

THE CLAIMANT.

(From Michael Davitt's "Prison Diary.")

His arrival, says Mr. Davitt, in Dartmoor, after completing the usual probationary in Millbank Penitentiary, created unusual excitement among both warders and prisoners, but particularly among the latter. "Sir Roger" soon became the lion of the place. To fall into exercising file with him on Sunday was esteemed an event to be talked of for a week afterwards by the fortunate convict, who had, for once in his life rubbed his skirts against one of England's proud aristocracy. To settle an argument upon any topic—legal, political, or disciplinary—required but the assertion, "Sir Roger Tichborne says so," and an immediate acquiescence in the conclusiveness of the facts or opinions advanced was the consequence. In fact, "Sir Roger" soon became the recognised authority upon every matter of moment to the one thousand citizens of Dartmoor's criminal population, from the merits of the skilly to the evils of trial by jury, or from the partizanship of judges to the quality of the shin-of-beef soup; and the acquisition to that secluded and unique society of such a man was put down among the list of great events in the history of Dartmoor. He remained the standard authority upon juries, judges, money, and victims of circumstantial evidence, to the whole chorus of gossiping magmen, until he was finally removed to another prison. Unlike the ordinary bogus aristocrat, "Sir Roger" never "flashed his rank"—that is, when he walked or talked with other prisoners, he did not "put on airs," or adopt the patronising manners that both outside, as well as in prison usually denote alike the *parvenue* and the impostor. He maintained his position, though, as the real "Sir Roger Tichborne" whenever brought before governor or visiting director, or when the fact might be questioned by other prisoners, and in his letters to outside friends while in Dartmoor. Whatever the man really is, victim or fraud, Tichborne or Castro, he exhibited, while under my observation, an individuality and a bearing in marked contrast to the ordinary impostors and criminals with whom he was associated. On the other hand, Sir Roger's intellectual training and extent of general knowledge, as far as could be gathered from his prison conversation, appeared to me to be far too limited for a man that was reputed to have received a good college education, and who had, in addition, travelled so much and mixed with so many men the world over, and who had also the advantage of having passed his forty-fifth year. Having accidentally heard the result of the general election of 1874, I communicated to "Roger" the triumph of the Tories and the fact of Mr. Disraeli becoming Prime Minister; whereupon he remarked, "Then you see if he does not make himself First Lord of the Treasury also." On another occasion he informed me that Dr Kenealy had introduced a bill into the House of Commons the week previously regarding his ("Roger's") treatment in Dartmoor, when Dr Kenealy had simply asked a question of the Home Secretary in reference thereto. His political knowledge appeared to be exactly on a level with that of the ordinary magman.

THE FLORA OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

(From the New York Evening Post.)

OTHER countries may show as great variety of flowers as Southern California, but there is none in which they take such complete possession of the land. In perhaps two years out of five the rainfall is insufficient to call out a full parade of the host of beauty; but in the other three nearly one-half of the land in winter and early spring is covered with bewildering colour, in which the visitor from the East may search almost in vain for old acquaintances. The latest editions of Wood or Grey will be quite useless, and one must be an expert in the science to find one's way through the immense botany of California.

In a few days after the first rain the lately bare plains and hillsides show a greenish tinge. Fine little leaves of various kinds will be found springing from the ground, but nearly all are lost in a general profusion of dark green ones, of such shape and delicacy of texture that a careless eye might readily take them for ferns. This is the *alfileria*, the prevailing flower of the land. Daily the land grows greener, while the shades of green, varied by the play of sunlight on the slopes and rolling hills, increase in number and intensity. Here the colour is soft and there bright; yonder it rolls in wavy alternations, and yonder it reaches in an unbroken shade where the plain sweeps broad and free. For many weeks green is the only colour, though cold nights may perhaps tinge it with a rusty red. About the last of January a little star-like flower of bluish pink begins to shine along the ground. This is the bloom of the *alfileria*, and swiftly it spreads from the southern slopes where it begins and runs from meadow to hilltop. Almost at the same time a little cream-coloured bell-flower begins to nod from a tall, slender stalk; another of sky-blue soon opens beside it; beneath these a little five-petalled flower of deep pink tries to outshine the blossoms of the *alfileria*; and above them soon stands the radiant cowslip, with reflexed petals of white, yellow and pink shining behind its purplish ovaries. On every side violets, here of the purest golden hue, and of overpowering fragrance, soon appear in numbers, beyond all conception. Six or seven varieties of clover, all with fine delicate leaves, now unfold flowers of yellow, red and pink. Delicate little crucifers of white and yellow shine modestly below all these; little cream-coloured flowers on slender scapes look skyward on every side; while others of purer white, with every variety of petal, crowd up among them. Standing now upon some hillside that commands miles of landscape one is dazzled with a blaze of colour from acres and acres of pink, perfect fields of violets, vast reaches of blue, endless sweeps of white.

Upon this—merely the warp of the carpet about to cover the land—the sun fast weaves a woof of splendour. Along the southern slopes of the lower hills soon beams the orange light of the poppy, which swiftly kindles the adjacent slopes, then flames along the meadow, and blazes upon the northern hillsides. Tall spires of green, mounting on every side, soon open upon the top into lilies of deep lavender, and the scarlet bracts of the painted cup glow side by side with the crimson of the cardinal flower. And soon comes

the iris, with its broad golden eye, fringed with rays of lavender blue, and five varieties of phacelia overwhelm some places with waves of purple, blue, indigo, and whitish pink. The evening primrose soon drapes the lower slopes with long sheets of brightest yellow, and from the hills above, the rock-rose adds its golden bloom to that of the sorrel and wild alfalfa, until the hills almost outshine the bright light from the slopes and plains. And through all this nod a tulip of the most delicate lavender; vetches, lupins, and all the members in the wild pea family are pushing and winding their way everywhere in every shade of crimson, purple, and white; along the ground the crowfoot weaves a mantle of white, through which, amid a thousand comrades, the orthocarpus rears its tufted head of pink. Among all these are mixed a thousand other flowers, plenty enough as plenty would be accounted in other countries, but here mere pin-points on a great map of colours.

As the stranger gazes upon this carpet that now covers hill and dale, undulates over the table lands, and robes even the mountain with a brilliancy and breadth of colour that strikes the eye even miles away, he exhausts his vocabulary of superlatives, and goes away imagining he has seen it all. Yet he has seen only the background of an embroidery more varied, more curious and splendid than the carpet upon which it is wrought. Asters bright with centre of gold and lavender rays soon shine high above the iris, and a new and larger tulip of deepest yellow rises where its lavender cousin is drooping its lately proud head. New bell-flowers of white and blue and indigo rise above the first, which served merely as ushers to the display, and whole acres ablaze with the orange of the poppy are fast turning with the indigo of the larkspur. Where the ground was lately aglow with the marigold, and the four-o'clock, the tall penstemon now reaches out a hundred arms full-hung with trumpets of purple and pink. Here the silence rears high its head with fringed corolla of scarlet; and there the wild gooseberry dazzles the eye with a perfect shower of tubular flowers of the same bright colour. The mimulus alone is almost enough to colour the hills. Half a dozen varieties, some with long, narrow, trumpet-shaped flowers, others with broad flaring mouths; some tall herbs, and others large shrubs, with varying shades of dark red, light red, orange, cream-colour, and yellow, they spangle hill-side, rock-pile, and ravine. Among them the morning glory twines its flowers of purest white, new lupinus climb over the old ones, and the trailing vetch festoons rock, and shrub, and tree, with long garlands of crimson, purple, and pink.

Meanwhile, the chaparral, which during the long dry season has robbed the hills in sombre green, begins to brighten with new life; new leaves adorn the ragged red arms of the manzanita, and among them blow thousands of little urn-shaped flowers of rose-colour and white.

THE NUN OF KENMARE.

THE Nun of Kenmare has arrived in New York. In an interview she said:—

"I have quite recovered from my fatigue, and would feel at home if the fussy men at the Barge office would only send me my luggage. But let me tell you my real object in coming to America. Guess? Money? Right you are. The fact is I want to establish a number of training schools for girls in England and Ireland, and I cannot do so effectually unless generous Americans help me. In these schools girls will be taught to plait straw, knit stockings, make lace, net ear-caps for horses, and all other such arts as are adapted for women. Others will learn printing, cooking, how to take care of children, and the ordinary domestic duties. Each girl will be allowed to choose her own task, and those who show any special aptitude will be trained to become telegraph operators, nurses, and teachers. In Nottingham our school has advanced very rapidly, and in Queenstown and Knock we hope for a similar success. The little children who attend our school in Nottingham receive a dinner every day at the cost of one penny a head, and, strange as it seems, our receipts do not fall short of our expenses."

"To what do you attribute the recent Irish distress?"

"Why, to bad potatoes and bad landlords, of course."

"Was your reception by Pope Leo XIII. as gracious as has been reported?"

"More so, if possible. Pope Pius IX. gave several private audiences to different persons, but his successor is very exclusive, and consequently I felt very much flattered at being privileged to speak with him in private."

"A story went the round of the papers some time ago that you had been miraculously cured of rheumatism at Knock, in Ireland. Is it true or not?"

"It is quite true. For several years I had been crippled with rheumatism, and could scarcely move from one room to another. At last I heard of the apparition in the chapel of Knock and went there at the risk of my life. On entering the chapel I suddenly felt the pains in my knee joints depart, and the next moment I knew that my old vigour had returned to me. And so it had, for from that day to this I have never been troubled with rheumatism. Another marvellous cure came under my observation about the same time. Right Rev. Dr. Murphy, Bishop of Tasmania, who had been nearly stone blind for several years, received from his sister a fragment of cement from the wall of the chapel, and on applying it to his eyes was immediately cured of his blindness. He hastened to Ireland and in the chapel of Knock, before an immense congregation, gave thanks to God for the mercy he had shown him."

"Have your books ever been pirated in this country?"

"Yes, one—my 'Life of St. Francis.' The others have been reprinted here, but the publishers have always paid me handsomely; more than one American has also left me a legacy. Washington Irving's coachman, a man named Callaghan, a native of Cork, left me 2,000 dollars. It seems he was dying, and had one of my books under his pillow at the time, and when his lawyers suggested that he should leave his earnings to his friends in Ireland, the poor man replied that he would leave his entire fortune, about 4,000 dollars, to the 'Nun of Kenmare.' On second thoughts, however, he left 2,000 dollars to Cardinal McCloskey and 2,000 dollars to me."