LORD KILLEEN'S REVENGE.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Well?" he asked, as she joined him.

"An inappropriate word. 'Ill' would rather describe it. That little country shrew, that impossible cousin of mine, has given me an extremely mauvais quart d'heure, simply because I made a laudable effort to put her in the right path to fame and fortune. Had I deliberately plotted against her peace of mind, she could not have been more abusive, yet I was all for it."

"To know you is to be sure of that. What mischief have you been up to now?" asked Varley, lazily.

She cast a swift, amused glance at him.

"Every hour proves it," she said. "You are the one man in the world suited to me. The boldness of your insolence is refreshing in this adulatory age. But of Constantia—you do not understand."

"Probably not; she would be a difficult study at any time, I fancy. Well, what have you done to her?"

"Merely betrayed a tiny secret. A secret so tiny that it was scarcely worth the betrayal; a thing of no real importance, and entirely without depth; but because of it she turned upon me, and was, in all, rather violent. At all events, she gave her unbiased opinion of my poor self pure and undiluted, an opinion decidedly more forcible than complimentary."

'She requires training," said Varley, with a frown. "She is brusque to a painful degree."

"You mean she tells the truth," said Donna, with a laugh. She was not at all bitter—she was even generous.

"Exactly. I have yet to hear what truth she told you, or why she told it."

"All because I gave her a domino of the most recherche—one I should not have disdained myself. You have not seen her yet, I think, so that I must enlarge on it to you. Well, Featherston not having the wit to see through yellow satin, mistook her for some one else, and poured out unlimited love at what proved to be a wrong shrine."

"Considering how Constantia affects him, she could hardly be annoyed by the love."

"She was, however, when he addressed the supposed object of his affections by her Christian name, which didn't happen to be Constantia. That was awkward; I heard a little, and I guessed the rest."

Varley gave way to merriment.

"Poor Featherston!" he said. "Condole with Constantia if you will, but you must confess it was rough on him."

"Ah, you take his part!" cried Mrs. Dundas. It was her turn now to be amused. "If you knew for whom the love was really meant, you might be, perhaps, a little more chary of your pity."

Varley dropped her arm, and turned to her with a rather savage expression on his face. In spite of the careless good-humor that usually characterized him, he could be at times angry to violence. He laid his hands upon her shoulders, and so moved her that the moonbeams fell upon her uplifted face.

"Well," said she, with a little curl of her lip, "am I as lovely as you thought me?"

"So," he said, "you have been encouraging that sneak, it appears, all this time?"

Mrs. Dundas shook herself free of him, and, stepping back, regarded him earnestly for a moment. Her eyes shone like stars, her rose-red lips grew grave; and slowly a smile grew upon her face that never was seen there save by him alone. It was a revelation, it was tender, gentle, real! The whole woman seemed transformed.

"When one loves there is but one encouraged," she whispered, softly.

At that instant she was an exquisite creature, refined, idealized, purified by almighty love. Varley, with an impassionate gesture, caught her in his arms and held her closely to his beating heart. To him this imperfect woman was the one perfect thing on earth; a woman to love "passionnement, eperdument, et pour toujours."

"How strangely you looked at me just then," she said, with loving reproach; "how oddly you look even now!" She pushed him from her gayly, and casting sentiment to the winds grew once more provoking, tantalizing. "What means that frown, my lord?" cried she. "Are you down on your luck, then? Have you backed the wrong horse, or has your true love played you false?"

"I trust not—I believe not," returned he, with emotion. As he spoke he bent his head, and pressed his lips vehemently upon the bare, lovely arm.

They were standing in a very secluded spot (well known to them), one window only in the whole house bearing upon it; this belonged to a small turret chamber seldom in use, and in which now a solitary light was gleaming. On such a night as this, when the house was full of guests, it was quite certain to be untenanted.

"You would not deceive me," he said, with agitation. The words were rather a question than an affirmation.

"You know it," she answered. It was inexpressibly sweet to her to know he loved her; it was sweeter still to feel her power over him.

"But that fellow, Featherston; you must explain that," he went on, quickly. "You have known of his—his damned impertinence for some time." His face was very pale, and he had evidently lost control over himself. He did not seek to apologize to her for the objectionable word used, and was, in fact, ignorant of having uttered it. Trifles of this sort, however, did not weigh on Donna; she passed them lightly over as a rule, and indeed, found a certain pleasure in them. They gave a flavor to the situation, a piquancy that enriched it, by their betrayal of the speaker's feelings.

"I guessed at it, rather. I could hardly know, as he gave me no open demonstration of his meaning until to-night, when, as I tell you, I overheard in part, and filled in the rest." This was a lie, as Featherston's attentions for some time, in private, had been decidedly pronounce. But a lie more or less did not count with her. "But I had my suspicions when first he began to make polite inquiries as to when Mr. Dundas would be at home. It occurred to me that he must have been struck by Mr. Dundas's moral qualities, which are unimpeachable, until I discovered that he avoided Ballymore on the hours named. But why waste our time talking of him?" cried she, suddenly. "The moments are flying that we can spend together."

"Happy moments have always wings." He placed his hand very tenderly beneath her chin, and turned her face to him. "Have you enjoyed yourself?"

"Does that require an answer? Have I not been with you? Thrice blessed yellow dominoes that helped me to my desire to see, to dance, to talk with you as I should not have dared to do under more open circumstances! If anything should be said now, why, it was Constantia with whom you danced, talked, etc. What more natural, considering how old a friend of yours she is, and so determined an ally, too, of Lady Varley's! By the bye, speak of a—an angel, there she goes, with her shadow as usual beside her."

An amused laugh that had mischief in it, and something besides that brought the blood to Varley's brow, broke from her. She laid her hand on his, and swiftly, noiselessly, withdrew deeper into the shadow, as Lady Varley, accompanied by O'Grady, moved across a patch of moonlight. Yolande had her mask in her hand, and her face looked sad and colorless. Her eyes seemed larger than usual, dark shadows lying beneath. She walked with her ordinary proud step, but there was weariness written on every line of her figure. She had come to Ballymore to-night entirely against her own wishes, partly in obedience to an expressed desire of her husband's, and partly lest her absence from Mrs. Dundas's ball might give rise to any speculation amongst the army of gossipers that besiege every small place.

O'Grady was talking to her. His calm, cultured voice came to them across the grass. Presently a rhododendronbush hid them, and they passed from view.

"Her shadow! why do you call him that?" demanded Varley, with a suspicion of hauteur in his tone.

"I was wrong," returned she, lightly. "Such godly women never have a 'shadow,' or a 'friend,' they have only an 'agreeable acquaintance.' But, as we have all learned from our infancy, there isn't so very much in a name after all—or else a great deal!"

"I have before this suggested to you that it would be as well to keep Lady Varley's name out of the conversation," said he, in a low tone that time had taught her it would be wise to regard. But she despised warnings.

"With all my heart. Keep her out of your mind, forget her much as you like," she said, flippantly. "But—keep your eyes open. The traveled youth is ever full of guile, and between you and madame there seems to be little love lost. I was astonished at seeing her here to-night; but now I see light."

"Would you leave nothing unsullied?" he said, with a dark glance. "Do not pursue this subject, I—entreat you."

His tone meant, "I command you." Donna, who had said all she intended to say, laughed softly, and slipped her hand, with a tender, seductive glance, through his arm.

"Did you hear that?" she asked, alluding to a clock in the old tower that had struck the quarter to twelve; the sound rang out sorrowfully, solemnly upon the still air. "I'd assassinate that clock, if I dared. How it kills one's joy, breathing dissolution as it strikes! Now, it will separate you from me. Our happy night, that knew but the one regret—that it should some time end—is now almost over. Midnight is at hand, when dominoes and the merry mask must be flung aside, and we must once again be as we seem, not as we are."

"You have been happy, then?"

"Absurdly so, for many reasons. Hear them: I have been with you, I have done that girl who hates me a really good turn, and I have circumvented Featherstone! Threefold bliss!"

"You are a little bitter with regard to Featherston," said he, regarding her with some suspicion.

"You have a glimmer of reason now and then," returned she, airily. "Yes! I owed him a tiny debt which I flatter myself I have now quite wiped out, leaving even a little to my credit. I have but one sorrow, and that is, that I could not see his face when Constantia spoke. It must have been a picture."

There was a satisfaction that was venomous in her tone. To Varley it was music. His doubts cleared.

"He fancied he loved me," went on Mrs. Dundas, with a light sneer. "In reality, any affection he has in him is given to Constantia. I spoiled his chance there."

"He is an excellent parti. Why destroy a little game like that?"

"For her sake. He is not good enough for her."

"Quite so, I should say. A girl without a penny, especially a girl of good birth, should be glad to accept such a chance of escape from the slavery of poverty."

"There are other chances far better for her than marriage with Featherston. He is selfish, unreliable, a liar and a hypocrite!"

She spoke warmly, and as one who knew. So far, indeed, as the last two accusations went, she was, beyond doubt, a competent judge.

Varley seemed surprised.

"You are very careful of Constantia," he said; "a girl who, it is notorious, regards you in any but a friendly light."

"I know that. I can hardly explain it to myself," she said with a slight smile. "I feel that girl despises—hates me; yet I am so far fascinated by her that I would work her way to happiness, I use her; yes. I abuse her—true! Yet I wish her only good. She is the one honest thing amongst us, I believe, and I would not see her sacrificed to a poor-blooded creature like Featherston if I could prevent it."

"Perhaps you think it will be for her good to die an old maid."

"I think it will be to her everlasting advantage if she accepts Andrew Stronge. There is a man, who will make her happy, if you will!"

"What! You advocate his cause now?"

"He little likes me. Yet, am I so poor a thing, that I can not see virtue in mine enemy? Pouf!" cried she, gayly, "you are in the dark yet as to my mental powers. I acknowledge his good parts, though he slay me. I know them all, and they are numerous. I like to acknowledge them; it makes me, in a sense, his superior. He will grant me no charitable doubt, and so I am the more generous of the two."

"Why should he dislike you?"

"Who shall say? And it is of no consequence at all. Your high-minded person is always very narrow. However, he loves most honestly that little fool, and I would see her happy, in spite of many insults."

She laughed gayly as if at the remembrance of the insults, and after a bit Varley joined in.

"You are truly an incomprehensible woman," he said.

"In that lies my charm. That is why you adore me," returned she, with a saucy smile. "Were I easily understanded of all men, my power would vanish; I should be like the rest of my kind—flat, stale, and unprofitable; I should bore you in a month. You say to yourself of me, one moment; 'She is wild, wicked, incorrigible;' the moment after: 'Nay, she is good, charitable, generous.' After that you are hopelessly mixed, and, being a man, and impossible, as you think, to be beaten, you are determined to wait and watch forever, until you solve the mystery; but that will be never. I perplex, puzzle, interest, stimulate, and so—bind you!"

She laughed again triumphantly, and stepping back from him, placed her arms akimbo, and nodded defiantly at him like any queen of burlesque.

"By the bye," she exclaimed, suddenly, "did you notice how that bit of antiquity, Lady Daryl, danced her lancers? No? No, really? Why, where were your eyes—your sense of humor? As for me, I was inthralled, enchanted. I refused to talk to Mr. Barry, who was rather amusing me at the time, that I might with uninterrupted thought study the performance, and take a lesson gratis. She is eighty, as you know, our Daryl, but she hankers after youth, and fondly believed her disguise would delude the onlookers into the belief that a young and artless thing was tripping it before them. All the steps learned in another age came back to her. She minced, she pranced, she showed considerably more ankle than was proper, and—well, look here, see how she conducted herself, deeming herself secure and unknown behind the folds of the wily domino."

As she spoke, she picked up her petticoats on either side, with an airy grace and a generous disregard of propriety, and, stepping back from him into the middle of the path, commenced a pas seul that was irresistibly comic. She so exactly represented old Lady Daryl, with all the ancient quavering movements, the decayed coquetry, the sweeping, bowing, grimacing airs and graces of a day forgotten that characterized that faded belle, that Varley fairly roared with laughter.

"Note her frisky ways!" cried she still springing to and fro with all the exaggerated sprightliness of one vainly striving to be young when handicapped by dreary age. "Mark her youthful grace! Take heed of the tender agility that sits so sweetly on the gay young thing! The very poetry of motion, eh, Varley? I'm sure I'm vastly obleeged to you, my lord, for your polite criticism." Here she imitated the miserable old fribble's voice to a nicety. "Stand back, sir, till I give you a better view. Say now, Frederick, wouldn't it have been a pity to let you be done out of so good a thing?"

Panting, exhausted, laughing until her sides shook, she stood before him and grasped his arm.

"So late, so late!" she gasped. "Let us run for it. Mid-night is on the very stroke, and I am bound as hostess to see the death of the immoral dimino, and the birth of the decorous dance."

As they drew nearer the windows, she stopped him. "You go that way," she said, "I shall go this. And remember, should the question arise, that you have been very attentive to Constantia to-night. Dance with her now to give the idea a color."

CHAPTER XXVI.

She was gone from him in a moment. She ran lightly through a side door, and when, a few minutes later, at the signal from old Lord Muskerry—who had been requested to fling a slipper into the air as midnight struck, as a warning to all Cinderellas to throw aside their disguises and proclaim themselves as they really were—all there divested themselves of domnoes and masks and stood revealed to their partners, and their partners to them, Mrs. Dundas was discovered at the end of the room laughing gayly with old Lord Killeens of Blue Ribbon fame, who was the kindest, the prosiest, and certainly the most harmless man in the United Kingdom.

Her purpose once accomplished, she did not lose much time over the prosy earl. She shunted him on to a dowager of noble dimensions, and catching up her now useless domino, moved toward the door, ostensibly for the purpose of getting rid of it—she who could have had a little army to do her will had she so chosen!

As she passed rapidly through the empty hall, she saw Lady Varley standing there with a heavy crimson plush cloak around her. O'Grady was standing near her, but she was not talking to him; she was staring at the open doorway, gazing out into the darkness beyond with an impatience she had almost ceased to subdue.

"What, Lady Varley! going so soon!" said Mrs. Dundas, going slowly up to her.

"I must ask you to excuse me," said Lady Varley, in a low, careful tone. She did not look at her hostess as she spoke, but employed herself fastening the already fastened catches of her cloak. "My abrupt departure may seem to you ungracious, but—there are many reasons why I must leave your—pleasant dance so soon."

The manner in which she plainly forced herself to be civil made her words almost an insult. Mrs. Dundas regarded her with the warmest sympathy.

"Ah! you are tired, fatigued," she said, sweetly. "One can see it. That will do for a first reason, at all events. As for the others—" She paused. She turned her eyes upon O'Grady, and her lips widened into one of her most brilliant smiles. "Mr. O'Grady—is he going—with you?" The little hesitation was perfect. "Am I to be so unfortunate as to lose you both in one moment?"

Lady Varley made her no reply; she only moved a step or two nearer to the door, and stood there is though she had forgotten her. But O'Grady's glance met Donna's and dwelt on it. He had peculiar eyes, earnest, searching—eyes that compelled your regard.

"Ah, Mrs. Dundas," he said, pleasantly, "do not tell me that you wish to get rid of me this early. I had hoped, when I had seen Lady Varley to her carriage, that you would have given me that dance you denied me in the earlier hours."

For a second Donna was disconcerted. He had known her, then, through her disguise! But after all it might as well have been Constantia. She had not spoken, she remembered, and how could he be sure if she persisted in saying it must have been her cousin he had asked for that waltz? By the bye, it would be wise to allude to it as a polka; it would be a proof that she had not been the one.

She was startled out of her pretty plans (which all had rushed through her fertile brain in the short time it had taken her to pretend to disentangle her fan from her lace flounces) by seeing Constantia coming swiftly down the hall. The girl looked pale and disturbed, and passed her as though she was not there.

"Are you going home, Lady Varley? Will you take me with you?" she asked in a voice that was almost a whisper.

"Certainly, dear, if you wish it. But as soon. Conniel and the dance only just commencing, as it were."

"Oh, do take me," said Constantia, with an entreaty that was vehement.

They had both spoken very low, but the hall was quite empty, and therefore every word could be distinctly heard.

"Are you too deserting me, Connie?" said Mrs. Dundas, amiably. "This dance has been a failure indeed. All my friends are forsaking me together."

At the word "friends," Constantia lifted her head and fastened her large eyes upon her. They were filled with a passionate contempt. Then she turned away and moved closer to Lady Varley, who was still gazing with an intense eagerness into the night beyond.

"Will it never come?" she said to Constantia. The words seemed to escape her involuntarily, and betrayed her loss of composure. Even as she spoke, the crunching of wheels upon the gravel outside was heard.

"Now Lady Varley," said O'Grady, coming forward and offering his arm. Mrs. Dundas also went up to her. She was not to be ignored by any one in her own house—and as yet the game was in her own hands.

"Good-night," she said, cordially, "I hope a good night's rest will make you all right in a few hours."

"Good-night," said Lady Varley; "thank you." Her tone was cold, but courteous; she laid her hand gently in Donna's. But Constantia could not do this. She swept past her cousin as though she was invisible, and settled herself in the very furthest recesses of the brougham, so that it might be plainly seen by everybody that she was not going to offer even the barest civilities. She was young, of course, and had many things to learn.

(To Be Continued.)

ORIGIN OF WIGS.

Recent Discoveries Showing Them to Have Been Used 4,000 Years Ago.

Wigs have been used either to conceal the want of natural hair or avowedly as mere ornaments. In the former way they have been used from the earliest historical times. The oldest existing specimen of this kind of wig is believed to be one found in the tomb of an Egyptian mummy at Thebes and now in the British Museum. This, it is considered by the best authorities, is 4,000 years old. The ancient Assyrians, the Persians, the Medes, the Lydians and others are known to have made use of wigs. Toward the end of the Roman Republic the ladies were very fond of wigs, and the fashion spread still more under the Early Empire, when yellow wigs, made of hair in Germany—were in great request. Horace, Ovid and Juvenal ridiculed the large wigs of the Roman ladies. Statues even were made with movable marble wigs. Two of these are still preserved in Rome. All the wigs so far mentioned seem to have been intended to pass as the real hair of the wearers. The latter use of wigs as mere ornaments began in France in the seventeenth century, when Louis XIII., to conceal his premature baldness, took to a wig. His courtiers followed suit, and the fashion spread rapidly. The wig became larger and larger, till under Louis XIV. it reached an absurd size. The fashion spread in England also, being at its height in Queen Anne's reign.

PEACEFUL BY NATURE.

The Egyptian Abhors Warfare, As Did His Fathers Before Him.

The ordinary Egyptian is by instinct utterly opposed to military life. The last thing in the world he wants to do is to fight. He hates the pomp and circumstance of glorious war, and nothing in his nature is appealed to by the idea of strife and combat.

He is a good-tempered, pleasure-loving man, and for 5,000 years his ancestors before him have loathed the clash of steel. Go back as far as you like in Egyptian history and you will never find a trace of the Viking spirit in the inhabitants of the Nile Valley. The successful wars of the Pharoahs were waged by mercenaries, and the papyri show that the military calling was always described as pure evil. The records show little delights in battle, but plenty of picturesque contrasts between the horrible miseries endured by the soldier in the field and the pleasant, snug life of the civilian tribe.

The spirit of the old Dane, who, when he felt death approaching, put on his armor because he would not die like a cow in his house, has no echo in the past or in the present of the true Egyptian.

THE NEW DOMESTIC.

Housewife (to new domestic)—There is one thing I wish to say to you. The last girl had a habit of coming nito the drawing room and playing the piano occasionally. You never play the piano, do you?"

New Domestic—Yis, mum, I plays, but I'll hev to charge yer five shillings a week aixtry I fi'm to furnish music for the family.

WHAT UNCLE SAM IS AT.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ABOUT THE BUSY YANKEE.

Neighborly Interest in His Doings—Matters of Moment and Mirth Gathered from His Daily Record.

The State Legislature of Ohio has passed an anti-lynching bill.

In New York State there are 280,029 acres of buckwheat under cultivation.

Uncle Hiram Lester, of Henry county, Ga., is said to be now in his 120th year.

A Thorndike (Mass.) man has a young kitten which has two distinct bodies, eight legs, no tail and a head which looks strangely human.

Work is proceeding day and night at the ordnance shops in the Washington navy yard on the guns designed for the new ships nearing completion.

The Chicago City Railway Company is preparing to spend $2,000,000 in building 40 miles of track in the south and south-western parts of Chicago.

The gifts to colleges, churches, libraries and public charities in the United States last year amounted to $28,943,549, against $19,967,116 in 1894.

Rockland, Me., has a woman justice of the peace, a woman court stenographer, three women who have made an ironclad agreement to wear bloomers.

There is nothing very eccentric in "Young" or "Old" as a name, but the combination is rather odd in the case of Mrs. Young Old, of Portsmouth, Va.

Cats are scarce in the little town of Valley, Washington. The coyotes come boldly into town at night, and carry off all the cats they see prowling around.

Mr. Charles H. Hackley, of Muskegon, Mich., has added $25,000 to his original gift for a manual training school in that town, making his total gift $155,000.

Coal of excellent quality, and in apparently enormous quantities, has just been discovered in Arizona, in the Dos Cabezas district, only six miles from the railroad.

A woman lawyer has won the first divorce case tried by a female member of the bar. The trial took place in the New York Supreme Court before Judge Smythe.

Mrs. Ann B. Whitman, of Marlboro', Mass., who died last week at nearly 94 years of age, was present at the laying of the corner stone of Bunker Hill monument.

Mrs. George Gould's tiara, which she has just received from a London maker, cost $80,000, and is said to be one of the finest specimens of the jewellers' art in America.

The newly elected president of Kenyon College, at Gambier, O., W. F. Pierce, is but 28 years old. He has been professor of philosophy at Kenyon for the last three years.

The congregation of a church at Filmore, Cal., has invited its pastor to resign because he accepted contributions for church work from sporting men and saloon-keepers.

Joel Luman, of Burtonville, Ky., is a big man. His height is 6 feet 4 inches, and his weight is 354 pounds. He has a son and a daughter, each of whom is as tall as himself.

Michigan has been called the "Lake State" for an obvious reason. It is better known as the "Wolverine State" from the former presence of great numbers of these animals in its forests.

South Carolinians are "Weasles," "Sand Hillers," and "Rice Birds;" the first an illusion to the thinness of the early natives; the second, to their place of residence; the third, to a common crop and birds which feed on it.

Arkansas, a great many years ago, was nicknamed the "Bear State," from the abundance of bears in the mountainous districts. For over forty years Arkansas had almost a monopoly of the bear stories of the country.

J. de Barth Shrob, whose death is announced in Los Angeles, Cal., was one of the best known viticulturists in the world. He leaves among other property a vineyard of 1,300 acres, included in his big ranch of 10,000 acres.

Encircling the throat of a baby left on a doorstep at Day's Ferry, Me., was a card to which was attached an envelope containing $500 in bank notes and these words: "When this is gone there is more from where this came from."

Roswell Silsby, who died at his home in Aurora, Me., the other day, was known all through that part of the state as "the hairless man." From birth his head was perfectly bald, and he had no hair on any part of his body. He always wore a wig. His age was seventy-six years.

The largest prune orchard in the world is said to be located at Los Gatos, on the western edge of the Santa Clara Valley, Cal. It contains nearly 50,000 trees, covering about 380 acres. A hundred workmen and as many horses are constantly employed on this farm, which is provided with its own waterworks and electric light plant.

Neither coloured folk nor Chinamen are permitted to live or work in the new colony of Fitzgerald, recently founded in Georgia; but a novelty for that section of the country has been let inside the limits in the person of a pretty girl barber. She has set up a shaving shop and is doing a big business among the westerners, who form the greater part of the colonists.

The Mayor of Flint, Mich., performs the duties of his office without compensation other than the satisfying sense of having done his duty. But the Mayor who retired last week has directed the affairs of the town so well during his year of office that the Common Council unanimously voted to make an appropriation for him, as an especial mark of satisfaction. The sum was one dollar.

Miss Kate Shelley, of Moingona, Ia., who made her way through a raging blizzard at midnight several years ago, and, by signalling to a crowded express train on the Chicago and Northwestern railroad, saved it from plunging through a wrecked bridge, has applied to the Iowa Legislature for employment in the State House as a memorial. She is destitute, and has to support her aged mother and an invalid brother.