

of his own former triumphs. He had placed all his hopes in this, and calmed all his anxieties with the thought.

Nora was to appear as soon as possible and in the most brilliant manner imaginable, for he wished to be master of the position before his rival had reached the capital. Thus it was that hardly three weeks had passed after the director's accident, when huge play-bills were pasted about on all the walls of the capital of North Germany, upon which were printed in large letters that the celebrated beauty, Miss Nora Karsten, would soon make her appearance in her father's renowned circus. Then followed the various wonders which, according to the programme, were to astonish the public.

Even the countess, prepared as she was, turned pale on reading one of these bills which Landolfo, of course, sent her. Something like compassion for the poor girl made its way through her rigid common sense to her heart. She remembered those pure and noble features, expressive of distinction and of higher education, and so completely devoid of frivolity. She wondered what could have brought her to anything so contrary to her nature. But, however it might have taken place, the deed was done, and with it a great load was taken off the countess's mind. She was now armed with unanswerable proofs, and could not be accused by her son of having given heed to vain reports. She was too honest to destroy Nora's letter, but she did not send it alone; she packed it with the paragraphs in the folds of the large play-bill.

"My poor son," she wrote, "I can no longer conceal from you that which the whole world knows. It will cause you to awake from a dream which your mother's experienced eye had long ago judged an impossible and an unworthy one. Do not sorrow too deeply over the bare truth; it is the privilege of pure and of noble souls to believe easily, and now and then their misfortune to err in their belief. I bless God that it has happened soon enough not to mar the happiness of your whole life. Come to your mother's arms, seek comfort in her heart, and you may be sure that you will receive it."

It was a matter of small importance, no doubt, that the countess should place Nora's letter so that it should be the last to catch her son's eyes. But life is made up of unimportant details, and the greatest effects are often wrought by the most insignificant causes. Did the countess make this reflection as she carefully weighed the packet before sending it to the post? Perhaps she did, and perhaps she considered it part of her duty towards her son to have arranged it thus.

At the same hour in which the countess had her letter and its contents posted, Nora stood in the small dressing-room of the circus, dressed for her first appearance. Her step-mother knelt at her side with a few attendants, and gave the last touch to the heavy folds of the dark riding-habit, which, simple and well-fitting, displayed her beautiful figure to advantage. Numerous candles were burning by the mirror which reflected her beauty, her severe beauty only relieved

by a golden net which imprisoned the lovely masses of her raven hair. Nora would not hear of wearing any other than the simple riding-habit she was accustomed to, nor did she even look at herself in the glass, or pay any attention to the many people who were occupied about her. She stood there as in a dream, her cold hands tightly pressed together. As in a dream she had lived through all this time, in which days succeeded each other mechanically and enveloped, as it were, by a mist.

Her father had had tact enough to spare her all the trouble of the preparations. She had resumed her daily exercises on horseback, and the fatigue she felt after them had been the only thing which had done her any good.

And yet she hoped for something, reckoned with certainty upon something which never came, so that each day had brought a fresh disappointment, and that she now felt as if the last plank had given way under her. Even at this moment she stood expectantly, hoping against hope that something would come and prevent her taking the last step. Young hearts have such a capacity for hope, you know!

She had, it is true, taken a last farewell from Curt, and had herself destroyed every chance of arresting herself on the road to her ruin; and yet, and yet! Perhaps help would come just in time to save her before it was irrevocably too late. Surely if he had dared so much for one single hour of happiness, what would he not dare now that her whole life was at stake? Every morning she had said to herself: "To-day, to-day a letter will come!" and every evening she had found some fresh excuse, some plausible reason for

the day having passed by without bringing anything from Curt.

A sound of applause now fell upon her ear, and with it ended the scene which preceded her own appearance. The director entered to fetch her away. A knock was heard at the door, and a servant brought in a letter.

Nora's whole frame was seized with trembling, and the director grew pale; but at the same moment Nora let the paper fall indifferently at her feet, for upon it she had recognised the handwriting of the Superior, who had answered her by return of post, true to her old friendship and motherly interest. But, alas! what is friendship when compared with love?

"It is time," said the director almost hesitatingly.

But Nora was trembling from head to foot, and seemed hardly able to move a step.

The director saw his hopes dashed to the ground, and asked in a hoarse voice: "Can't you do it? Won't it be possible?"

"Yes, it will," said Nora, drawing herself up at the sound of his voice, which had only once before sounded in so unearthly a manner upon her ears. "Yes, my father, it will be possible," and she followed him with a firm step.

Landolfo's exertions had, it must be owned, been crowned with success. The large arena was filled at it had hardly ever been filled before; every one had been determined to catch the first sight of the renowned beauty. The director had prepared everything with the greatest possible brilliancy, so that his daughter should appear with a certain *nimbus*.

(To be continued.)

The Irish Revolution and How It Came About

(By William O'Brien)

CHAPTER XXVI.—(Continued.)

In May, 1918, Lord Wimborne was succeeded by Lord French as Viceroy and Sir Edward Duke by Mr. Shortt as Chief Secretary. It was not until January in the following year that the first shot was fired in what came to be known as the "murder campaign" against the R.I.C. when two constables escorting a waggon of gelignite were killed near Tipperary. The only pretext for first launching the new policy of blood and iron was one which is now known to be, at the best, a mare's nest, and at the worst a wicked invention—viz., the fresh "German Plot" of 1918 which Field Marshal French proclaimed to England he had discovered, and on the strength of which the terrors of Martial Law were intensified and Mr. de Valera and Mr. Griffith deported to England from their seats at the Mansion House Conference against Conscription. The late Lord Lieutenant (Lord Wimborne) had never heard of "the Plot"; Sir Bryan Mahon, the Commander-in-Chief, we know on the authority of Colonel Repington's book told the new Viceroy (Lord French) he flatly disbelieved the story; when, after two years' refusal to produce the evidence on which it was based, the documents at last saw the light, they turned out to be a "crambe

repetita" of negotiations which had taken place before the Rising of 1916 with some sham "German Irish Society" in Berlin. Under cover of this bogus alarm, without a shadow of evidence to connect Messrs. de Valera and Griffith with these antiquated treasons, they were deported to England without any form of trial, with many hundreds of the more responsible Sinn Féin leaders as well; newspapers were suppressed, public meetings broken up, and an endless series of prosecutions, followed by savage sentences, were instituted upon charges none of which involved bloodshed or armed hostilities of any kind—charges of wearing green uniforms, drilling, singing "The Soldier's Song," being found in possession of photographs of the Rebel leaders, taking part in the Arbitration Courts, either as Arbitrators, solicitors, or clients and the like. The campaign was originally undertaken while Field Marshal French's military operations for the enforcement of Conscription were complete, and in the fatuous hope that the removal of Messrs. de Valera and Griffith would break the back of the opposition. It was directed not against crime in any ordinary acceptance of the term, but against an intangible and omnipresent expression of the National

W. E. Evans

TAILOR and COSTUME MAKER

IF YOU APPRECIATE BEING WELL
DRESSED LET US OUTFIT YOU.

Waimate