

## VOLUME I

### CHAPTER 1

“Studies serve for delight, for ornament and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business.”

—Bacon’s *Essays, Civil and Moral*

THE SCHOOLROOM of St. Swithin’s Convent presented a scene of unwonted bustle and confusion one fine, hot morning in the middle of July. Breaking-up day, or, as the Mother Superior preferred to call it, “the closing day of the scholastic year,” was an event of no small importance and solemnity. The whole community, from the Superior and the members of the Council down to the fifteen-year-old novice, were intensely impressed with the sense of personal and individual responsibility.

Each had her own share of the burden. That the invited guests were all the right ones—that the *déjeûner* should be faultless, or at least equal to those given by the convents whose celebrations had preceded this one—and that the prizes should be judiciously bestowed—was the special anxiety of the Superior. The musical display, and the examinations (scientific, linguistic, and other), concerned the respective class-mistresses, who, between rehearsing and cramming, had had a busy time of it for some months beforehand. The lay sisters had scrubbed and polished with extra zeal; and even the old gardener had been up and out at six in the morning, to rake the gravel walks and trim the sunburnt grass edges in the little lawn.

The schoolroom had been specially arranged for the occasion. At one end was a sort of amphitheatre of benches raised above each other. Four pianos, placed back to back, stood as close as possible to the pupils’

seats. At the opposite end were chairs and cushioned benches for the visitors, placed in a semicircle. An arm-chair with a huge crimson cushion, having before it a table on which were piled the prize books, occupied the central and most conspicuous position. The whitewashed walls of the room were decorated with evergreens. The school maps had been taken down, and their places supplied by pictures executed by the pupils: chalk heads of Zingari women, scratchy and nightmare-like; dropsical infants, with prematurely intellectual countenances; landscapes of the approved penknife and stump school, sewed pictures, and Madonnas in Berlin wool, all in bright gilt frames. A pair of globes stood in readiness in the corner, whence they could be most easily dragged out when wanted. Everything was as clean as possible; even the statue of "our Lady," which occupied the place of honour on the oratory, had been scrubbed to its pristine whiteness, and the flower vases before it supplied with a perfectly new set of paper roses and lilies.

The "exercises," as they were called, were to commence at twelve. By eleven o'clock the schoolroom presented an extraordinary scene of commotion. Nuns in their Sunday habits and full-dress cloaks, the long trains of which, for safety's sake, they had tucked under their elbows, were bustling about in great excitement among their pupils, who, to the number of seventy, of all ages from four to twenty, and dressed in white, were coming and going, chattering, gesticulating and laughing, with the exuberance of animal spirits peculiar to their age and proper to the occasion.

At first glance the scene seemed one of utter confusion and objectless Babel; but on closer examination the crowd might be seen to be formed of sundry distinct, though often changing groups—the nucleus of each being, in every instance, a nun.

In the corner inside the door, a scene from Molière's *Avare* was being rehearsed by a set of girls. "Maître Jacques," with her fingers stuffed in her ears, was shouting her part to the teacher, who, with a book of "Elegant Extracts" from French literature open in her hand, was listening with intense anxiety, and correcting whenever her ear caught a mistake.

"Oh! Bride Sweeny, darling child, sure you won't say *naysaire* for *nécessaire*. That's I don't know how often I've told you."

"I won't, sister," replied "Maître Jacques," removing her fingers, and falling back to let "Géronte" speak her part. "You needn't be afraid."

“I’d be everlastingly disgraced if you did,” continued the sister. “The first class have got off their *‘Esther’* beautifully; and you know the Bishop’s a splendid French scholar. Sure, you might all slip out here in the garden, and we’ll go over it all once more from the first.”

“Ah no, sister; we know it by heart now, an’ we’d only be dirtying our shoes; and besides, Mother Paul’s coming down to go over the problems on the globes. Julia Casey’s not up in hers yet.”

“That I’m not,” assented Julia Casey, who was muttering ‘Géronte’s’ speech to herself: “I always confuse the latitudes an’ the long-di-tudes; an’ I’m dead sure I’ll either smash that brass thing or let it fall—that quadrint, you know,—sure I’d die, an’ they all lookin’ at me!”

“Oh, Sister! Sister de Sales!” wailed a pretty little girl as she broke into the circle, “I’ve lost one of my bronze shoes; an’ what will I do? I’m to be in the first thing, and right in the front before the Bishop.”

Away ran the sister to look for the missing shoe. Miss Casey went to take her finishing lesson in the use of the globes, Miss Bride Sweeny to get up her answers in French history of the Merovingian epoch. Everybody was rehearsing. Eight small children, who were to play a concerted duet, were being instructed by an old nun how to take their seats decorously on the music-stools. A harp was being strung; and just beside it a big girl, who was to recite a Birthday Ode to His Holiness Pius the Ninth, was impressing a difficult stanza on her memory by the aid of thumping the window-shutter with her clenched hand at every word. One nervous young lady, the centre of a sympathizing circle, was in tears.

The din was at its height when a side-door opened, and a nun of tall commanding figure appeared suddenly on the scene. A hush fell on the assembly. “Mother Prioress!” breathed the nuns, all standing at attention. The lull only lasted an instant, however. The noise broke forth afresh, and with more intense vigour. Petitioners rushed up and barred the passage.

“Oh, reverend Mother, mayn’t Sister Wenceslas take this tuck out of my dress? Look, Mother, ’tis a show; ’tis so short.”

“Ah, reverend Mother, won’t you cut my piece out of the programme? I’m frightened to death. I’ll never—”

“Mother! Aloysia Kelly has lost one of her shoes; and what’s to be done? She never can stand up before the Bishop with only one on.”

But the Mother Superior heard nothing: she passed on up to the table without a word, and taking up a little bell, rang it vigorously. Perfect silence followed this signal.

“The Angelus, children!” commanded she in a loud voice, kneeling down as she spoke with her face to the oratory. Every one followed her example.

For an instant you might have thought the room was empty. Through the open windows the sound of the chimes in the convent clock-tower, and the echoes of the city bustle, poured in and mingled with the clear responses of the girls’ voices. The rustling of the leaves of the trees in the front, and the smell of the mignonette and lavender in the garden under the windows, came in with the warm air. It was a glowing hot day; and the nuns in their heavy stuff robes seemed quite overcome.

The prayer was soon over: the excitement of the occasion appeared to be rather incompatible with the duly reverential performance of the pious exercise; there being clearly noticeable a general tendency to giggle and fidget more than usual, and one tall black-eyed girl, who was going home for good, actually forgot to bless herself at the close.

“To your places, children!” cried Mother Superior, speaking while in the act of rising, and almost simultaneously with the last Amen, in order to stem the inevitable out-burst at its commencement. “The Bishop has arrived, and is in the parlour. You may speak,” she added, with the tone of one making a concession, “until the guests all come in.”

She was an experienced commander, and well versed in the arts of ruling—the chief of which is to know when to submit; and she divined pretty accurately that no power of tongue or bell would stop them to-day.

The girls all swarmed up into their places on the raised benches; and the river of talk, which had momentarily disappeared underground, welled forth from its hiding-place with redoubled intensity. The class-mistresses walked about the room, picking up bits of papers, ends of ribbon, leaves of books, and hair-pins, the jetsam and flotsam of that stormy sea of feminine humanity. The Prioress, meantime, had seated herself in her own chair, on the left of the Bishop’s, and was surveying the scene with complacency. Everything was ready. The seventy pupils, all dressed in white muslin, with white thread gloves and blue

bows—most of them fat and wholesome-looking—formed an imposing body, filling as they did one whole end of the room, from floor to ceiling.

“Now, Mother, everything’s right, I hope,” said the “mistress of the schools,” a fresh-complexioned, bright-eyed woman, about forty years of age, advancing, as she spoke, close to her chief.

“They’ve only sixty children at Saint Gengulph’s,” (be it observed that the prefix “saint” is always pronounced long and full—by no means the disrespectful abbreviation the English and their imitators make it,) “his Lordship has just told me,” whispered the Superioress. “He was at their distribution yesterday.”

St. Gengulph’s was a rival establishment.

“Sixty!—now, Mother!” cried the head-mistress exultingly. “And did you get a programme?”

Mother Superior nodded.

“Oh! and what did they learn of music, Mother? Was it the overture to *Faust*? Oh! I do hope it wasn’t; it’s perfectly dreadful when you know the priests have heard the same pieces the day before!”

“Better for you not to know, then, Sister,” replied the Superior tantalizingly. The sister darted a scrutinizing look at her chief’s countenance, and apparently read there a confirmation of her hopes, for she walked off to her post with a confident and smiling air. After a final glance round, the Mother Superior left the room to receive the guests in the parlours, while the pupils beguiled the time as they chose.

“A carriage!” announced a girl, who had taken advantage of her seat next the window to scratch a peephole in the muffed glass, and was enjoying the somewhat limited view to be had thereby. The excitement rose almost to shrieking-point. “It’s the Bishop!” cried one. “It’s not; he’s come already: ’tis papa!” said the black-eyed girl who was going home for good. With an exception or two, the interest was only increased when the sentinel announced the modifying intelligence that it was only a confectioner’s cart with things for the *déjeûner*.

“Carriage, indeed!” scoffed the big girl—a Miss Brangan. “Augh, then, Biddy Sweeny, ye’re the judge of carriages: not know a cake van from a carriage!”

Miss Sweeny was just launching a retort to this insolence, when the door opened, and a lay sister beckoned and called: “Mary Rooney,

your aunt, Lady Shanassy's in the parlour,—come." Next to the Bishop, who was the reverend Mother's first cousin, Lady Shanassy was the star of the occasion. An awestruck murmur went round the benches; Miss Brangan's scornful look disappeared; and Bride Sweeny forgot everything, in order to stare at Miss Rooney's progress from the top-most seat to the door. Gleefully conscious of her importance and reflected glory as the relative of the great lady, a little fat, red-haired girl picked her way through the crowd to the door.

"Stop, Mary darling!" called the head-mistress, your sash is crooked;" and kneeling down, she, with deft touches, flirted the offending ribbons into their proper position—the one hundred and forty eyes above losing not one iota of the manipulations. At last, the door being shut, their owners resumed conversation.

"Will ever I know my questions in globes?" soliloquized Miss Casey. "What's this it is now? Sister Paul says she'll ask me, 'Given the day of the month and the hour in Rome, to find where's the sun vertical.' *Rome*," repeated Miss Casey emphatically, fixing the name in her memory by hammering her knee with her fist. Find the meridian of the sun for the—"

"*Meridian* of the sun, Julia Casey!" interrupted a neighbour. "Declination, you mean."

"It's not," snapped Miss Casey, contradictorily. Nevertheless she borrowed a book to make sure.

"I'm certain to forget the name of that old first *Maire du Palais*," moaned another girl. "An' I'm not like you, Theresa; I never can remember a thing I don't know till 'tis too late."

Theresa was the neighbour who had corrected Miss Casey: a bright-eyed girl with a quantity of black hair hanging in two plaited tails down her back. Her face was beaming with good humour, for she confidently expected several first prizes. "What matter?" laughed she. "This business doesn't count for prizes, you know. Anyhow, I think I'm safe."

"Humph!" grunted Miss Brangan, who was stupid or idle, or both, casting a sour look in the direction of the prizes. "I wish I was safe out of it; papa'll murder me for not mindin' me French. Anyhow, 'tis the last of these old botherations I'll be ever at, so I'm not caring. Julia—Julia Casey," raising her voice, "are you going to Kingstown for the vacation? I

am; an' I'm going on the Pilgrimage to Lourdes in September. Yes, an' papa an' Aloysius."

Miss Brangan, the daughter of an alderman, and entitled to five thousand pounds' fortune, troubled herself but little about her examinations. It was not that, like Gallio, she "cared for none of these things," but she felt that she had enough without them. She would have liked, just as much as Theresa, to be called up for half a dozen prizes, and to play the best solo on the piano; but some sense of fitness, just as much as indolence, told her that it was more suitable to Theresa than to herself. Theresa's father was poor, and the family lived over their shop; whereas Alderman Brangan lived in Mountjoy Square, and had men to look after his shop,—or rather shops, for he had several. They were not at all in the same set, though in the same business. "Whiskey people" are not by any means equal and alike, though people will persist in saying so; and it was an understood thing that Theresa had need of all the accomplishments she could acquire. Miss Brangan thought there would almost be something *infra dig.* in troubling herself about that sort of thing. And she knew very well also that she would incur the risk of being thought clever. Fortune and cleverness together would constitute an anomaly; as cleverness is understood to be the peculiar appanage of dowerless spinsters, and even then is but a questionable commodity, and one by no means in demand in the market—that is, *per se*; indirectly it has a value of its own, for it is considered rather as a proof of antecedent culture, and consequent respectability, in its possessor.

The doors were thrown open now widely, and the guests thronged in, headed by the Bishop of Secunderabad, president on the occasion in lieu of a still higher dignitary of the Church, who was indisposed or busy. An immense number of priests—not less than forty—with a sprinkling of gorgeously dressed ladies, pre-eminent among whom was Lady Shanassy, in a robe of violet silk, slashed with velvet, a voluminous white lace shawl, yellow bonnet and gloves to match. The nuns entered by a door leading to their part of the house, and took up their position behind the visitors. The Bishop, when all had settled down in their places, gave the signal, and the performance commenced with the overture played by eight hands on four tolerably wooden-toned pianos. Fortunately, the instruments were a good distance off, and as the windows were open, a fair share of the noise passed out, so that conversation could go on without intermission. The Mother Superior was seated be-

side her distinguished relative, to whom, as he plays a small part in this story, we must devote a few words of description.

A man of about fifty-four—spiteful people would say sixty—years of age, the Bishop was under the middle height, slightly corpulent, but still trim and active of figure. His shapely hands and feet, clear hazel eyes and dazzling teeth, somewhat compensated for such defects as a general coarseness and indistinctness of feature. The lower part of his face was heavy, and gave him, until he spoke and his countenance lighted up, a sulkiness of expression quite belying his natural disposition. Indeed, a more jovial, sociable gentleman could hardly be found than his Lordship of Secunderabad, or one more in request by society. Unattached to any particular cure of souls, unless the chaplaincy of a fashionable convent be accounted such, he had plenty of time to devote to the exigencies of his numerous and widespread acquaintances. Dr. O’Rooney, as his name indicates, came of a good old Irish stock. He had been educated at Maynooth, where, as a matter of course, he had distinguished himself; and his first appointment was to a little mountain curacy on the confines of the Dublin diocese. After some ten years of country life, he was changed to a city cure. Here his social talents and agreeable manners stood him in such good stead that, on the death of the aged parish priest of St. Columbkille, Father O’Rooney was appointed amid universal acclamation to fill his place. He was not an ambitious man, and would have been well content to end his days in Columbkille Chapel House; but a Bishop was needed for Secunderabad, or a parish was needed for some curate on his promotion; and Father O’Rooney, with grief in his heart, though wearing a martyr’s smile of resignation on his lips, left the pleasant pastures of St. Columbkille, the rich dinners, the politics, municipal and imperial, the match-makings and diversions of Dublin city, for the unknown and remote regions of Secunderabad.

Ere he had been many years in India, a severe attack of liver complaint forced him to return; and whether the diseased organ proved obdurate to medical treatment, or whether Dr. O’Rooney had made up his mind not to face India’s malignant climate again, is unknown. Certain it is that Secunderabad knew him no more, and the Bishop remained in Dublin, retaining his episcopal title and privileges.

All who had known him during his tenure of the Columbkille parish flocked round him again; and his services were in immense request for masses and other ceremonies. One fashionable convent, the prioress

of which was his cousin, made him its chaplain. Then, a Bishop's spiritual services being naturally of greater value than those of the inferior clergy, command a higher fee. The class of people who set store by a flourishing wedding notice in the papers, took care to secure it by engaging "the Right Reverend Doctor O'Rooney, Bishop of Secunderabad, assisted by, etc. etc. etc.," PPs., and CCs. In short, this Lord Bishop unattached had very fine pickings among that ambitious class who were not sufficiently high placed in the social scale to venture to demand the services of the Primate or the Cardinal, and whose love of show would not let them be contented with the ministrations of their own parochial clergy. He was a very useful personage, on the whole. Whenever higher ecclesiastics found it inconvenient to preside at meetings or festivities, of whatever kind, Bishop O'Rooney was always ready and willing to supply their place. On this occasion a much more exalted dignitary had been invited; but a sudden summons to Rome had prevented him keeping his engagement.

The overture had just been finished, amid universal applause, and the class-mistress was in the act of announcing the second item on the programme, when the door opened, and the portress thrust her head into the room and beckoned the Superior. She rose and stepped hastily into the passage, where she found a group of four ladies, one old, three young, who were waiting for an interval of silence to come in.

"My dear Mrs. Rafferty!" exclaimed the reverend Mother, embracing the oldest lady of the group, and kissing her on both cheeks in French fashion,—“and Eily and Aloysia, my darling children!” and they, too, were kissed on both cheeks.

"This is a young lady friend whom we brought with us, reverend Mother,—Miss Davoren," said the matron who was the mother of the two other girls. A slender girl of eighteen, quietly dressed in grey silk, bowed in acknowledgment of the Superior's salutation.

"I'll take you in in one minute," said the Superior. "Eily, my child, how fat you've got! And Anastatia, my dear, you'll excuse me keeping you waiting, but there's a recitation going on just this moment, and you know it takes so little to put the children out. How is Mr. Rafferty? and why did he not come? and Stanislas?"

"Mr. Rafferty couldn't come. Augh! ye know, reverend Mother," said Mrs. Rafferty, sitting down and fanning her rubicund visage with her pocket-handkerchief, "gentlemen can't get away from business that way.

Stanislas'll come to take us home; and he said his Lordship's young nephew, Mr. Hogan, was very apt to come in with him."

"Oh dear, yes," said the Superior. "He will look in upon us; but I don't expect him till late. He's going away to-morrow morning to Switzerland, for the long vacation. I wanted him to go to Lourdes: there's a lovely pilgrimage just getting up now. Mary Brangan is going in September, you know."

"Is she, now!" exclaimed both the girls together, looking, as they spoke, not at the nun, but at their mamma, with a sort of meaning telegraphic stare. The communication seemed to suggest a great deal more than the Superior had any idea of.

"We're going down to Bray on Saturday. No; not Kingstown this summer. It's got that common, you know: I declare now, what with goin' there every Sunday, we do be sick of it. Miss Brangan's to be there now, is she? Well, it'll be new to her, you know. Mr. Rafferty's thinkin' of movin' on to the Square shortly. Murtagh's house is to be let—just a door or two from the Alderman's."

"That will be very nice for Mary to have such friends. I thought Eily was here with her. I must introduce you before she goes." Mother Superior saw everything, and was delighted to accommodate her friends.

Meantime, the young lady in grey had been standing apart, quietly examining a vase of wax flowers. She had been forgotten for a moment or two; but while examining with amused wonder the stiff fuchsias and petunias under their glass shade, she had smiled at the easy success of the Raffertys' stratagem. She knew they had been watching their opportunity for a long time, and wondered which was the object of their desire—the rich widower Brangan *père*, or the heiress his daughter. It was time to go now. The Mother Superior turned towards the stranger graciously.

"You have never been at any of our exhibitions, Miss Davoren?"

"Never. I have only been once in a convent before."

"Ah, indeed!" Something in the young lady's tone as well as her accent, which was vastly different from that of the others,—not Dublin, and yet not English of the very decided sort the reverend Mother was most accustomed to hear,—struck her as remarkable. She stood aside when they got into the passage leading to the schoolroom, and mar-

shalled the young ladies before her. As she followed, walking beside Mrs. Rafferty, she bent and whispered in that matron's ear,—

“Who is she? Protestant?”

“Good family. Her brother's in college with my nephew Stanislas. She's not Protestant, for she goes to Gardiner's Street Chapel regularly.”

“It's not a Protestant name, certainly. I suppose they're half, you know, mixed mar'ges no doubt.”

Then they swept in, with great rustle and commotion, past the Bishop and the attendant priests; the girls on the benches feasting their eyes in admiration and envy on the rich new dresses of the lathes.

“Julia,” said Miss Brangan, “those are the Raffertys. Look at that blue silk: my new one that I'm to wear going away is done just like that, panier and bouffawns. I'm sorry I didn't have that yellow lace. I might have, if I liked it. You've not seen it yet. I got it made lovely. What a notion I had of going home in the old school sack! I'm leaving all me old dresses behind me for the poor. What a show I'd be in plain skirts and no *tablier* till me new ones was made! Isn't that a nice-looking girl in the grey silk, do you say? She's a nice complexion, certainly, but I don't care for the way her body is done, at all. Pleats are gone out entirely; it's——”

But here a young lady with a very tremulous soprano began to sing one of the melodies, accompanying herself on the harp; and Miss Brangan's dissertation as to the successor of pleats was lost for ever.

Miss Bride Sweeny—or Biddy, as her friend maliciously chose to style her—had not yet forgotten the little unpleasantness of the morning. She did not like to be reminded of her plebeian patronymic in that manner. Bridget was an ugly name to begin life with, in a world the ups and downs of which no one can foretell. It was in vain that she had tried to have her second name, Geneviève, accepted: it would not go down; and the next best thing she could do was to adopt the compromise Bride. Sweeny *père* had made a nice thing of it in whiskey lately; and it was quite on the cards that he would be a town councillor at the very next election, and perhaps have a house “on the Square” too. Anyhow, she wasn't going to be put down by that Mary Brangan. So after a while she leaned forward, and said, in a whisper to which malice lent distinctness—

“Mary Branigan!”

The lady addressed flushed crimson, but pretended not to hear. Biddy Sweeny knew her weak point, and how to touch it.

“Mary Branigan, I say. You’re the next: mind yourself now in your Silvio Pellico, and don’t go smash the way you done yesterday.”

“The way *you done!*” mimicked Miss Brangan scornfully. “You’d better mind your English, Miss Sweeny.” She carried the day; as indeed she generally did, for her opponent was too hot-tempered to guard herself. Miss Brangan returned to her discussion of the toilettes.

“Thanks be to goodness, Julia Casey, I’m done wid it all. This day week where will I be? On the Pier, listening to the band, or at the Flower Show. Oh, laws!”

“Don’t be tantalising me!” returned her friend, who was not to “finish” till next year. “Sure, ’tis sick and tired of it I am; I’m coaxing mamma to give me a nice mixture dress, tight to me figure, for the vacation. Please goodness, I’ll see something of fashions beyond silk thread hair-nets instead of invisible nets, and aprons fastened at the side instead of behind. Faugh! that’s all we can have of them here.”

Further discussion was stopped by the appearance of the gentlemen of whom Mrs. Rafferty had spoken: her nephew, a medical student of Trinity, and the Bishop’s nephew, a barrister twenty-eight or nine years of age. The gentlemen, who walked in unceremoniously, shook hands with the Superior Mother and the Bishop, and took their places among their friends in the back seats.

“How do you do, Mrs. Rafferty? You must be nearly half through by this, are you not? No? my, my! that’s a sad business; I’ve come too soon!” So spoke Mr. Hogan, seating himself between Miss Davoren and the lady addressed. He cast a sharp, scrutinizing glance at his pretty neighbour; but her head was bent over the programme, and he could not see her very well.

“How is Mr. Rafferty?”

“Well, thank you, Mr. Hogan. You’re a great stranger these times; only the Bishop told us you were comin’, I’d hardly expect to see you even here.”

“Can’t help it, madam; I am so hard-worked, you know. I’m off to-morrow morning to the Continent. Yes; a friend of mine, Mr.

Saltasche, is going over with me as far as Paris. He happens to be an excellent traveller—knows every place abroad. You’ve been, of course?”

“No, never. What’s this now, girls?” said Mrs. Rafferty, looking at her programme as she spoke, “That’s Miss Brangan called out now to say this ‘Sil—Sil’—what? Augh, somethin’ Frinch. I must listen to her anyhow. How stout she’s got!”

Mr. Hogan had pains to conceal his amusement. He looked for a moment or two at the great fat girl, who, dressed in a costume of white stuff, which accentuated her stout figure most ludicrously, was reading or rather muttering something out of a book. Then he turned aside to his other neighbour. “That is an Italian recitation, or supposed to be, is it not?”

“I believe so,” she answered looking up demurely; but her eyes met such a fund of quizzical enjoyment in his that she was fain to drop them again until Miss Brangan, red as a peony, had returned to her perch and the ironic congratulations of Bride Sweeny. Miss Davoren was puzzled to know who her neighbour was. Could he be the Bishop’s nephew, alluded to before? She darted a criticizing look at the two gentlemen. Hogan was slight, but compact, and looked somewhat taller than his relative: he resembled him in complexion and feature. But the culture and quick intelligence so lacking in the physiognomy of the elder man were apparent in the more vigorous and clean-cut features of the barrister. He was not handsome, but there was nothing insignificant in his expression and bearing; and under the heavy eyebrows was a pair of grey, bright eyes, observant and humorous.

He stooped a little towards her, and said courteously, “Might I ask what comes next? Grand Fantasia,—something to make us all talk: I suppose the aim or end of most drawing-room music. Then, oh my! why, they have a German recitation, ‘Joan of Arc,’—aw, *Skiller’s*. That’s very deep; quite beyond me. I’ve read it in the English.”

“Indeed.” Miss Davoren was perfectly grave, though she was thinking to herself how evenly the balance had been restored between her neighbour and Mrs. Rafferty. “I’ve seen ‘The Robbers’ in French. I forget whose translation it was, though. It is quite tantalizing to hear that *Lebt wohl, ihr Grotten and ihr kühlen Brunnen* (‘Farewell, ye grottoes and cool streams.’) I am sure the thermometer must be ninety, at least, in this room.”

“More: look there!” Hogan indicated with a glance one of the occupants of the front benches.

“Poor Lady Shanassy!” Her ladyship had untied the yellow ribbons which confined her bonnet, and was lying back, gasping for breath, in her chair, yet smiling politely. Her double chin waggled about helplessly, and her round, red forehead shone with heat. It was stifling now in the room. The air that came in at the windows was hot and dusty. The mignonette seemed to have exhaled all its sweetness, and the geraniums and roses in the bouquet before the Bishop were shedding their petals on the red cloth. The priests lolled on their chairs, and talked all the time to each other, or whoever was near. It was positively too hot to pay attention.

“What’s this, now? glory be to God!” ejaculated a great fat priest: “the globes, alannah! The three Muses ’tis we have.”

“Beggin’ your pardon, Father O’Slaterry,” said a curate on his right, “there was nine of them.”

“So there was,” assented the big priest. “You were at school since I was. Graces, I mint to say: ’tis all one as the same.”

The three muses were Miss Sweeny, Miss Rooney, and Miss Casey—the last-named holding the dreaded “brass thing, the quadrint,” gingerly in her white-thread-gloved fingers, and repeating the “rule” all wrong to herself with fearful frowns. Miss Casey was first, and said her rule off glibly, but inaudibly, staring all the while at the red cloth on the table with an expression at once aggrieved and ferocious. The globe was twisted and made to squeak. Miss Casey did not drop her quadrant, but was so frightened when her turn came that she never remembered whether she had said everything wrong or not.

Hogan looked on with genuine amusement. It was the first time that he had witnessed one of these exhibitions; and he had little idea of the treat in store for him. Knowing the three performers he found something intensely incongruous in their proceedings. Lady Shanassy, who in her day had stood behind the counter of her husband’s grocery, and whose niece, Miss Rooney, might be called upon to do the same thing, no doubt was as edified as she seemed to be at the learning displayed. He looked all round at the phalanx of countenances: before him, where the girls were seated, and behind, to the guests; but the children looked tired and hot and nervous, and the priests were chattering and laughing and

yawning. He caught the eye of his cousin the prioress, and shook his head. She did not know what he meant, and was too far off to speak to him. Then he turned to his neighbour, whose name as yet he did not know.

“Dear me!” said he, “why, this is astonishing learning! What in the wide world? Whoever expected young ladies like these to know such things? I must make a note of it, and keep clear of them ever after. How in the world, now, could I ask such a bluestocking as that” (nodding in the direction of the bewildered Miss Casey) “to dance a quadrille with me! I’d as soon think of engaging in conversation with Caroline Herschel or Mrs. Somerville.”

“Poor things!” said Miss Davoren, who was trying hard to keep from laughing. Something in the voice made him look sharply at her. Was she making fun of him? She was as demure as possible, and seemed absorbed in Miss Rooney’s manipulations of the globe.

“What does it all mean?” asked he, when the interesting exhibition was over, and the globe, protesting all the way, was wheeled back to its corner.

“I am sure I don’t know. I never was at a school in my life,” replied she. “I begin to fear my education has been sadly neglected.”

“Do you like fables,—La Fontaine and Aesop, and that sort of thing?” This was *à propos* of the closing piece, “La Cigale et le Fourmi,” recited by a tiny, fair-haired girl of five.

“Exceedingly; Aesop’s fables were a great delight to me. He leaves so much to your imagination, you know. When I was a child, I used to divert myself making up stories out of them—reading, in fact, what was to be read between the lines. You remember that charming one, “The Dog and the Shadow”? Now, what sort of disposition had that dog? You can imagine him courageous, risking mortal combat; or cowardly, prepared to fly directly he had accomplished his act of spoliation. Another thing, too. Did he, or did he not, attempt to secure his own piece as well as the other? and what were his sensations on seeing the dog in the water mimic his actions so exactly?”

“Ah, ah I” said Hogan, laughingly. “That is an interesting question indeed: but perhaps he abandoned his own piece as some sort of compensation to the other dog; it might have been an amicable exchange, now, concluded after a negotiation.”

“Yes; one could fancy a bargain,” said Miss Davoren, dryly, “both parties willing and agreeable. Now they’re distributing the prizes. We shall get out soon, I hope.”

The Bishop, upon whose knee the little pupil who had recited the French fable was now seated, handed books to the girls, as they came up in order of merit to receive them. To the surprise of her class and herself, Miss Brangan was awarded no fewer than three firsts.

“It’s a scandal!” loudly exclaimed Bride Sweeny. “Theresa ought to have got them. Mary Branigan, you’re no better than a——”

“Stop,” said a nun, catching the speaker by the elbow. How dare you make remarks on what your superiors have decided! I’m ashamed of you, Miss; the guests barely gone to their luncheon, and such conduct beginning.”

Miss Sweeny, impulsive in everything, plunged headlong into a book-closet, and burst into tears. The other girls were racing up and down the room—some quarrelling over the books, more than one crying with disappointment, and all bursting with excitement and long-pent-up feelings. Miss Brangan, with three gaudy red and yellow bound books tightly tucked under her arm, her red countenance all aflame with mingled defiance and triumph, stood with her back to the chimney-piece, stoutly repelling the taunts and innuendoes of her companions. With the presence of mind and clear-sightedness that characterized her, she had realized the situation at a glance, and had taken up her position accordingly.

Knowing well that she was not entitled to a single reward, she had understood that on the occasion of “her going home for good,” her teachers had felt it desirable that she should be able to present some certificates or guarantees of her progress in her studies. After seven or eight years spent in St. Swithin’s, during which time the convent exchequer had been the richer by some five hundred pounds of Alderman Brangan’s money, it was only natural that at the end of that period the young lady should give some evidence of either talent or culture. Besides, the Alderman was wealthy and of high position; and who was Theresa, compared to Mary Brangan? Theresa would be indemnified next year, “*ad majorem Dei gloriam*,” as the reverend Mother, who liked Theresa, said to herself with a sigh, when signing her name in each prize book.

“Never mind,” said Theresa heartily, to some condoling friends. “I *earned* them, if she’s got them; an’ what do I care? Not one button!”

The nun who had reproved Miss Sweeny was standing near, and heard this. She cast a scrutinizing look from under her black veil at the speaker. Not a trace of envy or discontent could she discover on the open brow of the girl; and she nodded her head with an approving smile. She had seen perfectly that Bride, between whom and the heiress was a feud of old standing, had only made the injustice a peg on which to hang a quarrel; this she, by her prompt action, had prevented. Mary Brangan was leaving for good; “and a good riddance, too!” thought the sister, glancing at the truculent countenance of that young lady. “She’ll be married in less than six months,” and a little curl of disgust passed over her lips. “But Theresa,” and she looked again at her, “what rest will she find for the sole of her foot in the world?” questioned the nun, whose experienced eye read in the clever, bright, refined face a presage of trouble and conflict to come. “We’ll have her back here. That’s the sort that always do come back.”

“Mary Brangan! Where’s Mary Brangan? Darling child, come out in the garden with me.”

The speaker was Mother Paul, the mistress of the novices and teacher of the use of the globes and arithmetic, and Mary Brangan’s favourite nun. Not, indeed, that she cared one bit more for her than for the others; but it was the fashion to have a favourite nun, to whom to apply for advice in difficulties such as peculiarly afflict schoolgirls: for example, scruples in matters of confession, difficulties of belief—mostly, indeed, quite imaginary, or resulting from a deficiency of imagination; and Miss Brangan, of course, followed the general rule.

“Now, Mary dear,” began Mother Paul, a little old lady whose countenance expressed chiefly amiability and simplicity, “I’ve got leave to be absent from the defamer on purpose to speak to you. You know, dear child, it is a serious thing your leaving us this way for good, to enter on a scene of temptations and—and—ahem! constant struggle and watchfulness; don’t you, now?”

“Yes, Mother,” answered Mary; who, indeed, looked forward to life as a scene of eternal vacation, and whose imagination was revelling in visions of fashionable attire, late lying in bed in the morning, and never hearing bells ring for imperative duties.

“Come down here, child: the shade of the apple-trees is better than this glare, and you’ve got nothing on your head.”

The pair walked down a cross path bordered with lavender bushes and great clove carnations, the flowers of which were drooping in the heat. The *parterres*, glowing with geraniums and sweet-williams, looked hot and garish, and the perfume in the close air was stifling. They passed through a little swing gate into an orchard, where the trees hung over the gravel walks and formed shady avenues. Mother Paul turned down the first path, and continued speaking, with an anxious, serious tone and look that contrasted strangely with the bearing of her companion.

“Keep faithful to grace, dear child. I know you’ll go to weekly confession and communion; and you will come to your monthly meetings here on Sundays and feastdays?”

“Oh yes, Mother,” answered Miss Brangan dutifully; but not without some misgivings that Sunday meetings might interfere with those promenades on Kingstown Pier to which she looked forward with such delight.

“But that’s not enough, Mary dear; there’s a great deal more than that necessary. Oh, it’s terrible how girls are led away! Now, there’s fast dancing: that’s the hardest thing of——”

“Oh, Mother!” interrupted Mary, almost with a shriek, “I’ll promise you ever so faithfully: never, never!—now see if I will.”

“Ah!” sighed Mother Paul, looking up to the blue sky through the lattice of fruit-laden boughs overhead, “girls have promised me that often; and actually at their very first ball—their *first* ball, Mary—have basely yielded to the temptation of the devil!”

“Laws!” said Mary, meditatively and wonderingly. Then, moved by curiosity, “Who was it, Mother? was it the Raffertys?”

“I wouldn’t tell you, dear child, for the world, that would be a sin against charity; so don’t be losing your time asking me. But, Mary dear, I was wanting to speak to you most particularly about what you know you’re most inclined to—love of dress, darling child; and oh! above all things, light reading.”

Miss Mary assumed an air of resignation and *quasi*-penitence. She knew very well that Mother Paul was referring to that going-away dress which was at this very moment causing such heartburnings and envy in

the dressing-room, where it was ostentatiously spread out in strong contrast to the “sacks,” as she disdainfully termed the school uniform frocks of the rest. As for the “light reading,” that was the natural consequence of her once having brought to school, in a fit of bravado pure and simple, a yellow-backed railway novel, which had been pounced on and confiscated immediately, and the rumoured awfulness of which had thrown the school into a state of effervescence, and had invested herself with a delicious halo of wickedness and audacity that lasted nearly a week.

“Love of dress,” continued the Mother, “is a snare and a delusion; and it is degrading to every one; but it is especially revolting in a child who, like you, has had the benefit of years of training and religious education.”

“But, Mother,” expostulated Mary Brangan, with a perceptible pout, “papa wishes it; and people must dress accordingly.”

“Oh! I know, I know, dear,” said Mother Paul in a resigned tone; “obey your family. Of course you must appear according to your position in life; only remember the example of the Saints. St. Elizabeth wore a hair shirt under her royal robes. Never neglect to mortify your own inclinations: that’s the surest road to salvation.”

Mary listened devoutly to this somewhat vague direction, and began to wish the four o’clock bell would ring and call Mother Paul to her dinner. She intended fully to “mortify her inclinations,” and had a vague idea that after a week or two she would get up and go to eight o’clock mass every morning. That, as she had been in the habit of so doing for years, would not be very difficult; besides, to the intrinsic meritoriousness of the practice was joined the consideration of meeting lots of girls, and of forming new and desirable acquaintances.

“You’ll promise me, Mary, faithfully, never to read any book that hasn’t got your confessor’s approbation. Oh, Mary dear, if you only knew the—”

“I do, though, Mother Paul; and I’ll never read anything at all, if you like,—there now!” vociferated Mary, who had just caught sight of a group of heads in the dressing room window, and was seized with a sudden alarm lest any of their owners should meddle with her new dress. Biddy Sweeny would be capable of trying it on. How she burned to get away!

Mother Paul, whose veil prevented her seeing Miss Brangan's movements, stopped, and turning round, looked into her companion's face. Miss Mary was flushed a little, and her black eyes sparkled; the faint breeze that was just stirring the boughs lifted her ripply brown hair, and swept some of it across her forehead—white and unwrinkled yet, but hard. She was not pretty, for she had not a good feature in her face; nor interesting, for she had a determined, bold expression; but she had a beauty of her own at this moment—the beauty of youth and freshness and vigorous strong life, eager for action and enjoyment, eager, and daring, and ignorant. Mother Paul read it all with one look; and she smiled with a smile that was half a sigh, thinking how near the child was to her now, standing there in her white robe of innocence, a picture with a framing of fresh flowers and leaves; and tomorrow busy with the gauds and poms and vanities of this world, and far from her for ever.

“Oh! Mary dear, don't be in extremes. My child, that's what alarms me for you: you're always in extremes. And another thing,—now you'll find the time hang very heavily on your hands at home. Go on with your Italian, dear. You read your piece quite nicely to-day; and don't forget it.”

“Augh! what's the good, Mother Paul?” Mary was getting cross now; the burden laid upon her was beginning to be more than she could bear. “I know as much as any one else; where's the use of them things?”

“You never can tell, dear; you may be going to Italy one of these days; you never can know what may happen.”

Miss Mary had an eye for an absurdity, and stifled an inclination to giggle. She thought that a poor reason, but did not say so.

“I think that's not very likely, Mother.” She had already fixed on a receptacle in the lumber-room for her school-books, and beheld in her mind's eye, with intense satisfaction, Silvio Pellico and Veneroni's grammar reposing in undisturbed peace at the bottom of it.

“Now, dear child, I must go. I'll come down and bid you good-bye at five, when the carriage comes for you. You'll remember everything, Mary, and be a good, pious, Catholic girl, and do St. Swithin credit, and your religion. Now remember, Mary, it's matter of confession if you read anything but what Father McQuaide approves.”

“Oh! now, Mother, do you think I'd do such a thing?” Mary was positively indignant. They were now at the door of the school-house. Mother Paul smiled as she passed through into the monastery, and breathed a

prayer—good, pious soul—for her pupil’s welfare; and Mary, having closed the door after her with a sigh of relief, tore up the dressing-room stairs to look after her property.

The *déjeuner* had been going on for some time, and not a few of the guests had departed; still talking and laughing, eating and drinking, were being carried on with vigour. Lady Shanassy was seated near the Bishop, and the Mother Superior was busy catering for their wants. The nuns acted as waitresses and hostesses at the same time, and ran hither and thither with jellies and ices and more solid comestibles. Plates and glasses rattled and crashed occasionally, and great jolly peals of laughter shook the very windows. None of the pupils were present, save the Bishop’s little friend Angela Carey, who was seated beside him, drinking coffee out of his cup and being fed with all sorts of good things; there was a separate repast provided for them in their own refectory, and which they were all too excited and busy to eat. The large parlour seemed cool and airy in comparison with the schoolroom: the blinds were all drawn down, and through the wide-opened sashes the air streamed in fragrant and fresh from the shaded lawn without. The gaudy hues of the ladies’ dresses, and the brilliant pyramids of flowers on the table, were toned down by the shade to a mellow richness which the stained oak of the floor and walls enhanced. The nuns, in their picturesque religious garb, with pale refined faces, ministered to the wants of their guests. To Miss Davoren, at least, who was observant and impressionable, it formed a pleasant and suggestive picture. The Rafferty girls were too well used to it to think anything about the occasion extraordinary or out of the common; and sat with handkerchiefs carefully spread in their laps, and nibbled and gossiped with the priests, their neighbours. Lady Shanassy and Mrs. Rafferty professed themselves delighted with everything: “lovely” and “beautiful” were the mildest terms by which they could measure their admiration.

“Deed, yes,” said the Bishop; “Saint Gengulphus is beaten all to nothing entirely. Where’s John?”

“At the other end,” said the Superior. “I hope he’s getting something to eat; it was so provoking I didn’t know about the trains sooner. Poor Father Carey got scarcely anything. Lady Shanassy, let me give you one small bit of this cream: the lobster salad, then? They’re made at home, so I can assure you they’re good. And you think our music was better, my lord? Poor Mother de Sales will be so glad.”

“Won’t you be glad of your holidays, Mother? you must be entirely wore out,” said Mrs. Rafferty, who was holding a chicken bone most genteelly in her pocket-handkerchief, and picking it deliberately.

“Tis done now for another year. We go into Retreat to-night for ten days. Father Maloney will open it to-morrow morning, and dear knows that it will be a relief. I daresay in another hour there won’t be a child of the seventy left.”

“I should fancy *they* will find that a relief,” observed Mr. Hogan, who had come up from his end of the room. Indeed, the laughing and romping without could be heard distinctly.

“What do you say, Angela?” asked the Bishop. “I wager you’re sorry to go away, hey?”

“Berry,” replied Angela, speaking thickly through a mouthful of pink jelly, and looking up confidently from under her yellow curls. “Uncle John’s gone away.”

“Yes; gone to catch a train, my dear. Poor man, didn’t get his lunch.”

“I hope you don’t forget that I have to do the same thing, sir,” interposed his nephew in a low tone.

“Business, Mrs. Rafferty. Gentlemen have not the elegant leisure of you ladies. Might I ask,” and he dropped his voice again, “who is the young lady in grey who sat beside me?”

“Ah, then! and you don’t know? Why, I thought you knew her perfectly, you an’ she seemed such friends. She’s a Miss Davoren. ’Twas through Stanislas I came to know her; he an’ her brother’s great friends; she lives out at Green Lane.”

“Oh, to be sure; I remember meeting him: Dicky—Dicky Davoren, a handsome little fellow, with Stanislas.”

Then Mr. Hogan and his uncle took their leave of the assembly, and mounting a car outside the gate, sped citywards as fast as possible.

“God be praised that job is over, anyhow!” said the Bishop, twisting himself comfortably back in his seat. “Fine lot of girls she has got there, too. I hope next year will be as good a one. What a headache all that racket has given me!”

“Me, too; though I was not so long there as you, sir.”

“The drive will do us good,” returned the Bishop, drawing a deep breath; and now, my dear boy, what’s this you’re going to do? and when may I see you back?”

“I can’t just say that, sir; it will depend on how I get along. I wasn’t telling you about my friend Saltasche, was I? No. Well, you must know him; I got some work—cases for opinion—through him when that last Lead Mines Company was being wound up. You surely know Cosmo Saltasche?”

“Bless me! of course I do: the fellow who is at all those Charitable Association Meetings and Hospital Boards. Yes; a regular swaddler!”

“On the contrary a most liberal man; great friend of Monsignor Bursford’s; says he met him in Rome.”

“I fancy now I have seen that Saltasche at Princess Galichini’s; and no doubt it was there he met Bursford too.”

“A very genial, pleasant sort of fellow, a great friend of Lord Brayhead’s and Lord Ramines’; he has asked me to dinner to meet them.”

“He has,—eh,—has he?” said the elder man, with a dry sort of smile. “Queer couple to hunt together as ever I heard of. One a fierce old Orange bigot, the other a blackleg—I believe he was drummed out of a London Club for misconduct. I don’t care for ayther of them; you and the likes of you have nothing to do with that sort; far better keep to your own people.”

Though the Bishop spoke in this slighting way, he was secretly delighted, and his nephew saw it plainly. So with a mock air of submission he said,—

“You are the best judge, sir, of course; but a public man can’t pick and choose, and I might miss many a good thing by confining my acquaintance to those of my own religion.”

The Bishop did not reply. A large carriage, drawn by a pair of showy bays, whose harness was almost covered with brass, with menservants in green and gold liveries on the box, overtook their car; as it dashed past, a stout lady inside, dressed in brown, with a gorgeous hat and feathers, leaned forward and honoured the Bishop with a stare which was half recognition, half curiosity.

“Ah, then! my God!” cried he, astonished, “who is this that is? I know her surely.”

His nephew burst out laughing. “I should think so, indeed; it’s the big fat girl, Miss Bran— something or another. Just as I was leaving the hall I saw her trapesing down the stairs, got up to kill, and looking over her shoulder at her long-tailed gown. You ought to have seen the faces of the girls looking at her. It was a regular comedy.”

The Bishop laughed too. “That girl will have money—lots of it. Her father’s Alderman Brangan. The Raffertys are making up to her: I can see that clearly. Faith, then, Stanislas Mulcahy might well suit her. The money’s there, for certain: more than can be said of the Rafferty girls, for all the talk that he can give them four thousand apiece. I don’t believe it, for I know where he got it. There’s the Brangans’ connection, too, into the bargain.”

“Do you mean the gin palace connection, sir?” answered the barrister, with a curl of his lip.

The Bishop looked at his nephew angrily; but he had no time to say anything in reply, for the car drew up at that moment at the door of his own house, which was situated in a quiet street on the north side of Dublin.

“I ordered dinner at six,” said he, leading the way in. “I hope it is not spoiled: hey, Martha?”

“Glad to see you, Master John,” said the housekeeper, an old woman who had known Hogan from the time he was a child, ignoring her master’s question to greet his companion.

“Where were you this long time, alannah?”

“Now, Martha,” spoke the Bishop peremptorily, “don’t be gosthering with that boy, but bring up our dinner. I have to go out at eight o’clock.”

Then they walked into the sitting-room, where a round dinner-table was laid for two. It was a comfortable room, and furnished with solid, heavy furniture. A red Brussels carpet and rug, with heavy curtains of the same colour; half a dozen morocco-covered chairs; and one arm-chair, well stuffed and cushioned, stood before the Bishop’s writing-table. The sofa was brilliant with bead cushions and antimacassars of all colours and designs. No flowers, statuettes, or pictures spoke for the taste or re-

finement of the occupant. The bookcase contained three shelves, two of which were occupied by theological books, well coated with dust, the top held a double row of modern novels, chiefly Trollope's. A few large photographs from Rome, relics of his travels, hung upon the walls: St. Peter's, the Coliseum, and Trajan's Column, looking ghastly and unreal in thick black and white. Over the fireplace a common print of His Holiness, in the well-known attitude of benediction, looked down on a choice collection of cigar boxes, pipes, and matchstands, mixed up oddly with rosaries, prayer-books, and reliquaries.

His lordship drew a pair of Berlin wool-work slippers from under a table, and having got rid of his neat kid boots, slipped down to the cellar for a bottle of champagne, while his nephew, spying a newspaper with which he had some connection, hastily opened it to look if some verses sent in by him the day before had been printed. He found them as he expected in the poet's corner, but had not time to read the effusion before his lordship returned; and as he by no means desired his relative to know anything of the matter, he was obliged to replace the newspaper in its basket. The Bishop objected to literature. He knew the world—at least, the world of Dublin; and was well aware that the reputation of being literary does not serve a young professional man; and as John O'Rooney Hogan owed everything to his uncle, he was bound to defer to his prejudices. The barrister's father had been a tradesman in a little inland country town; and he, an only son, had been destined by his mother for the Church. For this, however, the youth had shown but scant inclination, and after absorbing the very limited stock of knowledge to be procured at the diocesan college of — he returned home to take his place in his father's drapery shop. This was even less to his taste than the clerical career, but his efforts to free himself from the toils of the hated business were unavailing. After a year or two of discontented servitude, the fates willed it that his father should die suddenly, and he found himself, at the age of nineteen, master of his own destiny. He confided his wishes and aspirations to his mother's brother, the then P.P. of St. Columbkille. Father O'Rooney good-naturedly consented to give him a chance, and carried him up to Dublin. After a severe and continuous course of study he passed a brilliant entrance examination into Trinity College, and, without being afterwards distinguished, got through his legal and other studies with the reputation of being a sure and solid, if somewhat slow student. He eked out his resources by teaching; and on his mother's death, which happened the same year that he was called to the English

Bar, found himself possessed of some twelve hundred pounds' worth of railway stock, and not a single encumbrance, wherewith to face the world. He was clever and good-looking, very gentlemanlike in appearance, and had an irreproachable accent—a most important item in our inventory of his qualifications.

The Bishop's interests in this world (his lordship would deny that he had any) were centred in his nephew; he looked upon him as a son, and, like many parents, thinking in his conceit that lack of opportunity and deficient instruction alone had hindered himself from rising to the highest pinnacle of eminence, he determined that the young man should enjoy every benefit that adverse fate had denied himself. His great aspiration was to see the barrister a judge. He felt that he ought to, and might, be on the woolsack; still, he thought he could die content if he could once see him in the ermine robes of even a puisne judge. But "*ottenuto che l'avesse, si poteva esser certo che non si sarebbe più curato degli anni, non avrebbe desiderato altro, e sarebbe morto contento, come tutti quelli che desideran molto una cosa assicurano di voler fare quando siano arrivati a ottenerla.*" And we may be very certain that the Chief Justiceship would haunt the dreams of Judge Hogan and his uncle, Bishop O'Rooney.

The dinner appeared directly. Martha was punctual and orderly, and the fillets of sole were perfection. Neither of the gentlemen had much appetite, as we may imagine.

"Those Raffertys are keeping up great state and style now," began the Bishop; "but he isn't solid. No, Assumption has told me she had always trouble enough to get the money out of him for the girls' bills when she had 'em there."

The Bishop deemed it well to give his nephew all the information possible about their acquaintance. Nothing gives a man so much the air of society as knowing everything about everybody. And it is quite easy to possess as much information as a French *chef de police*, without being in the least a gossip or ill-natured.

"They're moving into the Square in November, when they come in from Bray; by the same token, I believe they're paying fifty pounds a month for the house they have there."

"Whiskey, is he not?" asked the barrister carelessly.

“I believe tea and sugar also. He was a great friend of the late Lord Mayor. There’s daughters there, too; but no money. No,” said the bishop, shaking his head critically, “I don’t believe there’s any; but it’s a fine connection,—they are hand and glove with the Muldoons, the attorneys.”

“Bah!” said Mr. Hogan contemptuously, setting down his glass of Giesler. “People that are the laughing-stock of Dublin for vulgarity; common publicans, too,—traders. Faugh!”

“And isn’t it good enough, sir?” thundered the angry Bishop. “Now, John, my boy,” he continued, in a quieter tone, “don’t let any one hear *you* sneer at trade. You’re in a fair way enough; but a rash speech like that would be enough to tumble you over. I’ve not helped you to where you are without trouble and expense; and, as I judge by you now, you seem to forget yourself altogether just because a couple of swell Protestants have asked you to dine, and you must therefore be turning up your nose at these decent, useful people. Depend upon it, John, the only way to get on—and I know the world—the only chance of consideration or respect you can have from the Protestants, is to let them see—you being a Catholic—that you have the confidence and respect of the Catholics. The Government can’t do without the priests; and what use would you be without their back? And to make little of Catholics and Catholic society, is not the way to go about getting that,—I can tell you, sir.”

“I am fully aware of that, sir,” replied the young man in a deferential tone; “but I flatter myself you would wish me better than to see me tied for life to one of the Misses Rafferty or Brangan. I shall have to marry a Catholic, I suppose;—have no wish to do otherwise,” he added hastily; “but there are better class Catholics in Ireland and England than these.”

“But the capital,—the money?” interposed the Bishop hastily.

“I don’t mean to marry till I am more settled in life,—at least, sir, unless I find it indispensable. Do you know, sir, that Lord Brayhead is nearly related to the Chief Justice, and his son is to be member for Blankshire directly? He belongs to the Reform Club.” And Hogan fixed his keen grey eyes on the old gentleman’s face, to watch the effect of his well-calculated words.

The frown vanished from the Bishop’s face, and he filled himself a sparkling glass.

“Well, well, my boy, do as you like; it may be an opening: only remember to act with prudence always, and don’t be in a hurry,—wait patiently, and the world will come round to you. ‘Fair and easy goes far in a day.’”

Then the Bishop and his nephew helped themselves to choice Manilla cigars, and were soon enveloped in a fragrant cloud of tobacco smoke. It was not long before St. George’s chimed eight, and his lordship jumped up and rang the bell.

“Coffee for Mr. John, Martha. I have no time. Did you get any news of Mrs. Doolin since?”

“Augh! yis thin; she’ll niver pass the night, me lord. Master John, darlin’, don’t go now till I give ye your coffee.”

“Good-bye, my boy,” said his lordship, shaking the young man’s hand heartily. “I won’t see you for a couple of months, anyhow. Gobless you, and take care of yourself. Write from Paris, and mind you go see Father Pat Kelly at *Saint Sulpice*.”

The Bishop was gone, and Hogan waited to drink his cup of coffee. Presently Martha appeared with a tray.

“Well, Martha,” said he pleasantly to the old woman, how is the world treating you these times?”

“Augh! thin; I can’t complain as times goes. ’Tis yourself is scarce and rare this while back, Master John.”

“Term time and circuit, I’m busy, Martha, thank God!”

“When’ll we have the weddin’, Master John?” asked she slyly, handing him a cup of fragrant coffee.

“That’s what you’re thinking of, Martha, is it? It is more than I am.”

“Augh! now, sure you wouldn’t let us go till we see you settled in the world, jewel. Nothin’ would give his lordship such pleasure, or meself ayther, wid respect to you.”

“I’m young enough, Martha, and so are you,” answered Hogan between two sips.

“Dear, but ’tis yourself has the fine sootherin’ tongue, an’ always had, indeed. Himself done well to make a counsellor out ov you, Master John, honey!”

Master John finished his cup of coffee with a good-humoured smile.

“You never forget old times, Martha,” said he.

“Ah no, thin! Do you remember when you blown out the gas, an’ had like to kill yourself, the night you first came up from the country, in Columbkille Chapel House? Dear! dear! but you wor’ the boy thin, Master John;” and the old dame laughed and laughed until she had to put the corner of her apron to her eyes.

Master John laughed too, but not quite so heartily; and declining more coffee, set off home to prepare for his journey the next morning.