CHARLES JAMES LEVER

# THE KNIGHT OF GWYNNE

VOL. 1&2

**Charles James Lever**

# The Knight Of Gwynne
(Vol. 1&2)

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# Volume 1

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# PREFACE.

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I wrote this story in the Tyrol. The accident of my residence there was in this wise: I had travelled about the Continent for a considerable time in company with my family with my own horses. Our carriage was a large and comfortable calèche, and our team, four horses; the leaders of which, well-bred and thriving-looking, served as saddle horses when needed.

There was something very gypsy-like in this roving, uncertain existence, that had no positive bent or limit, and left every choice of place an open question, that gave me intense enjoyment. It opened to me views of Continental life, scenery, people and habits I should certainly never have attained to by other modes of travel.

Not only were our journeys necessarily short each day, but we frequently sojourned in little villages, and out-of-the-world spots, where, if pleased by the place itself, and the accommodation afforded, we would linger on for days, having at our disposal the total liberty of our time, and all our nearest belongings around us.

In the course of these rambles we had arrived at the town of Bregenz, on the Lake of Constance; where the innkeeper, to whom I was known, accosted me with all the easy freedom of his calling, and half-jestingly alluded to my mode of travelling as a most unsatisfactory and wasteful way of life, which could never turn out profitably to myself or to mine. From the window where we were standing as we

talked, I could descry the tall summit of an ancient castle, or schloss, about two miles away; and rather to divert my antagonist from his argument than with any more serious purpose, I laughingly told my host, if he could secure me such a fine old chateau as that I then looked at, I should stable my nags and rest where I was. On the following day, thinking of nothing less than my late conversation, the host entered my room to assure me that he had been over to the castle, had seen the baron, and learned that he would have no objection to lease me his chateau, provided I took it for a fixed term, and with all its accessories, not only of furniture but cows and farm requisites. One of my horses, accidentally pricked in shoeing, had obliged me at the moment to delay a day or two at the inn, and for want of better to do, though without the most remote intention of becoming a tenant of the castle, I yielded so far to my host's solicitation—to walk over and see it.

If the building itself was far from faultless it was spacious and convenient, and its position on a low hill in the middle of a lawn finer than anything I can convey; the four sides of the schloss commanding four distinct and perfectly dissimilar views. By the north it looked over a wooded plain, on which stood the Convent of Mehreran; and beyond this, the broad expanse of the Lake of Constance. The south opened a view towards the Upper Rhine, and the valley that led to the Via Mala. On the east you saw the Gebhardsberg and its chapel, and the lovely orchards that bordered Bregenz; while to the west rose the magnificent Lenten and the range of the Swiss Alps—their summits lost in the clouds.

I was so enchanted by the glorious panorama around me, and so carried away by the thought of a life of quiet labor and rest in such a spot, that after hearing a very specious account of the varied economies I should secure by this choice of a residence, and the resources I should have in excursions on all sides, that I actually contracted to take the chateau, and became master of the Rieden Schloss from that day.

Having thus explained by what chance I came to pitch my home in this little-visited spot, I have no mind to dwell further on my Tyrol experiences than as they concern the story which I wrote there.

If the scene in which I was living, the dress of the peasants, the daily ways and interests had been my prompters, I could not have addressed myself to an Irish theme; but long before I had come to settle at Predeislarg, when wandering amongst the Rhine villages, on the vine-clad slopes of the Bergstrasse, I had been turning over in my mind the Union period of Ireland as the era for a story. It was a time essentially rich in the men we are proud of as a people, and peculiarly abounding in traits of self-denial and devotion which, in the corruption of a few, have been totally lost sight of; the very patriotism of the time having been stigmatized as factious opposition, or unreasoning resistance to wiser counsels. That nearly every man of ability in the land was against the Minister, that not only all the intellect of Ireland, but all the high spirit of its squirearchy, and the generous impulses of its people, were opposed to the Union—there is no denying. If eloquent appeal and powerful argument could have saved a nation,

Henry Grattan or Plunkett would not have spoken in vain; but the measure was decreed before it was debated, and the annexation of Ireland was made a Cabinet decision before it came to Irishmen to discuss it.

I had no presumption to imagine I could throw any new light on the history of the period, or illustrate the story of the measure by any novel details; but I thought it would not be uninteresting to sketch the era itself; what aspect society presented; how the country gentleman of the time bore himself in the midst of solicitations and temptings the most urgent and insidious; what, in fact, was the character of that man whom no national misfortunes could subdue, no Ministerial blandishments corrupt; of him, in short, that an authority with little bias to the land of his birth has called—*The First Gentleman of Europe*.

I know well, I feel too acutely, how inadequately I have pictured what I desired to paint; but even now, after the interval of years, I look back on my poor attempt with the satisfaction of one whose aim was not ignoble. A longer and deeper experience of life has succeeded to the time since I wrote this story, but in no land nor amongst any people have I ever found the type of what we love to emblematize by the word Gentleman, so distinctly marked out as in the educated and travelled Irishman of that period. The same unswerving fidelity of friendship, the same courageous devotion to a cause, the same haughty contempt for all that was mean or unworthy; these, with the lighter accessories of genial temperament, joyous disposition, and a chivalrous respect for women, made up what I had at least in my mind when I tried to present to my readers my Knight of Gwynne.

That my character of him was not altogether ideal, I can give no better proof than the fact that during the course of the publication I received several letters from persons unknown to me, asking whether I had not drawn my portrait from this or that original, several concurring in the belief that I had taken as my model The Knight of Kerry, whose qualities, I am well assured, fully warranted the suspicion.

For my attempt to paint the social habits of the period, I had but to draw on my memory. In my boyish days I had heard much of that day, and was familiar with most of the names of its distinguished men. Anecdotes of Henry Grattan, Flood, Parsons, Ponsonby, and Curran jostled in my mind with stories of their immediate successors, the Bushes and the Plunketts, whose fame has come down to the very day we live in. As a boy, it was my fortune to listen to the narratives of the men who had been actors in the events of that exciting era, and who could even show me in modern Dublin the scenes where memorable events occurred, and not unfrequently the very houses where celebrated convivialities occurred. And thus from Drogheda Street, the modern Sackville Street, where the beaux of the day lounged in all their bravery, to the Circular road, where a long file of carriages, six in hand, evidenced the luxury and tone of display of the capital. I was deeply imbued with the features of the time, and ransacked the old newspapers and magazines with a zest which only great familiarity with the names of the leading characters could have inspired.

Though I have many regrets on the same score, there is no period of my life in which I have the same sorrow for not having kept some sort of note-book, instead of trusting to a

memory most fatally unretentive and uncertain. Through this omission I have lost traces of innumerable epigrams, and *jeux d'esprit* of a time that abounded in such effusions, and even where my memory has occasionally relieved the effort, I have forgotten the author. To give an instance, the witty lines—

“With a name that is borrowed, a title that 's bought,
Sir William would fain be a gentleman thought;
His wit is but cunning, his courage but vapor,
His pride is but money, his money but paper:”—

which, wrongfully attributed to a political leader in the Irish house, were in reality written by Lovel Edgeworth on the well-known Sir William Gladowes, who became Lord Newcomen; and the verse was not only poetry but prophecy, for in his bankruptcy some years afterwards the sarcasm became fact—“his money was but paper.”

This circumstance of the authorship was communicated to me by Miss Maria Edgeworth, whose letter was my first step in acquaintance with her, and gave me a pleasure and a pride which long years have not been able to obliterate.

I remember in that letter her having told me how she was in the habit of reading my story aloud to the audience of her nephews and nieces; a simple announcement that imparted such a glow of proud delight to me, that I can yet recall the courage with which I resumed the writing of my tale, and the hope it suggested of my being able one day to win a place of honor amongst those who, like herself, had selected Irish traits as the characteristics to adorn fiction.

For Con Heffernan I had an original. For Bagenal Daly, too, I was not without a model. His sister is purely imaginary, but that she is not unreal I am bold enough to

hope, since several have assured me that they know where I found my type. In my brief sketch of Lord Castlereagh I was not, I need scarcely say, much aided by the journals and pamphlets of the time, where his character and conduct were ruthlessly and most falsely assailed. It was my fortune, however, to have possessed the close intimacy of one who had acted as his private secretary, and whose abilities have since raised him to high station and great employment; and from him I came to know the real nature of one of the ablest statesmen of his age, as he was one of the most attractive companions, and most accomplished gentlemen. I have no vain pretence to believe that by my weak and unfinished sketch I have in any way vindicated the Minister who carried the Union against the attacks of his opponents, but I have tried at least to represent him such as he was in the society of his intimates; his gay and cheerful temperament, his frank nature, and what least the world is disposed to concede to him, his sincere belief in the honesty of men whose convictions were adverse to him, and who could not be won over to his opinions.

I have not tried to conceal the gross corruption of an era which remains to us as a national shame, but I would wish to lay stress on the fact that not a few resisted offers and temptations, which to men struggling with humble fortune, and linked for life with the fate of the weaker country, must redound to their high credit. All the nobler their conduct, as around them on every side were the great names of the land trafficking for title and place, and shamelessly demanding office for their friends and relatives as the price of their own adhesion.

For that degree of intimacy which I have represented as existing between Bagenal Daly and Freney the robber, I have been once or twice reprehended as conveying a false and unreal view of the relations of the time; but the knowledge I myself had of Freney, his habits and his exploits, were given to me by a well-known and highly-connected Irish gentleman, who represented a county in the Irish Parliament, and was a man of unblemished honor, conspicuous alike in station and ability. And there is still, and once the trait existed more remarkably in Ireland, a wonderful sympathy between all classes and conditions of people: so that the old stories and traditions that amuse the crouching listener round the hearth of the cottage, find their way into luxurious drawing-rooms; and by their means a brotherhood of sentiment was maintained between the highest class in the land and the humblest peasant who labored for his daily bread.

I tried to display the effect of this strange teaching on the mind of a cultivated gentleman when describing the Knight of Gwynne. I endeavored to show the “Irishry” of his nature was no other than the play of those qualities by which he appreciated his countrymen and was appreciated by them. So powerful is this sympathy, and so strong the sense of national humor through all classes of the people, that each is able to entertain a topic from the same point of view as his neighbor, and the subtle *équivoque* in the polished witticism that amuses the gentleman is never lost on the untutored ear of the unlettered peasant. Is there any other land of which one can say as much?

If this great feature of attractiveness pertains to the country and adds to its adaptiveness as the subject of fiction, I cannot but feel that to un-Irish ears it is necessary to make an explanation which will serve to show that which would elsewhere imply a certain blending of station and condition, is here but a proof of that widespread understanding by which, however divided by race, tradition, and religion, we are always able to appeal to certain sympathies and dispositions in common, and feel the tie of a common country.

At the period in which I have placed this story the rivalry between the two nations was, with all its violence, by no means ungenerous. No contemptuous estimate of Irishmen formed the theme of English journalism; and between the educated men of both countries there was scarcely a jealousy that the character which political contest assumed later on, changed much of this spirit and dyed nationalities with an amount of virulence which, with all its faults and all its shortcomings, we do not find in the times of the Knight of Gwynne.

CHARLES LEVER.

Trieste, 1872.

# CHAPTER I. A FIRESIDE GROUP

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It was exactly forty-five years ago that a group, consisting of three persons, drew their chairs around the fire of a handsome dinner-room in Merrion Square, Dublin. The brilliantly lighted apartment, the table still cumbered with decanters and dessert, and the sideboard resplendent with a gorgeous service of plate, showed that the preparations had been made for a much larger party, the last of whom had just taken his departure.

Of the three who now drew near the cheerful blaze, more intent, as it seemed, on confidential intercourse than the pleasures of the table, he who occupied the centre was a tall and singularly handsome man, of some six or seven-and-twenty years of age. His features, perfectly classical in their regularity, conveyed the impression of one of a cold and haughty temperament, unmoved by sudden impulse, but animated by a spirit daringly ambitious. His dress was in the height of the then mode, and he wore it with the air of a man of fashion and elegance.

This was Lord Castlereagh, the youthful Secretary for Ireland, one whose career was then opening with every promise of future distinction.

At his right hand sat, or rather lounged, in all the carelessness of habitual indolence, a young man some years his junior, his dark complexion and eyes, his aquiline features, and short, thin upper lip almost resembling a Spanish face.

His dress was the uniform of the Foot Guards—a costume which well became him, and set off to the fullest advantage a figure of perfect symmetry. A manner of careless inattention in which he indulged, contrasted strongly with the quick impatience of his dark glances and the eager rapidity of his utterance when momentarily excited; for the Honorable Dick Forester was only cool by training, and not by temperament, and, at the time we speak of, his worldly education was scarcely more than well begun.

The third figure—strikingly unlike the other two—was a man of fifty or thereabouts, short and plethoric. His features, rosy and sensual, were lit up by two gray eyes whose twinkle was an incessant provocative to laughter. The mouth was, however, the great index to his character. It was large and full, the under lip slightly projecting—a circumstance perhaps acquired in the long habit of a life where the tasting function had been actively employed; for Con Heffernan was a gourmand of the first water, and the most critical judge of a vintage the island could boast. Two fingers of either hand were inserted in the capacious pockets of a white vest, while, his head jauntily leaning to one side, he sat the very ideal of self-satisfied ease and contentment. The *aplomb*—why should there be a French word for an English quality?—he possessed was not the vulgar ease of a presuming or underbred man—far from it; it was the impress of certain gifts which gave him an acknowledged superiority in the society he moved in. He was shrewd, without over-caution; he was ready-witted, but never rash; he possessed that rare combination of quick intelligence with strong powers of judgment; and, above all,

he knew men, or at least such specimens of the race as came before him in a varied life, well and thoroughly.

If he had a weak point in his character, it was a love of popularity—not that vulgar mob-worship which some men court and seek after; no, it was the estimation of his own class and set he desired to obtain. He was proud of his social position, and nervously sensitive in whatever might prejudice or endanger it. His enemies—and Con was too able a man not to have made some—said that his low origin was the secret of his nature; that his ambiguous position in society demanded exertions uncalled for from others less equivocally circumstanced; and that Mr. Heffernan was, in secret, very far from esteeming the high and titled associates with whom his daily life brought him in contact. If this were the case, he was assuredly a consummate actor. No man ever went through a longer or more searching trial unscathed, nor could an expression be quoted, or an act mentioned, in which he derogated, even for a moment, from the habits of “his order.”

“You never did the thing better in your life, my Lord,” said Con, as the door closed upon the last departing guest. “You hit off Jack Massy to perfection; and as for Watson, though he said nothing at the time, I 'll wager my roan cob against Deane Moore's hackney—long odds, I fancy—that you find him at the Treasury to-morrow morning, with a sly request for five minutes' private conversation.”

“I'm of your mind, Heffernan. I saw that he took the bait—indeed, to do the gentlemen justice, they are all open to conviction.”

“You surely cannot blame them,” said Con, “if they take a more conciliating view of your Lordship's opinions when assisted by such claret as this: this is old '72, if I mistake not.”

“They sold it to me as such; but I own to you I 'm the poorest connoisseur in the world as regards wine. Some one remarked this evening that the '95 was richer in bouquet.”

“It was Edward Harvey, my Lord. I heard him; but that was the year he got his baronetcy, and he thinks the sun never shone so brightly before; his father was selling Balbriggan stockings when this grape was ripening, and now, the son has more than one foot on the steps of the peerage.” This was said with a short, quick glance beneath the eyelids, and evidently more as a feeler than with any strong conviction of its accuracy.

“No Government can afford to neglect its supporters, and the acknowledgments must be proportioned to the sacrifices, as well as to the abilities of the individuals who second it.”

“By Jove! if these gentlemen are in the market,” said Forester, who broke silence for the first time, “I don't wonder at their price being a high one; in consenting to the 'Union,' they are virtually voting their own annihilation.”

“By no means,” said the Secretary, calmly; “the field open to their ambition is imperial, and not provincial; the English Parliament will form an arena for the display of ability as wide surely as this of Dublin. Men of note and capacity will not be less rewarded: the losers will be the small talkers, county squires of noisy politics, and crafty lawyers of no principles; they will, perhaps, be obliged to

remain at home and look after their own affairs; but will the country be the worse for that, while the advantages to trade and commerce are inconceivable?”

“I agree with you there,” said Con; “we are likely to increase our exports, by sending every clever fellow out of the country.”

“Why not, if the market be a better one?”

“Would n't you spare us a few luxuries for home consumption?” said Con, as he smacked his lips and looked at his glass through the candle.

His Lordship paid no attention to the remark, but, taking a small tablet from his waistcoat-pocket, seemed to study its contents. “Are we certain of Cuffe; is he pledged to us, Heffernan?”

“Yes, my Lord, he has no help for it; we are sure of him; he owes the Crown eleven thousand pounds, and says the only ambition he possesses is to make the debt twelve, and never pay it.”

“What of that canting fellow from the North—New-land?”

“He accepts your terms conditionally, my Lord,” said Con, with a sly roll of his eye. “If the arguments are equal to your liberality, he will vote for you; but as yet he does not *see* the advantages of a Union.”

“Not *see* them!” said Lord Castlereagh, with a look of irony; “why did you not let him look at them from your own windows, Heffernan? The view is enchanting for the Barrack Department.”

“The poor man is short-sighted,” said Con, with a sigh, “and never could stretch his vision beyond the Custom House.”

“Be it so, in the devil's name; a commissioner more or less shall never, stop us!”

“What a set of rascals,” muttered Forester between his teeth, as he tossed off a bumper to swallow his indignation.

“Well, Forester, what of your mission? Have you heard from your friend Darcy?”

“Yes; I have his note here. He cannot come over just now, but he has given me an introduction to his father, and pledges himself I shall be well received.”

“What Darcy is that?” said Heffernan.

“The Knight of Gwynne,” said his Lordship; “do you know him?”

“I believe, my Lord, there is not a gentleman in Ireland who could not say yes to that question; while west of the Shannon, Maurice Darcy is a name to swear by.”

“We want such a man much,” said the Secretary, in a low, distinct utterance; “some well-known leader of public opinion is of great value just now. How does he vote usually? I don't see his name in the divisions.”

“Oh, he rarely comes up to town, never liked Parliament; but when he did attend the House, he usually sat with the Opposition, but, without linking himself to party, spoke and voted independently, and, strange to say, made considerable impression by conduct which in any other man would have proved an utter failure.”

“Did he speak well, then?”

“For the first five minutes you could think of nothing but his look and appearance; he was the handsomest man in the House, a little too particular, perhaps, in dress, but never finical; as he went on, however, the easy fluency of

his language, the grace and elegance of his style, and the frank openness of his statements, carried his hearers with him; and many who were guarded enough against the practised power of the great speakers were entrapped by the unstudied, manly tone of the Knight of Gwynne. You say truly, he would be a great card in your hands at this time.”

“We must have him at his own price, if he has one. Is he rich?”

“He has an immense estate, but, as I hear, greatly encumbered; but don't think of money with him, that will never do.”

“What's the bait, then? Does he care for rank? Has he any children grown up?”

“One son and one daughter are all his family; and as for title, I don't think that he 'd exchange that of Knight of Gwynne for a Dukedom. His son is a lieutenant in the Guards.”

“Yes; and the best fellow in the regiment,” broke in Forester. “In every quality of a high-spirited gentleman, Lionel Darcy has no superior.”

“The better deserving of rapid promotion,” said his Lordship, smiling significantly.

“I should be sorry to offer it to him at the expense of his father's principles,” said Forester.

“Very little fear of your having to do so,” said Heffernan, quickly; “the Knight would be no easy purchase.”

“You must see him, however, Dick.” said the Secretary; “there is no reason why he should not be with us on grounds of conviction. He is a man of enlightened and liberal mind,

and surely will not think the worse of a measure because its advocates are in a position to serve his son's interests.”

“If that topic be kept very studiously out of sight, it were all the more prudent,” said Con, dryly.

“Of course; Forester will pay his visit, and only advert to the matter with caution and delicacy. To gain him to our side is a circumstance of so much moment that I say *carte blanche* for the terms.”

“I knew the time that a foxhound would have been a higher bribe than a blue ribbon with honest Maurice; but it's many years since we met, now, and Heaven knows what changes time may have wrought in him. A smile and a soft speech from a pretty woman, or a bold exploit of some hare-brained fellow, were sure to find favor with him, when he would have heard flattery from the lips of royalty without pride or emotion.”

“His colleague in the county is with us; has he any influence over the Knight?”

“Far from it. Mr. Hickman O'Reilly is the last man in the world to have weight with Maurice Darcy, and if it be your intention to make O'Reilly a peer, you could have taken no readier method to arm the Knight against you. No, no; if you really are bent on having him, leave all thought of a purchase aside; let Forester, as the friend and brother officer of young Darcy, go down to Gwynne, make himself as agreeable to the Knight as may be, and when he has one foot on the carriage-step at his departure, turn sharply round, and say, 'Won't you vote with us, Knight?' What between surprise and courtesy, he may be taken too short for reflection, and if he say but 'Yes,' ever so low, he's yours.

That's *my* advice to you. It may seem a poor chance, but I fairly own I see no better one.”

“I should have thought rank might be acceptable in such a quarter,” said the Secretary, proudly.

“He has it, my Lord—at least as much as would win all the respect any rank could confer; and besides, these new peerages have no prestige in their favor yet a while; we must wait for another generation. This claret is perfect now, but I should not say it were quite so delicate in flavor the first year it was bottled. The squibs and epigrams on the new promotions are remembered where the blazons of the Heralds' College are forgotten; that unlucky banker, for instance, that you made a Viscount the other day, both his character and his credit have suffered for it.”

“What was that you allude to?—an epigram, was it?”

“Yes, very short, but scarcely sweet. Here it is:—

“'With a name that is borrowed, a title that's bought—'

you, remember, my Lord, how true both allegations are—

“'With a name that is borrow'd, a title that's bought, Sir William would fain be a gentleman thought; While his Wit is mere cunning, his Courage but vapor, His Pride is but money, his Money but paper.'”

“Very severe, certainly,” said his Lordship, in the same calm tone he ever spoke. “Not your lines, Mr. Heffernan?”

“No, my Lord; a greater than Con Heffernan indited these—one who did not scruple to reply to yourself in the House in an imitation of your own inimitable manner.”

“Oh, I know whom you mean—a very witty person indeed,” said the Secretary, smiling; “and if we were to be laughed out of office, he might lead the Opposition. But these are very business-like, matter-of-fact days we 're

fallen upon. The cabinet that can give away blue ribbons may afford to be indifferent to small jokers. But to revert to matters more immediate: you must start at once, Forester, for the West, see the Knight, and do whatever you can to bring him towards us. I say *carte blanche* for the terms; I only wish our other elevations to the peerage had half the pretension he has; and, whatever our friend Mr. Heffernan may say, I opine to the mere matter of compact, which says, so much for so much."

"Here's success to the mission, however its negotiations incline," said Heffernan, as he drained off his glass and rose to depart. "We shall see you again within ten days or a fortnight, I suppose?"

"Oh, certainly; I'll not linger in that wild district an hour longer than I must." And so, with good night and good wishes, the party separated—Forester to make his preparations for a journey which, in those days, was looked on as something formidable.

# CHAPTER II. A TRAVELLING ACQUAINTANCE.

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Whatever the merits or demerits of the great question, the legislative union between England and Ireland—and assuredly we have neither the temptation of duty nor inclination to discuss such here—the means employed by Ministers to carry the measure through Parliament were in the last degree disgraceful. Never was bribery practised with more open effrontery, never did corruption display itself with more daring indifference to public opinion; the Treasury office was an open mart, where votes were purchased, and men sold their country, delighted, as a candid member of the party confessed—delighted “to have a country to sell.”

The ardor of a political career, like the passion for the chase, would seem in its high excitement to still many compunctious murmurings of conscience which in calmer moments could not fail to be heard and acknowledged: the desire to succeed, that ever-present impulse to win, steels the heart against impressions which, under less pressing excitements, had been most painful to endure; and, in this way, honorable and high-minded men have often stooped to acts which, with calmer judgment to guide them, they would have rejected with indignation.

Such was Dick Forester's position at the moment. An aide-de-camp on the staff of the Viceroy, a near relative of the Secretary, he was intrusted with many secret and

delicate negotiations, affairs in which, had he been a third party, he would have as scrupulously condemned the tempter as the tempted; the active zeal of agency allayed, however, all such qualms of conscience, and every momentary pang of remorse was swallowed up in the ardor for success.

Few men will deny in the abstract the cruelty of many field-sports they persist in following; fewer still abandon them on such scruples; and while Forester felt half ashamed to himself of the functions committed to him, he would have been sorely disappointed if he had been passed over in the selection of his relative's political adherents.

Of this nature were some of Dick Forester's reflections as he posted along towards the West; nor was the scene through which he journeyed suggestive of pleasanter thoughts. If any of our readers should perchance be acquainted with that dreary line of country which lies along the great western road of Ireland, they will not feel surprised if the traveller's impressions of the land were not of the brightest or fairest. The least reflective of mortals cannot pass through a dreary and poverty-stricken district without imbibing some of the melancholy which broods over the place. Forester was by no means such, and felt deeply and sincerely for the misery he witnessed on every hand, and was in the very crisis of some most patriotic scheme of benevolence, when his carriage arrived in front of the little inn of Kilbeggan. Resisting, without much violence to his inclinations, the civil request of the landlord to alight, he leaned back to resume the broken thread of his lucubrations, while fresh horses were put to. How long he

thus waited, or what progress his benign devices accomplished in the mean while, this true history is unable to record; enough if we say that when he next became aware of the incidents then actually happening around him, he discovered that his carriage was standing fast in the same place as at the moment of his arrival, and the rain falling in torrents, as before.

To let down the glass and call out to the postilions was a very natural act; to do so with the addition of certain expletives not commonly used in good society, was not an extraordinary one. Forester did both; but he might have spared his eloquence and his indignation, for the postilions were both in the stable, and his servant agreeably occupied in the bar over the comforts of a smoking tumbler of punch. The merciful schemes so late the uppermost object of his thoughts were routed in a moment, and, vowing intentions of a very different purport to the whole household, he opened the door and sprang out. Dark as the night was, he could see that there were no horses to the carriage, and, with redoubled anger at the delay, he strode into the inn.

“Holloa, I say—house here! Linwood! Where the devil is the fellow?”

“Here, sir,” cried a smart-looking London servant, as he sprang from the bar with his eyes bolting out of his head from the heat of the last mouthful, swallowed in a second. “I've been a trying for horses, sir; but they've never got 'em, though they 've been promising to let us have a pair this half-hour.”

“No horses! Do you mean that they've not got a pair of posters in a town like this?”

“Yes, indeed, sir,” interposed a dirty waiter in a nankeen jacket; for the landlord was too indignant at the rejection of his proposal to appear again, “we've four pair, besides a mare in foal; but there's a deal of business on the line this week past, and there's a gentleman in the parlor now has taken four of them.”

“Taken four! Has he more than one carriage?”

“No, sir, a light chariot it is; but he likes to go fast.”

“And so do I—when I can,” muttered Forester, the last words being an addition almost independent of him. “Could n't you tell him that there's a gentleman here very much pressed to push on, and would take it as a great favor if he'd divide the team?”

“To be sure, sir, I'll go and speak to him,” said the waiter, as he hurried away on the errand.

“I see how it is, sir,” said Linwood, who, with true servant dexterity, thought to turn his master's anger into any other channel than towards himself, “they wants to get you to stop the night here.”

“Confound this trickery! I'll pay what they please for the horses, only let us have them.—Well, waiter, what does he say?”

“He says, sir,” said the waiter, endeavoring to suppress a laugh, “if you 'll come in and join him at supper, you shall have whatever you like.”

“Join him at supper! No, no; I'm hurried, I'm anxious to get forward, and not the least hungry besides.”

“Hadn't you better speak a word to him, anyhow?” said the waiter, half opening the parlor door. And Forester, accepting the suggestion, entered.

In the little low-ceilinged apartment of the small inn, at a table very amply and as temptingly covered, sat a large and, for his age, singularly handsome man. A forehead both high and broad surmounted two clear blue eyes, whose brilliancy seemed to defy the wear of time; regular and handsome teeth; and a complexion the very type of health appeared to vouch for a strength of constitution rare at his advanced age. His dress was the green coat so commonly worn by country gentlemen, with leather breeches and boots, nor, though the season was winter, did he appear to

have any great-coat, or other defence against the weather. He was heaping some turf upon the fire as Forester entered, and, laughingly interrupting the operation, he stood up and bowed courteously.

“I have taken a great liberty, sir, first, to suppose that any man at this hour of the night is not the worse for something to eat and drink; and, secondly, that he might have no objection to partake of either in my company.” Forester was not exactly prepared for a manner so palpably that of the best society, and, at once repressing every sign of his former impatience, replied by apologizing for a request which might inconvenience the granter. “Let me help you to this grouse-pie, and fill yourself a glass of sherry; and by the time you have taken some refreshment, the horses will be put to. I am most happy to offer you a seat.”

“I am afraid there is a mistake somewhere,” said Forester, half timidly. “I heard you had engaged the only four horses here, and as my carriage is without, my request was to obtain two if you—”

“But why not come with me? I 'm pressed, and must be up, if possible, before morning. Remember, we are forty-eight miles from Dublin.”

“Dublin! But I'm going the very opposite road. I'm for Westport.”

“Oh, by Jove! that is different. What a stupid fellow the waiter is! Never mind; sit down. Let us have a glass of wine together. You shall have two of the horses. Old Wilkins must only make his spurs supply the place of the leaders.”