

can ever cease to adore you. No! I swear by your cruelty that I will revenge it; by your wonderful beauty that I will win it, and be worthy to win it. Lovely, fascinating, fickle, cruel woman! you shall be mine—I swear it! Your wealth may be great; but am I not of a generous nature enough to use it worthily? Your rank is lofty; but not so lofty as my ambition. You threw yourself away once on a cold and spiritless debauchee: give yourself now, Honoria, to a *man*; and one who, however lofty your rank may be, will enhance it and become it!"

As I poured words to this effect out on the astonished widow, I stood over her, and fascinated her with the glance of my eye; saw her turn red and pale with fear and wonder; saw that my praise of her charms and the exposition of my passion were not unwelcome to her, and witnessed with triumphant composure the mastery I was gaining over her. Terror, be sure of that, is not a bad ingredient of love. A man who wills fiercely to win the heart of a weak and vapourish woman *must* succeed, if he have opportunity enough.

"Terrible man!" said Lady Lyndon, shrinking from me as soon as I had done speaking (indeed, I was at a loss for words, and thinking of another speech to make to her)—"terrible man! leave me."

I saw that I had made an impression on her, from those very words. "If she lets me into the house to-morrow," said I, "she is mine."

As I went downstairs I put ten guineas into the hand of the hall-porter, who looked quite astonished at such a gift.

"It is to repay you for the trouble of opening the door to me," said I; "you will have to do so often."

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CHAPTER XVI.

*I Provide nobly for my Family, and Attain the Height of my
(seeming) Good Fortune.*

THE next day when I went back, my fears were realised: the door was refused to me—my Lady was not at home. This I knew to be false: I had watched the door the whole morning from a lodging I took at a house opposite.

"Your lady is not out," said I: "she has denied me, and I

can't, of course, force my way to her. But listen: you are an Englishman?"

"That I am," said the fellow, with an air of the utmost superiority. "Your honour could tell that by my *haccent*."

I knew he was, and might therefore offer him a bribe. An Irish family servant in rags, and though his wages were never paid him, would probably fling the money in your face.

"Listen, then," said I. "Your lady's letters pass through your hands, don't they? A crown for every one that you bring me to read. There is a whisky-shop in the next street; bring them there when you go to drink, and call for me by the name of Dermot."

"I recollect your honour at *Spar*," says the fellow, grinning: "seven's the main, hey?" and being exceedingly proud of this reminiscence, I bade my inferior adieu.

I do not defend this practice of letter-opening in private life, except in cases of the most urgent necessity: when we must follow the examples of our betters, the statesmen of all Europe, and, for the sake of a great good, infringe a little matter of ceremony. My Lady Lyndon's letters were none the worse for being opened, and a great deal the better; the knowledge obtained from the perusal of some of her multifarious epistles enabling me to become intimate with her character in a hundred ways, and obtain a power over her by which I was not slow to profit. By the aid of the letters and of my English friend, whom I always regaled with the best of liquor, and satisfied with presents of money still more agreeable (I used to put on a livery in order to meet him, and a red wig, in which it was impossible to know the dashing and elegant Redmond Barry), I got such an insight into the widow's movements as astonished her. I knew beforehand to what public places she would go; they were, on account of her widowhood, but few: and wherever she appeared, at church or in the park, I was always ready to offer her her book, or to canter on horseback by the side of her chariot.

Many of her Ladyship's letters were the most whimsical rodomontades that ever blue-stocking penned. She was a woman who took up and threw off a greater number of dear friends than any one I ever knew. To some of these female darlings she began presently to write about my unworthy self, and it was with a sentiment of extreme satisfaction I found at length that the widow was growing dreadfully afraid of me; calling me her

bête noire, her dark spirit, her murderous adorer, and a thousand other names indicative of her extreme inquietude and terror. It was: "The wretch has been dogging my chariot through the park," or, "my fate pursued me at church," and "my inevitable adorer handed me out of my chair at the mercer's," or what not. My wish was to increase this sentiment of awe in her bosom, and to make her believe that I was a person from whom escape was impossible.

To this end I bribed a fortune-teller, whom she consulted along with a number of the most foolish and distinguished people of Dublin, in those days; and who, although she went dressed like one of her waiting-women, did not fail to recognise her real rank, and to describe as her future husband her persevering adorer Redmond Barry, Esquire. This incident disturbed her very much. She wrote about it in terms of great wonder and terror to her female correspondents. "Can this monster," she wrote, "indeed do as he boasts, and bend even Fate to his will?—can he make me marry him though I cordially detest him, and bring me a slave to his feet. The horrid look of his black serpent-like eyes fascinates and frightens me: it seems to follow me everywhere, and even when I close my own eyes, the dreadful gaze penetrates the lids, and is still upon me."

When a woman begins to talk of a man in this way, he is an ass who does not win her; and, for my part, I used to follow her about, and put myself in an attitude opposite her, "and fascinate her with my glance," as she said, most assiduously. Lord George Poynings, her former admirer, was meanwhile keeping his room with his wound, and seemed determined to give up all claims to her favour; for he denied her admittance when she called, sent no answer to her multiplied correspondence, and contented himself by saying generally, that the surgeon had forbidden him to receive visitors or to answer letters. Thus, while he went into the background, I came forward, and took good care that no other rivals should present themselves with any chance of success; for, as soon as I heard of one, I had a quarrel fastened on him, and, in this way, pinked two more, besides my first victim Lord George. I always took another pretext for quarrelling with them than the real one of attention to Lady Lyndon, so that no scandal or hurt to her Ladyship's feelings might arise in consequence; but she very well knew what was the meaning of these duels; and the young fellows of Dublin,

too, by laying two and two together, began to perceive that there was a certain dragon in watch for the wealthy heiress, and that the dragon must be subdued first before they could get at the lady. I warrant that, after the first three, not many champions were found to address the lady; and have often laughed (in my sleeve) to see many of the young Dublin beaux riding by the side of her carriage scamper off as soon as my bay-mare and green liveries made their appearance.

I wanted to impress her with some great and awful instance of my power, and to this end had determined to confer a great benefit upon my honest cousin Ulick, and carry off for him the fair object of his affections, Miss Kiljoy, under the very eyes of her guardian and friend, Lady Lyndon; and in the teeth of the squires, the young lady's brothers, who passed the season at Dublin, and made as much swagger and to-do about their sister's £10,000 Irish, as if she had had a plum to her fortune. The girl was by no means averse to Mr. Brady; and it only shows how faint-spirited some men are, and how a superior genius can instantly overcome difficulties which to common minds seem insuperable, that he never had thought of running off with her: as I at once and boldly did. Miss Kiljoy had been a ward in Chancery until she attained her majority (before which period it would have been a dangerous matter for me to put in execution the scheme I meditated concerning her); but, though now free to marry whom she liked, she was a young lady of timid disposition, and as much under fear of her brothers and relatives as though she had not been independent of them. They had some friend of their own in view for the young lady, and had scornfully rejected the proposal of Ulick Brady, the ruined gentleman; who was quite unworthy, as these rustic bucks thought, of the hand of such a prodigiously wealthy heiress as their sister.

Finding herself lonely in her great house in Dublin, the Countess of Lyndon invited her friend Miss Amelia to pass the season with her at Dublin; and, in a fit of maternal fondness, also sent for her son the little Bullingdon, and my old acquaintance his governor, to come to the capital and bear her company. A family coach brought the boy, the heiress, and the tutor from Castle Lyndon; and I determined to take the first opportunity of putting my plan in execution.

For this chance I had not very long to wait. I have said, in a former chapter of my biography, that the kingdom of Ireland

was at this period ravaged by various parties of banditti ; who, under the name of Whiteboys, Oakboys, Steelboys, with captains at their head, killed proctors, fired stacks, houghed and maimed cattle, and took the law into their own hands. One of these bands, or several of them for what I know, was commanded by a mysterious personage called Captain Thunder ; whose business seemed to be that of marrying people with or without their own consent, or that of their parents. The *Dublin Gazettes* and *Mercuries* of that period (the year 1772) teem with proclamations from the Lord Lieutenant, offering rewards for the apprehension of this dreadful Captain Thunder and his gang, and describing at length various exploits of the savage aide-de-camp of Hymen. I determined to make use, if not of the services, at any rate of the name of Captain Thunder, and put my cousin Ulick in possession of his lady and her ten thousand pounds. She was no great beauty, and, I presume, it was the money he loved rather than the owner of it.

On account of her widowhood, Lady Lyndon could not as yet frequent the balls and routs which the hospitable nobility of Dublin were in the custom of giving ; but her friend Miss Kiljoy had no such cause for retirement, and was glad to attend any parties to which she might be invited. I made Ulick Brady a present of a couple of handsome suits of velvet, and by my influence procured him an invitation to many of the most elegant of these assemblies. But he had not had my advantages or experience of the manners of Court ; was as shy with ladies as a young colt, and could no more dance a minuet than a donkey. He made very little way in the polite world or in his mistress's heart : in fact, I could see that she preferred several other young gentlemen to him, who were more at home in the ball-room than poor Ulick ; he had made his first impression upon the heiress, and felt his first flame for her, in her father's house of Ballykiljoy, where he used to hunt and get drunk with the old gentleman.

"I could do *them* two well enough, anyhow," Ulick would say, heaving a sigh ; "and if it's drinking or riding across country would do it, there's no man in Ireland would have a better chance with Amalia."

"Never fear, Ulick," was my reply ; "you shall have your Amalia, or my name is not Redmond Barry."

My Lord Charlemont—who was one of the most elegant and accomplished noblemen in Ireland in those days, a fine scholar

and wit, a gentleman who had travelled much abroad, where I had the honour of knowing him—gave a magnificent masquerade at his house of Marino, some few miles from Dublin, on the Dunleary road. And it was at this entertainment that I was determined that Ulick should be made happy for life. Miss Kiljoy was invited to the masquerade, and the little Lord Bullingdon, who longed to witness such a scene ; and it was agreed that he was to go under the guardianship of his governor, my old friend the Reverend Mr. Runt. I learned what was the equipage in which the party were to be conveyed to the ball, and took my measures accordingly.

Ulick Brady was not present : his fortune and quality were not sufficient to procure him an invitation to so distinguished a place, and I had it given out three days previous that he had been arrested for debt : a rumour which surprised nobody who knew him.

I appeared that night in a character with which I was very familiar, that of a private soldier in the King of Prussia's guard. I had a grotesque mask made, with an immense nose and moustaches, talked a jumble of broken English and German, in which the latter greatly predominated ; and had crowds round me laughing at my droll accent, and whose curiosity was increased by a knowledge of my previous history. Miss Kiljoy was attired as an antique princess, with little Bullingdon as a page of the times of chivalry ; his hair was in powder, his doublet rose-colour, and pea-green and silver, and he looked very handsome and saucy as he strutted about with my sword by his side. As for Mr. Runt, he walked about very demurely in a domino, and perpetually paid his respects to the buffet, and ate enough cold chicken and drank enough punch and champagne to satisfy a company of grenadiers.

The Lord Lieutenant came and went in state—the ball was magnificent. Miss Kiljoy had partners in plenty, among whom was myself, who walked a minuet with her (if the clumsy waddling of the Irish heiress may be called by such a name) ; and I took occasion to plead my passion for Lady Lyndon in the most pathetic terms, and to beg her friend's interference in my favour.

It was three hours past midnight when the party for Lyndon House went away. Little Bullingdon had long since been asleep in one of Lady Charlemont's china closets. Mr. Runt was exceedingly husky in talk, and unsteady in gait. A young lady

of the present day would be alarmed to see a gentleman in such a condition ; but it was a common sight in those jolly old times, when a gentleman was thought a milksop unless he was occasionally tipsy. I saw Miss Kiljoy to her carriage, with several other gentlemen ! and, peering through the crowd of ragged linkboys, drivers, beggars, drunken men and women, who used invariably to wait round great men's doors when festivities were going on, saw the carriage drive off, with a hurrah from the mob ;



then came back presently to the supper-room, where I talked German, favoured the three or four toppers still there with a High-Dutch chorus, and attacked the dishes and wine with great resolution.

"How can you drink *aisy* with that big nose on?" said one gentleman.

"Go an be hangt!" said I, in the true accent, applying myself again to the wine ; with which the others laughed, and I pursued my supper in silence.

There was a gentleman present who had seen the Lyndon party go off, with whom I had made a bet, which I lost ; and the next morning I called upon him and paid it him. All which particulars the reader will be surprised at hearing enumerated ; but the fact is, that it was *not* I who went back to the party, but my late German valet, who was of my size, and, dressed in my mask, could perfectly pass for me. We changed clothes in a hackney-coach that stood near Lady Lyndon's chariot, and driving after it, speedily overtook it.

The fated vehicle which bore the lovely object of Ulick Brady's affections had not advanced very far, when, in the midst of a deep rut in the road, it came suddenly to with a jolt ; the footman, springing off the back, cried "Stop !" to the coachman, warning him that a wheel was off, and that it would be dangerous to proceed with only three. Wheel-caps had not been invented in those days, as they have since been by the ingenious builders of Long Acre. And how the linch-pin of the wheel had come out I do not pretend to say ; but it possibly may have been extracted by some rogues among the crowd before Lord Charlemont's gate.

Miss Kiljoy thrust her head out of the window, screaming as ladies do ; Mr. Runt the chaplain woke up from his boozy slumbers ; and little Bullingdon, starting up and drawing his little sword, said, "Don't be afraid, Miss Amelia : if it's foot-pads, I am armed." The young rascal had the spirit of a lion, that's the truth ; as I must acknowledge, in spite of all my after quarrels with him.

The hackney-coach which had been following Lady Lyndon's chariot by this time came up, and the coachman seeing the disaster, stepped down from his box, and politely requested her Ladyship's honour to enter his vehicle ; which was as clean and elegant as any person of tiptop quality might desire. This invitation was, after a minute or two, accepted by the passengers of the chariot : the hackney-coachman promising to drive them to Dublin "in a hurry." Thady, the valet, proposed to accompany his young master and the young lady ; and the coachman, who had a friend seemingly drunk by his side on the box, with a grin told Thady to get up behind. However, as the footboard there was covered with spikes, as a defence against the street-boys, who love a ride gratis, Thady's fidelity would not induce him to brave these ; and he was persuaded to remain by the

wounded chariot, for which he and the coachman manufactured a lynch-pin out of a neighbouring hedge.

Meanwhile, although the hackney-coachman drove on rapidly, yet the party within seemed to consider it was a long distance from Dublin; and what was Miss Kiljoy's astonishment, on looking out of the window at length, to see around her a lonely heath, with no signs of buildings or city. She began forthwith to scream out to the coachman to stop; but the man only whipped the horses the faster for her noise, and bade her Ladyship "hould on—'twas a short cut he was taking."

Miss Kiljoy continued screaming, the coachman flogging, the horses galloping, until two or three men appeared suddenly from a hedge, to whom the fair one cried for assistance; and the young Bullingdon opening the coach-door, jumped valiantly out, toppling over head and heels as he fell; but jumping up in an instant, he drew his little sword, and, running towards the carriage, exclaimed, "This way, gentlemen! stop the rascal!"

"Stop!" cried the men; at which the coachman pulled up with extraordinary obedience. Runt all the while lay tipsy in the carriage, having only a dreamy half-consciousness of all that was going on.

The newly arrived champions of female distress now held a consultation, in which they looked at the young lord and laughed considerably.

"Do not be alarmed," said the leader, coming up to the door; "one of my people shall mount the box by the side of that treacherous rascal, and, with your Ladyship's leave, I and my companions will get in and see you home. We are well armed, and can defend you in case of danger."

With this, and without more ado, he jumped into the carriage, his companion following him.

"Know your place, fellow!" cried out little Bullingdon indignantly: "and give place to the Lord Viscount Bullingdon!" and put himself before the huge person of the new-comer, who was about to enter the hackney-coach.

"Get out of that, my Lord," said the man, in a broad brogue, and shoving him aside. On which the boy, crying "Thieves! thieves!" drew out his little hanger, and ran at the man, and would have wounded him (for a small sword will wound as well as a great one); but his opponent, who was armed with a long stick, struck the weapon luckily out of the lad's hands: it went

flying over his head, and left him aghast and mortified at his discomfiture.

He then pulled off his hat, making his Lordship a low bow, and entered the carriage; the door of which was shut upon him by his confederate, who was to mount the box. Miss Kiljoy might have screamed; but I presume her shrieks were stopped by the sight of an enormous horse-pistol which one of her champions produced, who said, "No harm is intended you, ma'am, but if you cry out, we must gag you;" on which she suddenly became as mute as a fish.

All these events took place in an exceedingly short space of time; and when the three invaders had taken possession of the carriage, the poor little Bullingdon being left bewildered and astonished on the heath, one of them putting his head out of the window, said,—

"My Lord, a word with you."

"What is it?" said the boy, beginning to whimper: he was but eleven years old, and his courage had been excellent hitherto.

"You are only two miles from Marino. Walk back till you come to a big stone, there turn to the right, and keep on straight till you get to the high-road, when you will easily find your way back. And when you see her Ladyship your mamma, give CAPTAIN THUNDER's compliments, and say Miss Amelia Kiljoy is going to be married."

"O heavens!" sighed out that young lady.

The carriage drove swiftly on, and the poor little nobleman was left alone on the heath, just as the morning began to break. He was fairly frightened; and no wonder. He thought of running after the coach; but his courage and his little legs failed him: so he sat down upon a stone and cried for vexation.

It was in this way that Ulick Brady made what I call a Sabine marriage. When he halted with his two groomsmen at the cottage where the ceremony was to be performed, Mr. Runt, the chaplain, at first declined to perform it. But a pistol was held at the head of that unfortunate preceptor, and he was told, with dreadful oaths, that his miserable brains would be blown out; when he consented to read the service. The lovely Amelia had, very likely, a similar inducement held out to her, but of that I know nothing; for I drove back to town with the coachman as soon as we had set the bridal party down, and had the satisfaction of finding Fritz, my German, arrived before me: he

had come back in my carriage in my dress, having left the masquerade undiscovered, and done everything there according to my orders.

Poor Runt came back the next day in a piteous plight, keeping silence as to his share in the occurrences of the evening, and with a dismal story of having been drunk, of having been waylaid and bound, of having been left on the road and picked up by a Wicklow cart, which was coming in with provisions to Dublin, and found him helpless on the road. There was no possible means of fixing any share of the conspiracy upon him. Little Bullingdon, who, too, found his way home, was unable in any way to identify me. But Lady Lyndon knew that I was concerned in the plot, for I met her hurrying the next day to the Castle; all the town being up about the *enlèvement*. And I saluted her with a smile so diabolical, that I knew she was aware that I had been concerned in the daring and ingenious scheme.

Thus it was that I repaid Ulick Brady's kindness to me in early days; and had the satisfaction of restoring the fallen fortunes of a deserving branch of my family. He took his bride into Wicklow, where he lived with her in the strictest seclusion until the affair was blown over; the Kiljoys striving everywhere in vain to discover his retreat. They did not for a while even know who was the lucky man who had carried off the heiress; nor was it until she wrote a letter some weeks afterwards, signed Amelia Brady, and expressing perfect happiness in her new condition, and stating that she had been married by Lady Lyndon's chaplain Mr. Runt, that the truth was known, and my worthy friend confessed his share of the transaction. As his good-natured mistress did not dismiss him from his post in consequence, everybody persisted in supposing that poor Lady Lyndon was privy to the plot; and the story of her Ladyship's passionate attachment for me gained more and more credit.

I was not slow, you may be sure, in profiting by these rumours. Every one thought I had a share in the Brady marriage; though no one could prove it. Every one thought I was well with the widowed Countess; though no one could show that I said so. But there is a way of proving a thing even while you contradict it, and I used to laugh and joke so *à propos* that all men began to wish me joy of my great fortune, and look up to me as the affianced husband of the greatest heiress in the kingdom. The

papers took up the matter; the female friends of Lady Lyndon remonstrated with her and cried "Fie!" Even the English journals and magazines, which in those days were very scandalous, talked of the matter; and whispered that a beautiful and accomplished widow, with a title and the largest possessions in the two kingdoms, was about to bestow her hand upon a young gentleman of high birth and fashion, who had distinguished himself in the service of His M——y the K—— of Pr——. I won't say who was the author of these paragraphs; or how two pictures, one representing myself under the title of "The Prussian Irishman," and the other Lady Lyndon as "The Countess of Ephesus," actually appeared in the *Town and Country Magazine*, published at London, and containing the fashionable tittle-tattle of the day.

Lady Lyndon was so perplexed and terrified by this continual hold upon her, that she determined to leave the country. Well, she did; and who was the first to receive her on landing at Holyhead? Your humble servant, Redmond Barry, Esquire. And, to crown all, the *Dublin Mercury*, which announced her Ladyship's departure, announced mine *the day before*. There was not a soul but thought she had followed me to England; whereas she was only flying me. Vain hope!—a man of my resolution was not thus to be balked in pursuit. Had she fled to the antipodes, I would have been there: ay, and would have followed her as far as Orpheus did Eurydice!

Her Ladyship had a house in Berkeley Square, London, more splendid than that which she possessed in Dublin; and, knowing that she would come thither, I preceded her to the English capital, and took handsome apartments in Hill Street, hard by. I had the same intelligence in her London house which I had procured in Dublin. The same faithful porter was there to give me all the information I required. I promised to treble his wages as soon as a certain event should happen. I won over Lady Lyndon's companion by a present of a hundred guineas down, and a promise of two thousand when I should be married, and gained the favours of her favourite lady's-maid by a bribe of similar magnitude. My reputation had so far preceded me in London that, on my arrival, numbers of the genteel were eager to receive me at their routs. We have no idea in this humdrum age what a gay and splendid place London was then: what a passion for play there was among young and old, male and

female; what thousands were lost and won in a night; what beauties there were—how brilliant, gay, and dashing! Everybody was delightfully wicked: the Royal Dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland set the example; the nobles followed close behind. Running away was the fashion. Ah! it was a pleasant time; and lucky was he who had fire, and youth, and money, and could live in it! I had all these; and the old frequenters of "White's," "Wattier's," and "Goosetree's" could tell stories of the gallantry, spirit, and high fashion of Captain Barry.

The progress of a love-story is tedious to all those who are not concerned, and I leave such themes to the hack novel-writers, and the young boarding-school misses for whom they write. It is not my intention to follow, step by step, the incidents of my courtship, or to narrate all the difficulties I had to contend with, and my triumphant manner of surmounting them. Suffice it to say, I *did* overcome these difficulties. I am of opinion, with my friend the late ingenious Mr. Wilkes, that such impediments are nothing in the way of a man of spirit; and that he can convert indifference and aversion into love, if he have perseverance and cleverness sufficient. By the time the Countess's widowhood was expired, I had found means to be received into her house; I had her women perpetually talking in my favour, vaunting my powers, expatiating upon my reputation, and boasting of my success and popularity in the fashionable world.

Also, the best friends I had in the prosecution of my tender suit were the Countess's noble relatives; who were far from knowing the service that they did me, and to whom I beg leave to tender my heartfelt thanks for the abuse with which they then loaded me! and to whom I fling my utter contempt for the calumny and hatred with which they have subsequently pursued me.

The chief of these amiable persons was the Marchioness of Tiptoff, mother of the young gentleman whose audacity I had punished at Dublin. This old harridan, on the Countess's first arrival in London, waited upon her, and favoured her with such a storm of abuse for her encouragement of me, that I do believe she advanced my cause more than six months' courtship could have done, or the pinking of a half-dozen of rivals. It was in vain that poor Lady Lyndon pleaded her entire innocence, and vowed she had never encouraged me. "Never encouraged him!" screamed out the old fury; "didn't you encourage the

wretch at Spa, during Sir Charles's own life? Didn't you marry a dependant of yours to one of this profligate's bankrupt cousins? When he set off for England, didn't you follow him like a mad-woman the very next day? Didn't he take lodgings at your very door almost—and do you call this no encouragement? For shame, madam, shame! You might have married my son—my dear and noble George; but that he did not choose to interfere with your shameful passion for the beggarly upstart whom you caused to assassinate him; and the only counsel I have to give your Ladyship is this, to legitimatise the ties which you have contracted with this shameless adventurer; to make that connection legal which, real as it is now, is against both decency and religion; and to spare your family and your son the shame of your present line of life."

With this the old fury of a marchioness left the room, and Lady Lyndon in tears: I had the whole particulars of the conversation from her Ladyship's companion, and augured the best result from it in my favour.

Thus, by the sage influence of my Lady Tiptoff, the Countess of Lyndon's natural friends and family were kept from her society. Even when Lady Lyndon went to Court the most august lady in the realm received her with such marked coldness, that the unfortunate widow came home and took to her bed with vexation. And thus I may say that Royalty itself became an agent in advancing my suit, and helping the plans of the poor Irish soldier of fortune. So it is that Fate works with agents, great and small; and by means over which they have no control the destinies of men and women are accomplished.

I shall always consider the conduct of Mrs. Bridget (Lady Lyndon's favourite maid at this juncture) as a masterpiece of ingenuity: and, indeed, had such an opinion of her diplomatic skill, that the very instant I became master of the Lyndon estates, and paid her the promised sum—I am a man of honour, and rather than not keep my word with the woman, I raised the money of the Jews, at an exorbitant interest—as soon, I say, as I achieved my triumph, I took Mrs. Bridget by the hand, and said, "Madam, you have shown such unexampled fidelity in my service that I am glad to reward you, according to my promise; but you have given proofs of such extraordinary cleverness and dissimulation, that I must decline keeping you in Lady Lyndon's establishment, and beg you will leave it this very day:"

she did, and went over to the Tiptoff faction, and has abused me ever since.

But I must tell you what she did which was so clever. Why, it was the simplest thing in the world, as all master-strokes are. When Lady Lyndon lamented her fate and my—as she was pleased to call it—shameful treatment of her, Mrs. Bridget said, “Why should not your Ladyship write this young gentleman word of the evil which he is causing you? Appeal to his feelings (which, I have heard say, are very good indeed—the whole town is ringing with accounts of his spirit and generosity), and beg him to desist from a pursuit which causes the best of ladies so much pain? Do, my Lady, write: I know your style is so elegant that I, for my part, have many a time burst into tears in reading your charming letters, and I have no doubt Mr. Barry will sacrifice anything rather than hurt your feelings.” And, of course, the abigail swore to the fact.

“Do you think so, Bridget?” said her Ladyship. And my mistress forthwith penned me a letter, in her most fascinating and winning manner:—

“Why, sir,” wrote she, “will you pursue me? why environ me in a web of intrigue so frightful that my spirit sinks under it, seeing escape is hopeless from your frightful, your diabolical art? They say you are generous to others—be so to me. I know your bravery but too well: exercise it on men who can meet your sword, not on a poor feeble woman, who cannot resist you. Remember the friendship you once professed for me. And now, I beseech you, I implore you, to give a proof of it. Contradict the calumnies which you have spread against me, and repair, if you can, and if you have a spark of honour left, the miseries which you have caused to the heart-broken

“H. LYNDON.”

What was this letter meant for but that I should answer it in person? My excellent ally told me where I should meet Lady Lyndon, and accordingly I followed, and found her at the Pantheon. I repeated the scene at Dublin over again; showed her how prodigious my power was, humble as I was, and that my energy was still untired. “But,” I added, “I am as great in good as I am in evil; as fond and faithful as a friend as I am terrible as an enemy. I will do everything,” I said, “which you ask of me, except when you bid me not to love you. That is beyond my power; and while my heart has a pulse I must follow you. It is *my* fate; your fate. Cease to battle against it, and be mine. Loveliest of your sex! with life alone can end my

passion for you; and, indeed, it is only by dying at your command that I can be brought to obey you. Do you wish me to die?”

She said, laughing (for she was a woman of a lively, humorous turn), that she did not wish me to commit self-murder; and I felt from that moment that she was mine.

A year from that day, on the 15th of May, in the year 1773, I had the honour and happiness to lead to the altar Honoria, Countess of Lyndon, widow of the late Right Honourable Sir Charles Lyndon, K.B. The ceremony was performed at St. George's, Hanover Square, by the Reverend Samuel Runt, her Ladyship's chaplain. A magnificent supper and ball was given at our house in Berkeley Square, and the next morning I had a duke, four earls, three generals, and a crowd of the most distinguished people in London at my *levee*. Walpole made a lampoon about the marriage, and Selwyn cut jokes at the “Cocoa-Tree.” Old Lady Tiptoff, although she had recommended it, was ready to bite off her fingers with vexation; and as for young Bullingdon, who was grown a tall lad of fourteen, when called upon by the Countess to embrace his papa, he shook his fist in my face and said, “*He* my father! I would as soon call one of your Ladyship's footman Papa!”

But I could afford to laugh at the rage of the boy and the old woman, and at the jokes of the wits of St. James's. I sent off a flaming account of our nuptials to my mother and my uncle the good Chevalier; and now, arrived at the pitch of prosperity, and having, at thirty years of age, by my own merits and energy, raised myself to one of the highest social positions that any man in England could occupy, I determined to enjoy myself as became a man of quality for the remainder of my life.

After we had received the congratulations of our friends in London—for in those days people were not ashamed of being married, as they seem to be now—I and Honoria (who was all complacency, and a most handsome, sprightly, and agreeable companion) set off to visit our estates in the West of England, where I had never as yet set foot. We left London in three chariots, each with four horses; and my uncle would have been pleased could he have seen painted on their panels the Irish crown and the ancient coat of the Barrys beside the Countess's coronet and the noble cognisance of the noble family of Lyndon.

Before quitting London, I procured His Majesty's gracious permission to add the name of my lovely lady to my own; and henceforward assumed the style and title of BARRY LYNDON, as I have written it in this autobiography.

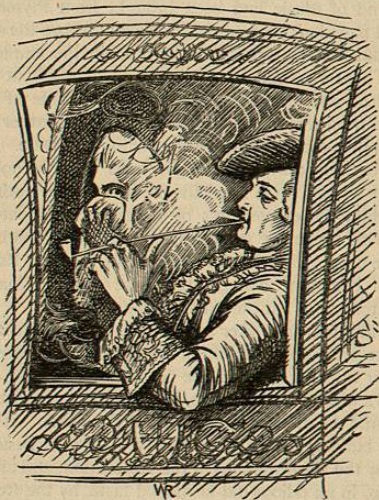
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CHAPTER XVII.

I Appear as an Ornament of English Society.

ALL the journey down to Hackton Castle, the largest and most ancient of our ancestral seats in Devonshire, was performed with the slow and sober state becoming people of the first quality in the realm. An outrider in my livery went on before us, and bespoke our lodging from town to town; and thus we lay in state at Andover, Ilminster, and Exeter; and the fourth evening arrived in time for supper before the antique baronial mansion, of which the gate was in an odious Gothic taste that would have set Mr. Walpole wild with pleasure.

The first days of a marriage are commonly very trying; and I have known couples, who lived together like turtle-doves for the rest of their lives, peck each other's eyes out almost during the honeymoon. I did not escape the common lot; in our journey westward my Lady Lyndon chose to quarrel with me because I pulled out a pipe of tobacco (the habit of smoking which I had acquired in Germany when a soldier in Bülow's, and could never give it over), and smoked it in the carriage; and also her Ladyship chose to take umbrage both at Ilminster and Andover, because in the evenings when we lay there I chose to invite the landlords of the "Bell" and the "Lion" to crack a bottle with me. Lady Lyndon was a haughty woman, and I hate pride; and I promise you that in both instances I overcame this vice in her. On the third day of our journey I had her to light my pipe-match with her own hands, and made her deliver it to me with tears in her eyes; and at the "Swan Inn" at Exeter I had so completely subdued her, that she asked me humbly whether I would not wish the landlady as well as the host to step up to dinner with us. To this I should have had no objection, for, indeed, Mrs. Bonnyface was a very good-looking woman: but we expected a visit from my Lord Bishop, a kinsman of Lady Lyndon, and the *bienséances* did not permit

the indulgence of my wife's request. I appeared with her at evening service, to compliment our right reverend cousin, and put her name down for twenty-five guineas, and my own for one hundred, to the famous new organ which was then being built for the cathedral. This conduct, at the very outset of my career in the county, made me not a little popular; and the residentiary canon, who did me the favour to sup with me at the inn, went away after the sixth bottle, hiccuping the most solemn vows for the welfare of such a p-p-pious gentleman.



Before we reached Hackton Castle, we had to drive through ten miles of the Lyndon estates, where the people were out to visit us, the church bells set a-ringing, the parson and the farmers assembled in their best by the roadside, and the school children and the labouring people were loud in their hurrahs for her Ladyship. I flung money among these worthy characters, stopped to bow and chat with his reverence and the farmers, and if I found that the Devonshire girls were among the handsomest