

and if she had not a penny, it would not diminish it."
 "Well, but you can have her if you wish, notwithstanding."

Reilly first looked at him with amazement; but he was sufficiently well acquainted with his character, both from what he had seen and heard of it, that his amazement passed away, and he simply replied:—

"Pray, how, sir?"

"Why, I'll tell you what, Reilly; except with respect to political principles, I don't think, after all, that there's the difference of a d—n between the Papist and Protestant Churches, as mere religions. My own opinion is, that there's neither of them any great shakes, as to any effect they have on society, unless to disturb it. I have known as good Papists as ever I did Protestants, and indeed I don't know why a Papist should not be as good a man as a Protestant; nor why a Protestant should not be as good a man as a Papist, on the other hand. Now do you see what I'm driving at?"

"Well, I can't exactly say that I do," replied Reilly.

"Then the upshot of the argument is this, that there is not a toss-up between them, and any man getting into a scrape and who could get out of it by changing one to the other—of course I mean from Popery to Protestantism—would prove himself a man of good sound sense, and above the prejudices of the world."

The truth is, Reilly saw, ere this, what Folliard was approaching, and as he determined to allow him full scope, his reply was brief:

"You seem fond of indulging in speculations, sir," replied Reilly with a smile; "but I should be glad to know why you introduce this subject to me?"

"To you?" replied Folliard; "why, who the devil else should or could I introduce it to with such propriety? Here, now, are two religions; one's not sixpence better nor worse than the other. Now, you belong to one of them, and because you do you're here snug and fast. I say, then, I have a proposal to make to you: you are yourself in a difficulty—you have placed me in a difficulty—and you have placed poor Helen in a difficulty—which, if anything happens you, I think will break her heart, poor child. Now you can take her, yourself, and me, out of all our difficulties, if you have only sense enough to shove over from the old P—to the young P—. As a Protestant you can marry Helen, Reilly—but as Papist never; and you know the rest; for, if you are obstinate and blind to your own interest, I must do my duty."

"Will you allow me to ask, sir, whether Miss Folliard is aware of this mission of yours to me?"

"She aware! She never dreamt of it; but I have promised to tell her the result after dinner to-day."

"Well, sir," replied Reilly, "will you allow me to state to you a few facts?"

"Certainly; go on."

"In the first place, then, such is your daughter's high and exquisite sense of integrity and honor, that if I consented to the terms you propose, she would reject me with indignation and scorn, as she ought to do. There, then, is your project for accomplishing my selfish and dishonest apostasy given to the winds. Your daughter, sir, is too pure in all her moral feelings, and too noble-minded, to take to her arms a renegade husband; a renegade, too, not from conviction, but from selfish and mercenary purposes."

"Confound the thing, this is but splitting hairs, Reilly, and talking big for effect. Speak, however, for yourself; as for Helen, I know very well that in spite of your heroics and hers, she'd be devilish glad you'd become a Protestant, and marry her."

"I am sorry to say, sir, that you don't know your own daughter; but as for me, Mr. Folliard, if one word of yours, or of hers, could place me on the British throne, I would not abandon my religion. Under no circumstances would I abandon it; but least of all, now that it is so barbarously persecuted by its enemies. This, sir, is my final determination."

"But do you know the alternative?"

"No, sir, nor do you."

"Don't I, faith? Why, the alternative is simply this, either marriage or hanging."

"Be it so; in that case I will die like a man of honor, and a true Christian and Catholic, as I hope I am."

"As a true fool, Reilly—as a true fool. I took this step privately, out of respect for your character. See how many of your creed became Protestants for the sake of mere property; think how many of them join our Church for the purpose of ousting their own fathers and relatives from their estates; and what is it all, on their parts, but the consequence of an enlightened judgment that shows them the errors of their old creed and the truth of ours? I think, Reilly, you are loose about the brains."

"That may be, sir; but you will never find me loose about my principles."

"Are you aware, sir, that Helen is to appear against you as an evidence?"

"No, sir, I am not, neither do I believe it. But now, sir, I beg you to terminate this useless and unpleasant interview. I can look into my own conscience with satisfaction, and am prepared for the worst. If the scaffold is to be my fate, I cannot but remember that many a noble spirit has closed the cares of an unhappy life upon it. I wish you good-day, Mr. Folliard."

"By h—s, you are the most obstinate blockhead that ever lived; but I've done; I did all in my power to save you—yet to no purpose. Upon my soul, I'll come to your execution."

"And if you do, you will see me die like a man and a gentleman; may I humbly add, like a Christian."

The squire, on his way home, kept up a long, low whistle, broken only by occasional soliloquies, in which Reilly's want of common-sense, and neglect, not only of his temporal interests but of his life itself, were the prevailing sentiments. He regretted his want of success, which he imputed altogether to Reilly's obstinacy, instead of to his integrity, firmness, and honor.

This train of reflection threw him into one of those capricious fits of resentment so peculiar to his unsteady temper, and as he went along he kept lashing himself up into a red heat of indignation and vengeance against that unfortunate gentleman. After dinner that day, he felt somewhat puzzled as to whether he ought to communicate to his daughter the result of his interview with Reilly, or not. Upon consideration, however, he deemed it more prudent to avoid the subject altogether, for he felt apprehensive that, however she might approve of her lover's conduct, the knowledge of his fate, which depended on it, would only plunge her into deeper distress. The evening, consequently, passed without any allusion to the subject, unless a peculiar tendency to melody on his part might be taken to mean something; to this we might add short abrupt ejaculations, unconsciously uttered—such as—"Whew, whew, whew-o-whew-o—d—n the fellow!—whew, whew-o-whew—he's a cursed goose; but a d—d obstinate—whew, whew-o-whew-o. Ay, but no matter—well—whew, whew-o-whew, whew! Helen, a cup of tea. Now, Helen, do you know a discovery I have made—but how could you? No, you don't, of course—but listen and pay attention to me—because it deeply affects myself."

The poor girl, apprehensive that he was about to divulge some painful secret, became pale and a good deal agitated; she gave him a long inquiring look, but said nothing.

"Yes, Helen, and the discovery is this: I find from experience, that tea and Burgundy—or indeed tea and any kind of wine—don't agree with my constitution; d—n the fel—whew, whew, whew, whew-o-whew; no, the confounded mixture turns my stomach into nothing more nor less than a bag of aquafortis—if he had but common—whew—"

"Well, but, papa, why do you take tea, then?"

"Because I'm an old fool, Helen; and if I am, there are some young ones besides; but it can't be helped now—whew, whew—it was done for the best."

In this manner he went on for a considerable time, ejaculating mysteries and enigmas, until he finished the second bottle, after which he went to bed.

It may be necessary to state here that, notwithstanding the incredible force and tenderness of his affection for his daughter, he had, ever since her elopement with Reilly, kept her under the strictest surveillance, and in the greatest seclusion; that is to say, as the proverb has it, "he locked the stable door when the steed was stolen"; or if he did not realise the aphorism, he came very near it.

Time, however, passed, and the Assizes were at hand; a fearful Avatar of judicial power to the guilty. The struggle between the parties who were interested for the fate of Whitecraft, and those who felt the extent of his unparalleled guilt, and the necessity not merely of making him an example, but of punishing him for his enormous crimes, was dreadful. The infatuation of political rancor on one side, an infatuation which could perceive nothing but the virtue of high and resolute Protestantism in his conduct, blinded his supporters to the enormity of his conduct, and, as a matter of course, they left no stone unturned to save his life. As we said, however, they were outnumbered; but still, they did not despair. Reilly's friend had been early in the legal market, and succeeded in retaining some of the ablest men at the Bar, his leading counsel being the celebrated advocate Fox, who was at the time one of the most distinguished men at the Irish Bar, and who subsequently was promoted to the Bench,

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