LORD KILLEEN'S REVENGE

CHAPTER XX.—(Continued.)

"But it is only good-bye for the moment; you have said you will not go away," said she, slipping her fingers trustfully into his. She seemed anxious, fearful. If he went, a good friend would go from her, and some instinctive feeling that he would be wanted here in their little community sooner or later awoke in her breast.

"Of course I shall stay, I have given you my word. And why should I run away? I am no coward," he said, very bravely. Then he parted from her and turning a leafy corner was soon out of sight.

He walked on heavily, hardly knowing why it was that his heart was so dull within him. He knew he was no longer the possessor of even a fainting hope such as had sustained him for many weeks, but as yet he could only think of her, how she had looked, what she had said.

She had not returned his gaze when he was going. Rather, her eyes had sought the ground as if in regret and sorrow. He was glad of those signs of gentle grief; they told him that at least she had felt for him. It was a great kindness in her that she had thus shrunk from meeting his parting glance. She knew there would be despair in it. It was a warm and honest heart that lay in her sweet bosom—a heart that had suffered a little for the poor wretch it had been obliged to condemn.

There was, too, some melancholy satisfaction for him in the thought that he had borne his defeat with considerable spirit. He had, to support him, the assurance that he had quitted her presence with a calm bearing—not as one crushed or humiliated. Why, indeed, should his rejection by such a kindly creature cause humiliation of any sort? Is a man lowered because one woman out of the whole universe does not find him exactly to her taste? No, it was foolish, and yet he could not help feeling glad that he had left her carrying with him so undaunted an exterior.

This inward gratification sustained him until a turn of the road, on which he now found himself, revealed to him the somewhat pronounced features of Garrett Barry. He started slightly, as one might who was suddenly roused from an engrossing train of thought, and stood still in the middle of the road. This was nothing, however, as Barry was walking with such velocity that as he turned the corner the two men came to a stand almost breast to breast.

Hitherto Mr. Stronge had believed himself to be as calm outwardly as any one could desire. With Barry lay the pleasure of undeceiving him. The first shock of the encounter at an end, Barry regarded him with a searching gaze.

"I say, anything wrong with you, old man?" asked that youth, with apparently deep concern, peering into his face. "You look as if you had got a twist somewhere."

"So I have," said Stronge, with some presence of mind. "It's— er—toothache."

"No, now! And is it that, that's the matter with you?" said the Limerick man, with a curious twinkle in his eye. "Faith, it's a bad job, by the look of you. There can't be anything much worse in the world than the toothache you've got."

"A toothache is always a bad thing," replied Stronge, stiffly.

"Incurable, unless you get the tooth out."

"That's easier said than done."

"In your case, do you mean?" Barry, who, as a rule, was a kind-hearted young man here laughed aloud in an almost fiendish joy. "If that's the way with you," said he, still laughing, "I'd advise you to go home and cut your throat, for there is no cure known for your disease."

"Disease! I've told you it is the toothache," said Stronge, indignantly, not liking his laugh or his fixed gaze.

"Well, just so." He nodded to him and went on a step or two. Then he stopped, and looked back at him over his shoulder. "Even if you had that tooth out," he said, "I doubt if you would feel much better."

He continued his way after that, and Stronge was once more left to his own communings. It seemed to him now that Barry had guessed his secret. And, indeed, no doubt he had, jealousy and unrequited love having sharpened that young man's wits.

Sadly, slowly Stronge walked onward, alive, indeed, to the knowledge that a great ill had befallen him, but hardly realizing to its fullest the extent of it. Not until he had reached his home and entered the hall, and wandered listlessly into the huge drawing-room on the right-hand side of it, did he quite comprehend how completely life for him had been bereft of its flavor.

Here, in this large exquisitely furnished reception-room, where in his happy musings he had seen her welcoming her guests; and there, in the pretty morning-room beyond, where he, perchance, and she alone, might have sat in pleasant converse; and in the dainty octagon nest up-stairs, all gray and silver, that her sweet presence might have graced; he had pictured her to himself a thousand times as wandering through all these rooms, their mistress, his queen! And such imaginings had been very sweet to him. But now he must dash his brush across all his pictures, leaving the canvas blank as his own heart!

CHAPTER XXI.

"He is a very nice fellow, at all events— thoroughly unexceptionable," said O'Grady, looking up from his cards for a moment. He addressed his host, who nodded in acquiescence, if rather coldly.

Barry was giving one of his little dinners— bachelor entertainments that were seldom declined by the men in the country round. His wine, left to him with the property by one of the greatest connoisseurs in that line that his time knew, was, naturally, irreproachable, and his cook was excellent. After dinner there would be a game of Nap or (so-called?) limited loo, that very seldom, however, knew any limit by the time the small hours began. However, as it commenced decorously, it was allowed to hold its good character all through; and it was found to be well to be able always to prefix the word limited to it when talking of the nights at Barry's house to one's wife.

Nearly everybody was present, and as midnight was upon them, just now the limit had been waved aside. Stronge, however, was absent; he had gone to England, where some one belonging to him lay at the point of death, and his name having fallen lightly upon the conversation going on in a desultory fashion round the card-table, O'Grady, who had taken a fancy to him, said a panegyric word or two about him.

"Yes, he is quite all right; he is really astonishing," said Featherston, in his slow drawl. "There isn't a flaw in him barring his birth."

"Ah, that's where the screw is loose, I hear," said Twining, with a little affected shrug of his capacious shoulders. He was the major of the line regiment stationed in the next town. His own father was an eminent soap-boiler in the North of England, so that naturally he was very hard on the want of proper breeding, when with those who knew nothing of his antecedents.

"His mother was a Jewess, I hear," he went on, with quite an astonishing display of disgust. "His father was an Irishman, and—er— Beg pardon, Barry, I'm sure," with an apologetic laugh; "No offense meant." He shrugged his shoulders again in that exquisitely graceful foreign way he had learned in his fortnight's sojourn at Boulogne.

"Where would it come in, I'd like to know?" asked Barry, with a slight touch of contempt. He evidently held the major in sure contempt, but let him down easy because of his being a guest.

"His pappy a Paddy; his mammy a Jew! What a remarkable combination!" said Varley. He had been losing pretty steadily, but this only served to send his spirits up. "By Jove, one should look for a startling result in a union of that sort."

"I don't think Stronge could be called exactly startling," said Featherston, meditatively. He said very little, yet he conveyed to every one the impression that he considered Stronge hardly worth an argument.

"I knew the grandfather on the mother's side, and he wasn't half a bad old chap," said some one.

"So did I," said Varley, with a gay laugh. "In the old days."

"Dickens a bit I'd doubt you!" said Barry, with a genial grin, giving him a poke unawares. "Der monish tight just then?"

"Wrong, my trusty friend! I had no dealings with him in that way; but I believe he let in Stronge's father for a good deal, and only loosened his grip on him when he had promised to marry his girl. Old Stronge caught in the toils, did marry her. There is nothing like honor—when you are stuck for it! So runs the tale; and the Stronge we know is the upshot of the transaction."

"Poor devil!" said Barry.

"Whom are you pitying, Barry?" asked Major Twining; "your compatriot—by the one side, at all events—Stronge, eh?"

"His father. I pity any fellow you could name who was bound to marry the girl he didn't love. Flat soda would be nothing to it."

"Your an Irishman, you see, Barry. And you therefore count the world well lost for that ancient humbug called love."

"Well, I do!" said Barry, stoutly. He thought of Constantia, and his heart swelled within him. "And why shouldn't I?" he said. "And why should you English sneer at Ireland? There's bad in it, as all we landlords know to our cost; but there is good, too. Enough to make all of you on the other side of the water deeply grateful to us. Who has given you your only general—"

"Gineral Garrett—be Irish at all risks," said Varley, gayly.

"By all means, my dear fellow, if you think it sounds better," said Barry, with undiminished good-humor. "Who gave you your only 'gineral,' then," he went on, returning his attention to Twining — "as you yourselves have styled him? Who gave you your Indian viceroy? Is General Roberts nothing to you? Faith," cried Barry, throwing up his head, "it strikes me you would be in a blue fix over there in your native land without a few Irish brains to stiffen you now and again, and pull you together."

"Hah!" said Twining, with a kind of snort that meant defiance. He was angry, but could think of nothing sufficiently brilliant to crush his antagonist. He came of a slow race. Soap, though a cleanly thing, is not suggestive of eloquence.

Varley, who had had a good deal of the defunct proprietor's old wine, laughed aloud.

"There is a good deal of truth in what you say, Garrett," he said gayly, flinging an I O U into the pool. "We are a happy family, we are, we are.' But when enumerating our celebrities, you might have given a little place to our prince of diplomatists, our dear—"

"Name him not!" cried Barry, tragically. "Traitor! Usurer! Base receiver of a starving nation's pence! 'A la lanterne!' would be my cry for such as he, could it do any good. The peasants lie dying of starvation on the road-side and in the gutters, whilst he revels in the thousands wrung from their hearts' blood."

"Well done, Barry, that last is far better than the orthodox 'sweat of their brow,'" said Varley with a mischievous laugh. "And, indeed, these dear peasants deserve our best consideration. When one comes to think of the boycotting, the playful assassinations, the merry maiming of the dumb beasts around us, one feels one's heart quite warm toward our gentle aborigines."

"I have confessed to the badness, you know," said Barry. "I have not denied that, when I spoke of the good; and you will at least admit that the lower classes would still be a mild and light-hearted race in spite of their grinding poverty, ay, and a loyal-hearted people, too, were it not for the diabolical agencies that strive every now and then to stir up the mud of sedition."

"Bravo, Barry, go it!" cried two or three junior members of the regiment commanded by Twining. They were all Englishman, and consequently looked upon Barry's partiality impassioned speech as rather a good joke.

Mr. Dundas, who was not at the card table, but who was playing a game of billiards with one of the neighboring squires, looked up suddenly.

"I am of your way of thinking," he said to Barry in his quiet way, that somehow silenced the youngsters. "There is only this difference between us: you have hope, I have none." He alluded to his unhappy land; but Varley glanced at him with a curious light in his eyes, and then suddenly broke into a low, secret laugh.

"I would have hope," declared Barry, hotly, "had England, who should be our mainstay, any sympathy with us; but in reality she has none. She blusters considerably about the disintegration of the empire, and the insult to the queen, and the loss of her own personal dignity; but honest regard for the loyal subjects in this miserable island there is none. I lived long enough in England to learn that."

"You lived there?" asked Twining, with some surprise.

"For two long years," replied Barry, with an unconscious stress upon the adjective.

"No doubt, considering the vast possibilities for sensational changes here, you found it slow," said Twining, who was nettled by the other's tone.

"Well, 'twas a trial, I don't deny that," said Barry, coolly, twisting and lighting a cigarette, "but I learned the ropes pretty soon, and learned, too, to endure it. I'm a happy-go-lucky sort of fellow when all is told, and I squared the slowness in no time. But I don't conceal it from you," with a comical glance, "that I felt it was a merciful interposition of Providence that induced my uncle to die and leave me a property that restored me to Irish soil once more."

"My dear fellow, you ought to be a leader of the Irish crew instead of a looker-on. To see most of the game isn't always everything. The excitement is lacking, for one part, and then there is the gilded recompense."

"'Tis a land in a thousand," said Varley. "Most patriots get beggary for their pains and live to rot in garrets, but in this poor, down-trodden land they think nothing of getting, every now and then, thirty thousand pounds or so as a gentle encouragement to go on and prosper. When the drama has drawn to a close, the principle mover in it can retire on his laurels and his thousands and live happy ever after in virtuous Louisiana."

"'Tis a burning shame," Barry was beginning with all the air of the one who was about to hold forth for an hour or so, when Varley, who detested political discussions, broke into the conversation.

"I hear you have changed the name of your place, Barry," he said.

"Well, yes. Belleisle, the old man called it. There's a name for an Irish home! I've rechristened it, however, and succeeded in making it partly decent. Shanakill, now! What d'ye think of that? Sounds a deal pleasanter, eh? What's your glass dry for, Varley? What d'ye mean by it? Well, and don't you all agree with me that Shanakill is the better name of the two, eh?"

"Where on earth did you get it?" asked O'Grady, who was amused.

"Inspiration, sir, and a touch of natural talent. You forget, perhaps, that I'm one of the Barrys of Derrygra, who never yet were known to be without an idea on any subject under the sun."

"Never heard of them," said Twining, with a smirk.

"No? Really now? Never heard of the Barrys of Derrygra? I'm sorry for you. It argues uncommon badly for you, let me tell you; and shows what a poor footing you have made in decent society."

He laughed so gayly that no one could accept the speech as offensive, but to Twining, who was of such questionable parentage, the words were objectionable. Everybody laughed with Barry, however, so he could hardly do otherwise. Varley, who had been very assiduous in his attentions to the champagne on the small table at his elbow, gave way to uproarious mirth.

"'Dacent,' Garret," he cried "Why imitate the hated Sassenach? Let us have the good broad Irish whilst we may."

"Anything to please you, my dear boy," said Barry, shrugging his shoulders, after a brief glance at the flushed countenance of his guest.

"To 'plaze ye,' an you love me, Garrett," persisted Varley, leaning back in his chair, his mirth taking a half-insolent meaning.

O'Grady looked full at him, and his lips curled. A feeling of shame and disgust mingled took possession of his breast. So this was her husband, this wine-filled, jeering jester! Barry, however, still kept his temper.

"The devil himself wouldn't 'plaze' you, it seems to me," he said, good-humoredly.

"'Divil,' Garrett. 'Divil,' I entreat you," said Varley, who had lost himself considerably, and, indeed, hardly knew what he was saying. Barry made a little swift indescribable movement, but before he could say anything, O'Grady laid his hand upon his arm.

"For an Irishman to quarrel with another Irishman on account of his accent, must always be a folly," he said, lightly. "But there are greater follies still." He pressed Barry's arm, and the young man, looking at him, let the frown fade from his brow. "He is your guest," whispered O'Grady, with a grave smile, "and that champagne of yours should bear its own share of the blame."

"You're right," said Barry, shaking his head, and following O'Grady, peaceably, to a distant table where some one was recounting in loud triumph his victory at a moral game of whist.

O'Grady drew a quick breath of relief. He had checked in the bud what might have been a serious outburst—a scandal, in fact, in which Varley would have held a principal part. In imagination he saw her proud lips quiver, her face pale, as this came home to her, and a sensation of gladness, that even thus secretly he had been her champion—had thus saved her some small hurt—made his heart warm.

"Varley is very excitable, very!" said Featherston, addressing him in his slow monotone. "It all comes of that pernicious habit of imbibing stimulating liquors in and out of season."

"I wonder you will admit the possibility of there being a season," said O'Grady, with a slight smile.

"There is ever with us, unhappily, the sick couch," said Featherston, solemnly. "Dire diseases at times require violent remedies."

"Is dry Monopole a violent remedy?" asked O'Grady, smiling.

"You shouldn't argue on that point with Featherston," said Barry, at the moment; "he is a rigid teetotaller—never touches anything, even in private! Eh, Featherston?"

"Never," replied Featherston, in his careful drawl. Barry has fixed his eyes on him in a somewhat determined way, and presently he felt the gaze, and felt also compelled to return it. By degrees his nonchalant air deserted him, and his color changed. "Never," he said again; but the stern virtue of his former tone was absent now.

O'Grady regarded him curiously.

(To Be Continued.)

WOMEN WHO SMOKE.

Not so long ago it was considered a risky and frisky thing for a woman to smoke a cigarette in the seclusion of the family circle, but to-day well-brought-up married ladies, without the least approach to fastness in behavior, smoke their three or four cigarettes a day, with the approval of their husbands, and in the presence of their servants. The ladies in Russian society, one and all, smoke cigarettes as a matter of course, in private and in public.

At an afternoon call in St. Petersburg, at 3 o'clock in the day, a Russian lady offers a cigarette-case and a matchbox in the most natural manner to her visitors, and without any demur cigarettes are accepted and smoked. In the principal Russian hotels the ladies smoke their cigarette after dinner in the presence of the assembled company, even to a burning end on the point of a penknife. In London such a custom would not be allowed and a fair smoker would be at once requested not to smoke.

American ladies appear, from all that is said, to be going side by side with their English sisters—some smoking con amore, others for the fun of the thing. Still it is apparent to all in society that smoking among ladies is immensely on the increase. Husbands, men friends, and even brothers say nothing against the practice, and, oftener than not, encourage it, unless extravagant indulgence is the result; then they put a limit to the number of cigarettes to be smoked by the wife during the day, if she has not sufficient strength of mind to do so for herself, and, indeed, most lady smokers make a point of limiting themselves to three cigarettes a day on an average.

Ladies in these days are nurtured in an atmosphere of tobacco smoke; how can it be otherwise than that they should acquire a taste for it? In a milder form, it is true, than that of the pipe or cigar, which their male relatives so keenly enjoy, but in that of the dainty cigarette. The days have gone by when the smell of tobacco smoke made a woman faint. Among a few married ladies an antipathy to it does still exist, and these ladies, it must be confessed make their husbands father uncomfortable, with their restrictions against smoking here and smoking there and render them a little envious of the freedom enjoyed by other men in this respect, whose wives are not so sensitive to this pungent scent.

It may be the encouragement men give to the ladies of their families and to their charming friends to smoke by offering an occasional cigarette has a suspicion of selfishness about it in thus subtly cultivating a liking for what they might otherwise consider obnoxious. So easily flattered are women—even the most strong-minded among them—that not seldom they profess an inclination for smoking when they do not actually care for it rather than appear churlish or prim in the eyes of the sterner sex. Smoking cigarettes after dinner has become so general that even in the most orthodox and highly conventional families cigarettes are smoked at dessert in the presence of the ladies, who not unfrequently smoke also. This is more particularly the case in country houses, but in town the fashion is followed to a great degree in smart society.

DEAD MEN'S SHOES.

The Peculiar Customs and Beliefs Concerning Them That Exist in the Old World.

"Dead men's shoes" is a common expression, but means much in many parts of the Old World, where the boots of the dead are accorded much importance.

In Scotland, in the northern parts of England, in Scandinavia, as well as in Hungary, Croatia and Roumania, the utmost care is taken among the lower classes that each corpse is provided with a pair of good shoes before being laid into the ground. If the dead person happens to be a tramp and to have been found dead bare-footed, there will always be some charitable soul to furnish a pair of good boots for interment along with the corpse.

An inspector of police in Scotland has been known to purchase of his own accord a new pair of boots and to place them in the grave, reopened for the purpose, of a murdered stranger, who had been inadvertently interred bare-footed the day before.

This practice, which likewise prevails among the Tsiganes, as well as in many parts of Asia, is attributable to the belief that unless the dead are well shod when buried their ghosts come back to haunt the locality where they breathed their last in search of a pair of boots.

The shoes are popularly supposed to be needed to pass in comfort and safety the broad plains which the departed soul must traverse before it can reach Paradise. Among some nations these plains are declared to be covered with furzes, thorns and morass, while other races say that they consist of burning sands. These plains of suffering are popularly credited with forming a sort of ante-chamber to hell. It is for this reason that the boots of the dead are called "hell shoes" in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark.

LEARN TO BOX.

Lord Wolseley, addressing the brigade of guards, strongly recommended every soldier to learn how to box. There was nothing, he said, that required more pluck, and nothing so likely to bring out the fine qualities of an athlete.

AT THE FORBIDDEN CITY

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE EMPEROR OF CHINA.

The First Formal Reception of the Diplomatic Corps by the Reigning Potentate—A Curious and Interesting Ceremony—The Scene in the Palace During the Ceremony.

After the present Emperor ascended the throne of China, his Government yielded the point and agreed to receive the diplomatic corps in the same manner that they are received by the sovereigns of Europe. The first ceremony of this kind, which took place on March 5, 1891, was an event in Chinese history. The members of the several legations arrived at Fu Hua, or East Flower gate, of the forbidden city, at 10 o'clock on that morning in sedan chairs, each escorted by two mounted officers of the imperial guards. They were there met by the members of the Tsung li Yamen, who conducted them to the Shih Yung Kung, the temple of the great river god, when they were offered tea and sweetmeats. An hour later they were escorted to the Tsu Kuang Ko, or reception hall, a handsome building profusely decorated with gilded coverings and ornamented with gay colors. The hall is approached by eight marble steps, which lead to a broad marble terrace. Around this terrace is a balustrade, supported by pillars of marble, pure white and beautifully engraved.

The Emperor arrived about the same time in his chair, which was covered outside and in with yellow silk, the official button on top being gold instead of silver, and the ends of the bearing poles being elaborately carved and capped with gilded dragons. The dean of the diplomatic corps, escorted by members of the Foreign Office, was conducted into the hall, the sides of the approach to the steps, the steps themselves, and the terrace being crowded with eunuchs employed in the palace, and civil and military officers whose rank did not entitle them to enter the presence of the Emperor. Each member of the diplomatic corps was given a separate audience by the Emperor, who was seated upon

A MARBLE THRONE.

As they crossed the threshold they bowed, advanced three or four paces and bowed again, then advanced to a point between the two dragon pillars, where a third stop and bow was made. There a foreign carpet covered the floor of the platform, which was about three feet high. Three flights of steps ascended to the platform, one in the middle and one at each end.

The Ambassadors and Ministers stopped about twelve feet from the Emperor where they made their speeches, which was translated by an interpeter into Chinese. They then advanced and handed letters of credence to Prince Ching, who had been standing on the left of the Emperor. Taking the papers he ascended the steps, approached the table in front of the Emperor, and laid them upon it, not kneeling until he had deposited them. The Emperor replied to the speeches in the Manchu dialect after the diplomatists had returned to their places between the dragon pillars, his remarks being translated into Chinese by Prince Ching, sentence by sentence. The exit from the hall was made by walking backward, with bows at three places.

The sides of the audience hall were covered with inscriptions and rare paintings of enormous size. The ceiling was composed of wooden squares one and one-half feet in size, divided by heavy rafters, all gorgeously painted with the dragon figures. The supporting columns were of red lacquer, covered with figures of gold dragons.

On the right of the Emperor stood Prince Po, on the left Prince Ko, and near him Prince Ching. The room was lined on either side by two rows of high officers of the imperial guards and chamberlains many being princes and, dukes of the imperial family. No arms were visible except the swords worn by the Emperor and the princes.

THE IMPERIAL ESCORT,

bearing long red lacquered spears, with silver points and a long tiger tail, could be seen just outside the doors. They presented a picturesque appearance. On either side of the Emperor was a straight stem six feet high, supporting at the top what appeared to be painted imitations of peacock tails spread out, the feathers indicating rank in China.

Lengthy inscriptions in Manchu were engraved upon a marble plinth back of the throne. Six immense incense bowls of old cloisonne, each guarded by an immense cloisonne dragon of great value, were placed around the platform, while from the ceiling were suspended eight cloisonne lamps made during the Tsu Kuang dynasty. On the table in front of the Emperor, which was covered with yellow satin, embroidered with figures of dragons, was placed the pipe of his Majesty, a piece of carved jade and gold, the handle formed by the body and tail of a dragon, its mouth as the tobacco bowl.

Within the pink walls that surrounded the forbidden city are several temples and forty or more palaces and other buildings, which are occupied as residences by the Emperor's immediate attendants and officers of the guard. They are all of one story and of uniform architecture, differing only in dimensions. Their exteriors are painted ed that peculiar white which Europeans have never been able to imitate, and roofed with tiles of imperial yellow. Fu Hua or East Flower gate, is reached from the Tartar city by passing over a marble bridge, handsomely decorated and bearing several tablets with inscriptions that betokens long life, prosperity, happiness, and other blessings. Immediately before the gates are the western gardens, handsomely laid out in the highest taste and skill in landscape architecture, and surrounding a lake that covers several acres. The nearest temple is dedicated to the great river god, and there the Emperor offers sacrifices to appease their disorderly joss, who is responsible for the floods which so frequently devastate the lowlands of northern China.

About the grounds are stationed thousands of imperial guards, who are distinguished by their yellow tunics and violet cloaks. They have a series of uniforms, which are changed at intervals by the Emperor's orders.