

Famous Novels as Short Stories

CONFESSIONS OF HARRY LORREQUER.

HAPPY ENDING OF A SERIES OF SCRAPES.

BY CHARLES LEVER.

(Retold by Robert Buchanan.)

"The Confessions of Harry Lorrequer" was the first of a series of books full of the drollery of Irish life and character which were to make Charles Lever famous.

Of English descent on his father's side Charles Lever was born in Dublin in August, 1806, and was first intended to be a doctor. Indeed, he followed this profession for a time in Brussels. But the call of literature was too strong for him, and he forsook medicine, became editor of the "Dublin University Magazine," and wrote a series of novels which reflect, in life-like fashion, the gay, almost riotous Irish temperament. Lever's own nature bore considerable resemblance to the characters he sketched. He died on June 1st, 1872.

I WAS never one to be easily depressed, even in the most formidable circumstances, and to this elasticity of spirits—whether the result of my profession, or the gift of God, as Dogberry has it, I know not—I owe the greater portion of the happiness I have enjoyed in a life whose changes and vicissitudes have equalled most men's.

It was on a splendid morning in the autumn of the year 181— that the "Howard" transport, with four hundred of His Majesty's 4th Regiment, dropped anchor in the beautiful harbour of Cove.

Many of our bravest and best we had left behind us, sleeping their last sleep in the soil of the Peninsula, and there was not a man amongst us whose warm heart did not bound behind a Waterloo medal as we marched proudly into "that beautiful city called Cork," where the bells from every steeple and tower rang gaily out a peal of welcome. Then began a series of entertainments by the civic dignitaries which soon led most of us to believe that we had only escaped shot and shell to fall less gloriously beneath champagne and claret.

We officers responded with a series of plays in which, I venture to think, I showed no mean ability. They met, however, with no approval from our Lieut.-Colonel Carden, who demanded everlasting drills, continual reports, fatigue parties, and heaven knows what besides, and frowned severely upon any kind of entertainment we enjoyed. Nevertheless, we carried out our intentions to produce "Othello" in which I played the name part, and celebrated our success with a champagne supper.

I do not remember how I reached my quarters afterwards, but I know that I seemed hardly to have laid my head on the pillow when a drum beat a "row-dow-dow" beneath my window. It was one of the Colonel's confounded morning drills.

I dressed myself with the speed of lightning and bolted out on to the parade ground, where the men were already drawn up. As I made for a group of officers, G—, the senior Major, one of the bravest men in Europe, laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. The others looked at me and joined in the merriment.

I looked down at my costume expecting to discover that in my hurry to dress I had put on some of the garments of Othello. All was perfectly correct.

Then the Colonel came across and I turned hastily round and wished him good morning. Never shall I forget the look he gave me.

"Go, sir!" he thundered, purple with passion, when he could find utterance. "Go, to your quarters. And before you leave send a court martial shall decide if such an insult to your commanding officer warrants your name being in the Army List."

"What the devil can all this mean?" I said in a half whisper, turning to the officers. But there they stood, their handkerchiefs in their mouths, and evidently speaking with suppressed laughter.

"They're all mad, every man of them," muttered as I betook myself to my rooms. I summoned my servant.

"Stubbes," said I, "are you aware—" I had only got so far when Stubbes, one of the most discreet of men, put on a broad grin and turned away to hide his face.

"Stubbes," said I in a grave and severe tone. "What is the meaning of this?"

"Oh, sir," said the man. "Oh sir, surely I did not appear on parade with that—" and then he burst into a fit of the uncontrollable laughter.

Like lightning a horrid doubt shot across my face. I sprang over to the dressing glass and oh! horrors of horrors! There I stood as black as the kin of Ashantee. The cursed dye which I put on for Othello I had never washed off—and there, with a huge bearskin shako and a pair of black bushy whiskers, shone my huge black and polished visage, glowering at itself in the looking glass!

There followed a very long interview with the Colonel, at which he accepted my apologies, but shortly afterwards I received orders which I could only regard as banishment, to take a company to Kilrush, and there to afford aid and assistance in suppressing illicit distillation.

With as near an approach to despondency as I ever permitted myself, I saw the first week of my new life in Kilrush pass away in the dreary monotony of continual rain. I was put up at the Burton Arms and amused myself by questioning its sole proprietor, Mrs Healy, about the country and its inhabitants. Among other things she gave me an account of the great landed proprietor, Lord Callonby, who was daily expected at his seat near Kilrush. My face must have brightened at this, especially when I remembered that his Lordship had two fine daughters, for my frank landlady wasted no time in disillusioning me.

"Ye needn't look so pleased and be curling out your whiskers," said she. "They'd never take the trouble of asking even the name of ye."

The Earl of Callonby, it appeared, though only visiting his Irish estates every three or four years, never took the slightest notice of any of the military in the neighbourhood or mixed with any of the local gentry. He confined himself to his own guests and his family, which comprised her ladyship, their only son, Lord Kilkee (nearly of age) and two daughters (the elder of whom, I remembered, had made a great stir when she came out in London only the year before).

Judge of my surprise, then, when one morning Lord Kilkee presented himself at my hotel following a little incident in a certain part of the Earl's domain. My dog Mouche had started a hare as I walked along, and had killed it just as a gamekeeper appeared on the scene. Adopting my usual policy of taking the bull by the horns I said with a tone of authority:

"I say, my man, are you his lordship's gamekeeper?" and when he said yes, I continued, "Well, then, present this hare to his lordship with my respects. Here is my card, and say I shall be most happy to wait on him in the morning and explain the circumstance."

And now, before I could carry this out, here was his lordship's son! I began to apologise for my dog's misconduct, but Lord Kilkee cut me short.

"You have nothing to be sorry for, Mr Lorrequer," he said, "for if this had not happened we might never have known you were in this neighbourhood. I am sure you must be finding time dreadfully heavy down here, and I am instructed by my father to ask you to dine with us this evening—a mere family party. But you must make your arrangements to stop all night and to-morrow. We shall find some work for our friend there on the hearth."

There seemed a mystery in this sudden politeness towards an unknown like myself, but I was never the sort to bother my head over bothers of that kind. Whatever the cause of my introduction to the Callonbys I resolved to make the best of it.

"Mr Lorrequer is most welcome," was Lord Callonby's hearty greeting when I duly presented myself. "I cannot be mistaken, I am sure—I have the pleasure of addressing the nephew of my old friend, Sir Guy Lorrequer, of Elton."

So the secret was out, and it must be confessed that this was the first time I had ever derived any advantage from relationship with the bachelor Sir Guy.

Her ladyship—a tall, stately matron—was almost as gracious to me as was her husband, and as for the daughters of the house—Lady Jane and Lady Catherine—nothing could possibly be more engaging than their manner.

Lady Jane's beauty made a particular impression on me and I was by no means displeased at finding a full-length portrait of her on the wall above the chimney piece in my allotted bedroom.

The next few weeks were among the happiest in my life. I went shooting with Lord Callonby and his son, and I went daily walks with the two beautiful girls through a romantic, unfrequented country. It became gradually perfectly clear that my attachment to Lady Jane was noticed by the family, and yet—to my own astonishment, let me confess—nobody seemed

shocked about it. Why the comparatively humble Mr Lorrequer should be regarded as a suitable parti for the Earl of Callonby's eldest daughter I could not fathom, but I cannot pretend that the mystery worried me unduly.

And when I was recalled suddenly to my duties at Kilrush and received a most polite letter later announcing his lordship's immediate departure for England, but adding that he proposed to interest himself on my behalf with my superior officers, I came to the conclusion that Lord Callonby was the gem of his order and had a most remarkable talent for selecting a son-in-law.

Be that as it may, I decided to put my good fortune to the test at once by applying for several months' leave of absence and got it without difficulty, Lord Callonby having actually called upon my implacable foe, Colonel Carden, and converted him into an obliging friend by the very fact of his obvious interest in me.

So, dreaming all sorts of dreams—seeing myself at one moment leading my young and beautiful bride through the crowded salons of Devonshire House and at another contemplating the excellence of the hunting stud arrangements—I proposed to set up at Melton Mowbray on the strength of my brilliant marriage, I too, crossed to England and called on my worthy uncle, Sir Guy Lorrequer, with the object of explaining my fine prospects to him.

But my uncle was more inclined to talk of the villainous extravagances of my cousin, Guy Lorrequer, who was the direct heir to his ample property. I heard my uncle with considerable chagrin. Here was Guy indulging in every excess with impunity, while I, the son of an elder brother, who unfortunately called me by his own name, Harry, a mere sub. in a marching regiment, with not £300 a year above my pay, and who, with any extravagance proved against him, would have been deprived of even that small allowance.

"But never mind," went on my uncle, "Guy may steady up now, I understand he is making a very great match."

I was bursting to tell him of my own affair in a similar direction, but my uncle was still full of Guy.

"The father of the young lady met Guy in Ireland or Scotland or some such place where he was with his regiment," he went on, "was greatly struck with his manner and address—found him to be my nephew—asked him to his house—and, in fact, literally threw his lovely girl at his head."

"As nearly as possible my own adventure," thought I, laughing to myself.

"But you have not told me who they are, sir," said I, dying to have his story finished and to begin mine.

"I'm coming to that—I'm coming to that. Guy came down here, but said not a word about the business. All he asked for was an introduction to them as they were in Paris, where he was going on short leave. The first thing I heard of the matter was a letter from the papa, demanding to know if Guy was to be my heir and asking how far Guy's attentions to Lord Callonby's family met with my approval."

"Lord who, sir?" said I, in a voice that made the old man upset his glass of wine and spring from his chair, startled.

"What the devil is the matter with the boy? What makes you so pale?" he demanded. "Lord Callonby was my old schoolfellow and 'fag at Elton.'"

"And the lady's name, sir?" said I, in scarcely an audible whisper.

For answer the old man handed me a letter from Guy which read as follows:

"My adored Jane is all your fondest wishes for my happiness could picture and longs to see her dear uncle as she already calls you on every occasion."

My eyes swam. Although I heard my uncle's voice still going on, I knew nothing of what he said.

I sat speechless and stupefied, puzzling out the base treachery I had met with. I saw now that in the Callonbys' attentions to me they thought they were winning the heir of Elton, the future possessor of £15,000 per annum.

From this tangled web of heartless intrigue I turned my thoughts to Lady Jane herself. How she had betrayed me! For she certainly had not only received but encouraged my addresses—and had straightway turned from me to receive the attentions of another when the mistake they had made had become apparent.

So I returned to Ireland before my leave expired and did my best to wipe out the memory of Lady Jane's perfidy by plunging into the wildest, maddest escapades that any of my gay, amorous messmates cared to suggest.

(To be Concluded Next Week.)

RADIO NOTES.

By "EXPERT."

A DANCE MUSIC ALTERNATIVE—AT LAST!

There has for some time been a demand among listeners for an alternative to the late dance music programme from 10.30 p.m. until midnight, and now, at long last, the B.B.C. are taking action in the matter. It has been announced that on February 16th E. J. King-Bull's play, "Reconnaissance," is to be broadcast from 10.30 onwards as an alternative to the dance music provided on the other programme. At the same time the powers that be at Broadcasting House are careful to state that they do not intend to make a regular feature of such programmes—to do so would, presumably, look too much like a wholesale capitulation to listeners' demands. The late broadcast of this play is, the announcement continues, purely experimental, though it is also admitted that it may well lead to important changes. Belated though it is, this sign that the B.B.C. is alive to the listeners' need for something other than dance music at the end of the day is none the less welcome. The whole trouble was caused in the first place, in my opinion, by a misconception on the part of the B.B.C. as to when the "peak" period of listening occurs. The B.B.C. obviously imagine this to be round about 9 p.m., whereas, in actual fact, in the south of England at any rate, it is more like 10 p.m.—and is often later than this on Saturday nights.

A Dance Band Mix-up.

There really should be some form of copyright in the names of dance bands—at least that is my view after what happened to me last week! The band which broadcast in conjunction with the Barnstormers was Don Sestas and his orchestra and not Don Bestor's band. I offer my apologies to Don Sestas herewith, but from the similarity of the names it will be appreciated how easy it was for the mistake to occur. The point I wish to make is this: There are two bands in existence, one conducted by Don Bestor and the other by Don Sestas, and, with all due respect to the last-named, Don Bestor's band is the better-known of the two, for gramophone records of his numbers are very frequently put on the air, and I am informed that Don Bestor and his band have also broadcast personally in the past. Don Sestas, on the other hand, is a newcomer to the microphone, though this fact was not emphasised at the time of his recent broadcast. Add to this the fact that his announcer spoke very quietly in a distinctly foreign accent, and it can be seen how simple it is for confusion to arise. Now Don Bestor was certainly first on the radio dance band map, so I appeal to Don Sestas to adopt a non de plume or give his band some distinctive title to distinguish it clearly from Don Bestor's orchestra, thus also preventing unsuspecting radio critics from falling into the trap he has unwittingly laid for them.

Grid Bias and Anode Current.

The warning never to experiment with the grid bias tappings while the set is in operation is very often given, in print and otherwise, but seldom heeded. Probably few amateurs realise the close connection between grid bias and anode current; but if a millimeter were connected in the anode circuit of the output valve, and its indications watched while the bias tappings were changed, the operator would probably receive a shock—though only a mental one. The fact of the matter is that although primarily the most suitable bias voltage is sought in the interests of faithful reproduction, it is equally important in its action of holding anode current consumption in check. Generally speaking, the higher negative grid potential, the lower the anode consumption; and it will be realised that if a bias wander plug is removed entirely, even momentarily in the course of making adjustments, the grid of the valve is without negative bias at all, and the anode current jumps up to a maximum figure. This is at least detrimental to the valve, and may even cause it to be completely ruined; also, where dry high tension batteries are used further damage may be caused by the sudden excessive drain. The safest thing to do is to switch the set off completely before any bias adjustments are made, but removal of the high tension wander plug is just as effective, if this happens to be the more convenient precaution.



finite psychological of the home is dull and we feel happy... a very important flour, provided that expresses her own original in its and outlook of the... to which it will... especially on... to the apparent... the use of... looks lighter when... is kept light, too... hours, such as grey... but yellows, reds... ever, the best effect... their bleakness being... tones. For example... paper in which grey... colourful frieze or... and a soft glow... the cooler shades... to the effect of... cushion-covers, bed... and is obtain... flowered designs are... while a checked... it light and gay... scheme.

Wholesome

Wholesome. They can be excellent way of using... recipe for MEAT PIE... pieces and roll these... cooked porridge, one... pepper and salt and... to put on top, and... the pastry must be slit... team may escape. The... is light. Everything... in a cool place. Butter can be particu... yet pure and whole... it is obtained only... nest pastureland and... pie-crust sufficient for... and 1 teaspoonful... in and mix well with... to make a stiff dough... out half-an-inch thick... then cut up into dice... in a pie-dish and... spoonfuls of cold stock... for 1 1/2 to 2 hours... is used in all.

Energy

Energy. enough to throw away... energies and powers... laughing, or playing... provided that the body... up the strength and... cool life would be much... chooses a school on the... of living, the food... pupils. Having satisfied... to leave the entire... It is good for the... other children of the



dropped that letter you gave... Father: "Good gracious!... the pillar-box."... on to dinner had been sent to... doctor. In reply, the hostess... him an illegible letter. "I... if he accepts or refuses," she... I were you," suggested her... should take it to the chemist... always read doctors' letters... they are written." The... at the slip of headed note... to his dispensary, and returned... later with a nicely labelled... he handed over the counter... are, madam," he said. "That... and sixpence."

WOOD'S CHALLENGE REMEDY... under the sum of £100 to cure... fail. Far superior to Pills, For... Continental treatment, For... regularities, however obstinate. Price... REMEDY is supreme. Price... 12/-. Stamp for particulars... established 30 years. AND MRS. W. WOOD, MEDICAL SPECIALISTS, Louis Street, Leeds.