LORD KILLEEN'S REVENGE

Mr. Roche, usually the mildest-natured man, and meek as Moses with the cross old paupers, who were as impertinent as they were ungrateful, was now outrageously angry with this well-to-do parishoner, and refused him absolution; in fact, he would hardly listen to excuses. He strode up and down the tiny study, and worked out his wrath with many words.

"It was rascally conduct, sir," he exclaimed, "unworthy of a Christian or a gentleman—to insult those two old ladies, and turn a sacred verse into ridicule! If such offenses were to be lightly condoned there would be no safety anywhere. One would imagine that just at this critical time when our country is laid in the dust by the conduct of those miscreants who pretend to represent their native land in Parliament, gentlemen would have the good taste to refrain from even the appearance of evil; but you have put yourself in the mouths of all men to-day."

"Nobody knows of it but you," said Barry, mildly. He was looking the picture of remorse, and as he spoke he sighed. He was in reality dying with laughter, but Mr. Roche only heard the sigh and saw the repentant face of the young man.

"Who gave you that bugle?" he demanded, sternly; so sternly that Barry felt he was yielding.

"My great-grandfather," said he, promptly, "at least it was his, and fell to my lot with the rest of the things. I wish now he'd disposed of it prior to his decease, for the very look of it will be poison to me for the rest of my days."

"Who put you up to that unwarrantable act of impiety?" asked the rector, regarding him fixedly.

"Not a soul," said Barry; but, as he said it, he thought of Constantia, and his promise to make an end of that hymn on the first opportunity. "I'm afraid, Mr. Roche," he said, with his eyes on the ground, "that I have a heart capable of much evil! But I think you might forgive me now it's all over."

"My forgiveness counts for nothing," said the rector, drumming his fingers on the table. "You are a sad trial to me, Barry, in many ways, and this abominable offense has worn away the last shred of my patience." He was very fond of Barry, and was, therefore, specially angry with him.

"If I could do anything," hinted the miscreant. "I can't bear being out of your good graces, Mr. Roche, and that's the fact. A check, now, for your old women—"

"Tut, tut," said the rector, throwing out his hands, as if to ward off temptation. "You can't buy your salvation, my good boy. You must go to Father Moroney" (the Roman Catholic clergyman) "for that sort of thing."

"But still the old women!" persisted Barry, who had seen the avaricious light in the rector's eye. Oh, kindly avarice, that longed, and desired, and sought, for the halt, the maimed, and the blind! "And you see, as you have called me 'your good boy,' I can't be altogether lost to grace; there must be a grain or two left in me."

The roguish smile crept over his face that the rector knew and loved.

"Now, Barry, go home; go home and repent," he said, hurriedly, not suffering himself to dwell upon the bribe, lest he should be unable to resist it.

Yet when Barry sent him a handsome check that evening, for his "old women," he accepted it, and spent an hour full of the wildest excitement deciding upon the most profitable way of laying out, in blankets, coals, tea, etc.

Though the rack would not have induced the rector to betray Barry's confession, still a knowledge of the profane one's name became pretty generally known. And Barry, going up to The Cottage on the following Wednesday, met with an extremely cool reception from Constantia, who revered the rector beyond all living men, and was indignant that Barry should not have spared him at least, when one of his wild fits was on him.

She was in the kitchen making a jam-tart for dinner, when he arrived, and Barry, who knew the back entrance as well as the front one, having seen her through a window, nearly up to her neck in flour, boldly abstained from knocking, but made his way to the lower regions, via the kitchen-door, without delay. He made also the discovery that if Constantia in everyday attire was charming, Constantia, in a big white bib, with her sleeves tucked up, and her lovely arms exposed to view, was adorable!

Her eyes, however, as they fell on him, were implacable, and her whole bearing full of a fine contempt.

CHAPTER XVI.

The kitchen was a remarkably lovely bit of color. It was growing toward evening, and the dying rays of the sun could not shine into it. It was, however, brilliantly lit by a roaring fire, that sent up a red glow to the very roof, which was vaulted. The flames caught at the bright tins and brasses, and played fantastic tricks with the china bowls upon the dresser. The jack-towel shone white beneath its glance, though early in the morning it was a distinct brown.

From the vaulted roof hung strings of onions, round and golden, and here and there were hams, and gammons, and tidy little bags redolent of sage and thyme. The fire cast its hot glances upon all, and turned the warm tiles to a blood red.

It was a pretty, quaint picture, that might almost have been labeled as "a Dutch interior," with Constantia as a brilliant figure in the foreground.

She came a step or two forward as Barry came in, and, as has been said, her aspect was unpromising.

"So you've done it at last," she said.

"I have," returned Barry, throwing out his chest, and trying to look triumphant—a dismal failure. "I've boycotted that hymn forever, I take it. And a good thing, too."

"Is that the way you intend to brazen it out?" demanded she. "Are you so lost to all sense of propriety that you don't know when you are in fault? Garrett Barry, I'm ashamed of you!"

Her eyes glowed; she stood erect. The dignity of her appearance suffered no diminution because of the dab of flour upon her Grecian nose.

"It's very good of you to take so much trouble," said Barry, who was now growing indignant in turn. "Faith, I didn't think you had so sincere a regard for me."

"It doesn't matter what I have. You are the one in question. To think you should have so disgraced yourself!"

"What have I done, then?" demanded he.

"Done! Is it nothing, do you think, to blow a trumpet in a church—in the middle of the service, before—"

"Why shouldn't I blow my own trumpet?" interrupted he. He stopped short, and laughed angrily. "If I didn't blow it, I don't expect there is any one would blow it for me."

"I should hope not, indeed," said Constantia, who was too wrathful to notice his real meaning. "How could you conceive—how had you the hardihood to carry out such a plot? One would think you lived in a savage land, in some country where the laws of society do not obtain. One would think you were determined to make your friends blush for you. One would imagine that some innate sense of kindliness would have held you back from insulting those two poor old women, who—"

"One, one, one!" cried he. "What! one? You?"

Constantia fell back upon an eloquent silence, and, returning to the kitchen-table, once more took up the thread of her tart, and worked away at the pastry with a will that had something of the force of venom in it. To him she vouchsafed no longer either glance or word.

He bore this ignominious treatment for some time without protest; but presently he spoke.

"So you won't speak to me, Constantia?" he said, reproachfully.

"Certainly not. If you stood there forever I should not address one word to you," declared she, with scorn concentrated upon her lovely lips. That she was speaking to him was a fact that had escaped her.

"I may as well go, at that rate," said he, gloomily.

"Far better," returned she, concisely.

Barry took one step toward the door, and then looked back. No relenting on the brow of his goddess! Two steps; and Constantia was bending over the neglected paste, beating it firmly into shape with the help of a truculent roller. Three steps. Surely, thought the culprit, so sweet a body can not harbor an adamantine soul, and now she will relent. He looked at her with all his heart in his eyes, and as he did so she lifted her head.

"Mulcahy, where are you? Come here," she cried, in a perfectly even voice, looking through Barry, as though he were not, to where in the scullery beyond Mulcahy might be. It grew plain to him that she was determined to ignore his very existence. She had, in fact, ceased to see him.

This insult was more than he could endure, with any show of resignation. It enraged him, whilst reducing him to despair. He undid the three steps, and found himself once more beside her.

"Constantia," he breathed in a sepulchral whisper, "did you ever hear of the word suicide?"

"Frequently. I have also heard of the word fool!" returned she, with cruel point-blankness.

"People before this have cut their own throats," went on Barry, darkly.

"Quite so! They were the people for whom the word 'fool' was coined." She was looking straight at him with remorseless eyes. Apparently she was not of the easily frightened sort, a discovery that delighted him.

"Are you determined, then, to drive me to it?" he said, in a tone specially tragic.

"Go home!" exclaimed Constantia, with all the air of one who has lost her last grain of patience. "Go home; and never presume to speak to me again on such abominable topics. Suicide, indeed!"

"Good-bye, then. I hope you will not live to regret this day."

"I hope from this day that you will learn to abstain from vice, and that you will put that bugle or trumpet, or whatever it is, into the fire without delay."

"You're a bitter Christian," said Mr. Barry, with deep reproach. "Is it because I dote on you, and you know it, that you are so hard on me? D'ye call that generous? As angry as Mr. Roche was—and of course he had bigger cause than you—he forgave me! I feel sure," said Barry, playing his trump with a regretful air, "that he would be shocked if he knew of your unforgiving spirit."

"I hope that's true," said Constantia, regarding him with some suspicion. If her pattern saint had been lenient to the sinner, why should she withhold her pardon? Perhaps, too, there was something in the reproachful eyes of the big Limerick man that appealed to her gentle heart; and that touch about the "unforgiving spirit" did a good deal for him.

"It's as true as that I'm standing here," said he. Was there a double meaning in that artful speech? Was a hint conveyed?

"You can sit down if you like," said Constantia, coldly. But the permission was a concession, and Mr. Barry gladly availed himself of it by seating himself upon the edge of the kitchen-table. In this happy position he was very near her, and could look into her eyes. He could also decorate his coat-tails with flour free of charge, and was doing it liberally, though perhaps of this he was not aware.

"There is one thing about you," said Constantia, still severely, though there was a visible melting of her hard mood about the corners of her lips. "You don't seem in the least sorry. No! I don't care about what you have said, you can generally say a great deal more than most people; it is your expression that I doubt."

"If that's all," said Barry, "it isn't of the least consequence. More than me are belied by their looks. There's you, now! Any one to see you would say, 'There goes the softest angel on earth,' and yet you are like a stone to me."

"Never mind me." She waived that interesting thought to one side with a floury hand. "What I wish to know is, are you really contrite?"

"Contrite, is it? And with you looking coldly on me? What d'ye take me for? Faith, I'd be more than mortal if I cared this moment whether I were dead or alive; though, perhaps, after all, I wrong myself, and there is a leaning toward the side of death."

"I don't see what I have got to do with it," said Constantia, gravely. The gravity for the most part was due to the fact that the tart was now finished, and that she was making little patterns on the edge of the paste with a fork and spoon. "What is really to be thought of is, that you vexed Mr. Roche—" She stopped abruptly and reddened, feeling that after all this was not the fault for which he should feel contrition. "That is, I mean," she went on rather lamely, "you should be sorry because—because—"

Barry, being wise in his generation took no notice of her slip.

"Of course, I regret it all," he said, "One can see that."

Then his sense of humor conquered all things, and his eyes brightened with a merry fire, and he leaned across the table toward her. "Constantia," said he confidentially, breaking into an irrepressible laugh, "you were there; you could see. How did the two old tabbies take it?"

Constantia struggled with herself. She fought a desperate battle with her dignity, but in the end dignity sunk out of sight. She leaned her hands upon the table, lifted her pretty head, and unfortunately allowed herself one glance at Barry. That settled it. She broke into laughter, low, but irresistible as his.

Long and merry they laughed, until at last Constantia dried her eyes in the becoming bib and spoke.

"As you have gone so far, it was a pity you couldn't have seen it out," she said, still laughing. "Poor old ladies, they thought it was the crack of doom. Never were two so terrified at the thought that their last hour had come. Yet why? one wonders, considering how soon it must come. They had to be taken home, and have been very hysterical ever since. Don't call upon them, Garrett, for the next twelve months, if you wish to keep clear of assault and battery."

"A word to the wise is sufficient, though I confess I should not have gone even had you not spoken."

"I was sorry, however, about dear Mr. Roche," said Constantia, earnestly.

"That rather cut me up, too. But he was very good about it, and granted me absolution rather sooner than I deserved."

"I should have made you pay the piper, had I been he."

"As I told you before, he is a better Christian than you are. However, I did pay the piper in part—I sent him a few ha'pence for his beloved poor—and I think he was pleased."

"Pleased! You could have given him no keener pleasure. It was good of you, said she, looking at him now with very kindly eyes. It gave him courage. He edged closer to her.

"I'm glad you're pleased at all events," said he, "Constantia!"

He tried to take her hand, but she put it deliberately behind her, and looked at him with a little saucy nod as much as to say, "Now, then!"

"Well, you're a little flint," said he. "And yet — Constantia, say you like me."

"Certainly, I like you."

"That's all very well—but—who do you like better now?"

"Why should I like any one better?" demanded she, being, it must be allowed, tant soit peu coquette.

"If you meant that in earnest, I'd be the happiest man above ground to-day," said Barry. "But—and it isn't that I'd distrust you at all, Constantia only, 'I dote yet doubt, suspect yet strongly love.'"

It would be impossible to describe the tragic fervor with which these words were rolled out with a true Milesian richness that added considerably to the effect. It delighted Constantia. She burst into a ripple of uncontrollable mirth, and tucking her arm into his, led him through the kitchen-door and toward the orchard. The warm June sunshine smote on their faces.

"You shall have some strawberries," cried she, gayly. "We have them of our own now, though few and far between, but you are worthy of them. You are the most amusing man I know, the joy of my life; what on earth should I do without you? All the others are flat, stale, and unprofitable, when compared with you."

She was in excellent spirits. Featherston had sent her a charming bunch of Dijon roses in the morning, and a pretty little message. She treasured both; one in her own room, the other in her bosom. As for Barry, she did not believe sufficiently in the depth of his attachment to be any way depressed by it.

"If you do not mean a little of what you say, you are a wicked girl," said Barry, regarding her mistfully. He was very honestly in love with her, and thought morning, noon and night of his chances for and against her acceptance of him. "At all events, there is no doubt at all about your being the joy of my life. And if it is true that you can't do without me, why—"

"There's Mr. Stronge!" interrupted Constantia, with an exclamation of eager relief. "Here he is, coming up the walk. How d'ye do, Mr. Stronge?" She held out her hand to Stronge, with such a beaming smile, and such an unreserved warmth of welcome, that she woke within his breast a joy better left unknown. "What has brought you today? How did you know I was here? Mr. Barry and I have just come into the garden in a mad quest for strawberries. Will you join us?"

He joined them.

CHAPTER XVII.

The little child was slowly but surely fading from out her arms. It might linger for a day or two, a week, perhaps, but hope there was none. So frail now was its hold on earth, that already—most blessed child — heaven was within its grasp! It was dying, gently, calmly, painlessly, a veritable falling off of the bud, and the only one who could not see it was the mother.

She was walking up and down her private drawing-room with it now, clasping it closely to her breast—not hushing it to slumber or soothing fractious cries (alas, how gladly she would have hailed them!), because the little thing was marvellously still and quiescent, and lay prone within the clinging arms without a moan, without a movement. She had sent the nurse away that she might have it all to herself. A hungry desire to share it with no one was full on her. She started perceptibly, therefore, when the door was thrown open and a servant announced Mrs. Dundas.

Lady Varley lifted her head with a sudden flush of amazed displeasure that was, however, no sooner born than crushed. But Donna saw it. Here! To have a—a stranger shown into her favorite apartment was an act that plainly angered her. She conquered herself at once, and moving forward, received Mrs. Dundas with her customary gentleness.

"They told me you were in here, with—baby," said Donna, with a charming smile and the prettiest touch of hesitating tenderness before the word "baby." "They would have taken me to the drawing-room below, but I wanted to see her. May I?"

She advanced toward the child, and looked quite entreatingly at Lady Varley. One might readily imagine her whole heart to be in her request.

Lady Varley hesitated involuntarily but momentarily, then sighed, then smiled, and so the battle was won. The mother could not resist the woman who showed an interest in her child. She drew back the coverings, and let Donna look at the baby's small, pinched face.

Mrs. Dundas bent over it with quite an air of hushed rapture. She did not admire it at all. It was like a little rabbit when skinned, she told herself, and she blessed her stars that she was not the mother of such an one; but she prodded its thin little cheek with her finger, and caressed the tiny hand, and did, indeed, all that could be required of her. She was studiously orthodox; she omitted no conventional word of praise; only she did not kiss it. That, she said afterward, was more than any one could expect. One should never kiss a baby unless one had a bath ready in the next room, into which to plunge one's self after the ordeal. And then, such a baby!

Of course, she saw it was not doomed to live. She saw, too, that Lady Varley did not believe this. She had certain elements of good nature in her, or she would have laughed at this. She still bent over the baby, and made pretty remarks about it in a low, trainante voice that fascinated most people.

"How quiet!" she said. "How good!"

"Yes, very quiet; such a good little angel!" said Lady Varley, with feverish eagerness. Then, as if struck by some sudden horror, she stopped short, and Mrs. Dundas could see that her color flew and left her livid. Love grows superstitious, and now that word "angel" had driven a nail into her heart. By her own mouth had she condemned her little one, and driven it forth from the fond shelter of the mother's arms to the unknown — the awful. In her anguish, the sweetness and rest of heaven was forgotten. "Oh, not altogether an angel, I assure you," she cried, in a strained tone. "Sometimes we cannot manage her—nurse and I; but just now, and usually, she is calmness itself. A sign of health, I take it. At least that is what Dargan, her nurse, says—a very experienced woman. And to be always quiet, surely betrays a singular freedom from pain or ache. You think so?"

(To Be Continued.)

GLADSTONE'S FAMILY LIFE.

Inside View of the Life of the Great Statesman.

A large-hearted old man who loves children is sure, no matter how masterful he may be, to be ruled by some child. Mr. Gladstone is no exception. His sunny little granddaughter, Dorothy Drew, rules her illustrious grandfather as imperiously as he ruled his party in the days of his political leadership. The grand old man finds pleasure in her companionship, and even when posed for a picture allows her to clasp his hand tightly, as if to force him to keep quiet. Says the New York Tribune:

Never was a family more truly united than that of the Gladstones. They constitute the most wholesome type of the English country-family, wholesome in body, and no breath of dissension or scandal has ever disturbed the serenity of their mutual relations.

Sons and daughters, as well as those who have entered the family by marriage, all vie with one another in reverence and devotion for the one who has done so much to render the name which they bear illustrious, a synonym for justice, piety and generosity.

But superior to them all on that score is the "Grand Old Woman," as the venerable Mrs. Gladstone, the once famous beauty, Catharine Glynn is affectionately described throughout the United Kingdom.

No wife is more watchful and devoted than she, and Mr. Gladstone has made few political speeches in Parliament when she has not sat in the gallery inspiring him with the knowledge of her presence, and few public addresses outside the walls of Westminster when she has not sat by his side, whether on the platform or on the buntings.

Indeed, on one occasion, when, about fifteen years ago, he was called upon to speak in the open air at Greenwich to an extremely hostile audience, she won the day for him by standing throughout at his side, holding an umbrella to shield his silvered locks from the glare of the sun.

Instead of the hisses, the howls, and even the missles that were anticipated from the mob, there arose cheers for the "Grand Old Couple" and for their "Grand Old Gamp."

C. O. D.

A young lady walked into a Mifflintown store, and after selecting a piece of cloth asked what it was worth.

Four kisses per yard, said the polite clerk.

The young lady stood abashed for a moment, and replied that she would take four yards. The cloth was cut off, nicely wrapped up, and handed to the fair purchaser, who received it with a smile and said:

Send the bill around to my grandmother; she will settle it.

A GIRL OF THE PERIOD.

He—I'm afraid I couldn't make you happy, darling, on only $2,000 a year.

She—Oh, it's plenty! With economy I can dress on $1,500 a year, and just think, dear, we can have all the rest for household expenses.

AN APPALLING DISASTER.

DEVASTATION CAUSED BY A GREAT EXPLOSION.

One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds of Dynamite Exploded Near Johannesburg, South Africa, With Frightful Results—Full Particulars of the Calamity.

One of the most appalling disasters of modern times, one fraught with death and the distruction of valuable property, was that caused by the explosion of about a hundred and fifty thousand pounds of dynamite in that part of Johannesburg, South Africa, known as Malay Location, which occurred a few minutes after three o'clock in the afternoon of Feb. 19 last. At that time a most violent explosion startled the citizens of the town, houses shook as though an earthquake was taking place and windows everywhere were broken by the concussion. Affrighted clerks and business men rushed from their stores and offices into the streets. Some people cried that the gas works had blown up; others had other theories, but it was soon ascertained that some nine or ten trucks of dynamite consigned to Mr. E. Lippert, and lying at the Johannesburg station, had exploded. The dynamite had arrived on the previous Sunday, but the removal of it had not begun until the following Friday. It was while it was being removed that the explosion took place. The effects of the disaster were frightful. On the spot where the cars stood all that remained were a few fragments of cars; around lay the horrible mutilated bodies of human beings, and a number of slaughtered, disemboweled and dismembered mules. Where, but a moment before was a leved track, was now

A HUGE TRENCH,

three hundred feet long, sixty-five feet wide and thirty feet deep, the earth being banked up on both sides as regularly as though a dam were in course of construction. The railway siding where the catastrophe occurred was surrounded by some hundreds of houses occupied by the poorer class of whites, natives and colored people. Scores of these houses were razed to the ground, burying their inmates beneath the fragments. In the immediate vicinity of the railway very few of the residents escaped alive, and those who did were so terribly wounded as to make the recovery of the majority doubtful. For several hundred yards around the scene of the explosion the sight was gruesome in the extreme; here and there lay a skull, a limb, entrails, a legless, armless trunk and fragments of human flesh, innocent children and strong adults in the throes of death, scores of mained and wounded. Here and there a car-coupling could be seen twisted out of shape. What was once a lively village was now ruin and desolation. The houses were, for the most part, made of corrugated iron, and consequently were easily dashed to pieces. At almost every ruined dwelling Zarps and others were busily engaged in the gruesome hunt for the dead.

Immediately after the explosion crowds—English, Dutch, blacks and yellow-skinned people hurried to the scene of the catastrophe, and then were witnessed

SCENES PITIFUL

in the extreme. At every few yards circles of people crowded round some object; old women sat among the ruins, their hands to their wounded heads and their faces the picture of despair. Fully a score of women had little children in their arms, babies and mothers bleeding from wounds. One man was found in a well; in another well a horse was found. Dead horses, dogs, fowls and mules lay scattered around. A short distance from the trench a Chinaman lay dying. In West Fordsburg six little white girls lay dead before the house in front of which they had been standing when the affair happened. Violent exhibitions of grief were visible everywhere as men women and children searched here and there for missing relatives; others sat brooding in a kind of fixed despair as if to think, an effort of which they were no longer capable. Willing hands went to work at once to search the debris, lest any living being might be buried there; the injured and dying were carried away to the hospital, the Wanderers or the Crown Reef Mine, and all the physicians in Johannesburg were at work caring for them. Nurses volunteered their services and soon all that was possible was being done for the victims of the disaster. The skating rink was converted into a mortuary. It will probably never be known how many were killed outright by the explosion, but the burials during the ensuing saveral days numbered

ABOUT A HUNDRED.

What caused the explosion will never be known, but one man who knew the driver of the engine of the train said that the latter told him that he was shunting some empty trucks into a siding near where the dynamite was standing and collided with the dynamite trucks. The next thing he remembered he was lying some distance from his engine. The destruction of property in and about Johannesburg was great. Scarcely a pain of glass remained intact in the city, while all the plate glass was shivered. Among the buildings wrecked were the extensive works of the Rand Timber Company, and the engine shed of the Netherland Railway. The former was two hundred yards from the scene of the explosion. In Fordsburg the Reformed Dutch Church was unroofed, as was also the building of the Rand steam biscuit factory.

Among interesting incidents of the explosion are the following: A hospital attendant found a white man picking the pockets of a dying man and gave him a sound thrashing. Another man was badly beaten for trying to steal a clock from a wounded girl. Fragments of iron, some very large, were hurled to distances varying to over a mile. Of several boys bathing in a dam near the siding just before the explosion, no trace was found. A man on horseback was blown from his horse and the chest of the latter was blown open.