

## VOLUME II

### CHAPTER 2

“Guided by you, our earnest aims presume  
To renovate the Drama  
The scenes of Shakespeare and our bards of old,  
With due observance splendidly unfold.  
Yet raise and foster with parental hand  
The living talent of our native land.”—

—*Rejected Addresses.*

“All you sage Counsellors hence!  
And to the English Court assemble now,  
From every region, apes of idleness.”

—*King Henry IV.*

DICKY DAVOREN was passing through the entrance gate on his way to the ten o'clock train one Friday morning, when the postman unceremoniously stuffed a couple of letters into his hands, and, glad to be saved the trouble of going up to the hall-door, made off as fast as possible. Dicky duly qualified this impertinent proceeding; and then, casting his eye over the superscriptions, rushed back to the room where his sister was sitting, and tossing the letters into her lap, cried impatiently,—

“Open the O’Hegarty’s first, Nell, and be quick. I’ve only five minutes.”

Nellie broke the huge violet seal, and read as follows:—

“MY DEAR NELLIE,

“I should perhaps have written earlier to let you know that I want Dicky to secure front places for us at the ‘Royal’ for to-morrow night. Three: please remember. Come early, and dress here. It is a Command night. Tell Dicky, with my love, that I shall require him to see us home, as Peter pleads rheumatism to escape the ‘extortion’ of attending us. I hope your mother is better. My love to all of you. In haste,

“Your affectionate cousin,

“D. H.”

“Well now!” exclaimed he; “and so I’m to be made do Peter’s work! My word, it’s a trifle too cool of Miss Dorothy. That dirty, good-for-nothing creature kept to do nothing.”

“Well, well,” said his sister soothingly, “perhaps Peter will relent, and——”

“Yah! old rascal; relent, indeed! Give him a piece of my mind, I will. Dorothy Hegarty’s getting childish. I’m to go take these seats too.”

“There’s nothing out of the way in that, is there? Here is the money for you. Go now, Dicky, or you will lose your train.”

The young gentleman snatched the coin, and flew out of the house, running fast in order to make up for time lost. Not so fast, however, that he could not bestow a friendly wink on the nursemaid to whom he had forbidden his sister to speak, and whom he encountered in the avenue with her young charges.

He arrived at the station just as the train drew up; and in obedience to a signal made him from the window of a smoking carriage, clambered in beside his friend Orpen, who happened to be going up to town by the same train.

“Look here, Davoren,” said this young gentleman; and putting his hand in the pocket of his Ulster coat, he produced a newspaper. Folding down a sheet, he pointed out to Dicky’s inquisitive eyes an advertisement from a firm of bookmakers, setting forth, adorned with the usual notes of admiration and testimonials from grateful clients, the golden harvest to be reaped from their infallible system.

“A bam., is it not?” asked Dicky, incredulously.

Mr. Orpen winked his left eye, and having folded up the newspaper, put it back in his pocket without saying a word. Then he leaned back, and proceeded to enjoy the flavour of a dirty little briar-wood pipe, which he had laid aside for an instant, with the most perfect composure and elegant indifference.

Dicky Davoren was not blessed with the virtue of long-suffering; and after a moment's stoical acquiescence in the superior attitude of his friend, gave him an impatient push.

"You're not such an ass? Come now, Orpen."

Still no answer. So Dicky, burning with eagerness, was forced to assume a look of indifference in sheer self-defence. Then Mr. Orpen condescended to enlighten him; and taking the questions in order of precedence, answered the first oracularly,—"'Tis, and it isn't," and then winked again.

Mr. Davoren, who by this time had got a small meerschaum lighted, and with alarming contortion of feature was endeavouring to hold it in his mouth and smoke it simultaneously, without the aid of a supporting hand, allowed his friend's utterance to pass unnoticed.

"And as for being an ass," continued he of the briar-root, "all right: I am," and he nodded with an air of cheerful acquiescence.

Dicky felt absolutely humbled and abashed; conscious that irony of this magnitude was a weapon entirely beyond his powers, he gave in at once. Taking the meerschaum, whose uncoloured bowl betrayed its newness in a very lowering way, he laid it tenderly on the cushion beside him, and having expectorated out of window, advanced his face close to the impassive briar-root, and in an emphatic tone asked,

"Orpen, how much are you on?"

Mr. Orpen deliberately reversed his pipe on the edge of the open window, and having knocked the last vestige of tobacco-ash out, put it in his pocket and answered sententiously, "Every brown I can raise."

Dicky's countenance glowed, and his blue eyes opened to their very widest extent. Then he dug his hands into his pockets and began a whistle.

"I know a chap," resumed Mr. Orpen, "that won a hundred and fifty on a mere little garrison steeplechase."

“Shillings?” interrupted Dicky, so greedy that he could not wait to hear all his friend had to say.

His companion glanced at him in a withering manner, and enunciated the single word “Sovereigns.”

The train drew up at the City Terminus now, and the two youths descended, and taking each other’s arms, plunged through a number of dirty byways across town to the college.

They dashed into the lecture-room almost breathlessly, and spent the time, as far as Dicky was concerned, in happy unconsciousness of the reverend lecturer’s every utterance. Dicky was deeply meditating the distinctions and differences between backing a horse and taking the odds, and calculating the amounts of imaginary investments and the intricacies of making a “safe book.”

The moment they were free, away they rushed to the rooms of a gentleman commoner named Gagan. Him they found at breakfast, with a chum named Mahoney Quain, a splendid-looking young animal, over six feet in height, and renowned as one of the best athletes and wildest lads in Trinity.

“What’s the row?” growled the host, turning a pair of very blood-shot eyes on the incomers. Mr. Gagan had been making a night of it; and the soda water with which his skip had liberally plied him had not quite rehabilitated him yet.

“Morrow, Mahoney,” said Dicky. “Got out your watch?”

This allusion was called forth by the unusual sight of a gold chain in the button-hole of the gentleman addressed.

“Yes,” returned Mr. Mahoney with a grin; “the money’s gone back to the bank: here’s the receipt!” and he dangled his watch in his fingers as he spoke.

“The Post Office Savings Bank is a humbug compared to a real good ticker. Mine’s not half the value of yours, Mahoney. It was left me by an old godmother, for being a good boy and attending Sunday-school regularly.” Orpen intoned this part of his speech with a sort of nasal drone that made the rest laugh. “It doesn’t keep time; but the governor can’t take a hint, and declines to exchange it.”

“That’s not what we came for,” interrupted Dicky. “Orpen, show that advertisement. Look, Gagan.”

Mr. Quain stooped his great back over the table, and, in company with his friends, perused the enticing bill of fare set forth in the columns of one of the most largely circulated and influential papers in Dublin.

“Ten pounds realize four hundred. Augh!” grunted he derisively, “the lowest thing they notice is five pounds.”

“Five hundred it might as well be!” cried Dicky scornfully.

“What do you think of a joint stock concern?” asked Mr. Orpen. “Quain, you’re in cash; Davoren, couldn’t you manage twenty-five shillings—hey? Make your game, genelman; ball’s a-rolling. *Rooge ah nore*, genelman! genelman!!” And Mr. Orpen, whose forte lay in mimicry, gave a good imitation of a well-known roulette man of the day.

“I shan’t,” said Mr. Gagan; “I’m cleaned out. You did it, Billy Orpen; so put down for me, else I won’t.”

“Have you your Ulster coat?” suggested Mr. Quain, who was credited with a perfect genius for raising money.

“No, I haven’t my Ulster coat,” returned Mr. Gagan savagely; “it’s pawned two days ago.”

A silence fell on the quartette. It seemed as if their scheme was to fall through; but Orpen, inspired by a sudden thought, cried,—

“Day after to-morrow we give in our fees, don’t we? Suppose you—ah—just postpone paying yours for a week, Gagan. I have done that: it works beautifully. They never mind a few days’ delay; and something’s always sure to turn up in a week.”

Mr. Gagan looked a little frightened; he had not tried this expedient yet; embezzling the fees was looked upon in college as a rather go-ahead practice.

“And what if your new financial dodge turns out to be a bilk?” asked Mahoney Quain, stretching himself lazily against the opposite wall of the little grimy room.

Orpen shook his head. “Perfectly safe, my boy; take thirty, forty, whatever is given against their selection or your own, I bet you we’ll win.”

“Have you won anything by it?” asked the host, slowly raising his head from the back of his chair.

“No, I have not tried it yet; but a cousin of mine has—a very decent fellow, Jack Warden,—I dined at his house yesterday, and he tells me he netted a cool hundred and fifty on a ten-pun’ note; he recommended me to try this firm in preference to his. He—let me see—I think he took seventeen or eighteen to one against Molasses; then their commission and charges reduced it. He is making money at it, I assure you.”

“When is the event, and what is it?” asked Mr. Gagan a little impatiently.

“Churton races; and they settle the Monday after. The money must be forwarded by Tuesday at latest.”

“I’ll close on the fees,” declared Gagan energetically, sitting up straight in the chair.

“I’m on too,” said Mahoney Quain. “And I,” declared Dicky Davoren, last of all, but not a whit less determinedly.

“Is it money down now?” asked the gigantic Mahoney, proceeding to finger over a handful of silver.

“Monday afternoon will do. Meet me at the football gathering. Now don’t forget,” adjured Orpen; on whom seemed to fall of its own accord, and by tacit consent, the office of secretary and treasurer.

Mr. Gagan lay down on his bed in an adjoining room; Dicky threw his books into a corner, and selected the most enticing of a collection of novels; Mahoney Quain, who was not addicted to literature in any shape, lighted a clay pipe; and Orpen disappeared with his newspaper, doubtless in quest of another Joint Stock company of subscribers. Before Dicky had finished the second page of his romance he remembered his commission, and reflecting that it would never do to forfeit the good graces of either Miss Dorothy or his sister at this particular juncture—for he was depending chiefly on their support to enable him to raise the twenty-five shillings, that nest-egg which was to be the nucleus of an inexhaustible Eldorado—dashed off at once to secure the places.

In the box office of the Theatre Royal he brushed against no less a person than Hogan, who, at the instance of Mr. Saltasche, was also taking places in the front row.

“Who are you squiring?” asked Hogan, carelessly, on hearing him demand three tickets.

“My sister, and—a—my cousin. Front row, and as near the centre as you have them,” said Dicky to the booking-clerk.

“This gentleman has got the centre seat; there are a couple on either side of his, if you could just settle between you,” returned the official.

“Of course,” said Hogan; “here, twenty-one, two, three, for you; give me this one.” The exchange was made to the satisfaction of both, and they turned and walked out together.

“How is your sister?” asked Hogan. “I have not seen you now for a good while: come in and have an oyster.” They were just at Burton Bindon’s door: Dicky assenting, both entered, and were speedily engaged with a dish of bivalves, washed down with tankards of stout.

“Master Davoren, why have you never come to see me?”

“I will, indeed,” returned Dicky. “I wrote down your address.”

“I shall be giving a supper some night next week, or so. Where is this you are? ‘Church——’ what was it?”

“Church House, Green Lanes,” replied the boy promptly.

“Oh, you’re beside Mr. Saltasche there. Do you know him?”

“I do; he lives close to us. Awful swell place; no end of glass, and all that sort of thing. Nice, jolly old chap, too.”

“Old chap!” thought Hogan; “a man I take to be only twelve or thirteen years older than myself: how these young ones run on!” and he looked at the stripling beside him. “Seventeen, I suppose,” he continued, noting the clear, smooth, almost girlish face, and weedy, though promising build of the lad.

“How old are you, Mr. Davoren? Twenty?”

Immensely flattered, Dicky looked up with a pleased expression.

“Not quite,” he replied. “Not eighteen yet.”

“Dear me! indeed!” Hogan threw all the wonder possible into his tone. “My dear fellow, excuse me, I must follow that gentleman going out there.” Hogan ran over to the bar, paid for both, and disappeared after an attorney of his acquaintance.

Dicky sauntered out leisurely, and returned to college, ostensibly to an afternoon lecture, but in reality to lay his plans with a view to possessing himself of the needful sum of money. If he were to borrow from

Orpen, that youth, who somehow always managed to have cash in his pockets, would insist on being paid out of the profits—Mr. Dicky, of course, with his usual confidence, looked upon the venture as already realized—and Orpen was such a Jew he would extort goodness knows how much percentage; then, too, the money would be in his hands, and he could in fact lay an embargo upon it. Somehow, the post of chancellor of the exchequer always devolved upon Orpen: some eclectic affinity between him and money, thought Dicky, shaking his blond head. He must look for it elsewhere.

The result of all his meditations seemed to be indicated by his dropping into his cousin's house in Fitzgerald Place at seven o'clock punctually, dressed with the most scrupulous care, and with a flower in his button-hole for which he had paid sixpence to the florist who lived in Green Lanes, and which, had he bought it in the Nassau Street shops, would have cost perhaps three times the money.

"The darling villain!" screamed Miss O'Hegarty, on finding him in the drawing-room when she came down; "he's actually punctual to the minute! And how nice he looks! Really, Nellie," she cried, to that young lady as she followed her in, "we may be quite proud of him to-night."

Nellie was not a little puzzled. She had expected, from the young gentleman's conduct of the morning, that he would have presented himself with a sulky countenance at the very last minute, and that he would have forgotten the tickets, or have gone to procure them so late in the day that they would have been obliged to put up with a back row. Not so: he produced an envelope, and handed it to his cousin, remarking,—

"Centre front, ma'am. Twenty-one, two, and three; and I've ordered a cab."

"The dear, thoughtful child!" cried Miss Dorothy in a perfect ecstasy; "and so poor Peter needn't go out with his rheumatism."

Nellie was stroking her hair before a pier-glass, and detected the trace of a grimace on the collegian's face; but she wisely abstained from making a remark, feeling grateful to whatever accident had caused his unwonted good-humour.

"Where did you get that lovely bud, Dicky?" she asked.

"Bought it—ah just now," returned he, glancing modestly down at the camellia, as if overcome with a sense of his own graciousness and amiability.

“We need not be there too soon, as we’ve taken our places. Sit down a bit, Dicky, till I get you a glass of wine; and tell us what you’ve been doing.” And Miss O’Hegarty seated herself in her arm-chair and rang the bell.

Peter presented himself with a countenance of superhuman crossness at the door.

“Peter! a glass of wine for Master Richard; and you needn’t go for a cab. Master Richard has saved you the trouble; he has been so thoughtful as to order one as he came along.”

Peter cast a glance of utter scorn and incredulity, on hearing this assertion, at both his mistress and Master Richard. This last-named repaid it with a broad grin of triumph and defiance.

“I hadn’t been doing anything, ma’am. College as usual; and went and looked at the football match.”

“Were you not playing, dear?”

“No, ma’am. Hem,—my subscription is out (five shillings), and it’s got to be renewed.” Nellie, hearing this, turned and looked at him in utter bewilderment, clearly remembering him to have got the very five shillings from his father only one week before.

“Oh, you must have it. I’ll see that you have it, Dick; now take your glass of wine: you must have hurried over your dinner.”

Mr. Dick mentally placed the five shillings to the credit of an account he was opening with his bank, which was situated in the top small drawer of his bureau at home, and drank his glass of sherry with infinite relish. Then feeling impatient to make his final move in the game, he declared it time to be off, and marshalled his charges carefully into the cab.

When they arrived at the theatre, and were about to pass down the tiers of seats to the front, Dicky seized Nellie by the arm, and held her back, saying, “Let Cousin Dorothy go first.”

Miss O’Hegarty passed in accordingly, and took number twenty-one, as he intended; then he placed himself between the two ladies, leaving Nellie in the seat marked twenty-three. “Now,” thought the young Machiavelli, “if Hogan has the gumption to sit next her, she’ll be in good humour too.”

They were rather early; but Miss O’Hegarty liked to be in before everybody else; and in the theatre, or in church, she almost considered it a

part of the performance to see the people come in. Nellie leaned back in her stall and looked round; the gas was not fully turned on, and the half-light had a pretty effect. The orchestra were tuning their instruments.

“That’s a part of the performance I never could understand their having to go through in public,” said Miss O’Hegarty with a grimace. “Just hear those fiddles scrooping: it ought to be done somewhere at the back. Ugh!”

Then a crowd poured in, and she began to recognize her acquaintances on all sides. Right opposite to them sat the Raffertys, dressed in all the hues of the rainbow, and the Brangans, and a tribe of their friends. Presently people began to crowd in behind. Miss O’Hegarty looked round, and found Mrs. O’Hara and her daughters attended by a couple of officers. She turned Dicky out of his front seat, and made room for Mrs. O’Hara. The young ladies did not seem inclined to be divided from their squires. The gas was now turned on full, and the orchestra having finished the objectionable preliminaries, commenced a lively waltz. Gaudily dressed people streamed in; red cloaks, white cloaks, blue cloaks, great bouquets of hot-house flowers, and gold and silver sprinkled fans, flirting and fluttering on all sides. The talking and rustling of silks rose above the music. All of a sudden a sort of commotion; then a lull. The waltz stopped suddenly, a bar of “God save the Queen” was played; their Excellencies were come, and without more ado the curtain drew up. Her Excellency looked pale and cold, and the red noses of her two old ladies-in-waiting beamed conspicuously over their ermine tippets. Mr. Wyldoates, and the other A.D.C.’s-in-waiting, settled themselves resignedly in a corner from which nothing could be heard or seen. The Malowneys were in their box too: Mrs. Malowney conspicuous by her absence; a chaperone, with a stack of roses on her head and huge knots of red ribbons, accompanied the young ladies in her stead. The Lord Mayor, of course, was present; his sons were in the pit, near the door, so as to slip out to the bar as often as necessary; and a rising young architect, and a young doctor, who showed themselves capable of appreciating the money and connection which Mr. Hogan had despised, made themselves agreeable to the ladies of the family.

One of the new modern society plays was being performed by a London company, in the usual style. The noblemen of the piece certainly did not look “to the manner born,” but were very well dressed. The actresses

were tolerable; a lady who had a minor part played it pretty badly, but her splendid diamond ear-rings and red-heeled boots seemed to compensate for her deficiencies. The first part was played by a clever actress, who might have passed for a lady in ordinary society. She was the only one of the female characters who seemed conversant with the most ordinary rules of etiquette. An “h” was dropped here and there by the diamond-earringed lady; but the youngest nobleman of the piece kindly adjusted the balance by inserting an extra one at intervals.

The first act was over, when, hearing a stir behind them, Nellie, whose attention was by no means absorbed by the piece, turned her head and met the glance of Hogan, who, followed by Saltasche, was moving quietly down to his seat. He smiled and bowed, and passed on to the farther of the two seats. Saltasche followed, and took that next her, giving, as he did so, an approving glance in her direction. Bland and smiling as ever, with a dark red camellia in his button-hole, he settled himself back in his chair to look round him; becoming aware of the presence of the physician-extraordinary beside Hogan, he touched him lightly.

“Change with me, my dear fellow; I want to speak to your neighbour.”

It was done in a moment, and Hogan was Miss Davoren’s next-door neighbour. She looked away across to the stage, trying hard to look unconcerned; but a bright lovely flush came up unbidden, and her eyes for an instant sparkled brighter.

Hogan caught sight of Nellie’s neighbour, Mrs. O’Hara, and remembered having seen her at Lord Brayhead’s dinner. He could not imagine whom Nellie was with. Presently Miss O’Hegarty handed an opera-glass to Nellie, desiring her to look at some person in the distance; and Mrs. O’Hara made some slight remark to her about the scene just going on. It was settled, then, who her companions were; and he was more puzzled than ever. She seemed to him still more exquisitely lovely to-night; her white cashmere cloak was open, showing her full white throat; a cluster of lilies of the valley, looking the very embodiment of innocence and cold white purity, nestled in the abundant coils of her brown hair; the graceful, but as yet scarcely formed contour of her shoulders and bust, showed clearly under the thin drapery, indicating a form that would mature into still more perfect womanly beauty. Some way behind sat Miss Bursford, with the pretty, but made-up, little Mrs. De Lancier; and across, beside and half hidden by a pillar, wearing a *burnous* of deep crimson, above

which her face looked like a *relievo* of snowy Carrara marble, leaning her head listlessly on her hand, was Captain Poignarde's wife. Saltasche caught sight, as he was sweeping the circle round with his lorgnette, first of Poignarde's vapid countenance, grinning approval of the actress of the diamonds: and, impelled by curiosity, looked to the right and left of him, to see if his *piquante* helpmate might chance to be there. She was looking, as it happened, straight in his direction, and he caught the very glance of her splendid liquid brown eyes right in his. The pure oval of her face was well relieved against the braids of brown hair hanging low on her neck. White and scarlet camellia buds were set, in defiance of the mode of the day, right behind her left ear just where the Spanish beauties put them; the white over the scarlet, so that the one set off the ivory-white skin it caressed and the other glowed in the setting of her luxuriant hair. Not a jewel did she wear, save a gold and diamond star, fixed in a black velvet ribbon on her neck; and her wrists, slender, round, and supple, bore not a single bracelet. Saltasche's artistic eye revelled in the picture she made; but not venturing to seem bold, he relinquished the glass to Hogan, and turned his eyes again on the stage. After awhile, at an emotional scene of the piece, seeing that Mrs. Poignarde, like every one else, was rapt in attention to the performance, he took the glass, and hurriedly adjusting it, fixed it full on her. Just the graceful pose of head he had noted that day down on the Quay; the square low brow, set in wavy brown ripples of hair; the white lithe neck, on which her head drooped and turned as gracefully and languidly as one of Nellie's lilies; the short curved upper lip and sweet half-opened mouth, showing little uneven pearls of teeth.

"What countrywoman can it be?" wondered he. "The mouth and chin are too perfect and too pronounced for her to be Irish. The accent, too, I remember, was a little foreign. Could she be American? I must find her out."

The pathetic, or rather, hysterical, love scene, was over now, and the drop-scene fell. With the exquisite artistic taste of modern audiences, it had to be raised again, to allow the spectators to feast their eyes on Lady ——'s dishevelled fainting fit.

Hogan leaned upon his elbow, and said to Nellie, "Are you not hard-hearted? I have been watching you for a symptom of a tear, Miss Davoren. Such insensibility is quite distressing."

"Have you been greatly moved yourself?"

“Er—that is not expected, you know; you don’t expect soft-heartedness from the sterner sex.”

“I have noticed,” said she, “that at sermons men cry more than women.”

“Well, indeed,” returned he, “if you could read the hearts of all present now, you would find the men more moved by that pathetic scene than you ladies seem to be.”

“You don’t need to take the trouble of looking so far as their hearts. Take them on the evidence of their eyes, just.” And Miss Davoren smiled a little maliciously.

“Miss Davoren,” said he with mock gravity, “do you insinuate that their emotion arises from soft-headedness rather than——?”

“I am sure I insinuated no such thing. Pray look! what strange being is that?” And she turned towards the stage, where the conventional stage-Irishman was going through the approved Hibernian *répertoire*.

“A foreigner of distinction!” and Hogan affected to raise his glass. “I have read of such an animal in the books of English tourists.”

“Is it not too bad that such a monstrosity should be presented as a national type? The Home Rulers ought to put that down.”

“We don’t know that,” said he drily; “only for this sort of thing, how could the distinction be kept up? And then it flatters the English so. They always like to remind themselves of their great superiority over us; and this” (nodding at the Paddy) “is a sort of pleasing reflection for them,—like *Punch’s* Scotchmen, you know.”

Nellie looked up into his eyes hastily, to see how far he was in earnest; and meeting a droll twinkle there, though to all other appearance he was perfectly solemn, she laughed outright behind her fan. “Well, the Scotch are not made fun of, as we are,” said she.

“Indeed they are!—and though it is the fashion here to sneer at them as being unpatriotic, calling their country North Britain and all that, they are a deal more really national than we.”

“I have heard that they deny their country, whenever they can.”

“That’s not so at all; rather, it’s only a few. The Irish in America—the second generation, I mean—would like to pass themselves off for Knicker-Bockers if they could. I have been told so. Not that I think that matters; I wish they’d all do it,” continued Hogan. “They keep pretty

well to their flourishing—good gracious! From Captain Macmorris down to the present day they are at it: what in the world is the sense of it?”

“*My nation! what ish my nation?*” Is that it? What a little gem that passage is!” laughed Miss Davoren. “Look at that man,” continued she; “did you hear him say *hoppportunity?* is it not absurd?”

“Yes,” replied Hogan; “I fear the people who come here to learn the correct pronunciation of the Queen’s English will carry away some rather erroneous impressions.”

“What do you say? People come here—to the theatre—for that purpose?”

“Yes, certainly, Miss Davoren; I know people who do.”

“Do look at that actor,” cried Dorothy, —“he with the handkerchief: that’s an imitation of Charles Mathews, in ‘Cool as a Cucumber.’”

“I have seen Charles Mathews: we went to see him the last time I was in London; he was very far before that man.” This was from Mrs. O’Hara.

“What a pity it is that ladies and gentlemen don’t take to the profession!” said Nellie Davoren.

“Ladies and gentlemen!” exclaimed Miss O’Hegarty; “what are you saying, Nellie?”

“But, Cousin Dorothy, was not ——— educated at Rugby? and Miss ———?”

“Don’t let me hear you talking so, child;” and Miss Dorothy turned away with a frown. An interval for refreshment occurred now, and the gentlemen availed themselves of it extensively. In this respect the Dublin audiences are yet far behind the Londoners; but, no doubt, time and assiduous copying of the British peculiarities will soon bring them abreast of their models. The pit was emptied in a few minutes. Boys just started in life, clerks and little shop-keepers, thronged into the bars; and every beverage, from the modest glass of beer to champagne and brandy and soda water, was called for. Saltasche and Hogan went out with the crowd. Hogan drank a glass of lemonade and sherry. Saltasche set down his glass untouched, and rushed to meet Poignarde, of whom he caught sight at the door. “Come and take a glass of brandy and water.” The Captain accepted with pleasure; and when he had finished, leaving his com-

panion, a young officer, followed Saltasche back to where Mrs. Poignarde was sitting alone.

“Adelaide, you met Mr. Saltasche before.”

She looked up, and bowed and smiled. He seated himself beside her.

“You don’t seem to care for this play, Mrs. Poignarde?”

“Well, no; I confess I do not.”

“After the London theatres it must seem very poor and shabby to you.”

“Well, I did not draw any comparison between them.”

“Have you been in Paris?”

“Never.”

“Ah! that’s a pleasure to come. You like travelling, of course?”

All this was uttered by Mr. Saltasche in his most courteous, suave tone, with the air of deferential interest which in spite of oneself attracts at last.

She glanced at him a little suspiciously, as if doubtful of his meaning, and said distantly, “My experience of travelling has been limited to the regimental changes between London and Shorncliffe and Aldershot; we were in Cork, too, for a few months.”

“A nice rainy place!”

“Not so bad as Dublin, though”; and she shivered a little. “I was born in South America, and have a dim remembrance of warmth and bright colours and perpetual sun. It may be only a sort of instinct, but I do hate this damp cold.”

He looked at her sympathetically.

“Well, we make up for it,” he said, “with our gaieties. These three months to come form our season. You go to many balls?”

“Ah! I know so few of your people here. I don’t make acquaintances. I wonder where Eric has gone,” she added suddenly, noticing that her husband had left his seat for the second time. “Ah! here comes Mr. Grey.” Saltasche bowed, recognizing in him the son of a clergyman of his acquaintance; and seeing Poignarde’s sullen countenance in the back-ground, his eyes looking rather lowering from the effects of a sec-

ond potation, he judged it well to withdraw and return to his own seat. So after a word of adieu, distantly and coldly pronounced by Mrs. Poignarde, he left her.

“Do you know Saltasche, Mrs. Poignarde?” asked young Grey.

“Well, hardly.”

“I know him right well: he is a very rich fellow—has a beautiful house in our parish; very charitable, and that sort of thing.”

“Is he?”

“He’s worth fifty thousand pounds; and an incorrigible bachelor.”

“Really!” She turned languidly, and cast a look across the theatre at Saltasche and his companion, who were sitting opposite. Saltasche was not the more interesting of the two. Hogan was taller and younger, and his bright thin face and keen eyes seemed to take in everything. Saltasche leaned back on one elbow, and out of his half-closed eyes looked far more at the audience than at the play; every now and again he directed his eyes on herself. She saw this too, and was amused at it.

When the first piece was over, she observed that his companion went out with the ladies who were sitting next him; he remained, as she did, for the after-piece. When it was finished they all rose to go; and in the throng on the staircase Saltasche pressed his way until close beside her. She was leaning on young Grey’s arm, her husband following behind: and in a bevy of beautiful women assembled from all parts of Ireland, Saltasche in his own mind decreed her the palm. Standing in the full blaze of the chandeliers, amid all the glare of colours around, the slight lithe figure and small glossy head so proudly carried, attracted more admiration than the celebrated Galway belle, Miss — herself. She seemed so utterly unconscious: not Lady St. — herself, attended by her court, could have shown more self-possession and haughty indifference. They passed down slowly; and it was not until after a long wait below that a cab was found. Saltasche stood close at the door and handed her in. He succeeded in his aim, which was to hear the address given to the cabman.

“3, Park Villas, Inchicore,” growled Poignarde.

Saltasche took out his pocket-book, and turned to the lamp to scribble it down. As he did so, he struck something with his foot on the step of the colonnade. Stooping, he found a broken fan of ivory and scarlet feath-

ers, and on the handle a mono-gram, "A. C.," in curiously entwined raised letters. A smile of triumph lit up his face as he examined his prize; he rubbed the dust off it with his handkerchief, and put it carefully in his pocket.

We must return to our party, whose fortunes we have abandoned for a while to trace the devious ways of Mr. Cosmo Saltasche. Hogan continued to sit next Nellie, drinking in the light of her candid eyes, watching her clear profile, the lines of which were as fine and pure as those of a Roman cameo, watching every stir, every movement—so unstudied, yet so graceful, so natural and so fitting—listening to the laughing remarks, sensible and straightforward, without a trace of worldly cunning or *arrière pensée* in them. He had caught a glimpse ere now of Diana Bursford, who was seated near, and who cast now and anon cold watchful glances in his direction; he had paid a visit at her house that afternoon, and had quitted it steeped to the eyes in the flattery she so well knew how to ply. He knew she expected, and that she had a right to expect him to go to her; but Nellie's fresh beauty chained him beside her, and Diana looked and smiled in vain.

Hogan parted from Miss O'Hegarty's party at the door of the theatre, leaving Dicky to escort them home. That young gentleman, who was in high good-humour, seated himself in the cab beside his sister. Everything had succeeded with him; and he already, in his mind's eye, grasped the fruit of his plans. He had overheard Mrs. O'Hara ask Dorothy who that handsome lad was, and had noticed Dorothy's pleased air in replying. He felt an ideal half-sovereign in his pocket, as securely as if he already possessed it. He waited patiently till they got out at the door in Fitzgerald Place.

"Come in, Dicky dear; I want you one minute," said Miss O'Hegarty, when the hall-door opened for them, and the cook with a tallow candle (Peter, the independent, had gone to bed) proceeded to light the candles on the hall table.

"See, Dicky; pay the cabman, and keep the change for yourself"; and she handed him three five-shilling pieces. "You must have something for being so good and considerate."

Dicky's heart throbbed with delight; he quickly took his leave, with many thanks for the liberal tip, and bestowing eighteen-pence on the cabman, buttoned up his top-coat and strode off to catch the last train. Thirteen-and-sixpence, exactly one-half of his subscription, he counted

into his drawer when he got home. Nellie and his mother were good for five shillings between them, at least. He had a florin of his own: six shillings only remained to be got together; and he tucked himself up in bed cogitating how to make up that deficit, more anxiously and eagerly than ever Chancellor of the Exchequer brooded over a shortcoming in his Budget.