

VOLUME II

CHAPTER 11

HOTSPUR.—Sometimes he angers me
With telling me of the moldwarp and the ant,
Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies;
And of a dragon and a finless fish,
A clip-winged griffin and a moulted raven,
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff
As puts me from my faith. I tell you what
He held me but last night, at least nine hours,
In reckoning up the several devils' names
That were his lackeys."

King Henry IVth.

HOGAN had not honoured the meeting at The Harp with his presence. He found it unnecessary to do so. The people seemed entirely on his side; and the Home Rule epidemic having seized upon them with such hold, the illusory promises and threats of the Wyldoates faction were not accounted much, either by him or by his clients. He was tired of the work, too, and gladly alleged an engagement in the Four Courts to justify his leaving by the midday mail on Friday. He left Dicky Davoren behind—to carry on the work of canvassing, ostensibly; but shrewdly suspected, at the same time, that the young gentleman's exertions would not go far to swell his lists. For various reasons, Hogan avoided all encounter with the parish priest. He knew that the good-natured curate, Father Desmond, was on his side; but not wishing to compromise him in any way, he kept out of his way too. The Sheas accompanied him to the railway station—Ned Shea trying hard to make the candidate promise to accept his hospitality on his return for the grand meeting to be held

the following week. But Hogan declined the offer with sincere gratitude and equal determination. He saw clearly that his hostess was miserably uncomfortable on her husband's account; and divining pretty accurately the nature of the declaration to be expected from Father Corkran on the coming Sunday, he wisely resolved to shift his quarters to the hotel; alleging to the Sheas, as his explanation for so doing, that it was a more convenient situation. He promised to be back in time for the meeting, but had grave doubts within himself as to the advisability of going to it and of making a speech of the Ultra hue that he would be necessarily obliged to in order not to fall out with his too-ardent supporters. These and many other thoughts he revolved in his mind, as he lay back in the cushions of the railway carriage. It chanced that an ocean mail had arrived that morning; so the train was filled with Americans on their way to Dublin from Queenstown. Hogan's compartment was crowded with them, discoursing nasal depreciations of everything they could see from the windows. He got into conversation with one of them—a little gentleman, with a funny round body, somewhat reminding one of a spider's, and with curiously attenuated legs. The likeness did not end there, as Hogan acknowledged to himself ere long. The little Yankee was a species of intellectual spider, sucking dry the brains of every one he could entangle in the web of questions which he seemed to emit and weave round the hapless victim as easily and skilfully as any member of the *arachnidæ*. There was no getting out of it: every plunge landed one deeper in. Hogan vainly tried to exchange parts, and with his barrister practice opened up sidings and new issues beyond counting. The little man was great on figures. He asked the "population" of every "town," as he persisted in calling the stations at which the train stopped—some of them five or seven miles away from the place from which they took their name. He popped his head out, in this thirst for information, at a wooden station on the edge of the bog, and hailing anybody on the platform, asked at large—

"Say, stranger, what's the name of this city?" Every one stared.

"Hey? what's the name?" Then, getting impatient, "I guess it ain't big enough to have a name of its own."

"Oh yes, it is," retorted a big cattle-driver who was seated on a railing, smoking his pipe; "an' it's got a popilation of its own—two millions."

The American shut up the window with a burst of derisive laughter, and sitting down, slapped his leg and said, good-humouredly,—

“The gentleman thinks he’s made a real fine joke now.” Then he went to the subject of national schools, and drew Hogan into an elaborate explanation of the working of the system. The train passed a peat-condensing manufactory as they went along; and he made a man who had got in after Hogan tell him all about the process. That done, he returned to his first victim, and got him on the geological formations of the different counties they passed through. Hogan’s knowledge was speedily exhausted, to his own surprise quite as much as that of the American, who told him that his own country-men; almost without exception, were thoroughly “posted” in those matters. A priest who, out of curiosity, changed his seat to hear what the eager-looking little man was saying, was then swept in, and made to tell all he knew about cattle-breeding,—the sight of a field of fat kine having suggested the topic. The American wanted to know what were “black “ cattle, and why the south of Ireland was noted for that particular colour. He was told by the priest that the cattle alluded to in the old Irish historical writings were always spoken of as being black, and that it was supposed that the original tribe of cattle—possibly those imported by the first colonists, who were Milesians—were black. The American was delighted: this kind of information was especially to his liking. He knew very well where the Milesians originally hailed from; he had been there.

“Been in Asia Minor! Dear me!” said his reverence admiringly.

“Yes, I’ve bin all over—bin everywhere and I fully bullieve, sir, that all cattle was black in the beginning. I mean that God created ‘em so—I dew; for when I was in Palestine I noticed all their cattle was black. Yes, sir—that just proves the whole question most clearly; and they told me in Palestine they’d bin always just so.”

“Hem!—You spoke the language?” asked Hogan, in a curiously constrained tone.

“No, sirree—didn’t take time. Can you tell me, sir, what is the prevailing notion here just now on this Home Rule?”

“It is not very—ah—easy to say. Society is divided on that subject—”

“Society? Ah! but I don’t mean society, sir; I mean the people.”

“Well, a good many of them go in pretty strong for it just as strongly here as you may have noticed among a certain class of them in New York,

now. I suppose the extreme democratic party there favour the scheme, do they not?"

Not a question would the American answer; he had come out to take, not to give—that was perfectly clear; and Hogan, amused beyond measure, but with a little irritation mingled with his sense of the absurdity, resigned himself to the tender-mercies of the little vampire for the rest of the way. However, at Portarlington, where they stopped for refreshments, and where the American, telling him if he "wasn't thirsty he had ought ter be," insisted on his taking a drink, he contrived by a clever manœuvre to get a seat in another carriage, and to scribble some pencil notes to have ready for the mail on reaching town.

One of these notes reached Miss Nellie Davoren next morning at breakfast time. She opened it quite unconsciously, thinking it some mere business letter; but when she glanced over the few lines, written in a bold hand, as clear and easy to read as large print, and saw the signature "J. O'Rooney Hogan" at the bottom, she was so startled as to be surprised in her own mind at herself. She left the room quickly, as if to go upstairs to her mother; but in reality she ran into her own chamber, and seating herself in the window, drew out the wonderful letter, sorely crumpled in the pocket into which she had thrust it in the agitation of the moment.

She set herself to con every word, line, and sentence. No address—only a date; and scribbled with pencil.

"DEAR MISS DAVOREN,—I have had to run up to town for a few days. Dicky remains behind, and has commissioned me to bring back a small fowling-piece belonging to Mr. Shea. I shall call for it on Monday, if not inconvenient to you.

"Very faithfully yours,

"J. O'ROONEY HOGAN."

Not much, after all—very little indeed. And this inconsistent damsel, who had been so astonished to receive a letter at all from her admirer, found herself wondering he did not say more when he was about it. But then, if he is coming on this absurd business, he no doubt thought it better to keep all his news to tell it in person. And a bright rosy colour flew up to the young lady's face as she reflected on the fact that this gen-

tleman—a barrister, on the point of becoming a member of Parliament—was coining such a ridiculous excuse for calling to see her. What would Dorothy say? And she got up and stood before the mirror, and smoothed back her ripply hair, thinking what she should say to him and how receive him. She forgot breakfast altogether. until a maid put her head in and awoke her young mistress out of the land of day-dreams by demanding a second cup of tea for Mrs. Davoren. Then she ran downstairs again, and took her seat at the table. She had finished her own breakfast, and having given the maid what she asked, she remained sitting quite still for a little time, feeling with one hand in her pocket the letter which she had received.

Certainly she had not expected it. He had asked leave, that night that he came out to see Dicky, to come and see them again, and to tell them the news of the election and all his adventures in the south; but he had not said a word about writing. And she went over in her memory every word and look of his, as in truth she had often done since that memorable evening. She ended by making a resolve in her own mind—a resolve that, to tell the truth, was but a half-hearted one—that she would treat his note literally, and take the visit as purely and simply a matter of business. Dicky very naturally wanted the fowling-piece; and what more natural than that Mr. Hogan should offer to bring it to him? In fact, it was just like Dicky's carelessness not to write for it himself. Then she went out to the hall, and looked at the gun, hanging, with the fishing-rods and other things of the kind, at the end. It wanted cleaning sadly. The thought flashed into her head that perhaps she ought to have it sent to Mr. Hogan's address. It would certainly save him the trouble of coming out; and he must have so much to do. Then the note was again read over: "I shall call for-it on Monday." This was Saturday morning; there was plenty of time; and she certainly would have the fowling-piece put in order and sent to Mr. Hogan's office. And with this Spartan resolution Miss Davoren went to the kitchen, for her usual morning consultation with the cook; this over, she busied herself with sundry and various household duties until midday; then she usually went to her mother's room, to sit with her and read aloud, or sew if the invalid were inclined to sleep. In the afternoon she might have to see a visitor, if such chanced to come their way, or to practise; or take a walk if inclination or the weather tempted. She generally spent Saturdays in town; she was wont to go to confession at Gardiner's Street chapel, where most of the Dublin young ladies congregate on that day. Then Dorothy generally expected to see

her at two o'clock to lunch; and so the whole day, from twelve until late in the afternoon, was usually spent in the city.

This Saturday would be a busy day with Nellie. She had to be ready in time for the one o'clock train, and it was nearly twelve when she had finished her morning tasks. However, she reached Gardiner's Street by taking a cab across town, and, after an interval of preparation, an obliging friend, a sister penitent, gave her her "turn" at Father O'Hea's box. The chapel was very full: it was the Saturday before the first Sunday of the month; and the rows of benches drawn up at the sides of the innumerable confessionals were all crowded—as usual, in the proportion of ninety-nine women to one man. Girls, school-girls, young ladies, young-old ladies (the most pious of all), and old lathes, thronged and squeezed and elbowed, and cast looks like daggers on every daring wight who presumed to borrow a "turn" from some one near the box, instead of waiting patiently at the tail of the long files on each side until all who had come before her were "heard" and had taken their departure. The Raffertys and Mary Brangan were high up, and smiled amiably at Nellie. Mary Brangan was rather down-cast in manner, and when Nellie had taken her place beside her whispered in doleful tone,—

"I wonder is Father O'Hea in good-humour to-day. Oh dear! what'll I do if he's not? I've got such a confession pain."

"Have you? Oh, dear! do you get them? I never do."

"Laws! don't you? I've been dancing fast again: what 'll I do? Say a prayer for me that I'll find him good-humoured. Oh! I'll be killed. Last time I got it awful from him; he said if I did it again he wouldn't give me absolution."

All this Miss Brangan whispered under her fingers, which she held so as to turn her voice into her neighbour's ear. In her other hand she held a huge scarlet-and-gold-bound "Key of Heaven," stuffed full of holy pictures and markers.

"I don't think fast dancing a sin; and my confessor told me if I didn't I needn't confess it. I don't think it is, at all."

"What! did Father O'Hea tell you that? Then I won't confess it, either!"

"I have more than one reason for my opinion, Miss Brangan; and besides, I never was bound, as you were, not to fast dance. Now, please do not follow my example: I'm sorry I told you."

“You needn’t. I have to go out a great deal; and what’s the use of going to a dance and sitting still? And besides, I hate quadrilles. Oh laws! there, he’s called off now to the house. We’ll have to wait an age.”

A man-servant had crossed the chapel from the door leading to the priest’s house, and tapping on the confessional, called away the confessor to see some one who had sent for him. The double row of penitents cast disappointed glances after him, for they would probably have to wait an additional hour or more. Miss Brangan looked rather relieved; she turned to Nellie and whispered something in her ear; then both ladies rose, and leaving their prayer-books on the seat in token of their return, passed out of the main door and down the steps into the street.

“We may as well wait here awhile,” said Miss Brangan, drawing a long breath. “I’m expecting to meet a cousin of mine. Did you see Miss Rafferty and young Mr. Dooly on Sunday? They were on the Pier; and I’m told the mar’ge is to come off after Lent. I met them all at the ball last night; and oh, Miss Davoren, that gentleman—what’s his name? the young bar’ster, I mean—Mr. Hogan, was expected, but he couldn’t come. Ah! wouldn’t you have been sorry if you were there, eh?”

“Not a bit, Miss Brangan. I can’t imagine how or why I should.”

“Don’t be vexed: I know he admired you greatly. I met him a while ago, sure—I nearly forgot to tell you (this with a palpable exhilaration of tone and look)—walking in Nassau Street with a lady. She was beautifully dressed—oh! be-yeu-tifully: navy blue silk and pale blue; and she’d lovely golden hair. She wasn’t young, though, at all.”

“Ah! was there an old lady very like her, and dressed in sealskin and black.”

“Yes, exactly. They were Protestants, I’m sure; for I could hear their accents, and they looked like it.”

“No doubt,” said Miss Nellie, quite carelessly. She divined at the first word, almost, that Miss Bursford was the beautifully dressed lady—the pale, blonde girl whom she had met at Cousin Dorothy’s. Walking with her! the very same day that—— And she determined now that that gun should be sent, without fail, on Monday morning to his office. Diana Bursford—beautifully dressed: and she pictured Hogan’s pleasant face smiling into hers as he walked beside her; proud, no doubt, to be seen with Miss Bursford. Why not? and the girl’s cheek grew the least shade paler for an instant only. She dismissed the envious thought

from her mind (it was merely envious) without an effort, and not without a twinge of self-upbraiding for having harboured it.

Miss Brangan's cousin came up now, accompanied by Miss Eily Rafferty and the pious Miss Doyle. The young ladies entered into conversation.

"Mary Doyle!" said Miss Brangan; "what are you comin' for to-day again? Weren't you at confession on Wednesday?"

"Yes; but I wanted to ask Father McQuaide's leave to employ Miss Feathers, the dressmaker; she's a Protestant, you know, and I couldn't think of giving her anything to do till I knew whether he'd approve it."

"Listen, then," said Miss Eily Rafferty; "here's a wrinkle for *you*, Mary Doyle. Did any of ye hear this story? Mother Paul told it to mamma last day she was visiting at St. Swithin's. There was a young lady, a great friend of her own (so now it must be true), livin' on the Laracore Road, just out that way a bit towards Green Lanes; and she was most anxious to get settled. Do ye mind how a nun never says 'get married,'—it is always *settled* they call it—ho! ho!" and Miss Eily giggled irreverently. "Well, the girl began a novena to Saint Joseph; and the ninth day, when the novena was done, and nobody turned up to marry her, she flew in a rage, and says she to Saint Joseph, 'Old boy, you've been here long enough,' says she—'and out you go!' An', me dear, what do you think but she opened the window, and she hurls the imidge plump into the street! 'Tis a fact! Well, a gentleman was passin' by, an' he saw the white thing fallin' down, an', me dear, he caught it, and he came up and knocked at the hall door. Well, her mother was in the hall; an' of course, the least thing she could do in mere politeness was to ask him in. Then, the girl she comes down, an', me dear, her mother introduced her, an' they were married in a month. So now!"

"Laws!" said Mary Doyle, opening her eyes and her mouth as far as they would go.

"Musha, then!" said Miss Brangan the sensible; I think they were badly off for men in that house. I wouldn't be her—no! indeed! Would you, Miss Davoren?"

But Miss Davoren was laughing too much to be able to answer the question; and after a few minutes' delay, the party separated and repaired to their respective confessionals.

When Nellie got away it was too late to think of going to Dorothy; moreover she did not feel inclined for the long journey across town; so, having made some necessary purchases, she returned by one of the afternoon trains.

The Sunday passed uneventfully. A note came from Miss O'Hegarty to ask why she had not seen Nellie the previous day, and to announce that she would call on Monday. Nellie was glad of this for several reasons: firstly, she wanted to see Dorothy; and secondly, her presence, and the stir she always created when she came, would prevent any mental tergiversations or useless regrets on her part, such as she knew herself liable to fall into, once that the white heat of determination had cooled down,—and which she determined to strive against.

So on Monday morning the gun was sent, with a polite message of thanks, to Mr. Hogan; and Miss Nellie went through all her duties with a somewhat unusual vigour. Lunch was prepared for Dorothy; and two hours' vigorous practice at the piano concluded by two o'clock, at which hour that lady was expected. Whatever delayed her, it was half-past three ere she appeared. By that time Mrs. Davoren was asleep, and could not be disturbed; so Miss O'Hegarty seated herself in the dining-room with Nellie.

"I couldn't get away any earlier, my dear. Peter is in one of his tantrums—says he'll leave on the first of next month; and he spent two hours this morning packing his trunk. Really, I'm wearied with him."

Nellie with difficulty restrained a laugh. Peter gave notice, on an average, once a fortnight; but the idea of the trunk-packing was something extraordinarily ludicrous—the trunk, according to Dicky, being a pure myth. Dicky had once upon a time penetrated the garret where this wonderful piece of furniture was kept, or was supposed to be kept; and declared ever after that the trunk was not in existence, and never had been, any more than Mrs. Gamp's Mrs. Harris.

"Why don't you take him at his word, Cousin Dorothy? I would, and have done with him. You would get an excellent servant for his wages."

"Deed, my dear, I think I will. Mrs. Hepenstall has often wanted me to take their man Kirk; they want to—do with the pageboy only, now that they have him trained and in on their ways, she says. How she could endure a gammon (*gamin*) of that sort about her, I don't know. I'd just as soon take in the organ-man's monkey. He's English, too."

“She brought him over with her, then?”

“She did; and indeed she was telling me, after she got him, that she was lecturing him one day on not allowing anything to be wasted, and how she’d value him if he was economical. ‘Waste, mum!’ said this page boy; ‘lor, no, mum: sooner than ’ave anything wasted, I’m sure I eats till I nigh busts.’ The Hepenstalls wanting to get rid of the man looks as if they were not getting on all too well. Poor Charlotte!” sighed Miss Dorothy, “she has a fast husband, I fear. What are men coming to nowadays? I was at the Griffiths’ the other day; and she looked that miserable and woe-begone: their son in college is a dreadful boy, and Judge Griffiths such a nice, steady man. It is incomprehensible to me.”

“It seems to me very clear indeed, then,” said Nellie, a little sharply. “Boys are allowed to do what they like and go where they choose. From the day our Dicky went to school he has been his own master altogether; and indeed, Cousin Dorothy, he refuses to tell even where he has been when he comes in. He goes out in the morning to college; he doesn’t come back till dinner-time. In the evening he goes out again. Mamma and I scarcely ever see him at all; and he won’t go with me anywhere hardly, except by the greatest coaxing. Papa never minds anything, you know.”

“Well, you see, my dear, he’s getting to be a young man now; and they won’t be controlled and questioned. Boys must all go through that stage: it makes them hardy and manly to be left to themselves; and then they learn the world.”

“Learn the world! Well, Cousin Dorothy, look at all the young men who learn the world. Tad Griffiths is learning it. His eldest brother killed himself in the process, no doubt. And there is young Grey, the clergyman’s son here, who enlisted last year, after getting himself expelled from college. The Miss Greys have not one of their brothers to take them about. They say they can’t get them to go into society; they hate girls, and it’s all humbug, and slow. Every night they are out; never in their father’s house except for meals.”

“It is a fact,” said Miss O’Hegarty thoughtfully. In my time men were just as wild—wilder! Look at the stories of their doings! Somehow they didn’t begin so young then, whatever’s the reason; and it was a different kind of wildness. Practical jokes, and fighting, and hard drinking, and that. They have a quieter style of sowing their wild oats nowadays; and, indeed, it is a deal a more mischievous one. Fashion, my dear,—it is the fashion.”

Fashion was the final court of appeal with Miss O'Hegarty in all doubtful cases, and by its decisions she abided faithfully. She never troubled herself about their justice; expediency with her was the equivalent. She was not in the habit of looking deeply into things; indeed, she seldom stirred the surface at all, and pronounced off-hand judgments on the first aspects of cases with a dogmatism and decision truly wonderful. We must do her the justice to say that this rule did not hold good in politics. She never relaxed a fibre of her Toryism, and had not a whit of that latent chameleon nature which becomes apparent in people even of the best set, on the changes of administrations. All Whigs were Radicals with her. The hybrid Conservative-Whig and the Liberal-Tory were impossibilities, and as such ignored and scouted.

"By-the-bye, Nellie, to-morrow I'm going to a concert for this Asylum. Mr.—ah—what's his name?—that great friend of the Bursfords, Saltasche—has found out some splendid *pianiste*, an officer's wife, living up somewhere near the Park; and he and his friends have taken her up. It's a Protestant affair, but if you like I'll take you; I can easily get tickets."

"No, thank you, Cousin Dorothy; I could not go. You know we are forbidden to attend any of those entertainments. Tell me, is her name Poignarde?—a very young, pretty woman? I think Dicky spoke of having met her with the Greys."

"Yes, that's the very name. I never do remember those foreign names; but I'm told her playing is something divine. The husband is a fearful scamp; and the Greys are very kind to her. You might as well come, child."

Just as Nellie was about to reply a loud knock at the door startled her. Mr. Hogan's knock!—she thought it must be Mr. Hogan's knock; and in spite of her efforts to remain composed, she could not prevent her surprise showing itself.

"Who's that, Nellie?" asked Miss O'Hegarty sharply. "Had we not better go into the drawing-room?"

"I know who it is; at least, I am sure it is Mr. Hogan. He was to call here for something to take down to Dicky in Peatstown; and—and—"

But by this time they were at the door of the room, and further explanation was impossible. There indeed stood the candidate for

Peatstown, looking as bright and fresh as possible. He was presented to Miss O'Hegarty, and bowed low to her, recognizing the lady who had been Nellie's chaperone at the theatre the evening they met there.

Cousin Dorothy guessed intuitively the whole affair, and was more cordial than was her wont, considering who her new acquaintance was. She seated herself on an ottoman, and scanned him as curiously as politeness would allow.

Nellie began in a slightly nervous tone.

"It was too—too much trouble for Dicky to burden you with his gun, Mr. Hogan. I sent it to your office this morning. Did you get it?"

Had Miss Davoren's cousin not been present, Mr. Hogan would have said the truth—that he did receive the gun and the message between ten and eleven o'clock; but, with his usual caution, he reflected that the admission would certainly entail the inference by the clever-looking old lady, whose grey eyes were fixed upon him so scrutinizingly, that he had come to pay a visit to the young lady of the house. So he answered composedly,—

"No, Miss Davoren; I had left before its arrival. I did hear since, indeed, that my servant had been looking for me with a message of some kind." And this mendacious gentleman looked at her to see if her expressive countenance betrayed any disappointment. On the contrary, she looked intensely relieved—and was so too. She dreaded being raffled by Miss Dorothy; and she had also some undefined dislike to being talked of in connection with any man. However proud she might feel, the idea that Miss Brangan and her set should ever discuss her, as they were now discussing other girls, was unbearable. Her dislike of the particular kind of current small-talk known as "chaff" was something morbid in its intensity. Hitherto it had been very easy for her to avoid the bantering of her friends, for she found the ordinary "young gentlemen" of her acquaintance so uninteresting that even the simplest conversation was difficult; and they, however they admired her, were afraid to show any marked preference to one so cold and distant in her manner.

Miss O'Hegarty, having surveyed him well, now began to speak to the young man.

"I see by the *Beacon* that you are standing for Peatstown in opposition to Lord Kilboggan's nephew."

“Yes. I am contesting the seat in the Liberal interest,” he replied, a little pompously.

“Does your canvassing go on well?” asked Nellie anxiously, and a little cordially, as if inclined to counterbalance the old lady’s patronizing tone.

“Oh yes, so far satisfactorily. It won’t be a very close contest. I have had hard work; but I think the most wearing part of the work is the journeys up and down by rail. I had an American—a most extraordinary man, a perfect question-machine—for travelling-companion on Saturday. He did so annoy me.”

The old lady smiled mischievously. “Was he catechising you on your political creed, Mr. Hogan? What tiresome creatures one does encounter in travelling!”

Her first allusion to his affairs was coupled with the mention of the *Beacon*—a paper which had recently made a savage onslaught on the Home Rulers generally, and on the progress of the Peatstown election and the candidate and his platform in particular. Hogan was keenly alive to the implied sarcasm of the second speech; but he ignored it by a literal interpretation, and replied quite unconsciously,—

“Well—ah—he did not confine himself to any one subject. The number of questions was fully paralleled by their diversity: he went from statistics to topography, geology, and zoology—everything that possibly could be dragged in; and kindly informed me that I was greatly behind his countrymen, insomuch that I was not conversant with the mineral productions of Tipperary.”

“Are they not wonderful creatures, now?” said Miss O’Hegarty. “Perfectly wonderful! I never could endure them. One meets such a dreadful set of them abroad.”

“Ah! well; but you don’t find better-class Americans, Miss O’Hegarty, making themselves so objectionable. You mustn’t take the shoddy specimens as representatives.”

“Nonsense!” replied Dorothy, with a most aggravating air of superiority. “They are all alike: isn’t it a Republic? Manners must be the same with everybody where there are no class distinctions. They have no aristocracy. Fine dress seems to be their sole idea of refinement. Faugh!”

“They have an aristocracy of intellect,” put in Nellie.

"Nothing of the sort, child," said Dorothy, almost angrily. "What literature have they, indeed?"

"They have ours—which they take without paying for it," laughed Hogan.

"They've none of their own," continued Miss O'Hegarty. "No, none. What great poets or prose writers have they? They can't call Longfellow a national poet. There is no American epic—no history——"

"Epic, eh? Well, I think the real American epic is Barnum's autobiography. The genius of the nation is best expressed in that. Ha, ha!"

"What is Dicky doing?" asked Nellie; "and when may he be expected home?"

"Well, Miss Davoren, he is canvassing: that is, he takes pleasant country drives with the young ladies of the house, and seems to do a great deal of work indeed. He is remarkably clever."

Miss O'Hegarty, with whom her young relative was an especial favourite, smiled on hearing the encomium pronounced by Hogan; and in a pleasanter tone of voice asked him when he was to return to Peatstown.

"To-morrow. Then I do not come back here until after the election."

Miss O'Hegarty would hear nothing of the election. She casually brought in the name of a prominent Conservative peer, as being interested in the result, on account of his cousin the candidate—showing that she was retained on the other side. So the conversation shifted to indifferent topics; and after a stay of twenty minutes he rose to go. He felt sorry he had not sent a note acknowledging Miss Davoren's attention, instead of coming in person. However, when Nellie placed her hand in his, and looking straight into his eyes, thanked him—a little tell-tale colour dyeing her cheeks the while, and a brighter light shining in her fine eyes—for his kindness and attention, he thought that, after all, his visit had not been bootless; and he pressed her hand ever so little as he left the room. He had accurately gauged her before—that is, as much of her character as it behoved him to know: to wit, that she was not, like most of the other women of his limited acquaintance, business-like husband-hunters, admiration-mongers,—turning, like sunflowers in quest of every ray, their beauties to all eyes. Neither could it be said of her, as a witty Castle aide-de-camp said of some of the Corporation ladies, that she bore "the mark of the Beast." Her face and style were eminently Protestant: even in London society, he thought to himself, there could

not be found a trace of "Dissenting appearance" in her. Good blood!—her mother came of the Rathbone and Desmond families: nothing like it! And Mr. Hogan reflected with great self-satisfaction on his own maternal ancestor, that royal prince of the ninth century, the founder of the O'Rooney family. Not, indeed, that he had ever cared to claim the kinship; he had rather affected to laugh at the idea; but of late he had noticed the tide seemed to be setting in favour of such appendages. The Raffertys had got home a genealogical tree from Sir Bernard Burke; the Ryans wrote themselves down O'Ryan; and Donnell, the retired wine-merchant, who bought Lord Ramines' patrimony, insisted on the prefix Mac. There was great talk of the septs and tribes; and sundry extinct peerages seemed to be only waiting for moneyed claimants to come forward. Hitherto he had overlooked the fact that his ancestry might be of service. His profession and his success had sufficed as a patent of respectability; but the pedigree would undoubtedly be an addition indirectly, for as the Bishop had often told him, "The only chance of respect and consideration from the Protestants, you being a Roman Catholic, is to let them see that you have both from your own people." So he determined that the chieftain Rhuadne, and that the ruined Castle Rhuadne, near Tara, should both be skilfully introduced as a background, so to say, to the representation of the family O'Rooney—the composition, consisting only of the Bishop and himself, seeming a little bald and crude. It was not an absurdity; it was a means to an end. He had set to build a mansion to himself; and he had fixed the top stone of the building first,—a well-paid and lofty government situation, to be the reward of Parliamentary services,—to render which services a seat in Parliament must be attained, which seat in Parliament must be obtained by—any means. "*De minimis non curat Lex*": he used to repeat that quotation frequently to himself,—not that he derived much mental comfort from it, or that he distinguished very clearly the difference between the broad elastic margins of the Lex and the close, fine-drawn distinctions of the inner tribunal, which he much seldomer invoked.

As he drove back to town, he debated within himself the desirability of calling on Miss Bursford. He had, indeed, sent her a note from Peatstown, to say that everything was going on well with him,—a note couched in such terms that neither answer nor acknowledgment was needful, but which had nevertheless been answered; and it was this answer that made him hesitate as to paying her another visit.

“Better leave it till we go to London,” thought he. “Safer—much safer, and more to the purpose;” and he did leave the visit till then.