

## VOLUME II

### CHAPTER 13

“O sacred hunger of ambitious mindes,  
And impotent desire of men to raine!  
Whom neither dread of God, that devils bindes,  
Nor lawes of men, that common weales containe,  
Nor bandes of nature, that wilde beastes restraine,  
Can keep from outrage and from doing wrong,  
Where they may hope a kingdom to obtaine.”

—*The Faërie Queene.*

IT WAS with a strange feeling of elation and pride that Hogan leaped from the railway-carriage at Kingsbridge, to receive the greetings and congratulations of his friends, who, headed by the Bishop, were drawn up in waiting off the platform. There was a larger number of them than he had expected; indeed, a great many who before had ranked as mere acquaintance had lately enrolled themselves among the ranks of his best sympathisers.

Every one had been taken by surprise; and the unexpected exaltation of the young barrister was ascribed by most to the discrimination of the constituents, who so seldom alight on the wrong man or pass over deserving merit. The mystic letters which Mr. Hogan had now appended to his name stand for a great deal more than is commonly supposed. The politicians in general were delighted—taking his return as a proof of the depth and sincerity of the national feeling; and sundry well-known and tried warriors set to burnishing their armour for an assault on the Parliamentary fortress on the very first opportunity—shrewdly judging that if a nobody like Hogan had won his spurs thus easily, there must be golden prizes to be had for the trying.

The Bishop and some other influential friends had written to the candidate, offering to get up public dinner—a banquet, in short—as a token of affection and esteem; but this had been declined by our hero, whose intention it was to get to London immediately, and to work. Mr. Saltasche and Lord Brayhead were positively waiting for his parliamentary services; and the railway bill was in actual danger. So, on the plea of want of time, he nipped the project in the bud.

Dicky and the Muldoons, father and son, dined quietly with the member at the Melbourne. The party broke up early; the Muldoons being the first to leave. Dicky took himself home to Green Lanes, and the Bishop and his nephew were left alone.

“Well, John,” said his lordship gravely; “now, can you give me any idea of the bill?”

“I cannot, sir; it will be heavy,—far heavier than I thought. Although some expenses were nil, the very ones I least expected—for instance, your old friend Father Corkran——”

“Aye; he went against you, I know.”

“Yes, utterly. Had it been any other time, and only for the extraordinary misconduct of the landlord, and this agitation, I’d have been swamped. As it is, the Ballot accounts for a good deal. One of the priests worked very hard for me.”

“One, hey?—who?”

“Father John Desmond, the curate of Ballinagad. The parish priest was dead against me—frightful man: won nearly ten pounds off me at cards, and denounced me the Sunday after. The Bishop was opposed to me, I think.”

“Ah! ‘Twas hardly worth his while to interfere; you see, it’s not long now you’ll be in, for all the money and the trouble.” And his lordship groaned discontentedly.

“No matter, sir, no matter;” and Hogan shook his head determinedly. “I go to London on Tuesday, to take my seat. I don’t know when I’ll be back. Let me see. I must run to and fro a good deal. I don’t want to let go my practice altogether, you know.”

“Ah! John, I wish you had stuck to the practice a little longer; it’s the surest card—it is indeed.”

“Yes, sir, I know that; however, ‘nothing venture, nothing win.’ I should be a thundering fool not to take the ball at the hop. There is not a doubt on my mind that I’ll be re-elected. No, no, my lord! the Liberal Government is rooted as no Government ever was before in the country. Why, it is ridiculous, on the face of things, to imagine they could ever be upset. They monopolize all the talent of the century—all the learning. There are only a couple of Conservative papers in London: that is very significant, sir.”

“As for talent and learning, that is thrash—mere thrash. It’s votes that does it. To every *talented* voter, how many fools have you? And as for newspapers, divel a bit I ever believed in newspapers—never. And another thing the Liberals have done, with extending the franchise here. Mark you this. Everybody has it, and so nobody values it; the better classes don’t care for the trouble of voting: it is no *class privilege* now, as it was once upon a time; so the power is passing into the hands of the rabble—that is, comparatively speaking I call them rabble.”

“That will be only temporary,—must be, sir. We have the example of New York before us in that matter; and, after all, as Saltasche said the other day, the utterances of this country in politics are scarcely responsible yet. You must not forget that we are young, yes, sir, young, in political life—inexperienced.” And Hogan drank off his glass of wine with the air of one who has decided everything.

The Bishop sighed gently, and shook his head with a little gesture which signified plainly that, while yielding to the persuasive tongue of his nephew, he reserved his own convictions on the subject.

The next day, in Sackville Street, Hogan met, at the corner of a street leading to one of the chief railway stations, Miss Davoren and her brother, walking together towards the bridge. He had a spare half-hour, he found, on consulting his watch; so he accosted them, and all three walked on together.

“I ought to congratulate you, Mr. Hogan,” said Nellie, looking up almost shyly at him. She felt the least bit in awe of him now. “You had a wonderful triumph.”

“Yes. I am astonished at myself. I ascribe it to luck, and to my friends—and assistants,” he added laughingly to Dicky.

That young gentleman had the grace to blush a little.

“There wasn’t any need,—there wasn’t, positively. They’re all gone mad on this Home Rule.”

Dicky had been talking to the aristocratic Mr. Orpen in the train that morning, and his views on Home Rule had undergone considerable modification at the hands of that mentor.

“Gone mad! Tut, tut! you mustn’t speak disrespectfully of my standard, my dear fellow!”

Dicky only laughed, and turned off short into the college gates, which they had reached. Hogan had an appointment with Saltasche in the Green; but it wanted nearly twenty minutes of the time, and he thought to himself that he could not do better than spend the interval in the company of Miss Nellie, whom he never remembered to have seen looking more beautiful.

“In what direction are you going, Miss Davoren?”

“Fitzgerald Place to Miss O’Hegarty’s.”

“Ah! the lady I met at your house some time ago. Do you know, I had been thinking of running out on Monday in that direction again.”

She only looked at him, and said hesitatingly, “Yes.”

“Yes,” he repeated. “Did we not agree I was to come and tell you all my adventures: eh?”

Nellie did not even look up this time; but her cheeks flushed a little. He watched her well.

“You wouldn’t care to hear about it all, though?”

“On Monday,” she replied, with a little tremor, “we shall not be at home. Dicky and I have to go to a place beyond the Park, to pay a visit which it is impossible to put off.”

“Oh me!—and Tuesday I go to London. Is it not too bad, now? Let me see;” and he stood still, as if to turn back.

Nellie looked up hastily, as she turned, to see if there were any trace of displeasure or misapprehension of her meaning in his face. In reality he was thinking that it was as well she had declined his visit; he was pressed for time. After all, though he knew he was in love with her, it was safe to be prudent. So, conscious of having the advantage, he held out his hand.

“It may not be good-bye; but, wish me well, won’t you?”

He was cold-hearted by habit, if not by nature, and fenced round with caution and foresight; but there was something in the beautiful eyes which met his now that put calculation to flight, and it was with a very different feeling that he murmured, as he pressed her hand,—

“Good-bye, and God bless you: you will hear from me soon.”

Then he turned abruptly, and walked away down the street as fast as possible, heedless of everything and every one he passed, and seeing only her face and the bright transformation that came over it, as he spoke to her. He almost wished he had remained a moment longer. It might be a long time ere they met again; and he fell into a gloomy train of undefined foreboding most unusual to him. What reason there was for it he could not have told; but certainly he was not in his customary equable, sanguine mood. The reaction after the excitement and over-work of the last month had, no doubt, set in; and he felt, in spite of himself, languid and depressed. The day was heavy, no sun illumined the long rows of sombre tall houses, and a light grey fog hung over the trees in the College Park. It made him think of Peatstown, and his weary drive through the hills. Mud, cold, wet, and desolation: these four words summed up his principal impressions of the place. He recalled Barney Shane's dwelling on the hillside with a shiver of disgust. What an experience, to have passed a night in such a hovel! Let them say what they would, he considered he had earned his prize.

Hardship of any kind was antipathetic to Hogan's nature. That which was soft and easy in life he clung to. He could work hard; but if he did, it was not as men do who work for the love of working and for the love of their calling. He worked hard that he might the sooner play. There was a strong tinge of the peasant nature underlying all his polish: the ingrained hatred of work, the fatalistic indifference engendered by a social and religious system of long and complicated standing, the curious reverence and love of power and authority peculiar to those who have been oppressed. All this old leaven worked under the superimposed layer of training and culture. On the maternal side he had inherited good blood, or the legend of it; whereas the Hogans had neglected to preserve their family record. He had his cleverness from his mother; and, as often happens when such is the case, his mind ran in rather a feminine mould. There were some parts of his character, at all events, which were not what the world calls manly.

He reached Saltasche's office nearly ten minutes late, and sauntered up the stairs with a sort of defiant leisureliness. He thought he would take a slightly independent tone with his friend now. Just as he reached the door, a man running downstairs from an office on an upper story hailed him.

"Hollo! that you? Mr. Hogan, allow me to congratulate you, my dear fellow!" And the gentleman, whom indeed he hardly knew, shook his hand violently.

He was a noisy, chattering attorney of the money-lending class, who knew everybody and everybody's business, and who was a most notorious liar.

"Thank you, Stamps! Can't stay a minute," returned the member carelessly.

Stamps seemed gratified with this much notice, and darted upon the handle of the door to open it for Hogan. The member passed in, nodding his acknowledgment. Slight as the incident was, it was nevertheless a tribute to his new dignity, and sufficed to put him in good humour again. He advanced to the fire, apologising to Saltasche for his delay. There was the least shade of consequence in his tone, which his friend's fine observation did not miss. He laughed pleasantly, and pointed to a chair opposite.

"You got a stunning majority, didn't you? No fear of a petition, eh?"

"Not a whit. They couldn't do it. Anyhow, it would not be worth while wasting powder on. They'll wait until I try it again. I take my seat on Tuesday evening."

"You do? Do you know anybody in London?"

"Scarcely. I have been promised letters to people there."

The Bishop, indeed, was procuring him letters of introduction to sundry Irish Catholics in London—people whom Hogan ungraciously vowed never to go near.

"I'll see about that. Hem! Mrs. Bursford and her daughter are going over for the season. You will do well to call upon them. Mrs. Bursford has a relative in the present Government. I'll find out their address and send it to you."

Hogan murmured his thanks. He was astonished at this intelligence; and vainly tried to recall some foreshadowing of it in his conversation with Miss Diana.

“Now, of course,” went on Saltasche, those prospectuses can be issued. “I have two or three here waiting your name; and you will be able to save me many trips to London about getting the slate companies floated, and this mad old fool’s railway company too. He’ll ruin himself at that yet. By-the-bye, there’s something nice to be made on the Patagonian Loan. The stock is now at ten shillings; but on Thursday it will be stated that the United States have offered to buy Patagonia. So I am wired from Washington. You can imagine how that will start the prices. You will be in London on Wednesday. Stier and Bruen, of Cole Alley, Mincing Lane, do most of my commissions. Suppose you give them a call? I’ll write in the meantime to them about you.”

“Very kind of you indeed; but there’s a little hindrance in the way. I have no money.”

“What! ten shillings even?”

“Not a *sou*! It’s very tempting, though.”

“It’s a sure thing. You see, all they want from you would be a deposit for cover, in case—; but in this instance, except as a form, that would not be necessary. I introduce you. You understand me.”

But the barrister had, in fact, never given his attention to the Stock Exchange science. So Mr. Saltasche was obliged to explain the modern system of betting on the differences, or “selling short,” as the process is called in the land of its birth.

Hogan was dazzled by the talk of his companion. That transactions involving millions could be carried on by men who were comparatively penniless, seemed an absurd impossibility. Saltasche, however, was able to give him chapter and verse for his assertions, and told him the names of many plutocrats, with the history of their successful operations.

Then they adjourned to lunch, and a bottle of champagne threw an additional tinge of rose-colour over everything. Hogan quitted his friend in a state of bodily and mental exhilaration more unusual to him still than the fit of blues under which he had laboured in the forenoon.