

"Quite so, my dear lord—the name is, I am confident, McCarthy, and, I rather think, Michael," said the Secretary, proudly.

"According to the information that reached me, the fellow has actually taken up his quarters in my Castle."

"Precisely; and, of course, you want us not to execute the warrant—to let the fellow slip through to America—no fuss or annoyance about the thing. Well, I dare say, if you really desire it—if you insist—"

"Heaven and earth, no, my dear sir," thundered Lord Drumshaughlin. "Do you think I am stark mad, or perhaps a Fenian myself? I am going home to Drumshaughlin to-night, and do you think I want an American filibusterer to meet me in my own arm-chair with a bowie-knife? Good heavens, no! Pardon my heat, my dear sir. But what I came to ask you to do was to have the fellow's arrest effected before I reach there—this very night, if possible—so that there may be no possible room for doubt as to the attitude of the Government, or as to my own, with regard to fellows of that kind. And the only other favor I should entreat is that the affair may be conducted with as little alarm or annoyance as possible to my daughter, who, for her foolish brother's sake, appears to have tolerated this man's presence under my roof."

John Jelliland sank back in his chair, as if another wide-weltering river Suck had overflowed and overwhelmed him. The rod of an all-chastening Providence had been used once more upon his offending shoulders. But he was now getting rather broken to the discipline. In a moment or two, he meekly kissed the rod, and once and for ever dismissed Ireland and Irishmen as the Sphinxes of the nations—the teasing, shifting, rebellious, fascinating, ragged Unknown and Unknowable.

"So that was what you desired, Lord Drumshaughlin," said the Chief Secretary, with a sigh of resignation. "Certainly. The warrant for that man's arrest—a most dangerous man—went over several days ago. It shall be executed to-night, and, of course, as you suggest, with every possible consideration for Miss Westropp's feelings."

As Lord Drumshaughlin drove back to the club to dine, and set Mundle at the work of packing, he somehow felt that he, who had set out as a bare-footed penitent, was returning as a victorious general; for he had not only crushed treason's head, but he, of course, debited himself with the piece of luck that had befallen Harry, as though it had been the result of deep forethought and diplomacy of his own. He pulled up outside a telegraph station in Piccadilly, and despatched the following telegram to Garrindinny, prepaying postage to Stone Hall, Drumshaughlin:—

"Am returning to Ireland by night-mail from Euston.—Drumshaughlin."

CHAPTER XXVIII—A FIGURE IN THE DARK.

The Hon. Miss Westropp was relieved from an unexpected quarter of the miserable doubts which haunted her ever since young Harold burst into her poor little fairyland like a Black Knight with his declaration of love. It was Frank Harman who effected her deliverance. That good-natured grenadier thought the genial off-hand way was the best way of reassuring Mabel that her offences had not put her outside the pale of society.

"Deborah is such an absurd creature," Miss Harman rattled along, as if crossing a stonewall country at an easy gallop. "She'd really leave one no society but Mr. Primshanks, and no literature except his hymn-book. I am positively in dread she will forbid the Two-Shilling Novel Series the house next. As for you, my dear child, the naughtiest heroine in the Series is not a more dreadful young person in her eyes."

"Indeed?" said Mabel.

"Yes. You know what Deborah is—thinks there ought to be a law to oblige young men to go about logged and muzzled, and that a young lady who marries out of the county families might almost as well have forgotten to be married at all."

"I don't think these are matters for coarse jests," said Miss Westropp, repressing herself with some difficulty.

"Nor I; but, I assure you, Deborah doesn't at all regard it as a jest. She is quite seriously shocked by your wicked Gunpowder Plot against the foundations of society, dear. As for me, I am never done telling her that the

time for those ridiculous old strait-laced frumps and social distinctions of hers is gone with Noah's Flood. We're all changing and turning the old order topsy-turvy; and why not? There's my brother Hans moving heaven and earth to carry that old gombeen-man, Dargan, for the Club. I'm canvassing for him myself. What do I care whether a man had a grandfather, or is a grandfather unto himself? In a progressive age he may be just as useful, if he only keeps a loan-bank, or just as good a soldier if he's only an American. *Apropos*, my dear Mabel, I must know your American Captain; I hear such funny stories of him. Do trot him out. I am dying to meet him. I am positively determined to meet him."

Frank Harman had galloped breezily along without in the least noticing the color mounting in Miss Westropp's cheek. The latter could bear it no longer.

"I am afraid," she said, touching the bell, "I shall have to leave my guest, Captain MacCarthy, some liberty in the selection of his acquaintances, and for the future I shall have to claim some voice also in choosing my own. Order Miss Harman's pony-chaise to the door, please Mary."

Miss Harman's candid impertinences and her sister's poisonous tattlo completely reassured Miss Westropp that she could not be so far wrong in breaking from the traditions of a society such as theirs to brighten and be brightened by the lives of the simple, kindly, honest-hearted folk, who gathered around her as around a glowing fire that had suddenly leaped forth in their chill world. After all, was young Harold's hysterical love-fit so unpardonable a piece of silliness compared with Miss Deborah's infamous hints and envious green-glasses? Which was the more truly vulgar figure—that of the bony female grenadier, just gone—herself the daughter of a successful tithe-proctor—affecting to make and unmake social laws like an Eastern Sultana? or Captain Mike's rugged form, strong as a mountain pine, with a voice that could be gentle as a zephyr whispering among the pine-tops? Were the young fellows who raved of rushing steeds and clashing swords in an open field for Ireland so much worse company for Harry than the young squireens who only raved of the ambitions of a horse-jockey in the tipples of a groom? Was it really so very degrading, in the midst of the beauteous glens, to feel the quickening glow of friends, home, and country, instead of regarding them all as a turnkey's daughter might regard her father's prisoners—as an Hyrcanean tiger's daughter might regard her father's prey? And, when she flitted among the mountain cabins, welcomed to the warmest corner, romping with the children, listening to the old man's tales, soothing a heathery sick-bed with her bright eyes (and perhaps, now and again, with some less potent cordials)—was she in very truth betraying the cause of society, morality, and religion, because she did not use their hospitality as a sanitary detective, spoil their Heaven to give their cabins a coat of whitewash, and force them to swallow down one of the Thirty-nine Articles with every mouthful of port-wine. She could not think so; and, as a matter of fact, she did not reason the matter out with any such particularity. A German poet once said that the Rose is without a Wherefore: "*Sie blühet weil sie blühet*." Mabel Westropp blossomed and gave forth perfume because it was her nature to; and the sweet scent flowed over the mountain sides all the more deliciously after the Harman rainstorm had beaten upon the tender petals.

Her life passed in a whirl of simple delights those days: trotting through the woods with the little Motherwells; watching her chrysanthemums come out in their battalions of pink and white; organising apple-feasts and kiss-in-the-ring for the urchins of the Ranties; plotting mysterious loans and packages of tea for some of the most desolate creatures on Mrs. Rohan's lists; amusing Harry's ambition in the parting of his hair; working a Grand Army badge for Captain Mike; reading the German poets with Joshua Neville (who, it must be owned, admired the German poesy chiefly for the rugged, old-red-sandstone look of it in print, and who every day with new wonder beheld these uncouth, wrought-iron words dissolve in honey music on Mabel's lips and shape themselves in airy visions under her spells). With Georgey O'Meagher she became fast friends, and early elicited from that frank young party