joyous and brilliant life, lost their rights, abdicated. Who, then, overturned all this order of things, and obsessed me with his pursuit?"

"I was mad!" said Bradwell.

"And you are mad no longer!" exclaimed the Duchess. "Thanks!" He protested, but without energy,—out of pure politeness, one would have said; and Ellen, incensed, furious, resumed with panting utterance:

"You are no longer mad, or else you are mad over another. At least, express to me your remorse for your conduct toward me. I was tranquil, happy, very happy. A passion is born in you, and, for the satisfaction of your desires, you

beset me, you overcome my resistance,—for I defended myself, I struggled, you must admit, and it was by surprise, by violence, that you triumphed!"

"I admit it."

"After long, useless artifices, seeing that your sighs did not move me, that your tears did not soften me, that your fever did not consume me, one night"...

"I beg of you!"

"One night, during Newington's absence, you forced the door of my chamber"...

"Hush! I implore you."....

"Exhausted in the struggle, you conquered me at last, and since then, weakening me with your caresses, burning me with your kisses, you have aroused in me the sentiment which slept, you have excited the appetites of my flesh, you have unchained the fury of passion. Submit to the consequences of your madness! No, no: you will not shield yourself there!"

She trembled; her anger, her pain, at once agitated her, and her voice, alternating abruptly, was now mournful and husky, now vibrating in its tones, as her recollections passed before her.

Sir Richard, at first, had listened abstractedly. His saddened gaze wandered, and, faint-hearted and discouraged, his thought roved far off, down towards Bunclody, as always, around Treor's house. But, in proportion as the Duchess unrolled the picture of the ardent past, of the bold attempts of his incessant love for Ellen, his imagination, his senses, became inflamed. Marian, the angel, vanished, yielding her place to her whom he had called the demon incarnate, and in all his being now reigned the revived criminal passion of which he tried vainly to cure himself.

But to possess again the Duchess, at Cumslen-Park, under the roof where Lord Newington lived, after having grasped the hand of his father, who continued to place in him perfect confidence of which he showed himself unworthy,—no, that, this knavery, this hypocrisy, this treachery, was keenly repugnant to him and filled him with disgust.

"Let us go away!" said he to Ellen. "I have already proposed it to you; we will go to England, to France, wherever you please."

"So, indeed!" she replied.

"Why?" said he, amazed.

"Because, being as poor one as the other, what of our future? People do not live on air, or dress any longer in green as our first parents did in their earthly paradise. How should we live? You as a clerk, and I as a bar-maid? I should be homesick for the grand life which I have tasted. Cross, whimsical, I should become as ugly as envy. And you, moreover, even before this metamorphosis, would cease to love me; you already love me less. Did you distinguish me when I was the heiress of a clergyman, under my biblical head-dress, my gowns as flat as one of my honorable father's sermons?... It was only when I blossomed out as a Duchess that I had the good fortune to please you.... I will remain Duchess.... without the Duke."

"Without the Duke!" repeated Richard, contemplating her with fear. "Without the Duke,"—what could these three words signify, since she refused to go away? They could be explained only by the resolution firmly fixed in her of ridding herself of Newington, and suddenly the repeated attempt to which the general had almost fallen a victim appeared to him in all its horror.

Lady Ellen had inspired it, commanded it, dictated it. The agitation of the young woman the first time at Bunclody; her advice, her pressing entreaties that he should not approach the Duke; her cry: "You wish, then, to be killed in his place!" when nothing had then indicated the presence of the assassin in the vicinity,—all the circumstances confirmed the intuition which he now had of these two attempts.

And the dreadful death of Casper was now illuminated for him with a frightful light; chance and his drunkenness alone would not have caused the filthy fellow to fall into the teeth of the dogs; a hand guided him, perfidious wretch, that of the Duchess. Casper, the clumsy and suspected executioner of the base plots of Lady Ellen, well! she had put him out of the way through anger, for the sake of prudence, in anticipation of future attempts!

So the Duchess, thrice criminal,—in thought, in command, in action,—was projecting the perpetration of fresh misdeeds which she would renew unweariedly until successful and, doubtless, badly seconded by her paid acolytes, she would end by operating herself, without fear, without reluctance, now that, tinged with blood and free evidently from remorse, she had made her *debut* in the career of personal crime.

In disgust and terror he recoiled, with a start, from the Duchess, destitute, however, of the force necessary to break off the *tete-a-tete* and casting about with an inviting look to find a third party who might deliver him.

With her delicate instinct and clear sight, the young woman divined that, beside these perfectly ostensible movements, he was secretly revolving a decisive project in his gloomy head, behind his eyes fiercely concentrated, and, abruptly, she said to him:

"Richard, what are you plotting?"

"What am I plotting!"

He feigned not to comprehend, despite her piercing in this way his hidden resolutions, and being above all apprehensive that she would turn him aside from a design in which he saw salvation.

Salvation for him, for her, for the Duke!

"Yes," repeated Ellen, abandoning her tone of armed defence, "you are plotting something!"

And, obliging him to let her decipher the language of his eyes, she read what he was meditating.

"You wish to go away alone!" said she.

Incapable of lying, he confessed that it was so.

He would go very far, would travel, would forget. During this time the fever which ravaged her would gradually cool.

"Do that!" said she, furious and afraid, "do that, and the Duke, the cause of your departure and my abandonment, will die immediately so that I may rejoin you sooner."

"You confess, then, that you are capable of the crimes of which I suspect you?"

"Of all crimes, if I lose you, and in order to see you again!"

"And I, to escape you, will attempt anything."

"Happily also," she said, recovering herself suddenly, as if sure of herself, "I count on your weakness, on the captivating memory of the delights which you have tasted in my arms, for, although it was you that excited me to love, is it not true that I have practised its mysteries divinely? You have crowned me priestess of this religion, but I knew better than all others its secret incantations, and I have bewitched you!"

Calm, insinuating, her voice modulated to caressing music, she enveloped him in a sensuous network, radiating voluptuousness.

"Remember then!" she said to him softly, taking his hands, which he tried to withhold, and burning his cheeks with her warm fragrant breath, which fanned his carnal agitation, "remember then the masses which we have said, the offices which we have celebrated together!"

But, an idol with ears that heard not, with eyes that saw not, Sir Richard Bradwell remained cold as ice and hard as stone, and neither the intoxicating fragrance of Lady Ellen's superb body, nor the knowing promises of her eyes, nor the chant of her words, sweet and swelling like a canticle of canticles, moved him.

Under these ways of the irresistible siren was outlined, in spite of everything, the abominable author of assassinations. This whole being fashioned for pleasure revealed the monstrous aspect of the Fates who cut off the thread of our days: the bones of her slender fingers clicked like the steel of daggers, the passionate phrases of her mouth burst forth like the detonations of murderous fire-arms, and there emanated from her, from her neck, from her breasts which stood out beneath her low-necked dress, from her lustrous hair, an acrid odor of blood which suffocated him.

And he did not conceal it from her, nor that this impression would not, in the future, be effaced; that it would, on the contrary, be emphasized if she did not amend, and he would curse her tomorrow, pitying her today, if she persevered in this tragic and villainous path to which she had committed herself.

Then, suddenly, to save himself from her seductive attempts, the danger of which he knew, and the efficacy of which had been of old too often established, he rushed to the side of Lord Muskery, who was passing with a lively skip, having succeeded, some minutes before, in kissing the long nails of Lucy Hobart.

CHAPTER VII.

"Go! Go!"

"Without having moved you?"

"My answer is unchangeable!"

Christmas eve, having slipped into Treor's house, during the master's absence, Sir Richard was vainly begging Marian to listen to him.

She had not had the strength, on perceiving who entered, to drive him away, to evict him immediately like an intruder, like an enemy; his countenance bore witness to so much trouble; she knew so well the purity of his intentions, and with what a tender, respectful passion she had inspired him.

"You will never be my wife?" continued Richard.

"Never!"

"Still," said he, "you have loved me, and not so long ago,—a few months only. We met in the fields, in the woods where you led the children to teach them to spell the Irish books which our stupid authorities prohibited, and I helped you often in your task. Sometimes, in turning the leaves, our fingers touched. Today you would refuse to give me your hand, even as a comrade."

"You are the enemy!"

"You know well that I am not, and that I protest energetically against the persecutions of which you are the object."

"That is to your credit, but the honor of the oppressed consists in not distinguishing between the oppressors, in breaking every bond of friendship with any one belonging to their race."

"Oh, the injustice which those grand, solemn words contain! So, whether I am kind or cruel to your friends, you will hate me just the same."

"I do not hate you!"

"But you no longer love me?"

"Who has told you that I loved you?" said the young girl with a start, her tremor contradicting her denial and her voice quivering.

"No one has told me, you least of all; but everything in your manner with me of late, everything in the emotion which you felt near me, in the impatience, the joy which you showed on my arrival, the sadness at my departure, gave me to understand it. Oh! I did not plume myself upon it, believe me, to importune you, to dare to beg a rendezvous without the witnesses who always accompanied you."

"It is true!"

"You love me, then?"

"Yes!"

"And you love me no longer?"

"Do not question me. Events separate us. They dig each day between us an abyss more profound, a river of blood! Forget by-gone days!"

"No! and I will not take my leave unless you promise me to reconsider your cruel decision to which I would not have submitted had I not been sure of your crime."

Excessively moved by this recollection so delicately evoked, Marian paled and faltered, closing her eyes, in which, amid the trembling lashes which fringed them, stood pearly tears.

And Sir Richard comprehended that the sentiment of the old time still lived within her, and, in an outburst of intense happiness, he seized her hand and covered it with tender kisses; but she withdrew it promptly, offended. After the categorical declarations which she had just made to him, this effusion constituted an offence, and now she invited him to go without delay, without respite. She would not pardon him unless he obeyed quickly, submissive and repentant.

He was obstinately opposed to leaving, to being dismissed. It was senseless, when they both loved each other, to sacrifice themselves to considerations of race.

"Though one has undertaken to utterly annihilate the other," said the young girl, "and by the most atrocious means. You refuse to comprehend this, and yet a different attitude on my part would scandalize you,—yes, render me odious in your eyes; at least, I hope so. If I were indifferent to the massacres which succeed each other, and of which your people make heartless sport while my friends mourn, and with which yours are always surrounding us, what a heart of bronze, what a despicable soul would be mine!"

"Weep for those whom you love and whom they kill, curse their assassins, but do not confound me in the hatred which you vow to the executioners,—me who join in your just wrath against them, and who share your pity for the victims!"

"Alas! are you not the son of one of our most ferocious persecutors, of Lord Newington, this man of prey? The balls of his muskets have killed our past, and have laid in the bloody grave of my brothers the future which might have smiled upon us.

At the name of the Lord, Sir Richard clenched his fists, and an explosion of savage hatred shook him at the same time that a flash of wild hope crossed his mind. The Duke, whose image Marian called up as an obstacle to their happiness, he abhorred at this moment. He could have desired to learn suddenly of his death, and he thought with satisfaction of the thousand perils which menaced him,—the chances of war, the snares of the conquered, and especially the relentless plotting of Lady Ellen.

And he who had testified to the Duchess such vehement indignation at the idea of impious murder which she cherished, would have actually, willingly urged her to hasten the *dénouement* of her plots; perhaps he would have put his hand to the sacrilegious work!

But this odious impulse did not last long, and he immediately reflected that perhaps this intrusion of the Duke in the midst of his tender dream was the

revenge for the injury of which he had teen so shamefully culpable in regard to him.

He had possessed himself of his wife in a cowardly, disloyal, treacherous way, and Lord Newington, in retaliation, frightened Marian, splashed him with the blood in which he rode up to the breast of his steed, and caused the *fiancée* whom Bradwell coveted to refuse him.

Nothing could be more just!

Then the young man's animosity turned against the Duchess.

It was true that the initial responsibility was not Lady Ellen's. He had desired her, had long importuned her in unceasing courtship, sown with snares; at last, weary of unsuccessful stratagems, of profitless ambuscades, of ineffectual artifices, a madness, because of his repeated checks, seizing him, he had had recourse to force; but, in the sequel, when his consciousness of guilt awoke, did she not lull it with the sweet murmur of magic words, with the warmth of her embraces? When remorse assailed him, did she not smother it with the clasp of her muscles, stamped with an infernal magnetism?

Vainly he had tried to break the bonds of this fatal passion; the Duchess had set herself against it, and, by the love-potion which her whole being distilled, she held him unceasingly, and kept him enthralled in a subjection from which he could never free himself.

Never! above all since Marian would not consent to aid him and since she alone, the only being in the world capable of exorcising it, shrank from the salutary task of combatting and overcoming the influence which bewitched him.

In this very instant when he was inwardly invoking her help, she urged him anew to go away, to return to Cumslen-Park, to the castle, and Ellen waited for him there, impatient and finely dressed, knowing that the Duke would be absent.

He daily defended himself from her caresses, and daily he fell back into his slavery, languid and feverish, becoming from day to day less capable of resistance and without energy to flee.

For hours he would escape her, retrenching himself in the chaste sphere of his love for the granddaughter of Treor. But suddenly, far from the Duchess, at distances really enormous, a sensation would imprint itself in his flesh, which immediately sent an imperious thrill through his whole body; an intoxication enervated him; irresistible desires took possession of him, and brought him back close to her whom he anathematized, whose death he sometimes wished, and whom he would finally hurry to rejoin, in terrible apprehension of not finding her or of being repulsed by her.

On a few rare occasions he had rebelled against the cowardice of his senses; he had succeeded in fleeing twenty leagues away and staying there half a week. This was after getting a glimpse somewhere of Marian's serene profile, respectfully saluting her, and receiving from her a furtive good-morning, discreet, however, and full of reserve.

This viaticum was sufficient to start him on one of his journeys of refuge; but, in the end, the salutary impression would be dissipated, melted away by the

ardent, corrosive breath of the unworthy passion, and, slowly at first, then more rapidly, then with a speed which bordered on vertigo, he would regain the castle and fall again into the power of the wicked enchantress.

"Speak!" repeated the young girl for the second or third time, now disturbed at this meeting already too prolonged, and afraid that some one would come in.

"Marian!" said Sir Bradwell, in the tone of a prayer.

And he was on the point of opening his mournful heart, of revealing all,—his criminal love for the Duchess and the assistance of which he was in need.

But the sound of steps outside was heard, and Treor's granddaughter really feared a surprise. They would not suspect her of doing wrong. Still, under the circumstances, Sir Bradwell's presence would seem singular. Besides, it would be embarrassing; people would consider themselves compromised; and she begged him to leave the place.

As he still did not go, in spite of her incessant entreaties, she gave him to understand, trusting to his faithfulness, that her father was going to have a reunion of friends, it being Christmas, and that she must prepare the house for the children who were coming, in the sadness of this dreadful winter,—perhaps the last,—to amuse themselves with some playthings and to participate in a meagre repast furnished just to keep up the tradition.

Treor had been obliged, in the persistent absence of the priest, to celebrate a kind of mass in his capacity of descendant of the elect of the parish, and doubtless the ceremony was in progress. Directly they would leave the church, and the children would not be long in reaching the house. The parents would follow them closely. How could Sir Richard's presence be explained?

Already the singing could be heard,—a canticle which terminated the ceremony, or which, at least, was intoned after the first part. In twenty minutes they would arrive.

"Go, I beg you!" Marian went on repeating.

"I remain!" said Sir Richard.

Marian, while speaking, busied herself in stirring the fire, and, in the great fireplace, lay whole branches of larch-trees, which curled up, and threw out sparks of fire; she turned her head quickly, doubting if she had understood, and if it was Sir Richard whom she heard. The accent so sweetly sad with which up to that time he had lulled her differed so much from the rough, brutal accent with which he had just pronounced his last words! And she rose up, stupefied at the change wrought in him.

His countenance, usually rather cold, rather severe, but which kindness softened, and which, above all, the love which he showed her smoothed,—this face, a moment before so expressively affectionate, breathed now a secret irritation, a kind of wildness convulsing the features and twisting the mouth, ordinarily so correct, but the under lip of which, a simple, hardly perceptible white line, betrayed, beneath the calmness of the whole, a slumbering cruelty, just as the narrow forehead, contracted between the temples, indicated a

decided obstinacy; and his eyeballs, of a pale topaz, in which sometimes glistened the gold of exquisite tenderness, now radiated gloomy fire.

The young girl experienced an emotion of painful fear, and reiterated, but more imperiously, the order that he should go, to which he showed himself more deaf than before. Then she became really angry.

Remain in spite of her! Marian asked him where he believed himself to be that he should speak in that way; she had received him without animadversion, almost as a brother, and, because of her gratitude for the service rendered, that she might thank him for his intervention when the odious soldier was about to do violence to her. But truly now she recognized no longer his nobility.

By virtue of what right would he remain against her will in this house? By virtue of the order putting the village outside of the king's peace? Then she herself would retire and warn Treor; she would inform all the invited guests to seek elsewhere a free roof under which they could meet, provided always Sir Bradwell would permit them, and would not rout them out of their new refuge, either alone or escorted by the Ancient Britons, of whom he seemed now quite worthy to take the command.

"Pardon!" said he all at once, coming out of a profound meditation into which his mind had suddenly fallen, while his contracted features relaxed and the sinister flames which had been burning in his eyes went out.

And again, with a softened face, slightly ashamed, he begged Marian to excuse a temporary fit, altogether ill-timed and improper, but spontaneous, of involuntary madness. A wicked rage had passed over him against these Irish who revolted, who would not passively accept the yoke of the conquered; formerly the same wrath had animated him against the oppressors. Love had unsettled him, wiped out his sense of justice; he had considered only his passion, had seen only the obstacles raised across its path and whence they arose, and a blind anger had taken possession of him against the people from whom they emanated.

Now, he had no feeling in his heart, in regard to the sons of the "old woman," save the keen and glowing sympathy which they had always inspired in him; he framed the most sincere, the most ardent vows for their success; and, the platonism of desire not seeming to him of a nature to aid powerfully enough these unfortunate people who were so worthy, he proposed to enter with them into bonds of more effective solidarity.

Quite himself again, breathing deeply, and with the resplendent air of pride and joy of one conscious of harmony between the resolves of his conscience and the acts which he has determined to perform, happened his heart to his thoughts and reassured Marian, who, with her ear close to the door, or opening the window-shutters, was on the watch to see whether they were returning from the mass.

"I remain," repeated he, "but to put my hand, guiltless of blood, in that of your father, in those of your friends, in those of your brothers, and I will say to them: 'Your cause, legitimate and sacred, I will content myself no longer with

accompanying with vain admiration and idle words of encouragement. It was chance that placed me among your enemies; it omitted fashioning me in their image. I feel as you do the horror of their conduct as highway robbers. The little which comes to me of their wealth has doubtless been acquired by depredations which despoil you. The luxury in which I participate has been stolen from your miseries. Forget that I have so long withheld what belongs to you; I despoil myself to restore it to you; accept me in your ranks as one of your own!'"

He was transfigured. His features, in general simply correct and wearing a pleasing expression, now became of that true radiant beauty which grand sentiments produce, and Treor's granddaughter submitted to the invincible charm of this metamorphosis.

"Yes, I desert my camp!" he repeated. "The Duke has several times reproved my inaction. He invited me to take part on one side or the other, and, when I urged upon him conciliatory measures, he mocked at my desire for peace, which—I am sure, for his mocking smiles declared it—he looked upon at bottom as mere cowardice!

"Well! I will enter the struggle; I will lead your troops to battle for the vindication of their rights, although they do not lack heroic chiefs, for the example of my desertion will strengthen the confidence which it is necessary for them to place in their good cause."

His exaltation was increasing, but its very excess frightened Marian, and she reflected that, in reality, justice, devotion to Ireland took only second rank in this display of enthusiasm in favor of their side. The love which he felt for her was the real motive of his fine fervor, his resolutions, which perhaps he would regret in the future.

She was not so innocent that she had not understood the hints, in the conversations of the Bunclodyans, of the empire which the beautiful Duchess exercised over Richard; and without imagining that between Ellen and him matters went so far as incestuous adultery, she felt that Sir Richard would find difficulty in extricating himself from this influence.

Perhaps it would need only a word, a sign from Lady Newington later to make of him, when they believed him definitively gained to the Irish cause, a renegade for the second time; and Marian did not dare to assume such a responsibility.

Seeing her all at once lose the animation which flushed her face and made her eyes glisten, Sir Richard guessed the change which was working in her and that she refused his generous decision, taken so freely, with an enthusiasm above suspicion, and even without having weighed the reward with which his conduct would be crowned.

He wished to doubt, however, and, full of anguish, interrogated Marian.

"Remain neutral," she said to him with effort, with regret, "content yourself with palliating, in the measure of your influence, the horrors of the savage war which they make on us. This is all which it is allowable for us to accept."

And, without waiting for her to furnish him the least explanation in support of her words, he flew into a passion. In vain, in order to soften her words, she tried to say that both of them would be suspected, and that she would be accused of lukewarmness and of thinking more of her love than of the cause, in bringing Sir Richard among them.

Seized with a fit of mad grief, he uttered the frightful phrases of an insane man:

"Since my devotion is refused, well! I will carry it elsewhere. Ah! Marian, I shall have, some day, the spectacle of your love for some hero of your party...."

"I shall never love anyone," she said.

"A vow? All women perjure themselves. I say that you will love some one of your people who will bear himself heroically, whose bravery will excite applause, whose name will be transmitted in history, covered with famous laurels. Well, every Irishman is transformed for me today into an abhorred rival whom I must kill. From this time forward I declare a pitiless war upon them all. The handsomest, the youngest, the bravest especially! Bad luck to them!"

What a transformation for Marian!

Notwithstanding her silence, just before, when Richard questioned her to discover if she still loved him; notwithstanding her affirmation that their past was dead, quite dead, forever buried with its dead brothers, and that the future would see them strangers to each other,—she still kept in her heart the same tender passion as before.

Her vow to the league of the United Irishmen simply bound her to renounce hopes certainly entertained formerly,—and on this point she would not compromise,—but it did not at all invalidate a love born long years before, at a time when a young girl's heart is first awakened.

During the interval that had elapsed since that epoch, it had developed freely, and had taken deep root, always strengthened by the generous attitude of Sir Bradwell so far, up to this moment even; and Richard's fury shook her painfully, producing in her a commotion which stunned her, torturing her soul and wounding all its tenderness.

Would she be forced to despise him, to hate him? Or could she preserve for him feelings of which he showed himself unworthy?

In that case, it would be she who would deserve contempt. My God! Had not her unhappiness yet reached the limit of the possible?

No, Richard was only under the dominion of a new fit of passion which would disperse. Only an instant before, moved by frightful and unreasoning anger, had he not suddenly made amends and at once asked her pardon? In a second, the same sudden change would humble him before her, repentant, saddened, like a child filled with remorse for a fault.

She looked at him.

Alas! his countenance did not change, and his vague and enlarged pupils betrayed a continuance of his madness. Then she recalled having often seen him in old times wandering gloomily and aimlessly across the fields, with dishevelled

hair, and a fixed look that was now directed towards the clouds and now straight on into the immensity of the plains, and that occasionally he would be talking in a very loud voice.

Neither the rain nor the sun disturbed him; neither the water which flooded him nor the heat of the leaden star turned him aside from his course or his ecstasies, for the spectators declared his mind upset, explaining the fact by his birth in a year especially marked by dramatic events, massacres without number, and continual conflagrations.

A famine, the previous year, had decimated the country and emaciated spectres, strolling skeletons, circulated slowly through the streets, dragging after them their sufferings and the want which tortured them; the Duchess, Richard's mother, very compassionate, had been revolutionized by these pitiable, hideous pictures, and had taken into her system the germ of the nervous malady to which she succumbed later, after having communicated to her son an unhealthy susceptibility, combatted, it is true, by a dread of the paternal temperament which he had doubtless inherited.

So Marian, with a breaking heart, tried to calm him in a friendly and gentle way. Amicably and gratefully, she recalled to him his generous interference when he arrived upon the scene of the barbarities of Gowan and his gang, of the revolting extortions of the Britons. She cited his discussions (of which she had been informed) with Sir Walpole, the sleek, glittering officer, the bickerings and quarrels they had had together and which often just escaped degenerating into challenges.

This was why she did not cherish malice at his menaces; she would not keep even the memory of them. Oh, no! No more would he, moreover,—and she well knew that he would continue to conform his acts to those of the past, and explicitly deny, by his future conduct, the blasphemies which he had just uttered!

But this peaceful overture did not act at all on Bradwell as she had hoped. Neither the suavity of the young girl's voice, nor the kindliness of her words, melted the exasperation into which he had fallen and from which his morbid mental state would not permit him to extricate himself easily.

He was wrongly accused of insanity; but all the causes cited by the witnesses of his fantastic ways and of the intermittent incoherence of his ideas and his actions had had really the fatal influence which they pretended on his brain, hi which inexplicable fits of violence succeeded exemplary feelings of charity.

Excesses in goodness as well as in evil struggled for the victory in his character, and Lady Ellen had contributed not a little to unbalance him by the unreasonableness of her always unsatisfied passion and the deadly refinements with which she stimulated the satiety and the ardor of her lover.

So that, pushed to an extreme point, he lacked the elasticity necessary to reaction.

"Richard," said Marian, "it is over, is it not, your wickedness?"

"If you retract your desperate *never,"* he answered, roughly and imperatively.

And as she kept still that she might not excite a new crisis, he interpreted her silence as a negative, and in a transport less exalted than the previous one, but not less categorical as to conclusions, he said:

"Well! you will have forced me to it: I entered your father's house as a friend; I leave it an irreconcilable enemy; I came imploring the favor of a hope; I go away promising you surprises that will terrify you."

He was wandering; he surely would not keep his diabolical promises. Nevertheless, Marian held him back that he might not leave after this abominable imprecation, and that his voice, when he. were no longer there, might not resound under this roof in such a diabolical tone; but harshly and roughly, positively disowning her, he called on her to let him go away.

Already, dragging her after him, he had reached the door, when it was suddenly opened, and some one entered who imposed silence and, with his extended hand, stopped Bradwell, bent on his intention of departure.

It was Father Richmond, the priest of Bunclody.

"I have been wandering about my profaned church," said he, "awaiting Treor, who is repeating his sacrileges; I recoiled before the scandal of again turning the ungodly out of the sanctuary; I am waiting, outside, to reprimand them, as is my right, in the name of the Most High whom they are outraging, whom they are defying with impunity, but who will soon chastise them, we cannot doubt."

"And what do you wish of us?" asked Sir Bradwell, drily.

"I walked some distance away," the priest resumed, tranquilly, "and I was praying. Thus I overheard your dispute. After my orisons, I thought that perhaps my ministry could be exercised usefully here, and here I am."

He paused, sanctimoniously watching Marian and Richard by turns to see what chance of success was reserved for his intervention; and seeing that both, extremely puzzled, were waiting for him to speak, he said:

"The wrong is on your side, Marian, and it is you whom I blame."

Although much astonished, she did not reply, thinking only of the result to be reached,—the restoration of Bradwell to reason,—and the priest resumed:

"It is you whom I blame, Marian, because you will be responsible for the miseries with which he will overwhelm your country, for he will fulfill his menace. He will fulfill it, I tell you, because I remember his childhood and know that he possesses, by the side of the tender qualities which he inherits from his deceased mother, in an equal degree the excessive passion of Lord Newington, his wild and blood-thirsty anger."

Marian was weeping, with her face in her hands.

"Moreover," concluded the priest, "the infernal sin has exalted the bad instincts in his soul and weakened the good ones."

"Sir!" said Bradwell, knitting his bushy eyebrows in a sinister fashion and biting savagely his pale lips.

He asked himself what the curate was coming at; but the placid countenance of the holy man, like the limpid clearness of the lakes, more inscrutable than a blank wall, completely eluded his examination. Father Richmond, shivering with cold, turned to the fire, warming his blue hands and his feet benumbed in the damp shoes which smoked in the blaze of the fire-place.

"Yes! yes! yes! It is you, Marian," repeated he for the third time, "it is you who will bear the weight of the responsibility, for if sin inflames the faults of Sir Bradwell, his bad tendencies which there is reason to fear, it belongs to you to combat them, to annihilate them by your happy influence."

"Me!" said Marian, trembling.

"Yes," replied Richard, approving the priest, whom he supposed to concur in his opinion.

The priest made his customary pause, by which he thought to give more force to his arguments; then he went on, pointing with his fingers, which were losing their numbness, to the heavens through the roofing:

"God appears to have selected you for this *role.* He has placed you as the guardian redeeming angel with the face of the angel of the persecuted, placed by the side of Sir Bradwell as well as the sentinel of the bad."

"Exactly!" said the lover of the Duchess, looking at Marian with his clear eyes, in which joy beamed with re-awakening hope, with confidence in the effect of this word of the priest, who was touching the dangerous point from which he had recoiled.

"I call no names!" continued Sir Richmond, stretching by turns before the flames his thin legs like spindles; "but you will understand of whom I speak. Marian, who is this demon whose pernicious empire you, by divine appointment, are called upon to combat."

"The Duchess, the disastrous Lady Ellen!" exclaimed Sir Richard, eagerly.

"Yes, she," said the priest, who turned again, letting fall his cassock, which he had lifted up to the knees, and making a wry face; "but I should have preferred that the name had not been cited, that we had expressed ourselves with veiled words, that we had understood each other without being explicit. A certain obscurity seemed to me favorable to our explanation: the shade covers propositions which one would not make in full sunlight, and the confessional, in the darkest part of the church, is kept in a mysterious penumbra, where the sinner, with bent head, reveals secrets which he would hide carefully in the depths of his soul, if he were asked to disclose them under the tapers of the altar or the light of the porch...."

And, in truth, an embarrassment seized Bradwell, who had become quite calm again, but who, having betrayed so freely his *liaison* with the wife of Sir Newington, with the wife of his father, felt how greatly he had failed in his duty as a gallant man, and his uneasiness extended to Marian, who, reddening, dared no longer look at him.

So much so that the situation became difficult, intolerable, inextricable, and that Sir Richard, ashamed, purple, furious with himself, desired now to

disappear as soon as possible, and would have left abruptly, in a gust of wind, in his inability to invent a plausible way of escape.

The priest, happily, cut short the constraint which all, including himself, felt, and which, if prolonged, would spoil all, preventing the success which he had promised himself to achieve by his step.

"I will see you again this evening," said he to the young man, taking leave of him with an affectionate, paternal grasp of the hand. "I made allusion just now to the privileges of the confessional; alone with Marian, we will talk as if I were receiving her at the tribunal of penitence... *Au revoir!"*

"Thank you!" said Bradwell, taking his leave and saluting Treor's granddaughter with an awkwardness which would certainly have been ridiculous under any other circumstances, but which denoted a complete suspension of his former vindictiveness.

And when the door closed on him, the abbe returned to Marian, taking her hands in an easy, caressing way, and inviting her to listen to him with attention, and, above all, to heed his advice; he implored it of her!

"We have only a little time to ourselves; let us talk little, let us talk well, or rather be silent yourself, my dear child, and be for me all ears and all heart. I declare to you that it is the voice of the Lord which converses with you," he concluded, investing his priestly air with unusual circumstance.

And, after his traditional pause, letting go the young girl's hands, walking rapidly through the room, veiling the tone of his phrases, with his chin in his band, he began upon his subject:

"You love Sir Richard, Marian. Before the events which disturb our unhappy country, and expecting them to lay it waste, sowing everywhere misery and ruin, you have several times avowed it in your confessions."

"Yes!" said she.

"I have myself advised you to stifle this love, or at least quiet it, inasmuch as you did not know the intentions of Sir Bradwell in regard to you. In his rank, with his birth, it was to be feared, if he distinguished you, if he sought your society, it would not be from a commendable motive. I forewarned you against his fascinations, against the perils of a passion which sometimes ends in dishonor."

"And I took it kindly"...

"Today, it is no longer the same," said the priest, stopping, with folded arms, before his sheep. "Richard has formally declared himself; I have heard him. It is not a mistress whom he is deceiving, whom he is urging; it is a respected wife to whom he aspires. You repulse him, you have not the right."

"Oh!" exclaimed the young girl.

But father Richmond did not permit her to formulate her protest.

"You have not the right," repeated he, "for the reasons that I stated in presence of Sir Bradwell, and because, in constraining so your heart, in breaking his, in drawing on your cause the worst calamities, you only obey a guilty watchword, a criminal countersign, both sealed with a sacrilegious vow."

"Pardon me," said Marian, "we have not time to discuss this subject."

Although knowing the moments were counted and that he had himself stated the urgency of brevity, Sir Richmond, like the majority of his colleagues whom discourses from the height of a pulpit render necessarily prolix, not accustomed to limiting himself, elaborated endless phrases and wandered off into useless digressions. Now he had prepared his theme to develop it methodically, in the logical, progressive order of arguments carefully accumulated. The remark of the young girl nonplussed him, showing a lack of deference with regard to the word of God which exhaled from his lips, as he had forewarned Marian.

But he did not entirely lose his bearings on that account, and, descending from the heights, he resumed familiarly, and not without malice, knowing the feminine nature by constant association with it and not fearing to come directly to the point:

"Lady Ellen is Richard's mistress; she has inveigled him, like a wicked princess in a fairy story; she is corrupting his body, she will ruin his soul. What do I say? If Bradwell should die today, what account would he render of his acts at the tribunal of the Most High? The lover of his father's wife, ignominy! All the commandments of the church, of God, outraged. Shameless, the work of the flesh accomplished under conditions which one shrinks from relating and which Catholicism punishes with the most extreme torture, even with the stake! And, in another world, an eternity of pain among the orbs of hell!"

"Why has he committed this inexcusable crime, worse than murder?" said Marian, coldly, in whom, all at once, virtue and the chastity of her nature rebelled indignantly.

"Why? but am I not explaining it to you?" replied the abbe, inventing, in order to sustain his position, the circumstances of the crime. "Why? Because, eudowed with an incomparable beauty, full of the voluptuousness which intoxicates, a nest of enticing lasciviousness, she has contaminated the unfortunate Richard with her sorceries, like a poor innocent boy, and no adviser has shown him the peril, no friend has extended the hand to keep him from falling into the alluring atmosphere of delicious vice."

The priest watched Marian closely. Was the effect being produced on which he counted? He smiled shrewdly, with an imperceptible half-closing of the eyelids. Evidently she was seizing the bait. Now her breast was heaving under her dress, her nostrils contracted, the tears gathered and were forced back into her throat, a hissing sound escaped from her clenched teeth, and in the pupils of her eyes something of defiance gleamed.

At once she deplored the position of Richard, irresponsible, fallen unwittingly into the snares of an enchantress, enervated by the carnal philters which she distilled; and a desire to struggle against Lady Ellen, to snatch her prey from her, invaded her, exciting the woman and the lover to the contest.

The feeling of her woman's power, of which she had been ignorant, was suddenly awakened in her; and, surprised, bewildered, proud of this power of

influence which she had never before suspected, there came to her an irresistible, childish desire to use it.

In the past she had loved Sir Richard without reasoning, without accounting for it to herself, without reflecting, without dreaming, consequently, of defending herself from this capture of her soul, from this penetration of her being; and probably she would have been more inclined to believe herself the subject.

The pain of her sacrifice, when she had taken the pledge required by the League, the inefficacy of this oath, which was binding only on her acts, but could not modify her heart, could not repress its beatings, could not change its preoccupations,—such reasons confirmed her in the idea of this subjection.

Spontaneously, in her revolt against the atrocities committed by the English, she had at the time included Richard in the reprobation which she vowed against them; the solemn kiss given to Paddy sealed, in her intention, the official rupture with Sir Bradwell; it had sufficed to see him, to learn of his interventions in favor of the conquered, to see him at work in various circumstances, to lose the courage and the force to persevere in this indifference, or, rather, hostility.

And after that she met him so often on the road! He prowled about, he stood taciturn, disconsolate, so constantly, so long, for hours, with death in his soul, about their house, impatient and feverish if, at last, she did not appear at a window; rejoiced and revived, when she went out into the street to get something for the house, to speak with a neighbor who called her, to caress the children whom their mothers were leading!

It was stronger than she; in spite of her inmost resistance, of the scruples of a severe conscience, in spite of the fear of this sin which was always dragging her along, at last she ended by showing herself and did not always succeed in avoiding Richard with her look.

Then, evidently, she imagined herself dominated, subjugated; simple and without coquetry, she did not reflect that the attraction, at least, was reciprocal, and now, the priest, after having won her interest, repeated that she held in herself a sure power over Richard, a considerable power. And not only to command the son of Newington, free and in love only with her, but capable, in a struggle of which Sir Bradwell would be the object, of winning the victory over the Duchess, so wonderfully pretty, so armed with seductions, so artful, so refined, surrounded with all the resources of princely luxury.

She, Marian, to possess this sway, when her toilet hardly differed from that of the humblest Irishwomen; when her home, sad and gloomy, with walls bare and cold, was decorated only by armfuls of flowers in their season! She did not even suspect her beauty, no man having ever praised it in her presence.

And a kind of vanity troubled her for an instant. It must be, then, that she was endowed with physical charms really queenly if, in this frame, without any artifices on her part, such a ruling power could be attributed to her.

No: they were mistaken, they exaggerated in order to tempt her to a decision; but the priest, who followed the evolution of thought in the mind of the younu girl, at once combatted the doubt which she felt.

"You are incomparably better than the Duchess," said he; "Lady Ellen, more captivating, more intoxicating, more solvent, has not the delicacy of your features, the purity of your lines, the divine contours of your form from which youth radiates and over which chastity reigns. In the church pictures, the virgins are represented with your face, the angels are not invested with more ingenuous grace than you."

But although the abbe put no warmth into his enumeration, which was more over very moderate in regard to her charms, this man's voice, detailing them, shocked her, bruising the just susceptibilities of her modesty.

A blush spread over her face, and, filled with confusion, feeling the priest's eyes enwrapping her as a *connoisseur,* considering the delicacy of her white tapering hands, the supple beauty of her neck, the fineness of her figure, she begged Sir Richmond to stop talking of herself.

At the same time, she reflected that the scrutiny to which the priest was devoting himself, without lust, Richard—it might be unconsciously—had also given himself up to, though without the same platonism, with desires which she did not clearly define, but which, at the same time, in her vague comprehension of them, revolutionized her with an indescribable fright, overwhelmed her with the weight of crushing shame.

From the little which the priest had insinuated, Richard, enticed by the Duchess, seemed to her, in his instinct, in his mechanical intuition, incapable of sentiments absolutely pure, completely detached from all carnal thought, and she reflected that, in the combat to which they were forcibly pushing her against Lady Ellen, in the arms even of this woman, he would dream perhaps of her and desire her instead of his mistress.

Seized with revolt and indignant, sick at heart, and trembling as if eyes had beheld her without a veil, as if the skin of her body had been touched by the caress and the offence of a kiss, throwing a shawl over her shoulders, she reiterated to Sir Richmond her wish that this painful interview, on the subject of which she was already too much weighed down, should now end.

She reproached herself, moreover, now, for having, if only for a few minutes, forgotten the common misery of her Irish brothers to attend to that of Sir Richard Bradwell; and the feeling of pride which had moved her some moments before, caused her cutting remorse as a piece of cowardice and a desertion.

If their hut lacked almost the necessities of life, it was because the little money which Treor and his granddaughter had went in alms to the poor, in relief to the first-comer, in services to their neighbors; if she wore clothes which were old, faded, mended, it was because she clothed poor women and children with the money which would have bought new garments for herself.

In vieing with the Duchess, who doubtless did not receive Richard without passion, without some temporary successes, Marian would sooner or later learn coquetry and desire dresses a little more modern, and a dwelling less devoid of the simplest comforts; and the realization of these wishes, modest as they seemed, could not be effected without detriment to the wretched people whom she assisted.

And she explained herself clearly in this respect, notwithstanding the protestations of the priest who was enraged at the thought of failing in the commission with which he had charged himself, after having, m Sir Richard's presence, plumed himself, so to speak, on his ability to lead the young girl to repentance.

"So, it matters little to you!" he said to her, comically opening his eyes very wide, "whether you leave in the jaws of the demon a soul whose salvation is in your hands? And you even take no account of my exhortations, which point you to this work as agreeable to God and very probably of his own designing?"

"Exhort Sir Bradwell to struggle against the temptation himself, to no longer stain himself with the execrable sin which you have denounced."

"He has not the strength."

"Give it to him by your encouragement."

"What can my voice do by the side of the siren's songs?"

"Is it not the voice of God which comes from your mouth?" replied Marian.

"He does not know the accent of the voice of the Lord!" said Richmond.

"Pray Heaven to work a miracle which will convince him!"

"The miracle would have been you, if you had consented to play the *role* which I marked out for you and for which, surely, God has chosen you."

"It is too perilous, and if I did not lose myself, I should at least be despoiled of the most precious privilege of woman,—the purity of my life."

"No, for by a general absolution in advance, I would absolve you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!"

In pronouncing these words unctuously, he executed in the air the gesture with which he dismissed the penitents at the confessional.

But Marian was indignant at this facility of indulgence of which she would not accept the benefit; she was of the opinion that it was better not to take upon herself the sin than to be purified of it by the vain words of the priest.

So that the priest became very angry, and asked her who would cleanse her of the blood of her brothers which Sir Richard would shed, as he had promised.

In vehement spite, Sir Richmond lifted in the air his great, spider-like arms, and his spread fingers starred the ceiling, while on the rough wall moved the fantastic shadow of his long, ill-formed body!

He comprehended nothing of the young girl's scruples, so exaggerated, so extreme; they denoted evidently a mind as badly balanced as that of Bradwell, and the general derangement, since the commencement of the popular disturbance, had occasioned in him a disorder that had made him sick.

So that, while anathematizing Marian, he inveighed against himself at the same time for having thoughtlessly engaged in this new complication, where he only registered once more the definite proof of his own powerlessness, compromising the little prestige and authority which remained to him.

"Who will cleanse you of the blood?" he began again.

But Treor's granddaughter was no longer there: she was setting the table in the next room, and a rattling of plates cut off the close of the reproach.

"Marian!" called the priest, excessively vexed and in a very loud voice, determined to reprimand her sharply for this breach of propriety.

Instead of answering, she went out into the yard, and he saw her go towards the cellar with a lantern, and fill some jugs from a cask of water.

Decidedly, his preaching had been pure loss; unfortunately, it was, perhaps, not in the desert. Outside, steps were heard on the ground hardened by the frost; and, in the same way that he had surprised Richard's quarrel, some one, connected with the castle, strolling about in the darkness as a spy, might have chanced to overhear his charges against the Duchess.

In such a case, he positively saw himself no longer in fine clothes, but wrapped in an icy shroud, by the orders of the vindictive lady; for she surely would never forgive him this furious interference with her criminal love, or his grave insults to her character, and above all her beauty!

He trembled, thinking of his awkwardness in thus placing himself under the hammer at a time when already his attitude toward the Irish exposed him to the danger of being sprawled by them upon the anvil; and since to do what he imagined to be his duty, to obey his conscience, became so perilous in the present emergency, he decided to mix no more in anything, leaving events to take their course, all hideous passions to unchain themselves, massacres to be perpetrated, cataclysms to burst upon the country, and, if need be, the impious to profane the churches and disregard the law of God,—God himself who, on the whole, permitted doubtless all these scandals, all these base acts, all these miseries, all these abominations, for the punishment of the sinners.

Confining himself hereafter to praying, at the foot of the altar, that the celestial wrath might disarm, and begging the Lord to pardon the guilty,—in this way, the priest flattered himself that he would make them forget him and would thus escape the blows of either party; and, taking a last warming at the fire, re-adjusting his hat which had been pushed on one side in the heat of the discussion, he left the house deliberately, and then, going along by the houses, he glided into the shadow in a direction away from the church, that he might not reach home till after the service and sure of not encountering on his way Treor, or any of the United Irishmen.

Marian, returning upon his heels, overwhelmed with this discussion, with all the impressions received, with all the sensations experienced, with the various, violent, conflicting emotions which had pierced her soul, sank down in exhaustion, now that no witness constrained her to dissimulate, and, in the

fatigue, in the suffering; of her weakened frame, sobs broke forth from her throat.

Believing that the priest was returning, she rose suddenly from the seat on which she had been supporting herself. But it was not he; some one was drumming at the door with an unaccustomed, hesitating hand, like that of a child or an old man, and timidly pushing it open.

"Edith!" exclaimed Marian, drying her eyes, and extending her hands and face to her breathless visitor, before whose suffering her own suddenly vanished.

Arklow's widow was shivering, although in profuse perspiration and burning; with a violent fever, while flames devoured her hollow eyes so deeply sunken in their sockets, and reddened the cheek-bones so frightfully prominent in the thin, wan, almost cadaverous face.

The young girl drew her to the fire, wanted her to sit down, and questioned her with a filial solicitude; but all this interest seemed to trouble her, on the contrary, and she accepted its marks and testimonies with a rudeness which Marian interpreted wrongly, imagining that Edith was aware of Richard's visit and scandalized by it.

"Oh! do not take away your hands, Edith," she said, "and look at me; if he has entered here, it was not of my choice."

The mother of the little soldier trembled, and her fixed eyes opened immoderately in a face of marble paleness and with a mute agitation of the lfps which outlined in vacancy words certainly terrible for the poor woman, whose haggard face was full of stupor.

After several attempts, hoarse sounds came from her mouth, in which confused utterance could be distinguished this agonizing interrogatory:

"Entered here! Who?"

"Ah! I imagined that you knew," said the young girl.

Then, since she had begun the confidence, she finished it, not having the-least reproach to address to herself, and she related the interview with Sir Bradwell, the urgent counsels of the priest, and how the incident had closed, not without much heart-swelling, but nevertheless without her having lost for an instant the recollection of the oath which bound them all.

A contraction of the old woman's face, so sad, so distressing, again misled Marian, who protested that she should not judge her with severity.

"I have not the right," said Edith, very gloomily.

"Not the right! Why? Because you are not a relative? I mean the right which we each possess to weigh the acts of those who have sworn conjointly with us. Upon you more than any other it devolves, by right of your martyrdom. You have paid for it with the blood of your husband, with the hard captivity in which your adored son groans."

"You, more than any one, have the soul of a patriot," replied the old woman, to turn the conversation from herself; for her worst martyrdom was what she was now enduring.

The odious hour was approaching when Newington, fatal, implacable, would arrive to claim the execution of the infamous bargain which he had imposed and to which she had consented, and all Marian's words pierced her like so many daggers, like so many insulting blows on the cheeks.

For several weeks she had not lived, if sobeit she were now living; a slow, an intolerable agony had developed, wherein her crime crushed her, wherein the thought of her treason snatched her suddenly from the torpor in which want of food and sleep had kept her for whole days, and it threw her into the street, pursuing her in the midst of hootings, chasing her across the open country, into the depths of woods, where the unfortunate woman, tortured and torn by premature remorse, cowered with shame; and she lay thus, in the cold and snow, by night, revived only by the awakening of her maternal heart.

Suddenly, with a start, as if she heard again the shots of the squad which filed before her eyes on the evening of her admission to Cumslen-Park, she would get up and run to the castle to inform herself about her Michael, pacing, like a tireless sentinel, up and down the approaches to the buildings, listening in the breeze to hear some sound from her son, breathing her child in the atmosphere, perceiving his pale phantom, tottering under the weight of his chains and the harshness of the jailers.

Then, when she reflected at what price she could liberate him, she would run away at full speed, in a breath, resolved to walk, to run so far, so far, so far, that return for Christmas would be impossible, or that, on the way, people might kill without pity this emaciated and demented creature, looking like death, surely wandering about with some sinister design, bent in advance under the weight of an immense repentance.

Four days ago she had fled, according to her habit, and no one knew in what direction; she had returned in haste, on the road day and night, panting and full of fear lest she might be too late for the appointment with the savage Newington.

And on the threshold hesitation had suddenly resumed possession of her, congealed her on the spot, vacillating under the enormous weight of opprobrium already accepted; and fearful, timid, a whole world of opposing ideas and arguments for and against her step rushing about in her poor empty head, she really wished to sink a hundred feet under ground, as through a trap-door, as in the turf pits into which passers-by sometimes fell.

Then, in a giddiness which, in her brain, mixed up the ideas of good and evil, confounded justice and injustice, thrusting the Irish back into the dim distance in order to leave her only the consciousness of the peril from which she could redeem her son only by introducing some one through this door, mechanically, automatically, gropingly, she pushed in, believing that she heard, behind her, in the darkness, the impatient steps of the man and the murmur of his angry voice.

Meanwhile Marian continued to torture her with her eulogies, which fell on her like so many brands and devoured her flesh like the bite of ulcerated wounds.

"To sacrifice," said she, "a love which had hardly blossomed, to renounce the hope of a happiness of which one has had but a glimpse, what is that by the side of your abnegation? Ark low died for Ireland! Have you ever regretted his sacrifice to the country? It became necessary, for the salvation of our people, that Michael should share the fate of his father; do you think that for you, his fond mother, it would be better for him to live?"

"Hush!" said Edith, gloomily.

And Marian, who was arranging the Christmas-tree on a table and finishing hanging to the fir branches the toys and candles, by knots of green ribbon, suddenly interrupted her work to support the miserable woman, who was tottering on her legs and who stretched out her arms to recover her balance.

"Pardon, Edith, pardon!" said she. "I lay my hand too heavily on your bleeding wounds. Compose yourself.... You have no news of Michael? No news is good news. You would have heard if any misfortune had come to him."

The young girl gently helped the trembling widow to sit down, and then reached for a vial of liquor in the cupboard to revive her; but Edith pushed away the flask, not wishing any.

In truth, she existed by an inconceivable miracle, nourishing herself on air, so to speak, consenting to take nutriment—and in what quantities—only in her hours of prostration, when her friends forced her like a child, reprimanding her, scolding her, invoking the name of the prisoner to compel her, if she desired to see him again, to sustain herself.

She had obeyed, that she might not die before the time fixed by Newington for Michael's deliverance; but today all her wishes were summed up in the longing not to survive her execrable bargain. She had confidence in the word of Lord Newington; he would keep his promise, but she did not feel the courage to face her son afterwards.

No, in future a thick purple would hide her, and Michael would read her infamy, her rascality, on her shamed face, through her lowered eyelashes, in the stammering of her utterance.

For she would not dare to rejoice openly that he was safe and free, and he, a deserter, not being able to explain his unexpected pardon, recalling the scene in the park when the bullets had been spared only after a cry which she had uttered, would guess the enigma of the clemency of his executioners.

Yes, to die presently, before the close of the appointed hour, such was the Christmas to which she aspired: an instantaneous death,—to be extinguished with the lights on the Christmas tree! But, now, a revival of energy was necessary in order to send Marian away and permit the Duke to slip into the house.

A shadow rested on the window, filling the whole width of the casement, and, by its great height and imposing breadth, was recognizable as that of

Newington, who was growing imprudent, audacious, because of their too long delay in giving him entrance and because perhaps he was getting chilled through just to be able to see the conspirators assemble without securing for himself a hiding-place within hearing of their resolutions and thus possessing himself of the plans of the executive committee at Dublin.

Marian, who had recommenced her work of organizing the festival promised the children, had turned her back to the window; but Edith was facing the panes of glass upon which a low drumming of fingers had attracted her attention; frozen, she motioned to the shadow to go away; then, with lungs terribly oppressed, with her heart so compressed as to draw from her cries, she expressed her astonishment that the young girl had not gone with the children to the church.

"And who would have prepared these surprises for them, my good friend? Would you yourself have had the patience, if you had come sooner?"

"What is there left to do, now?" asked the widow. "To light the candles when the tumult of the band shall announce its arrival.... I will do it, if you wish; you go and say some prayers."

Marian looked at her. Why this exhortation all at once? Why, above all, did not Edith think rather of praying herself? And Arklow's widow, seeing what question the young girl was asking herself, said:

"Because I, you see, do not feel the strength to move; I could not walk twenty steps at this moment, outside, in the cold, in the night which agitates me and which is peopled with phantoms!"

"And yet," said Treor's granddaughter, touched, "you wish that God might be interested in your lot, that he might be moved to pity over your heart-breaking miseries? Take my place here, I will run to pray for you at the church, where perhaps I should not have gone for myself, in view of the horrors which heaven authorizes."

Quickly, with a turn of her hand covering her head with a hood, reminding Edith a last time not to fail to light the tree for the return of the children, embracing her closely and offering her forehead like a loved and affectionate daughter, she left.

Immediately, coming out of an intensely dark corner, Newington introduced himself into the house, frightening the widow, who was anxiously awaiting him, and who, at the last, hoped that he would renounce his project, through fear or prudence, perhaps simply tired of waiting.

"You!" exclaimed she, hiding her eyes and tottering again.

He checked her and roughly asked:

"You have not spoken?"

"I have been a coward!"

"You will say nothing?"

"I shall contmue to be an infamous wretch."

"Good! but no emotion," said he, taking off his cloak and throwing it over his arm, fixing in the holsters of his belt of gold silk the pistols whose

emblazoned hilts glittered in the light of the fire, and assuring himself that his sword moved freely in its scabbard.

"No emotion," he repeated, "it would betray us both, and consequently a third, him whose safety you have so much at heart."

The bells rang out gaily in a light peal, and in the clear atmosphere of the limpid night rose the songs of the children.

"It is the end of the mass, is it not?" said Newington.

"Yes," said Edith, in desperation and hurrying at the same time to light the wax-candles, as Marian had charged her. "Well! Where shall I conceal myself?" appealed the Duke.

"Oh! Find a place for yourself!"

Now the folding doors of the church opened noisily, and the troop of the faithful vacated the temple and dispersed, grouping themselves in families, to regain their homes after good-nights and wishes for a New Year, better than its predecessors, the dawn of an era of liberty!

Most of them started towards Treor's dwelling, and Paddy Neil, with the children at full gallop, very soon burst into the house, just as Newington had concealed himself in a retreat in the wall, covered by a curtain.

The curtain still moved, visibly conforming to the body and legs of Newington, and every one would surely have remarked this peculiarity except for the marvellous attraction of the superb tree, gilded in its nimbus of dancing lights in which tiny tin household toys shone like silver, dolls' hair glistened, the tinsel of artificial jewelry blazed like diamonds, and the trimming on the rich dresses of marionettes sparkled dazzlingly.

And Paddy, taking down one by one all the splendors of this dream of paradise, read the names inscribed on the articles, selected in concert with Marian, who had now arrived, and distributed the gifts to the recipients amid a tumult of joyous hurrahs, clapping of hands, and frantic capers.

As he went on, commenting on the prize which fell to each, he won the approbation of the grown persons who came in, filling the too small house.

"Sheep," said he; "just what we are, only we are tired of being sheared.... A watch...; although it does not go, it will strike, all the same, the hour of our deliverance."

"A doll!" cried a radiant child, admiring the toilet of a puppet; and she added: "As magnificently dressed as Lady Newington!"

"With more heart underneath and less coquetry," continued Paddy.

"Soldiers! soldiers!" exclaimed a boy, who was already ranging them in line on the edge of a table and taking aim at them.

"Wooden soldiers!" quizzed the jovial Irishman, showing his white and laughing teeth, which could bite as well. "He will not break them, however, before we have destroyed ours,—the infernal Mob, the Ancient Britons, the whole set, all the rest of the goods which King George will send us."

The tardy were still coming in, arriving from a great distance, and Treor presented them to the Bunclodyans who did not know them; they made room for

them by the fire, gathered about them, and almost piled themselves up on each other.

They especially crowded around the people from the barony of Shemaker. Accustomed from their childhood to hunt game in the marshes and sea-birds in the rough season, the skin of their tanned faces and hands, their caps, which fell over their eyes, and their thick beards gave them a savage appearance which rather frightened the women. They were extraordinary shots, from whom the English would hear before long, and Treor cited instances of their marksmanship which surpassed in skill anything imaginable.

Paddy finished his distribution.

"A violin, Mr. Treor!" cried a rosy-cheeked boy, offering the instrument to the old man and begging him to play, since he knew so well, with his magic bow, how to make them sing.

"Another time!" he responded, counting his guests with a glance.

And, finding every one present, he invited his granddaughter to lead away the children, who were at first refractory, having begun their games, covered tables and chairs with their toys, and organized matches.

Vainly the young girl held out to them the favorite sin of children of their age, gluttony, the enticing promise of a good repast: a roast goose—lean and tough—and cakes of all kinds, dry, frosted, with cream, fruit tarts, which awaited them in the other room, where they could amuse themselves more comfortably, running, shouting, raising Cain, and disturbing no one else.

They declared they were not hungry, and one of them stated the reason why he had no appetite.

Had not Mr. Treor just said in the church what is repeated every day,—that in Ireland more than half the people do not eat?

"Well!" concluded the child, "we have just eaten supper; let the goose and the cakes be given to those whose stomachs are pinched."

They yielded, however, and, when they had disappeared, the host said:

"Now we only lack Sir Harvey."

"Here he is!" said the agitator, appearing and greeting the assembly. And they bolted the door, while the groups stepped back respectfully that he might advance.

But, though very dignified, he was at the same time very simple.

Familiarly, he offered his hands that they might take them. Many hesitated, recalling his crucifixion, which he seemed no longer to remember; and, when they explained to him the reason of this abstention, he said:

"Yes, the sores are still a little sensitive, but one does not stop at suffering so slight when it is a question of grasping friends' hands; and I ought to retain the memory of this torture only to punish the author, remembering that any of my brothers might have endured it in my place, and also to thank the devoted woman who cared for me and whose dreadful grief afflicts me as profoundly as if ties of close relationship united us."

He looked for Edith, who, having followed the troop of little ones, was with them in the other room; but he interposed when they started to disturb her; in the midst of these little ones, won by their contagious gayety, she doubtless forgot for an instant her overwhelming misery; so he immediately asked for news of the country.

"Excellent. The enthusiasm in the cause of the rebellion only grows. Their sole fear was that it might not be restrained till the signal for the explosion."

And Harvey, applauding, informed them that they would not have to wait long for this signal. The English had just suffered a formidable repulse in the neighborhood of Dublin, and in the very outskirts of the rebellious city. In consequence of the defeat, under the shock of the surprise and the anguish, they comprehended that the insurrection of the capital was the fire to the powder whose train would shortly flame from one end of the country to the other; and they feared lest they might be unable to recross the sound, especially as at that very time a French fleet had been sighted, borne over the ocean by a favorable wind to the aid of United Ireland.

"Long live France!" cried Paddy.

What imprudence! They hushed him, notwithstanding each one's wish to imitate him in the joy which they all felt over the news, rousing in their souls an impatient eagerness for the contest.

But they checked all manifestation,—partly through deference, not to interrupt Harvey, and partly through curiosity to learn the rest.

"A complete fleet," continued the agitator: "fifteen three-deckers, twenty frigates, six transport-ships, and fifteen thousand men to land."

"Which means assured, indisputable, glorious victory, with what we shall ourselves do."

"Hoche commands the expedition."

"In that case, Ireland is free," said several at once, tossing their caps in the air.

"And the landing-place?" asked some one.

"The bay of Cork."

"And Newington here!" murmured Edith.

She stood like a statue of dark despair framed in the doorway between the two rooms, and spoke so loud that she would have been heard if a warm murmur of satisfaction had not been raised at the very moment, at the news that the landing of the brave Frenchmen would take place in the vicinity and at the thought of being favorably situated to assist them, the first to welcome the soldiers and sailors of the friendly Republic, and also the first to use gun and pike in their company.

Their tongues began to unloose, the enthusiasm could no longer be pent up; they exchanged nervous grasps of the hand, there were gleams in the eyes which saw at the horizon, coming under full sail, the expected vessels, and their joy overflowed when Bagenel Harvey's information was completed with the date when the French forces would set foot on Irish soil.

"Day after tomorrow, according to the calculations!" said he, amid cheers which they could no longer restrain and which no one thought of checking.

Even Harvey was pleased with this frenzy; it seemed to him necessary on the eve of decisive hostilities, and, far from recalling them to circumspection, he did not fear to excite them still more.

"Bravo!" he exclaimed. "So far I have enjoined upon you a barren resignation, in order to deceive the enemy, lull, its vigilance to sleep, and impose a check upon its cruel practices, upon its ferocity. High hearts now, and your hands on your swords, on your guns; a pike in the hands of a patriot is worth a hundred times the most unerring weapon handled by a hireling, even though an intrepid defender of an unjust cause."

"We are ready!" they cried on all sides.

"The English soldier fights against you in obedience to the impious order of chiefs who are the rascally lackeys of an imbecile king," continued the agitator; "he fights for the satisfaction of beastly instincts excited in him by the leaders of those troops of brigands which pillage your dwellings and lust after your wives and your daughters.

"Yours it shall be to recover the soil of which the thieves have dispossessed you. Formerly you reigned as masters over this corner of the earth where you were born; it nourished you; now you are slowly dying in it of want, when famine does not mow you down on the stones of the highways, there to lie unburied, the prey of unclean birds and loathsome beasts. Water this soil with the blood of the spoilers; there will spring up an abundant harvest to surfeit the appetite which has been accumulating during the centuries in which your stomachs have clamored with implacable hunger!"

The applause redoubled, though more soberly expressed in order not to interrupt the orator, who continued:

"No, do not delude yourselves with the thought that the oppressor ever will be moved to pity. Pity would disturb his digestion. He hastens it by hunting through your meagre harvests, trampling without restraint in fruitful seasons upon the growing ears. One does not find fortune in a horse's footsteps; under the hoofs of theirs lies ruin!"

All had suffered continually more or less from these excesses of the hunters, who, in a gallop of their whole band over a field anxiously cultivated, ravaged the hope of harvests and left them a prey to absolute privation, constraining them, that they might not die, to expatriate themselves to beg in the cities, to exile themselves in England where their daughters, their sisters, were hired as servants, unless, little by little, receiving no wages, they finally sank into the mire.

Harvey knew how to touch a sensitive chord, as bitter tones of assent proved to him together with the contractions of faces growing wild, and he resumed his speech, passing in review the whole of the facts and monstrous deeds of these daily tyrants, retracing the picture of their crimes, recapitulating the series of cruelties with which they had soiled themselves more recently, and

portraying in advance all the horrors, all the ignominies, of which they would be guilty in the near future, if they were not finished with at once, if they were not reduced to powerlessness to injure, if death, which walked by their side as a docile servant, were not forced to turn its blows against them without pity, without remission, until the sigh of the last one should be exhaled in the wind of the trumpets sounding deliverance.

Hurrahs broke forth, filling the house, and Paddy went out to look about in the neighborhood, returning to advise them to hush their clamors which were reverberating to the devil and which must have already excited the suspicions of the soldiers if, sitting at the tables before their own feasts, the noise of their jaws chewing the food, and of their glasses falling on the table, had not prevented them from hearing.

Edith shrugged her shoulders. Fine precautions when the Duke, in his secret nook, was not losing a word of what was said aloud. Or even in an undertone. What a pity! And she treated Paddy with a kind of disdain at the thought that he should search outside, and that his scent did not reveal to him Newington's hiding-place. An enemy, in the very midst of them! Is he not to be smelt, then, like a wild beast?

At the same time she shivered with fear whenever Neill or any one else approached too near the hiding-place, or looked in that direction; and she conceived the idea of going to station herself in such a way as to conceal it; but then, might not this, on the contrary, draw their attention in that direction? She abandoned her project; moreover, she would have lacked the strength to execute it. Her stiff legs would not move, and her arms, when she tried to stir them, would not separate from her body, which seemed to be fastened to the floor.

Was paralysis seizing her, then? No locomotion, no movement; would dumbness follow? She tried to pronounce a word and did not succeed, her jaw-bones rusted, her cheeks rigid, and in her seemingly metallized palate her tongue petrified and heavier than an ingot of lead.

And at that very instant a remorse more tormenting than ever seized her, urged her to keep silence no longer, to reveal the presence of the dreadful spy.

Sir Harvey was now giving instructions; King George's regiments, in a hurried march, doubling, tripling their rations, travelled day and night, by foot and horse, and, in seized vehicles,—carriages or wagons,—were being transported from a hundred different points, north, east, west, and south, towards the bay of Cork to drive back the landing troops. Artillery rolled along all the roads to be ranged in batteries on the heights commanding the harbor and to bombard the relief ships, dismast them, and sink them with their garrisons.

Well, then, it was important to take possession of these heights, as quickly as possible, without delay, to guard them, to fortify them, and, behind the improvised ramparts, to annihilate, as fast as they approached, regiments of the line, foot-soldiers, cavalry, artillery, all the reinforcements.

"Yes, yes, at once, let us go!" said all, with one voice.

"Good!" said Harvey, "let us separate; in half an hour, re-enter quietly your several houses; then a general rendezvous, by groups, at the oak of the Virgin."..

"Silence!" imposed the hollow voice of Edith.

Stammering, the widow brought out the word in two fragments, her mouth distorted, and, with a superhuman effort, loosening her arms, which opened by jerks, and then only half way.

They looked at her, perplexed and agitated; without vexation at her strange and untimely interruption, when such a grave crisis was at hand, but not without a keen anxiety, so strongly was the expression of an intense will affirmed on her lifeless face, as well as in her eyes as dark as caverns.

"Silence! Why?" asked Treor, with solicitude, believing, for his part, in a mental derangement easily conceivable.

"Because...," said the poor woman, with unheard-of difficulties, tearing out the syllables, "because"....

They positively hung upon her lips, suffering to see her exert herself in such a way, the veins swollen on her yellow forehead, her lips compressed like those of a mask in antique tragedy.

"Because?" gently asked Marian, who had come in.

But no other sound passed between her clenched teeth; she doubtless could not speak, and so abandoned this struggle against the obstacle which closed her jaws, and her expressive eyes veiled themselves under their heavy, swollen lids, burned by tears shed daily, without respite.

"Come!" said freor's granddaughter; and she tried by coaxing to lead her away among the children. But Edith, extending her arm with a sudden push, drove her away.

"No!" said she, in a harsh tone, lifting her eyelids and showing a transformed face, painful in its expression to the point of paroxysm.

Harvey stepped towards her and questioned her. What was it then, that she felt? What preoccupation was crossing her mind? If she had a reason why they should be quiet, well, let her give it!

"Leave me!" she said, lowering her head and hiding her face, on which was now painted extreme confusion, followed suddenly by fright at the visions passing before her.

In truth, in a cloud of blood which blinded her, was heaped up a great pile of corpses. Stretching as far as the eye could reach, covering the entire country, the plains, the mountains, and the faces of the dead, turned toward her, looked at her reproachfully.

Through this funereal litter of all the males, young, middle-aged, old, armed for deliverance and massacred by Newington's forewarned soldiers, wives, sisters, daughters, mothers wandered inconsolable, embracing with frenzy, in the madness of their grief, those whom they recognized, and hurling maledictions till they themselves expired, exhausted by the horrors of a dreadful agony.

Alone, the widow of Arklow remained standing in the Sea of blood which mounted to her knees, and then to her breast, and she contemplated her work while the ravens feasted, croaking her name and thanking her for this banquet of flesh which she offered them; and Arklow, risen from his grave, disowned her; and her Michael, renouncing the benefit of the treason which assured him existence, killed himself by the side of his comrades, refusing to look at her, from fear that he might be suspected of connivance.

"No! no! no!" she articulated energetically, exciting their curiosity like an enigma.

Horrified at the carnage of which she had had a glimpse, at these hearts of mothers or wives broken by her odious selfishness, she repented, decided that these abominations should not be committed, resolved to suffer alone the death of a son and to rejoin him immediately in the tomb.

Concentrating all her powers, tottering, she succeeded in detaching herself from the door, in taking a few steps, supported by Harvey and Treor, and, designating the hiding-place where the Duke was trembling with rage, she said, answering at last the question of a few moments before:

"Because,—because my Lord Newington is there."

"In my house!" cried Treor. "Nonsense!"

"I brought him in!" said the widow.

"She is wandering!" exclaimed several at once, filled with commiseration.

"It is the truth!" said the Duke, putting aside the curtain which concealed him, and springing out of his hiding-place, with no pallor in his cheeks, but proud, speaking m a loud voice, disdainful, with defiance on his crafty lips, his arms crossed, not dreaming of having recourse to his weapons, notwithstanding the cries of death which rose, notwithstanding the circle which narrowed around him.

"He promised to pardon my child!" explained Edith, in a hollow voice, to those a hundred leagues from supposing her guilty of such an act. The mothers present comprehended her, nevertheless, and pitied her, while trembling at the thought of the consequences if her treason had been continued to the end.

Under the broadside of furious looks, of insults, for having imposed such a bargain on an unfortunate woman, so tried, on a brain weakened by the assassination of her husband, the burning of her hut, and the captivity of her son; before menaces flung in his face, and clenched fists two inches from his nose, the Duke maintained a bold front, eyeing by turns the nearest and most furious assailants, enveloping them in an insulting scorn which exasperated them.

In their hands, their prisoner, he dared them; certain of them, intimidated,, lowered their eyes; he still appeared formidable. Free, commanding his soldiers, warning them of the announced attack, surely not one of them would escape. Consequently it was the part of prudence to suppress him. "To death! to death!" they vied with each other in repeating. "Or let him sign the order to release Michael!" said a woman. Newington sneered; a hand was stretched out to seize

him; he grasped it, and,, twisting it between his powerful fingers, he brought the aggressor, whose suffering made him lose heart, to his knees; then they would have thrown themselves on the Duke, if Treor and Harvey had not checked their fury. “No execution without trial!” said the agitator.

“Justice and its pomp and paraphernalia!” sneered the Duke. “A court, witnesses, a summing-up, a sentence. My God! all these formalities waste precious time, and during the delays the prisoner, the accused, the condemned stands a. chance of being rescued and revenged. I answer you that, for my part, would not stand upon so much ceremony.”

“Do not tempt us,” said Treor; but he went on in the midst of continual mutterings which grew ever louder:

“Of all those who are here, whose faces I have seen, whose voices I know, the furious ones, not one, I swear to you, will lead a long life. Very short, on the contrary, at the end of a rope. Clear the way, then, that I may escape, you blackguards! Or else strangle me as soon as possible, set your fangs in my throat, you dogs of rebels.... if you can!”

“Duke, no provocation!... We hold you in our power, and your bravado will not awe us!” said Treor.

“To death! We wait too long!” murmured the greater part of the assembly, feverish, thirsting for vengeance, and Newington, in the crowd, driven to the wall, hastily pulled his pistols from his belt, pointed them in front of him, with finger on the trigger, and admonished them not to defy his dogs: they would bark and bite at the same time!

They were not afraid, but prepared for a new rush; several Bunclodyans forced a passage, claiming the perilous honor of arresting the rascal; Paddy Neill, in the front rank, prepared to leap upon him; but once more the agitator restrained this outburst, and, placing himself between his own and the Duke, lowered the weapons which they drew from their pockets or from under their cloaks.

“I beg you, my friends, appease your just wrath and renounce your right of retaliation, which is so just, but the use of which would dishonor you before posterity and before history! The man most guilty—and the Duke of Newington answers to this description; all the iniquities he carries on his conscience—even the man most guilty spare until you have tried him.”

“He was tried long ago!” interrupted voices.

“Not regularly, not in his presence, not when he could defend himself, explain himself. To order such cruelties as those for which he will remain accountable to you, perhaps his lawyer would argue that this man is insane.”

They recognized the justice of the sentiment expressed by Harvey; but also its unseasonableness, and at such a juncture reason was on Newington’s side when he spoke, a few minutes before, of the precious time wasted in formality.

While establishing a court, or even while promptly questioning the prisoner and consulting as to his late, unless they should juggle the ceremony and make a show, a mockery of it, the Britons, the Infernal Mob, the castle, would have

plenty of time to invade the house, overturn the chief justice, his assistants, and the witnesses, and take away the accused, whom it was important, moreover, first to disarm, and who probably would not submit to this operation with a good grace,, without using his effective means of defence, and, before giving them up, would break the heads of more than one of those who should attempt to lay hands on him.

"To death! to death! then," they cried now, without consenting to let Harvey expatiate longer, who saw it was useless to resist.

And in spite of his sense of justice, of his horror of summary executions, in which, often, mobs in their blindness attack the innocent, he decided that the case of Newington was exceptional, and that he merited the torments inflicted by him on so many of the Irish, and the death which he lavished on others.

He felt that, in a state of war, necessity set aside law, and that the Duke living, even at the bottom of a dungeon, would constitute a danger. Still, he hesitated to abandon him to the vindictiveness of the company: one against all,—such disproportion shocked his delicate sense of honor.

Suddenly the sound of a distant report changed his intentions.

It came from the castle, surely, and it was not the discharge of a single musket at a beast or a burglar, or the weapon of a drunkard emptied at the moon, but a roaring and prolonged rattle of musketry, of firing by platoons.

Instantly, Edith had a presentiment of what was happening.

"Michael, my son, killed!" said she, breathless, terrible, a fury.

And, dishevelled, her whole body shaken by a revengeful wrath, drawn up as if to hurl itself better, she rushed at Newington, who, unmoved before the daggers, before the guns, trembled in the face of this feeble, tottering old woman, whom a child might have knocked down with a push.

"My son," repeated she, "they have murdered him. Ah! Duke! Duke of Death, your promises, your word!... infamous before, you are perjured now!"

She brandished her thin fist, the bones of which were prominent under the driedup, blue skin, and slapped the face of the Duke, whose wrath, however, still further roused by this offence, was tempered by the desire to exonerate himself.

"First," said he, "no one or nothing has proved that the prisoner has been executed."

"I can prove it," said a new arrival, Nelly Burke.

She was on her way home, after the mass, and, on the road which overhung Cumslen-Park, she had seen perfectly, by the light of the lanterns, Arklow's son led into the garden, fastened to a tree, and shot by the soldiers, at the command and before the eyes of the Duchess, leaning, during the preparations, against the balcony of a window.

"So be it!" said Newington; "but I am not a party to this execution. Admit, moreover, that it would be past comprehension if I had ordered it while you held me in your clutches. Yet concealed under this curtain, this old woman immediately betrayed me, she crying: 'Vengeance!'"

Notwithstanding the correctness of this observation, they muttered sarcasms upon his courage; not even hesitating to throw it in his face that he was pleading with fear in his breast....

"Me!"

He pronounced this word in a thundering voice reinforced by the sound of his chest as he struck it roughly to affirm his personality, the bravery which they doubted!

This monosyllable, so accented, signified more than all phrases, all protests, and called up his brilliant past as a soldier, his boldness, his wounds, his exploits, the orders of the day in which his commanding generals praised him.

And since, against all right and fairness, they suspected him of fear, well! he accepted joint responsibility with the Duchess, from whom the order emanated, and he applauded this measure, only regretting that he had not been there to witness the spectacle.

They hooted at him in mad rage.

"Shoot him, then, at once and without further beating about the bush!" said different voices in a tumult, an exasperation which Nelly Burke increased. She related that she had not only seen this horrible picture, but a hasty movement where the Britons were stationed, like an alarm, during which the lieutenant went up to Lady Ellen's apartments to talk with her, while the men took up their guns, put on their cross-belts, and prepared to set out.

"To come here to deliver him!" they said, pointing to Newington.

"They must take away nothing but a corpse!"

"Only," said Paddy, "we will demand a reward of Lady Ellen."

"Why?"

"We shall have made her a widow, and she can marry Sir Richard."

"It is for that purpose, moreover, that she has had Michael killed."

"You lie!" cried Bradwell, entering by breaking the door and followed by an escort of soldiers.

Then, addressing the Duke:

"Help yourself, sir, and you are free!"

Newington had not waited for the invitation. Discharging his two pistols at once, he knocked down the two nearest aggressors, who parried while falling, and, though wounded himself, a ball in his shoulder and a stab in his thigh, he forced a passage with vigorous lunges of his weapons, receiving a shower of balls which lodged in his thick clothing, were flattened against the walls, and riddled the chest.

"But the children in the other room?" cried some one.

Marian, at the commencement of the hubbub, had taken them all out into the court, pushed them into the cellar, and, barricading them, quieted the fears of the smaller ones, and restrained the larger ones, who wished to plunge into the disturbance.

Reassured as to the fate of the children, the hosts of the elect renewed, in the house invaded by the soldiers, the struggle which had been commenced,

frightful in such a small space, where the musketry rattled, causing happily more noise than harm, with epic hand-to-hand struggles, the wounded stamped upon, and dagger-thrusts showered without cessation; blood streamed and spurted from the wounds, flooding the floor, staining the walls, and sprinkling in places the beams of the ceiling.

In vain Sir Bradwell tried to stop this butchery. He was ignorant of Marian's decision in regard to him, not having seen the priest again and with good reason, and he did not yet dream of undertaking the atrocious work with which he had menaced the young girl some minutes before.

Reentering the castle after leaving Treor's house, and hearing of the preparations for the execution of Michael Arklow, he had made inquiries, and, learning from whom the orders came, he had gone to the apartments of the Duchess, and, questioning her, had had his suspicion aroused by her evasive answers, her annoyance at being questioned, her joy, her triumph when the little soldier, with a shattered skull, whirled round on himself and then lay stretched, with folded arms, on the ground.

But it was not so much this death that rejoiced her; and she did not feast herself again with the sight of the young corpse; she listened in the direction of the village, and the clamors which soon reached her ears from the dwelling of Marian's grandfather transported her with joy.

But her spite almost immediately manifested itself.

The tumult increased; it lasted, contrary to her expectations; doubtless this disappointed her so much that finally, forgetting Richard's presence, she said aloud:

"What! they do not reply by the execution of the other! They are amusing themselves by insulting him: what are they waiting for?"

And, her cheek red with wrath against these "imbeciles," she inveighed against them, urged them on through the intervening space as if they could hear her at that distance and succumb to the suggestion of her ungovernable will....

"Ah! the old woman has not unmasked him yet, does not understand the gunshots; and these cries are not addressed to him!"

Then Richard comprehended that his father, misled among the Bunclodyans to spy them, was in danger of death, of a death which he perhaps merited, but called down on him, imposed on him, by Lady Ellen, and always with the same aim,—to free herself so that, as a widow, she could marry her incestuous lover.

To do nothing in these circumstances, when he clearly perceived the Machiavelian designs of the Duchess, and while it was not too late to interpose, was equivalent to complicity, and he had no wish to bear this charge.

From the balcony he notified the soldiers, who were finishing the funeral task, to remain in arms, ready to follow where he would lead them, and, in spite of Ellen's imprecations, in spite of her efforts to detain him, clinging to his arm and making him drag her on the carpet, getting up again and barring the door, imperious, imploring, and at last letting him go with a sarcasm, weary of

struggling, her limbs bruised, and believing that Richard would not arrive in time,—he had gone!

But on the way he enjoined upon his men to be cool, to spare especially the women, and he forbade them to use their guns. To deliver Lord Newington,—that was their only duty.

They would succeed without bloodshed; and the soldiers promised, winking and laughing at his credulity. They had been out of work too long. Only now and then a few blows to give to some refractory soldier who had been ordered to fatigue-duty and who had refused, to paladins protecting some jade who repulsed them, to some mocking child, to some scornful old man.

"Outside of the King's peace" remained a vain phrase, a derisive formula devoid of sense; and these privations were made heavier by Sir Richard's appeal to the officers. Ah! many thanks! they would make up for lost time, for the consideration and reserve and respect which had been forced upon them.

And, as soon as Treor's threshold was crossed, profiting by the occasion of the pistol shots fired by the Duke, they gave rein to their concentrated desire for carnage, to their sanguinary instincts at last unbridled, to their thirst for revenge for so much burdensome prudence.

Vainly Sir Richard recalled them to calmness and self-possession; they struck as if they were deaf, they wounded as if they were blind, struck and wounded themselves, moreover, with usury.

Irishwomen, Irishmen, soldiers, the same frenzy intoxicated each, and, all the combatants intertwined, forming compact groups, no one dared to use his weapons, for fear of striking the friends and comrades next him; and the fight went on, not less fiercely, but, on the contrary, more savagely, with the natural weapons: a battle of enraged animals strangling each other, biting each other everywhere, taking shreds of flesh from shoulders, from limbs, with rags of clothing, from the face, baring the cheek-bones and the double row of teeth.

Edith, crouching, wound her arms around Newington's legs and cried out that she had done so, but was not heard in the uproar of insults, cries of pain, stamping, collisions, tumbling of furniture and partitions, and breaking of plates and dishes.

And the Christmas tree overturned in the fireplace, its branches quickly caught fire, and the flames communicated to the floor, where grease-spots promptly fed them.

Tables and chairs taking fire, the conflagration spread rapidly to the beams and the thatch of the roof, roaring as it went, and the Britons, filled with fear at the thought of burning alive, struggled no longer except for their personal safety, trying to free themselves from the arms entwined around them and to get out of the house, cost what it might.

"Cursed witch!" howled Newington, delayed by the bonds in which he was held by the old woman dragging after him and holding him fast in her muscles like an immovable rock.

At times a sudden stream of flame shot out with a hiss, licking the faces, stinging the skin, cutting the flesh, and stimulating the desire to escape of all who hurried, pell-mell, in a general scramble, except Paddy, Treor, and Harvey, who tried to organize the exit of their people by the court, the Duke, who denounced the deserters fleeing from his side, and Sir Richard, terrified at the sudden appearance of Marian in the midst of the flames.

Confiding the children to a neighbor who had arrived, and who took them away to their homes where they were sheltered from the quarrel, far from the disaster, the young girl reentered into the contest in which her grandfather and her Irish brothers were perhaps suffering their death agonies, to console them, dress their wounds, die with them!

Through the clouds of powder and the smoke of the fire, she looked at Sir Richard with severity, almost with horror, attributing to him the unchaining of all this demoniac fury, the responsibility for this orgy of murder, for this mad destruction of men and things.

But with looks more eloquent than speech he protested energetically; and as Harvey, comprehending too late that his generosity had been untimely and foolish, was about to repair his errors by blowing out Newington's brains, having already placed the mouth of a pistol against the Duke's temple for the purpose, Sir Bradwell knocked up the weapon with the end of his cane, for he had neither rifle, nor dagger, nor sword, and proposed an arrangement, an armistice.

On hearing the noise of the combat, the Ancient Britons and Gowan's Mob came running up, at race-horse speed.

Their hurrahs of encouragement or of menace reached the interior of the house in spite of the uproar of the expiring struggle, of the cries of pain, of the vociferations, of the clatter of guns falling on the floor, of the noise of falling beams.

The dwelling surrounded, not one of the Bunclodyans could escape from it without suffering summary execution, or certain capture, in case they should reserve him for worse tortures in the future. In these conditions, even-handed exchange: Newington to be saved, and the troops who were coming to receive orders to retreat and return to their barracks.

That is to say, to Treor, to Sir Harvey, the leader, to them all the arrangement spared not only the death which they braved, but the possibility of completing their undertaking for the salvation of Ireland.

"Do not listen to him," thundered Newington, scarlet, his eyes starting from their sockets, congested by the idea of this merchandizing which he rated as pusillanimous, sullying his dignity and capable of compromising the success of the repressive movement.

"Do you accept?" asked Brad well.

"No, kill me!" growled the Duke, still held motionless by the weapon, and who felt, nevertheless, on his forehead the coldness of the steel.

"I accept," said Harvey, "on condition that hostilities shall be suspended until tomorrow on your part and on ours."

"No, kill me!" howled Newington, who was still held by the arms, his fleeing 'soldiers not dreaming of coming to his relief and his son having no power to aid him, being held at a respectful distance by a group of Irishmen, who separated them from each other.

"And on our side," resumed the agitator, half asphyxiated by the thickening smoke, so dense that they could no longer distinguish each other,—"and on our side plenty of leisure to abandon arms and the village with its horrors of war, to I go in whatever direction we wish, without being disturbed by any of the regular or irregular troops, any guerillas, any partisans of yours."

"Never!" cried the Duke.

"Agreed!" said Sir Richard.

"With the further condition that no messenger despatched by you or yours shall transmit to the regiments on the march the secret of our plan, fraudulently, dishonestly detected by Lord Newington."

"I refuse!" exclaimed the Duke, who was foaming with impotent rage.

"I accept!" said Bradwell again.

"You swear it?"

"I swear it."

"In that case, Sir Newington is free," pronounced Harvey, solemnly.

And, in spite of himself, liberated, unobstructed, pushed out of the house where he persisted in staying,—for he knew that honor would constrain him not to break the engagement, the oath of his son,—the Duke, expecting to sink with withering rage, witnessed the retreat of his soldiers, cursing, rebelling, throwing to the ground their useless muskets, breaking their sabres, accusing Sir Richard, without fear of being punished, or made examples of, of cowardice, of treason, of desertion, of bargaining with the enemy, of having dishonored them, sold them, made money out of them and of England.

"The first who mutters." said the young man, phlegmatically, "the first whose gesture again offends me, who comments on my action by a look, inscribes himself against my will, whoever does not bow passively to my orders, let his head be broken!"

There was a silence, while the roof of Treor fell in almost upon Edith, whom they had been obliged to carry outside, as she had gloomily resolved to perish in the ruins.

Between her contracted jaws she stammered:

"Duchess of Newington, murderess of my child, of my Michael, may the wrath of God soon weigh down upon your head!"

CHAPTER VIII.

For two days the troop of Bunclodyans have been on their way toward the bay of Cork.

Faithful to the promise given, the Duke of Newington had not disturbed them, and they advanced tranquilly, rallying on the way the hunters, the pike-

men, the riflemen, the fishermen, the miners—a hundred men here, fifty, twenty, thirty there, the value of a company, of a platoon, of a squad. The hamlets and every farm furnished a handful of men; from a hovel on the side of the road came out on the threshold, awaiting the procession, the father and his sons; women joined the little army, a pitch-fork under the arm or on the shoulder, or else carrying a scythe grown rusty, so long had the harvests slept in the furrows; and when they had passed a village, the rear-guard would hear all at once galloping after them urchins, escaped from their homes, and whom they could not succeed in sending back to their parents. They brandished cutlasses and knotty clubs and put handles to bits of iron, and so much patriotism shone in their clear eyes that they cheered up the loiterers, those whom the hunger and the increasing cold rendered less enthusiastic about the adventures of war!

Treor, Harvey, now in the advance-guard, now in the rear, distributed enthusiasm the whole length of the column, receiving the assurance of warm devotion, and, to lighten the burden of the march on the road, which, in spite of the distance traversed, still stretched a pretty piece ahead, Paddy Neill, the life of this solemn body, sang national airs, taking the place of the absent flourish of trumpets and the drums which enliven the steps of marching troops.

They joined in the choruses, joyfully, forgetting their weariness, and in the sweetness of the melodies which succeeded the songs of war, in the lullaby of the *lieds,* each recalled the rare tranquil evenings of old, in the years when the hands of the English weighed less heavily on Ireland, through the generosity of the governor's wife, through the marvellous gentleness selfishly shown by lhe sovereign and the landlords.

However, lest these melancholy returns towards a past which was peaceful, but submitted to shameful slavery, might weaken wavering energies, if any were lo he found in the ranks, Marian, suddenly, in a moment of silence, sang in her grave, pure voice, of a silvery tone with fully vibrating notes, the proscribed song, the sad national air:

O, Paddy dear, and did you hear the news that's going round'.'
The Shamrock is forbid by law to grow on Irish ground:
No more St. Patrick's day we'll keep, his color last be seen,
For there's a bloody law agin the wearing of the green.

And the entire little army, in deep bass voices of the men, the tenors of the young men, the sopranos of the young girls and children, in an impressive unison which rang like a chorus of the faithful under the high arches of the church, kept up the interesting succession of verses:

O, I met with Napper Tandy, and he took me by the hand.
And he says, "How is Ould Ireland, and how does she stand'.'"
"She's the most distressed country that ever I have seen,
For they are hanging men and women for the wearing of the green."

Over these couplets, sung with a dragging melody, as if wet with tears and stamped with sighs, the surge of the marchers slightly slackened, undulating in meditation, like a procession following a funeral hearse; then, suddenly, passion flamed up in their hearts, kindling their voices, and accelerating the steps of the battalions with these words:

And since the color we must wear is England's cruel red,
Ould Ireland's sons will ne'er forget the blood that they have shed:
Then take the Shamrock from your hat, and cast it on the sod.
It will take root, and flourish still, though under foot 'tis trod.

When the law can stop the blades of grass from growing as they grow.
And when the leaves in summer-time their verdure do not show.
Then I will change the color I wear in my cabbeen.
But till that day, plaze God, I'll stick to the wearing of the green.

The words burst forth like challenges, and, reechoing from the hillsides, might doubtless have reached the ears of the enemy in the distance; and the over-excited band, impatient for the fight, begged that they might, instead of going to the post assigned by Harvey, march immediately to meet the English troops and engage at once in battle, breast to breast, instead of intrenching themselves behind fortifications, like cowards.

Face to face, to gratify their repressed fury, choosing each his adversary, recognizing by physiognomy, according to his particular ideal, the type best incarnating tyranny and bloody despotism!

But Harvey and Treor, while applauding their enthusiasm, their feverishness, reasoned with them. They must not act from their individual hatred, from their preference for one kind of action rather than another, but

"We will conquer!"

"Even against numbers!"

"No matter how many!"

And the soldiers on the French vessels, who, during useless engagements, might be prevented from landing for their work of salvation by regiments unexpectedly arriving from other directions, and might perhaps be triumphantly bombarded by artillery whose passage would not be obstructed!

These arguments prevailed over the unchained fury, and John Autrun, the sergeant of the Ancient Britons, who had joined the Irish on his recovery, worked with the agitator to convince those most difficult to reach through motives of prudence.

They came to a halt, and he, perched on an eminence, like a preacher, made a speech to them.

"Comrades," said he, with the inspired air of a believer, his eyes lost in vacancy, "it is a long time since my heart was dedicated to your cause. What

caused my delay in actually devoting to you my assistance was my faith in a certain prophecy. I have read in the Bible, and more brilliant minds than my own have explained to me by texts too long to quote and which they have marvellously interpreted, that the resolution of the Irish to shake off the impious yoke of England would be spent in vain, until a landing of French troops should aid them. This is about to be accomplished, and our cause will triumph from that very moment; but if it is not effected, our hope founders with the vessels which were bringing us deliverance and will vanish with the wind which shall fill their retreating sails."

"The sergeant is a Presbyterian," shouted some of the Irish, eager for the hand-to-hand fight; "the prophecies of his religion can not weigh on our minds!"

But Edith, up to that time taciturn, buried in her bleeding memories, bent under the burden of her incipient treason, which she did not consider redeemed by her subsequent conduct, when she had unmasked Newington,—Edith, straightening up in her ragged mourning garments, sculpturesque and like an imposing priestess, emphasized the assertion of John Autrun.

"We are going," said she, "to the headland from which Saint Patrick once threw into the sea the reptiles of all species which infested our soil.

"Is not the Englishman a serpent more unclean than all the others? Our patron, the venerated saint, in inspiring our chiefs with the idea of enticing him to this cliff, has, in his designs, decreed that this new reptile which entwines us, which smothers us in its folds, which dishonors the ground on which it crawls, the green grass in which it hides,—Saint Patrick has decreed that this new reptile shall be hurled by us into the sea, the immense tomb!"

And, believing in this double augury, obeying at last, beginning again the patriotic song which so electrified them, the soldiers of Sir Harvey again took up their march.

Their steps lengthened unconsciously, and they very soon drew near and attained the blue horizon of the rocks which scaled the plateau of the headland. These rocks perforated the cold skies, of a grayish hue like that of oxydized metal; while on the left, overhanging apparently the road, stretched the broad expanse of ocean, its thick, gloomy azure spotted with flakes of foam lashed by the north wind.

A unanimous clamor arose all at once, a triple hurrah filled the air, frightening from their eyries the eagles which began to wheel about. Gliding over the waves like a flock of gigantic white birds, the French fleet was distinctly discerned, and from the perfectly perceptible growth of its sails, they calculated that it would make land in the course of the day, before the setting of the sun which did not yet touch the zenith.

And the repeated shouts of joy, the cheers for France, for Ireland, for Roche, for Harvey, mingled in succession, continued, deafening even the gulls poised on the reefs of the shore, who flew about in bewilderment, like the great red eagles, in their surprise.

But, at the same time, anxiety found its way into the hearts of some.

The swell, already heavy, seemed to increase with every moment; the crest of the waves, rising higher each minute, was fringed with a more abundant foam, and on the surface of the sea, very clear till then, the dust of the spray began to make a sort of mist in which the ships were effaced like fleeting outlines.

And a sudden rise of wind was noted, which blew now with unprecedented violence, in gusts, causing the vessels to heel to starboard at intervals.

Then they rose again, advanced rapidly, heeled again, ran along at a sharp incline in spite of the reefs taken in the sails, straightened once more, and pursued their way without accident, without obstruction.

Nevertheless, anguish seized even the least impressionable, on account of the intense blackness of the sky, which was covered with gathering clouds, piled up in a disorderly way, in menacing calmness.

The stiff breeze blew the clouds from three or four different directions and piled up in one heap all the sweepings of the rest of the heavens, and now the entire horizon, sky and sea, was black as ink, excepting the spitting waves which were breaking with increasing wrath. They could feel that the tempest was on the point of bursting with the utmost fury.

So, little by little, sustained by voices which grew less numerous each instant and which were scattered over the whole length of the column, and then by isolated voices, the songs ceased entirely, the universal ardor was extinguished, and a feeling of sad and hopeless resignation spread imperceptibly through the ranks, in spite of the efforts of the leaders and the attempts of Paddy to enliven by his droll jests, by his joyous nonsense, all these patriots determined to do their duty, to fight like dogs, to die like heroes, but without immediate advantage.

In the future they would serve as examples to their descendants who would rise again for deliverance; but that was all!

The prophecy of the sergeant was now running in their heads, and they were considering the end which he had foreseen when preaching submission to the orders of Sir Harvey.

No landing of the French; it was useless to count on salvation.

Edith's prediction did not revive their confidence. The widow had no other source of inspiration than herself; she made an absolutely artificial comparison of the English and the reptiles, and, to sustain her position, inferred a similar fate for both. In truth, the process lacked weight and bore marks of the poor woman's mental incoherence.

She now repeated her prophecy in vain; they no longer believed in it; and certain individuals thought that she continued to hold a shining ray of hope before their eyes from fear that they would remember her treason and blame her for the approaching defeat of the Irish forces.

A little reflection would have shown them that no connection could have existed between the bargain accepted by the unhappy woman and the disaster which they feared for the fleet; they could not have imagined that Newington,

bound by his son's oath to send no messenger to the reinforcements of the king to urge them to hasten, but not bound regarding the hurricane, had let it loose upon the French vessels.

Nevertheless, refraining from reasoning, considering only the result, these people looked upon the mother of the soldier Michael as a bringer of ill-luck, attributing to her unconsciously an influence on events; and in proportion as the fury of the wind increased, driving the ships over the waves and seeming on the point of crushing them between the sky and sea, they made Edith responsible for the unavoidable catastrophes.

They arrived at the foot of the hill where they were to take their position, and the military preparations of Sir Harvey, in distributing the *roles* for the defence, caused a favorable diversion from the pernicious direction which had been taken by the minds of the troops, who possessed both the virtues and the vices of the race,—not only its prompt enthusiasm, patriotic delirium, impetuosity of action, obstinacy in abnegation, endurance of suffering, and disdain of death, but also its superstitious fear, mental discouragement, and fatal susceptibility to impression.

The gravity of the moment, the grandeur of the mission which they assumed, the impatience for the battle suddenly metamorphosed them, restoring their energy which for an instant had wavered and weakened. Their spirits were revived by the intoxication of the powder which they inhaled while biting their cartridges and loading their weapous, by the singing sound of the pikes and scythes which they clashed against the rocks, by the slightly swaggering call with which they summoned their enemies to appear as soon as possible, without delay, to measure themselves with these Irishmen, generally so submissive and who had borne torture and massacre without resistance, today, as they had done two days before, under Treor's roof. Ah! the cursed Englishman would learn to know his gentle victim as a tiger when once aroused to fight.

The approaches to the cliff guarded by pikemen in case of an assault; each rock furnished with a squad to vigorously resist the passage of any scaling-party and cover the mountain like a wall to be protected from the encroachments of thieves; on each step of the gigantic staircase a post of mowers to hew down the assailants, cut off their heads like ripened grain, sever their arms and legs, and split their chests in two; and, at the summit, the riflemen, all furnished with fire-arms, whose projectiles, from afar, would riddle with implacable hail every regiment of redcoats which should present itself, dismounting the chiefs, and throwing headlong, with their four feet in the air, the horses of the artillery,—with all these dispositions, there would be no God if the English should take possession of the plateau. And if they should not advance further, but should try to turn the cliff and come back over the sands, then from the heights they would roll down boulders which would fall like rain on their backs, flatten them out like crabs, and drive them into the sand like nails under the hammer.

Long live Ireland!

Unfortunately the hurricane redoubled, the clouds, like a charge of cavalry, rushed along, launching the blinding and freezing rain, the stiff hands of the soldiers could hardly hold the frozen buttrends of their rifles and muskets and the streaming handles of the pikes, and the contingent destined for the occupation of the summit of the heights saw immense water-spouts shoot upwards to unprecedented elevations and fall upon the vessels, which disappeared for an instant under the brutal avalanche.

And now they had to contend with a head wind and were obliged to tack repeatedly, which delayed their anchoring in the roadstead. Provided no new difficulty presented itself, they might impede the march of the king's troops, in case they should not succeed in annihilating them.

In the far distant fields Paddy perceived compact black masses, difficult at first to distinguish from the surrounding woods with their low vegetation and gloomy thickets, but impossible of confusion by any one acquainted with the topography of the neighborhood. Besides, they displaced each other and approached with a celerity which was appreciable even at that distance.

Soon, moreover, gleams of light enveloped in white smoke arose, accompanied by a dry rattling of musketry in answer to the gunshots from the neighboring bushes, shots which were carefully husbanded and expended, and the curious and comforting spectacle was afforded of engagements begun at ten different points, in the vicinity of the neighboring villages, from each of which the bells sounded the tocsin announcing the arrival of the army, calling on the armed Irishmen roundabout to be on their guard, and, like a sonorous *Sursum corda!* warning them that the hour had struck for supreme heroisms!

The bells of Whitestone sounded so loudly that, to use Paddy's expression, one might have thought that he was wearing them as ear-rings.

"Which proves," remarked one of his comrades, "that the wind is increasing furiously."

"And which diminishes proportionally the chances of the landing of the French," reasoned another, in a tone of sad disappointment.

And truly, alas! the foreboding of this man seemed well-founded; suddenly a sail, breaking loose, slapped madly in the wind, clinging to the masts; disabled transport-ships, their masts gone, were turned from their course in the tempest; and waves as high and massive as mountains lifted the vessels to prodigious heights and engulfed them in bottomless abysses.

The firing on land increased.

All the wood-lands, on both sides of the roads, were crowned with smoke, and the volleys which came from them were responded to by the marching troops, whose energetic defence soon repaired the trouble made in their ranks by surprises.

At the first word of warning they plunged into the thickets, to the sound of the trumpets, amid furious volleys; then the reports followed each other only at intervals, growing fainter in the midst of the uproar; and, with oppressed

hearts, the Irish with Sir Harvey and Treor waited with unspeakable anxiety for the end of the skirmish, the events of which, surely terrible, escaped them.

What unknown would disengage himself from these mysterious hand-to-hand fights?

Who would conquer,—their enemy or their friends and brothers? On which side were the dead falling in greater numbers?

Suddenly some isolated individuals would emerge precipitately from the copses, followed by others, thinly scattered at first and then more numerous, in bands which would often rest for a minute, then rally, and re-enter the depths of the woods, but which often also retreated, either still coolly firing, while breaking, as they were pursued step by step, or running away without looking behind, in mad panics!

From that distance it was impossible to recognize the nationality of those who were disbanded. Were the English repulsed, or their own comrades dislodged? Even with his glass, so obscured was the light by the i»creasing tempest, Sir Harvey could not immediately discern, and they held their breaths until he was able to decide.

In general, however, almost all the way along the line, the enemy retreated, and the trumpets sounding the retreat indicated to the Bunclodyans to which side victory leaned, which, nevertheless, was not settled, the king's regiments resolving not to retreat, re-forming quietly, and rushing back, refreshed, to the rescue.

And through the hearts of Sir Harvey's soldiers again passed the impressions of anxiety, of hope, of pain, and of joy. Sometimes the Irish, at the end of one of these renewed attacks, would he obliged to abandon their positions, but not as runaways, only leaving to station themselves elsewhere on the route of the temporary victors and to again dispute their passage energetically and triumphantly.

In any case, though success should remain with the English, some time must elapse before they would reach the plateau; and meanwhile, to occupy and distract themselves, many of these forced spectators of a long drama, which never flagged though cut up into many acts, lighted their pipes at which they warmed their benumbed lingers, and the smoke of which, driven furiously back towards the sea, recalled their attention to that part of the tragedy. In that direction the outlook was bad for Ireland!

Whirlpools of water and wind were assailing the ships; and while, near one of the villages, skirmishers were attacking the unsuspecting artillery on the flank, cutting the hamstrings of the horses which drew the cannons and powder-carts, spiking the guns, and setting fire to powder which blazed into the air for several miles, the tempest was undertaking to engulf the fleet, or at least to drive it, terribly damaged and disabled, along the shores of Ireland.

Already the greater part of the transport-ships were heading in the other direction, absolutely unable to struggle against the elements, and the rest, sustaining by turns serious damages, cordage broken, shrouds demolished, and

the bowsprit torn out as neatly as the stem of a fruit, could not be slow in following their example.

"We are lost!" murmured the Bunclodyans and their comrades, with contracted foreheads and dilated eyes, which reflected discouraging visions of defeat, flight, and massacre.

And Treor, and Harvey, and Paddy, and John Autrun, at first all absorbed by the view of the partial combats which were going on at the right and at the left, now heard the increasing lamentation; and the commanders of all the posts stationed upon the declivity noted a similar demoralization invading the mass, disintegrating its energies, and enervating its members in a torpor something like sleep.

They attributed it at first to the cold which benumbed them, congealed the blood in their veins, and left the brain deprived of its vivifying nourishment; but this did not account for the dreams and nightmares which some of the men were beginning to manifest.

Then Treor, stupefied and distressed, suddenly bethought himself of the cause of these metamorphoses, striking himself with his fists for not having foreseen it.

"The hasheesh!" said he, "it is the hasheesh!"

And, detaching the pipe from the drooping lips of one of the smokers, he took several whiffs, and the singular, sharp, nauseating, characteristic flavor confirmed his conjecture and his despair, so disastrous were the enervating, dissolving, diluting effects of this narcotic, this philter.

Quickly, quickly, in fury and dismay, he pulled all the fatal pipes from the mouths which were enjoying them, from the set teeth which held them, from the hands which obstinately struggled for them, and all those who were not poisoned by the pernicious drug joined him, at his command, at his-prayer, at his supplications, in saving their comrades from the action of this poison, distilled by Tom Lichfield, the devil in the service of Newington!

Yes, they all remembered this wretch, who had suddenly appeared in the village on the same night that Sir Harvey did, and had informed against him to the Ancient Britons, causing the ruin of Edith's house and the death of Arklow. Though they had refused to trade with him, he had succeeded, by flattering their taste and pampering their inclinations, in inducing many to accept packages of tobacco, that tobacco which they lacked and longed for, by the aid of which they so often deceived hunger in days of distress, and thanks to which their gloomy dwellings became illuminated with a ray of joy.

In the blue spirals of its smoke they could see the spreading wings of the laughing chimeras which they strode, and, in the sadness of the hours just past, many, related Treor, had yielded to its obsessing influence: they saw now the results of this indulgence.

Several already, under the influence of the pernicious intoxication, discharged their guns in the air, having no further need of them, they pretended, now that Ireland, triumphant, proclaimed free, and in the midst of

festivities, invited all her children to rejoice in the abundance which they would lack no more. Neither slavery, nor warfare, nor work hereafter; gentle, peaceful, golden life, spent amid enchantments, in cultivating blooming gardens laden with perfume, and in abandonment to the charmer, love.

Others, with grinding jaws and convulsed faces, rushed upon imaginary aggressors, leaped into space, mutilated themselves on the ragged rocks, or attacked their neighbors, whom they called English rascals, struck with their weapons, and wounded; some were even killed.

And just at that time, amid this disorder, this confusion, this madness, this delirium, these desertions of friends, these scuffles between themselves which could not be suppressed, Marian, trembling, pointed out an army, near at hand and advancing along the road, perhaps a mile away, which she called the advance guard,—the Ancient Britons, Gowan's Mob; in the rear extended an enormous mass, something like ten thousand men.

The army was emerging from the woods through which the Irish had passed some time before, and the various lines which formed it, divided in order to penetrate the narrow ways, consolidated on reaching the open, and their column stretched along the road indefinitely.

The whole camp which had been established in front of Bunclody was certainly on the march, reinforced by new recruits, doubtless regiments despatched from Dublin and England, and Sir Harvey could not comprehend how they pressed him so closely; but he soon saw to what resource the enemy owed this rapidity; the foot-soldiers leaped on behind the horsemen, and the massive horses, strong as towers, transported their double burden without difficulty, trotting as if at liberty.

Newington galloped on before, exciting the troops to hurry, reprimanding them, the Irish thought, in order to hasten their pace, whereupon the spurred horses broke into a gallop.

Though his arm was in a sling, the Duke moved it just the same to point out the heights, and Hunter Gowan, running at their sides, started suddenly at full speed, leading his band, whose frantic hurrahs shook the air and were carried to the Bunclodyans in the roar of the constantly rising wind, which carried stones and trees with it on its way and whirled them about in its gusts.

The Infernal Mob reconnoitred the road and searched the clusters of trees on either hand; but its objective point evidently was the plateau, and it stopped in its course only at the foot of the declivity, seeking a way, however steep, by which to gain the heights.

Some of the Bunclodyans' bullets whistled about Gowan's ears, but he took off his hat and saluted them ironically; Harvey, however, forbade their firing: what good to throw away powder on these inoffensive horsemen, when presently they would have none too many cartridges to use effectively upon the foot-soldiers whose serious attack they must soon withstand.

"But Gowan orders the assault!" said one, timidly, his courage having been taken away by the hasheesh.

And, in truth, to the astonishment of all, the whole gang of the old hunter, the scoundrel at the head, undertook the impossible ascent, certain of them, by the efforts of their extraordinary horses and notwithstanding the shots which struck them, climbing almost to the peak.

Most of them, nevertheless, paid dearly for their ridiculous temerity, and horsemen and beasts, after fruitless attempts, being received upon the points of pikes and lances and by the edges of scythes, fell back to the bottom, bruised and crushed, the corpses piled up together.

Gowan was infuriated, and his horse accomplished miracles of climbing, straight up, hanging on by his hoofs as with hands, human, heroic; two balls from Irish guns crashing one in the face of the man, the other in the face of the horse, the group whirled about in space, and, rolling down from rock to rock, lay flat on the soil spirting vermilion blood.

And all the audacious men who had struggled with prodigious skill to follow their chief tried to wheel about; but the frantic leaps of their horses dismounted them, and they fell upon the ragged rocks, or else the pike-men, recovered from the surprise and fright which paralyzed their forces at first, pierced them in the air.

During this exercise in equestrian gymnastics, the main body of the army approached in its turn the cliff, and Marian, very pale and ready to sink, noticed by the side of Newington, incensed at the repulse of his scouts, Sir Bradwell, as phlegmatic as usual, but looking at the heights embattled with soldiers, where, doubtless, he distinguished her, leaning forward in the front rank.

Where the horsemen, madly valorous, had vainly rushed to encounter only death, the foot-soldiers would surely succeed easily; so, ordering the charge to be sounded, Newington commanded the assault, which Sir Richard offered to lead; but the Duke invited him to remain at his side, probably lacking confidence, not in the courage, but in the firmness of the capitulator of Christmas, and the Ancient Britons, anxious to revenge themselves for their defeat of the night before, rushed forward at double quick.

Sir Walpole had obtained the honor of this perilous enterprise by reason of the fame of his family, and in order that he might obtain glory: but his superiors in rank, on whom would fall the command of the assaulting column, being jealous of him, saw with satisfaction his check at the first onslaught, and the repulse of himself and his troops after furious resistance.

In vain he returned to the charge, encouraging his men who cursed in spite and swore to eat the entrails of the stubborn Irishmen; all, pell-mell, in bleeding cascades, fell back pierced, mutilated, killed, the first to ascend upon those who ascended last, and the latter, in turn, upon the heaps of killed and wounded.

Harvey, Treor, Paddy, John Autrun multiplied themselves, ran in whichever direction the assailants presented themselves, and by their example revived the energy of the faltering men weakened by hasheesh. Marian's grandfather, this old man, fought with the valor of a knight, the vigor of a soldier in his prime, and the surety of an old stager bronzed on battle fields; and Marian, always at

his side, admirable in her coolness, braving death twenty times a minute without winking, the angel of the holy war, did marvels. She received the wounded in her arms, dressed their wounds quickly amid the shower of bullets, consoled the dying, and, religiously lying, assured them of the success of their cause, the triumph of the country.

"Newington is turning his heels!" she said; "he is falling back. Hear them sounding the retreat."

In the exhaustion of their death agonies the unhappy men did not distinguish; it was, on the contrary, the charge, the furious charge, which they heard, and the Duke sent forward, to sustain Walpole's companies, other companies and others yet, who all, one after the other, broke upon the rampart of rocks furnished with such intrepid defenders.

The position, in other circumstances, would certainly have remained impregnable; the deaths, insignificant on the side of the Irish, amounted on that of the enemy to a considerable number; but the hasheesh had not vainly carried its debilitating effects into the arteries, and the arms which held the muskets, suddenly relaxing, offered only a childish resistance to the aggressor precisely at the moment when, doubtful of success, Newington sent Sir Richard to the attack, ordering him to conquer at any price, if he wished to redeem his foolish clemency of the previous evening.

And Marian heard the command and the recommendation at the same time that she heard Sir Harvey order his best marksmen to check this new attacking column and to aim especially at the leaders.

"Whoever shall lay one low will deserve well of the country." And seizing a rifle himself, he tried to hit Bradwell who was calmly advnucing, with his cane under his arm, surrounded by bullets which grazed him, scratched the ground about his feet, and struck his soldiers behind him on either side.

"Forward!" said he. And now he began the ascent, apparently as coolly as he would have cleared the steps of an ordinary stairway, although projectiles converged towards him from all sides.

Marian looked at him not without poignant emotion; with each second, her heart oppressed, she believed she should see him rolling to the bottom, and suddenly she murmured:

"My God! It is for him that I am afraid!"

And having collected herself with a prayer, she exclaimed again:

"My God! It is for him that I pray!"

Completely worn out, the pike-men retreated, remounting the plateau, and under the tempest of bullets Sir Richard was still climbing the declivity.

"To the rescue, comrades!" cried Paddy, who continued:

"At Dublin, one breezy day, I came near getting a chimney on my head..... With a tempest like this, the rocks of the cliff shall melt upon the backs of the assailants."

"Saint Patrick, protect us!" prayed Edith.

"Not only Saint Patrick," rejoined Paddy Neil, "but Saint Peter and Saint Rock!"

And using their pikes as levers, he and a dozen of his comrades pried off enormous fragments of rock, and succeeded in rolling them into space, causing frightful cries of pain and furious shouts of rage where they fell.

Marian, leaning over the edge of the abyss, closed her eyes, and tried at first not to hear; then, on the contrary, she tried to distinguish, among the cries, if any came from the breast of Sir Bradwell. But what foolishness! If he should fall, pain would not draw from him an exclamation. He would die stoically. Then she looked upon the means of defence improvised by Paddy as monstrous, and almost cowardly,—yes, cowardly,—and she was about to say so when she saw Richard.

Free from harm, without a wound, imperturbable, he continued his way, his uniform wet with steaming blood and splashed with fragments of brain. He was wiping his face, which was also soiled.

He felt her eyes upon him and turned his own towards Marian; but, thus engaged, he did not notice a sword raised over his head, which would undoubtedly split it if he did not suddenly parry or dodge it; she almost cried out to him to beware, but by a lucky chance a bullet broke the arm which brandished the fatal weapon and checked the confession on her lips.

At first she applauded, but was instantly ashamed.

In which camp did she consider herself, then? An Irish girl! She had no soul! Her oath of renunciation on the Gospel a comedy in that case; her kiss given to Paddy—that is, to the victim of the hatred of the torturers—a grimace, an affectation, or the unreflecting act of her excited nerves, and it shrunk to the level of the most ordinary crisis.

Paddy Neill! Now, on Richard's account, she felt for him an animadversion which would readily change into a feeling of deeper hostility, and though salvation rested in the hands which bore the rocks, she revolted against the expedient, not from humanity, not from charity, not in behalf of all those whom the weight of the boulders would break, but for the benefit of a single one, to save the only Sir Bradwell, so terrible moreover,—in fact, the worst of executioners, in case he should carry out the sacrilegious threats made by him three days before.

But she violently put aside this conjecture; words pronounced in anger, a cruelty of which one makes a show in order to intimidate; his back turned, it was all over. The other evening, in their house, had not Richard, on coming to the aid of Sir Newington, contradicted by his attitude, by his horror at the savage struggle in progress, his former odious proposals of massacre and his implacable declarations of war?

Nothing was more natural than that he should march with the. English troops, at their head, leading them to the assault, at a time when no one but the old or the infirm remained motionless at their firesides awaiting events. To avoid being suspected of cowardice at his age, notwithstanding the sympathy he

had thus far shown for the Irish, he had been obliged to mingle in the struggle, to affront its perils, and since she had repudiated his offers to serve Ireland, he participated in the operations of the opposing camp.

But without wrath, without any animosity, and, who knows? perhaps that he might meet death, the end of an existence of repentance and despair, the termination of an ignominious life.

Thus severely did she rate the treason of Sir Richard in regard to his father; and since he lacked sufficient energy to escape from its practice, from the solicitations of this unworthy and tempting crime, and since she refused him the hope of salvation in the future, what reason had he for dragging out on earth a painful and lamentable existence?

Fresh pity seized her, in spite of the remonstrances which she addressed to herself the minute before, and, without going the length of criminal wishes—Oh, not far from that, never—that victory might favor Sir Richard, she formulated prayers that he might escape the shots fired at him from all directions. The others, his soldiers,—well! let them perish to the last man; but let him, fighting alone against all, be made prisoner, or allowed to retreat, slightly wounded, incapacitated from exposing himself anew.

No! rather a serious wound, but one from which he would recover after a dangerous sickness, in the course of which the austere reflections of long wakeful hours would drive away whatever remained of his guilty passion for Lady Ellen, and, in the weakness of his convalescence, another gentle face of a young girl partly seen would take the place, in this reviving heart, of the refractory Irish woman!

In an instant she was seized with a desire to inflict the saving wound herself with her own hand, to grasp the rifle of a crippled neighbor and strike him with a bullet; but where should she aim in order not to kill him or occasion a fracture which would leave him forever disabled? She knew how to fire; she stopped the defiant crows in their flight; but now she trembled too much and renounced her design.

It became needless, moreover; an enormous block was loosened by the efforts of Paddy and his comrades, who toiled and sweat like cattle under the hot midsummer sun, and, as the stone fell, Sir Richard disappeared before the eyes of Marian, who instinctively closed the lids, fainting, though still standing. But her brief swoon over, she saw Richard again, picking himself up; with his bleeding fingers, which he did not even stanch, he picked up his sword torn from the belt, and with no apparent wound save that his joints were simply bruised, but not dislocated, he having been hit by the rock but providentially saved from being crushed, he summoned the hesitating ones, more or less crippled, but capable of a new effort, and the reinforcements which Newington sent him, to a new assault, and once more began the ascent.

Again all the guns singled him out, but the more ardent shot away the tops of rocks around his body, without doubt because of the virulence of the hurricane which juggled the bullets and shook the muskets like pliant branches

of shrubbery in the firmest hands, and all the more then the hands of the marksmen whom the hasheesh had enervated.

Nevertheless, two, three projectiles successively penetrated his uniform, and blood stained his shoulder and ran over his chest; but he did not bend for that, but continued the arduous ascent, encouraging his subordinates.

"Forward! forward!" repeated he.

His look riveted on Marian, he questioned her mentally and in a manner so eloquent, so explicit, that she comprehended him as clearly as if he spoke.

Fixed, decided, without weakness, without a passing gleam of tenderness, these looks were equivalent to a summons. Surely Richard was aware of the piteous fashion in which the priest had failed, and was not accompanying Newington as an amateur, or that they might not doubt his bravery, but to keep his execrable promise.

So far he had not personally used his weapons; he faced death without reply: but to urge on others; to lead them back, after a repulse, to the combat; to excite their emulation by his audacity, his coolness, his luck, which left him untouched amid the bullets and rocks; to participate in the furious action, sure to end in pitiless butcheries; to make himself an accomplice in command and in execution,—did not these things lay upon him a responsibility worse than the highest after Newington's?

And, irritated by these persistent checks, intoxicated with powder, motion, and tumult, at last he would use his sword, dip it in the blood of the enemy, and, after this baptism, holding back no longer, kill like any Briton, his coreligionist in murder, like the survivors of the Infernal Mob, his equals in hatred!

Then, this not sufficing to satisfy his thirst for blood, whereas now he simply urged to victory, he would order unlimited massacre of those who should still struggle against him, of those also who should disarm, of those, if they encountered such, who should beg for mercy.

Marian's face, in proportion as she deciphered the tumultuous thought of Sir Bradwell, reflected the sadness and horror which invaded the soul of the young girl, and Bradwell, seeing what sentiments he inspired instead of the desired submission, was filled with wrath; she blinded him, she unsettled his brain, and filled it with a determination to commit terrible cruelties.

Marian saw this, and ran to Treor.

"Your dagger!" she said, without preface, holding out her hand to receive it.

Brought home by one of her ancestors from a voyage to the Indies, the blade which she asked for, short, narrow, but serpentine, with a groove running its entire length, had this frightful peculiarity,—that, poisoned, its wound, though a mere scratch of the epidermis causing only a drop of blood to flow, proved fatal in a few minutes.

So Treor refused it to her, pleading that there was danger that, in striking the enemy, the weapon might, if not handled firmly, turn in the hand and cause the death of whoever was using it in defence.

"Exactly. Give it to me!" repeated the young girl, in a serious voice.

And, reminding her grandfather of a confession made at the time of her fatal love for the Englishman,—a love, she had informed him, which reached in Richard the point of criminal frenzy,—she told him of the demand of Newington's son and his threats if she did not yield.

"Look at him," said she, "and judge if I have not reason to fear everything from him."

For sole response, embracing his granddaughter and blessing her, Treor gave the dagger to the child!

There was urgent need: the old man now despaired completely, not only of positive success, but of their ability to longer hold Newington's forces in check. A last gust of the hurricane so lashed the sea that waves rose to the plateau and swept back with them a dozen Irishmen into the sea; the last vessels to brave the tempest lost their rudders and floated at the mercy of the wind, which, after having tossed them madly about in every direction, clashing them against each other, and causing new and irreparable damages from which the weaker ones went to the bottom, drove them suddenly out to sea, in rapid and disordered flight.

And this issue, foreseen, but against which they invoked a miracle, completed the demoralization already commenced, and wrung from the lips of the wretches who were growing weak under the influence of Lichfield's drug cries of a despair augmented by the rumbling noise, along the whole length of the hill, of an immense mass of soldiers ascending from all directions at once.

Sustained by the trumpets, which sounded incessantly, encouraged by their officers who marched by the side of their ranks, or by Newington who, from below, persistently ordered them to carry the position, exhorting and stimulating each other, swearing, cursing, blaspheming, and vituperating these rascals, these brigands, these drunken Irishmen, they ascended as if by ladders, in spite of the shot and stone which riddled them; they climbed like monkeys, uttering shouts of triumph when half-way up.

Treor and Paddy, taking Harvey aside, tried to get him to withdraw from the fray without delay. Heroism, it is true, counselled him to remain with his friends, to share their fate, their death, their tortures; but this point of honor would end in what? In depriving Ireland of the necessary leader, in decapitating the army of defence, which, more than ever, needed a head to conduct the other troops of the country to revenge.

The defeat experienced by the contingent from the vicinity of Bunclody would not count if the agitator escaped, if he went at once somewhere else to direct the military operations.

A few hundred men less, the loss would be inappreciable; but if the general should fall among the number, the forces at the disposal of the Revolution would be paralyzed, and the impression of a first repulse he alone could diminish by explaining it, by showing that they were not overthrown, by simulating—if he did not possess it—confidence in the return of victory under the colors of Ireland!

Harvey resisted, refused to hear, absolutely; he evaded their entreaties, seized a fallen musket and some cartridges, began to fire, and urged them not to desert their necessary posts as soldiers to hold this useless council of war. They persevered in their representations, very gently at first, very respectfully, but soon assumed an imperative tone. The vanity of the man, his apprehension of perhaps unfavorable judgments upon such a flight, his desire not to survive those whom he commanded, were so many weaknesses forbidden to a leader of an army, whose position, besides, was not entirely included in the midst of a handful of combatants shut into the narrow limits of a compromised position. And as he continually escaped them to lend a hand to the work of defence and to substitute himself at some difficult point for some tired Irishman dismayed by the advance of the enemy's ever growing forces, they ordered him—rebels, so be it! against his personal authority, but speaking in the name of the country in danger—to leave them without delay or else be adjudged guilty of violation of his oath.

Moreover, his retreat would not be accomplished without exciting events, without running the risk of death on all sides, and his bravery would not lack opportunities to manifest itself. By the road, which he must take, down the cliff to the sea, he would risk a hundred times breaking his bones, being dashed by the waves against the rocks, or carried away by the eddies out into the floods from which he would never emerge, and the prospect of all these difficulties, of all this mass of perils conjured up to conquer, of this new battle after that from which he withdrew, decided him. He grasped silently the hands of his friends, and, with tears in his eyes, slipped away between the openings in the rocks, burning his hands terribly at the outset by too swift a slide over the jutting points of stone.

But, seeing him disappear, and doubting their defeat no longer, bewildered at the same time by the vociferations of the assailants who were approaching the crest of the plateau, some followed Harvey in his flight; and, quite beside themselves, not estimating the extent of the fall, they threw themselves into the abyss, fifteen or twenty of them, with their arms outspread and head first, rebounding on the wall of the cliff and swept off in the hurricane like so many empty manikins, and others plunging into the sand where their feet, alone emerging, struggled an instant convulsively.

And while they were looking with stupor and pity upon this singular and fantastic exodus, suddenly a shout of decisive victory, in which the voice of Bradwell mingled, crowned the height, whose valid defenders, still in possession of their wits, displayed new vigor and rage in opposing its easy capture by the enemy.

In a last spasm of patriotic energy, each one rushed desperately upon the English, not counting on salvation or quarter, their force increased tenfold by this thought of making the enemy pay dearly for their lives and of leaving their survivors less work to accomplish, as well as the fortifying example of their heroic death.

But, little by little, before the increasing number surging from all sides, the Irishmen, surrounded, assailed in the rear, on their flank, in front, succumbing, thrown down, conquered, lay disarmed in the agonies of death, writhing in vain, like the fragments of a serpent trying to reunite, and biting at the legs ot their adversaries; in vain they rose again, with powers of muscle equal to those of will; now the complete triumph of King George's troops became incontestable, and nothing, no supreme attempt, no miracle could change the adverse fortune or delay their destiny, which was to die.

"Kill! kill!" howled from below the hoarse, raw throat of Newington; "kill the young, the old, the women, all, all!"

"Not another drop of blood, not another act of violence!" shouted Sir Richard on the other hand, who struggled with these demoniacs to check their intoxication of murder, comprehensible during the action, cowardly after the victory.

He might sooner have appeased the tempest, and his officers, on his formal order, continued, after losing their voices, to order, by gestures and by sabre-cuts, the cessation of butcheries; but the soldiers continued, as in a dream, their abominable work, epic in its horrors, sniffing the blood which flowed and enjoying the contortions and grimaces of the dying as they would the most admirable play. The unexpected and comical arrival of Lichfield, his ludicrous astonishment, his laughable disappointment when he found that Sir Harvey was gone, then his joy at seeing him below going along the shore under the arching waves, all his expressive mimicry, his clapping of hands, his exclamations diverted the murderers from their absorbing frenzy.

They all knew the price set on Harvey's head, and many were anxious to pocket it; those who were not enticed by the allurement of a reward so great understood perfectly how much more important it was to capture the chief of the insurrection than to exterminate a few hundred rebels; and on the heels of Tom Lichfield, who made off, the greater number rushed in pursuit of the agitator, flattering themselves that, with haste and a few shots skilfully fired, they could arrest him in his flight and then put him in irons.

And, except a hundred, they rushed off, yelling like hunters urging on dogs, certain ones imitating between their lips the sound of the horns; the hundred who remained, less infuriated, more tired, more docile, better disciplined, were induced at last to lay down their arms, especially by the promise that soon, perhaps, their passion for cruelty would find greater satisfaction.

In the midst of the last blows and the noise of death-rattles and imprecations, Richard sought Marian:

"Marian, I entreat you, do not prolong your obstinacy; have pity on yourself, have pity on them!"

"We are in your power; sacrifice us to your hatred."

"Appeal to my love.... stronger than my reason, than my mercy. Humble your pride, make it a meritorious sacrifice to the general salvation.... It is not too late; gain me over to your interests."

"Fulfil your duty as a conqueror!"

"You are beside yourself.... Examine my hands, not a trace of powder; my sword remains virgin in the scabbard! I have exposed myself to your fire a thousand times without answering!"

"I know it!"

"Not a drop of your blood can fall on my head; nevertheless, mine has flowed... You can still, without crime, belong to me... Do not refuse me... Promise me that you will consent later... some day, when peace is concluded, the passions of both sides calmed, and resentment extinct."

"Never!"

"Reflect: the life of your brothers will pay for your rebuffs."

"The conquered buy pity, the saving of their lives! What cowardice! There are no cowards among us!

A comparative silence was established amid the desolation of irreparable defeat, and they were disturbed only by the numerous agonies which were gradually being hushed in death.

"You prejudge the sentiments of your companions in misfortune," asserted Bradwell.

"Ask them!" said the young girl.

And, appealing to her friends, she cried, in a loud and piercing voice:

"Do you know what Sir Bradwell offers me? To be his wife!"

A growling murmur of indignant protest against such an offensive proposition was, the answer; but Sir Richard, immediately, to the stupefaction of his officers and soldiers, declared:

"If she consents, I will pardon you all for your reward."

"We refuse!" replied all in chorus.

"The lives of all spared," continued he.

"We refuse!"

"Immediate liberty for all, and no prosecutions in the future." "We refuse!"

The officers present rebelled: the words of Sir Richard dishonored them; they consulted together vehemently: should they permit him to continue? Their duty told them to force him to silence, and, if need be, to demand his sword and put him under arrest as a traitor or a madman.

Nevertheless, the prestige of the rank and name of Sir Bradwell, the son of their general, caused a hesitation, during which Sir Bradwell, misled, went on:

"She has not revealed all to you... She loves me, and violates her heart in refusing me."

"A mistake! Englishman," cried Paddy. "It is I whom she loves, and the kiss which she gave me before us all betrothed us."

"And I have promised her to this brave boy, victim of your torturers, you brigand, you executioner's son!" added Treor.

By such lies both sustained the courageous attitude of Marian and forced Sir Bradwell to terminate this scene, so painful to the young girl whose tender

weakness he publicly unveiled, and all that were left of the Irishmen, joining them, begged for immediate death.

Then Richard knew no bounds; with the face of a raving maniac, a bloody foam frothing on the edge of his lips, sneering and sinister, he turned to his subordinates:

"Seize one of these proud fellows and hang him there!"

A tree, which had resisted the tempest, stood between the rocks.

And, unbuckling their sword-belts, taking off their shoulder-belts and slashing them into thongs, and bringing out ropes from the bottom of their sacks, the soldiers in no time made presentable halters and began to look among the heap of men for the first victim to sacrifice; but, in the embarrassment of the choice, all at once presenting themselves for death, they treated roughly the unhappy wretches who provoked them, they were brutal with them, and repulsed them with heavy blows of their muskets.

Edith advanced. Throughout the fight, standing conspicuously upon a rock, exposed to the hail of bullets, she had not had the fortune to so end her martyrdom, and, with her clothes riddled by shot, scattering on the ground the bullets retained in the cloth, she claimed the honor of heading the march to eternity.

"It is my right!" said she, "for no one hates you and despises you as much as Ido!"

But they pushed her back roughly, recalling the words of Newington at the moment of Arklow's murder. Death would be a deliverance and life a burden heavier than all crosses.

"Me! me! whom Marian loves," demanded Paddy, with a frightful smile on his ravaged face.

"Me!" cried Treor, "I excited them to revolt!"

"Me!" said a curt voice, that of sergeant John Autrun, pale, believing no longer, after the scattering of the French fleet by the tempest, in the success of the Irish, and in a hurry to disappear that he might not witness their return to slavery.

"Yes, him, the sergeant, the deserter!" the soldiers cried together in a fury, and not without design, as they looked at Sir Richard out of the corners of their eyes, showing, by this chorus of maledictions against the traitor, of what punishment they deemed apostasies worthy.

And already, before the son of Newington had assented, the former officer of the Ancient Britons was swinging from one of the branches of the fir tree; on his blue lips a hurrah for Ireland expired with his breath.

"Long live Ireland!" shouted all the other candidates for the gibbet.

Quickly a second took his place by the side of the sergeant, and his dead body swung in the breeze created by the shouts of the brave Irishmen; then, as the isolated executions did not proceed with sufficient speed, and as each hangman made the others jealous, the soldiers rushed in a mass upon the prisoners, and each, choosing a victim nearest to his band, the tree was soon

filled, like a Christmas tree, with human puppets which the wind knocked against each other in an absurd manner.

"Long live Ireland!" cried the victims, before the rope grasped their throats. "Long live Ireland!" came in a thrilling refrain from those who waited their turn at the gibbet.

And Sir Richard, stupefied, with leaden eye and mouth wide open, looked on at the ignoble spectacle of this bestial surfeit of base revenge, at intervals turniug his eyes towards Marian.

Then, the young girl; a holy wrath boiling in her bosom, leaped upon the monstrous executioner, crying, in thrilling tones:

"If it is for me that you are cruel, by me you shall cease to be so."

She raised her dagger over him, but, before she could strike, he seized her arm, and, as he grasped the fine, smooth wrist in his fierce fingers, the weapon fell to the ground; he picked it up, screaming to the soldiers like a demon of massacre:

"Kill, shoot, hang them all!"

Then, brutally driving Marian before him towards a path which led down at the side, he exclaimed: "And you, away with you! away with you! away with you!"

CHAPTER IX.

It was very cold and the night was falling, invading with its darkness the great room in which Richard had taken refuge some hours since, now recovered from his bloody delirium, and plunged into a gloomy prostration, a dull despair, shaken, however, from time to time by a passing fit of barren rage against this pitiless, inflexible, invincible Marian. With his forehead in his hands, his eye wandering, and a bitter curl upon his lips, he saw again the heroic splendor of the young girl, superb in her audacity and pride, as she braved and threatened him. Ah! if she had only killed him, all would have been ended now!

Oh! for an end of the torture which he endured, his intense desire for her growing still more intense with the irresistible evocation of her luminous face I He would die, but at least holding between his shriveled fingers that soft and precious hand which he almost crushed and whose feverish heat remained upon his flesh and permeated his whole being.

Marian! The name constantly rose to his lips in a stammer, and left his throat in spite of himself; and, to touch anything of hers, no matter what, he held in front of him the dagger, as a monk in prayer holds before his eyes the divine crucifix, and with ardor contemplated the weapon, glittering in the expiring light of the fireplace, and its tapering blade insensibly magnetizing him into the mysterious ecstasy of a dream.

And suddenly he who had not been roused from his torpor by the thousand noises outside, or the haughty commands of Newington whose echoes reverberated through the vast halls, or the bustle of the soldiery still filling the

courts, or the shots of the sentinels amusing themselves by firing at some inoffensive passer-by, trembled nervously at the sound of a silken train brushing imperceptibly over the thick carpet.

Enveloped in a loose wrapper of white satin, somewhat open at the neck, Lady Newington, with her long golden tresses and her undulating and charming step, advanced slowly and silently, looking, in the reddening brightness of a falling brand, like the marvellous apparition of a Fata Morgana. Insensible to the fantastic grace of this entrance, Richard, with knit brows, in an outbreak of malignant wrath, tried to rise and conceal from Ellen's look, as from a profanation, the dagger which he had wrenched from the Irish girl. The Duchess made this impossible; and as, with a seeming *nonchalance,* she leaned on Bradwell's chair, with a quick gesture she seized the weapon and took possession of it.

Bradwell gave an instinctive cry of terror.

"Ellen! do not touch it."...

"Why?"

"It is poisoned."

"Ah! bah!"

And the Duchess broke into a harsh, incredulous laugh, whose fleeting banter doubled the fascination of her being by parting her voluptuously moist lips over the milky whiteness of her teeth and lowering over her sparkling eyes her blinking lashes.

"My ladyl You frighten me, you are playing with death I swear it to you."....

Ellen's laugh ceased, not under the influence of fear, but because of a sudden idea which imposed itself upon her, again transforming her mobile face and changing its artificial and provoking gaiety into an expression of diabolical cunning, of cold cruelty; and with her clear voice, impenetrable, enigmatic, cutting, and metallic as steel, she repeated:

"Poisoned! We will see!"

Very quickly she turned towards the window, with one push opened it wide, and gave the odd call with which she usually summoned her doves. Bradwell recoiled with horror.

A frightful odor of blood reached them, borne by the wind from the height where the bodies of the Irishmen, not yet removed, were rapidly decomposing, and also the more pungent and stifling smell of fires which had been lighted.

Whirlwinds of black smoke passed, veiling for an instant the bloody purple of the heavens, flames darted from distant beds of coals, licking the horizon, upon which were outlined in a triple and interminable row the sinister shapes of gallows, and the deafening, exultant croaking of the ravens responded to the smothered sound of a vast and many-voiced sob, while the hastening flock of doves encircled the Duchess, smiling at them wheeling in their flight.

For three days, frightened by the tumult of the battle, they had been cowering in the towers of the castle, where, trembling, they awaited the end of the devastations in the neighborhood; and as the last gleams of the blazing roofs

set on fire the surrounding woods, the poor, gentle birds, chilled and famished, flew joyously at the call of the kind mistress who usually petted them so much, pampering their greediness, and all flew around the marvellous young woman, making her a halo with their glittering wings, greeting her with a hosanna of joy, and celebrating her surpassing beauty in song.

But the beating of their agitated wings, their cooings, more tender than words of love, left the wicked Duchess indifferent, and the invasion of the entire band seemed rather to annoy her.

The Duchess called the nearest of the turtle-doves, behind which the others held discreetly back, Aisse, the favorite, whiter than the others, with a suspicion of a tuft of black, and black also on the breast, perhaps over the heart, and who wore about the neck a loop of gold from which hung an enormous diamond, glittering in the night like a clear star when, amid the darkness, she left her nest to come and knock at Lady Ellen's window.

Instantly Aisse alighted, light as a flake, placing her pink feet on the shoulder of the Duchess, and with her round beak kissed the divine ear of Ellen, who, unscrewing the cover of her sweetmeat-box of colored porcelain, pricked a square of apricot paste with the point of the dagger.

"You are not going to try the virtue of the poison on this dear little creature!" cried Sir Richard, in sudden indignation and extending his hand to prevent the crime.

But the bird had already snapped up the *bonbon* in a fatal hurry, fearful of the movement made to save her, which she interpreted erroneously as intended to deprive her of a delicacy; and the Duchess, moreover, helping her, she had scratched her palate with the blade deep enough to make the blood flow.

So successful was the experiment that, before the eyes of the horrified Bradwell and of Lady Ellen, who was radiant at the promptness of the result, the dove suddenly exhaled a plaintive sigh, and, with the anguish of a human creature in her golden eyes which grew dull, she stiffened her supple limbs, and, rendering up her life, fell on the carpet, while her mates of the pigeon-house, surprised and mournfully disturbed, with their narrow animal instinct, felt vaguely the abomination of what had passed, and flew swiftly away, bewildered, frightened, silent, and melancholy.

"Monstrous! monstrous!" cried Sir Bradwell, looking sadly at the bird which the Duchess thrust away from her with her foot.

The excessive sensibility of Sir Richard at the insignificant death of a bird made her laugh, coming the day after he had ordered his frightful executions, his furious massacres; she answered his silly tenderness, his indignation over a trifle, with a contemptuous shrug of her shoulders, considering that the corpses of his victims were rotting hideously, without burial, and, shaken to and fro by the wind in the branches of the trees, would soon shed swarms of worms upon the ground.

And, *a propos* of that, she questioned him regarding the scandalous and ridiculous scene in which he had exposed to public view his sentiments in regard

to the young Marian, and she refused to believe in the veracity of the account which had come to her, though from twenty different sources.

"Tell me, I beg you, that you did not open your heart, as beggars expose their sores to excite charity, and that you did not receive a lesson in dignity from this young girl, from all the Irishmen shouting the refrain of "Long live Ireland!" It was a falsehood that they told me, was it not?"

"Not at all."

"You were mad, then; unsettled by the fight or drunk with too much whiskey, taken before the action to nerve you up."

"My lady!"

"What! I seek a motive, an excuse for your unspeakable conduct, and you push away the support which I offer you? You acted, then, in cold blood?"

She questioned him closely, breath to breath, in a rising wrath, at first light, contemptuous, and contained, but now flagrant and brutal; and as he did not answer, as he averted his darkening face, saddened, doubtless, by the picture of the adventure which she evoked, the irascible young woman, forgetful of decorum, of her bearing, seized him by the facing of his coat which she shook to rouse him from his insulting reverie and force him to a categorical explanation.

"Richard," she resumed, "answer me, I wish it, and answer me in the way that I desire. Lie, if necessary, if lying will quiet my alarm. You did not possess your reason. Is not that the truth? Or else—you see I am generous—you felt towards the Irish girl the revival of a worn-out fancy."

"Ellen!"

"You felt a desire for her of old, before falling in love with me; she is agreeable, has ingenuous, exciting ways, and your jealousy is irritated at the thought that this tender and sweet fruit will one day be plucked by some boor before your face."

"Enough! enough!"

He was suffering terribly, and a vehement wrath was arising within him. To hear his love and Marian's misfortune so treated and in such a tone, when the very name of the young girl in the mouth of the Duchess, soiled with criminal kisses and the grossest sensuality, seemed to him a stigma upon the chaste and respected virgin!

But, notwithstanding the folds in his menacing forehead and his harsh voice, he did not impose silence on his mistress, whose eyes flamed with spite, and she went on, violent, perfidious, odious:

"Only confess that it is the simple desire of the flesh which holds you, and I will grant you permission to content yourself."

Indignant beyond all expression, he put his hand on her lips to close them; but, drawing away, she continued:

"In war, this is easy: she refuses, take her!"

An expression of supreme disgust and intense pain at the same time leaped from Richard's throat at the sight of this unworthy condescension, this obliteration of the moral sense and the baseness of this advice of the tempter.

And the Duchess, put beside herself-by this insulting reception of her conciliatory proposition, by the sentiments roused in the mind of her lover, walked rapidly up to him, folding her arms, her face thrust forward, darting from under her half-closed lips the thunderbolts of her overflowing fury, and, shaken by a convulsive trembling, said in a hiccoughing voice:

"Then with her you would not dare? It is not as with me, whom you have taken by force, without scruple.... Take care of your remarks, which outrage me!... Your Marian"....

Bradwell, trying to regain his equanimity, preserved an enervating speechlessness, foreseeing disagreeable consequences from this harpy's miserable outburst, and feeling in himself a disposition to violence if Lady Ellen did not cease her attacks on the young girl.

She perceived, under Richard's outward calm, the thought which was evolving in his mind and saw in his twitching hands the itching for violence; so she provokingly resumed her interrupted sentence:

"Your Marian, you would not touch her! On account of her virginity, perhaps.... ah! ah! ah! do not trouble yourself: many a fine day, doubtless, has she run in the fields!"

She purposely used this coarse expression, which she had heard in the conversations of the servants at the castle, or, in former days, among the country people about her father's parsonage. A more discreet circumlocution would not have so deeply wounded Richard, who in his distress was seeking revenge, and this broad language would irritate the wound caused by calumnious assertions.

The infamy of the proceeding did not escape him; she knew perfectly well, from having informed herself, as a false detective, the irreproachable reputation of the young girl; but, in her thought, besides satisfying her hatred, the outrage, formulated with this indecency of idea and by such revolting images, would pollute Marian, would sully her horrifying halo of sinless purity, would ruin his *protégé,* and would destroy the power, made a hundred times stronger by her refusals, which she exercised over Sir Bradwell.

But the immediate effect of this venomous insinuation might be dangerous to her, might complete the exasperation of him whose privacy she so monstrously invaded, and she shivered with fear as she felt the young man's hand graze her cheek.

Starting to strike the provoking, hateful face, his hand had suddenly swerved on the way, and the Duchess, who mechanically and convulsively grasped the hilt of the dagger to answer the brutal blow, the unpardonable offence, stood wonderstruck, looking at Richard's face.

He bent no longer on her his look as piercing and cutting as the steel in the hands of the executioner; restless, shaded with a sudden sadness which

gradually darkened them, his eyes traced in space an imaginary outline, and fixed themselves, beyond the walls of the apartment, the confines of Cumslen Park, the limits of the village, in the distance, in search of Marian.

Lady Ellen's low and vulgar invective had roused in Sir Bradwell's mind the thought of the frightful peril which perhaps menaced the young girl at this very hour on the roads swarming with victorious soldiers in the terrible country where the troops were going through their evolutions, with blood on fire, greedy for the joys which crown triumphs.

Alone, without a defender, without defence; Paddy Neill doubtless hanged or butchered; Treor a prisoner in a casemate of the castle; without the weapon which would have protected her against violence, whether she had used it to repel the first attempt of those attacking her or had turned it upon her own breast and thus offered to their lust only a rigid corpse; harassed surely every minute, at the turning of the roads, at the corners of hedges; assailed, thrown down, without the resource even of flight, so exhausted was she by the emotions of the day,—she was falling a prey to the vile passions, not only of the single aggressor of the moment, but of all the brutes who crossed her path.

The poor unfortunate! and, by the side of the real dangers which she ran, what signified the words with which the Duchess tried to sully her? How much more culpable was he than Lady Ellen, he who had exposed, condemned Treor's granddaughter to this flight beset with traps, with ambushes, with snares, with surprises a hundred, a thousand times worse than death?

Evidently his only *role,* in order to repair the wrong, if there was still time, was to leave the castle at once, and not return until Marian should be found, taken to a safe place, and confided to sure friends, to careful guardians provided with the authority necessary to over-awe the English troops.

While he was beating about in the darkness on the roads converging upon the battle-field, where, worn out and wounded, the poor, sweet child had perhaps laid since the evening before, awaiting help or preferable death, some reliable soldiers, not brutes like the others, should make a similar and more extended search in other directions.

But the Duchess, reading the brain of her lover like an open book, made formal opposition to this plan of rescue; and, as Richard, sceptical regarding the moral means to which she might resort if he should think of disregarding her command, turned his eyes questioningly towards the dagger which she continued to handle in her agitation with feverish movements, she threw the terrible blade into a corner, and with a smile, expressive first of pity and then of a passion which also disarmed her and brightened her face with an ardent and caressing tenderness, she said, as if no quarrel had taken place:

"Ah! my Richard, how wrongly you judge me! Kill you that you may not run after this Marian! Kill you,—that is, close forever those dear eyes from which emanated the vivifying light which first roused love within me, and seal with ice that mouth from which infinite happiness flowed so long in my veins, as from a marvellous fount! Exhausted for me since the birth of the kisses which you give

to another in your barren ecstasies, I am dying, my heart withered, my soul consumed with a devouring fire which kindles unspeakable wrath within it. Kill you! but I wish, on the contrary, your re-opened lips to distil for me anew their wild intoxicants, while they shall drink from mine and from my fragrant body the joys for which you constantly thirsted but so recently."

"Say the philter which destroys reason, honor, and conscience," said he, in the beginning of an excitement which was the precursor of his defeat.

By recalling these sensual memories, which she enumerated with agitated modulations of her warm, golden voice, in which mingled languishing strains of violincellos and the lulling music of an orchestra dying away in the distance, she regained him. In the orbs of the changing eyes of this magician of love all mad desires glittered by turns, through them passed the delicious languors weary of gratification, and the allurement of feverish renewals of voluptuous delights half revealed itself behind the trellis of her fawn-colored lashes, completely disorganizing the weakening resistance of Bradwell.

And she asked herself, laughing inwardly at this declining transformation of the hostile and faithless will of her pliable lover, why she had allowed herself to be governed by a stupid, vixenish passion, which disfigured her without any doubt, lowering her to the level of the commonplace creatures of ordinary households, of the mistresses of the market-place, of the Ariadnes of dens of ill-repute.

The trivial, filthy taunt, in her mouth fashioned for the wayward and delicately delusive phrases which ensnare, this frenzy demeaning her lascivious being so irresistibly fascinating when she wished it, what nonsense, what madness to set up anger against auger, when, by caressing ways, by "the old times" of carnal emotions, and by exciting words skilfully recalled, she could succeed so completely in melting the harshness of rage at its paroxysm, however justifiable, and of spite, however comprehensible!

In truth, Richard's attitude had disturbed her self-possession, inducing in her a momentary irritation so prompt and sharp that she bade farewell to reflection, to calculation.

See! For twenty-four hours she had forced herself to avoid him in the apartments of the castle, through which he passed alone; he was recovering from his discomfiture in regard to Marian, his sadness in such states of mind plunged him into a brown study, and she thought it expedient not to meet him; but after this lapse of time, could she calmly allow him to remain in his philosophico-amorous meditations eternally on account of the same object?

And when, obeying an irresistible and unavoidable force, she approached the subject regarding which she could have wished not to appear disturbed, partly from prudence, partly from vanity, Richard avowed squarely that which propriety, respect, gallantry forbade him to confess; she urged him to deny the scandal learned by her from divers sources, and he persisted in building it up; she exhorted him to a pious lie which would calm her, and he declined to satisfy her. Zounds! any one, equally irascible and even less gullible than she, would

have overstepped the boundaries, would have descended to the same shameful triviality, and the same low, passionate, bitter, virulent violence.

But she would be more careful in the future. Moreover, she needed only to gain time, till the death of Newington which now would not be long in coming. Afterwards, captivated by caresses, enchained by the bonds of an effective moral complicity,—the Duchess flattered herself,—Sir Richard, although he might still long for his cursed Marian, would be forced to entirely renounce her, if tragic events, in which he possibly would aid, did not first oblige him to give her up for lost.

And, smiling at this near future of peaceful, orderly adulteries, Lady Ellen, more coquettish, and made more alluring by her purpose of seduction, resumed her irresistible artifices, the recitals which sent feverishly erotic thrills through Richard's body, stirring the blood in his arteries till it mounted to his head like intoxicating wine, and quickening his amorous sensibilities. In his exultation his eyes discerned through her glittering spangles the radiant nudity of Ellen's body, and his dilating nostrils breathed the fresh and intoxicating perfume of the exquisite flesh of the young woman whom he now desired with all his might.

Nevertheless, he still dreamed of the lonely one, of her who, in this thick night, in the moaning north wind, in the cold in which the black and leafless trees shivered, was perhaps drawing her last breath, overwhelmed by suffering, by horror of the darkness, of the solitude, of the frightful unknown concealed in the gloom, by the natural fear of death, at her age so hideous and inconsolable.

He dreamed especially of her whom some soldier, some wretch, some robber was violating perhaps at this very hour, in the night, like a coward, with no one even to help her, with no possibility of her cries, lost in the gusts of wind, reaching the ears of any one whom she might call to her rescue.

Still possessed by his mania!

But Lady Ellen would not take offence at it, would not become excited; these last clouds would soon vanish, chased away by the light puff of her breath with which she bathed Richard's fevered brow, sighing, simulating a sorrow which swelled her breast, and all at once, in a crushing need of consolation, leaning on her lover's shoulder.

He did not embrace her yet, although burning with desire to do so; but, at the contact of her supple form, which moulded itself to his, penetrated by the magnetic warmth radiating from those diabolically seductive limbs, he did not possess the energy to repulse her, even gently, although he mentally conjured Marian to exorcise him from the charm, from the witchery which enveloped him and insinuated itself through the net-work of his veins and through every pore of his skin!

And the Duchess, slowly, in a mournful scale, now enumerated the chapter of her regrets. No: she knew now, he had never loved her except materially, with a passion which possession satisfied, and as he would the first comer, a servant, no matter which one of her chamber-maids, young, pretty, and sweet. Was she

mistaken? Let him deny it, then! He had not the audacity, and she pressed him with questions.

Surely she did not believe that he had not had other women before her, peasants, *bourgeoises,* fine ladies, not to say prostitutes, and in the mass of these commonplace conquests, caressed one minute with transport and then quickly forgotten, she counted no longer; it was frightful; it was enough to make one die of grief and shame; she no longer had any greater place in his esteem, in his gratitude, than all those fleeting, doubtful passions at which people sometimes blush.

"Ellen!" protested Richard, feebly, but she did not stop.

"Yes, at which they blush; for often," she continued, "one sees such cases; a young man, beautiful as a heathen god, abandons himself to the equivocal and mercenary embraces of an old and ugly courtesan, worn out by a whole population of lovers by night, by day, within the hour, or he even pursues with his sensual madness some shapeless, dirty wench, spotted with the filth of her revolting trade."

"Ellen!" said Sir Bradwell, anew, with a swelling heart and pressing her against his broad chest with a tenderness not at all concealed.

But the Duchess was not contented with this testimony. In complacently unveiling before Richard the picture of the base and ignommious loves upon which the youthful ardors of beginners feed, she aimed to suggest to his mind comparisons between the lot of others and his own happiness, favored with an admirable mistress, in her triumphant prime, surrounded by the most fervent adoration of all who came near her, and whom he had but to say the word in order to possess alone.

Since Marian escaped him, Marian the virgin, at least he might conceive, on hearing this account of the clandestine couplings of the common herd, a dread of being given up to such himself if he did not cling to the Duchess, and this apprehension strengthened Lady Ellen as the beginning of a future and firm constancy on the part of the lover who had just given signs of releasing himself from her charming and golden bonds.

She resumed her instructive discourse.

"Pardon!" said he, at last slipping his arm around her flexible form, the intoxicating velvet of which his fingers felt, enraptured, through the material of her wrapper, as they buried themselves in the bend of her prominent and firm hips.

At the same time he again drew the Duchess towards him, the forehead of the young woman at the height of his lips; but was he not then conquered, and did the image of the young Irish girl still float between them? She struggled, refused herself, saying with a faint voice, in which there was an appearance of a sob, Sir Richard held in his arms only the mistress of his body if in the kisses which she received there was no soul.

And, disengaging herself, with averted head, pressing her eyelids as if tears were flowing which she wished to drive back or conceal, she declared that she would not belong to him henceforth unless he loved her first of all for her heart.

Though, up to this time, she had been only the flesh which infatuates, which intoxicates, and upon which one may gorge and surfeit himself, she would not lend herself longer to these vile, degrading embraces, which lowered the highest of women to a level with the lowest, and all to a level with the beasts; and she reproached him with having dishonored her by the depravities of a passion without ideal, when, knowing nothing about love, she had aspired, in the delicacies of her nature, to the simple outpouring of souls, to the poetry of hearts in communion.

An excellent actress, she hid her eyes with her little plump hand, reiterating with sighs her bitter and heart-broken censure:

"No, no! Richard, you have not acted like an honest man!"

What became of the griefs of Marian, by the side of these wrongs of Sir Bradwell toward the Duchess, which she pointed out to him in the depths of her grievous affliction? Treor's granddaughter ran only an imaginary peril to her body; at least the uncertain catastrophe hanging over her would not touch her moral being; while in Lady Ellen's case it was her mind, her emotions, her most sacred sentiments that Richard had perverted. Ah! how this crime outweighed the responsibilities assumed in regard to the Irish girl!

And he, in the examination of his conscience, feeling himself culpable, confused by this specious revelation, at once overflowing with immoderate desire, and, impressed with sincere remorse, full of longing and repentance, he sprang towards his tottering mistress, and without suspecting the pretended fainting-fit which she invented to complete her conquest, he covered her with kisses to bring back the sweet breath and pardon on the pale face to revive the enchanting smile.

He interrupted his warm caresses only for demonstrations and to entreat her to return to life, which, in accordance with the wishes expressed by her, he would make sweet for her, reverential in the future of earthly pleasures filled with all the felicities of starry and seraphic dreams.

"Quite sure!" murmured the palpitating woman, as she revived, questioning him with her looks, which sparkled like the first stars of the evening.

And to prove to her the need of his promises, on his knees, wandering, embellishing with variations the old eternal expressions of love, he imposed a check on the increasing impetuosity of his ardor, he purchased, with a timid suitor's courtship, the signs of favor which usually, without such long preambles, he took by assault cavalierly.

But their sham prudence, their hypocritical pretence of reserve, did not last long, and soon, electrified by the furtive touching of their cheeks, inflamed by the mingling of their breath and the meeting of their incandescent glances, they yielded entirely to their passionate desires.

For a fortnight after this violent reconciliation, their criminal love was perpetuated in a possession disturbed by no person and no event, but rather favored both by persons and by things.

Newington, summoned to the other end of the county with the troops for urgent operations, had left, refusing Bradwell the honor of accompanying him. He punished him thus for his scandalous conduct on the battle-field; and, if "the friend of Miss Marian" escaped a court-martial, Richard owed it to the implacability displayed by him at last, which atoned for his moment of sentimental aberration.

A fortnight followed of damnable delights, spiced, refined, extravagant, during which the thought of the Irish girl haunted Richard's mind only at infinitely short and inappreciable intervals, in the fleeting shape of an effaced image, except once, when it was impressed upon him more distinctly, almost tangibly.

In view of the castle windows a convoy of emaciated prisoners, bent with fatigue and inanition, filed between ranks of soldiers; and Bradwell, who was roaming about the apartment in a frightfully enervated condition, gaping at the red rays of the setting sun, while Lady Ellen was dressing for dinner,—Bradwell, whose mind, broken like his body, moved in a sad, slow, and yet wandering way, thought he saw Treor's granddaughter in the group which the guards were maltreating.

He restrained an exclamation of pity which would have been caught by the Duchess, who had noiselessly entered the room and advanced close to him without his perceiving the rustle of her dress. She had planned a surprise for her lover, to excite his admiration. He stared at her, and then broke out into applause and praise and thanks. She presented a divinely adorable appearance in a Louis XV. costume incomparably coquettish in style and cut outrageously low in the neck, and her satin skin was shown with great effect by numerous artificial marks placed upon her neck and face. She looked younger by ten years.

With her half-closed eyelids, accented with a pencil stroke, with her carmine, half-open, provoking lips, with her rows of teeth parting in a smile pointed like a rose-bud by the vermilion tip of her tongue, which lay like a serpent under roses, the irresistible Duchess eclipsed without difficulty the mournful and gloomy face of the prisoner marching below, bent like an octogenarian, and who, Richard convinced himself, gave simply an impression of Marian, but was not she, or anyone really resembling her.

And Lady Ellen kept daily in store for him these superb surprises, renewing herself by ingenious incarnations,—today a gallant Marquise Pompadour; yesterday a mystical silhouette caught sight of in the depths of a cloister, a Gothic figure taken from a window, an innocent lady of the ages of chivalry who delighted in the tales of the troubadours; tomorrow the formal face of the court of Elizabeth, with the stiff waist, and the form imprisoned in heavy and close folds, and perhaps in the same day the lively *manola* of the Prado, at ease in her

loose-fitting bodice, a pomegranate or jasmine blossom in her hair, and a cigarette between her laughing lips.

Thus bewitched, if by chance,—a circumstance more and more rare,—at the suggestion of a fact or a word, the image of Marian outlined itself, a shadow hardly seizable by Bradwell but partially awakened from his dream, annoyed and disturbed, he straightway drove away the troublesome apparition, running, in case it persisted, to take refuge, like a frightened victim of hallucination, a cowardly deserter of the heart, in the atmosphere, in the lap, in the always open and always hospitable arms of the Duchess!

There he would forget both the abandoned girl and the Duke, though reminders of the latter nevertheless arose everywhere, in the high official portraits ornamenting the halls, in the title of Duchess with which Lady Ellen was daily saluted before him and which he himself gave to his mistress when he spoke of her to others.

Thus he lay, languishing and enervated, in the continuous moral torpor of drinkers who have plunged into a succession of intoxications, awaking suddenly only at the news that Sir Newington would return within a week. The forces of the rebels having been annihilated in the country under his orders, the Duke was returning to take up his winter quarters at Cumslen Park, where he would reside without leaving again unless called away by new and unforeseen events.

Infatuated with his easy exploits, having had to subjugate only weak and demoralized bodies of men, he was looking forward to celebrating his laurels by the resumption of festivities, and especially to receiving from Lady Ellen "the crown to which he most aspired," the highest reward which he coveted,—the marks of her wifely affection.

In his correspondence, entirely explicit on this point, he insisted on it from one end to the other with the heavy grace which characterized him, and, probably writing after drinking, in the fumes of the liquor which flowed at the triumphal banquets, he formulated his desires without disguise, without dissimulation, and with an uncouthness, assurance, and impropriety of expression which revolutionized Richard, stirred his gall, and poisoned his blood with a murderous rancor.

Returning the abhorred letter which Ellen had handed him to read, quivering under the outrage, really sickened in a sincere rebellion of his whole being, he showed a face so wild, which betrayed such a resentment of his rival in the past, such a hatred of him for the pretensions which he uttered concerning the future, that the Duchess, precipitating herself, blushing, on his breast, swore to him that never should the boor, the clumsy and brutal soldier, touch her, or even repeat to her in his moments of lust one of the infamous phrases there written!

No, he should breathe the subtle perfume of her hair only while imprinting a paternal kiss on her forehead, and he should be permitted no other liberty, she affirmed, than a commonplace kiss on her gloved hand.

But Richard considered even this embrace, this touch of the lips, as an invasion of his rights, and his jealousy was exasperated when his father, the moment of his arrival, paid ardent court to Ellen, twenty times more gallant than on his departure, put in a mood for conquest by his association with victory, over-excited by the superb and brilliant beauty of the Duchess, who was more charming and seductive than ever.

The neighbors of the castle were present at a military dinner given the same evening, at which, with animation, bluster, and swagger, they emptied as many bumpers as they had won victories over the enemy, whose forces consisted of a few small detachments remaining in the country and which they crushed, being ten or twenty to the enemy's one. They proposed as many noisy toasts as each of these gilded officers ascribed to his comrade, in order that the comrade might recognize in turn an equal number to his credit, and the whole laced, bedizened company, clucking their war stories, showing off pompously, bursting with vain-glory, showed in regard to Sir Bradwell such an indifference, rendered more noticeable by the praises with which they overwhelmed Newington, that Richard, seized ten times with the sudden temptation to quarrel, restraining himself on account of the Duchess, who enjoined him to be calm, withdrew, after the repast, into the solitude of a disused hall, where he could, however, watch the Duke, following the play of his features as he talked with Lady Ellen.

Twenty times more he was about to rush forward to disturb their interview, because, in his view, Ellen did not close it soon enough, but rather endured it without the impatience which he supposed her to feel, or even, one would have said, with some satisfaction.

But suddenly her attitude became reserved instead of gracious, and she held herself upon her dignity, while the Duke, on the contrary, became more and more inflamed, as, looking out from under his bushy contracting eyebrows, he darted lustful glances at his wife, of which Ellen appeared brutally heedless.

Clenching his fists, Richard marched directly towards the group, reddening, the blood humming in his head, congested, and staggering, his legs as weak as a drunken man's.

Although her back was towards him, the Duchess heard him coming, and to avoid the irreparable scandal of an inevitable scene between father and son, prompt, smiling, she turned directly round, and, leaning on the arm of her lover, led him into another room, leaving the Duke stupefied at this desertion, and appeasing Richard with these whispered words:

"You consent to his disappearance, do you not?"

"Yes!" said Bradwell, shuddering; and at that moment he would doubtless have killed the Duke with his own hand. After some minutes, leaving Richard, whom she sent to his apartments, promising to join him there, the Duchess returned to Sir Newington, and, by a clever and plausible falsehood, similarly calmed the irritation excited in him and which was turning to suspicion.

"Thank me," she said; "I do not know on the strength of what rumors Richard imagines that you have caused the execution of the troublesome Marian, with her sad heart, and he was hastening straight to you to heap the most virulent reproaches on you. I had been watching him for a moment."

"That was the explanation, then," interrupted the Duke joyfully, "of your sudden change toward me; the reason why, from being charming and delightful with me, you suddenly became more than cold, icy?"

"Frozen with fear, with apprehension of some deplorable affront, and of terror lest it should carry him to excess."

"Oh! nonsense!"

"What will check madmen in their folly?"

"You believe that he would not have respected in me his commander and his father in one?"

"I tell you that his madness is extreme. During your absence, on several occasions, he wanted to kill himself. I have taken from his hands the dagger with which Treor's granddaughter, as they have told you, tried to strike him on the battle-field."

"Perhaps you did wrong! I do not speak of the danger to which, according to you, his mental derangement exposes me; but I would rather see him dead than dishonored by this imbecile and guilty passion which is a defection, a desertion to the enemy."

"Oh! Duke, is it a father who speaks?"

"It is the indignant commander."

"Whose rigor would warrant the rebellion and the ingratitude of the son and the subordinate, if he heard you."

Bradwell had returned a second before, devoured by irresistible jealousy, and had been listening at a distance, in the shadow of the tapestries; and Lady Ellen, who was aware of it, insisted at length on Sir Newington's disposition in" regard to his son.

She compared him to the Romans, capable of ordering themselves to inflict the punishment of Brutus on their own child for lack of discipline; and the proud and hard Englishman, flattered by the comparison, bristled up and confessed that he so comprehended his duty as the leader of the army.

"Oh! You fill me with horror!" protested the Duchess, energetically, inwardly applauding herself for her manoeuvre and for the avowal she had drawn out, which would intensify the virile resolution of Bradwell if he, perchance, was weakening and allowing himself to be moved by timid and foolish prejudices concerning family and a father's sacred character, whatever it may be!

But in vain she awaited the wrath which, at the same time, she tried to provoke in order to free herself from the gallantries of the soldier, whose desire was increased, on the contrary, by her generous anger, which set her off and rendered her superb, and she could not get away from him.

By good fortune, in an adjoining hall, where they were serving drinks of all kinds to the guests, growing more and more thirsty, loud and noisy calls arose for the Duke to join in new toasts, and all tongues, growing more free in speech, although physically more tied, soon decreed that Sir Newington belonged, for this night, to his companions in arms, for a last bout with the bottles, and, willy-nilly, joining with the others in this drunkards' task, priding himself on his work, ridiculously vain of this vile business, the general, surpassing his lieutenants, swallowed such quantities of liquor that at last, having put his guests under the table where they were snoring like cocks, he ended by rolling into the heap himself, completely drunk.

When he awoke, his body benumbed with cold, his temples on fire, in broad daylight, licked by his little Myrrha who, according to her habit on such occasions, refreshed his face, the first idea in his stony brain was to resume the conversation with the Duchess interrupted the previous evening, and still hiccoughing, gaping wide enough to dislocate his jaws, his eyes ridiculously swollen and not at all seductive, his palate so clammy that the words adhered to it, his beard stiff and his hair bushy, he started for Lady Ellen's apartments.

But as he stopped on the way in front of a sideboard, to pour a tumblerful of water to cool the heat of his throat, an outburst of laughter and the railleries of a sprightly voice saluted him.

Fresh and blooming as the month of May, in a periwinkle toilet, the Duchess, in the act of polishing her nails, was watching him with a sly and rebellious look, her eyes gleaming with a mischievous roguery which made her seem ten years younger.

Ah! the man smitten desperately, she had the air of saying, and who drowns in his cups his reason and his forces, who slides under the table when he might be gliding into a perfumed bed, and who now, with a tormenting headache, a brain empty and heavy as lead, and eyelids weighed down by an urgent need of sleep, must think of nothing but sleeping till the next day in his silent and dark chamber, steadily and dreamlessly!

A night and a day lost at sixty years, and when he felt disposed! what a waste, what lamentable prodigality! And perhaps even tomorrow would be spent in restoring the energies consumed by this night of orgies! What imprudence! especially with a creature as fantastic and as changeable as the diabolical Duchess Ellen! Yesterday she could receive the homage of Sir Newington, seduced by his prestige as a conqueror, caught with the fumes of his glory. Woman often changes; the occasion of this good-will might never be found again; but in its place whims without number which would disappoint the Duke!

See!

The mimicry, discreet as it was, and finely but so expressively shaded, distressed completely the poor Duke, entirely discomfited, whose piteous face presented such a comical aspect that under any other circumstances Lady Ellen, not at all charitable in temperament and willingly following her caprices at her husband's expense, would have broken out into a wild, imperious laugh.

But she repressed it, reflecting that, to secure her ends, she must inflame him and fill him with desire.

She had planned everything to perpetrate the crime approved by Richard, and in a fold of the ample sleeve in which played her beautiful bare arm lay Marian's dagger, while from Treor's casemate had been coming, for some hours, to serve her projects, the sounds of the old man's violin, by turns melancholy, plaintive, passionate, furious, and fantastic.

For some days the previously quiet cell of the prisoner, whom they held as hostage in case of the return of fortune to the Irish, had been filled with music as soon as daylight appeared; and sometimes even during the night the strains were heard, but more softly, as if the fear of disturbing those asleep had muffled the voice of the instrument, lightening the bow in the old man's fingers.

Languishing melodies, just whispered, took wing in the darkness; they were interrupted by interludes at the end of a phrase; and if some sentinel, some spy, had fixed his ear to the door of the dungeon, the sadness of a sigh, the despair of a sob, would have been heard in the interval of silence.

Treor, in truth, who had been among the first to fall, fainting, on the battle-field, among the dead and dying, under the avalanche of blows from the blind soldiery, not seriously wounded, but suffering from a considerable loss of blood, was ignorant of Marian's fate.

Vainly had he questioned on the subject the soldiers who daily brought him his piece of bread and refilled his pitcher of water: none took sufficient pity on his misery to deign to open their teeth; and thinking that, if the dear child had escaped the hecatomb, she would be roaming in the vicinity of Cumslen Park to endeavor to communicate with him, for several nights, at the hour when all noise was hushed, when the steps of the benumbed sentinels resounded no more on the ground hardened by the cold, he had been calling the name of his granddaughter, but without evoking any other response than that of the echo.

So, when one of his guards, appearing at last to become more human, believed he might assure him, without more details, that Marian lived, it occurred to him at once that with his violin a call could doubtless be made to reach her, who evidently was not wandering about in the darkness. He would play in full daylight, and not only would she learn in that way of his existence, of which she perhaps despaired, but he could talk with her, so much like speech were the phrases on the magic instrument modulated.

But what a mad dream for a prisoner to aspire to the possession of this violin to charm his captivity, from which they would probably take him, some morning not far off, to lead him through the mist to the foot of a scaffold, where they would hoist him without other form of trial.

But suddenly one of the soldiers, a rough fellow, who watched over him after the fashion of a hairy bear, was replaced by a recruit, a conscript, very delicate and well-bred, who showed a filial attention to the old man, and declared himself chosen by Lady Ellen to alleviate the confinement of the Irishman.

The Duchess, according to him, was not so black as Treor believed her. She shared the hatred of her race for the conquered, but only so far as they revolted, lifted their heads again, and showed themselves dangerous. She considered it cowardice, monstrosity, to strike them to the earth; she was violently angry with Sir Bradwell on account of his rage for cruelty on the battle-field, and this was the motive which now made her compassionate.

She certainly would not open the doors of the jail, but she thought it odious to accumulate torments there, to make the old man suffer from hunger, from the *ennui* radiating from the walls, from the spleen oozing from these tombs.

Hunger mattered little to the old man; his piece of bread sufficed to sustain him; he refused every addition, however modest, to his repast; he had braved the *ennui:* the spleen did not come to him from the walls, from the darkness, from the rising dampness, but from the lack of news of his brothers in arms, of his granddaughter. Was she dead, a prisoner? Were the others conquered? Was the revolution subdued?

Ah! it was nearly all up with the insurrection, alas! but after the defeat and the dispersion of the French fleet, he foresaw it. There remained the question of Marian; as to that, the soldier possessed no information.

He professed to make inquiries, but could get no information anywhere, even among the few peasants who had escaped the carnage; and when the bolts were drawn, the old man wept all the bitter tears of his heart. It was certain that only his violin could procure for him any information about his granddaughter, and he did not deem it beneath his dignity as a conquered man to solicit of his jailers the favor of obtaining the instrument.

At first the Duchess made an ostensible opposition to this request so contrary to the rules, and for which every one would censure her; then she changed her mind and gave the required authorization, planning her course if the Duke, then absent, should be angry on his return. But how could the violin, now that they thought of it, be recovered from the ashes of Treor's house, in ashes itself, an impalpable powder which the wind must have scattered to all points of the compass?

By a miracle, which often occurs in the most frightful fires, William Bloch, the soldier who so pitied the sorrows of the old man, found it, however, under the rubbish in its scorched box, touched only in places by the flames. An intelligent and providential fall of joists and plaster-work, forming a sufficient excavation, had preserved it from ruin and disaster. And as soon as it was given to him, without an instant's delay, the distracted grandfather, with a bow on which was stretched his soul, made the vessel of wood which he humanized give forth his wail, his mortal anxiety, and his prayer to Marian to inform the prisoner if she, his adored darling, still lived.

Then, suddenly, he stopped, full of dread, wishing to break the violin, even grasping the bow in his knotty fingers, as if to break it in pieces as his accomplice in a fatal imprudence to which Marian, thus summoned, betraying her presence in the vicinity, might fall a victim.

Evidently, if she still lived and was concealing herself, it was from Sir Bradwell, from her dreadful lover who was capable of the most revolting brutalities

But William again reassured him: he confided to him what was generally whispered about,—that Sir Richard, recaptured by the Duchess, did not trouble himself any more about the young girl, and that Lady Ellen would not let him be preoccupied.

So Treor kept up his diurnal and nocturnal appeals; but with no response save the north wind, the dogs who howled lugubriously at this music which enervated them, some fox in the far-away woods, the birds frightened away from the towers, the sad cooing of the turtle-doves, or the sullen and cross command of a sentinel to be silent, brought to him with an oath by some swearing soldier.

For a time he would be silent; then he would begin again, deadening the tones of the violin; but in this way Marian, if she were at some distance, would not hear, just as he would not hear her if she addressed to him only encouraging words made faint by space.

Then the idea came to him of the hasheesh which developed the senses, and, to sharpen his hearing, he contemplated procuring some, but immediately renounced this unpleasant project, dreading, if he succumbed to the temptation, the consequences, the allurements, the abuse, the annihilation of his energy, the destruction of his courage to endure captivity, the substitution of cowardice therefor, and the lasting stain of compromises with the conquerors.

He positively would not pursue this thought which in its results might become so detestable; but, on the other hand, his desire to communicate with Marian alone was so intense, and this would furnish him a means so efficacious, that a struggle ensued within him, and he at last yielded.

The soldier procured him the hasheesh, which he smoked at first with moderation, without any pleasure, with the sole aim of attaining the desired acuteness of perception; then he used it more largely, lavishly, to the point of mental ecstasies and disturbances, to the point of fits of frenzy in which he raved in his cell like a madman, hurling himself against the walls, which he pretended to overthrow, and falling back again, bruised and bleeding, on the straw, with an empty head and flaccid limbs: awaking at the end of twenty-four hours in a gloomy torpor, he relighted his pipe in a stupefied way and smoked himself into a new intoxication, incapable now of resisting the abominable inclination.

Aware of these crises, expected and provoked by her, the Duchess rejoiced over them, counting, for her designs, on the inert and unconscious cooperation of Treor; and this morning, when, a temptress in her spring toilet, she presented herself to the astonished vision of Sir Newington, ashamed of his night's orgies, she heard with delight the sound of the violin, wishing that the Duke would listen with her to the odd inflections, the strange chant, such as angels or demons by turns, according to its languishing expression, might have uttered in their supernatural spheres.

Newington absolutely detested this caterwauling; but since the incoherent noise pleased Lady Ellen, he tolerated it, especially as this daily absorption of the poison would certainly stupefy the old man, and lead him in the future, if he survived, to preach to the conquered definitive submission to the conquerors.

"Ah! truly, the Duke does not like this music; but it is delightful," said the Duchess, calmly, without fear of displeasing her lord and master, and without laughing; "and I could have begged"...

"What?"

"With the thousand noises of the going and coming of horses stamping on the pavement and the orders to the soldiers in the neighborhood, at such a distance this music, at times so abominable, but which occasionally takes on softer modulations, escapes me, and I could have begged you to summon the player hither."

And as Newington looked at her, astonished at this whim, and did not at once assent, reflecting that this intruder would arrive inopportunely in the midst of their *tete-a-tete,* Lady Ellen declared that she gave up her wish, but with a pout of her red lips which poorly concealed her vexation.

"Pardon me," said the Duke, gallantly, explaining his egoistic and amorous hesitation, and he rang for a domestic to lead the prisoner in.

Clapping her soft and charming hands, the Duchess rewarded him by extending her wrist for him to kiss, praising his gallantry, thanking him profusely, like a child whose whim has been granted.

"Let them treat the person gently," ordered Newington, "and not irritate him, if he rebels at my orders!"

"Oh!" said Ellen, "he cannot have much will."

"But the susceptibilities of intoxication thus disturbed!"

"To anger?"

"It is possible."

Simulating a sudden terror, she asked:

"In that case there is, perhaps, some danger in his coming?"

"Fear nothing on my account."

"But it is on your account no less than on my own that I am uneasy."

Her alarm appeared really sincere and for the affectionate reason which she pleaded, assuming admirably sentiments far from her own and giving Sir Newington looks filled with conjugal solicitude, and almost with love, which transported him.

"No! no!" she repeated, "countermand the order; I refuse to have the old man taken from his casemate today or ever."

Newington did not consent to this countermand.

"A septuagenarian, debilitated and disarmed!" said he; "you do me little honor if you think that I fear him."

"Without arms!"

"Disarmed! You forget," she continued, "that a weapon is easily concealed in the clothes," and, as the Duke shook his head doubtingly, she added: "Look

here! even I have a dagger in my sleeve; why should not the "old man have one too?"

She pulled out the weapon, and, unsheathing it, brandished it before her husband's chest, feigning an exaggerated attitude of threat.

"Admirable!" exclaimed the Duke, in admiration of her beauty. She ceased her simulation of murder, being on the watch for Trevor's arrival; and Newington, to reassure her completely and not prevail against her judgment by a boldness which he did not exhibit in this case, told her that, with these devils of Irishmen, distrust was the mother of safety, and that as a precaution against traps and treacherous blows, he wore a coat of mail.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, almost as if disappointed, irritated, and inclined to think that the Duke was guilty in this precaution of a cowardice and the treason against which he had forewarned himself.

But it was only a passing impression, and she immediately resumed the conversation which this avowal had interrupted.

"The point of a dagger is very sharp," said she.

"The coat of mail is very close."

"I should have no confidence in it."

"Try!"

"You say so?"

"See if your dagger will penetrate it."

"But, if it should?"

"There is no danger."

And, uncovering his chest, the Duke invited her to put it to the proof.

Strike him full in the chest! No, the Duchess did not dare; the coat of mail might be broken by the blow and the Duke be fatally stabbed; no, no, she would not expose herself to such unhappiness! And as Newington persisted in inviting her to the act, and telling her to have no fears, she still refused, half laughing, half serious.

"You do not tremble, you confront death with your habitual courage, and you would receive it, I am sure, without winking."

"It would be even sweet, given by your hand!"

"Yes, but myself! To say nothing of my suffering, I should find myself in a pretty fix if, by chance, you should die without the power of explaining how it happened, and this might cause me a thousand annoyances. Who knows? They might shut me up in prison, they might even hang me. Thanks!"

Sir Newington smiled over her alarm at this prospect; shrugging his shoulders and taking her hand which held the dagger, he turned it towards his big chest, obstinately determined that the experiment should be tried.

But, appearing completely frightened, the Duchess, with a swift effort, disengaged herself, withdrawing the weapon which scratched the surface of her husband's throat.

No, again no! she would not!

"You had better have consented," said the Duke, wiping away with his coat some drops of blood which had fallen upon his right hand.

"I have wounded you," cried Lady Ellen, apparently overwhelmed.

"Oh! just a scratch upon the surface of the skin! I shall not die of it. See, it has already stopped bleeding."

The Duchess was distressed, and irritated also at the Duke, declaring such play to be senseless. She might as easily have severed an artery and occasioned a hemorrhage which would have been followed by death.

The entrance of Treor, whom the servant summoned for this purpose now pushed in ahead of him, put an end to the lamentations and reproaches of the perfidious woman.

The old man, slightly bent, stopped on the threshold, examining with his immoderately large and brilliant, but dim eyes, the room, its decoration, and the people; then he advanced with short steps, full of hesitation. Still scrutinizing the place into which he had been brought, he half-closed his eye-lids, in order to tetter discern an object which he could not define, the faces of beings whom he seemed to know, but did not recognize.

Suddenly, stopping again near the door and turning his fixed and shaded eyes towards the Duke and Duchess, he asked:

"Why did they disturb me? Where have they brought me? I have come a long way; my legs are wavering and exhausted... up to the knees. I hope that this is at least a free country, without foreigners to oppress it."

Excessively lean, a pale, tall skeleton, with his cavernous voice, he stood upright like an apparition of death exhumed from the sepulchre, animated with breath borrowed for the occasion. And Newington looked at him with the disdain of the man in insolent health, full of blood almost bursting from the skin, and with the scorn which the weakness of such an unsubstantial enemv, ridiculous in his pretensions to struggle, inspired in this giant, in this formidable ox.

Lady Ellen, pale without any real reason, but simply from physical impression, looked at this sort of spectre with terror, disgust, and instinctive horror, and retrenched herself behind Newington, shivers creeping down her back and all through her flesh chilled by this glimpse into sepulchral regions.

However, the scene took the turn which she desired.

The old man railed at the Duke, whom he at last recognized.

"I am not mistaken," said he, extending his arm and designating the general with his index finger; "that is the face of a tyrant; one could swear that it was Sir Newington, just as at Cumslen-Park."

Then, after a time employed in confirming himself in his hypothesis, he resumed:

"Surely the same coarse arrogance, the same hardness of features less hard than the heart, and I get a glimpse, through his eye-balls reddened with the blood which he has shed, of his detestable soul, the receptacle and horrible den of hatred and nameless cruelties."

The slow, solemn, emphatic way in which he uttered these words did more than his curse to increase the uneasiness of the Duchess, acting on her nerves and adding to her marble pallor, and Treor, struck by this singular change of color, turned his looks away from Newington to fasten them on her, and, with a satisfied sneer, he said, pointing to Ellen:

"Yes, but death stands at the side of this bloody despot,—death, delusive, alluring, adorned, but death!"

Observing the Duchess start, the soldier offered to send away the old man; but, regaining her composure, and trying, by rubbing with her glove, to bring back to her cheek the color which had disappeared, she said:

"No!"

"She betrays herself," said Treor, "by her spite at being unmasked. Ah! my Lord, take care that she does not come too near, that she does not touch you!"

This was too much for Lady Ellen; this phantom frightened her at first simply by its unearthly aspect and by its voice such as one hears in a nightmare; but she might have overcome this painful sensation but for the dread that she now felt of the sort of divination with which the old man seemed endowed.

Was he going to denounce her? Would he perceive the insignificant wound inflicted on Sir Newington and reveal to him its mortal gravity, and would the Duke order the arrest of the poisoner, or else strangle her himself? She recalled the extraordinary lucidity of Miss Hobart, distinguishing, in her hasheesh crisis, words uttered a long distance off, and she feared that, with a double sight like that of the silly young girl and with his ear also sharpened, he might become a terrible accusing witness against her.

The flush which had returned for an instant to her face vanished, and Treor, who observed every indication of emotion on the part of the Duchess, pointed out this phenomenon to Newington.

"See! the roses of the cheeks are shedding their leaves," cried he; "look at the whiteness of the shrouds which are spread out where the perfumed petals flourished... and note how her engaging smile is transformed into an atrocious grimace!"

"It is enough, is it not, my Lady?" asked the Duke.

She tried to conquer her increasing embarrassment and insist that this exhibition, on the contrary, interested her; but prudence suddenly bade her to cease to restrain her fear.

"And you yourself," said the old man, addressing the Duke, "your red face, like the setting sun, is growing pale, and the twilight of the tomb dulls your skin, while the hand of death is already pulling at the corner of your lip."

Very plainly these were the first symptoms of the poison introduced into his flesh, and they commanded the retreat of Lady Newington, under pain of being obliged to help the Duke, to call for the assistance of the servants and the physicians,—that is, to surround the victim, in his death-struggle, with embarrassing and perhaps dangerous witnesses.

So to the remark of her husband the Duchess replied that, in truth, the spectacle at last began to weary her; that she desired music, not the farce of lugubrious ravings, and Newington ordered the old man to hush, turn his heels, or play.

"Let your violin sing!"

"A *De Profundis?"* asked Treor: "that is the piece for the occasion;" and, in spite of the opposition and command of Newington, he intoned with his sepulchral voice the funeral psalm and accompanied it with the sinister chorus of his instrument.

A terrifying prelude, which depicted with a gloomy completeness the death of a fearful sinner, burdened with iniquities. Then sighs of relief, joyous whispered sounds, rose from under his bow to describe the contentment experienced by the whole mass of terrorized, tyrannized wretches on account of this death.

A heart-rending, penitent wail succeeded this stifled joy of the oppressed,—the lamentable, despairing cry of a soul writhing in the clutches of Satan, and comprehending in its refined and enlarged intelligence the extent and unutterable horror of the tortures reserved for it and bearing no proportion to the crimes covered with which it is descending into hell.

He improvised with a master hand, bending over the violin which he warmed with his breath; one would have said that he was talking to it, swaying with it in such contortions that it seemed as if his neck and shoulders would be dislocated, and designing with his bow in space a hypnotizing series of lightning flashes.

The instrument wept, moaned, hurrahed, roared, and prayed by turns. All the sufferings, all the anguish, all the horrors experienced by the sinner descended into the cycles of chastisement, he expressed with languor, with remarkable truthfulness and power, and from the narrow structure of frail wood seemed to escape, roll into the air, and fly far away the legions of the damned, dishevelled, convulsed, writhing in spasms, for eternity.

Ellen was fascinated by the sight, but, frightened at the same time, she wished herself away, and, with a strong effort of her will, she turned towards the door; the musician barred the way with his bow.

She must dance, and Newington with her, the dance of the dead, in the whirlwind of spirits summoned but fleeing: to her, death personified and incarnate, it belonged to set the example.

"Embrace her form with your enamored arms," ordered Treor; "you need not fear her contact any longer. Press her, since she charms you; kiss her marble flesh. I will lead you, with ravishing airs, up to the mouth of your pit."

Then, speaking to the Duchess and the Duke successively, he said:

"Let him clasp you! Hug her tightly, stifle her. Then she will kill nobody else."

And as the terrified Lady elbowed him to pass, he tried to seize her by her skirt; she struggled and at last disappeared, crying to Newington to hold the madman who was pursuing her.

But the attempt to run after her exhausted the old man, and, re-entering the room breathless, his frenzy was calmed for a second, and a quieter song, an innocent lullaby, replaced the demoniacal phrases on the lips of this mad victim of hasheesh!

Moving his head to and fro, he gave the lines placidly and paternally, speaking rather than singing them to the Duke, who suddenly exclaimed in tones of alarm:

"But what is the matter with me? What does this strange chill in my limbs mean?... while, on the contrary, my skin is burning... what? my hand is swelling, my wrist and arm too, and my pulse beats immoderately as in a fever."

"Hush!" said the old man, "the child is asleep; this is the hour."

And again he began his tranquil song.

But Newington paid no heed.

"A numbness of ill omen," exclaimed he, "is creeping over my whole body."

"Yes, the body," sneered the hallucinated man, "for the devil long ago got the soul."

"It is this cut," said the Duke, "a poisoned weapon, surely;" and, lifting from the floor the dagger which the Duchess had purposely let fall, he examined it, while Treor, in the constantly changing features of the Englishman, followed the progress of the poison with a burning satisfaction, approving gestures, and a mimicry of triumph.

"Ah! the face grows purple again and is swelling; the eyes are bloodshot and starting from their sockets. Ah! ah! he is the image of those whom he has hanged, except that his tongue is not yet thrust out."

"My throat is obstructed," said the Duke with a rattle in his voice, "an intense thirst is devouring me."

He half opened his mouth to breathe the refreshing air.

"The tongue! the tongue!" applauded Treor, "I saw its tip; it will protrude clear to the uvula."

"You laugh at my torment," cried the soldier, in a furious rage at this joy which taunted him, and he brandished his hand to strike down the insulter, but "his fist, heavier than a mass of lead a hundred times its size, fell back by his side with incomparable speed, and the muscles of his arms, relaxed, enfeebled, and flabby, appeared to the Duke ready to part like tenuous threads.

A bellowing came from his throat at the consciousness of his helplessness. This philter, spreading in his veins, put him at the mercy, him the indomitable giant, of this tottering spectre of Treor. Misery! Misery! and the fragile phantom could continue his insults with impunity.

"Yes, a hanged man!" repeated the old man in ridiculous and unrestrained glee. "He swings in the north wind like a jumping Jack. Ho! ho! At every gust,

the rope strangles him more, projects the eye-balls beyond the blue lids, and the tongue sticks out, out, out!"

Newington tried to loosen his collar, to tear it, that he might breathe more freely, but did not succeed, and, in a voice which was fast growing feebler, called for help, quickly, and for something to drink.

The words of Treor drowned his cry of distress, and he tried to gain the threshold; but his legs failed him, as his arms had before, and, tottering, reeling, he fell heavily on his knees.

"Bravo! bravo! bravo!" repeated Treor. "The rope is broken; ah! ah! ah! and see him on all fours.... on all fours like the Irish to scratch the earth to obtain nourishment."

Newington had a passing gleam of hope; through the half-open tapestries he saw Lady Ellen as on the evening of his conference with Gowan and the gelder, and he cried in the hoarse voice of a dying man:

"Ellen! Ellen! save me!"

"Ellen! Ellen!" he repeated, "help!"

The form did not move, and he at first believed it was an illusion of his wandering brain; but, the curtains closing, Lady Ellen disappeared, except the tip of her foot. According to all evidence, Newington was not the sport of a partial vision, and the Duchess was doubtless standing on the other side of the curtain.

He imagined her motionless with terror; but, if she lacked the courage necessary to enter, stupor did not nail her to the spot or paralyze her voice or limbs. Then what was it that kept her from calling out or ringing for a domestic?

He listened. The servant who had led in Treor was asking the Duchess if he should not take the prisoner back, if the old maniac was not disturbing the Duke. As for danger, the domestic did not concern himself much about that; this hypothesis did not even present itself to his thought. Lady Ellen sent the lackey away, pretending that Sir Newington was enjoying the spectacle; in reality, he was submitting the old man to a sharp examination, and the hallucinated Treor, mistrusting nothing, was furnishing all the necessary information.

"What a lie!" thought the dying man, and he tried to find a reason for this imposture. Was there one, or was she simply obeying the natural feminine instinct which loves to exaggerate, to amplify everything, to color the most ordinary acts of commonplace life? But no: she could hear the death rattle in his throat, and, if she did not run to try to save him, if she even sent away the aid that offered, it must be that she wished the death of her husband, it must be that she had not struck the Duke inadvertently, but that she premeditated the blow!

"Wretch!" Newington tried to shout; and he attempted also to rise, join the criminal, and punish her. But he fell back on the carpet.

"On all fours, like a dog!" he exclaimed.

And Treor, his irritating echo, repeated after him, railing and radiant:

"On all fours, like a dog!"

But he added in the tone of an exhibitor of educated animals:

"The dogs, with music, stand on their feet to dance. Attention!"

He tuned his violin, and began a march.

"Come, stand up, stiffen your back!" he commanded the Duke; "your fore paws beating time.... No dogs who do not drill like experienced soldiers on hearing such music. Carry arms!"

He quickly lifted his bow high in the air, like a sword drawn to the light, and then he quickened the time so that it tired his biceps to keep up the movement, and started the perspiration from his temples; and as Newington, quite contrary to the music, stretched on the carpet in untold agonies, he cried: "Oh, no! oh, no! not death so soon; the next is: Present! fire!" And angrily inveighing against his subject, he continued, with a shrug of his shoulders:

"He bites the dust, like the poor devils executed by Newington's orders."

"As you will be executed yourself, rebel, viper!" replied the Duke, in a moment of relief.

"Threats! Who then threatens? Newington, Newington himself!" Treor now recognized the Duke with surprise, with unequivocal satisfaction at seeing him before his old worn eyes, in which he did not believe.

"So he threatens even death!" said he at last, gravely, solemnly. "Have it hung, have it shot!"

His bent figure straightened up in the severe majesty of an accuser, and strong in the confession that came from the lips of the executioner of his people, "I expire," he resumed slowly and full of authority:

"You can not. It is your master. It is the universal master! the master of superb masters!"

Then, warming up, he uttered a tirade surely too theatrical, but which the intoxication of the hasheesh in his brain amplified in spite of him:

"The bishop exorcises demons, but not death; the king has no power to condemn it to the galleys, or to exile it.

"The scythe in the fingers of the tottering skeleton defies the sword and the crosier; behold the long procession of those whom the spectre pricks with its scythe: the lawyer, whose tongue it has cut out; the doctor, whose scribbled prescriptions it has speared and thrown into its basket."

And, pointing out with his bow the apparitions clearly discerned by him in the hall which they were filling, he went on:

"The princess, whose robes of state it has torn, and whose hair it has cropped grotesquely; the bride, whose orange-flowers it has stripped off, and whose white tunic it has torn from her,—do you see them, wan and shivering in their windingsheets?"

The wails of Newington had become incessant, but Treor remained deaf and continually railed at the dying man.

"Oh! the round, the grand round of the skeletons in which you are about to have a place, how swiftly it moves! Do you hear the concert, the groans of the funeral-procession, accompanied by the rattling of bones, like castanets?"

The victim would have moved the most cold-blooded witness; his stomach was distended by hiccoughs so violent that he seemed on the point of vomiting up his soul and which inflated his chest nearly to bursting; then the powerless effort resolved itself into a mortal prostration of some seconds followed by a new attack of nausea which did not cease.

"Oh! how quickly they go!" continued Treor, insensible to this agony: "in spite of themselves, pell-mell, the monarch uncrowned and the shoe-maker barefooted, the nun unveiled and the harlot unpainted, the selfish *bourgeois* stripped and empty-stomached, the beggar relieved at last of the weight of his pouch. Faster and faster yet, they signal to you, and the procession lengthens. Be off! be off! from the tomb disappear into eternity! Let not the earth be encumbered with corpses!"

A fearful rage seized Newington. He no longer distinguished Treor's words, no longer appreciated their cruelty in the terrors of his commencing agony, but all this vain noise, instead of the assistance he invoked, exasperated him; and as the instant before he would have willingly throttled Lady Ellen with his hands, he conceived the presumptuous design of arresting all this exasperating chatter in the old man's throat.

At least he desired to ask Treor to be quiet: his tongue, enormously swollen, moved with too much difficulty, and he could articulate only a plaint: "I am thirsty! water!"

And, acutely tortured by the ardent thirst which devoured him, he succeeded in crying clearly three times: "Water! water! water!"

This cry of distress penetrated to Treor's heart, and suddenly all his insanity departed, his medley of vain declamations hushed, and he thought only of relieving the wretch who called for help with such anguish, in torments of such agony. That it was Newington, the tyrant, the executioner, did not matter! Humanity, under these circumstances, had the ascendancy, and malice, the legitimate right of retaliation, abdicated.

The old man did not even reason, did not consider the charity which he was preparing to accord to the suppliant. The spirit of solidarity awakened within him instinctively. On the sideboard where the Duke had first drank, he perceived the decanter, and started in that direction to fill a glass with water and give it to the agonizing man.

But he could no longer stand on his feet. His last work of improvisation, his over-excited utterance, his extravagant mimicry, all the fire expended, had at last exhausted him, and his legs, even more unsteady than Newington's, finally sank under him.

He recovered himself by a fortunate grasp at the back of an arm-chair; otherwise, he would have rolled on the carpet by the side of the Duke; but he remained there, leaning on the seat, incapable of straightening up or abandoning the support, though exhausting himself in excessive attempts which all failed.

And the torment was aggravated by the proximity of the desired object,—hardly two arm's-lengths away; without reflection, unconsciously, he extended

his hand, bending and disjointing himself to diminish the obstinate distance. An open abyss before him, as immense and broad as a river, would not have been more insuperable.

With a despairing eye Newington followed the efforts of the old man. The rattling went on unceasingly between his jaws, which contracted by degrees like the jaws of a vise when one turns the screw; the burning in his throat reached its height, like a collar of living flames constantly stirred up and gradually decapitating him; his chest seemed to be on fire, as if he had swallowed a cask of burning alcohol or imbibed a barrel of melted lead; and, the delirium finally seizing his overheated brain, he fancied that the fire formerly lighted in the house of the elect continued to burn in his body. "Water! water!"

Only these words escaped from his swollen lips.

"Water! water!"

And still on all fours like a dog, wheezing, coughing, snorting, he no longer looked even human, so much swollen was his face, so sunken were his features in this uprising of puffy flesh. One would have said it was some hideous monster expiring in a gilded costume placed upon it in obedience to some carnival whim, but for the perpetual and monotonous cry of his torturing agony. "Water! water!"

Truly Treor suffered the torments of hell in his inability to assist this dying wretch, and he lost his self-possession for a time. At last, however, it occurred to him that, though fastened there like a post, he perhaps had not lost the faculty of speech, and with the thought he recovered all his energy. Raising his voice, he gave a call which would certainly have been heard a long distance, if Lady Ellen had not run in madly and stifled it with her hand. In vain the old man struggled to free himself, even trying to bite the rosy fingers; they were held so firmly over his mouth that they cut short his respiration, and the choking made it impossible for him to struggle against the wrath of the young woman, who shook him brutally and succeeded, without great difficulty, in making him let go of the arm-chair to which he was clinging.

While he whirled on his stiff legs for a second and beat the air with his arms, trying in his desperate gyration to grasp something, Newington, who, in spite of his derangement of mind, recognized the Duchess, gave a cry like that of a wounded stag at bay; at the same time, he moved along on the carpet, like a feeble man with a broken back, using his knees, hands, and elbows, trying to get to Lady Ellen.

His face, when the arms gave way, struck the floor, and the Duke wailed and roared by turns, like an animal that feels itself mortally wounded. Grazing with his fiery cheek the fresh skirt of the Duchess, he tried to cling to the stuff and lift himself to her waist, thinking to grasp the poisoner in a spasmodic embrace that would cause her death; he fell back powerless, and then made another and more ambitious attempt, hoping to hoist himself to the height of her throat, so as to strangle the criminal, on a level with her face, and disfigure her atrociously.

A semblance of the wavering reason which was little by little fading still gleamed through this thick brain, and now revealed to him the sole motive which Lady Ellen had obeyed in killing him. He recalled the journeys of Richard and the Duchess into the country, the hours when they absented themselves from the castle, on all kinds of pretexts, and the sudden way she had taken the arm of the young man the evening before.

Again he saw distinctly the convulsed face of Bradwell, his agitation which Ellen tried to calm, and he inferred the truth.

But, if this were so, he did not wish to die without vengeance, without killing this unworthy creature, without at least destroying the seductive visage with which she had once captured him, and then captured Richard. Yes, it would be a hundred times more cruel than death to live disfigured, hideous, an object of repulsion, unable to procure any satisfaction of the passions which boiled in her vile soul and her perverted body.

Her Richard, for the possession of whom she committed the crime, would flee from her, and she would die of despair, of spite, of rage. What an expiation! Newington, with this end in view, would pitilessly plough up her face and tear it with his nails into shreds which would have to be sewed together. She would remain marked with scars, her nose slashed, her cheeks furrowed with frightful trenches; a woman proud of her beauty and living for it alone, but henceforth more ugly than Paddy Neill, the Irishman.

But it was too late; he lacked the least particle of strength; his hands even slipped over the smooth folds of her wrapper, incapable of seizing it, and again he lay crushed upon the floor.

However, being near Lady Ellen's shoe, he savagely set his teeth in it, and she could not restrain a cry of pain which attracted Bradwell, who had been roaming since morning about the castle, high and low, through the corridors, a body without soul, haggard, his hair bristling, avoiding witnesses.

Having shut himself up in his room, which he had doubly locked, that he might not be disturbed, and having thrown his key carelessly under the furniture, with his eye-lids closed that he might not, under the lash of his awakened conscience, suddenly rush out to prevent the murder, he had passed through the most opposite alternations, cursing himself for his complicity in the crime, blaspheming the Duke who forced him to it by his claims as a husband, and anathematizing Ellen, who had so fatally infatuated him.

When anticipatory remorse assailed him, ordering him to hasten to hinder the iniquitous act of the Duchess, immediately the sight of some object—a fan or handkerchief—belonging to his mistress sustained him in his guilty resolutions.

Everywhere in the room, things spoke to him of her, recounting their tumultuous scenes of delight, the allurements of their passionate frenzies.

With the flowers which were fading in the vases on the tables, and with the perfumed ribbons, mingled the peculiar perfume of her flesh, and the whole atmosphere, laden with this combined odor, intoxicated him, evoking in him the

sensual being who reasoned no longer, whose vices alone survived, the being hardened to all but passion and hatred!

And he stretched himself on the bed, where Lady Ellen's place was still marked in the hollow of the thick eider-down mattress; he plunged his head into the pillows, where her dear head moulded itself in fragrant imprints; and in the dream of the preceding night which came back to flatter and excite him, he forgot that, during his amorous ecstasy, his intoxicating recollections which set all his flesh tingling, the most cowardly of crimes was being perpetrated by this woman on the person of his father.

Weary of waiting, however, he could no longer bear the anguish, and descended to see for himself.

Softly at first, his head lost in the fear of the unknown into which he was advancing, listening to the various noises issuing from the court, from without, from within, he heard Treor executing his madman's *De Profundis,* his thundering voice with its resounding echo. As he approached the room in which were the Duke and the old man, his fever increased in intensity and, now quickening his pace, now almost halting, he stopped short on a step of the staircase, shivering and hesitating whether he should not turn back.

He mustered up courage and resumed his way, and at last, as one throws himself into a fight, head lowered, resolute, blind, deaf, no longer distinguishing anything, perceiving only the panting of his oppressed lungs, he rushed forward.

At the instant of his arrival, Ellen had just disappeared to silence Treor's brawling, and through the parting of the tapestries Richard witnessed the rapid climax of the drama; besides the cry of the Duchess, he was in time to hear the last sigh of Newington, who, in a last convulsion, grasped the old man with his stiffening fingers.

"Dead!" said Bradwell, contemplating the corpse of his father with a fixed and frightened gaze.

"Abandon me, then, now, Richard," said Lady Ellen to herself, smiling and looking with joy upon her work, with intoxication upon her lover.

Then, ringing all the bells, opening the windows, the doors, in an uproar of noisy grief, beside herself with despair and terror, which drove Sir Bradwell, incapable of such hypocritical counterfeiting, back to his rooms, she summoned all the servants, and the soldiers of the guard, and the officers, and the passers-by, to come and verify the murderous attempt, the crime of the old Treor, of this rascal of an Irishman.

CHAPTER X.

Simple coincidence: the very day of Newington's death, the fortune of war, till then favorable to the English, turned against them. The rebellion, which was weakening in consequence of successive defeats, recovered in various places considerable advantages, regaining at last the ascendancy.

Harvey multiplied himself. Arrived safe and sound in the midst of his partisans, in spite of the furious chase of the soldiers and of Lichfield, who pursued him hotly with the aid of some doubtful characters of his own sort, the agitator had disciplined the enthusiasm and drilled his tumultuous recruits in the manceuvres which assure victories and above all make them fruitful, and, thus governed, the vehement impulses which had previously been wasted in individual efforts, now closely united, overthrew the methodical enemy, dislodging him from his positions at twenty different points. A breath of new hope ran over the whole island, in the wind of success, and everywhere it lifted the heads bowed under the weight of defeats and disappointments.

For twenty leagues around Cumslen Park, where dreams had vanished and resignation prevailed, suddenly hearts beat with an ardent desire to recommence the struggle. In the battle already fought the strongest had succumbed, and since then Newington and his battalions, Gowan at the head of his Infernal Mob, had passed through the villages, decimating them by nameless atrocities and sowing terror everywhere. But with the regain of triumph, the news of which spread rapidly, all the defeats to make good, all the sorrows to avenge, all the insults to wash out in blood, all the humiliations to repay, aroused the old pride, rekindling the chilled hopes, and exciting the love of national independence, which oft-repeated blows had deadened.

And the secret meetings, which had ceased for a time, again were held at night; groups discussed in broad day, in the public squares; the blows of the hammers on the silent anvils resounded as of old, and pikes were forged by arms redoubled to replace the weapons of which the ravages of the oppressors had despoiled the country.

They chose leaders, they drilled, children familiarized themselves with the management of improvised weapons, and all waited for a signal; they dispatched to Dublin, to the scene of battles, messengers on messengers to obtain an order.

The troops of the king, who had abandoned themselves to the pleasures of an easy peace, who slept on their laurels, and who celebrated in perpetual orgies their prompt and, as they believed, decisive triumphs, had been obliged to resume their arms and scour the country, to nip these desires for revenge in the bud.

And while the preparations were being made for Newington's funeral, which was to be attended, to increase the solemnity, by the disposable officers of the army of occupation, the authorities, the representatives of the government, and guests on the way from England, a second time the peace of the country seemed gained by the immediate rigor of the repression, the summary executions *en masse,* the unutterable atrocities, the rage of the conquerors which was visited upon women at their firesides, upon feeble old men, upon defenceless children, and upon the houses which they set on fire.

But the hostilities recommenced the next day, notwithstanding the blood shed, notwithstanding the example of the corpses piled up on the roads, and the

expedient, effective in other countries, of columns which traversed the country incessantly, establishing a reign of terror.

But the war assumed an unusual character. No more crowds anywhere to disperse, whose leaders they could hang to the trees by the roadside, shoot, or basely disembowel. No effervescence in the villages and the hamlets which still had some inhabitants left, and, in many localities, the roofs deserted, there was not an Irish face to be seen at the window of any shanty, or a native to be met in the fields, engaged in work of any sort.

The dying beasts of the flocks bellowing from inanition alone disturbed with their lamentable plaints the silence of the solitudes, the usual bands of crows descending upon the carrion. Nowhere could the fine ear of the most cunning of the army's bloodhounds perceive the sound of a voice, the echo of a step of the enemy, burrowed they knew not where.

Nevertheless, the soldiers no longer dared to venture out in isolated bands. A squad which separated from a regiment would not reappear. They could not find even a vestige of it. The sentinels disappeared as by enchantment; the most vigilant scouts, wherever stationed, melted like snow soldiers in the sun.

Even the horsemen of the Infernal Mob refused to serve as scouts; those who plunged into the country on a drunken spree were never seen again.

The earth seemed to open to swallow all temerity, as it evidently concealed in a sure refuge the invisible army of this pitiless war, which terrified by the suddenness, implacability, and unheard-of audacity of its operations.

Left for dead from the wounds with which they had covered him in the fury of the discovery of the odious assassination of Sir Newington, Treor disappeared the same evening. This was one of its strokes, not the least extraordinary. In order to effect it, it was necessary to enter Cumslen-Park, which was guarded carefully within, and whose passages were never without people coming and going, and to go out, bearing the burden of a body. Now, not one of the servants of the castle had the slightest remembrance of any such performance.

Even during the night there had been successive watches over the body of the Duke upon which the physicians were performing an autopsy previous to the embalming. And all the *personnel* of the establishment, besides extra soldiers for the occasion, were passing each other in the corridors until daylight and spending their time in the apartments.

The removal, then, had been effected even in the midst of this display of vigilance, and was truly a wonder.

Afterwards miracles of this kind were wrought daily, and Sir Richard, taciturn, wrapped in a dejected stupor, found each morning in his room, the doors of which he bolted, a terrifying warning, in which he was called a parricide and an impostor.

Impostor, because he permitted the popular version to be credited that Marian's grandfather had been guilty of the poisoning of the Duke. He was invited to declare himself an accomplice in the crime, to name the abominable

perpetrator of it, and he was threatened with exemplary punishment in case he did not yield to these officious injunctions.

And, stung by remorse, harassed by the struggles which he sustained against his conscience, if he fled from the castle, theatre of the impious crime where their victim resided, over whom filial proprieties commanded him to watch in his turn, and oftener than the others, then unexpected voices, at the turn of some path, where no witness was looked for, assailed him, apostrophized him harshly for his parricide, and especially for longer permitting the responsibility of his act to dishonor an Irishman.

He would rush in the direction of the sound of the voice, break into a quick-set hedge, turn hastily around a piece of wall, explore the excavation of a grotto, rummage among the rubbish of a ruin, but never meet anyone on whom to pour out his wrath, and wreak his personal insanity.

He avoided sleep in order to find out how the terrifying notes reached him; but whatever vigilance he exercised, they always deceived him, and the warning was deposited just the same, though not in the room where he lay in wait with a weapon in his hand; he would discover it suddenly, behind him, at his side, without having heard the sound of a foot on the carpet, or the creaking of a neighboring door.

And the Duchess, to whom he communicated all these infernal proceedings, to whom he showed the written letters, and with whom he offered to watch for a night, began to be filled with fear.

She did not believe in the supernatural, in reproaches coming from on high or from beyond the tomb, in a God who reprimands sinners before they appear at his tribunal, in the dead who rise from their funeral beds to make scenes. Good stories for little children whose goodness is preserved by tales which would put them to sleep standing, and in whom respect for parents is stimulated by imbecile trash.

The dead which pull the living by the feet! When she was very little, she had had convulsions over this fable of death, and her mother had sworn to its falsity; and when her father, the pastor, thundered in the pulpit upon eternal punishment, unfolded complacently the torments of hell reserved for those forgetful of the law of heaven, she was often taken with nervous tremblings, threatening her health, and the sacred orator displayed his family eloquence, privately, in destroying the disastrous effect produced by the public sermon.

As she grew up, the minister had explained to her the vanity of the thunderbolts launched at the head of his sheep; the dulness of mind of the faithful forced him to have recourse to this apparatus for terrifying invented by the Church to strike coarser imaginations. But she, the daughter of a pastor, of a man belonging to the *elite* of society by his intelligence, ought not to share the idiotic beliefs of the vulgar.

Ingenuously and frankly she had put this insidious question:

If he really despised myths so absurd, why did he teach them? Because it was his profession? In that case, why did he follow a profession based on imposture?

And, ill satisfied with the confused explanations of her father, she had conceived a considerable contempt for the author of her days and a scepticism which increased with age regarding the divinity whose commandments she was taught not to violate.

Without denying it, without defining it, Ellen feared it no more, considering it as an agent absolutely not to be thought of in the affairs of life, and this was why she was now disturbed by these repeated occult manifestations which her accomplice communicated to her.

Evidently they emanated from individuals who knew or mistrusted, and who, renouncing their futile attempt to intimidate Richard, would probably end by speaking and preferring their formal accusation before public opinion, before a tribunal.

Surely they would not brutally tear her away from the castle where she had reigned, up to that time, amid adulation, to thrust her into the cold dungeon provided for ordinary prisoners; the judges would treat her with gallantry; her assurance, her indignant denials, would impose on them without doubt; her beauty would finish the work of convincing them of her innocence; but, after this scandal, of which there would always remain some vestige in the public mind, would Richard dare to become her husband, braving the hostile sentiments, the sly insinuations, the clandestine rumors? And still less would he have the audacity to remain her lover on account of the eyes turned upon them, and he would escape her just when, in her struggle to possess him alone, indissolubly, she had at last triumphed!

Who knew even, in the derangement of brain and of conscience which she saw him to be in, whether he would maintain before the court an attitude sufficiently firm to convince justice of their common innocence? Even to save her, would he consent to lie, to perjure himself? Called on and summoned to tell the truth, would he not confess under a sudden impulse of the frankness which characterized him? And it was this failing of her lover, the fierce uprightness of his nature, which frightened her.

As, however, around her, among her servants, the soldiers garrisoning Cumslen Park, the officers whom she daily received, and the visitors who brought her their condolences, no one let fall the faintest symptom of suspicion in regard to her, or showed, in her presence, even the imperceptible embarrassment which would have escaped even the best actors, she recovered her boldness, and undertook to reassure Bradwell, who was more deeply affected.

Treor alone, she said, shared with them the secret of Sir Newington's death, and, he having died also, no one had received his confidence. What, then, remained about which they need worry themselves to death; not even simple presumptions; the gratuitous or interested guess of some Irishman, advanced in

order to trouble them and exonerate the memory of his friend! Truly, they showed themselves very simple to be impressed by so little!

The perpetrators of these annoyances, moreover, well knew whom they concerned; they pursued, with their malicious jokes, only Richard, whose tormented mind gave them a ridiculous credit which she would have refused them.

So, Lady Ellen remarked, they sent her no warning, no summons; she came and went, without any where feeling the earth rise, or hearing the walls ring, or being addressed by voices descending from heaven such as he heard wherever he might go.

And as her gaiety returned with that mental calmness which she had at first lost, she ended by laughing at her lover and at the vain terrors which besieged him. and she asked him if he was quite sure that the voices existed, if they did not rather resound in the interior of his brain.

He answered by the letters: did he, by chance, write them himself in a dream? She desired to examine them, flattering herself that she would recognize the writing, or at least discern in the characters the source from which they came; but in vain Bradwell searched for them in the pockets where he had carefully buried them: disappeared!

To relieve his conscience he ransacked the furniture in which, in his excitement, he might have locked them up with the thought that he might need them; in no drawer, no hiding-place known to himself alone, did he find them, and the Duchess saw in this disappearance a sign that all this lugubrious farce by which Richard and she had been filled with suspicion had been played upon them by timid people who were afraid of compromising themselves.

By whom, however? She would not have been a woman if this curiosity had not piqued her, and she watched all those who approached her, with the detective-like care with which she always conducted her inquiries. She interrogated skilfully, feverishly, setting traps into which the culprits would certainly have fallen, and did not give up; but the conspirators showed intelligence also. Vainly she set watch over, and herself watched, her domestics, her maids: all her attempts failed pitifully.

Then her over-excited suspicion extended to everybody promiscuously and, although she had quite ceased to tremble, she conceived irrational resentments toward her most faithful servants, toward persons farthest from injuring her; and she took a special animadversion to the priest of Bunclody whom she inwardly accused of having plotted and concocted all the manoeuvres which had imposed upon Richard.

The priest, who had formerly frequented Cumslen-Park, had not looked at all pleasant since the insurrection, and did not set foot in the castle; even during the mourning of the Duchess, when he should at least have offered his condolences, he had not appeared or given sign of life; certainly such an absence must signify something, must indicate criminal acts; and without more

certainty, she enjoined Gowan to severely punish Sir Richmond for his intercourse with the rebels.

And the leader of the Infernal Mob, who cherished a rancor against the invisible, intangible enemy for the murder of several rascals of his band, congratulated himself on this extra duty, in which he could give expression to his ferocity, which had been increasing for some days, in the absence of objects on which to wreak it.

The poor, trembling priest, however, kept himself free from all participation, even hidden, in any act, and at the time when events took such an abominable turn, he redoubled his precautions, and displayed a luxury which would have been laughable under other circumstances, that they might not, in either of the camps, implicate him in any affair, or even accuse him of preferences

Padlocked in his presbytery with his servant, he did not show even the end of his nose at the window, or even his shadow behind the glass when, in front of the house, arose the abominable tumult of some execrable and cowardly assassination.

Pushing circumspection to the extreme, he simply fell on his knees and interceded with his God at once for the victim, in order that the Lord might receive him nevertheless into Paradise in case he die unforgiven, and for the executioners, whom he supplicated the Most High, Most Merciful, to pardon.

And he guarded even his mental demeanor in such a way that he should not be compromised, making the request by a vague movement of his soul at the feet of the Eternal. Formulating his supplication in words, his expression would have been of a nature, in spite of all his care, to grate upon susceptibilities; by any subterfuge employed to designate the murderers he would have run a risk of disobliging these odious rascals.

The result of this attitude, it is true, authorized both the Irish and the English to believe him at heart with the enemy.

And it was in this way that Hunter Gowan argued in spite of his protestations, the morning when he invaded the presbytery in company with the fiercest of his sanguinary gang, thirstier for carnage than ever before.

At the first summons to open, the priest remained deaf in spite of the uproar of reiterated calls, abuse, and insults, and the drunken brutes asked him if he was in bed with his servant, though she was not at all appetizing.

Obtaining no response, they scaled the wall, broke in the doors, smashed the partitions, and, reaching the room where the unhappy man was shivering with terror at his prayer-desk, cried:

“Ah! rascals, scoundrels, is this the way you receive the defenders of order? They described you well when they denounced you as an out-and-out Irishman.”

“Me!”

The priest, in order to protest, cut suddenly short the ejaculatory prayer which, in the imminence of his peril, he was addressing to the Almighty for his own salvation, struck his breast, made sonorous by the fasting to which the

hostilities and the absence of the market which supplied his plentiful table had condemned him, and shouted, lifting his long arms in the air:

"An Irishman! me! and an out-and-out one?"

Standing upright, he did not try to avoid the scrutinizing looks of Gowan. He opened his eyes immoderately wide, that the leader of the Mob might be able to see the depths of his soul.

"An Irishman!" continued he; "but the censure which, from the beginning of the insurrection, I have not ceased to inflict upon the Irish; my church, which I have forbidden them, closed with folding doors; their wives, to whom I have refused communion; their daughters, to whom I have refused confession; their children, to whom I have refused baptism; their dead, to whom I have refused extreme unction, my benedictions, my absolution!"

"The wonderful privation!" interrupted, with a coarse laugh, the ex-valet of the hunt. "Now, if you had refused them the beer and wines in your cellar!"

"Oh! as for that," affirmed the priest, "I have not had to deprive them of them; they drink only pure water."

"Like frogs! But we are not frogs; why have you not already invited us to taste your liquors? We will empty cups to your health, which has need of good wishes, for I swear to you that it is very much threatened."

This pleasantry was welcomed with hurrahs, emphasized by the clanking of the sabres and the ringing of the muskets on the flag-stones, and the patient, who felt already the cold blades in his flesh, ordered his old and dull servant to run and show the brave men into the hall, where a good fire was blazing, and to serve them promptly with everything they might desire to drink.

But the instruction arrived too late; already the goblets had been filled, the jars were being emptied as by enchantment down the burning throats, and, with the noise of the earthen-ware, of the tin, and of the wooden tables knocked against each other, bursts of laughter and noisy speeches arose.

"See how you sin, like one of your sheep," said Gowan; "you fail in kind attentions; I have been obliged to remind you of a politeness which should have imposed itself upon you immediately on our entrance, and which my comrades have not had the patience to await. No, no, it is useless for you to swear to the contrary; you have not treated us as friends."

Growing pale; his terror increased by that of old Edwige, the servant, who I crossed herself continually, mumbling bit by bit or all together (her God would know them well) all the prayers, all the litanies, all the acts of faith, of hope, of charity, of contrition, that she could think of,—the priest struggled with all his might against this deadly accusation.

The time had passed for circumspection, for a position midway between the two parties; he declared himself very squarely for the English, calling Edwige to witness, but still not deciding to go down among Gowan's soldiers, who were now sitting at the table and clamoring for something to eat; he appealed to God on high, and here below to Jesus on his crucifix.

The captain of the Infernal Mob shook his head and informed him then of his strict instructions, received from the mouth of the Duchess herself in consequence of formal accusations representing the priest as affiliated with the United Irishmen.

The actions which he had just cited to exonerate himself were comedies, assumed to divert suspicion and to secure the power to carry on with impunity, in shadow and disguise, the works of darkness and blood.

At the same time Gowan, cunning and violent, declared him prisoner, laying his hand on his shoulder so roughly that he staggered and uttered a cry of pain; and a tardy dignity arose in him to protest against this outrage on his character, against the sacrilege of this brutality, aimed, it seemed to him, at his priesthood more than his person.

And, ashamed at the cowardice which he had thus far shown, as if suddenly touched with a grace that enlightened him, he reviewed his whole conduct from the beginning of the revolution and judged himself with an extreme severity.

Truly, was not the right on the side of the insurgents? And, in any case, their heroism, their abnegation, their constant humanity, in the early days, merited admiration and esteem and sympathy.

If, at last, exasperated by the inexcusable cruelties of the conquerors, they engaged in their turn in a war without mercy, they did so in retaliation. Well! without approving, he comprehended them, and did not blame them.

And he reproached himself for abjuring them, for abusing them, as he had just done, proclaiming sentiments of Anglomania which he did not feel, and, solemnly, boldly, in a manner worthy of respect, he made honorable amends to the conquered whom he had insulted, almost the instant before, out of base fear.

He did not settle the question of the legitimacy of their claims, but applauded their courage, their avoidance of excesses.

Therefore Gowan did not let him utter a long tirade. The priest making compact with the insurgents, that was the complaint which was made against him; he confessed it, or at least no longer disputed it; Lady Ellen's orders, then, could be executed without delay.

"What orders?" inquired the old servant, resting, for a second, from her mumblings.

"To hang him, or cut his throat, or shoot him, as he may prefer," responded Gowan.

But Sir Richmond put her gently aside, and, lifting his eyes to heaven in the conventional attitude of a martyr, he said:

"I do not fear death!"

"We shall see!" said Gowan, pushing the priest before him down the staircase.

Below, the gang, whose drunkenness was increasing, were yelling hungrily before the ransacked cupboards and the kitchen rummaged from one end to the other; they insisted that the old servant and the priest should show them where the victuals which they could not find were hidden.

"But there is no hiding-place," the servant assured them.

"No fowl, no cheeses, no quarters of game, no ham?"

"No, on my place in paradise."

And the priest, supporting her affirmation, roused a rage of furious disappointment, a chorus of anathemas, volleys of blasphemies, in the midst of an incessant uproar of benches striking the pavement and empty bottles breaking; and one of them pleasantly insinuated:

"Shall we eat, then, the priest and the vixen?"

His comrades protested at first, unanimously; the priest seemed to them really too tough, and the old woman as greasy as a seal. Thanks! they would only drink, as there was no more solid refreshment.

And eight or ten of them repaired to the cellar, from which they brought up casks; placing them anywhere, even on the table, they did not cease to fill their glasses, which they emptied at one gulp, in the hurry of their disgusting orgy, finishing by losing their reason, while Gowan, accepting a glass to imbibe ideas, busied himself with inventing a way to settle the priest's account that should be ingenious, novel, and creditable to his imagination!

But one of his companions stole from him the glory of the discovery, a certain Rutbert, who had proposed eating the curate and the old woman, and who now, in his stupid intoxication, began to put his idea into execution.

In the fire-place long logs of oak were blazing with clear flames which filled the chimney, and the intense heat bit the flesh under the clothes, under the gaiters, under the boots of the soldiers, who moved away, one of them, whose calves were burned, regretting that a deer was not roasting before this splendid fire.

"Let us roast the priest!" rejoined Rutbert; and, not allowing his proposal to be forgotten, renewing it between every drink which he swallowed, it at last was eehoed by three or four of his comrades, as drunk as himself, and soon the whole band uttered the refrain:

"The priest on the spit! The priest on the spit!"

And, notwithstanding the Pater-Nosters of Edwige, her supplications, kneeling at the feet of the rascals, a discharge of pistols, followed by twenty other murderous reports, struck Sir Richmond, unmoved, braving his executioners. He rolled on the flag-stones, and, divesting him hastily of his clothes, the savages, in shameless joy, in the midst of cries which were heard at the castle, looked about for a pike on which to impale their victim in order to lay him before the fire-place, and, finding none, but still stubborn in their cannibalistic design, they fixed upon a compromise.

They would not roast the thin old fellow whole, with his skin tanned like a shoe; but his heart, perhaps, was more delicate than his dog's skin, and ten knives at the same time ripped open his breast. Rutbert plunged his hands into the opening, and, detaching from its ligaments the heart still warm and beating, he pierced it with a long, sharp dagger, which they placed before the fire-place to serve as the desired spit.

Stamping with joy and drinking repeated bumpers, they, nevertheless, did not taste this horrible dish.

At the moment when, out of bravado, Rutbert, challenged by the others, was ready to cut from the heart, the blood of which was dropping on the embers, a piece to eat, suddenly a voluminous package fell into the flames through the flue, and a formidable explosion, scattering over the room a shower of projectiles, burst out, riddling with lead and iron each of the bandits, and finally burying them under the rubbish of the fallen house.

From her window the Duchess saw the house blown up and believed it a trick of Gowan's, but soon the rumor of what had happened reached her ears; Gowan and all of the band which had accompanied him had perished without one escaping.

Sending immediately to clear away the ruins, she verified the news and became convinced that the deed was done by the Irish. But various witnesses had seen from a distance, roaming about the presbytery, two men with caps pulled down, one of whom soon fled, pushing before him the old Edwige, after which came the terrible explosion, sending the roof into the air, hurling the walls in all directions, and spreading a black smoke everywhere.

Again Lady Ellen became the prey of violent frights; but she conquered them; now the obsequies would not be longer delayed; they would take place the next day; numbers of the guests were already at the castle, and, surrounded with their friendship, or, at least, their solidarity, certain of being defended against any criminal surprise, and diverted by their society, notwithstanding the mournful gravity of the circumstances, she recovered herself completely.

After the ceremony, nothing would keep her at Cumslen-Park or in Ireland. It was natural that, widowed under such dreadful circumstances, she should leave the castle and the island, and travel. She would cross the channel and travel on the continent, safe from pursuit, if, her crime at last known, they should venture to trouble her.

In twenty-four hours there was little risk of any mischance occurring. The persecutions of which Richard had been the object would be no more renewed; on that side there was, then, nothing to fear; if, indeed, anyone had had any interest in denouncing them, he would not have waited till the last moment.

If even a vague accusation had been secretly murmured, it would have come to her; her friends would not have continued the affability, the courtesies, which they lavished on her: intimate friends, like Muskery, would have warned her, in order that she might avert the calumny; Lady Carlingsford, so garrulous, so malicious, and who so detested her, would not have failed to make some allusion to the rumor which was afloat, and, feigning to have no faith in it, of course, on her honor, would have propagated and proclaimed it at pleasure.

Since, of all these symptoms of an alarming rumor, none presented themselves, the Duchess, fatigued with her tormenting vigils, towards midnight, following the general counsel, went to bed, where she soon slept the sleep of the just!

CHAPTER XI.

During the fortnight that, in its brilliant uniform starred with decorations and covered with laces, it had lain on its funeral bed, the corpse of Newington, notwithstanding the fact that it had been most skilfully embalmed, had altered steadily.

The rosy light of the torches, flanking the catafalque worked with silver wire and adorned with plumes, was reflected in mortifying flesh, and, in spite of the incense, a nauseating odor filled the air, in which the rare conservatory flowers, gathered and renewed each morning, withered prematurely.

The officers, who, with drawn swords, formed, at the threshold, the supreme guard of honor, relieved each other three and even four times an hour, that the impure air might not affect them, and they extinguished the lights nearest the body, that their melting heat might not hasten the decomposition. On the morning of the obsequies, the servants succeeded in opening the windows, but could not push back the heavy shutters. Going outside to see what obstacle resisted so obstinately, they found that, during the night, in spite of the sentinels and the ferocious bull-dogs loose in the yard, mysterious workmen had firmly padlocked them.

But, afraid of exposing themselves to the vengeance of these hellish artisans the lackeys, without consultation, with one accord, resolved not to touch the padlocks.

They must have been put there for a purpose, and common prudence forbade them to thwart it; how did they know that the crow-bars would not cause an explosion like that which had just destroyed the priest? No one wished to pass from life to death in perilous leaps which scatter one into fragments; better breathe the impure air during the funeral service.

There was nothing to be done, moreover, but to wait patiently; in a few short hours the obsequies would begin by the placing of the body in the coffin; with the morning it would be over, or by noon at the latest; and when they had crossed the room for some purpose,—to carry wreaths, change the faded flowers, or put in place seats that had been disarranged, they would run at once to wash themselves internally with copious draughts of port or whiskey.

And the friends, the guests, obliged to salute for a last time the remains of Newington before they should be enclosed in the triple bier of glass, cedar, ami chased silver, did not tarry, but bent hastily over the corpse, and filed away with rapid step towards neighboring rooms or out of doors, where they breathed freely.

Only Sir Richard and Lady Ellen lingered about the body and returned to it continually together, or oftener separately, feverish and agitated, not exchanging a single word, Bradwell extremely grave, the Duchess animated, more impatient with the time which passed with such deplorable slowness!

The fortnight just ended had not contained a day so long, and this last hour really seemed eternal.

Ellen had finished her widow's toilet, received the mournful homage of a hundred persons, and more than twenty times already she had descended from her apartments to the chapel, kneeling for form's sake, for the world, looking at the corpse with eyes which she tried to wet with false tears.

Vainly her maids tried to keep her in the reception-room which was her place, pointing out to her the violation of etiquette committed by this constant desire to see the dead, to drag her affliction—although legitimate—through the corridors, and to expose it noisily and immoderately in the face of all; she would pay attention for some minutes to their observations while they re-fastened her veil or adjusted some bit of crape which had escaped, or while she cast a last complacent glance in the glass, or while some late coiner deposited at her feet the customary condolences.

But when nothing obliged her to remain in this official room, where, on a kind of throne raised upon a stage draped in mourning, she should have preserved with dignity, under the eyes of her servants, the rigidity of a statue, she would promptly abandon this post, and return to the chapel where the visitors were becoming fewer and fewer.

Noblemen from afar merely got down from their horses and assured her, like their predecessors, of vengeance on the mass of the Irish for the abominable crime committed by one of them, who had unfortunately escaped expiation.

They stayed no longer than necessary in the foul atmosphere, having come from the fresh air with lungs expanded by the run; and soon the Duchess found herself alone with the lour priests bowed in prayer at the corners of the catafalque, who astonished her by showing no sign of physical disgust, though near the body and I enveloped in the pestilence which escaped from it.

But for the force which imperiously led her back into this fetid place, how far she would have kept from it. But while she paraded elsewhere in the pomp of her mourning, or when she isolated her pretended sadness in the retreat of her own apartments, might not some incident happen which would suddenly compromise her security and revive all at once her exhausted fears? So she felt the urgent need of her presence to promptly avert and drive away all danger.

Neither this danger nor the event was clearly defined in her agitated mind, obscured by dense vapors pierced by fugitive gleams, and in which surged furtive visions of individuals, of objects, of countries, while a confusion of noises buzzed in her ears,—the roaring of a far-away incendiary fire, the monotonous rumble of the sea.

But in this tumult of her brain, the apprehension of the uncertain, of the unforeseen, of surprise, dominated her, and from time to time a kind of shudder at the imminent froze her limbs.

Therefore with what wishes, more intense each minute, she longed for the end of this delay!

She inwardly censured Sir Bradwell, who perhaps did not sufficiently hurry those in charge, or whose taciturn and gloomy grief they respected, not daring to disturb him to indicate that the moment of final separation was at hand.

Moreover, for every one's sake, it was important to terminate the ceremony, to remove from the interior of the castle these remains of the Duke which would scatter pestilence abroad and were, in any case, a monstrosity, the sight of which offended the most pious.

Truly Richard took pleasure in nightmares; he was peculiar in his tastes, and she was on the point of going to ask him to hasten the end of his ignoble dream.

At that very moment he entered the room.

Grown several years older, with hair turning gray, emaciated, and with feverish looks burning in the depths of his heavy and cavernous eyes, he walked automatically, aimlessly, as in a dream, a body wandering through a sorrowful Gehenna.

At the least noise he trembled, and the call of the Duchess, given rather emphatically, caused him a shiver and made him lift his head, which was bent forward on his breast, in a nervous start of painful surprise.

What did she wish? He contracted his eyebrows heavily, and, as he did not advance, but rather made a movement of recoil, she approached and severely, jestingly, invited him to look at his face, more mournful than was fitting, exaggerating the desolation, positively overwhelmed; a face of a lover whose mistress, adored as a radiant divinity, has expired in his arms.

But the free tone of this mocking reproach grated very harshly upon Richard in such a place, two steps from the corpse of their victim, and he manifested his feeling by somewhat bitter words, a recall to shame which she did not accept.

For some days Bradwell had been very irritable with her and had spoken to her harshly.

Although no secret menace came now to trouble him as at the beginning, touched with remorse, he felt towards Ellen a commencement of aversion which was increasing, which struggled still with the passion existing for the damnable marvel,—so seductive, pale, and slightly thinner, that is to say, refined, in her long mourning garments,—and which would end by triumphing over it.

Nevertheless Richard, in his justice, reacted against this new impulse; he did not recognize that he had a right to hate the Duchess, at least as the instigator and principal author of the poisoning of his father: this crime flowed from the other, from the first crime committed against Sir Newington,—adultery, almost incest; and the responsibility of that belonged to him alone.

Their mutual burdens in this execrable tragedy balanced each other; their culpability was equal; perhaps his even surpassed that of the Duchess.

Misled by a sort of rape, led astray by ungovernable passion afterwards, Ellen had been fatally, irresistibly led to the suppression of the obstacle which impeded the free exercise of her passion; her commendable feminine repugnance

at being shared by two possessors had likewise guided her; and in truth, in such circumstances, the real crime was in having kindled this frenzy!

To the rebuke of the Duchess, he made no answer, and, bending over the catafalque, he contemplated the hideous body with a consternation absolutely edifying, but less that of an inconsolable son than of a repentant criminal, and Lady Ellen could not forbear saying so to him in a low voice, and exhorting him to circumspection.

Silently removing himself a few steps from the monks who were praying, and calmly touching the arm of the young woman, he simply asked her, with a kind of religious solemnity:

"You have, then, no remorse?"

And he, in his astonishment, opened his eyes so wide that the impenitent Lady came near bursting into a laugh, and answered lightly, in a tone whose disdain was not concealed:

"Remorse I... Eagerness to have this ended, that is all; my lord lowered into and sealed within his tomb of stone!"

The left corner of her lips turned up with scorn, and in her eyes, where the gleam of the tapers was reflected, shot a look of pride, of defiance of the terrors of conscience, which sickened Richard, who could find only this exclamation for response: "What a frightful creature!"

And Ellen replied immediately, emphasizing her sickly irony with bravado: "Because I have not to repent of an action which I have meditated for a long time and which frees me. The abominable crime? Is it a just, a merciful man that I have put out of existence? No: the object of universal execration, a rascal whose hands are red with the blood of a whole people. I have only anticipated the lover of justice who would sooner or later have punished him." "You should have waited for him."

Richard answered mechanically, preoccupied by dull noises outside which struck his ear; and Ellen lashed him on account of this word which escaped him in his distraction:

"Wait! O the hypocrite, and to rejoice at my deliverance! The profit without the danger, an honest maxim! To desire ardently the death of some one, applaud it, have the benefit of it,—is not this, then, the crime, minus the boldness, the courage, to commit it?"

"Exactly!" said Bradwell, convinced. "But if, in the case of a natural death, only the having wished it constitutes a sufficient motive for remorse, we have a still stronger reason for being frightfully obsessed.... For my part—and the merited torment has already commenced—I shall never know again, by day or night, a moment's rest."

"Not so loud. Hush!" said Ellen, who thought that she saw the monk's cowl move in a listening attitude. "Absorbed in prayer or asleep, they do not hear us."

The uncertain voice of Richard provoked in Ellen an opposition which she formulated, and, looking at his terror-stricken face, she taunted him as a childish coward, afraid of a shadow or of a vain spectre.

"Your altered countenance will betray us; recover yourself; control your blood, your nerves!"

But, insensible to these griefs, Bradwell, without attempting to comfort her, listened, more and more frightened, passing through all the shades of alarm, and hardly controlling a trembling which aroused in the Duchess a protest of violent reproach.

To explain his increasing emotion. Richard tried to induce her to listen also. The stifled tumult of a struggle near at hand, in which could be distinguished a moving of furniture, stamping, suppressed attempts at cries, and groans...

But Ellen discerned nothing of the kind and laughed at his hallucination, asking him if he had not been smoking hasheesh, like the old Treor.

"I swear to you," affirmed Richard.

"That all the tumult has your brain for its seat. I do not wish to pretend to be stronger than I am. I too, in the suffering of these latter days, in certain lapses of my energy, have been haunted by these noises which exist only in ourselves. Calm yourself, then!"

"Before the soldiers present themselves to arrest us," resumed Bradwell, "you may rest assured I shall recover my serenity, and my countenance will not dishonor me.... But I admit that the unknown frightens me, and these noises which persist, and which I hear feebly but surely, revolutionize me. Hark! cries are breaking out...."

"Hallucinations!" repeated the Duchess, testily; "the hallucination of the massacre in the recent battle. The victims, raised rotting from the soil, detached from their gibbets, are running to curse you, accompanied by their sisters, their daughters, their wives, and it is the chorus of these imprecations which rises in your demented brain."

"No! no! They are killing people, I tell you!"

Lady Ellen listened out of complaisance; but not even the wind whistled in the chimneys. Some accident, she admitted, might have taken place; a cavalier dismounted, a beggar bitten by the dogs, or a scuffle of soldiers, such as often occurred, without reason, for a ration of gin, for nothing, for fun.

"This was not a scuffle, or simultaneous scuffles," insisted Bradwell, "but a battle."

"Between whom? Our Britons and the phantoms of the enemy exterminated everywhere?"

"No, perhaps not so completely; Paddy Neill, who, I believe, escaped from the carnage, and Harvey, who, as you know, succeeded in regaining his troops, and has taken command of them again to force the victory,—these two may have rallied the routed survivors fleeing from all the neighboring villages."

"And you think they would lead them back into this region, occupied by numerous troops?"

"Yes, by outflanking them and baffling their vigilance, which perhaps is relaxing."

"And for what end?"

"For vengeance!" said a grave voice.

"For vengeance!" added another voice, coming, like the first, from a cowl. And, terrified by this sudden intervention, asking themselves who were these bold priests who responded in this manner to their interrogations, Ellen and Richard remained nailed to their places as they recognized, standing around the corpse, Edwige, the old servant of the priest of Bunclody, Edith, the mother of the soldier Michael, Paddy, whom they had either hanged or disemboweled, and Treor, Marian's grandfather, who was dead!

Do the dead then return now? By the blow of this unexpected apparition, the incredulity of the Duchess was shaken, but not for long. She, like everyone else, had imagined Treor dead, when he still lived, his soul fastened to his old bones, and only in a faint. His friends caring for him with solicitude and perhaps with an empirical science which regular physicians do not possess, the old man had been raised from his pallet, not from the tomb; there was really no need to be frightened as if it were some supernatural manifestation!

Bradwell, on his side, so depressed, straightened himself proudly, fixing with defiance the phantoms, who remained unmoved, their arms extended towards him and towards Ellen!

The peril declared, he was prepared, and he marched deliberately up to Treor, who added, as solemnly and gravely as the God of the Christians in the pictures of the last judgment:

"We are here for your punishment!"

"It is I who punish rebels!" said, boldly, the son of Newington, and he called to his people to seize these four first.

But in the vestibules arose a confused murmur of whispering voices and stamping feet, the noise of a surge, of a human tide rising; and Lady Ellen, thinking that the persons invited to the obsequies were approaching, went precipitately to meet the flood and drive it back, till the required soldiers, seizing the troublesome mourners, should drag them outside. She recoiled, uttering exclamations of fright. A deep serried band of Irish, gloomy, fierce, with a look of the other world, was advancing, and their growls of anger, at sight of her, were not calculated to lead her to expect mercy from their tardy intervention.

She was conscious that they came to execute the threats contained in the warnings addressed to Richard, and, commencing to dread thoroughly the penalties promised Bradwell, but which she would evidently share, notwithstanding her desire to conceal her weakness, she called to her aid the servants, the officers, Lord Muskery Jennings, all those on whom a woman could count.

But at her cries, though the doors opened to make way for those whom she summoned, they all entered gagged, chained, pushed into the room by the Irish, whose compact mass filled all the outlets, and numbers of whom carried on their clothes large, damp, vermilion stains, which shone in the flame of the lamps;

from their rags which fumed in the heat of the room exhaled a red steam with the characteristic odor of human blood recently shed.

"Your servants, your friends," said Treor, "are prisoners or dead."

"And you are going to assassinate us in our turn?" replied Lady Ellen, in whom the looks of the crowd of enemies, their features still contracted with the effort of the struggle, inspired a terror which she could not drive off. She tried, however, to conceal it before so many witnesses.

"We have assassinated no one," responded Treor. "All those whom our brothers have stabbed, strangled, put to death in any fashion, we have particularly designated for capital punishment. Not one who has not perpetrated abominable crimes, who has not shown and paraded a gratuitous cruelty. Soldiers! no: execrable executioners! pitiless persecutors! The loyal adversaries whom we know as such, who, in the battles have simply fought with valor, though they have killed more than one of ours, we have been contented to reduce to a state of absolute helplessness. Bound firmly, under bolts, or disarmed and sent away on parole, they live, and can tell the story of our justice.... which is going to judge you, Lady Ellen, Duchess of Newington, you, Richard Bradwell."

Richard, folding his arms, without bluster, without wrath, as without fear, looked at the old man in acceptation of his irregular jurisdiction which he did not possess the power to challenge. Defiance, bravado, protestations, or even a pretence of commanding these men who held him in their hands, seemed to him nothing but swagger.

If the hour—and he felt it—had struck for him to answer for his crimes toward his father, well! he was ready, and he said simply and very clearly to Treor: "Speak!"

"Listen," said the old man, slowly, and after a pause in which all became profoundly silent: "Richard Bradwell, you did not profess for our race the native hatred of your compatriots; far from that, even; your inclination was toward us, and nevertheless you have *associated* yourself, without the conviction which would excuse it, in the work of extermination carried on by your English brothers, and yon have surpassed them in fury."

"No argument," interrupted Bradwell, proudly, "no formality, no witnesses, no routine proceedings. The conclusion, promptly."

"For those," continued Treor, "whom you have ordered hanged without passion against them, national or personal, for those whom your soldiers, excited by you, have massacred like savages, the penalty of retaliation."

"Yes! yes!" clamored all the Irish, over-excited, warming up at the recital of this odious crime.

"Then," resumed the old man, "for these crimes the punishment indicates itself: shot and fastened then to the gibbet, food for the ravens, as an example to your sad fellows."

"I am ready!" said Bradwell, relieved that he was not charged with the murder of Sir Newington, and not fearing death when life, as he had declared to Ellen, held for him only sleepless nights full of nightmares.

Still calm, he took a few steps towards the Irish who claimed the task of his execution.

But Treor's voice stopped him; it said:

"Sir Richard Bradwell! listen to me again."

And the son of Newington, turning back in astonishment, heard these words:

"You cannot be released with this liberating punishment, for the sentence which you would have incurred for the sole incriminating acts affirmed by me sinks into insignificance beside other crimes more monstrous yet, and, above all, more dishonoring, of which you know!"

"We are lost!" murmured the Duchess, seeking wildly in the crowd a clearing by which she might be permitted to escape, searching among the mass for a look of curiosity, of sympathy, of pity, which she might change into sudden love.

She implored, she tried to subjugate, promising herself entirely; in the eyes turned towards her by admirers of her beauty, of her radiant seductiveness, endeavoring to pour the corrupting philter which emanated from her whole person.

Sir Richard, still very firm but deathly white, waited, with forehead slightly bowed, while Treor explained himself farther:

"I see," said the old man, "that you do not dream of denying, of opposing us with contradictions which, moreover, would be useless; nevertheless this sudden repentance comes too late to move us; at the time of our secret warnings you should have shown it, and complied with our injunctions, which were sufficiently imperative."

There was no response, and a murmur of astonishment ran through those present, friends and enemies, who were ignorant of the charge against the son and the widow of Newington and who questioned each other, Lord Muskery and the other frequenters of the castle protesting in advance.

And, feeling herself sustained by these, the Duchess overcame the cowardice which had taken possession of her, body and soul, brightened her pale features, and resolved to save herself by a daring attitude.

"Of what horrible, dishonoring crimes am I, then, guilty?" she demanded, superb and haughty.

On a sign from Treor, the old servant of Sir Richmond, who had been silent, then spoke:

"I accuse you," said she with emotion, "of having given orders for the murder of my venerated master," and she recounted the horrors of the assault of Gowan's Mob.

The Duchess smiled disdainfully, and replied that she would not condescend to such puerile denials. The priest had conspired against the castle, as formerly

he had conspired against the village. In civil wars equivocal persons, double traitors, merit death at the hands of both the opposing parties. Therefore she assumed the responsibility of this execution.

She fixed her bold eyes upon the old servant, who turned hers away in the confusion of such insolence; and, becoming excited in this game for the defence of her menaced body, certain that her beauty in this duel was enhanced by her animation and her will to captivate the assembly, she cast triumphant glances in all directions to gain partisans for herself.

"And the death of Sir Newington, the Duke, your husband, do you assume that also, with a light heart?" asked Treor, in the midst of a general murmur.

"What do you mean by that?" demanded several voices, those of the Lords, friends of the deceased and of the Duchess...

And, simulating utter stupefaction, like a true actress, her mouth slightly gaping, her eyes rounded, Lady Ellen looked at Treor, and shook her head with a movement which signified: Has he gone mad, or does his impudence know no bounds?

Then, turning towards the assembly, she explained her mimicry.

"I have pitied this old man," she said with an extraordinary audacity, with convincing inflections of the voice; "perhaps in the intoxication of hasheesh he does not remember; at least it may be that the misfortunes of his country, the disasters about him, the implacable war, have deranged his faculties. The death of Newington, the crime to which the Duke succumbed, is his work!"

"Over the body of the victim," said Treor, gravely, extending his hand over the catafalque, "I swear that I am innocent of this crime, even by way of retaliation, by imprudence, by accident; Duchess, approach then, and take, if you dare, the same oath."

Feigning not to understand that he accused her, and as if he had simply invited her to support her testimony by this solemn act, she said:

"He submits me to the oath on the subject of the murder of my regretted husband; well! I swear, and is there really need of my swearing? Can there be hesitation between my affirmation and his? I swear that everybody knows that which report has published everywhere, without encountering the shadow of a doubt. This Treor, in his cell, played astonishing airs on his violin, more than supernatural in their character, and it was I who had the weakness, the charity, the humanity, to have his violin given him to lighten the rigors of his captivity, which were extreme at his age."

"By premeditation!" interrupted Paddy Neill, whose frightful face impressed the Duchess painfully.

She continued, however, with the same volubility:

"I listened, ravished and at the same time enervated, to this demoniacal music.... and the Duke offered to send for the musician, and I made the mistake of accepting. Once before us—but I repeat that of which no one is ignorant, and I must annoy with my repetitions. Once before us, he was no longer a man; he was like one possessed; he was drunk, he was mad, a furious madman who abused

us, who insulted us, who lifted his hand against the Duke, who seized me by the skirt.

"This is not the version which you at first fabricated?" said Treor, drily.

"Silence for the accused!" cried Lord Muskery; "go on with your testimony, Duchess!"

"The servant who led me in," resumed Treor, not at all disconcerted, "returned, attracted by my disorderly clamor,—for I was drunk, I admit, drunk from the hasheesh which they furnished me,—at my request, I confess, but granted for Lady Ellen's purposes; this servant questioned the Duchess, and, to get him away, she responded that the Duke was in no danger; at that moment, he was rolling in frightful agony, a prey to infernal sufferings."

"So that you claim the Duchess as your accomplice?" said Lord Jennings, sneering.

"The author of the crime!" declared Treor, in a strong voice, rousing among the English a storm difficult to calm. Amid the tempest special clamors rose.

"Shameless, impudent fellow!" cried Muskery, addressing Treor, and, notwithstanding the bonds which fettered him, trying to walk towards him!

"He accuses innocence, virtue, of his crime!" thundered Jennings.

"Ah! why are we bound and made incapable of punishing this impostor as he merits?" resumed Muskery, trying to break his chains.

Their guardians bound them more securely, they too becoming more furious and reiterating the assertion of their chosen leader:

"Yes! Yes! the Duchess is only a vulgar poisoner!"

But Treor imposed silence on them, and coldly invited the others to calm their generous indignation.

"Criminals have counsel, but no champions," said he; "listen to us, hear the witnesses, you may then present the defence of the guilty...."

And, in spite of the protests, the burning comments, the curses of the Lords and rebellious friends of Lady Ellen, who became all the more turbulent as the repression showed signs of indulgence, Treor told the story, and again described his entrance into the room and the symptoms of poisoning shown by Sir Newington, already struck at that moment with the dagger picked up by Sir Richard on the battle-field.

"Very well invented!" said the Duchess.

"Don't interrupt!" cried several persons at once, some of them even among the English.

The old man's tone of simple sincerity, the authority of his frank and serenely majestic countenance, won him, little by little, the previously hostile part of the audience, and many of those who were not yet convinced at least desired to enlighten themselves by hearing to its close, this clear, cold, precise, crushing indictment.

The poignant phrases of the struggle of Newington against death, the sinister raillery with which Treor welcomed the enraged death-rattle, and then the emotion of the old man on being sobered by perceiving that he was dealing

with an unfortunate, his powerlessness to help him,—all this part of the narrative moved the hearts of the most unfeeling, and filled them with a belief in its truth.

And when Treor came to the hope of the dying man on recognizing the Duchess through the half-open tapestries, and in his paroxysm of rage suddenly divining that his death-blow came from her, Treor reproduced the scene with. such eloquence that no doubt existed save in a few minds, and he could command that the prisoners' bonds be loosened, with no danger that these, once free in their movements, would use them to attempt, as they would have done two minutes sooner, some mad manifestation in behalf of Lady Ellen.

But a sudden change was worked in favor of the young woman when the old man, finishing the relation of the facts, recalled the furious outburst of the monstrous Lady, now she had gagged him with her little hands, thrown him down close to Newington, and then called, with all her might, in order that witnesses might establish the crime, exciting those who came in to rush on the pretended culprit and riddle him with mortal wounds.

"Kill him then!" she cried; "he breathes yet, open his veins; under the weight of your knees, under the blows of your heels, press out his old soul!"

Truly, this was too much honor, and, looking at the Duchess, her quiet features, her resigned smile of scorn at the enormity of the fable with which they were trying to overwhelm her, gave her the look of a grand person vilely slandered, who disdained to defend herself; and most of her partisans, who had been for an instant turned against her, turned back quickly, and protested anew.

A hardened criminal, a criminal by trade, who is at least not just beginning his career, could alone be capable of this persistence, of this artifice, of this ferocious desperation in crime.

He who wishes to prove too much proves nothing. The adage pleaded victoriously against Treor, and they muttered it. Vainly he recounted the supreme desire for vengeance which tortured Newington in his last convulsion, his attempt to drag his poisoner with him to death, and in what way the Duke, in his vain rage, had died at the feet of the culprit.

A dull rumor, then interrupted by denials in an undertone, ran through the ranks of the nobility whose class feeling forbade them to accept the hypothesis of such acts of violence, customary among the lower orders, perhaps, but unknown in their aristocratic spheres.

Recourse to poison or the dagger would not be, on the whole, derogatory to the Duchess; but her nature would revolt at this pugilistic wrangling; her education, her elevation to the nobility, obliged her not to resort to such, even in the passion of the crime, even in the terror of being discovered.

No one pretended that the old man lied; that he knowingly, deliberately, and with an infernal assurance, accused the Duchess wrongfully; but, as they would recall, he confessed himself that he was in a state of deep intoxication from hasheesh!

All that he honestly believed he had seen was hallucination, a delusion of his perverted, obliterated senses; yes, the Duchess, intervening at the call of her husband, had, perhaps, brutally pushed Trevor away, imagining him the assassin; and Newington possibly caught hold of her, as a drowning man catches at his rescuer. As for the poisoning by the dagger, probably Treor, without criminal intention, had scratched the Duke, or the Lord himself had cut his skin.

In any case, Lady Ellen was clear of guilt. And her friends raised their voices to formulate such means of defence as would conciliate all ill feeling and close the debates.

On their counsel, the Duchess did not refuse to lend herself to this compromise; and when Treor drew from one of his pockets, as one of his proofs, the fine satin shoe perforated at the tip with the holes evidently made by desperate teeth, her advocates still explained the bite by the delirium of Newington, who, at the last moment, might easily have taken his pitying wife for an enemy.

"Yes, yes, that's it! Let there be no more charges; let us proceed to the obsequies!" urged a considerable number of persons among the English.

"Yes!" sighed the Irish also, being in haste to finish and to leave this room, in which, under the suffocating heat caused by so numerous an assemblage, the decomposition of the body which had lain on the catafalque too long was proceeding more and more rapidly.

"Let us finish," demanded Muskery, "and, outside of this place, of this impure air, you can do with us, your prisoners, what seems good to you."

"Let the Duchess, then, confess her crime!" said Treor, slowly.

What! he persisted in his accusation!

It was not enough for him to be acquitted of the charge which weighed upon him, and again a sudden change was observed, unfavorable to Lady Ellen.

Since the old man insisted in this way, it must really be that he believed in the guilt of the Duchess; and, imbued with justice as he appeared, it could not be that he founded his belief only on deceitful appearances.

He must possess irrefutable proofs; let him, then, produce them: he had to summon witnesses; let them appear!

As if to respond to this tacit invitation, Treor, by a sign, gave an order to two Bunclodyans, Murphy Gall and Nett Droling, and they pushed in front of them the astonished Miss Hobart, ignorant of what they wanted and frozen with fear when Treor named her.

"Miss, one evening, the evening of the hunt when the Duke of Newington, run away with by his horse, narrowly escaped being crushed at the bottom of a precipice," he said, "you were leaning your elbow on one of the windows of the castle, and you witnessed a tragedy which has not yet been brought to the light, but no phase of which escaped you; recall and repeat what you saw, if you are without hatred, without passion against the Duchess; through a friendship of which this woman is unworthy, conceal nothing; do not disguise the truth."

Very red with the fire of all eyes converging on her with a feverish curiosity, and her habitual worldly frivolity paralyzed at the gloomy appearance of this extraordinary tribunal, Miss Hobart was disconcerted and really recalled but vaguely the far-off pictures which Treor evoked; and, moreover, her mind had been so saturated with hasheesh that she had contemplated them in a stupid horror.

She objected, but Treor nevertheless exhorted her to reveal all, if her memory could furnish her the information sought and required.

But, now that the reminiscences began to stand out more and more clearly, and the light outlines to take on more substance, the incorporeal to incarnate itself in tangible personalities, the amiable young lady, terrified at the consequences of her testimony, was silent.

"Speak!" Treor warned her.

She preserved, nevertheless, an obstinate speechlessness; a second time he summoned her to obey, and, timidly, still pleading the-mental aberration caused in her that evening by meddling with hasheesh, she retraced the long and moving scene of the murder of the gelder. Almost every one present knew the *denouement,*—Casper fallen into the midst of the pack and devoured alive; but at the narration of the circumstances, so shudderingly pathetic, of this long passion of the drunkard and at the manoeuvre of his perfidious executioner, the flesh of the hearers quivered with fright, perspiration started under their hair, an oppressive feeling of horror restrained their breathing and stifled the exclamations of a wrath which was boiling in their breasts.

For, though most of those present doubted the story of this odious and bloody trap, and banished it to the domain of nightmare, they were nevertheless struck with the similarity of the observations of Treor and Miss Hobart in their intoxication.

The principal peculiarity of the hasheesh in Lady Ellen's case consisted, then, in deforming her into the principal character in an immense crime. But just now she accepted without reserve the responsibility for the martyrdom of Sir Richmond, in spite of the abominations amid which it was perpetrated, and she did not revolt at the orgies of the rascals employed by Gowan; it must be, then, that, under her caressing manners, her alluring grace, her enveloping charm, her outward seductiveness, she concealed a soul as ferocious as it was insidious and crafty, a soul of a felon together with a felon's enigmatical and treacherous exterior, undulating carriage, and swinging gait.

At this very moment, her eyes contracted under her half-closed lids, the prominence of her contracted brows accenting the retreating of her forehead, crouching as if ready to spring, she resembled a lioness, cunning, vindictive, and cruel, and she made many of those who were looking at her shiver.

Since the decease of Newington, the dogs had howled day and night, and had been banished to a distant kennel in the middle of the woods.

Suddenly set free, the entire pack, collected at the gate of the castle, set up their chorus of lamentations, and the sinister, prolonged howlings impressed the

Duchess painfully; she imagined that they were going to throw her as food to these beasts probably starved for the purpose,—a quarry like that in which had perished the gelder, and by way of retaliation.

But Treor, after having left her for a few seconds to the horror of this fear, banished it. He reserved for her a worse torment. Her cowardly murder of Casper was only a secondary matter, and committed only to annihilate the awkward instrument, the indiscreet accomplice, of her then unsuccessful attempts upon the Duke's life!

The ball which grazed Sir Newington's head on the green of Bunclody really came, as Tom Lichfield had said, from the gun of Casper, and the irritation of the Duke's horse in the hunt was also the work of Casper, commanded by Lady Ellen.

The Duchess protested with virulence, treating as miserable inventions all these stories, based on what? The wanderings of an eater of hasheesh, confirmed by the aberration of another victim of hallucination: so many idle tales which would burst like soap-bubbles on any impartial examination.

With a look, she questioned the audience, but their eyes turned away from hers; she felt herself no longer sustained except by the rare obstinacy of those tenaciously infatuated, of those generous and upright souls who could not admit that a young and pretty creature could abandon herself to crime with such aptitude and persistency, not recoiling from any atrocity, even the most excessive!

And the gallant Muskery, the interpreter of the sentiments of several Lords at his side, argued the anomaly of a woman, of humble extraction, attaining to the height of rank, of name, of riches, and preparing for herself, with her own hands, a sudden, irremediable fall into the abyss, reigning in the castle and dreaming of the prison, enjoying a life most unexpected, most brilliant, most enviable, and aspiring to an ignominious death.

Such a decline of gratitude, such a perversion of taste, such a misconception of one's interests, are not to be found.

Did not Newington yield to all the wishes, all the whims, of the adored Lady Ellen? We rid ourselves only of our burdens! The Duke, so to speak, crawled at the feet of the young woman; one kills only the despotic master, not the submissive, respectful, fervent slave.

"But the husband whom one hates, in order to belong only to the lover with whom one is smitten."

"Lady Ellen has no lovers," loudly replied Muskery, who had courted the Duchess and judged from his repulse that Ellen's virtue was unassailable.

"She has Richard Bradwell for a lover," answered Treor.

"It is false!" cried Muskery.

"A falsehood which is not to be discussed," said the Duchess at the same time, shrugging her shoulders, but deigning nevertheless, in a jesting and haughty manner, to refute the imputation.

Richard her lover! And who invented, then, this silly story? Treor, Marian's grandfather. He was, however, not ignorant, unless through unheard-of blindness or deafness, of the unlawful love of Richard for his granddaughter; and if he had any doubt up to the time of the battle, on that day Richard had clearly expressed it, it would seem. All the Irish, all the English officers, all the surviving soldiers were witnesses of it; Bradwell had been the laughing-stock of his camp!

"One thing astonishes me," closed the Duchess impudently; "it is that, leaping from his funeral bed, Newington does not rise in fury at this reminder to confirm my words."

She was winning. The variable crowd of English, familiar with the facts which she invoked in her defence, manifested its approbation of this argument.

But Treor replied to the Duchess coldly, and as if there had been no question of his grandchild.

"I repeat," said he, "that Lady Ellen, in spite of her denials, has Richard Bradwell for a lover."

"It is false!" cried Muskery again, surprised that Richard did not rise with the energy of indignation against an imposture so monstrous.

Everybody, even she, was astonished at his silence; they summoned him, Muskery called on him; but he, unmoved, deaf to the insinuations, insensible to the rumors of unanimous reprobation excited by the revelation of Treor, looked fixedly, without thought, upon the ducal corpse, which he had approached, with folded arms, and head lowered, according to his habit when near the catafalque.

At intervals his lips moved in silence, uttering some private word, and he did not move from this attitude, notwithstanding the line of witnesses who testified to details tending to establish the adultery of the son and wife of Newington.

"They lie, they are avenging themselves, they are paid to ruin me, they are buying their liberty," answered Lady Ellen, vehemently, to each of their imputations.

But the sonorousness of her distracted voice did not move Bradwell from his stern trance, nor did the rustling, almost the contact, of the witnesses heard, of whom Treor demanded the oath, sworn over the corpse!

But, on the whole, all the testimony was debateable; the charge was supported by no crushing arguments. The promenades, the *tête-à-têtes* cited, the unconstraint, the caresses, the liberties charged, had not, perhaps, passed the limits of an unimportant familiarity.

A servant, it is true, pretended to have observed demonstrations more compromising, to have seen Sir Richard enter at night the apartments of the Duchess, and reciprocally Lady Ellen glide at night, and twenty times rather than once, into those of Sir Richard; but the chamber-maids of the accused flatly contradicted him.

Obstinately the valet persisted that he had heard the most serious dialogue between the mistress and the lover; she saying, "To be by turns in his arms and

in yours sickens me; he must die!" and Sir Bradwell exclaiming, "No, no, he is my father, you shall not kill him."

The maids of the Duchess proved that the lackey, discharged some time before for theft, was taking vile revenge.

And new, impassioned debates arose; they admitted generally the crime of the Duchess, but not yet the motive, not the adultery, which nothing decisively affirmed and against which Muskery set himself, screaming himself hoarse, with a heat worthy of a better cause, excited by the Duchess, declaring herself the victim of one infamy more.

"Bradwell!" said Treor, in the tumult of the controversies; but he had to touch the shoulder of the young man, who did not hear him.

"What?" said he, at last.

"Deny then that you are the lover of Lady Ellen," cried Muskery, "and that it was to be yours alone that she has poisoned the Duke, after having, on various occasions, tried to rid herself of him, especially with the aid of Casper, whom they accuse her also of ridding herself of by a crime."

The old Lord had given all his voice to this request, and put into it an accent which dictated to Bradwell his response, signifying: "Even if you must perjure yourself to save her, deny, deny, deny still, deny always!"

But, in spite of this pressing invitation, Sir Bradwell remained silent; and when Treor questioned him on the subject of his relations with Ellen, he still did not speak; but, on the question being renewed, he answered, after hesitation:

"What is it to you, approvers on one side, conquerors on the other?"

A murmur greeted the inconclusive reply, an evasion rather than an answer.

And, in face of the hue and cry, of the exclamations, of the loudly-confessed disappointment, he went on:

"Let them shoot me; let them hasten to hang me; I accept even torture; what need of any more questions?"

He seemed to be rousing from a heavy sleep and disposed to fall back again, in any case desirous that they should not disturb him in his absorption, in which doubtless he enjoyed comparative peace,—that of the conscience communing with itself at the approach of accepted death.

But this persistent refusal to explain himself was equal to an acquiescence in the assertions of the accusers and involved the condemnation of his mistress, and Lady Ellen, comprehending this perfectly, begged him to speak.

"They charge me, Richard, with the burden of your silence; a word from you will extricate me from the grasp of this implacable tribunal, which is animated, I wish to believe, by the sentiment of the justice which it has undertaken to enforce; venomous witnesses pretend that I am your mistress, and they infer from this imposture that I have poisoned the Duke, my husband, to become your wife; tell them that we are to each other only affectionate relatives and nothing more."

Bradwell could not repress a look of weariness, but continued to maintain silence, and this obstinacy, confounding the Duchess, plunged her into a terror which she could not well conceal.

"Speak, then, Richard, I beg of you, speak! Have you gone over to my enemies? But my death will result, if you persist in refusing to speak."

And, addressing herself to Treor, to Paddy, to all the people present, she said:

"His suffering has doubtless impaired his mind, destroyed his understanding. Did he not show his insanity even on the battle-field? Regarding his love for Marian, which prevented him from possessing me, I appeal to all women; one does not divide his affections; his passion, repulsed, has unsettled his weak brain, and the mourning for his father, this sudden catastrophe, has finished the work of deranging his reason, not completely but temporarily,—sufficiently, nevertheless, to render him incapable of heeding what is going on around him; so that he does not comprehend under what a load they are crushing me without his caring to lift it from my head."

"What next?" exclaimed Richard, annoyed at all this "quarrel," and immediately plunging again, terribly gloomy, into his repentant prostration.

"And you wish my destiny to hang on a word that may at last come from this mouth? This would be scandalous," resumed the Duchess. "Let them believe me and cease to accuse me, or let them call my word in question and lead me to my punishment!"

She cast again a triumphant look over the assembly, certain of having made an impression by her vibrating tone, the logic of her dilemma, the energy of her conclusions, and her superb attitude, her shoulders erect, and carrying high her head beautified by excitement.

But Treor, who would not so lose ground or be stung by declamations, interrogated Bradwell once more:

"Sir Richard," said he, raising his voice, "answer: I demand it. Lady Ellen, in her defence, calls upon you. Does there exist between you, as she claims, only the affection of relatives? Or are you incestuous lovers, as I maintain? Before your father, affirm one or the other, and you will be believed."

Bradwell, lifting his head, listened, but with a vexed face, annoyed at this proof which he was invited to give and irritated with Ellen for suggesting it.

After having had the audacity of the crime, she lacked the courage of supporting the consequences, and took refuge, to escape them, in impudent lies, a cowardly denial of her past and of the end toward which, so brave when she hoped for final impunity, she marched without shrinking.

He despised her, and did not dream for an instant of lending himself to the fraudulent acquiescence which she demanded; but no more did he feel a desire to contradict her and thereby betray her.

And again he plunged into his extreme dejection.

"Do not prolong a painful and infamous event; decide," said Ellen to Treor.

She waited with effrontery, thinking to secure her end by force of assurance.

But tranquilly, coldly, severely, imperturbably, Treor replied:

"A last experiment, madam! Comply yourself with that from which Sir Richard shrinks; do not recoil from the oath which you have just evaded."

A few words pronounced hastily, without earnest intent, of no more importance than a prayer muttered with the lips. Indeed! if such an empty sham would suffice to extricate her, the Duchess would not hesitate; she felt no apprehension, no silly scruple, about this Platonic step to save herself!

And the best way, on these occasions, being to act promptly, she advanced rapidly to hurry through the ceremony, and already had lifted her arm, when Bradwell, rushing up to her and lowering her hand, his eyes red and his face deathly pale, prevented her from carrying this sacrilegious profanation farther.

"No, no," said he, "I forbid you!"

And this time an almost universal clamor arose, which was equivalent to a verdict.

With the exception of a few dissenting voices of no importance, they were recognized as guilty.

Vainly Lady Ellen essayed a last protest, simulating a sudden indignation, far from her soul, at the judgment of this crowd which she insulted in order to regain its support, accusing her faltering friends of cowardice.

But, after their fluctuations, certainty was now planted ineradicably in their minds, and Treor was able to pronounce sentence amid whispers of approval.

First he addressed himself for a last time to the Lords who had been consulting, inquiring if they could yet bring proofs in favor of the Duchess or Bradwell; then he said:

"Hear the penalty to be inflicted upon them: they shall be imprisoned in this room with their victim.... till death ensues."

"No! not that, no!" cried the Duchess, frozen at this prospect, which was received likewise in dull stupor by the assembly.

"They shall suffer hunger as the Irish suffered it," continued the old man, developing the grounds of the punishment inflicted; "they shall die by the side of this hideously decomposing corpse, as during the famines the Irish perished by the side of the corpses of sons, of fathers, of mothers, of wives, too numerous to be buried and infesting the air with their corruption."

Lady Ellen, her inflexibility broken, shaken by an unspeakable fear, her spirit of rebellion positively killed, accepted her defeat, but not such implacability as this, and implored Treor:

"No, some other punishment," said she, quite beside herself; "the rope, the axe, but not this sequestration with the dead. Muskery, Jennings, protest, and all the others too, in the name of humanity! You also, Bradwell!

"It is you who tremble now," said Richard, victorious. "No more pride, then!"

"Do not be deceived.... What revolts me, fills me with a terror which I can not conceal, is not the moral idea of this funereal cohabitation. I do not fear that the phantom of the Duke will judge me after you, and persecute me without rest: and the proof of this is that I confess what I have so obstinately denied. Yes, Richard was my lover, and the corpse lying on this stately bed, but powerless to avenge himself, is our common work. I even assume the heavier share of the material responsibility; I planned the work and perpetrated it, having only his assent.

"I struck Treor to the floor as he was calling for help... Previously I had, on two occasions, urged Casper to assassinate the Duke, and, as has been testified, I got rid of this Casper under the horrible conditions which have been revealed... I avow, then, all that is desired, without remorse, without regrets. I acted through passion... My only excuse is the force of this passion.

"But I do not plead extenuating circumstances, and I brave the punishment, whatever it may be, outside of that to which you sentence me. The block, the gallows, the wheel, even quartering, it matters little! None of them shall wring from me the least cry of pain or fear.

"But, for mercy's sake, not this prospect of my last moments near a corpse which spreads around it such a horrible pestilence.... No, no, no!"

They comprehended her ardent request, but nevertheless thought it strange that she should make this speech to excite pity, and thus cynically display her crimes which she boldly claimed as deeds of prowess.

And, on a tacit order from Treor, the Irish withdrew little by little, dragging along their prisoners, none among them having the smallest desire to intercede in behalf of the monstrous Lady, the very genius of the depths of crime.

"They are going!" she cried, perceiving their silent exodus, and she ran to leave with the crowd, beside herself, violent, haggard. They pushed her back on all sides.

She tried to break a passage by force, but they threw her back into the middle of the room, and the four judges of the court disappeared, while she cried vainly: "I will not! I will not! I will not!"

CHAPTER XII.

Lady Ellen screamed in vain; only the armor was moved by her protests, resounding under the shock of her voice; and in the distance died out, little by little, the murmur of the ebbing human tide. There was no hope of salvation but in herself; the Duchess threw herself again upon the doors, and, stiffening herself, tried to shake them. Massive, of thick wood barbed with iron, they did not yield. Ellen appealed to Bradwell for assistance.

"Break them down, Richard!"

And while waiting for her accomplice, still somnolent at the foot of the catafalque, to decide to move, she cried out furiously at her jailers: "You are bandits."

But the door only threw back her voice in her face. She was infuriated, however, and tried to force the bolts, calling Bradwell, who did not move from his erect position by the catafalque, with arms folded, and wrapped in thought.

Since the doors would not yield, she thought of the windows, suspecting that they were fastened! No! She believed she was saved. To descend a story, that would not be difficult.... The little fresh air stored between the shutters and the windows seemed good. The shutters, however, resisted her push; they were barricaded. Terribly disappointed and temporarily discouraged, finding herself at the end of her resources, tears flowed from her large, spiritless, feverish eyes.

"Resignation!" said Bradwell, sententiously, in a voice which rolled through all the halls, reinforced by the steel of the armor.

"Never!" replied the Duchess with energy. "Patience at the most. It is impossible that this be anything more than a test. The Irish have a worship of the dead... They will not leave Lord Newington without burial... But answer, then, Richard! Confirm my hope, my illusion, if it be one!"

She pressed him, hoping only for one commonplace word to deceive her! But he did not abandon his coldness:

"Perhaps it would be better to give yourself to repentance, turn your prayers to Heaven, which has pity and forgives!"

"God," sneered Lady Ellen, "if he existed, would take pity first on the miseries of Ireland!"

And as if seeking in the hermetic walls some unknown, miraculous exit, she inspected the room with an increasing terror, reflecting on the hours to come.

"Ah! to agonize here," she said, "is to die many times over.... And when the tapers shall be consumed, these lamps exhausted and extinct, to remain plunged in this offensive darkness! What an abomination!"

"If you had foreseen the chastisement, my father would be still alive," queried Bradwell.

But she did not hear him, all absorbed in the impending horror, and she continued:

"You will kill me rather, will you not?"

Then, dismissing again the overwhelming certainty of their final abandonment, she said:

"Yes, this is surely only a test.... They are watching us. Hush: silence will mislead them.... They will open the doors."

Softly, lightly, on tiptoe, she went to each of the doors by turns, and listened a few seconds.

But not a sound came to her, not an approaching step, no murmur, no stifled words.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, in a fury of wrath, "it is madness to count on any pity whatever. For mercy's sake, Richard, for mercy's sake, kill me!"

"I have no weapons!" he replied plainly.

"Stifle me, strangle me, break my head against the walls!" She was becoming terribly excited; Bradwell tried to calm her.

"Since I entreat you," she insisted. "You have no right to refuse me; you brought me here.... I was tranquil, honestly faithful to my duty. All my life overturned; the birth, growth, and domination of the passion which rendered me criminal,—this is all your work, commenced the night when you took possession of me.... Give me back in death the peace which you took from me!"

"As you said," Richard answered, "this is perhaps only a test.... No discouragement, then; no sharpening of your terrors!"

"You do not believe what you say," replied Lady Ellen. "Moreover, how long will this test last? A day? Two days? This would be too much. See, then, the hideousness of the corpse, and how fast the decomposition is proceeding. If it is the killing me which offends you, invent a means of dying together.... Does none exist?"

The fear of the death-agony under such conditions, of the hunger which would torture them, in the midst of this putrid atmosphere and all this infection which they would breathe in their last convulsions,—this disgusting prospect revolted and demoralized her; and, extreme in everything, now that she looked upon suicide as a deliverance, she clung with more and more ardor to the idea of destroying herself.

"Ah! a fire, a conflagration!" she cried, radiant at the discovery; and she ran to the tapers, seized one eagerly, and applied it to the velvet hangings of the funeral canopy.

But Bradwell tore it violently from her and pushed her back.

"We shall burn in hell!" he said.

"Presently! This is a more prompt, less frightful death; I wish to expire!" He grasped her wrists firmly, and, bruised by this clutch, she struggled to extricate herself.

What religious mania possessed him? Heaven, hell? She knew as much as he about them, having been educated amid these empty words. Heaven extended itself here on earth over happy lovers; hell they were now enduring. Nothing described in the books of priests, of whatever faith, offered a parallel to the torments which she endured, and which would follow.

And, succeeding in making Richard loose his hold, she cried:

"The fire! go away, I will light it in spite of you."

"With what, then?" said he.

She again seized a taper, but he took it from her like the other, and by turns extinguished them all, and, that no spark might be left by which she could light the fire for which she longed, he overturned the expiring torches, and complete darkness reigned.

"Oh! the night! the night!" she exclaimed, in unutterable fright, and took refuge in a mad run to the extremity of the room, stopped only by the wall, while Bradwell, remaining close to the catafalque, knelt in the darkness.

"Pardon, my father," said he; "pardon!"

He did not pray, did not appeal to the God in whom he believed in order to move him: if he had given such advice to Lady Ellen, it was out of kindness,

because he saw that she was laboring under a fit of madness. For himself, even as he braved chastisement on earth, he did not recognize the right to try, by cowardly supplications, to escape it in another world.

"Richard! Richard!"

The Duchess, who would have made way with herself at once, hidden in a corner, trembled at this silence of the night, and called her lover with a failing voice.

Not a ray of light came to her, either from under the doors or through the interstices of the shutters, and vainly Ellen tried to accustom her eyes to this dense darkness which prolonged gazing did not diminish. She only brought into the tired pupils gray undulations which danced and broke into foam like waves, and the clashing of which caused, at last, a piercing pain.

The Duchess, under this physical suffering, closed her eye-lids; but then the vision of the corpse began to outline itself confusedly, at first in the envelopment of a thick mist, then, little by little, more distinctly. Soon the details came out, the hands and face, for example, with extraordinary clearness, more searching than nature, and more and more frightfully pronounced.

Lady Ellen dreamed that this face had formerly touched hers, that this mouth had rested on her own; and this gave her a sensation of such profound disgust that it seemed to her that the putridity was infusing itself into her own veins, poisoning her blood, and causing a decomposition which was already softening her bones and her superb flesh, and reducing her to it spongy mass, a melting and liquefying paste.

Then, seized with an unparalleled terror, she renewed her desperate calls, in a hoarse voice.

"Richard! Richard! do not leave me so alone.... Come! I entreat you!"

Bradwell not responding, she resumed, speaking to herself, wandering:

"He has gone! He has gone!.... They have pardoned him, or he has discovered a concealed outlet."

Confirmed in this conviction by the persistence of Bradwell's silence, she wished also to profit by the opportunity to escape, and, with arms stretched out, that she might not strike against the furniture or walls, she walked very rapidly, full of hope, already deluded with the idea that she was breathing more freely; but suddenly she gave a cry, a shriek rather, as if she were being burned or skinned alive.

The sudden aspect, the unexpected contact with a slimy reptile would have induced a less piercing, less superhuman cry, and, in fact, her hands falling on the head of the corpse, the impression had been worse.

As before, when the darkness came, she fled precipitately, as if pursued by a pack of hounds, by a frenzied crowd, crying in the insanity of her confusion:

"The corpse! I touched it! I touched it! Richard, help, help!"

Bradwell was moved with pity, and, rising, he said to Newington:

"Pardon her, also, now."

At his words the unhappy woman became a little quieter, but only to implore the death which she had just before solicited.

"Yes, death, immediate death," said she; "see, I beg you on my knees."

"On your knees not before me, that I may render you this service, but before your victim; humiliate yourself, repent! peace will descend upon your conscience, as it has upon mine."

"After that, will you kill me?" she asked, ready for any affectation, even disposed, now, to make an effort towards the sincerity of remorse which he advised.

"No, I will not kill you," responded Bradwell; "moreover, you will no longer beg me to."

And the impulse of repentance, just outlined, which would, perhaps, have developed, was instantly repressed.

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed.

She wiped upon her skirt her hand moist from the dead body, but it retained the sensation as keenly as if it were still resting on the vile flesh, and the vision of the corpse, which had for an instant disappeared from her eyes, came back there with an intensity which would no longer be dissipated.

She comprehended the phantoms at which she had laughed of old, the spectres which haunt the imagination and which paralyze or derange the mind; and, mechanically, without reflecting that a bandage over her closed lids could not protect from inner apparitions, she carried her hand to her eyes.

"My God! my hand," she cried instantly, "my infected hand on my face, and I do not fall."

"Repent!" said Bradwell, continuing his laconic and monotonous sermon.

"Repentance! It is stupid! Will it lift from me my hallucination, purify the air, disinfect my forehead, my hand?"

"You will recover that force of soul which drives away obsessions; you will again become mistress of yourself."

"Really?"

Ah! If Richard was not deceiving her, if he did not deceive himself, if the receipt which he indicated possessed the efficacy which he claimed, the Duchess would not hesitate to try it; only, of what was she to repent?

"Repent of the crime first.... and of what then?" she questioned. "Of the passion which made me commit it?"

"Certainly," said Richard.

"Real sorrow for this passion?" said she, "promises for the future, if we should have one, if we should escape from here by an unexpected miracle, which will not take place? A promise not to fall into it again, to repudiate it?"

She interrogated with a renewal of her scorn.

"Are you not cured, then, by this tragic end; for it is the end.... Do not count on your salvation; you will be disabused."

"You are cured, you," she replied, a prey to a revival of spite. "If the impossible miracle should deliver us,—Adieu forever, is it not? And you would run to your Marian! Say, answer; answer me, answer me, then!"

During their colloquy she had approached, guided by the voice, and now, opposite Bradwell and near him, she spoke to him with kisses which he felt.

"Answer, then," she insisted in a rising wrath and shaking him by the facing of his coat, without moving him, however, or causing him to obey this virulent injunction; on the contrary, he contented himself with gently detaching her arm.

And she resumed:

"You are silent.... because you never lie, because you do not wish to lie, because you do not know.... Oh, well! this conviction will aid me in enduring death more patiently. At least, you will never be anything to this girl."

"It is not a question of her!" said Richard.

"You are lying this time... or as good as lying. Certainly... You do not speak... but your thought wanders off to her, I am sure of it. You are where she is, you have learned perhaps that she exists; or dead, your thought goes to her grave, to her body abandoned in the furrow of a field, the rut of a road. And this is why you have not a vivid impression of the horror which surrounds us. Of her, living or dead, and of whom I am jealous, I forbid you to think... Do you understand?"

"Do not excite yourself further," exclaimed Bradwell; and his voice expressed a pitiful disdain...

"If I should insult her, your adored Marian, you would strangle me?" asked the Duchess.

Her precipitate question was made in the tone of a positive affirmation, and the Duchess seemed to triumph.

The wished-for, solicited death, which he so obstinately refused her, she would obtain in this way, and so finish her torture, which might last how many days!

A week doubtless, hunger destroying you slowly, little by little, before twisting you in those convulsions of unheard-of sufferings which still are not the last, but are followed by intolerable, increasing exhaustion and an agony which is death coupled with the consciousness of the final catastrophe.

And she began to curse Treor's granddaughter, who would not have him, but remained as insensible to his prayers as to his threats, and who, certainly, had listened to others. Not Paddy Neill, that monster: that was only to divert suspicion.... Who knew if a sudden enticement had not thrown her into the arms of an English soldier?

"Yes, a handsome soldier, well-built, like a Hercules; delicate, dreamy young girls sometimes find in such coarse dreams satisfaction of their craving nature!"

"Duchess!" exclaimed Richard, really becoming angry. And she went on:

"You, Richard, with your taciturn air, your thoughtful attitudes, did not respond to her ideal. You would have been content to sigh at her feet, to sing

songs to her, to recite verses to her, timidly kissing, in your boldest moments, the tips of her fingers. That was not what she needed, but the brutal assault of a powerful man."

"Ellen!"

This time, Richard seized her by the throat to arrest the flood of insults; but, under the pressure, there came a rattle, a cry of joy, and he let go.

"You are wrong not to finish me," she said, "for I shall begin again."

"No! I swear to you"....

"You will prevent me, how?"

"By leading you to the foot of the catafalque and forcing you to kneel there, your face touching the funeral cloth; and, if you are not hushed by that, then I will place the hand of the corpse on your lips to stifle your blasphemy!"

"No, no!.... I will say no more!"

And, in a new fit of her mad fears, in which she shivered through her whole body, cold and bathed in an abundant sweat, she turned away from Richard that he might not, in a frenzy of sudden rage, seize her and put into execution his diabolical threat.

But this recollection of Marian, evoked by her for her own purposes, roused in her rancorous soul the keen hatred of her rival, and, daring no longer to insult the young girl, she still felt the irresistible need of expressing her sentiment:

"Your Marian! your Marian! your Marian!" she said, raging; then she added: "Ah! how I wish she were in my place!" She sneered and resumed:

"I am becoming reasonable, am I not? I am making honorable amends; I should like her to be with you.... in your arms...."

"So much censure, and at such a moment! I pity you, madam."

The Duchess, weeping, was in despair; now there was no longer any hope, as there had been just before, of salvation by an approaching violent death.

There was unfolding in her mind, in advance, the too long series of her last interminable days, without anything to mark the passing time, and the horror of which increased steadily from hour to hour, unless an attack of madness should suddenly extinguish reason, and leave to wander in this infected place only the animal in her more or less courageous in enduring bodily pain. And she wished for insanity as she had wished for death.

At first, however, she tried to divert her thought, to bring it back to the memory of some fact of former days, before the crime.

She endeavored to recall the beginnings of her passion for Richard, or of some day when they had lived in the delights of a tender interview, or their adventurous rides far from the castle, the nights audaciously stolen from the Duke, in imminent peril of surprise, the intense joys of which were doubled by the apprehension of mortal danger; but no phrase of this past of forbidden love could she now retrace in her brain.

Nothing but fugitive impressions, corners of a picture, half-displayed and instantly effaced, figures which outlined themselves for a second and vanished

like smoke, phrases the sound of which dissolved in the air, as if they had come from mouths which had suddenly lost the faculty of speech.

Then the Duchess fixed her attention more especially on the abhorred face of Marian, but succeeded no better in keeping this profile before her, for the odor of the corpse which was permeating the room brought back unceasingly the vision of Newington on his bed, and she called, at last, with all her might for mental alienation to come to her rescue.

And she meditated on the means of gaining this refuge; perhaps she could succeed by knocking her head against the wall often and violently, by accumulating so many hideous things at once before her mind that her faculties could not resist. Yes, this last receipt was the best, and since Richard forbade her to abuse Marian under penalty of being dragged up to the catafalque and having her lips closed by the vile hand of the corpse, she would resume the litany of her base insults, and in a few minutes, all hope being lost through the intensity of horror, she would roll inert on the stone floor, insensible to all the tortures of the agony which awaited her.

But while she was still hesitating to take this frightful resolution, sounds of hurried steps resounded in the corridors, and a key was heard in the lock, a grinding on the hinges, a breath of fresh air entered, and a voice said immediately:

"Quick! You can escape! Fly from this room, quickly, and outside, with precautions, with prudence, you will be safe."

"Marian!" Richard had exclaimed, as soon as the first words were spoken. "Marian!" the Duchess, in turn, had murmured gloomily.

"See, my Lady, if you wish to fly, profit by this generous offer," said Bradwell.

"If I wish it!" cried the Duchess in a tone of victory.

In the darkness, Richard had not seen Ellen, who, gliding along the floor, almost without touching it, had moved towards the open door, and he comprehended her manoeuvre only when it had noisily closed again and the key again had turned. "She has locked us in, the wretch!" he muttered. Through the wood, the Duchess cried: "Thank me, then, Richard, I give you your Marian."

"My God!" said Richard, "what a frightful thing! Oh! it is not for myself that I tremble; it is for you, Marian. Of course no one knows the step you have taken."

"No one!"

"In that case, you are lost, condemned to die with me the death which was destined for her."

"O well! I have on my conscience no crime to aggravate my agony." Suddenly, a thread of light darted under the door, and they could hear a shrivelling noise on the other side.

"It sounds like fire!" said Bradwell, frightened.

"Before leaving," cried Ellen, "I illuminate your betrothal."

"Oh! the execrable woman, who has lighted a fire by which you will be devoured, Marian, by which you will be devoured alive! Ah! why, why did you take pity on us?"

"Because I love you!" said the young girl, gently.

CHAPTER XIII.

Still again the fortunes of war had turned.

Surprised in certain combats, betrayed by auxiliaries imprudently enlisted in the ranks of the insurrection,—the low herd of the cities, who, at the first engagement, disbanded in a "save-himself-who-can" way disastrous in its result,—the United Irishmen, experiencing several consecutive defeats, decimated, weakened, demoralized, no longer held the country with the same spirit, the same confidence.

The defection of the quota of the colliers dealt them a last blow. These recruits, enlisted into regiments with the hope of seeing them accomplish wonderful exploits, not only quitted them suddenly on the eve of an attack by the English, abandoning the positions which they had orders to guard and to contest, but also took away during the night the fire-arms and munitions of all their comrades in camp; and, without other defensive weapons than pikes against a strong enemy furnished with guns of rare precision and provided with respectable artillery, the troops of the revolution were obliged to retreat, not without a struggle, foot by foot, before a constantly increasing number of English divisions reinforced from all sides.

Around Cumslen-Park there was the same sudden downfall: landed surreptitiously, while the castle was in flames, regiments, attacking the insurgents unexpectedly, had defeated and routed them, and were now reconnoitering the country, patrols picking up on all sides the wretches fallen on the roads, enfeebled by their loss of blood, consumed by the fever of their wounds, dying of hunger and cold in the severe temperature which prevailed.

And the repression was not limited to the combatants, to those whose hands retained, even after being bathed with care, the dirt of the powder in the folds of their rough skin, or the blisters made by the pikes upon the epidermis; they arrested all who belonged to the family of the "poor old woman," the men who had gone back into the country, and the others, refugees or those who remained in their huts,—the children, the women, the old people, as well as the men!

Convoys of the wretches whom they were leading to prison, exile, or execution after a show of absurd trials, followed each other along the roads, in the morning mists, over the ground hardened by the frost, which attained an excessive intensity.

Not from pity, but for themselves, that they might not fall, overcome with stiffness, the soldier-jailers, when a little wood was within reach, lighted fires at which the prisoners received permission to thaw out their freezing limbs at a

distance, and there remained constantly, behind the column, those whose feet refused service, and who were soon stretched on the rugged earth, hardening there, taking singular forms of branches, trunks of uprooted trees.

In certain detachments, the severity towards the vanquished enemy was complicated with an ironical cruelty. When those who were so painfully chilled, overcome by suffering, begged permission to approach the fire, they invited them ceremoniously.

"How then I they have a right to it in exchange for the warming given to Sir Bradwell and Lady Newington;" and they pushed them towards the flames till the latter licked their clothes; and some were burned frightfully, amid the coarse and noisy mirth of their executioners.

They put an end to their tortures of the damned, equally with a joke.

"They are too warm, cool them again now;" and, with a blow of a gun, they would kill them, or draw their blood by piercing them with bayonets.

These soldiers had less fierce souls than the Ancient Britons, and if they sometimes abandoned themselves to deplorable atrocities, it was not from native ferocity, but often for diversion in sport.

From time to time they would feign a lack of watchfulness, in order that one of their captives might attempt to escape, and when he had gone so far as to conceive the possibility of salvation, the most skilful shooters would lay a wager on the one who should send, without demolishing him, the most morally discouraging balls: in the legs first, without breaking them, in order to retard his walk, in the body without striking an organ essential to life. The unskilful one who killed the run-away or even broke the bones in his legs lost and paid.

All this without hatred, but, on the contrary, with a certain esteem for the enemy whose valor in action could not be denied, or firmness of soul in adversity, or indomitable courage when put to the test.

The business, moreover, demanded severities, without which the prisoners would have rebelled and made off.

Their spirit of revolt, in spite of all disappointments and the defeat from which it would doubtless take some years to recover, was not completely subdued, but manifested itself in proud replies, which soldiers of order must not tolerate.

"Are we going to take root here?" said a sergeant after a halt too far prolonged. "It is freezing hard enough to break a stone."

"But not hard enough to break your heart," responded one of the prisoners.

"Come, old man, forward!" commanded the same sergeant, roughly handling a poor old man of seventy years, infirm and overwhelmed with suffering.

"My legs refuse to do service," replied the old man. "Finish me!"

"Not yet!" sneered an officer. "You must have participated in more than ten revolts. That merits the cross; carry it!"

"Let us both carry it," cried a tall lad, offering his shoulder to his grandfather to support him: "I will be in all the revolts to come."

"Wait, you seed of rebels, we will prevent your sprouting and bearing fruit."

And, with a blow of his gun, the soldier who had made the threat completely crushed his skull.

And especially when they had passed the night on the bare ground and in the beautiful starlight did the soldiers rise in a bad humor and torment their band of prisoners.

At daylight they began to march; and, finding obstinate sleepers, crouched down in the ditches, shrivelled up in a furrow, they would shake them like plum-trees, or simply give them a few kicks to warm them up, or even prick them with the points of their swords when, in spite of everything, they did not awake.

"Freeze," they said, and the band would move on, abandoning the sad human waif.

And it was in this way that one morning, ten days after the fire at Cumslen Park, a woman, carefully wrapped in ragged shawls, her face veiled, resisted every summons of the soldiers who exhorted her to rise from the pile of stones on which she was leaning, crouched in a heap, her face on her knees, clasping her legs with her arms and folded hands.

The evening before, they had picked her up roaming about the encampment, and she had vainly tried to escape; Once seen, her strength failed her; immediately overpowered in the field, she still vainly struggled like a she-devil; her resistance did not last long, and on its ending in a faint, they threw her, like a bundle, on the stones where they found her again at daybreak.

Several times during the night she extended her hands to the fire, and they might have distinguished their fineness, although stained with mud, and guessed, from their elegant grace, that they belonged to a young woman; but she did not risk these exhibitions when any one, English or Irish, was near.

And they might have seen her turn her head, but without unveiling it, towards a bit of bread that had fallen from the greasy pocket of a soldier and greedily watch it a long hour at least.

They walked over it, and she felt a twinge of disappointment; a plaintive sigh escaped her, and, when no one was near, she rushed upon the trampled, dirty, vile crumb, and, barely wiping it with her dress, devoured it with her white, sharp teeth.

Now, motionless, as if sealed to the earth, as if petrified, she did not move, not withstanding their punches.

"I am going to wake her if she is only sleeping, but not her last sleep," said one of the soldiers. And he bent down quickly, threw her at full length, lifted the skirts of the wretched woman and threw them over her head, denuding the splendid body which shone on the gray earth in the dawning light of the morning.

And the comrades gathered to contemplate this picture, applaud it, and make obscene comments on it; neither the biting cold nor this foul hilarity roused the young woman from her marble apathy, and they concluded that she had passed from life to death, or that she would do so in a very few moments.

"She will die there!" said a surly sergeant; "come, let us move on!"

"It is only dogs and Irishmen who die," observed one of his comrades, "and if you will take the trouble to look closely at the lady, who is well worth this trouble, you will see that with such stockings, as soft as her perfumed skin, this is no beggar."

These stockings, really fine and lustrous, contrasted with the tattered clothes of the apparently poor woman; and their black color contrasting with the whiteness of her skin, they were puzzled.

They were worn as mourning, for whom? Newington? Then the woman escaped from the castle must be one of the servants at Cumslen Park; in what capacity? A maid, doubtless, of the Duchess. She had dressed herself in this tattered garb to mislead the Irish whom she might encounter; so be it! But why had she not at once declared her identity? Why her desperation when they captured her, why these pains to hide her face?

"Probably," said one of the officers, "because she has become bewildered while wandering in the fields, sleeping in the woods, and not eating at all."

The young woman, pampered and coddled, accustomed to a full table, to idle mornings, could not endure this vagabond's existence.

And through pity, on this hypothesis that she was a compatriot and not one of those demoniacs of Irish patriotism, with the end of his sword the officer covered her again with her dress and suggested laying her on the embers which were still warm.

Zounds! they could not burden themselves with this baggage, carry the girl on their backs to the next houses, or stop to give attention to her; with the warmth, she would recover consciousness, if she still lived.

"She breathes," affirmed the sergeant, who had already pleaded the nationality of the unknown, and who, kneeling close to her, bent over the lips of the fainting woman.

"Execute my orders!" repeated the officer.

The sergeant, before obeying, placed his mouth on that of the young woman, long and passionately, and lifted her by the shoulders, while the soldier who had lifted the skirts just before now carried her by the legs; and when she was deposited on the embers, the column, at last, at the sound of the trumpet, took up the line of march.

For a long time the steps resounded on the frozen crust of the road; it was only when they could be heard no longer except as a sound dying in the distance that the poor woman raised herself on her elbow.

Up to this time, though apparently herself again and warm, the blood circulating in her veins, she had continued to simulate death, half-opening imperceptibly her eyes and closing them immediately.

Now, inspecting the road in every direction and the country on the right and the left, listening to the noises brought by the wind or reverberated by the soil, she lifted herself at first on her knees, still examining the far-off solitude, scrutinizing the least cluster of stunted trees, waiting to see if from some bend

in the earth no one emerged, and, reassured on this subject, she lifted herself at last to her feet, not without difficulty.

Evidently extremely weak and with members yet stiff from the coldness of the night, she tottered, and was obliged, to save herself from falling, to sit down quickly on the ground, seized with rage and anguish at the same time.

"But no!" she protested against this weakness, "I must conquer. To die here, after having escaped so many massacres, passed through all perils, triumphed over all investigations, diverted curiosities, suspicions,—that would be really too foolish."

Shaking off the torpor which, in spite of everything, was regaining possession of her and enervating her completely, she leaped, forcing herself, by a powerful effort of the will, upon her smarting feet, which seemed to give way under the weight of her body, light as it was, diminished through fasting.

And, conquering her unheard-of, incessant suffering, she took a hundred steps, which she accelerated, and then suddenly stopped. She went along the road, in the direction opposite to that followed by the troops, and she turned at intervals, deceived by the sound of her steps, to assure herself that she was not pursued. But she asked herself aloud where she was going in such haste, in this vague hope of she knew not what, like an animal escaped from the knife of the butcher.

Just then, yonder, emerging from the horizon, a black mass began to take shape, leaving behind a space of road which increased little by little in depth; then this mass advanced, and, from time to time, a sudden gleam shining below it, there was cause to think it another body of troops escorting prisoners; immediately the woman turned suddenly to one side into a field, where she at once crouched down for fear that they should distinguish her in her trembling flight, and until the band had defiled at the heels of the other company, the unhappy woman remained in her crouching posture, moved, nevertheless, by a violent wrath mingled with contempt for herself and interrupted with crises of real despair.

"Ah!" she sighed at last, when there was no longer a risk of the departed soldiers hearing or seeing her, "it would have been better to have surrendered myself, to have told my name; if I had brazened it out, I should, perhaps, have saved my life, and they would not refuse me a little nourishment, warmer clothes, and a refuge!"

A late comer, a straggler, appeared, hurrying to rejoin the column.

She wanted to hail him; she even moved her arms, but the words died on her compressed lips and it was in very low tones that she said:

"Help! I am the Duchess of Newington!"

"Duchess!"

She repeated aloud this title which sounded like a sarcasm, and looked with a bitter and disgusted smile upon her strange garb, assumed at the top of the castle after having lighted the fire, and expressly chosen in this state of raggedness to better deceive the Irish with whom she would have to mingle. She

contemplated her blackened fingers, encrusted with filth, and her broken nails, those nails once so long and pink now bordered with a repulsive line of black.

Her hands, bleeding in spots through her thin skin, cracked by the cold, had been skinned by the pebbles when she had dragged herself along the ground to keep out of people's sight; she had covered them with mud in digging up the earth, in her furious hunger to reach a forgotten root which she feasted on voraciously, with the gluttony of the poor whom, formerly, they served with soup in porringers at the castle gate.

The proud, the resplendent, the triumphant Duchess, in her rags, whom the breaking of the branch of a tree by the north wind made start with fright, who searched the furrows like a famished beast, who picked up from under the soldiers' feet a scrap of dirty bread, and who, to eat until satisfied, to sleep quietly under a roof, felt herself ready for any meanness, any compliance, any submission!

Ah, yes! if a passer-by, a soldier, had wished her in exchange for something to appease her intense hunger, she would have abandoned herself without a rebuff. The bit of dirty bread, devoured during the night, had rather re-awakened her drowsy stomach, and its demands now tortured her, rending that organ, pulling and pinching it, with atrocious burning sensations.

But the local suffering which was so acute was not to be reckoned by the side of the general suffering which extended from the head tormented with headache, from the temples which seemed as if bored with gimlets, to the lower extremities, the bones of which seemed broken in a thousand pieces by drubbings, by a fall from immeasurable heights,—the sensation which those experience who are tortured on the wheel.

It was almost a fortnight since she had fled from the castle, since she had roamed about like a criminal, equally in fear of falling into the hands of the Irish, who would not spare her, remembering her misdeeds as the despotic Duchess, and into the power of the English, who would inflict upon her the punishment due to the murderess of Sir Newington; and during this time Lady Ellen could not remember having found, more than two or three times, enough to eat, stuffing herself with sour berries, or cramming herself with raw potatoes which she found now and then in the fields.

The rest of the time she had passed her days with an empty stomach, searching for impossible food, limited to chewing herbs respected by the frost, and here and there the bodies of birds or little animals killed by the cold.

Then these twenty-four hours followed each other like centuries, during which, crouched anywhere at the appearance of a danger, not a grain had passed her teeth.

And from one of these famishing retreats, one day, she had suffered the torture of Tantalus, perceiving a squad which suddenly stopped, in consequence of an accident to a horse which fell on the road.

Vainly trying to lift the beast, who had broken a leg, they had finished by killing him and detaching the four quarters, which they cooked at the next

halting place; and, at the heels of the departed soldiers, the miserable woman was preparing to rush on the deserted carcass, when a second squad unexpectedly arrived and took its share of the food, a disappointment which was repeated four times, the different portions of the marching body always arriving at the moment when Lady Ellen believed herself at last admitted to this unhoped-for feast.

It was not permitted her to participate till after interminable hours, in the night; and then she greedily sucked the blood and gnawed the rags of mangled flesh remaining on the skeleton.

Now the memory of the red and tender meat made her dry mouth water, and the cold congealed the drops into pieces of ice which pricked the lips.

And in a frenzy of need, she pleaded aloud, with abrupt words, begging with tears, in cries to the whistling wind, for immediate relief.

"I am hungry! I can bear no more; have pity on me!"

And, deserting the fields, she strode over the ditch, lying in ambush by the roadside, waiting, hoping, wishing some one to pass of whom she could beg the favor of something to eat, ready to offer herself in case they should not show pity.

The sentiments of modesty and reserve existed no longer in her, and at intervals, even nothing human; the necessity of satisfying herself possessed her and led her; and the instincts of flesh-eaters revealed themselves in her blood, inflating her nostrils at the idea of some wounded man dying somewhere near, whose remains would satisfy her at last.

Forthwith a reaction was effected in her mind which revealed the hideousness of her conceptions, of her hopes, and she became alarmed at having arrived at this degree of perversion of the senses.

Yes, once more, anything rather than a prolongation of this trial, anything: from the Irish who, recognizing her, would kill her,—that is to say, finish her, for was she not already three-quarters dead?—to the soldiers who might treat her as the respected Duchess or as an infamous girl of the streets, it mattered little to her, provided this agony of the damned would cease!

And, contenting herself no longer with passively watching the opportunity, she decided to run after it as fast as she could, continuing to loudly proclaim her torturing distress so that she might be heard from afar.

But now the reverse of what had happened the previous days occurred. Doubtless all the convoys of prisoners had marched on to their destination, and she met no one.

Tottering, bent, she went on mechanically, still growing constantly weaker, saying to herself that this could not last always, this solitude of the sad, dismal roads, stretching away to the horizon, where, with her fixed eyes, she sought simply a living soul to be moved by the sight of her.

"I am hungry! have pity on me! I am hungry!" she still cried, but now *mezza voce,* for herself, discouraged about making herself heard; moreover her

quivering voice had become perceptibly hoarse on account of the redoubled cold, which was benumbing her brain.

She still walked on, always repeating her plaint, but more and more like an automaton, a mist before her eyes and with no consciousness of her comatose state, except at those times when the temperature drew groans from her.

The north wind bit her face under the stuffs which veiled it, bit the flesh all over her body under her thin dress, and crushed her fingers as with nippers.

Lady Ellen blew on her hands to drive away the numbness; she hastened her pace to warm herself; but at last, overcome, her impoverished blood congealing in her veins, she stopped again, suddenly, and, after reeling several times, fell at full length, with a sigh.

The sigh of relief of a beast ceasing to run about, to support the burden of its empty skull.

This skull, which was ready to split at every sound of a step, at every jar of a pebble, reposed now on a knoll as on a kind pillow, and her spine, which fatigue seemed to have skinned, found rest on the bare ground as if it were a soft bed.

With the cold which increased with the wind coming suddenly full from the north, this surely was the *denouement,* and she faced the issue with comparative happiness.

She repeated again: "I am hungry!" and then closed her eyes to sleep; she trembled nevertheless at a sound of steps on the road, which her ear, close to the ground, perceived distinctly.

Someone was coming, and she braced herself in an effort to recover energy enough to await him.

At first she experienced a very keen satisfaction.

Someone approaching on the road; this was what she had vainly hoped for during so many eternal hours, and she indulged herself in a feeling of entire confidence in her rescue.

Perhaps the stranger was not as cruel by nature or as barbarous in morals as those she had met already, and she took pleasure in imagining him humane, compassionate. Who knew if he was not going over the road by which the columns of prisoners had passed to relieve the wounded and dying abandoned by the way?

It might be a son of the "Poor Old Woman," seeking those of his brothers who had fallen under the weight of bad treatment, enfeebled by privations. O well! he would not distinguish her from an Irish woman and would help her.

Even if he should not recognize her as a compatriot; if he should discern in her an English woman and in the English woman the abhorred Duchess of Newington,—he would assist her, if only out of charity; and, being afraid that the man would go away without seeing her, turning into some cross path, she half lifted herself and tried to make a sign with her arms; but finding it impossible to raise them or even to hold herself in a sitting position, she suddenly fell back again, dragged down by the inconceivable weight of her head, overcome by dizziness, as if on the edge of a precipice; as to the traveller, she had perceived

only a confused profile through the thick fog before her eyes, just as she heard no longer the sound of his steps but as a confused noise of far-off bells.

Then the steps, suddenly, in proportion as they approached, had the resonance of cannon, in cousequence of which, at each second, it seemed to the poor woman that her skull would split, each successive pain drawing from her wails like those of a dying child.

Suddenly the shocks ceased.

The traveller had stopped, and, considering with curiosity the unfortunate woman, he hesitated whether to prolong his involuntary, instinctive halt, or go on.

The cold was very biting; and although corpulent, wrapped in furs like a bear, wearing boots trimmed with furry skins, his face protected by a cap pulled down to his mouth, the man nevertheless dreaded a pause in which the good heat stored up in his flesh would evaporate and hesitated about suffering pain for the satisfaction, not of a feeling of pity,—it was not there that the shoe pinched him,—but of a desire for information which he might, perhaps, be unable to gather.

In any case, it was important to decide promptly, and touching Lady Ellen rudely with his foot, he addressed her:

"Hey! woman, are you asleep? Are you dead, or dying?"

She did not move, she had not felt the pressure of the boot, brutal as it was, and he renewed his interrogation in a still more surly fashion, raising his voice and giving the poor woman a kick with his boot-heel filled with nails, at the same time that with his stick he dealt her hand blow after blow, breaking the skin and bruising the flesh.

A groan escaped from Lady Ellen's throat, almost a rattle; and the tormentor, finding that the woman still lived, became milder.

That she might get into a condition to speak, he brought up from the depths of his pocket a flask, from which he hastily unscrewed the stopper, and after himself swallowing a tumblerful of the liquor, an excellent gin, which he relished, smacking his tongue on his palate, he forced open the teeth of the dying woman and poured down her throat a copious draught.

"Good!" said he, "that warms and nourishes."

And as the effect of the cordial did not at once appear, he doubled the potion; revived at last, Lady Ellen half opened her eyes, and, with a nervous shiver, half returned to herself, but pushed away the bottle, which he held again at her lips.

"No! no!" she cried, experiencing the sensation of an inward burning which was eating-into her stomach.

Her abrupt gesture spilled a good glass of gin and the man, furious, swore as if he were possessed, all the while gulping down a second and third bumper, which brightened up his dim eyes.

"The devil! you are not, then, a true Irishwoman!"

But, rousing all the same, in spite of the fire in her stomach, and seating herself on the edge of the slope, she reached out her hand to drink again.

"Good!" said the stranger; and immediately, while Ellen swallowed with less and less repugnance and finally with pleasure this fire which, insinuating itself into her veins, cleared her brain and unfastened her limbs from the ground, he questioned her.

"Where is Harvey?" he asked; "Harvey, the agitator, your general? I have important orders for him."

But Ellen, not responding, still drinking, he took away the flask:

"No, not now; not a drop more till I am enlightened."

Imagining that the silence of the woman proceeded from a fear of betraying the leader of the insurrection, he continued:

"I am English, it is true, and I should have difficulty in concealing it; but the Irish do not count me among their enemies; I am called Tom Lichfield, and, delegated by twenty philanthropic societies, I have employed myself throughout the campaign in lessening the rigor of repression. If I inquire about Sir Bagnel Harvey, it is for humanity's sake, on account of an imminent peril which he can avoid if I succeed in meeting him."

"Tom Lichfield," murmured Lady Ellen; and she did not repress a movement of repugnance, refusing the flask which he held within reach, summoning her to tell what she knew.

At this name of Tom Lichfield an intense fear seized her; from a traitor like him one might apprehend everything, and she fixed more firmly over her face the veils in which she was carefully wrapped.

This movement did not escape the Englishman, and, already perplexed by the inefficacy of the temptation of his gin, he wished to discover the reason of this sudden repulse, and rapidly removed the stuffs which concealed the face of the Duchess.

She stood upright to evade the liberty which he took, but the earth appeared to give way under her feet, and, in order not to fall, she leaned on his arm, begging him not to let go of her.

"Ah! Indeed!" said Lichfield, "but I am not mistaken; it is Lady Ellen's voice."

The veils at this moment became disarranged in the young woman's effort to cling to him.

"Yes, it is she," he repeated.

"Sustain me; everything is turning round. An enormous gulf is opening before me; I am going to be plunged into it."

"O well! so much the worse!" said the traitor; "all this time my Harvey is doubtless making good time; we are not in a parlor where I am obliged to be gallant."

And, disengaging himself from Lady Newington's grasp, he started off at a slow run.

He must make up the time lost after this fool of a woman whom he consigned to the devil, and who, in the meantime, had better have remained in the flames of the castle rather than to drink and spill his gin, and delay him to no purpose.

Behind him, he heard her roll on the ground with tumultuous cries, but this did not at all move him, especially as he was beginning to complain and suffer on his own account from his unusual exercise.

Nevertheless, he did not dare slacken his pace too quickly for fear of cooling off and inducing an inflammation of the lungs, thus leaving others to capture the famous rebel, reaping the benefits without having had the fatigues, the anxiety, the disappointments, and at a time, too, when there was really nothing more to do but extend the hand, so to speak, and close it over the collar of the cursed Harvey.

After the battle the general had thrown himself into the sea to escape his pursuers; and Lichfield had followed him into the waves, without reaching him, alas! barely escaping twenty times a final submersion, recommending his soul to God, but supported by the waves and saved by his natural buoyancy.

Since then he had been at his heels in almost every skirmish, fighting, himself, at his post, perching, by manoeuvres of eminent strategy, on some point whence he could command a view of the two armies.

At night he had approached the place where the general was resting, hoping to get close to his prey, cut off his head, and fly triumphantly with it to the keeper of the Treasury, who would count out to him the promised bounty, and he cursed his sex which did not permit him the exploits of Judith and Jael.

Defeated, trying to rally the remnant of his followers, to raise new recruits, Bagnel Harvey was none the less hunted by Lichfield, who, only a few hours before, had suddenly lost sight of him at the crossing of a road concealed by a thick wood.

Doubtless the Irishman had turned to the right, Lichfield to the left; it was for this reason that the Englishman had wished to inquire of the Duchess. Suddenly, as he left her, he believed that he saw his man on an elevation, and he started to run.

Unable to do so any longer, out of breath, he had to diminish his speed and return to his normal step, fortifying himself with great draughts of gin from his flask, which he emptied to the last drop, following it with another full one, the aroma of which he sniffed with delight; but he was enraged at his snail's pace, while the game was rapidly running away from him.

The road, now going through a hilly country, offered Lichfield only a very limited horizon, and the odious traitor could not see whether Harvey pursued his course along the beaten path, or cut across for fear of meeting someone.

On an eminence, however, he drowned in big gulps of gin the shout of joy ready to leap from his throat; the agitator was hurrying along below, only a few miles ahead, and as the road which he would follow was both winding and

excessively hilly, the Englishman now felt sure, by going through the moors, of catching his man.

This would be hardly the affair of an hour; hardly, for the joy of attaining his end refreshed him suddenly.

"Hurrah!" cried he, caressing in his belt, under his great coat, the two pistols which he carried; and he plunged into the heath, which was too thin, however, to obstruct his progress.

The ground rose at a gentle incline, and Lichfield, aided by the north wind which pushed him along, went on without fatigue, like a great ship going before the wind, which glides tranquilly on the waves; and he was dreaming in his joy that at last, the campaign ended, with a distended purse, returning to Glasgow, he would there enjoy his well-earned repose, surrounded by general consideration, when suddenly dull subterranean noises, like a clamor of thousands of voices, drew him from his reverie, communicating to his adipose being a shudder which, by reason of the persistence of the unusual noise, penetrated to the marrow of his bones.

Frightened, he stopped short to discover the cause, imagining himself the victim of an illusion.

But no: the confused murmur, like a rumbling of thunder or of the rising sea, confirmed his impression, as if some formidable tempest was growling in the bowels of the earth, and distant detonations added their special noise to the general uproar.

What was going on down there? What tempest was gathering which would probably break at last? And of what elements was this conflagration composed, menacing in itself, and still more on account of the unknown region in the midst of which it was manifested?

Too far from the shore, terrible, imposing, it was not the sea engulfed in excavations which was roaring and beating the walls of its prison; perhaps it came from a crowd of men escaped from the carnage of the previous week, preparing a revenge; or perhaps it was an avenging cataclysm, and the country, filled with mines which were commencing to explode, was on the point of being hurled into the air, like the presbytery of Sir Richmond, burying conquerors and conquered in a gigantic common tomb?

Tom Lichfield did not arrive at a decision; and the more he struggled to comprehend, the less he succeeded, his faculties becoming paralyzed in the fear which pursued him.

lie hastened his steps to elude the danger; but the farther he advanced, the more the alarming symptoms were emphasized. Surely a profound overturning was agitating the internal mass of this region; a revolution was preparing; and, whatever it might be, it frightened Lichfield, who resumed his interrupted course, doubling his speed at first, and then running as when leaving Lady Ellen.

And now a new cause of terror was added to the preceding ones. It seemed to this big Englishman, at first, that he was walking on a floor suspended in the

air, and which bent under his enormous weight and the shaking rapidity of his giant's tread.

Then, the solid and firm floor became loosened, and puddles of oozing, warm mud moistened Lichfield's feet.

Surely the noise came from sheets of stagnant water at a greater or less depth, and there was no cause to be filled with alarm.

Reassured, Lichfield turned in a direction where the earth was dry and firm, and if, beneath, the enraged tempest continued its uproar, at least he no longer risked drowning, and he tranquilly scrutinized the neighborhood in search of his Bagnel Harvey, whom, for an instant, he had completely forgotten!

And he rejoiced at seeing him at a distance of, perhaps, a mile only, seated on a fragment of rock, in a discouraged repose, and easy to overtake.

Suddenly an immense cracking noise was heard under his feet, and, like breaking ice, the crust of the soil, having become thinner, split in all directions. Lichfield uttered an oath which resounded through the whole valley, reinforced by a hundred echoes, and which disturbed Harvey in his meditation; and with a prodigious effort, leaping like a clown in a circus, he lifted his enormous mass and transported it to a piece of solid earth which resisted his weight.

"It is not safe to venture this way," said he; and, lightening himself as much as he could, trying with the toe of his boot the places on which to set his feet, he advanced again, congratulating himself on once more escaping.

But, suddenly again, a noise behind him made him turn; an eruption of mud, enlarging the yawning hole which had just missed engulfing him, spurted up in tumultuous waves, and immediately spread itself on every hand.

Tom Lichfield, ignorant of the nature of the soil in these regions, had ventured on the surface of a peat-bog swollen by the diluvian rains of autumn, and which now, through the open orifice, overflowed with the fury of a torrent.

Promptly the opening, at first limited to a radius of some feet, was enlarged by the rush of the liquid, and the ever-increasing flood of water and mire spread like lava from a crater.

From the height of his observatory, Harvey, seized with pity for the misery of Lichfield, although recognizing him with disgust, exhorted him to quickly regain the road, indicating to him the safest way to reach it; but in vain the traitor struggled, beside himself, running like a greyhound, his eyes out of their orbits, expressing his mortal anguish by prolonged howling.

Behind him the wave rushed on without swerving, broad and deep, and it soon reached the fugitive, overthrew him, swallowed him, dragged him into its stream of mud, without an eddy, a whirlpool, or a jet of foam to betray the accident!

CHAPTER XIV.

Night and day searching for the twentieth time, at the risk of falling into the midst of the English, the same villages, the same fields, the same roads,

Treor, Paddy Neill, and Edith wandered, silent, taciturn, desolate, in search of Marian.

What had become of her? Struck by English bullets, her last breath exhaling in a supreme hurrah for Ireland,—truly this was the fate which all would almost have wished for her, and through their sobs an intense sigh of relief would have left their breasts if, at some turn of the road, at the foot of a wall, in the middle of a moor, they might have found the young girl with her breast or forehead perforated with a bleeding star.

For that would have been a brief and painless agony in comparison with what they often imagined,—her slow death in the terrors of cold, hunger, fever, wounds which she perhaps had received, or worse yet!

And, though they did not communicate them to each other, the frightful thoughts which formerly assailed Richard haunted them all incessantly, filling their hollow eyes with silent fear.

Sometimes, under the domination of this idea, Paddy, running at full speed, would take the lead, picturing to himself that down there, among those bushes, behind that heap of stones, Marian was lying in a faint or dead; but her attitude, her disorder revealing the horrors of a frightful struggle, and to spare Treor the heart-rending hideousness of such a spectacle, he would run to the supposed place where, in reality, he would often find a corpse of some Irishman, torn by birds of prey, the bony remains of his hand still contracted over the shamrock leaf or the green cockade pinned to his clothes.

And one night they experienced an atrocious fright. By the white light of the moon, Paddy—he was certain this time of not being mistaken—had perceived in the ditch of an old field of buckwheat the end of a white skirt with light green stripes, such as Marian wore. On the black earth, in spite of the stains, the colors showed brilliantly under the lunar rays. Paddy, promptly, tried to spring forward; the hand of Treor, falling on his shoulder, nailed him to the ground, while a hoarse cry escaped from Edith's throat. All three had seen it at the same time, and, for an instant motionless, stood looking at it. Treor became livid, trembling, his mouth open in an exclamation of stupor which changed into an imperceptible rattle.

Then suddenly, automatically, the mournful trio rushed forward, clearing the fifty yards which separated them from the ditch, and when, at a few steps' distance, Neill again tried to get there first, Treor rudely restrained him, veiled his eyes with his fingers; and, covering his old face with a corner of his tattered sleeve, commanded Edith:

"You."....

She bent over for a second, and then, with a terrified gesture, throwing her head and shoulders back, she cried, in a hollow voice, scarcely articulate: "Yes!"....

A simple "ah!" from Treor answered her, so grave, so frightful, that one could not believe it was spoken by a human voice.

Without waiting another order, the widow tried to draw the body from the mud in which it stuck, burying her arms up to the elbows in the thick mire, and trying to clasp the figure to lift it more easily.

The burden was too heavy for the weak creature exhausted by the. tears, fatigues, and cruel fasts she had so long endured; forced, in spite of her will, to drop the heavy mass, she fell backwards.

Intimating to Paddy not to move, Treor then went to the rescue, and, kneeling on the edge of the muddy hole, with a single attempt, by an heroic effort of energy, he tore the corpse from the unclean paste, in the network of entangled grass which retained it. A horrible odor of decomposition rose; and yet, without faltering, without even being disturbed, the grandfather, holding against his breast the soiled, infected body, gently deposited it on the ground.

The dress violently torn, the bruises on the arms and shoulders, told enough of the infamy of the English; the face was half hidden under clots of blood, and the trace of a bite was distinguishable on the neck. Without a tear in his dry eyes, Treor covered with his ragged coat the throat and shoulders, modestly closing his eyes that he might not profane Marian's nudity, and as he brought together the half-bare feet, a sudden cry escaped him:

"No!"....

No, this could not be, this was not Marian! The height was the same, but it was the medium height of many women of the country. The dress was hers, perhaps! But in this time of ruin and of fires, they shared the little linen and the few clothes saved by some from the pillage and the flames. What was certain was that the young, frail, slender girl did not have the strong, robust feet and limbs which he was at that moment touching. The hair, in this doubtful light, appeared of the same shade, but less long, less supple.

"Water, snow!"

Paddy, and Edith, who had recovered herself, brought it; with a corner of her neckerchief the widow was preparing to wash the face of the dead, when, suddenly, the moon, which had been clouded for some minutes, entirely hid itself behind a thick cloud, plunging the country into complete darkness.

A quarter of an hour, which appeared a century, passed in this way; the three knelt around the young dead woman, Treor and Paddy holding their breath, while the widow piously recited the prayers for the dead.

When the rays of light reappeared, the grandfather slowly and gratefully made a great sign of the cross, and it was Paddy Neill who murmured, moved:

"Ah! my dear soul!"

The corpse was that of Nelly Pernell, the gracious and laughing gossip, once so infatuated with the joyous Paddy.

"Poor woman!" said Treor, also.

And while Edith, near her, finished the psalms, with the ends of their rifles they dug a grave for her in the field of buckwheat.

A strange thing: this mournful work for some hours inspired Treor, Edith, and even Paddy with a vague confidence. It seemed to them that, since at this

juncture, when they had been so certain of its being Marian, fate had favored them, God would carry his mercy to its limit, and restore them the young girl intact and safe.

And, to give stronger ground for this ray of hope, Paddy pleased himself with recounting the astonishing, miraculous fashion in which Marian, after the massacre, had escaped all perils, thanks to her marvelous courage and to her keenness also, which detected, by the slightest indication, inappreciable to all others, the danger of the paths which else would have been deemed practicable, of hiding places which others would have declared invisible, the heroic girl enduring with a manly firmness the fatigue of the precipitate marches over thorny or marshy land, in the cold nights, being frequently obliged by the approach of the English to crouch down among the bushes, holding her breath, or hide behind a pile of snow.

The danger passed, she valiantly resumed her course, crossing the frozen streams, scaling the steepest and most rocky paths, with the view of gaining, some miles from Bunclody, the less unfortunate village of Cherborough, where Treor had friends whom she would rouse to avenge their brothers.

And it was through the woods of this village, whither Paddy had come with similar intentions, that he had providentially met her. Sublime in her torn clothes, with her naked feet bleeding on the stones, her eyes burning feverishly in her pale and wan face, her streaming hair sprinkled with green twigs of fir and larch which it had caught, she had appeared to him like the living image of his Country, no longer the Poor Old Woman famished, exhausted, tortured, with back bent under the blows of the conquerors, but an Ireland rejuvenated, proud, menacing, indomitable.

He grew excited, and, raising his forehead, in the horror of his mutilated face his enthusiasm, his faith, shone out superb. A bitter and broken-hearted laugh from Treor extinguished this impulse of reassuring pride.

Incredulous, the grandfather shook his head. Paddy, according to the proverb, had tried to prove too much. Admitting that Marian had, to his eyes, personified Ireland, well! at the same time as the assassinated Country, she had rendered up her soul, and this double bereavement, this annihilation of all his loves, of all his dreams, of all his illusions, he should not survive.

Younger ones like Harvey, like Paddy, might still embrace the chimeras of the future, proclaiming to the orphans of Ireland liberty, vengeance, and the seed of their words would no doubt germinate in their hearts. But he, who could not assist in the flowering of these harvests, who believed no longer, alas! in the possibility of revenge,—he would fall with this insurrection which, full of ardor, he had fomented, believing it a decisive, saving one, and which, bloody and vain, for sole result had weakened the country and deprived it of its stoutest defenders.

Unless, indeed, an infamous outrage had been committed on his child. In that case, traversing, if it must be, Ireland and England, and swimming across the channel, succeeding by strategems that could not be baffled, he would push

his way to the very throne of George the Fourth, and, in his royal blood, wash away the ignoble affront sustained by the Irish virgin.

The force, the vigor necessary for the accomplishment of this task would be inspired in him by the very sight of the violated body, and with bitter impatience he set out again on his search, exploring the streams filled with human remains, dragging Edith and Neill to the sea, and remaining there hours, believing that the waves breaking into foam would presently bring him the remains of Marian, and trying to pierce their green depths with his eyes.

The balls of the scouts stationed along the shore obliged them to move, to hide somewhere till the protecting night, during which they could drag themselves from place to place, less exposed but also, each instant, more weary. Paddy, whose thigh was injured in the last battle, obliged sometimes to stop to stanch the reopened wound, ended by falling one evening at the edge of a wood, under the twinges of intolerable suffering.

In spite of the lack of care, the wound had remained healthy, thanks to the cold, but now was growing worse; and when Edith, crouching down beside the young man, had drawn away the torn bandages, which soiled and poisoned rather than protected, she sorrowfully shook her head:

"Gangrene!"

Not pronounced, but menacing; its white leprosy beginning to show in the tumefied flesh, swollen and red.

"Ah!" exclaimed Paddy with a gesture of rage and disgust, "to die rotting, like a dog, and meanwhile to hinder your search and be an encumbrance and a danger to you, capable of contaminating you. Never! Treor, there is no more lead or powder in our muskets; but break my skull with the butt of one of them, I beg you!"

The old man, silent, grave, looked at Paddy, seeming to reflect on the justice of his demand, and a pity, mingled with a kind of remorse, invaded him at the thought that Paddy would die sacrificed not to Ireland, but to his almost filial devotion to Treor. By no means enfeebled, his flask half full, instead of joining the old man and Edith to assist, them, he might have easily gained less disturbed regions, as Harvey had urged him to do, and with the agitator again, without despair or scepticism, have sown the seed of approaching revolts.

Selfish and regardless, the old man had failed in his duty as a man and a patriot, and, extending his hand to Neill, almost humbly, he murmured:

"Pardon!"

Paddy grasped the fingers of the grandfather, but without comprehending, without even hearing the word uttered. He was curiously watching Edith, who, at their feet, was digging with her nails in the snow.

Always apparently just ready to die, at once stiff and bent, emaciated, with the frightful face of a skeleton, this woman astonished them by her constant revival of vitality. With stomach empty, limbs freezing, hardly protected by a rag against the north wind, the snow, the frozen rain, the cutting squall, without a complaint, she went on always. Paddy had compared Marian to Ireland! No, the

real image of the country was this exhausted, tortured, frightful, unchangeable old woman, her vacant look incessantly wandering into the past.

And still, before Neill's anxiously questioning look, the widow clenched her teeth, her active hands continuing to tear up from the hardened snow bits of roots and leaves.

"If I find the Sacred Herb, I will stop the gangrene."

In the hideous and grotesque face of the man tortured at Dublin an infinite gratitude beamed, while, turning away, Treor disguised a shrug of the shoulders.

But of what use was it to take from the unhappy man this last ray? Let him hope, on the contrary, as long as possible, all the time that it would take Edith to find this undiscoverable plant.

And, through fear of letting a sentiment of irony or incredulity pierce through his face, Treor resolved to go away for a few minutes. Notwithstanding the evening which was falling clear and dry, announcing a polar frost, the bushy copse where Edith and the wounded man were grouped would protect them sufficiently to prevent the repose and inaction from being fatal to them. Moreover, he would not go far.

"I am going to explore the field," said he, aloud.

Skirting the edge of the little wood and the fields, the gray, dull road wound with an abrupt descent. Mechanically Treor followed it. This deserted road attracted him; the main highways were the only places which they did not search, on account of the English soldiers, in regiments or patrols, who were constantly marching through them.

By the propitious and brief chance which left him free, he must hastily profit. As accessible to illusion as, just before, Paddy had been, he imagined he might meet on this road—which he recognized—not Marian, but someone who knew her fate. Hurrying his steps, almost running, the hard earth resounding under his heel, he did not feel anxious lest this noise might betray his presence to some sentinel in ambush. And very soon he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

A woman lay across the road, not dead, for she stirred, thrown there only by fatigue, exhaustion, the benumbing of the cold. An Irish woman, and even from Bunclody or some near village; this he could see by the arrangement of her hair.

On his knees beside her, he set about helping her, rubbing her temples and striking her hands, and then suddenly rose and started back, indignant!

Drunk, this Irish woman! In spite of the vow solemnly taken by all! In the midst of the disaster of the country, of its agony and death-struggle! Dead drunk! Her brandy-laden breath forbade him to doubt it.

Almost immediately, however, he reconsidered. Drunk, yes! But the whiskey poured between her lips by some charitable Englishman was perhaps the only restorative imbibed by her for days, and the draught taken had been sufficient to stupefy her; in her stomach, gnawed by hunger, the cordial became poison.

Ah! poor woman! Compassionately he drew near again, bending further over her,, and this time something more intense than stupor made him rise again:

"Lady Ellen!"

At the sound of her sad name pronounced with infinite surprise by Treor, the Duchess appeared to rouse from her beastly torpor, and, half lifting herself to see who called her, with her emaciated fingers she put aside the great masses of dishevelled hair soiled with mud which thickly covered her face.

But vainly opening her eye-lids, blinded by the strong light of the moon which came full in her eyes, she did not recollect the old man and stammered vague words which would have betrayed her if he had not already recognized her.

She imagined herself seated in her rooms at the castle, waiting for her maids to dress her, and, taking Treor for a servant, she complained that they let her rage and wait without a fire in such dirty, mean clothes, when it was already long past dinner-time!

She was disgusted with herself, and she was dying of hunger.

Never, no, never, had they served her so badly, abandoned her with such heedlessness about her toilet and with such carelessness about her appetite. What were the cooks doing, then, that they did not prepare the dinner; and the chambermaids, who did not even bring water to bathe her?

"The skin of my face is all wrinkled with the dust which covers it, making a, mask so stiff that it will crack presently. And my hands!.... Ah! ah! Muskery would hesitate to kiss them!"

And now she believed that she saw in the old man the nobleman who paid his court to her so gallantly, and she poured out to him all her trouble, which he would, moreover, see for himself, and from which he would promptly extricate her.

"Your arm, Muskery, and let us get away quickly from this inhospitable castle where they treat me as a prisoner, where they are, doubtless, condemning me to perish with cold and hunger and in filth. Oh! my dear friend, deliver me most quickly from the dirt which is tormenting me, and which must fill you with horror as well as myself."

Her speech was thick and embarrassed, and she pronounced with difficulty, restrained by the stiffness of the muscles of the jaws, and the petrifaction of the brain congealed by drunkenness. She stood swaying on her limbs, which tottered incessantly.

And, recovering her equilibrium, she rubbed her hands, which she then spread out in the light, extending them to the moon, with a drunken, foolish laugh at the dirt on her fingers, those fingers which she had once guarded so fastidiously, even at her father's house, where she appropriated money from the masses to buy perfumed soaps.

Treor looked at her, very much puzzled at meeting her at liberty, in real flesh and blood, on the road, when, at the most, the wind could only have sown her ashes along the ground.

He asked himself by what miracle she had escaped the double prison of bolts and flames, and he felt an imperative curiosity to question her on this subject, to learn whether it came by simple chance, or through an accomplice out of commiseration; but above all he was filled with pity at the misery nevertheless endured by Lady Ellen, which had ended in this abjection; and, averse to exhibiting more inclemency than heaven, which had permitted the wretch to escape from Cumslen-Park, he prepared to pursue his way and his researches indifferent to the fate of the dying woman, which was, however, easy to surmise. But an expression which she uttered confusedly checked him.

"Before we go away, the fire! Muskery!"

And, radiant, her eyes dilated at the spectacle of the evoked conflagration, she applauded, following with a savage joy the leaping into the air of the sheaves of flame, listening with savage delight to their crackling, then their formidable roaring and the crash of the beams, of the sides of the walls falling in.

Treor looked at her anxiously, endeavoring, in this manifestation of barbarous joy, to discover how much was the result of the temporary insanity caused by the gin and how much belonged to reality. Had she really lighted the fire, or did she imagine that she had lighted it?

He opened his lips to question her; but, contracting her forehead, going from exaggerated, immoderate satisfaction to increasing wrath, Lady Ellen was now muttering streams of imprecations which she stifled at times under her closed fists applied to her teeth and which the bit in her sudden frenzies.

Often, in the wanderings of her disgraceful flight, she had been beset by a similar commotion, caused by the idea of Marian and Richard, agonizing together and probably in the embrace of their passion at last gratified.

Vainly she tried to delude herself, to represent to herself the virtue of her rival triumphing over the entreaties of Bradwell, and Bradwell himself, in the presence of his father's corpse and in his state of mind overwhelmed with penitence, incapable of obeying the impulse of his ardent love too long repelled; she could not succeed.

The vision of their embraces would force itself on her: at the moment of dying, asphyxiated, without power to struggle, Marian, in spite of her chastity, had abandoned herself in Richard's arms, and he had been unable to resist. The fixed idea which was implanted in the intoxicated brain of the Duchess was to go at once, without delay, to Cumslen-Park, to find among the rubbish the calcined remains of the lovers, to separate them, stamp on them sacrilegiously, and scatter their cursed bones.

She stood staggering, her arms raised and lowered impetuously, tracing on the whiteness of the soil huge and fantastic shapes, and she imagined herself speaking loudly, volubly, while the tumult of her delirious thoughts escaped from her unmanageable and feeble lips only in incoherent, abrupt, stammering phrases, terminated by harsh cries, idiotic sneers, hiccoughy syllables, of which Treor could not get the sense, or even the exact sound.

A foolish wandering which he had too long permitted to delay him, and resolutely, this time, he made a movement of retreat so much the more prompt and decided as his strained ear perceived now in the distance a confused noise of horsemen coming at a trot in their direction.

Quick! if he wished to escape, to warn Paddy and Edith, who were, doubtless, uneasy at his absence, and who might arrive at any moment.

Roughly the Duchess caught hold of him:

"Ah! no, you will not go!"...

Articulating her words almost clearly, she continued to laugh, with a laugh more malicious than stupid, which disturbed Treor and made him turn again towards her instead of pushing her away. Clinging more firmly to the clothes of the old man, and hanging on his arm, she went on, in a wild way:

"Save yourself... abandon me... oh, no!... You see that I have need of your aid, of your help to drag me... down there... Could I, even with all my hatred, reach there alone? I should fall again... for the last time, without having had the last, wild joy of separating them, preserving in my two-fold and terrible agony the vision of their clasp... of their lips united... I cannot bear that... but answer me, then... you understand me perfectly... I can not bear that... !

She shook him furiously, her face convulsed with rage, blazing with jealousy, haughty and implacable; once more, in spite of her rags and filth, the proud, redoubtable Duchess.

He was drinking in her bitter words, his mind filled with a sudden suspicion; and, dreading that she might become silent, that, plunged again into stupefaction and torpor, she might retain eternally between her lips the horrible and mysterious revelation of which he had an anxious and eager presentiment, he questioned her.

"Conduct you.... where?"

She looked long at him, as if this anxious voice had awakened in her the world of her recollections slumbering under her forehead, which she rubbed with a mechanical movement, her brow contracted in a useless effort of memory, her eyes opened wide, her mouth yawning. Treor was afraid that, half recognizing him, she would change her mind or tone, and he insisted, grinding nervously her wrists between his shrivelled fingers:

"Finish.... whom do you wish to separate?"

Certainly this voice troubled her, almost terrified her, especially with this display of violence which the old man added to it.

Misery! she was still silent! Ah! by what power, what subterfuge could he draw from her the rest of her sentence?

"Separate, whom?".... resumed Treor. And suddenly struck with a ray of light, railing at himself for not having more quickly guessed the commencement of an enigma that was so easy, so evident, he exclaimed:

"Richard, is it not? Richard and...."

His temples wet with sweat, his body shivering, it was his turn to check himself, frozen with terror, not daring to pronounce this name which rose to his

throat immediately after that of Bradwell, but which his brain as well as his tongue repulsed with indignation and horror, and which Ellen at last called out in his face!

"Richard.... and Marian!... yes, yes, your granddaughter, Treor!"

"Wretch!... you lie!"....

Standing erect again, triumphal in her hatred, eluding the spring of Treor ready to rush upon her, she had audaciously seized him, and, in spite of his resistance, held him, obliging him to submit to the volley of her cynical avowals, her invectives, her insults; the intoxication which, just before, prostrated her, now doubling her forces as it excited her brain confused with rage.

"Separate Richard and Marian.... Yes! for the Irish girl and the Englishman are dead in each other's arms."

"Imposture!" repeated Treor, suffocating, incapable of a more explicit protestation.

"You do not ask how it is that I am here," replied Ellen; "it is because Marian came, for the love of Sir Bradwell, to deliver us.... and I shut her in in my place.... The courageous virgin contended for my lover with me... I yielded him to her.—Ah! ah! you threw in my face the shame of my adultery... well! and your granddaughter who prostitutes herself to the enemy, do you think her ignominy less deep?"

"Away with you! I will crush you, serpent."...

But she held him firmly and went on:

"I lighted the fire to illuminate their nuptials!"

"Infamous wretch!" continued Treor.

She even thought of rousing again the insults of the old man, responding to him only by furious shouts of laughter, and, excited still more by the struggle which she had to carry on, while speaking, with the old man, quite beside himself with the boldly evoked vision of Marian and Bradwell, she uttered in Treor's face obscene calumnies about the young girl, soiling with filthy details her death and that of Richard.

"You lie! you lie! She died a sinless virgin!"

"Come, then, to the castle.... and we shall find, mingled, embracing, the bones of their corpses."...

"Enough!... or my old fingers will find the power at last to strangle in your throat your base blasphemies."

"That's right, resume your trade of executioner."....

"No, of judge."

Leaving in Ellen's finger-nails scraps of flesh, his hands, extricated from the grasp of the Duchess, clutched frightfully the delicate neck of the young woman, and, bending her at the same time towards the ground, his face perfectly livid, he said with a calm voice:

"Die; die on your knees."....

Deaf to all other sounds than Ellen's curses, he was disturbed neither by the gallop of an English body of troops bounding upon him at full speed, nor by

the cry of alarm which Paddy and Edith, attracted by the noise, gave as they came hastily to his rescue.

What did it matter to him; grimacing, purple, Ellen was dying, but not quickly enough, because Treor's fingers, benumbed by the icy cold, could not give the vice-like grip that was needful.... and suddenly a discharge from the red soldiers drew a stifled imprecation from the old man. A ball broke his arm, obliging him to release the throat of the Duchess, who, falling down, rescued once more, breathed the air in a convulsive spasm.

"Treor and his inseparables!" said the officer, Sir Edward Walpole, inspecting disdainfully, between his blinking eye-lids, the group standing in the middle of the road; "their account, decided on a long time ago, will drag no longer. Present."

"Long live Ireland!"

All three, Paddy, Edith, and Treor, responded by this cry to the ironical command of the lieutenant, and the sentiment of patriotism, overruling in the old man all other personal anxiety, hushing his hatred without extinguishing it, he let the Duchess rise, while, without a line of his face betraying his suffering, he crossed his broken arm under the good one, and proudly eyed the soldiers from head to foot, astonished that they did not fire.

But Sir Edward Walpole was delaying the execution with a purpose, and, summoning the mother of the deserter Michael, he said:

"You, woman, separate from the rest.... Sir Newington, God has his soul, condemned you to a life more woeful than death. The wish of the deceased shall be respected!"

And, as Edith did not move, inert, but with a rebellious face, he repeated his order, irritated, smacking his tongue on his palate; and, still disobeyed, two men, at a sign from him, approached the old woman, bending from their saddles, seized her each by a shoulder, and violently separated her from her friends, whom the kicking of the horses prevented from holding her.

"Now, fire!" ordered Sir Walpole, in a hurry to finish, and the fingers of the Britons pressed the chilled triggers of their rifles, at the same time that the horses, stung by the cold, snorted grievously and pawed the ground, shivering under their long' winter hair.

"Long live Ireland!" began again the two conquered ones, but the cry was not finished, only the first syllable of the sacred name of the country being carried away by the north wind with their last sigh. And their mouths remaining wide open in this supreme shout of love, their eyes illumined by furtive glimpses of near dawnings, their arms stretched out in the gesture of heroes leaving for battle, they preserved on the bloody earth such admirable, sublime faces of patriots that Sir Edward, moved in spite of himself, saluted their expiring and smoking bodies.

A stupid sneer from the Duchess at this avenging spectacle made him turn his head in her direction, and, really offended, he upbraided the cynical woman

who permitted herself this scandalous explosion of joy; for, unless she were mad, she certainly deserved a lashing.

He turned his horse towards her, and, as she did not answer, he pushed her with the pommel of his sword; but she did not reply or seem to feel the blow.

With the point of his sword he uncovered the features concealed under the dishevelled hair, and recognized, with an intense stupor, Lady Ellen, the dazzling Duchess, for whom his fancy had once been kindled at Cumslen-Park.

"My lady!" he called, his heart seized with an extreme anguish.

Continuing to pierce him with a frightful fixedness, the dilated pupil of the Duchess veiled itself under a glassy steam, and the sneering grin of the locked jaws assumed a ghastly rigidity.

"Dead!" said Walpole, in terror.

A solemn silence reigned, interrupted only by the martial neighing of the horses; and, spectral in the clear night, standing close to the two martyrs whose blood, a supreme sacrifice, was smoking towards the limpid heavens, Edith, with her monotonous and grave voice, sending an irrepressible shudder through the frames of the English, pronounced these words:

"Dead!... of cold, of hunger.... like an Irishwoman!"

The End.