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THE  
**PEEP O'DAY**  
AND  
**THE BILLHOOK**  
BY  
THE O'HARA FAMILY

DUBLIN

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## PREFATORY NOTICE.

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MR. DUFFY, the Publisher of the present issue of "Tales by the O'Hara Family," tells me that a cheap edition, such as will place those Tales within general reach, is required by the reading public, and I have agreed with him to be his Editor.

In order that the friends of "the O'Hara Family," and myself, should understand each other, I will here repeat, what I have recently stated, that my brother and myself were joint producers of the stories now about to be republished. This being the case, it will, I trust, be conceded that the editorship has not been entrusted, by the Publisher, to unfit hands.

Seeing that, in all cases, either as originator or as reviser, the Tales, on their first appearance, passed through my hands, the public will, I trust, accept my services on the understanding that I come to the work with a strong letter of recommendation to their favor and indulgence.

It is my intention, as each volume appears, in condensed shape, to state in how far I have been concerned therewith. It is my intention also, as we go on, to append notes here and there.

It will be my endeavour to make these notations as little cumbrous as possible, and to throw into them whatever of anecdote or historical reference may appear to me interesting to the reader.

One of the rarest delights of my boyhood was, of a



breezy September day, to see my six-foot kite become a dweller of the upper air. As I beheld it steadily and gracefully ascending, and felt it, like a live thing, "tugging," as we call it, for more string, thereby intimating, in language well understood, its ambition to soar higher and higher skywards. As I so beheld, and held communion with my kite, my fellowship therewith, and my pride of heart were great, and the recollection comes back freshly to me.

I was then a skilful fabricator of kites, and I remember well what care and judgment were necessary when adapting the wavy appendage called "the tail" to the main body of the aeronaut.

If the tail were too curt, the kite would manifest its vexation by wavering from side to side in evident displeasure, or, mayhap, becoming irritated beyond endurance, toss itself end upwards, and descend in a rage, delving its snout into the sod.

If the tail were inartistically prolonged, or its central gravity excessive, then the kite would refuse to mount at all, and trail prostrate along the grass sulkily.

It is my hope that in shaping the notes I may add to this edition of "The O'Hara Tales," I shall be able to adapt them as successfully as I was able to adapt the appendage to the kite of my boyhood. They must not be too diffuse, nor must they be too dull; they must not be over short, or over flippant.

In fact, I will endeavour to take a hint from the furnishing faith of my kite; and, should I succeed to my own wishes, and the wishes of my readers, one of the pleasures of my boyhood will be remembered with greater relish.

MICHAEL BANIM.

# THE PEEP O'DAY;

OR,

JOHN DOE.

---

## CHAPTER I.

THE old devotion to private skirmishing of the Irish peasantry is well known. Skirmishing would indeed be too mild a word to express the ferocious encounters that often took place among them—(we speak in the past tense, for, from a series of wretchednesses, the spirit has of late considerably decreased)—when parties, or, as they are locally termed, factions, of fifty or a hundred, met, by appointment, to wage determined war; when blood profusely flowed, and, sometimes, lives were lost.

But, apart from the more important instances of the practice those pitched battles presented, accident, and the simplest occurrences of their lives—pleasure, rural exercise, sport, or even the sober occupation of conveying a neighbour to his last home—supplied, indifferently well, opportunities for an Irish row.

On festival days, when they met at a “pattern” (patron, perhaps) or merry-making, the lively dance of the girls, and the galloping jig-note of the bagpipes, usually gave place to the clattering of alpeens, and the whoops of onslaught. When one of them sold his pig, or, under Providence, his cow at the fair, the kicking up of a “scrimmage,” or at least the plunging head foremost into one, was as much matter of course as the long draughts of ale or whiskey that closed his mercantile transaction. At the village hurling-match, the “hurlet,” or crooked stick with which they struck the ball, often changed its playful utility. Nay, at a funeral, the body was scarce laid in the grave when the voice of petty discord might be heard above the grave’s silence.

These contentions, like all great events, generally arose from very trivial causes. A drunken fellow, for instance, was in a strange public-house; he could not content himself with the new faces near him, so struck at some three, six, or ten, as it might be, and, of course, got soundly drubbed. On his return home, he related his case of injury, exhibiting his closed eye, battered mouth, or remnant of nose; and, enlisting all his relatives, "kith-and-kin"—in fact, all his neighbours who liked "a bit of diversion," and they generally included the whole male population able to bear arms. At the head of his faction, he attended the next fair, or other place of resort, where he might expect to meet his foes. The noise of his muster went abroad, or he had sent a previous challenge: the opposite party assembled in as much force as possible, never declining the encounter: one or other side was beaten, and tried to avenge its disgrace on the first opportunity. Defeat again followed, and again produced like efforts and results; and thus the solemn feud ran through a number of years and several generations.

A wicked, "devil-may-care" fellow, feverish for sport, would, at fair, pattern, or funeral, sometimes smite another without any provocation, merely to create a riot: the standers-by would take different sides, as their taste or connexions inclined them, and the fray thus commencing, between two individuals who owed each other no ill-will, embroiled half the assembled concourse. Nay, a youth, in despair that so fine a multitude was likely to separate peaceably, would strip off his heavy outside coat, and trail it through the puddle, daring any of the lookers-on to tread upon it. Such defiance was rarely ineffectual; he knocked down, if possible, the invited offender; a general battle ensued, that soon spread like wild-fire, and every "alpeen" was at work in senseless clatter and unimaginable hostility.

The occurrence of the word "alpeen," here and elsewhere, seems to suggest a description of the weapon of which it is the name, and this can best be given in a piece of biographical anecdote.

Jack Mullally still lives in fame, though his valiant bones are dust. He was the landlord of a public-house in a mountain district; a chivalrous fellow, a righter of wrongs, the leader of a faction of desperate fighting men:—like Arthur, with his doughty knights—he was a match for any four among them, though each a hero: above all, he was the armourer of his department. In Jack's chimney-corner hung bundles of sticks, suspended there for

the purpose of being dried and seasoned. These were of two descriptions of warlike weapons,—shortish oaken cudgels, to be used as quarter-staves, or, *par excellence*, genuine shillelaghs; and the alpeens themselves,—long wattles with heavy knobs at the ends, to be wielded with both hands, and competent, under good guidance, to the felling of an ox.

Jack and his subjects, Jack and his alpeens, were rarely absent from any fair within twenty miles, having always business on hands in the way of their association. When a skirmish took place, the side that could enlist in its interests Jack, his alpeens, and his merry-men, was sure of victory. The patriarch was generally to be found seated by his kitchen fire. Business was beneath him; he left all that to the "*vanithee*;" and his hours lapsed, when matters of moment did not warn him to the field, either in wetting his sticks with a damp cloth, and then heating them over the turf blaze, to give them the proper curve; or in teaching a pet starling to speak Irish, and whistle "*Shaun Buoy*;" or, haply, in imbibing his own ale or whiskey, and smoking his short black pipe, or *doodheen*, as he himself termed it. Here he gave audience to the numerous suitors and ambassadors who, day by day, came to seek his aid, preparatory to concerted engagements. His answer was never hastily rendered. He promised, at all events, to be, with his corps, at the appointed ground: then and there would he proclaim of which side he was the ally. This precautionary course became the more advisable as he was always sure of a request from both factions; and time, forethought, and inquiry, were necessary to ascertain which side might prove the weaker. For to the weakest—the most aggrieved formed no part of his calculations—Jack invariably extended his patronage.

The *vanithee*, good woman, when she heard of an approaching fair, or other popular meeting, immediately set about preparing plasters and ointments: this resulted from a thrifty forecast. For, were she to call in a doctor every time her husband's head wanted piecing, it would run away with the profits of her business. Jack, indeed, never forgot his dignity so far as to inform his wife that he intended being engaged on such occasions: but she always took it for granted, and, with the bustle of a good housewife, set about her preparations accordingly. Till at length a breach happened in his skull which set her art at defiance; and ever since she lives the sole proprietor of the public-house where Jack once reigned in glory. The poor widow has thriven since her

husband's death ; and is now rich, not having lately had Jack's assistance in spending (she never had it in earning). She recounts his exploits with modest spirit ; and one blessing, at least, has resulted from her formerly matronly care of the good man : she is the Lady Bountiful of her district ; a quack, it may be, yet, sufficiently skilful for the uncomplicated ailments of her country customers.

Such ordinary facts as we have here glanced at, never fail to strike with astonishment, if they do not greatly interest, the English visitor to "the sister isle," when he is first made acquainted with them. In both ways were they regarded by two young English officers quartered at a remote, though no very remote period, in the inland town of Clonmel, before whom a native acquaintance descanted on these traits of local character, while he and his military friends sat over their evening bottle. The bottle emptied, the Clonmel visitor gone, lieutenants Howard and Graham remained together, still occupied with the new and extraordinary anecdotes they had heard. They separated for the night, and continued to recur with interest to the information of their friend. They were amazed, if not shocked : they could not understand how such things could happen. In a civilized country, indeed, a motive to the cool, scientific punishment that Spring and Neat, or Spring and Langan bestow upon each other, was easily comprehended : but they stared with utter consternation at the mystery of an Irish fight, because it was discussed with shill-lelachs and alpeens, instead of fists and knuckles.

Next morning they met, after their early parade, at Graham's private lodgings—for, at the time we speak of, the officers of a regiment were afforded, even in considerable towns in Ireland, but scanty accommodation in barracks. It was a hot, oppressive forenoon in the close of July, promising a day of even more relaxing influence, and ten hours of sunlight were before them, to be spent in one way or other. To the man of business, or to the professional man in London, to the needy author, the toiling lawyer, nay, considering the various rounds of metropolitan amusements, perhaps to the Cornet of the Guards himself, this may seem no very embarrassing prospect : but to the fashionable English lieutenant on country service in Ireland it might well appear an endless vista, beset with doubt and fear, and all the little fiends of apathy and idleness.

In their want of something to do, and while they again recurred to the topics of the preceding night, the friends felt curious to

behold, as they had previously been surprised to hear of, an Irish row; and—

“Oh, for a fight of alpeens!” said Graham, throwing up the window, as he rose from breakfast, and heaving one of those heavy sighs that denote the joint reign of heat and listlessness—“Howard, what is to become of us this ferocious day?”

“There’s nothing to be done with the fishing-rods,” returned Howard: “Isaac Walton himself could not tempt to a bite any trout in his senses, till evening, at least. And I am tired of the two Misses O’Flaherty.”

“And I of the three Miss Nicholsons, and of the four Miss Pattensons,” said Graham; “their prattle and tattle, their tastes and their raptures, are death to me. They have all been escorted through the streets, and on their public promenades, and to Church, Mass, or Meeting, by the poor ensigns of the last score of regiments quartered in their native town, saying the same fiddle-faddle things, and exhibiting to each set, successively and in vain, from time immemorial, the same faces and the same fascinations.”

“Then their brothers and male cousins are such sots, asses, or puppies,” continued Howard, in the same complimentary strain, towards people who thought themselves as the apple of his eye.

“And their mothers and maiden aunts such worriers,” rejoined Graham, in the same tone. “And the girls themselves, too, they walk so much, and they clack so fast, and they parade one so here and there, that a man had better be on a real forced march at once, than by their sides in such weather. But, suppose billiards?”—

“Monstrous!”

“Then the racket-court?”

“Terrible!”

“A cool hand at whist till mess-hour?”

This proposal was also considered and declined. The friends having thus passed in review all the means of enjoyment suggested by their situation and ruling tastes, remained for some time hopelessly silent, picking crumbs of bread off the breakfast-table, and gently filipping them out at the open window, until the entrance of their last night’s guest gave a fresh and pleasing turn to their ideas. Renewing with him the conversation about Irish fights and merry-makings, they were cheered to find that a pattern was that day holden a few miles from Clonmel, where they might hope to become acquainted, at a civil distance, with the prowess of the Alpeen and Shillelagh.

A proposal from Mr. Burke, their Clonmel friend, to guide them to the spot, was immediately accepted ; and, though the sun grew fierce in his strength, they resolved to proceed on foot, for he promised to lead them by a short cut through fields and meadows. The breeze of the open country was reviving, and they would saunter along, resting in the occasional shade, and by the side of clear cool brooks : no hurry was in the case ; indeed it were better to come upon the scene of festivity towards evening. Altogether, everything was *now* practicable and delightful. So, sinking the military character in peaceful suits of clothes, a precaution prudently hinted by Mr. Burke, each gentleman, by his further advice, furnished himself with a respectable shillelagh, and the little expedition set out.

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## CHAPTER II.

AFTER a pleasant saunter through an open, interesting country, Howard and Graham, and their friend, gained the spacious plain on which the pattern was being held. For some time they rambled about amongst the people, looking on at their diversions, or occasionally joining in their mirth. Assuredly there was here a sufficient variety to engage attention. Some were employed at the wonders of the show-box, or listening with open mouths, and looks of respectful amazement, to the oratory of its accomplished exhibitor. Our gentlemen did not, themselves, refuse an approving laugh to one turn of the fellow's eloquence. He had in his hand the knotted string, which guided the movements of a picture of a certain battle, celebrated in the annals of the Irish rebellion for a triumph over some regiments of Irish militia, by a mob of peasants, assisted by a part of the handful of French landed at Killala.

"Look to the right," quoth the showman, "and you shall see the Wicklow militia scampering off the ground, my Lord Monck at their head, on the gallant occasion. Small blame to his lordship, for the French are at his heels."

Passing from this group of rustic connoisseurs, our visitors next noticed a swarm of simple clowns, who stood, all their faculties of acuteness and comprehension brought to a focus, watching the coils of a strip of old hat, as the cunning knave, who professed

this species of gambling, folded it up in good affectation of plain dealing: then, certain that they had kept an observant eye during the process, they proceeded, with hope almost raised to certainty, to stick a wooden peg in the proper loop. A halfpenny was paid for the venture, and if successful they were to gain thrice the sum; but, with all their sagacity, bitter disappointment was sure to follow. Many staked their money on the fascinating evolutions of the Wheel of Fortune; and always with certain loss: others threw a stick at some wooden pins placed upright in the ground, ever filled with honest surprise that they could not hit any of them, though but a few yards distant. There were beggars with every boasted ailment under the sun, clamorously insisting on the charity of "the good Christians;" and ballad-singers with cracked lungs, squeaking forth ditties of unique composition; such as,—

"As I did ramble,  
Down by a bramble," &c.

There were venders of cakes and of cheese, of apples and of gingerbread, all striving with incessant uproar to attract custom. But the principal diversion, and that to which the greater number were attached, was dancing on the green sod. As our trio stood a little elevated above the concourse, they counted ten pipers within ken, each surrounded by a crowd of "boys and girls," footing it away with every mark of utter glee and happiness. The manner in which a piper set up his establishment was simple enough. If he had a wife—as which of them had not?—she brought a stool, and, lacking that convenience, a stone served the purpose: he seated himself; struck up a merry jig; one or two friends patronized his muse, and presently he had a group around him, and was prosperous.

By the way, an occurrence noticed by our party, on their walk to the pattern, should here be mentioned. A few fields from the scene of festivity they perceived a young fellow, rakishly dressed in his holiday garb, stop, unconscious of observance, before one of those tall stones occasionally to be met with in the country parts of Ireland, but of which the use or meaning is unknown to us, notwithstanding that we have anxiously inquired after their tradition. The athletic fellow held his hat in his hand, bowed to the stone with all the air he could assume; bowed again and again; then replaced his hat, and began to dance rapidly before his stationary partner. He kept his eyes fixed on his feet, as if



to watch how they did their business; and after some time, at length seemingly pleased with his performance, he took off his hat again; again bowed profoundly to the stone, and, with an exulting shout, scampered off to the pattern. Here he was soon recognized, using to a pretty girl, as he took her out to dance, the same graceful ceremonies he had before lavished on an object not so sensible of his fascinations.

"Tents," or booths, constructed in a very primitive manner, were, to the number of forty or fifty, erected along the field. Long, pliant wattles, stuck in the ground at regular distances, and running some thirty feet, then meeting at top, and covered with blankets, sacks, or such like awning, made up each tent. A description of the interior of one, will give a proper idea of the rest. A long deal table, or rather a succession of deal tables, was placed nearly from end to end; forms were ranged at each side; and on these sat a mixed company of old and young. Here a youthful fellow was placed by a pretty girl, his arm round her neck, while he whispered his best soft things, and she smiled, and pouted, and coquetted: opposite sat two or three old men discoursing on the weather, the crops, and the prices; the young folk no way bashful in their presence, and little reason had they to be so; for the ancients quaffed their liquor often and heartily, taking not the least notice of what passed at the other side. Here too was a piper, and the dance went on as vigorously within as without. The landlord and landlady stationed near the entrance were provided with a good store of ale and whiskey, at the call of their customers, attended by a wench as comely as possible, eternally out of breath with running here and there; as the incessant knocks of the empty quarts against the table challenged her attention. It was her business to see that the same quart did not thump a second time, and to be prepared with her best smile and ready joke, and perhaps something else, equally ready and desirable, for every customer who should choose to laugh or bandy wit, or struggle for a stray favour, with the decently-coy Hebe.

Having walked everywhere their curiosity directed, without observing any promise of an Irish row, our amateurs were, in some disappointment, about to return home, when their unconscious acquaintance, whom they had seen bowing to the stone, made his appearance from the aperture of a tent, his hat doffed, and leading by the hand a blooming lass. It was evident he had seen the party of gentlemen from within; and now stopping and scraping before them—"Gentlemen," said he, "here's a merry young girl

wants a partner for a dance." His fair charge whispered him, and he continued, addressing himself to Graham—"Will you, Sir, take a small dance wid the colleen dhass?"

She sent, on her own part, a merry invitation from her black eye, and Graham's Clonmel friend answered: "This gentleman never said no to a pretty girl in his life." The girl curtsied, still looking to Graham, who, of course, repaid her with a bow. Whereupon she offered her hand, and rather led than was led by Graham into the tent, Howard, Burke, and the posture-master following.

Here they found themselves in the presence of fifty or sixty country people of both sexes and all ages; some singing; some spouting love; some dancing, and some conversing vehemently, and with, at least, spirited gesticulation. But, though thus separately engaged in the detail, all were unanimous in one accompaniment, namely, the consumption of ale or whiskey, more or less; their hearts wide open as their mouths and eyes, and their animal spirits ecstatic from the genial influence of the liquor.

With officious eagerness, they made room for the strangers, whose "health an' long life" was immediately toasted round from mouth to mouth; and, according to the local usages of hospitality, Graham, Howard, and Burke, had to pledge every soul within view, each in his or her own magnum. This was more than an inconvenience; but the visitors had determined to conform in everything to the taste of their circle, and, in the entire good-will of their neighbours, they found the benefit of their policy. For, when in turn they ordered some whiskey-punch, and pushed it round, they had enlisted, for ever, the affection of every creature present.

"Arrah, thonomon-duoul, gintlimin, bud here's your hearty welcome among us; here's long life an' glory to ye! Upon my sowl bud I loves the likes o' ye in the bottom o' my heart, that wouldn't be shy or afeard to sit down and take a drop wid the country-boys. Ye deserve the best in the tent, an' ye must have it as long as Paddy Flinn has a laffina in the 'varsal world—halloo, there!" and thump went the empty quart against the table. Mr. Patrick Flinn, the knight of the stone, had emptied his vessel at one draught, out of the good-will he bore them, and now pounded with a force that set all the other vessels dancing, while the tent echoed the sound.

During his delivery of this speech, Howard had time more closely to observe the face and probable character of their quondam

acquaintance. He seemed about twenty-three years of age, tall, wiry, and athletic: his features expressed rather shrewdness than openness; the eyes grey and small; the nose aquiline, and the mouth in a perpetual play of waggersy and good-humour, which, perhaps, was as much a convenient affectation as a natural habit. His whole manner and dress, too, appeared ostentatiously disposed to claim notice for him as a queer, scapegrace-looking fellow. He now wore his hat on one side; and the collar of his shirt being open, displayed a throat and neck red as scarlet, and rough as a cow's tongue.

While Howard made his observations, he was interrupted by a husky, gruff voice at his other side, saying: "Here's tow'd's yere good healths, gintlemin, an' that ye may thrive an' prosper, an' that I may live to see ye here again at the pattrern this day twelve-months, I pray Gor."

The voice that pronounced these words was not in unison with them; and when Howard fixed his eyes on the speaker, he felt, that, neither in person nor feature did they find a correspondence. The man was, in fact, of that outward description termed ill-looking. His face, large and gross, beamed with nothing kindly: in stature he was short and broad, but of Herculean symmetry: under a bushy black eyebrow lurked a deep, and, if not scowling, a watchful eye: the whole expression of his features was gravity of a disagreeable kind. At variance with the general costume around, he wore an ample, sailorly jacket, and a red handkerchief, that coiled like a cable round a throat unconscious of a shirt-collar. In other respects, his dress accorded with the usual one; being composed of a nameless-coloured shirt, breeches open at the knees, pale blue stockings, ungartered, and part of an old hat, tied with "suggans," or hay ropes, about the small of each leg, and covering the tops of his brogues. His age might be forty-five.

But Howard was again diverted from his studies by—"Musha, yere healths, an' kindly welcome to the pattrern a hinnies-machree,"—addressed to him and Burke by a sedate old matron, whose clothing, being of the most costly kind worn by the class to which she belonged, showed her to be "comfortable," and that she could well afford to spend a little on such occasions as the present. She had on a good blue rug cloak, the falling hood, lined with purple satin, and a large silver hook-and-eye to fasten it at her neck. A flaming silk handkerchief was tied on her head in the way peculiar to her country, the costly lace of her cap peeping from under it. There was a cordiality, an earnest-


ness of voice, and a soft benevolence of smile, accompanying her words, that formed a strong contrast to the last salutation.

“Healths a piece, genteels, all round—not forgetting you, sir,” added a rosy lass, with a stammer, a smile, and a blush, and her eyes half raised over the vessel, as in the last words she addressed herself to Howard. And in this strain arose the civilities of every individual in the booth: the phrase and sentiment varying with the age or character of the speaker.

In the meantime, Howard and Burke were lookers-on at the dance between Graham and his partner. When the jig was first about to be struck up, Graham, under the tutelage of Burke, requested to know the tune the lady wished. He was answered, according to invariable custom, with a set phrase—“what’s your will is my pleasure, sir.” But here the fair one proved over complaisant; as, from his total ignorance of native music, Graham could name no tune likely to be understood. In this dilemma he had recourse to the piper, who sat with his instrument prepared, awaiting orders; and in a whisper desired he would give his own favourite. But, before we proceed further, let us introduce more particularly Mr. Thadeus Fitzgerald, or—as he was called by his own friends—Thady Whigarald, the piper.

This popular votary of Apollo, was, if his physiognomy furnished proof, as happy in playing his pipes, as those they set a capering. He sat, a good bulky personage, with a fat, pleasant orb of countenance, which, while he tuned his pipes, simpered like a joint of mutton in the dinner-pot: when at work, his sightless eyeballs kept rolling about, as his head went backward and forward, and up and down, in unison with his own beloved strains; while every other feature expressed correspondent applause and ecstasy. His rusty, broad-brimmed hat was encircled by a small hay-rope instead of the ordinary band, and in this his pipe was stuck: the leaf turned up all round; so that if Thady happened to be out in a shower, he must have a rivulet running round his head.

His grey frieze coat and waistcoat were much broken; the knees of his breeches open as usual; and his stockings so peculiarly tied below the fat knee, as to serve for convenient pockets. Into one he slipped the halfpence, the result of his professional skill; and from the other occasionally extracted a quid of tobacco, which, with a dexterous jerk, he deposited in his mouth, scarcely ever allowing this digression to interfere with the progress of his music. Thady was facetious withal; from time to time



encouraging the dancers, as good sportsmen cheer on their dogs. When he heard the feet beat loud time to his jig, which in his estimation was the beau-ideal of dancing,—“Whoo! success attend you, my darlin’!—Whoo! ma colleen-beg! That’s id, à-vich-ma-chree!—Whoo! Whoo! that’s your sort, Shaumus!”—these and similar ejaculations joyfully mingled with the notes of his instrument.

To Graham’s request for his own favourite air, Thady replied—“Why, thin, agra, because your lavin’ it to myself, I’ll give you somethin’ that’s good: so here goes in the name o’ God;” and instantly he set his arm in motion to inflate his bag. Then volunteering a prefatorial shout, he struck up a jig, the rapid canter of which set Graham’s extremities going at such a rate, as quickly to put him in a violent heat, and leave him panting for breath. Meanwhile, Graham’s mountain-partner, possessing better lungs, or being more of an adept at the exercise, seemed little exhausted, and through common shame and gallantry he rallied his own spirits, and resolved to dance the battle out. But, notwithstanding the encouraging shouts of Thady, the lively and really mirth-inspiring air, and the importance which he could not fail to perceive was attached to durability—for at different intervals he was addressed by the spectators with—“That’s id, your sowl! hould on as long as Thady has a screech in the chanther!”—notwithstanding all this, Graham was at last compelled to make his bow, and retire to a seat, completely blown and crestfallen.

His partner, seemingly but just fresh for the sport, looked triumphant, and still timing the music, jiggèd towards Howard, with a rapid curtsey, and—“I dance to you, sir, i’ you plase.” Refusal was out of the question; and, although he had his friend’s fate before his eyes, up sprang the desperate man she had pitched upon. After some time Howard had the gratification to observe that his blooming adversary began in her turn to betray signs of fatigue; and he was about to congratulate himself on a speedy victory, for he had fully entered into the spirit of competition he observed so prevalent, when another damsel bounced up, flung by her mantle with a jolly air, cocked and secured her coarse straw bonnet, assumed the place of the first, and set upon Howard with all her might. This reinforcement soon decided his fate. Burke took the hint from what had been done by the second girl; Mr. Patrick Flinn relieved Burke. Other “country-boys” took part with the strangers, for it had now become a real contest between the sexes; and the fun waxed uproarious. Thady blew

with redoubled fury, and grew downright clamorous in his cries of encouragement. The excessive effort creating excessive heat, our military incognitos and friend indulged in frequent glasses of punch, to prevent bad consequences; so that in a little time they joined in the loud mirth of their companions; and unconsciously expressed their delight in the same manner as those around them. They turned their partners with a shout, and became *au fait* at the Irish screech. All in the tent felt flattered by the jocularity and heartiness with which they entered into the rustic mirth; and they had to undergo exclamations of good will, shakes of the hand, and even hugs and kisses, from old and young. Every draught of ale and toss of whiskey went down freighted with "health and long life to the gintlemin, every inch o' them;" and all declared their readiness, nay, anxiety, to die on the spot, if it could be of the least service to them.

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## CHAPTER III.

HOWARD, sitting down to rest during the progress of the dance, found himself again by the side of Paddy Flinn, who immediately addressed him.

"Musha, then, beggin' your pardon, sir, will you taste a dhrop of ale frum a poor boy?" Howard tasted accordingly, and Paddy then caught his hand in an immense fist, hard as his own plough-handle, with a pressure that nearly caused the complimented person to shriek out.

"Sha-dhurth,"\* Flinn continued—"upon my conscience, but I'd bear to be kilt stone-dead for you or any friend o' yours. Show me the man, standin' afore me, that 'ud say black is the white o' your eye!—whoo!"—(We have no better translation for the screech). "Whoo!—ma-hurp on duoul!—bud I'd batter his sowl to smithereens!" And, letting Howard's hand go, he smote the table with such might, at the same time emitting a tremendous yell, that the quart from which he was drinking jumped into his lap, and there emptied its contents. Paddy took it up very leisurely, and looking at it for a moment, while

\* Your health.

his face assumed an expression of unique waggery, and lost the menacing appearance which a moment before it had worn, thus apostrophized the vessel :

“ Why, then, fire to your sowl, an’ ill end to you, for one quart, couldn’t you be asy wid yourself, an’ not to go spill a body’s dthrop o’ liquor? Where do you think I’m to make out the manes o’ fillin’ you so often?” He again thumped the table with it, however, and the smiling tapster appeared in a trice. “ Here, ma colleen dhass,” he cried, “ an’ give us a quart the next time that wont be losin’ the dhrink.”

“ A pretty girl, Paddy,” observed Howard.

“ Arrah, then, isn’t she, Sir? an’ all o’ them, the cratur, considerin’ sich as them, that lives on phatoes one an’ twenty times in the week?”\* But here a sudden stop was put to the dialogue; Howard, from what immediately followed, imagining the fellow had lost his wits. Paddy sprang up; gave his hat a violent shove, that made it hang quite at one side of his head; jumped across the table; in his transit overset two old men who were talking Irish; and, without waiting to apologize for his rudeness, brushed up to where the dance was going forward, and bellowed out, as he flourished a stick he had snatched in his progress:—

“ Show me the mother’s son o’ you that daare touch *that!* Whoo! Dare *you* touch it?”—whisking round, and playing the stick over the head of a young fellow near him.

“ No!—bud I’d sthrike the man that would!—Whoo!” was the answer.

Paddy, after waiting for some time, hallooing and brandishing his weapon in defiance of the whole world, stooped down and raised a hat from the ground, which, with many professions of esteem and love, he presented to Graham, from whose head it had fallen in dancing, and who, in the full fling of the sport, had scarcely observed his loss. Paddy then moved quietly back to his place; but Howard shifted his quarters, not choosing any longer the immediate proximity of so turbulent a spirit.

Perhaps Howard had another reason for this change of place. No intimate or cordial fellowship seemed to exist between Flinn and the short, dark man we have before described as attracting Howard’s notice; yet, on more than one occasion, he thought he observed a peculiar intelligence take place between them. It was interchanged slightly indeed, by the rapid elevation of an eye-

\* i. e., Three times a-day.

brow, the compression of the lips, a shrug, a faint smile, or even a stare : but these simple indications bespoke, in Howard's mind, a closer acquaintance than it was evident the parties wished to proclaim ; and the mystery interested him.

Another circumstance, too, assisted the interest. At the very upper part of the tent sat a young man about twenty-four years of age, better dressed and of better air than most around him. From the moment our party came in he had occupied the same place, sleeping, or appearing to sleep, through all the uproar, and the only person unconnected with it. He was booted and spurred, and soiled with travel ; hence, perhaps, the weariness he could not, or would not cast off. Once, however, he was perfectly awake for a moment, and bending rather a stern eye upon Paddy, as he sat conversing with our friends, the young man called out : " Flinn !" in a commanding and quick tone. The word seemed to strike with equal effect upon Flinn and the gruff-looking man, for both rose, when Flinn said to the other, with a wave of his hand : " tishn't you, but me, Jack Mullins," and proceeded alone to wait on the young person who had summoned him.

As they conversed rapidly and secretly together, Howard perceived, by the frequent recurrence to him and Graham of the stranger's keen blue eye, that he and his friend formed the subject of their discourse. Displeased, if not offended, his own brow and lip curled : he turned fully round in the direction where the young man sat, and challenged his attention. His manner was scarcely noticed by the person to whom it was addressed, except by a careless aversion of his glance, when, looking once more to Howard, their eyes encountered for an instant. Immediately after Flinn returned to his place, and the person with whom he had conversed turned his side to the company, crossed his legs, leaned his head on his hand, and relapsed into sleep or apathy.

Howard now took a seat beside Jack Mullins, as he had heard Flinn call the surly fellow, whose manner during the whole evening was taciturn in the extreme. For since he drank the stranger's health, upon their first appearance, he had never spoken to those near him, nor, indeed, opened his lips, except to afford passage to the inundations of ale, against the influence of which he seemed completely proof, or to send forth a yell, his sole tribute to the general mirth. When Howard sat down by him, he turned his face slowly round, then, with a continued, stolid stare, moved his hand to a quart, and holding it before him, said : " sha dhurth, again, a-vich ;" drank and relapsed into silence.



Howard, from a variety of motives, wishing to draw him into dialogue, remarked : " My friend Paddy is a queer fellow, I believe."

" You may say that, à-roon."

" Then you know him ?"

" Anan ?"

Howard repeated the hypothetical question.

" Why, about as well as you know him yourself ; an' sure that's a raison for saying as much of him as you do, à-vich."

" Och, we all knows poor Paddy well enough," said a curious little old man, with a rusty buckle-wig, who, sitting opposite, overheard the conversation. " He's a boulamскеich iv a divil that never minds nothin' bud his divarsion. Bud for all that, he's as *good a boy* as any in the place, or the next place to id, by Gor," and the old fellow's eyes twinkled, as he benevolently brought forward the virtues of Paddy's character.

" I'm glad to hear you say so," said Howard. " I perceive he is over fond of his 'drop o' drink,' as he calls it, and that temperance can scarcely be said to be amongst his good qualities. But I suppose he is an industrious lad ?"

" We never hard much to say fur him in the regard o' that," replied the old man.

" Well, then, he is a dutiful son ; supporting infirm parents perhaps ?"

A rude " ho ! ho !" here sounded from the throat of Mullins. But he corrected himself as Howard turned round ; and now presented a face of impenetrable indifference. The old commentator continued.

" Ulla-loo, à-vich-ma-chree, Paddy doesn't live with his father or mother. He's a stranger among us, like ; a labourin' boy that goes the country, doin' a start o' work for one body or another, just whin he wants the price of a gallon, comin' on a pattern, or a fair, or a thing that-a-way. Bud for all that, as I said afore, he's the *best boy* among us."

Howard, though easily comprehending that the willing expositor knew less of Paddy than Mullins, who professed to know nothing, was impelled to ask another question : " The best boy ! I should like to know what you mean. Paddy is good-natured, I suppose ; obliging, and willing to serve a friend or a neighbour ?"

" Why, a hinny, Paddy 'ud be as dacent, an' as willin' as another to do a dacent thing. Bud sorrow a much has the poor gorçoon in his power, barrin' the one thing. An' maybe he'd do

that as free fur fun as fur love. Yes, mostha; he'd fight fur you till he was kilt, out-an'-out."

"Still you do not tell me how he is 'the best boy.'"

"Musha, God help you, an' begging your pardon, Sir, à-vich, but I *did* tell you. A betther boy nor my poor Pawdeen never walked a fair;" and he looked affectionately at Flinn, who was, and for some time had been, dancing. "Divil a four o' the clanest boys in the country bud he'd stretch with his alpeen, afore you could screech."

Their conversation was here interrupted by the hero himself, who, as he sat down at some distance, commenced, in consequence of a general request, to exhibit as a singer. He sang in Irish, and Howard necessarily lost the literal sense of his verses; but the air to which they ran had such a character of downright waggery, as could not for a moment be mistaken. Paddy prefaced each verse with a prose introduction, spoken in all the mock-seriousness of a finished exhibitor; and the effect produced by the whole on the audience was most surprising. They seemed frantic with delight; they jumped about, screamed, banged the table, and greeted the close of every verse with a general shout of ecstatic approbation. What would an applause-loving actor not give for such an audience!

Howard, wishing to fathom the taste of his rustic friends, longed to be made acquainted with the nature of the composition, and for this purpose applied to a decent-looking man, who seemed more orderly in his demeanour than the others, and to whose opinion an universal respect was paid whenever he deigned to deliver himself, which was not often. In fact this was the mountain schoolmaster, and Howard could not have applied to a better person. After some preliminary remarks, composed of the biggest and most obsolete words the pedagogue could recollect, he supplied a literal translation of one verse, which ran as follows:—

"Oh, whiskey, the delight and joy of my soul!  
 You lay me stretched on the floor,  
 You deprive me of sense and knowledge,  
 And you fill me with a love of fighting;  
 My coat you have often torn from my back;  
 By you I lost my silken cravat;  
 But all shall be forgotten and forgiven,  
 If you meet me after mass next Sunday!"

The song passed away, and Howard again sought to penetrate the rhinoceros caution in which Mullins wrapped himself.

"An accomplished fellow every way," he said, turning to his neighbour.

"Aye, faith," was the reply.

"I saw him speaking to that strange young man, some time since," continued Howard.

"Did you?" said Mullins, unmoved.

"And therefore conclude they are acquainted?"

"Aye in throth?"—(asking rather than assenting.)

"Well?"

"Pray do you know that sleepy young man?"

"Me?—how could I?"

"Why I thought when he spoke"—

"Harkee, à-vich," interrupted Mullins, with, for the first time, a slight approach to interest—"I know little of anybody, and don't care how little anybody knows of me: I never ax questions, for fear I'd be tould lies. Bud," he continued, changing his manner into an affectation of communicativeness, as he perceived Howard's displeasure—"sure we all know *that's* the farmer's son, that comes to hire us, now an' thin, to dig the phatoes, o' the likes o' that. An' sure Paddy Flinn, or any other labourin' boy of his kind, may know as much of him as another, an' no harm done."

Howard was here called on to take his place in the everlasting dance, and rose accordingly. The fame of the "gentlemen's" exploits had gone abroad, and the boys and girls poured in from the neighbouring booths, totally abandoning the pipers without, to partake of the superior glee that was going on in the favoured tent. The place became excessively heated by the throng, and, since dancing must be the order of the evening, it was proposed by Howard and his friends to substitute country dances for jigs, in order to do away with some of the monstrous labour of the occupation. The novelty of the thing made it highly acceptable, although, except the strangers, there were not, perhaps, two individuals present who understood the evolutions of a figure. Immediate preparations were, however, made for commencing. The gentlemen chose their partners amongst the very prettiest lasses; took the upper places, in order that the others might study the figure before their turn came round; and, with an encouraging whoop from Thady Whigarald, at the same time that he struck up "Mrs. M'Cloud," set off in high spirits.

In a little time the lads and lasses began to understand the dance, and then wondering at, and delighted with their own clever-

ness, the glee became deafening. Every soul in the tent was infected by the Imp of boisterous enjoyment. The dancers shouted as they bounded along: the piper drowned his own music in his own shouts. Children and old men and women shouted as the performers whisked by, and with gesticulation accompanied them in their career. Those who sat at the table beat time with their fists; so that the quarts, pints, and tumblers went through the mazes of a figure of their own. And two urchins, bestriding an empty barrel, and kicking with their heels, provoked from it a sound that, while it assisted in the chorus, told equally well for the pocket of the landlord, and the guzzling capability of his guests.

In the midst of the sport, Howard, who had occasionally reconnoitred the upper part of the tent, where the persevering sleeper lay, observed that from time to time Mullins sidled his way in that direction, and was now within a few yards of the young man. The increasing puzzle had its effect on Howard, and he brought his mind to consent to a finesse, that under other circumstances he should certainly have rejected, no matter how urged on by curiosity or interest. Having danced to the bottom with his partner, he pleaded to her a slight illness, enjoining her not to make any remark; left the party, bearing a glass of water in his hand, and stretched himself on a form nearly opposite Mullins, and about equidistant from him and the other person, who still seemed wrapt in sleep. To a gruff question from Mullins, he urged a bad head and stomach, and much fatigue, and then apparently composed himself to slumber, and in a short time gave natural symptoms of deep repose.

The *ruse* was successful. After a lapse of about ten minutes, Howard could hear Mullins move higher up on his seat, and then a quick whisper from the other—"No—no—stay as you are—no nearer. Do you think he sleeps?"

"Like a top," answered Mullins, in the same whisper,—"But let us step out, if you like, for a surety."

"Idiot!" said the other, "how can you propose *that*? Don't you fear we are watched?"

"Well, à-vich," answered Mullins, passively.

"Well or ill, listen to me. And don't turn round so, and gaze at me. I see you with my side-sight. Turn off, and look away from me, as I do from you. There, and now answer me in that position, but no louder than I question you. I have ridden hard at your appointment up from the harbour; and a damned fag it is to one so long unused to it. Since I entered this tent and saw

you, I have suffered Hell's torments, in not being able to ask you one question. *Is* he at the pattern?"

"I saw him on the road, an' he tould me he was for comin' here, as a good place to hire his men for the harvest."

"How long is this ago?"

"About five hours agone, I think."

"Are you sure he is to come alone?"

"Not the laste sure in the world ; but all the other way. Didn't I tell you he guessed you were somewhere in the country? Didn't you say, yourself, this moment, he may be on the watch? An' sure he wouldn't come here widout a few Alpeens, any way. The red divil himself can call his faction about him, an' so can *he*."

"Well, how many of us are here?"

"Only myself an' Flinn, an' six boys more. Bud I often riz a good Faction in a worse place out o' nothin' at all bud good will for a scrimmage."

"You know you must not appear to him unless we are successful, out-and-out. The six other lads are abroad?"

"Yes; here an' there, an' over-an'-hether. And Flinn, you see, for all his caperin' an' his divil's thricks, is watchin' the mouth o' the tent."

There was a pause, broken only by one or two impatient sighs that came from the younger person, who again resumed, in a hasty whisper:—

"Damnation!—if *this* fellow be only giving us the fox's sleep?"

"Avoch, don't fear him. 'Tisn't a soft omadhaun like him could think of any sich thing."

"But I saw him speaking to you?"

"Well, an' if you did? Sure I knew how to answer him: don't fear."

Another pause ensued, and the young man once more led the conversation.

"Mullins, now listen attentively to me."

"Well, à-vich."

"*His* life must be spared on this occasion. Let us first secure and get him down to the harbour. That's all I want for the present."

"An' that's litle enough. I remembered you tould me so afore, an' sure I tould Flinn, too, as you bid me. We'll all mind it."

"Again I warn *you* to keep out of his sight. The moment the game is up, take to the road, and wait for us a little way forward. If we fail, your continuing to live on good terms with the rascal

is what we must mainly depend on for success another time. D'you hear me?"

"Avoch, to be sure I do."

"Then move down from me, now, as easily as you can. I see another of these fools coming."

Mullins obeyed this order as Graham advanced in some anxiety to look after Howard. He found his friend seemingly asleep on the forms, and Howard allowed himself to be often called and shaken before he would acknowledge the restoration of his senses. At last jumping up he declared his illness to be quite gone. Wishing to communicate to Graham in private the strange conversation he had heard, he advanced towards the dancers, first observing that the young man had re-assumed his drowsy mask, and that Mullins had slid a good distance off, and was now looking at and cheering on the crowd, with as much affectation of enjoyment as his gross and lethargic features could assume.

"The very devil's in that fellow," said Graham, pointing to Flinn, as they approached the revellers. "He has been continually out of place since you left us; jostling and plunging, and setting every one astray. Expostulation was thrown away upon him; I endeavoured to give him some directions, and he listened pretty tamely for a moment, but as we spoke, the precious piper emitted such a blast and shout, as were too much for him. Off he went like a shot, thump against another man's partner, who had not time to get out of his way, and brought her to the earth. But, without at all ceasing the motion of his feet, Paddy instantly caught her up, gave her a kiss, to which Petruccio's in the church was mere billing and cooing, and adding—'there alanna! sure I'll kiss you an' cure you,' on he went as if nothing had happened."

Howard now made an effort to move through the crowd to the opening of the tent, beckoning Burke, and leading Graham. Considerable difficulty occurred in the very first step, as well from the good-natured officiousness of the people, as from their number and bustle. A moment after, other circumstances completely foiled any such intention.

Paddy Flinn was just about to lead down the dance. The last couple had just finished; and at the entreaty of his partner he seemed endeavouring to bring his mind to a focus, and try to understand what he had to do, his face being turned to the entrance of the tent. Suddenly he sprang forward; snatched an alpeen that lay quietly beside the piper; and then, with a tremendous yell, upsetting every person and thing in his way,

flourished the weapon, and made a deadly blow at a gentlemanly-dressed man who was just entering. The foremost of a considerable body of peasants who came in with this person, guarded off the blow, and in turn struck at the aggressor. Their sticks crossed and clattered ; but at last Paddy felled his man, crying out at the same time, as the rest of the hostile party pressed upon him—"Where are ye, my boys, abroad !—Come on for the right cause !—Look afther Purcell !—he's goin' to escape !" Then turning to the people in the tent—"Neighbours ! neighbours !—neighbours an' all good Christhens !—stand up for honest men ! This is the divil's bird, Purcell !—stand up for the orphans he made ! for the widow he kilt ! for the daughter he ruined ! and the son that's far away !—Whoo !"

As he spoke, Howard looked with amazement at the sudden and almost incredible change that in a moment was presented in the face and manner of Flinn. His features lost every trait of the levity and drollery that had hitherto appeared to be their fixed character, and now bent and flashed with natural sternness and ferocity. His figure became erect, firm, and well-set. All previous jauntiness and swagger was cast aside like a disguise : his whole mien was that of a man made up to the accomplishment of a desperate purpose, and seemingly incapable of a moment's trifling or good-humour.

The instant he concluded his speech, the shout was echoed from abroad, and some six or seven, evidently the friends he had invoked, pressed upon the rear of Purcell's party, and gave the greater number of them something to do. Flinn, after levelling the foremost of the van, for some time singly engaged the remainder. And well did he uphold the character given of him to Howard by the little old man in the buckle-wig. Within a few minutes he had stretched four additional enemies by the side of the first victim to his invincible arm and murderous alpeen. But presently he was saved the trouble as well as the glory of a single stand against shameful odds. Every male creature in the tent flew to arms, and the greater proportion siding with Flinn, he became the leader of the more numerous faction.

Now ensued a scene of truly astounding uproar. The tables, on which the landlord had disposed his good things, were upset in an instant : his jars and bottles went smash, and rivulets of good ale and whiskey inundated the tent : bread and meat, and cheese, were trodden under foot. Thady Whigarald was tumbled from his seat, his pipes crushed to atoms ; and the last desperate

and expiring sob of the wind-bag, and scream of the chanter, mingled ludicrously enough with his own pathetic lamentations for the loss of his darling instrument. The landlord uselessly endeavoured to harangue the combatants: in vain he pointed out the utter ruin hurled upon him. The girls and old women screamed, and tried to escape by the entrance; but it was crowded with battle, and all chance of retreat, except with danger to limb and life, thereby rendered hopeless. So that after a time they flocked to the upper part of the tent, keeping shrill chorus to the war-whoops of the men of fight, to the frantic oratory of the landlord and landlady, to the clashing and clattering of alpeens, and the rapid and too audible blows that resulted from them.

But the worst is to be told. Arms were scarce; and, woful to relate, the frail tenement that had hitherto afforded the combatants shelter and merriment was demolished in a twinkling, to supply the pressing want. The wattles on which the awning was suspended were torn up; the blankets and sacks, that had formed the roof, pulled down and trampled to rags. Howard had, before now, seen a battle "in the tented field:" Graham had long fondly imagined one, and both had speculated even upon an Irish row. But such an exhibition as the present neither had ever yet beheld or dreamt of.

They and their friend endeavoured to make peace, counting upon the previous devotion expressed to their sweet persons. But such is the fickleness of all human influence and popularity, that broken pates were likely to be the only result of so ill-timed an assumption of superiority. No one, indeed, struck at them; but they were shoved and shouldered aside, and sent helpless and unnoticed through the tide of battle, like bubbles dancing upon the war of ocean, or straws or atoms whisked through the conflict of the whirlwinds. Meantime the hand of chance alone shielded them from the promiscuous blows that were dealt around; some of which they would, in all probability, have shared, had not a providential rescue occurred in their behalf.

An Amazonian maiden, to whom Graham had been particularly "sweet," as she would herself say, in the course of the evening, observed his dangerous situation, and, with the energy and disinterestedness of a primitive heroine, plunged forward to snatch him from it. Dashing aside the waves of battle, she won her fearless way to Graham's side, clasped him in her arms, and, bearing him to the top of the tent, set him down on his legs amid the peaceable cohort of women who had there taken up their



position. Some four or five, stimulated by her example, made the same exertions, and with the same success, in behalf of Howard and Burke; and our three friends being thus safely disengaged, the treble files closed upon them, clamorously refusing to afford further opportunity for peacemaking.

One of the first observations which Howard made, assured him that neither Mullins nor his drowsy acquaintance remained where he had left them. In fact, they were nowhere to be seen; and as, so far as he could recollect, they had not advanced to the belligerents, it was plain they must have retired through the space left after the demolition of the tent. Before he had been spirited away from the immediate scene of action, Howard could ascertain that Purcell, as he had heard Flinn call the gentleman who served as a provocative to the engagement, was also missing. And the yelling exclamations which now broke from Paddy, proved that he must have effectually baffled his foes, and escaped whole and uninjured, whatever fate had been allotted for him.

We have taken up some time in describing a scene, and the rapid succession of events, that in reality did not occupy above five minutes; for, counting from the moment that Flinn gave his first blow, down to that during which Howard made the observations just attributed to him, not more time had certainly lapsed. As he concluded his reflections, Flinn, with a yell of mingled anguish and desperation, pressed his men through the opening of the tent to scour the plain abroad in search of the absconded foe. Purcell's party made feeble opposition to this movement, and presently the skeleton mouth of the booth, the only remnant of it that had existence, disgorged the throng of combatants, and our visitors were left, unmolested, with the crowd of women. These, too, soon disappeared, following, with screams of apprehension and terror, the fate of their "kith-and-kin," engaged in the sanguinary conflict. Some hasty and hearty kisses, and prayers for everlasting long life and good health, were, indeed, bestowed on the "gintlimin" before this final separation. But at last all withdrew, and Howard, Graham, and Burke were left alone, in the first twilight of a beautiful summer evening, to seek their way back to Clonmel, and congratulate themselves as well on their escape from, as upon their introduction to, the novelties and haps of an Irish skirmish.

They quickly struck out of the pattern-field, choosing in the first instance a circuitous path, rather than exposure to the continued tumult that Flinn kept up all over the plain.

They could, however, observe at some distance, as they retired, vendors of all kinds of trumpery removing their stalls, and pipers' wives running off with a stool under one arm, and a blind husband under the other, in order to yield prudent way to the approaching stream of combatants. For a full half-hour, too, the shouts of the field came on the evening breeze ; and they had gained a near view of Clonmel before distance completely divided them from all echo of the scene of struggle.

Howard, in talking over with his friends the conversation he had heard between Mullins and the stranger, felt pleasure in expressing his certainty that the proscribed victim had escaped their vengeance. His curiosity, indeed, continued excited to know the certain close of the matter, as well as the provocations to hostility, and all other circumstances of the case. But after some time he gave up the thought, and was content to regard the whole as "a mass of things" indistinctly seen, and never to be discriminated. He was, however, mistaken in the latter part of his conclusions.



#### CHAPTER IV.

A FEW days before the occurrences detailed in the last chapters, some of those rustic depredations, so utterly disgraceful to the country in which they take place, had been committed in the neighbourhood of Clonmel, on a scale much inferior, however, to their late magnitude and atrocity. Howard and Graham had, among others, become acquainted with the rumours of such events, previous to their sortie to the pattern. But as their scene was laid in another and distant part of the county, and as they had yet assumed no very formidable aspect, nor created much sensation, they were not thought of sufficient consequence to interfere with the day's enjoyment.

In about a week after the era of the pattern, more alarming reports of continued outrage spread through Clonmel, and the public mind became considerably agitated. Bodies of nightly depredators, or terrifiers at least, traversed the county, attempting to enforce their own wild views in their own manner. These bands were, according to their private taste, variously designated :

the terms *shanavest* and *caravat*, invented by themselves, were adopted by the community at large in reference to them. *Shanavest* means "old waistcoat;" *caravat*, "*cravat*;" both words compounded of equal portions of bad English and bad Irish, and intended to describe the parts of dress by which the association chose to be distinguished. Without dwelling on strange words, it will be sufficient to say, that the spirit of these combinations, one and all, was a resuscitation, in some shape or other, of the old spirit of Whiteboyism, concerning which we assure ourselves every reader has, by this time, the proper ideas.

It appeared that each body had a captain or leader, with a mock name, which was conferred at the pleasure of himself or his constituents, and also acceded to by the public. In recurring to these names, a singular feature of Irish character invites attention. It is remarkable, that in the very act of proclaiming his real or imaginary wrongs, and committing himself to the black passions attendant on a course of ignorant self-assertion and unbridled revenge, the Irish peasant—the inheritor of misery and neglect, and sufficiently proving in the continuance of this turmoil his sense of so hard a lot—should evince a levity that can be supposed natural only to a body of men associated in the spirit of eccentric enjoyment. The president of a club of "queer fellows," might receive or assume such appellations as the most terrible leaders of Irish depredation invented, and promulgated for themselves. And in the exercise of his mock dignity, or while he humorously enforced his conventional pains and penalties, might affect about the same character that the Whiteboy captain put on at the very moment that he issued his ill-spelt manifestos of no sportive tendency, and while he was prepared and determined to exact the letter of their demands.

The local reformer of the mountain, the bog, or the desert; the legislator for an almost uncultivated tract of impoverished country; the desperate neck-or-nothing leader of a throng of desperate and sanguinary men, disguised his identity in a humorous ideal; wrote his threatening notices in the tone of an April-day hoax; denounced a foe as one friend might promise to another a hit over the knuckles; talked of a midnight visit as the same friend might propose a pleasurable surprise to that other; and performed his whole part as if he were Tom-fool to a corps of Christmas mummers. If this be the affectation of demoralized habits of thought and feeling, it is hideous and demoniacal; something in the nature of the jeer and levity with which Goëthe has so startlingly invested his

Mephistopheles. But there is a bitter eccentricity often resulting from a long-cherished sense of wretchedness ; a kind of stubborn braving of ill-fate, that ostentatiously shows itself in outward lightness and recklessness. There is a mockery of the heart by the heart itself ; a humour, in fact, which the inspired writings would seem beautifully to describe, when they declare, "that even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness." There is this step between our conjectured opinion and the miserable creatures it would make tenfold more miserable, and, all national distinctions apart, it leaves us a better sympathy than the first supposition could, with the common tendencies of human nature.

Craving pardon, according to the established custom of all ramblers, for this unintended digression, we resume, by proceeding to notice some of the names affected by these rustic Lycarguses. One called himself Captain Starlight ; another, Captain Moonshine ; a third, Jack Thrustout ; a fourth, Richard Roe ; and all who are familiar with rather recent Irish affairs will remember the doughty CAPTAIN JOHN DOE. This quaint title, as well as two others above-mentioned, originated from the fictitious names that the law, in its own roundabout and strange mystification, inserts in ejections served on those whom it is gravely about to dispossess of their tenements. And it must have been curious enough to observe the incipient Shanavests or Caravats putting their heads together, spelling over the jocose piece of parchment, and making a variety of shrewd conjectures as to whom this Richard Roe or John Doe could really be. Until, to their cost, they found him a very formidable personage, and, by some crude association in the recesses of their own minds, resolved, while they adopted his name, to be as farcical and as devastating as their merry prototype, in his best day.

Our hero was, indeed, of sufficient character to engage, almost as soon as he had announced his political existence, the attention of his Clonmel neighbours. Meetings were called to arrange a plan of warfare against him ; and proclamations of rewards, to a large amount, issued for his apprehension. In these official documents, his face, person, dress, and age, were, on good authority, set forth. And as the more peaceable inhabitants, together with the old ladies, servant-wenches, and little boys of Clonmel, read therein details of his swarthy complexion, stout figure, forbidding features, and wild attire, all belonging to a man of the stern age of forty-five years, great was the reverential panic

inspired, and universal the abhorring homage paid to Captain John Doe's grim person.

From week to week, from month to month, his fame spread proportionably with his excesses. He at last approached pretty near to Clonmel, and was said to hover about the town, now at this side, and now at the other, from the adjacent heights of Slievenamon and the Galteigh mountains. Parties of military accordingly marched, from time to time, against him, but with no material success. Captain Doe's adroitness, and uniform good fortune in baffling a superior enemy, became as notorious as his desperate resistance to, or triumph over, an equal or inferior one. His hairbreadth escapes, his rapid movements, and the various disguises he could at pleasure assume, were the theme of every tongue. In the vulgar apprehension, they equalled, if they did not surpass, the subtlety and wonderful finesse of the whole corps of primitive Irish Rapparees, with Redmond O'Hanlon at their head, and Cahier-na-Choppell bringing up the reserve.

Seven months after the pattern day, that is, in the end of the succeeding February, Lieutenant Howard was ordered, with a considerable party, from the head-quarters of his regiment at Clonmel, to relieve another detachment which for some time had been harassing John Doe among the mountains, about thirteen Irish miles distant. Howard set off in good spirits. He was, as we have observed, heartily tired of the refinements of the town; and was therefore excited and pleased with the prospect of seeing more of the interior of the country, particularly on such a service. He was, withal, confident in the strength of his party, and vain, by anticipation, of the success which others had missed, and of which he made no question. He had but one regret in undertaking his little campaign, and this grew out of his separation from Graham, between whom and Howard a sincere friendship had long been cemented. To remove or alleviate this only disagreeable feature, it was arranged between them that Graham should apply for an occasional leave of absence, and visit Howard during his absence on this hill-duty, for a day or two at a time. For the first leave he was immediately to apply; and in order that Graham might promptly commence the desired intercourse, Howard was to write him an intimation of his quarters, as soon as he took them up.

Three days after Howard's departure, a letter accordingly reached his friend, but without proposing so immediate a meeting as had at first been contemplated. Howard mentioned, in

explanation, that he had scarcely gained his field of action, when the movements of Doe demanded his best measures. That he had since been marching and countermarching from point to point; that after twice eluding his very grasp, Captain John had now escaped all observation; and that he, Howard, necessarily proposed to scour the country in search of him, and could not, therefore, name any place, nor indeed any day, for receiving Graham. He would, however, write from time to time, and anxiously hoped that the nature of his service might afford him a speedy pause, and thereby at once give opportunity for their seeing each other.

Subsequent letters continued to reach Graham, dated from the one spot, yet still declining to see him, on the grounds that the writer could not answer for his remaining one hour after another where he was. Doe's hiding-place was still a mystery, although, night by night, some traces of him were left abroad: Howard had chosen his present quarters as the best point from which to take general observations, and originate, at a moment's notice, the most effectual sorties. And, while his sojourn in them was daily uncertain, there still arose a daily necessity for remaining stationary until circumstances, that an hour might produce, should call for a change of place and measures.

At last, Graham received a note, dated from new quarters, though only three miles from the last, which, on the strong probability that Howard should now, for a few days at least, occupy them, invited Graham to the long-planned meeting. It further hinted, that Howard's change of position was owing to a successful manœuvre against Doe, which, as he was thereby hemmed in, embarrassed that formidable captain, and, no doubt, would end in his destruction. The writer addressed his note from an Irish cabin, where he at present bivouacked, and to which his messenger would conduct Graham.

It was still moonlight when Graham, attended by the single soldier who had delivered Howard's letter, commenced his journey on the following morning. It was Sunday. The stars twinkled joyously throughout a deep blue sky, cleared by the influence of a frosty atmosphere: those brilliant hosts of light might, to minds of an imaginative tendency, seem shining forth in universal jubilee that their nightly course was run, and the relieving day at hand. As Graham and his follower gained the Broadway that led on the outside of Clonmel, towards the recesses of Slievenamon mountain, and as the crisp frost crackled under his horse's step, he

felt all the buoyancy that, to youthful hearts, such a morning, enjoyed in bounding liberty, could not fail to communicate.

His attendant, a staid old soldier of sixty, systematic as a machine, grave as an owl, and commonplace as an old pinch-beck time-piece, was, however, a considerable drag on his happiness. This man rode a very indifferent hack; added to which, he had been some forty years out of the saddle, so that he could neither keep up with Graham's spirited animal, nor take much pleasure in the extra effort necessary in endeavouring to do so. Accordingly, it became his interest and policy to curb, by all prudent means, Graham's uncalculating career, for which purpose he more than once suggested to his "Honour," awkwardly essaying each time to carry one hand to his cap, the propriety of pushing on abreast, that his Honour might have the immediate service of an old soldier on a road by no means safe at such an early hour in the morning.

"Why, Evans," said Graham, at last pulling up, "I wonder what danger you can fear, man. Lieutenant Howard writes me word, and you confirm it, that this Doe is surrounded—almost taken prisoner, I may say. Besides, we are both well armed."

"Please your Honour," said Evans, slowly and gravely, "Doe, which they improperly call Captain, *may* be surrounded, or *may not* be surrounded."

"Pray what may that signify?" Graham demanded.

"Your Honour won't think I mean but that his Honour, Lieutenant Howard, is very sure he is surrounded," continued Evans, still more gravely, and with an additional shade of visage that might be called the shade mysterious. "But after all his escapes from our hands, when the oldest soldier didn't think it possible, and with all his disguises and outlandish tricks that were never equalled but in a play, played on the stage, in a play-house, it is hard to say—that is, to be very certain, that he is, at the present time—"

The speaker here interrupted himself with a "Hush!" and drew up his horse to listen, as the noise made by another horse approaching was distinctly heard in a side direction towards the main road, which was Graham's route, and which had lost much of its broad and level character since it had begun to turn amongst the first inequalities that flanked the main base of Slievenamon.

Graham also paused to listen, and, as audibly as his videt, heard the near approach of a horseman down a wild and nar-

row bridle-road, or boreen, about ten yards to the right of the way. He immediately took a pistol from his holster; Evans unslung his musket, which had hitherto dangled most awkwardly and inconveniently across his back; and both halted and sat up in their saddles, observing profound silence, except that Evans whispered to his officer a respectful hope that the horse he bestrode might stand fire better than he knew how to trot.

In a moment they heard a noise accompanying that of the horse's feet—namely, a lusty, stentorian voice, sending forth, in measured and prolonged notes, some kind of a strain. It was too deep and serious for a song, unless a song of very severe and doleful character. At first Evans, taking the latter view of the case, thought he could recognize in it a generic likeness to his not quite distinct reminiscences of "The Death of Abercromby," or some of its interminable similitudes: but having vainly cocked his ear, while he cocked his musket, to catch a word of the old ditty; in fact, having ascertained that the singer gave utterance to a language that, whatever it was, was not English, Evans became assured that it must be Irish. Recollecting that, among other curious things, Doe was much in the habit of carolling aloud his own rebellious songs, a conviction flashed upon him, which he communicated in another whisper to Graham, and both stood doubly prepared on the defensive.

The appearance, almost immediately, of a man, from the boreen, was not calculated, all circumstances of time, place, and prepossession considered, to allay the nerves of our travellers. He was well mounted on a strong, active, though not handsome horse: his figure seemed over large, and was enveloped from the chin to the boot-heels in a dark top-coat. On his head appeared a white mass of something, which the imperfect light did not allow Graham to distinguish or to assign to any known class of head-gear; and upon this again was placed a hat, with a remarkably broad brim, and a low, round crown. As he emerged on the main road, this apparition still continued its peculiar chaunt, and was only interrupted by the challenge—"Who goes there?—stand!"—of Graham, and its instant echo by the mechanical old soldier.

"Stand yourself, then," answered the stranger, in an easy, unembarrassed, but by no means hostile tone; and, continuing rather jocosely, he repeated an old school-boy rhyme—

"If you're a man stand;  
If you're a woman go;  
If you're an evil spirit sink down, low."



"Did you say 'fire,' Sir?" asked Evans, in an aside to Graham, and levelling his piece.

"No!" said Graham, aloud. "Hold! And you, Sir, I ask again, who and what are you? Friend or foe?"

"A friend to all honest men, and a foe, when I can help myself, to no man at all," was the reply.

"That's no answer," whispered Evans.

"You speak in untimely and silly riddles, Sir," said Graham. "Advance and declare yourself."

"Begging your pardon," continued the stranger, still in a good-humoured tone, "I see no prudent reason why I should advance at the invitation of two persons armed and unknown to me."

"We are the King's Soldiers," said Evans, rather precipitously.

"Silence, man," interrupted Graham—"I am an Officer in the King's service, Sir, and my attendant is a soldier."

"O ho!" quoth the stranger, "an Officer, are you, but no soldier?"

"What, Sir!" exclaimed Graham, raising his pistol, while Evans had recourse to his musket.

"Hold! and for shame, Gentlemen!" cried the other, seriously altering his tone—"What! on a defenceless and peaceable poor man, who has given you no provocation? Upon my life, now, but this is unceremonious treatment just at the end of one of my own boreens. In the King's name, forbear—if, indeed, ye are the King's Soldiers, as you say, though I can discover no outward badges of it." For Graham rode in a plain dress, and Evans had disguised under his great coat all appearance of uniform, a foraging cap alone intimating, to an experienced eye, his military character.

"I pledge my honour to the fact," said Graham, in answer to the stranger's last observation, as he lowered his hand and was imitated by Evans, "and you will at least respect the word of a Gentleman."

"'Tis my habit to do so, Sir," said the strange man; "and in proof of what I say, I am willing now to advance to you, if you also pledge your honour not to be fingering your triggers, there."

"I do, Sir—you may come on in perfect safety. But hold—I have also my terms to propose—are *you* armed?"

"Me? God help me, what have I to do with such matters?"

"But how am I to be assured?"

"Why, I'll tell you then," answered the other, resuming the jocular tone—"You can easily see by the moonlight, and indeed by the daylight, too, which is just breaking on us, that in my two hands, at least, I have neither gun, blunderbuss, pistol, nor cutlass. See, I hold out both my arms in this manner."

"Stop!" roared Evans, as he saw the arms in motion, and suspecting a finesse, again levelled his musket.

"Recover arms!" cried Graham, impatiently. "Fall back, Evans, and keep yourself quiet."

"God bless you, Sir, and do manage him now," the stranger said, as Evans obeyed orders—"I shall hold out my arms, I say, as they are at present, and we'll leave the rest to my horse. Come, Podhereen, right about face, and march."

The obedient animal moved accordingly, and a few paces brought his master and Graham face to face: "And now, Sir," continued the stranger, "I suppose you are satisfied, and I may just lift the rein from the beast's neck as before."

To this Graham assented, rather because he saw no reasonable ground for refusal, than because he was perfectly satisfied. Though Evans, from behind, whispered: "Search him first, your honour; 'tis Doe, I'll take my oath of it, in one of his disguises. Look at him!"

Graham did look, and in truth, if his moral certainty was not so strong as Evans's, he had his misgivings in common with the crafty old campaigner. The white protuberance on the stranger's head he could now ascertain to be some species of wig, bloated out over the ears, and the back of the neck, to an immoderate compass, and lying close to the brow and side of the face in a rigid, unbroken line, while it peaked down in the middle of the forehead—much like, in this respect, the professional head-disguise of the gentlemen of the long robe. The broad-leafed, round-topped thing on the pinnacle of this, still seemed to be a hat: the dark loose coat, with a small cape reaching between the shoulders, hid all detail of the figure. By his face the stranger was between forty and fifty; exactly Doe's age. His heavy eyebrows, broad-backed nose, and expressive mouth, together with the self-assured twinkle of eyes that gleamed on Graham like illuminated jets, and a certain mixed character of severity and humour that ran through his whole visage, indicated a person of no ordinary cast.

Still Graham looked, at a loss what to make of a costume so outré, and, to his experience, unprecedented: till at last the subject of his scrutiny again broke silence.

"I suppose I may go my road without any further question, Sir?"

"May I ask which road you travel, Sir?" Graham said, with obvious meaning.

"Tut, tut, now," said the other, "that's too Irish a way of answering a Gentleman's question, on the King's high-road. Danger has often come of such odd answers. You see I am unarmed, and I see you have it in your power, that is, if you liked it, to strip me of my old wig and hat in a minute, and no friend of mine the wiser. In fact, Sir, you now give me sufficient cause to look after my own personal safety. I have no wish to offend any Gentleman, but you must excuse me for saying, I cannot be quite sure who or what *you* are. You may be Captain John, as well as any other captain, for aught I know."

This was said with perfect gravity; and Graham hastened, in some simplicity, to make the most solemn and earnest declarations of his loyalty and professional services and character.

"Well," continued the stranger, who had now turned the tables, and become catechist accordingly, "All this may be very true, and from your appearance and manner I am inclined to think the best of you. But if *you* are not he, how can I be so sure of that suspicious-looking person at your back?"

Evans, shocked to the bottom of his soul, as well as displeased, that under any circumstances he could be confounded with a Rebel, Traitor, and Desperado, shouted out at this observation, and was with some difficulty restrained by Graham from taking instant vengeance for the insult. When he was restored to order, Graham assured the stranger, with emphasis equal to what he had used on his own account, of Evans's real character.

"Then pass on, Gentlemen, and let me go about my lawful business," continued the man, drawing up at the road-side to allow them to pass. Graham accordingly put his horse in motion, and, followed by Evans, both, still holding their arms, trotted by. Graham and the stranger touched hats to each other as they parted, but Evans only bent, on his now detected foe, a ferocious look, which was returned in a burst of suppressed laughter.

"He's either Doe or the Devil, please your Honour," said Evans, when they had advanced a little forward. "And now why does he follow us?" he continued, as with some difficulty turning round in the saddle he saw the stranger trotting after them at about the distance of thirty yards.

"Never mind him, Evans," said Graham; "if he keeps that

fair distance, we can't hinder a peaceable man from pursuing his journey."

"But who is that coming down the hill-side before us?" asked Evans, pointing off the road to where the moon threw a shadow over the side of a declivity, which the day had not yet sufficient influence to relieve or dissipate.

Graham looking in the direction to which Evans's hand pointed, saw a form in rapid motion down the hill; and both, almost simultaneously, pealed out their usual "Who's there?—stand!" but the form still continued to descend.

"Stand, on your life!" repeated Graham; but no notice was taken of his threat. At this moment the horseman behind quickened the pace of his horse, and approached much nearer.

"We are surrounded, please your Honour!" said Evans.

"Fire, then!" said Graham aloud, and continued in a lower tone, "I will turn round to meet this other man."

"Nonsense!" cried the stranger from behind, who seemed to have heard Graham's orders to Evans—"Stop, man, stop! don't fire!—'tis a harmless creature of my own!" But his words had little effect on Evans, the report of whose piece was almost instantly heard, succeeded by a loud bellow from the hill, and then the form continued to tumble down more rapidly than before, now evidently impelled by its own gravity, till at last it splashed through the thin ice into a little stream of water at the side of the road.

"There," continued the stranger, who had by this time come up; "now you have done it. A brilliant affair it is for the King's men to boast of!"

"What do you mean, fellow," said Graham, confronting him; "stand off, or take the consequences."

"Ulla-loo!—I'm not another calf to be treated in such a manner," replied the stranger; "I tell you I'm no mark for such doughty knights. But stop—here's a second foe breaking the fence at the top of the hill—Make ready—present—fire!"

"'Twas a poor calf, of a certain, please your Honour," interrupted Evans, who had now returned from an investigation at the spot where the enemy remained stationary.

"A *poor* calf!" retorted the horseman. "'Twas as thriving a calf as was ever seen at this side of the country; and of all creatures in the world the very one I had my eye on for my next Christmas beef. And I must say, Gentlemen, that if ye are what ye pretend to be, I take it rather ill of the King to train up his

soldiers in hostility to any poor man's meat. I thought he had some other employment for them."

Evans's antipathy, now increased by a sense of shame, and a growing apprehension of the stranger's ridicule, turned off in dogged dudgeon, while Graham said—"This is all extremely ridiculous, Sir, but, perhaps, mostly owing to your own strange and unsatisfactory conduct. As to the loss you have sustained, if indeed the animal was yours, or, whether it was or not, here is pecuniary recompense ; and so, good morning to you."

"Stop a moment, Sir," answered the horseman, "I have no claim on your money. 'Twas an accident, and must be arranged as such : you will put it up, if you please :'" with a wave of his hand, an inclination of his head, and altogether the assumption, for the first time, of an air, voice, and manner, that was impressive if not gentlemanly and commanding. Graham mechanically complied with the felt influence of this change of character, and returned the money to his purse. The stranger continued.

"With respect to the other part of your implied terms, it must be 'good morning,' or 'well met,' just as you insist on it."

"Good morning, then, if you please, Sir," answered Graham, and slightly bowing, again set off with Evans. Yet, he was scarcely two minutes on his way, when he felt a kind of regret at having so cavalierly rejected the stranger's half approach to fellowship. In the improved light of the gradually expanding morning this person's face had become more distinct, and more pleasingly distinct during the last words he had spoken. Graham now thought over the easy self-assertion with which he had refused the money, and recollected, that the language adopted in his explanation was much more that of a gentleman than the idiomatic turn of his previous discourse, while it also had less of the brogue of his country. In fact, Graham felt half sorry, and half curious. He was getting deeper into the feeling, when the object of it again diverted from himself this dawn of favourable impression.

The noise of his horse's feet, in rapid motion, first awakened Graham from his reverie ; and, looking behind them, our travellers saw the stranger nearer than they had reckoned, holding out one arm, and crying, "Halt !—halt !"

Evans concluded that they were now in reality to be attacked ; and Graham, impatient of so incorrigible an intruder, mended his pace to avoid him.

"Will your Honour please to leave me behind ?" asked Evans,

thumping his spurless heels against the sides of his hack, and applying the butt of his musket for a common purpose, as he vainly endeavoured to keep up with Graham.

"Halt, I say!—your purse!—your purse!" cried the horseman, still closing them.

"I'll shoot you as dead as Abercromby first—blast my limbs, if I don't!" roared Evans, facing round.

"Why, you stupid and provoking fellow," said the pursuer, slackening his speed, "won't you let me give your master his own?"

"Fall back, Evans," said Graham, advancing.

"Your purse, Sir," continued the stranger, extending his arm; "it fell from you on the spot where we last halted. Again, good morning to you."

"I'm much obliged," said Graham, taking it. "And, now that we can all see each other better, suppose, Sir, if our routes agree, that we push on together?"

"My way does not hold for more than a hundred yards farther, along this main road," answered the stranger, carelessly. "I must then turn off to the left."

"Please your Honour, that's exactly our route," whispered Evans.

"Then we *are* to be together, Sir, if you have no objection," resumed Graham.

"None in the world," was the reply; and, much to the astonishment of Evans, Graham fell into line with the stranger, leaving the galled, and jaded, and fretted Orderly to follow as he might.

The day was now almost fully up. The thick vapour that had slept out the night on the bosom of Slievenamon, whitened in the returning light, and lazily obeying the summons of the breeze, began to crawl towards the peak of the mountain, and there once more deposit itself, as if to take another nap. Graham remarked on the picturesque effect: and his companion replied, "Yes, it was odd enough that old Slievenamon should put on its night-cap just as all the rest of the world was throwing off that appendage."

Graham, too proper and systematic in the succession of his ideas to like this trope, did not notice it, but proceeded, with a little vanity of his travelled lore, to allude to the superiority of Italian over our island scenery.

"Superiority is a general word," said the stranger, "in the

way you use it. I presume you do not mean mere height, as applied to such mountain scenery as surrounds us: in other respects, the Italian landscape, principally owing, of course, to the influence of atmosphere, is more beautiful than the English one; and, from the scarcity of trees in Ireland, much more so than the Irish one. But among the mist and shadow of our island hills, as you call them, particularly in Kerry, I have always felt a fuller sense of the sublime, at least, than I ever did in the presence of continental scenery, either in Italy or in Spain. Switzerland alone, to my eye, first equals us, and then surpasses us."

This speech gave information of rather more acquaintance with the distinctions, in a knowledge of which Graham took it for granted he might shine, than it seemed practicable to turn to advantage. He, therefore, avoided the general subject, and, taking up only a minor division of it, protested he could not understand why, unless it was attributable to the indolence of its people, Ireland should be so "shamefully deficient in trees."

"Indeed!" his companion replied, in an indefinite tone; then, after a pause, added, that "he thought so too;" but Graham did not notice the scrutinizing, and, afterwards, rather contemptuous look; and, finally, the severe waggery of face, that filled up the seeming hiatus.

So, having to his own mind hit on a fruitful theme, Graham diverged into all the ramifications of Irish indolence. Obstinacy was his next word: Irish indolence and obstinacy. They would neither do, nor learn how to do, anything, he said; they would not even submit to be educated out of the very ignorance and bad spirit that produced all this Whiteboyism. There was a national establishment, he was well assured, in Dublin, with ample means, that proposed the blessings of education on the most liberal plan; yet the very ministers of the religion of the country would not suffer their ragged and benighted flock to take advantage of so desirable an opportunity. The bigoted rustic pastors actually forbade all parents to send their children to the schools of this institution.

"Yes," the stranger said, "the Parish Priests—the bigoted Parish Priests. And all because a certain course of reading was prescribed in these schools."

"Precisely, Sir," assented Graham.

"The Bigotry of the Priests is intolerable," said the stranger, "and only equalled by its implacability. Nothing can bring

them to consent to the proposed terms, because, forsooth, they plead a conscientious scruple; because they say their approval would be a breach of their religious duty. As if we had anything to do with the private conscience and creed of such people."

"Or as if the body of respectable Gentlemen, who framed the regulation, should accede, by rescinding their law, to the superstitious prejudices of such people," echoed Graham.

"Very true, Sir. The Medes and Persians, I am given to understand, never repealed a law, and why should the gentlemen you speak of? Besides, there is so little necessity for the concession. The liberal and wise association can so easily accomplish its professed object without it."

"Pardon me, Sir, there we differ: the object proposed is the education of the poor of this country; and I cannot exactly see how they are to be educated, if—as is on all hands undeniable—the Parish Priests have sufficient influence to keep them, now and for ever, out of the school-houses."

"Oh, Sir, nothing can be easier. But first let me see that we understand each other. You and I, suppose, are now riding to the same point. Well, a pit, an inundation, or a fallen mountain, occurs a little way on, rendering impassible the road we had conceived to be perfectly easy, so that we cannot gain our journey's end by this road. If you please, the place we want to reach shall stand for the education of the poor Irish, the object professed: *we* may personify the educating society, taking our own road, and the bigoted Priests are represented by the monstrous impediment. Well, Sir, we reach that insurmountable obstacle to our progress. Now, would it not be most humiliating and inconsistent, and all that is unworthy, if we did not instantly stop, and declare we would not proceed a foot farther, by any other road, till our favourite one, that never can be cleared, is cleared for us? So far I understand you."

"Then I protest it is an advantage I do not possess over you, Sir," said Graham.

"All will be distinct in a moment," resumed his companion. "I say we are both exactly of opinion that the society should not, with ample means and professions, take a single step towards its end, unless by its own blockaded way. That, in dignified consistency, it should not vouchsafe to teach one chattering urchin how to read, or write, or cast up accounts, unless it can, at the same time, teach him theology. In other words, till it



sees the mountain shoved aside, the deluge drained, or the bottomless pit filled up. In other words again, till the bigoted Popish Priests consent to sacrifice their conscience, whatever it may be ; though, meantime, the swarming population remain innocent of any essential difference between B and a bull's foot, or between A and the gable-end of a cabin. We are agreed, I say, Sir ?”

“ Faith ! whatever may be your real drift, I must admit you have substantially defined, though in your own strange way, the very thing I but just now endeavoured to distinguish. And, I must repeat, from what we have both said, that the main object of the society still seems shut out from attainment. This, however, was what you appeared to deny, I think. I should be glad to hear your remedy.”

“ We come to it at once, Sir. By no means look out for another road, but try to get rid of the irremovable barrier.”

“ I protest, you rather puzzle me.”

“ That's the way, Sir,” continued the stranger, running on in his wonted delight and bitterness. “ No time can be lost, no common sense and consistency compromised in the hopeful experiment. That's the way.”

“ What, Sir ? what do you mean ?”

“ Convert the Parish Priests ; there is nothing easier.”

“ Pardon me, Sir, but I begin to fear that you trifle with me,” said Graham, mortified and displeased at having so long exhibited for the amusement of so strange a person.

“ I should be sorry, young gentleman, to say anything to offend you ; I am sure I have not intended to do so. But now farewell, Mr. Graham ; present my compliments to your friend, Lieutenant Howard, and tell him he shall soon hear more of me. Farewell ! my road lies up against, or rather round the breast of this hill ; you will find your quarters two miles on. A good morning, Sir :” and without more pause he turned off the bye-road they had for some time pursued, into a rugged and narrow path, strewn with stones and rock ; and, after a few words of encouragement to Podhereen, his athletic horse, disappeared among the curves and bends of encircling hills and inequalities.

Graham stared in consternation when he heard the stranger mention Howard's and his name. His rapid disappearance along so wild a path, together with what Graham now regarded as the unmanner, induced, more than ever, serious apprehensions as to his identity, in the formation of which

he was abundantly assisted by Evans. Both seemed to think it was their policy to push forward to Howard's quarters with all possible speed; and even Graham allowed the suspicion of an ambuscade to shadow his mind. Evans, accordingly, put his hack to the utmost stretch, now requiring but little accommodation from his officer, to keep him in view.

They gained, however, a near prospect of Howard's mountain quarters, without any further adventure. An untenanted cabin served for his bivouac. It was built in a desolate little valley, fronting the road over which Graham travelled, but considerably below its level, having one knoll of mountain at one side, another at the other, with an open back ground of flat and apparently marshy country. Before the door of the cabin, Graham recognised his friend, surrounded by the few soldiers who formed his immediate body-guard, and who, with the exception of a sentinel, seemed employed in furbishing their arms and accoutrements. About a quarter of a mile in the open ground beyond, the main force of his party was also discernable in a line round the marsh, standing to their arms.

Howard, almost at the same time, saw his friend's approach; hastened to meet him; and led him, laughing at his own means for hospitality, into the cabin. There, however, a good breakfast was prepared, and a bright furze-fire blazed in the ample chimney.

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## CHAPTER V.

DURING breakfast, Graham did not fail to mention to Howard his adventures on the road; and the individual who, for a great part of the journey, had been his almost self-elected companion, became an object of equal interest to Howard as to himself. The fact of his seeming to know Graham's person, and the purpose of his route, with his parting allusion to Howard, which the friends now construed into a threat, won on their apprehension. Notwithstanding Howard's strong assurances that he could not be the man they almost feared to think, conjecture was still busy, and doubt uppermost.

After some time spent in discussing the matter, Howard recollected an engagement of importance which he wished to keep.

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It was to meet, at the Roman Catholic place of worship of the mountain district, a Protestant Clergyman, who was also a county magistrate, and with him a Roman Catholic Priest of eminence, from whom they expected an address to the rude congregation, on their secret associations. This latter gentleman, Howard had already met, he said, at the house of a Roman Catholic proprietor in the neighbourhood, where he had passed the last fortnight previous to the change to his present quarters. He proceeded to speak of him as a man who had gained much character by his writings and preachings to the common people. "Here," continued Howard, "are some of his pamphlets to the Whiteboys, which you will read and judge of for yourself. But I have to add of my good friend, Father O'Clery, that *he* is the friend of Flood, Grattan, Curran, Lord Avonmore, and other Irish stars, who have unanimously elected him a member of the festive body, quaintly denominated 'The Monks of St. Patrick.' Also, that he has officially received notice of the gratitude of Government for his most useful, as well as talented exertions."

"The second fact I have mentioned, reminds me," pursued Howard, "of the facetious social character of O'Clery. Indeed, I have scarcely ever met a person of a rarer vein. Nature seems to have stamped him a wit and a satirist; but he contrives, with peculiar good-humour, to exercise her gifts in a harmless way. Then, everything about him is, to me, eccentric. His swollen, old-fashioned, white wig; his curious, round hat; and the robust horse he rides, which he calls, I think, *Podhereen*, or 'Beads.'"

"Calls *what?*" cried Graham.

"Tis a curious name," answered Howard, "like everything else in this curious country, and I do not wonder at your astonishment. *Podhereen* is the title borne by his horse, which, as I have translated it, means 'Beads:' hence the point of so calling a Priest's horse, perhaps from the circumstance of the rider often saying his Rosary on the animal, as he journeys from place to place."

"If *Podhereen* be indeed the creature's name," resumed Graham, "And if such a hat, and wig, and manner, as you describe, belong to O'Clery, then have I been an Ass, and the Priest knows it, too, Howard."

"What!" cried Howard—"Ah, I have it! I have it!—O'Clery was this morning to have ridden from a friend's house

near Clonmel, to keep the appointment at the Chapel, to which his Protestant fellow-labourer, with whom he lives in some amity, had also been invited. As I live by the sword, you met him on the road, and Lo! your Captain John!"

"Nothing is more evident, I fear," replied Graham, rather taken aback by the discovery.

"About two miles from where we sit," continued Howard, "a straggling path diverges among the hills towards the friend's residence, where I have met him, and where he had engaged to breakfast. Lo, again, your mysterious disappearance! He knew you were coming hither,—I am to see him at the Chapel, and again and again, behold!"—

"All too true, Howard," resumed Graham, shaking his head, and laughing. "The worst is, I was goose enough to read him a lecture on the Bigotry of Popish Priests, in which the old Jesuit seemed to join, till he had meshed me in a confusion of I know not what ideas. But from all you say of the man's satirical turn, I now clearly understand how I have been bamboozled."

"Exquisite!" cried Howard, "O'Clery will live on this for ever and a day! But come, you must see him in his true character. The hour of appointment is at hand, and we can scarcely be in time at the Chapel."

The friends accordingly proceeded across two or three uncultivated fields, to the mountain Chapel of the district. It was visible from a distance; a low, almost squalid-looking building, contrived, according to universal usage, in something of the shape of a cross, with small narrow windows, many of which were broken; and thatched with straw, that in some places was decayed and blackened by the weather. No "venerable yews" shaded this less than humble conventicle. In fact, not a single tree was in sight: no inclosure ran round it; even the burial-ground was exposed to all intruders.

"Can this be a Christian place of worship?" said Graham, as they approached, "I rather thought we were going to yonder smart-looking building, with blue slates and a steeple, at the brow of the hill."

"To say truth," replied Howard, "being good and loyal Protestants, that should be our destination. It is a Protestant Church, where the beneficed Clergyman reads prayers, as Swift often did, to one old lady who lives near, and,—if the roads be good,—to two. Sometimes, indeed, as was also occasionally the case with the humorist I have mentioned, the Clergyman's

Clerk represents, in a large and cold Church, the imaginary congregation of the Parish. Nay, O'Clery gravely asserts that, upon a particular occasion, even this parliamentary kind of representation ceased. His story is, that the old Clerk died of a pleurisy, caught during a winter's attendance in the damp and deserted building, and that for three months, as there was no second Protestant of his rank in the Parish, his office remained vacant. Some bungling endeavour at a schismatic substitute was, however, made. A young Popish peasant, attracted by the salary, promised to attend; but as the fear of a long penance, and, I believe, everlasting damnation to boot, forbade him to be present at Heretical ceremonies, he contrived to reconcile his conscience to his interests in the following manner. During service, the fellow walked outside the Church, spelling the tombstones, or whistling an Irish ditty; it was conceded that when the Clergyman came to any part that required the response of a Clerk, he should ejaculate, 'Hem!'—and at this signal the young man would run to the church door, thrust in his head, and having roared out—'Amen!'—return to his private amusements, and so get through the service."

After a laugh at this conceit, Graham expressed his surprise that a Clergyman should be well paid for having nothing to do; in fact, he could not even understand by whom, when he had no congregation. Howard answered, by the Roman Catholic Landlords, Farmers, and Peasantry, of the country. An explanation which Graham thought odd, seeing how evident it was that those same persons could not afford, for the purposes of their own worship, a better edifice than the one now in view.

This conversation brought them to the entrance of the Chapel, and Graham, from what he there saw, thought the matter still more singular. The body of the building was stuffed with people; while, outside the door, hundreds continued to kneel in the open air many yards along the wet and miry approach to the Chapel.

From the profound silence that reigned within and without, interrupted only by the monotonous voice of the priest, it was evident that prayers, or, technically speaking, Mass had commenced. Whether Habit or Piety produced the effect, the visitors could not avoid noticing how deeply attentive even the outside congregation appeared to be. The old women and old men of the crowd held in their hands long black beads, or rosaries, to which as they slid down each bead, their lips moved

in seemingly fervent prayer. A few young persons of both sexes had books; some girls again had rosaries; and even those who knelt un supplied with any such clue to devotion, kept up the general appearance of an attentive feeling.

As Howard saw no means of entering the Chapel through the crowd without disturbing their order, and as he knew of no other entrance but by this principle one, the strangers remained for some time disagreeably situated, particularly when they began to attract the notice of the people, and fear, if not consternation, seemed the result of the discovery. After standing still for about five minutes, with their heads uncovered, through a wish to conciliate the favourable opinion of those around, Graham pressed his friend's arm, and pointed to a side-face in the rustic assembly. There was no mistaking it, although several months had elapsed since the gentlemen had before beheld it. Its proprietor was the bowing knight, Mr. Patrick Flinn.

"I caught him watching us," whispered Graham; "but, when my eye met his, he turned round with an affectation of unconsciousness, and assumed the deep abstraction of visage, and that rapid movement of the lips, you now perceive."

Immediately after, Flinn again looked towards his old friends. As if acting on a second thought, he bounced up at once, and with his old scrape and bow, and peculiar swagger, approached, and in an anxious whisper addressed them.

"Musha, long life an' honour to ye, Gintlemin, and praise be to God for the day I see ye agin. Won't ye come round to the Sacristy where Father O'Clery, an' the ministher, good loock to him, an' Mr. Grace, *your* ould friend, Captain Howard, is waitin' fur you."

After due recognition, Paddy's offer was accepted, and Howard and Graham accompanied him round to the back of the Chapel, where, by a small private door, he introduced them to what he had called the Sacristy. Then, with repeated farewells and fervent prayers for their worldly and immortal happiness, he disappeared, leaving Howard not a little surprised at the intimate knowledge of his arrangements and acquaintances that the man's speech seemed to imply.

According to the usage of his superiors, Flinn was correct in the name he had given to the small apartment into which the visitors now entered; as, even on the dwindled and sometimes wretched scale upon which the Roman Catholic religion is practised in Ireland, its professors fondly continue some shadow of its various

primitive accompaniments, of which the names, whether as applying to buildings or parts of buildings, to persons, ceremonies, or the materials for ceremonies, had a different import in the olden time.

The Sacristy, then, was at the back of the altar : it was the place where the Priest put on his vestments previous to his appearing before the multitude to celebrate Mass. Here, too, was a confessional chair: the Sacristy was also occasionally appropriated to the better order of parishioners, who might choose to hear Mass free from the pressure of the crowd. The floor was earthen, the walls whitewashed, and perspiring with chill rather than heat. Altogether, the place presented an aspect of little comfort.

At the moment in which our friends entered, Mr. O'Clery, attended by the Parish Minister, issued from the Sacristy by another door, that led into a round, railed space before the altar, called the Sanctuary. Mr. Grace, the gentleman at whose house O'Clery had breakfasted, and the common friend of Howard, was about to follow, when, recognising Howard, he turned back, and, in profound silence, led him and Graham after the Clergyman. Graham remarked that as his friend passed out, he bowed with a very fascinating smile to a young lady who stood veiled at the door, and who, spite of much abstraction and piety of manner, as graciously returned the salute.

From the Sanctuary, where seats were provided for them, the visitors saw with amaze the immense surface of heads in the body of the Chapel, undulating like a sea, and thick and wedged as paving-stones in the streets of a city. Some incidental pause had occurred in the service, which afforded proper time for the delivery of an exhortation. Of this the human mass seemed aware ; for there now arose a universal press forward, attended with the scraping and clattering noise of hundreds of hob-nailed brogues against the clay-floor of the chapel ; and, simultaneously, the uproarious coughing, and blowing of noses, and hemming, and sneezing, by which, as a matter of course, an Irish Congregation prepares for a decorous attention to the harangue of its preacher.

Mr. O'Clery was not of the parish to which on this day he devoted his eloquence, having only been invited thither, as Howard informed Graham, in consequence of his established character. Mass had been celebrated by the Parish Priest, who now stood with O'Clery on the altar, while the Protestant

Clergyman remained on the side steps. Before the honorary preacher could begin, the *bona fide* occupant thought it necessary to address his parishioners.

And he did so, good man, in a strain, and on a subject, and with a manner, little eloquent. Advising them that Mr. O'Clery was to follow in reference to their wicked associations, he contented himself with reprobating their general incorrectness in the payment of his Christmas "dues." He protested that he had not received a pound of their money since Easter: and how did they think he was to live, and keep the poor horse, that morning, noon, and night, was on the road in their service? There again, his horse: Mickie Delany had promised to send him in a grain of oats; and Tom Heffernan, a bundle of hay; and Jack Hoolachun, a whisp of straw; but oats, hay, or straw he had never seen since. The very Chapel above their heads, and above his head, they would not cover. He had kept his bed for a week with the rheumatism, imbibed from the droppings of the roof, as he said Mass on the last rainy Sunday. What did they intend at all? Was it their wish to remain in their ignorance, and their sins, and their wickedness, like a drove of beasts, without Priest to give them the word of God, or to Christen for them, or to Marry for them, or to Confess them of their abominations? And then to go, head foremost, out of the darkness of their life in this world, into the eternal shadow of the next?

This and much more the afflicted and really worthy man addressed to the gaping throng, who, whenever he gained a climax of denunciations, sent up such a wail of singular pathos, as to the uninitiated ear might promise a speedy arrangement of the last Christmas "dues." Though we have never heard that, eventually, it was of much benefit either to their own souls, or to the bodies of the complainant and his horse.

At last Mr. O'Clery began his exhortation, in a style and manner very different indeed. In setting out, he addressed himself at once to the hearts of his hearers, ingeniously and successfully endeavouring to insinuate himself into their affections and confidence. He called them his dear, though unhappy children, grafting, as he went along, his disapprobation of their crimes upon his sympathy with their misfortunes, and winning them to become, in a sort, the judges and denouncers of their own excesses. When he had sufficiently prepared his opportunity, the reverend gentleman did not withhold the broadest statement of the atrocities that had been committed. Still he



kept his kind tone and manner, dwelling rather in sorrow than in anger upon the national disgrace, and, to him, the personal anguish of such a statement. Presently he argued with his audience upon the utter uselessness of their projects and acts; when disciplined forces were brought against them; when they were not countenanced by a single individual of their own religion, who from station and education might afford them counsel; when the wisest heads in the country were leagued against them; and when they had the experience of the utter failure of all their previous attempts. After thus disheartening them, the preacher next rapidly recurred to the moral delinquency of their deeds. Now, for the first time, he got in a view of their illegality; strengthening himself by giving the religion they professed as the rule of civil obedience; fully defining the duties that, according to it, they owed to their King and Country, and the deadly sin that followed a breach of those duties. Here, at last throwing aside the Olive Branch, and arraying himself in all the sternness and terror of Ecclesiastical Power and Authority, he called on the thunders of the Church to assist the voice of the Law, and uttered the deep threats at which the Irish peasant has been in the habit of trembling, though recent events prove to us a growing indifference towards them. An evident awe resulted from this; and the speaker hastened to complete his impression by once more touching the human feelings. As Irishmen, as Christians, as fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands, he invoked them to adopt the course that would save their Country from opprobrium; that would save their little Children, their aged Parents, their fond Wives, from the ruin, and shame, and sorrow, that must follow a perseverance in crime: that would save themselves from shameful death here, and judgment hereafter. In conclusion, the preacher, in his own name and in the name of all their Priests, invoked them with tears upon his cheeks. Then falling on his knees, he prayed a merciful God to give strength to his supplications.

The final effect was decisive. For some time an intense silence had waited on Mr. O'Clery's peroration. But, as he rose to a climax, the weeping wail of women bore testimony to its influence. Some even shrieked in anticipated agony; while in the pause they left, sobs, "not loud but deep," intimated the laborious working of grief and repentance in harder hearts. Many a rough cheek, which since childhood had been dry, now ran tears respondent to those shed by the reverend preacher.

And, when he suddenly knelt, one mighty burst attended his unexpected movement; every knee simultaneously sought the ground; and, for a minute after, clasped hands and upturned eyes proclaimed the continuous sentiment and conviction.\*

Indeed, to those who have never been present at such a scene as we describe, and who are unacquainted with the Irish character, this attempt to convey a true picture will, perhaps, appear exaggerated. Howard and Graham, taken by surprise, acknowledged, however, its immediate influence; for they found themselves kneeling at the close, along with every other individual of the congregation. The Protestant Clergyman did not withhold, even under a dissenting roof, the natural testimony that was only an admission of the sway of those broad Christian principles, which, in common with the preacher, he devoutly advocated.

It was now his turn to say a few sentences to the people. He was led up to the altar by the two Roman Catholic Priests, and began, his eyes still moist, and his voice affected, to state, that it was under their permission he had ventured out of his place to speak a friendly word to his, as well as their common flock. After the powerful appeal that had been delivered, he would not, he said, hazard a single general observation. All he had to propose was peace and good-will, and, so far as in him lay, the measures to attain both. He then alluded to the difficult question of tithes; volunteering concessions, and suggesting arrangements, by which he hoped, in his own person at least, to alleviate the hardship he was aware existed; and promising for himself, to the utmost extent of his influence, not only pardon, but protection to such as would speedily give up their wicked courses, and conform to the advice and precepts they had just heard.

His address seemed to produce, if not so powerful an effect as the last, certainly one more pleasing. The Mass was resumed under every appearance and hope of good results.

When it had concluded, and while the people were pouring out of the Chapel, Howard and Graham gained the Sacristy, where the first presented his friend to Mr. O'Clery, and to Mr. and Miss Grace, which lady, Graham recognised to be the same to whom Howard had bowed with such *empressement* on his way to the Sanctuary. O'Clery, even so soon after an occasion and exertion that had intensely affected himself, let fly at Graham a few

\* The sketch of a usual scene.

significant glances of his deep, black eye, while his lip curved in a provoking smile. He shook him heartily by the hand, however, and courteously expressed his pleasure in making the acquaintance.

An invitation to dinner by Mr. Grace, was declined by Howard, on the plea of attending to his present duties. So, while O'Clery and the Protestant Clergyman, accepting it, accompanied Mr. and Miss Grace to their house, the military Gentlemen sought their Irish cabin and casual camp-mess, loud in approbation of the eloquence they had heard.

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## CHAPTER VI.

“WELL, your prophecy holds,” said Graham to his friend after dinner, as he sipped a glass of genuine pottheen punch: “I begin to like your smoky beverage better than I thought it possible to have done.”

“’Tis the only thing I can offer you in my wild quarters ; and though, being both smoky and illicit, it goes against your palate and my conscience, yet, necessity you know, Graham—”

“Has little to do with squeamish tastes or the Parish Guager. Pottheen you call it?”

“Pottheen; derivative, pot. Which utensil, with a crooked tin tube, forms, I can learn, the whole distilling apparatus. The natives, who ever mix up with aberrations of this kind a quaint and singular humour, further term it ‘Mountain Dew,’ in allusion, I believe, to the situation, and to the witching time of night, in which it is generally manufactured.”

“Well, Howard, I have now, for the first time, opportunity to inquire after your romantic campaign here. You are sure Doe is completely hemmed in?”

“I am positive from the intelligence of my spies, that, at this moment, the formidable Doe, with part of his gang, surprised in their retreat homeward, as usual, after a nightly depredation, lies, at some concealed point, within a circle of three or four miles I have formed round them. We repeatedly started and chased him during the course of yesterday ; towards evening, however, he eluded us.

Ever since the men stand to arms, where, at a distance, you have seen them. They and I are certain that he is within their lines, and that, if he does not appear, he must starve within them."

"Why not close in, and take him at once?"

"You are unacquainted with the nature of the ground. He has retreated among the recesses of a bog, the area of which is some miles, and where regular soldiers, ignorant of the novel impediments and ambuscades of the place, cannot follow him. It would be madness, indeed almost sure destruction, if they did. You have only the aspect of the situation, softened by distance. In reality it abounds in alternate pools of deep water and marshy spots of soil; while here and there huge clumps, as they are called, of turf, create hiding-places, and are, of course, dangerous impediments. No; the advantage is mine, and I must not hastily forfeit it. He shall, as I have said, creep out to us, or rot where he is. The men are content to watch him, as on the edges of the bog, all around, they have, in turn, their occasional bivouacs, and, like myself, are in no want of rations."

"Are you aware of the number of the enemy?"

"I believe they are rather numerous; and, what is more, brave and desperate."

"Then all is not yet certain. Instead of crawling out to be hanged, they may break forth and escape, if they do not absolutely annoy you."

"It is possible. Though from our, at least, equal numbers, and commanding discipline, not probable."

"You have often seen this Bravo?"

"Never. That pleasure is in reserve for me. But I have often heard from him."

"Indeed! in what way?"

"In the shape of sundry written threats, directing me to draw off my men, and go quietly about my business, if I valued life or health."

"How did these notices reach you? by what hand?"

"I do not know. Sometimes, in the morning, I found them on my pillow; sometimes nailed to the very door of my bivouac; nay, I got one of them dangling at my sword-guard."

"In good earnest, now, what is the treason of these silly, as well as desperate men?"

"If by treason you mean disloyalty to the person of our gracious King, I believe they are not guilty of that specific crime."

“No?”

“No. I have assured myself that their views do not involve the most distant aim at the throne. On the contrary, I believe they indulge a kind of wayward love and reverence for their present good Sovereign. As to the Church, they take, in the way of resistance to tithes, or rates, or dues, almost as much liberty with their own as with ours.”

“You surprise me. What is their object then?”

“They state it to be the lowering of rack-rents and tithes. This Captain Doe professes not to allow any person to set or take land, or pay tithes, but on his own terms. Upon any that transgress his orders, he wreaks, when he can, summary, and often horrible vengeance.”

“Is the grievance real or imaginary?”—

“That is a question, Graham, that, if you had my duty to perform, you would scarcely wish to discuss. At all events, I believe we could not, as Englishmen, understand its naked merits. The great relative differences between Landlord and Tenant, and Pastor and Flock, in each country, must incapacitate our judgments till we are better informed.”

“Be it so then. Of what rank and education may this Doe be?”

“His Excellency either does not know how to write, or else takes a new secretary at every turn. No two of the state papers he has done me the honour to address to me were written alike.”

“Have you any of these precious documents to show?”

Howard searched his pockets, and while thus employed—“By the way,” his friend continued, “that was a pretty little Papist you smirked at to-day in the chapel. *You* thought so, evidently.”

“I think I have some of these papers,” said Howard, most properly replying to the first question, first—“Yes, here is one, predicting my annihilation in two short days if I do not forthwith return to Head-quarters.” As he spoke, he looked towards the fire, his face emulating the colour of his jacket.

“And not a word about the little devotee? Well; monopolize as you like. But let us see this other matter. Hollo!” continued Graham, laughing as he read, “what the Deuce is all this?” and he read aloud:

“‘Captain John Doe presents his compliments to Lieutenant Howard,’—oh, thou particular fellow! (an interpolation by Graham :) ‘to Lieut. Howard, sending this private note to warn him, at the same time that he would do well to draw off his

men; that Lieut. Howard might also find it for the best to give up—”

“Stop, Graham,” interrupted Howard, in evident confusion, “I’ve made a mistake.”

“‘To give up,’” continued Graham, still reading out, “‘all pretensions—’”

“I say ’tis a mistake—That’s the wrong note—give it me;” and Howard rose and advanced, but the other anticipating him, also started up, and holding Howard off with one hand, kept the note in the other, and went on.

“‘To give up all pretensions to the rich attorney’s daughter,’—ha! ha!—Finaud!—Love and War?—eh?”

“This is unlucky—ill-timed, I meant,” mumbled Howard, his cheeks red as those of a blushing girl.

“‘For, by the Moon and Stars, he reigns under,’” pursued Graham, still from the paper, “‘Captain John swears he can never permit *purty* Mary Grace’—what!—the little Idolater?—‘*purty* Mary Grace to be carried off from a gossip of his own, by an English Red Coat. Signed, Doe,’ and countersigned too!—‘Lieutenant Starlight, Serjeant Moonshine.’ Why, Howard, how close and prudent you would be!—pretty Mary—no—*purty* Mary Grace, the rich attorney’s daughter—ha! ha! ha!”

“Nay, Graham,” said Howard, resuming his seat, and the least in the world sulky, “since you have at your pleasure possessed yourself of my secret—though I own I was just debating how I should best escape your cursed laugh in breaking it to you.—But, since you have it, there is no need of that laugh, Graham. I’m not so ashamed of the matter.”

“What! Matrimony in good earnest?” and Graham also sat down, returning the note.

“Really,” answered Howard; “a pretty girl, as Doe himself has defined her—”

“*Purty, purty*; no perversion of text.”

“A handsome girl, an amiable and sensible one, and a *dot* of Five thousand, Graham. Though, for that matter, I would marry her without a penny. Laugh if you like; but you know the proverb.”

“Aye, they laugh that win. By Jove, Hero of ours, let me congratulate you, rather. A fascinating little puss she must be. When did all this happen? How could it? You have made quick work—why, you are not yet a month on the service!”

"What need of a century? I had a pleasant billet at her Father's house for a fortnight."

"Ah! necessity for remaining stationary; yet could not appoint to meet his friend, as he might be obliged to change quarters at a moment's notice, and so forth," said Graham, good-humouredly, alluding to the notes he had received from Howard, and of which we have before spoken. "But what will you do with the holy father?—purchase his dispensation? That will cost a world of money."

"Give him one, rather: that is, dispense with *him*; for I cannot see how he comes into the matter. You know, Graham, I have ever said I should not trouble myself about my wife's Religion. Enough for me, if she has the spirit of any; and such I truly believe to be the case in the present instance."

"And of the disapprobation of his High Mightiness, Captain John!"

"Oh, let to-morrow or next day settle that."

"Well—a bumper to your success in the rival fields of *Mesdames Venus and Bellona*.—And now, Howard, 'tis time I were on the road."

"What! abandon us so soon?"

"Why, yes. After all our disappointments in meeting, when, each time I was prepared for a long visit, I could not, on the present occasion, get leave of absence longer than to-night. I must present myself in Clonmel to-morrow; but the next time shall be an age."

"Then you will have to travel all night?"

"Yes; but with old Tom Evans I shall not mind it."

"Take him. Though, indeed, I intended him for my own body-guard on a march I propose to steal across the country this evening."

"Humph—*purty* Mary Grace?"

"Perhaps you guess it. But no matter about Evans. The certainty I have that Doe is out of the way enables me to go alone, except, it may be, with a peasant for my guide, as my path is a cross one, almost unknown to me."

"How far?" asked Graham.

"Not more than three miles—Irish ones though."

"Oh, doubtless you may venture it. Come."

"With you. But—Graham"—

"Well? Well?"—

“No need of remembering my little affair at Head-quarters, you know.”

“Purty Mary and the rich attorney?”

“Indeed, Graham, I must insist—”

“Ha! ha!—fear nothing;—I’m prudent.” And the friends, after mutual farewells, separated on their different routes; Howard and his guide towards Mr. Grace’s house, and Graham—with Evans, grumbling in every aching joint of his body, at being again, and so soon, called upon to shake for thirteen miles, say sixteen English, in an uneasy saddle—towards Clonmel.

We are here obliged to close a very short chapter, in order to afford proper scope for the events now to be detailed.

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## CHAPTER VII.

AFTER conducting his old acquaintances to the Sacristy, at the Chapel, Flinn returned to his place among the kneeling crowd. Watching his time, till the service allowed, according to established form, general liberty to stand, he pushed on into the body of the Chapel, and heard attentively the separate exhortations of his Parish Priest and of the Rev. Mr. O’Clery, together with the few words spoken by the Protestant Clergyman.

When all was over, Flinn left the Chapel with the rest of the people, but dallied near the place till he thought he might proceed, without their observation, to keep an appointment with a particular friend. With his hands plunged into his breeches’ pockets, his hat hanging, as usual, on one side of his head, and while he whistled a lively air, Flinn turned down a bye-path, which led from the Chapel over a considerable declivity, towards a wretched little thatched hut called the “Forge.” It was, in fact, the smithy of the district, erected distinct and far from any neighbouring dwelling-house, and exclusively devoted by the proprietor, whose residence was a cabin at some distance, to the purposes of his trade. So that on a Sunday he made no use of, and claimed no right of possession over it. Furthermore, apprehending that little seduction to theft was held forth by the massive anvil or gigantic shattered bellows, the only available



property left during the Sabbath on the premises, he had never gone to the expense of a door for the hovel, and it consequently gave an open, and, so far as in it lay, a hearty welcome, one day in each week, to all chance comers. And, the year round, the Forge had—we are compelled to admit—almost systematically upon that day, its particular visitors. Some of the very lowest order of Irish peasants are passionately attached to Card-playing, rather, it would seem, for the sake of the amusement than in a gambling view. And of all convenient places in a neighbourhood, the snug corner of a field, or the depths of a sand-pit not excepted, though both haunts are often resorted to for the same purposes, none surpass in attraction the deserted and isolated Forge.

To the adjacent Forge, then, our friend Paddy Flinn directed his steps. As he advanced, he met, in succession, two or three little boys, whom the party engaged in forbidden pastime had sent out and stationed as scouts, to give them timely notice of the probable visitation of their really good and zealous Parish Priest, from whom they had vainly heard repeated prohibitions against such breaches of the Sabbath, and who, failing in words, had often surprised them with his more convincing cudgel or horse-whip, while they were engaged in the fascinations of their game. The little urchins rapidly inquired of Flinn, as soon as he appeared, the destination of their dreaded pastor; and having ascertained that, as he had gone to dine with Mr. Grace, no visit might this day be apprehended from him, they immediately abandoned their disagreeable posts, and separated to seek some more genial occupation.

As Flinn, pursuing his path, entered the Forge, he found Jack Mullins, the friend he had appointed to meet, deeply absorbed with three others in the climax of a long-contested game. The anvil constituted a card-table for this rustic party, who, sat round it on large stones piled one over another. They used cards which might baffle the discriminating faculties of more accomplished gamblers, as long fingering, and the hue and shape thereby left on each, confounded, to the uninitiated eye, all distinctions of number, colour, and suit. Habit is everything, however. The present proprietors of these mysterious symbols appeared to recognise their fifty-two subtle subdivisions with as much ease as, in a more fashionable hell, gamblers of a higher order distinguish the difference of an unsoiled pack. Rumour adds, that here the means for arriving at such conclu-

sions were not derived from much positive evidence of the marks originally stamped on the paste-board, but rather from subsidiary hieroglyphics that had gradually succeeded to the original signs, and as gradually become acknowledged, from month to month, nay, from year to year, by the persevering and watchful observers.

No notice was taken of Flinn's entrance, if we except a slight raising of the eyes, and an accompanying noise, like a grunt, directed to him by Mullins, and meant, we presume, for avowed recognition. The men pursued the critical turn of their game with all the abstraction of their caste, and with all the attendant symptoms of deep study; that is to say, bent brows, protrusions and compressions of the lips, and occasional long pauses and unmeaning stares at the wall, or out of doors. Flinn, too, after his first unnoticed salutation, kept silence for some time, standing behind Mullins, and watching his play and hand. At last the interregnum of a deal allowed him a few words.

"Well," he said, "I was at Mass, boys."

"You're all the better o' that, arn't you?" said Mullins.

"To be sure I am, you Gallows Bird, you," answered Flinn. "An' wouldn't anything, not to talk o' that, be better nor the prayers you get out o' the Devil's Horn-buke you hould in your hand there?"

"Well, à-vich," said Mullins, tranquilly dealing the cards.

"What do you call well?" cried Flinn. "I don't know what's well or ill myself; but I know the day that's in it is the day o' days. For, sayin' nothing o' the strange Priest's sarmen, little did any of us think we'd live to see a Sassenach Ministher prachin' to us off o' the same altar wid our own Soggarth, an' two Red Coats kneelin' down by his side to pray the blessin' o' God on us, poor Divils that we are, along wid Father O'Clery, good loock to every inch of him."

"They'd do anything to sell us, betwixt 'em," said Mullins.

"An' what rhaumaush did you hear from Father O'Clery?"

"It was no rhaumaush,\* you Hell-hound," answered Flinn, "bud plenty o' good sense an' love for us, an' the right thing afther all, an' I'll stand by it."

"You'll stand by the gallows," said Mullins, in a jeering tone and manner.

"To see you swinging on it," retorted Flinn; "when you'll

\* Nonsense.

be ather walkin' in sarch of it, an' your own coffin followin' you, two or three miles, of a market-day. I often tould you not to fear the wather, Jack. Bud the short an' the long is this. Father O'Clery said nothin' bud God's truth this blessed day. There wasn't a dry eye in the place. An' if you can do any good, Jack, by spakin' to any friend o' yours, or the likes o' that, its nothing but what 'ud become you well. And so I'll tell the farmer's son, himself, when I see him next."

"Let us play our play, a-hagar," said Mullins, "an' don't be botherin' plain people wid what they know little about. Come. Now all the loock is his that has the five fingers."\*

"Aye, you'll play your own play, Jack. An' may be you'll have the loock o' the five fingers too. The skibbeeah's, † I mane, while he's takin' your measure for the hemp cravat," observed Flinn, as the gamblers now resumed their pursuit—"Bud stop, for I think you'd betther," he continued in an undertone, "an' just turn round till you see who's lookin' at you." With these words Flinn escaped from the Forge, hastily pointing to an orifice, meant for the double uses of window and chimney, which was situated in the wall of the hovel behind Mullins's back.

The men with whom Mullins was playing first took advantage of Flinn's hint, and, fixing their terrified eyes on this opening, saw it almost entirely filled by the round, red face, and fat shoulders of their Parish Priest, who, notwithstanding other engagements, could not conscientiously overlook, on this particular Sunday, the chances of the notorious Forge, and had accordingly paid it a speculative visit.

"Ho-hol ye Sabbath-breakers!" roared the worthy man, precipitating himself into the Forge, and, whip in hand, falling with might and main on the backs of his profane parishioners—"Have I found you again!—have I found you again! At the old work!—at the old work!" Each iterated sentence was accompaniment to a repeated lash, and Mullins's three gaming friends quickly, and with ostentatiously loud screams, escaped through the open doorway, while the Priest turned round upon a whole nest of old and young, who, we forgot to say, sat on the hobs of the Forge fire, or on the ground, anxious spectators of the ambitioned game. Among these the zealous pastor also made impartial use of his horsewhip. It was ludicrous to hear the cries and shouts of tall, rawboned fellows, of from six to seven feet high, as they quailed or jumped beneath

\* Five of trumps.

† Hangman's.

the hand of a little round man, whose entire physical strength was not equal to that contained in one of their fingers, or who, at least, by the merest show of resistance, might have escaped his flagellation. But as the beasts of the forest all tremble at the Lion's roar, so do the greater portion of Irish peasants shrink at the voice of their Priests. We have seen a mob of some hundreds, even in the excitement of mutual passion and conflict, fly, forgetful of everything but the moral terror of his presence, as the waters divide and splash when a heavy stone is dropped into them. On the present occasion, the flock of idlers in the Forge bore similar testimony to a similar influence. In fact, the place was, in a few minutes, cleared of all except the Clergyman and Mullins. For Mullins would not run as the others did, but now stood doggedly, and, as well as he could, indifferently, his side turned to the Parish Priest, and his eyes fixed on the landscape abroad.

"And do *you* face me, you unfortunate sinner?" said the Priest, screaming at Mullins when he discovered him. "But I'll convert you—you as well as the rest—if there's virtue in whalebone and whiplcord, I'll convert you one after the other;" and he wound a good lash at Mullins.

"Nonsense, Soggarth, nonsense!" ejaculated the suffering party, when he had felt the smart of the whip. "Don't be doin' that agin, I advise you."

"I see you now, an' I know you now," said the Reverend operator, somewhat daunted by the bad expression of the man's face. "You are one of those that have brought sin and trouble into my poor Parish—you and your crony, the Jig-dancer"—(Mr. Flinn, we presume, was meant). "But I disown ye—I renounce ye. Ye are two diseased sheep among my innocent flock, and two strangers that 'tis hard to speak about."

"Then don't speak about us at all, please your Reverence," said Mullins. "An' if we're strangers let us alone."

"Go, man, go," resumed the clergyman—"I know you not, and all I have to say is this. Come in next Saturday to your Easter duty, and show your bad face at Mass next Sunday, and behave yourself like a Christian creature in my parish. Or, if you don't, leave my parish. I won't give you my curse upon it—that's an awful thing to do—but I'll mark you, you Sabbath-breaker—I'll mark you!" And the virtuous, though, as we have seen in the chapel, scarcely accomplished pastor, hastily left the hovel, Mullins uttering an "Avoch!" as they parted.

He stood a few minutes after the clergyman's exit, apparently in

deep thought ; then suddenly turned to leave the hovel, when he was met at the threshold by Flinn.

"Come wid me up by the side of this brook," said Flinn, rapidly walking in the direction he pointed out. "Let us get among the hills before we spake anything more about it."

They accordingly continued their way until they had reached the solitude of a wild little valley, and here Flinn again paused and addressed his companion. "What are you goin' to do wid Purcell?" he suddenly asked, staring Mullins full in the face.

"Bad end to him, how do I know?" said Mullins, "only he asked me yesterday evenin' afther my work was done, to meet him here, an' I said yes, because it was as good as to say no."

"You wouldn't, you curse-o'-God limb," resumed the other, "you wouldn't be afther sellin' the pass \* on whatever poor fellows you know anything about—would you?"

"Ho ! ho ! who are you spakin' to?" replied Mullins.

"I don't well know, maybe," said Flinn. "Bud I know, an' I think you know too, there would be neither honour nor glory, gain nor savin', in tellin' your thoughts to such a hound as Purcell, for all his magistrates' warrants an' the like. Though I say agin, Jack, the strange Priest tould us enough to-day to make us to do our best in the fair cause."

"Hould your tongue," said Mullins, "I know nothing at all of it. Don't be botherin' me for ever. What can you do bud spake, spake, spake? If you could do anything else the evenin' o' the PATTERN, I wouldn't have the trouble o' meetin' this black Protestan' this blessed an' holy night ; an' others 'ud be saved trouble too."

"'Twas none o' my fault, Jack. I done my best, if ever I done it ; while you had only to look on wid your sailor's noose in your pocket ; that, I say over an' over, you'll be outmated at last. Bud how does Purcell trate you?"

"Well enough, considerin' the likes of him ; an' the likes o' me, too, that only works whin the fit is on me. He's always soft wid me—maybe too soft, for all we know. Bud make off wid yourself—I see him just turnin' into the glin—bad loock to him ! an' how 'ticlar he is, an' the evenin' only fallin'. Here, you

\* "Selling the pass," a generally-diffused proverb through Ireland, is perhaps derived from the traditionary circumstance of an officer of James's army, at the siege of Limerick, in 1690, having disclosed to Ginkle, William's general, a favourable part of the Shannon, by means of which, it is said, Ginkle put an end by treaty to the long-contested siege of the city.

scapegrace, get behind this big stone, an' lie quiet if you can, an' say your prayers if you remember any o' them. I'll soon send him off."

Flinn obeyed the instructions of his companion, completely hiding himself behind a tall rock that sloped from the path against some adjoining masses of stone that skirted the valley, and which was also partially surrounded by brushwood, as if to add to its present usefulness. When he had squatted in his ambush, Mullins walked slowly away from the spot, and then up and down at a little distance, while he awaited the approach of Mr. Purcell, the Gentleman in whose employment, as a garden labourer, he now was, and the same who had given rise to the fray at the Pattern some seven months before.

"I am glad you are punctual, Mullins," said Mr. Purcell, as he came up. "But are we alone?"

"Din't you see we are?" answered Mullins.

"I thought I saw another by your side when I first entered the valley."

"You thought wrong, then, Mr. Purcell, unless it was *who you know*, keepin' me company, for your sake, till you came yourself."

"Whom do you mean?" said Purcell, half guessing from the nature of the man, as well as from a recollection of the confidence he had given him, the probable allusion.

"Hauld your ear an' I'll tell you. The *ould bouchal*, Mr. Purcell," answered Mullins, very calmly; "an' I'd make little wonder if you thought right, after all."

"Tut, tut, Mullins," said Purcell, laughing, yet, perhaps, somewhat disagreeably affected. "No more of that folly. Indeed 'tis worse than folly in such a place."

A pause ensued, during which it would seem that Purcell wished Mullins to say something; but whether or not such was his intention, he was himself compelled to continue.

"I have trusted you very freely on this matter, Mullins, because I think I may have faith in you. Besides, the more you know of it, the better you can serve me."

"Maybe so, Mr. Purcell."

"Mullins, I have loved Mary Grace for years; I have tried to win her for years."

"I know that. You tould me the like afore."

"At first, as I said, she slighted me, on account of that unfortunate young lad, Kavanagh. But when he was put out of the way,

"Much, Mullins, much. My other friend might miss the thing; may be overpowered; for Howard is bold and active. You can follow them."

"So I can; an' I see it now, Mr. Purcell."

"Mullins—there is a pass a little way on, between the wood and the river; they will get into that. 'Tis crossed by the mountain stream, that stream is deep and headlong, and, at last, it meets the river." A pause succeeded.

"Aye;" Mullins at length resumed—"when once in, we needn't fear he'll rise agin."

"Right; or you know well how to prevent it, if you like, Jack. Weren't you taught how to make a basket to put a stone in, when you were a man-o'-war's-man?"—

"I could thry, I think; never fear, Mr. Purcell."

"You know how little *we* can be suspected. It is just the time and place for an English officer to be looked for by such a man as Doe, or some of his people. Then, I'm a loyal person, and a magistrate, and you're in my employment, Mullins."

"Aye, faith: sure I understand it entirely, Mr. Purcell."

"Come, now. But stay—we must not walk together towards my house."

"No; an' you'd better go home to the colleen that's expectin' you, Mr. Purcell. What 'ill you do wid poor Cauth, I wonder?"

"Oh, d—n her, Jack, let her go her ways," answered Purcell, his brow and eye darkened by this sudden question: "I'm long tired of her."

"An' so let her sure enough," said Mullins; "'tis good enough for any of her sort. An' yet, Mr. Purcell, she was a clane, likely girl when you saw her first; an' now her best days are over. Faith she has few 'ud give her a welcome, I'm thinking. Still if we get Mary Grace for you, Cauthleen must take the dour, anyhow."

"Good-bye, Mullins," said Purcell, evading further explanation on this last point. He walked a few steps away, then returned, and again spoke.

"When it is done, and well done, come to my house by the back way. You'll find me in the parlour; and then we can prepare for the other business."

"I will," responded Mullins. Purcell stood a moment silent, and again turned off, with a "good-bye."

"Good-bye, then," echoed his companion.

"Stay an instant here, 'till I'm out of sight," Purcell continued. "You remember everything, and mark me?"—

"I do," said Mullins, and Purcell rapidly walked away.

"Or," muttered the other, when he was out of hearing, "if I didn't, the Devil has marked you, an' that's enough for us both. Flinn!"—and Mr. Flinn accordingly appeared.

"The false thief!" pursued Mullins—"the bloody informer!—wid his acres around him that he schamed an' swore out o' the hands of honest people! An' he thinks he can buy me up? An' he thinks to do what he likes without our lave? Where's the farmer's son, Paddy?"

"At hand, I'm thinkin'," said Flinn. "Bud *what bolg is on you*,\* now, black Jack? I didn't see you in a right kind of a passion afore, since the day the Minister offered to lave the oats on your field if you went to Church next Sunday. What was Purcell sayin' to you at all, at all?"

"Go tell the farmer's son," Mullins condescended to explain, "that Purcell, the Rapparee, is goin' to take off purty Mary Grace."

"Musha, Jack, was that all the Omadhoun wanted wid you?—an' did he cross your fist?"

"Did he gi' me a bribe, is it? Avoch, bad loock to the lafina he offered me; an' if he did, d'you think I'd touch it, Paddy, frum the likes of him?"

"Maybe not, Jack, à-roon; bud I'll tell you what I was considerin' while you both left me to get could under the stone, there. Faith, I was thinkin' that there was no raison in the wide world why we couldn't manage Purcell where he stood, an' so get over, quietly and hansomely, the little obligation we are owin' him this long time, for another man's sake."

"Maybe I was thinkin' o' the like, mysef," said Mullins; "it was so new a thing to see him from home without his red-coats about him. But all for the best, Paddy. It's a long lane has no turnin'. Let us go tell the farmer's son what he wants to do in the regard o' Mary Grace."

"The farmer's son knows it already. But for the night that's in it, he can't help it, poor fellow."

"Curp-on-duoul! an' why so, man?"

"I thought you could tell the raison, of your own accord, Jack. All his tenants on the spot are doin' somethin', an' the rest too far off to be here in time."

"That's thrue enough—bud no matter—he's at home?"—

"Where else 'ud he be!"—

"We must spake to him, thin, about another small matter that

\* What is the matter.



Purcell has on hands. D'you know, Paddy, à-vich, he wants to have the Red Coat to himself?"

"Musha, how, Jack?" asked Flinn.

"He wants just to stretch him in the glin, below there. An' I'm to help him, you know."

"Och, sure I know," said Flinn, laughing.

"Ho! ho!" echoed Mullins; "for the matter o' that, I'd have little objections to make a hole in a red jacket, any day; bud we must hear what the farmer's son says about id. Come, there's no time to be lost. Howard is on the road by this time." And the two friends went on their errand.

Meantime, Purcell approached, by another path, his own house, deeply and sternly revolving a purpose, that for some months had occupied his mind, and that now, bent as he was on making Miss Grace his wife, and so near the time of his attempt, too, engaged every bad energy of his soul. The poor creature to whom Mullins had just directed his attention, and whom he described as expecting Purcell at his home, was the object of Purcell's thoughts. She sat, indeed, expecting him; him—her sole earthly protector: the self-elected substitute for every other; her heart's early and only love, for whom she had sinfully abandoned the world and the world's smile, to keep, in friendless and otherwise cheerless solitude, a constant place at his side. Alas! she did not think what a requital he contemplated for her.

Purcell had not found the destruction of this now helpless creature an easy exploit. She had withstood his smiles, his oaths, and his ardours—his gold she at once spurned—until, in the fervency of passion, the constitutionally calm villain had given her, in writing, a solemn promise of marriage. Then she fell, and with her all her influence, attraction, and hopes. Years passed over without any disposition on Purcell's part to perform his contract. The victim could at first only weep, and kneel to him for mercy and justice; and then, when she gradually saw the nature of the man to whom she had abandoned herself, and felt in words and acts the effect of that nature in reply to her supplications, the wretched girl could only mourn in silence. If she did speak, it was in the tone of a poor slave abjectly begging a favour, rather than in the voice of a conscious right demanding the fulfilment of an obligation. She could compel Purcell to nothing, even if her weak and self-accusing heart dared to meditate a severity towards the master that, even with knowledge of what he was, it still worshipped. The forlorn girl had no friends to advocate her cause: her crime, along with

other things, had scattered them over the earth, or sunk them in its bosom. Since her ruin, too, Purcell had, by all available means, thriven in the world; and fortune thus added another link to the mean as well as guilty chain that bound her to him. Increasing wealth lent him increase of sway; and while her love remained unabated, her awe increased, and abject subjection followed.

Yet, though she did not continue to plead her own cause, she still had Purcell in her power, and he knew it. Cauthleen held his written promise of marriage, nor could lures or entreaties prevail on her to trust it for a moment into his hands. Purcell had lately expressed some slight curiosity to see it, but Cauthleen had never attended to his wish. The man's designs on Miss Grace prompted him in this instance. As he himself truly stated to Mullins, his long and strenuous endeavours had been directed to a union with that young lady; and among many other firm objections urged as well by her father as by the high-spirited girl herself, the written engagement to Cauthleen, which was generally talked of, met him at every step. Purcell, therefore, determined to remove that obstacle, even though the unhappy Cauthleen should become still more a victim.

In truth he had now for some time brought himself to contemplate with indifference the expulsion of Cauthleen from his house, and her subsequent wandering alone, and in shame, through the world. It cannot even be said that his passion for Miss Grace had caused a disgust of his unfortunate mistress. Purcell bent his ambition, not on the person of the lady, but on the alliance with her father's wealth; to which, as she was an only child, he would, in the event of becoming her husband, also become heir; and his new-sprung name and pretensions must thus gain strength and countenance in the country. No; he had not even the poor pretext of alienated and ungovernable passion to urge for his neglect of the wretched girl, whom, having made so, he should never have abandoned. He knew but one plea for his disgust—for his hatred: he had tired of her. And perhaps, with lengthened investigation, we could not advance a better reason, duly considering the character of the man.

With a breast and brow made up to the prompt execution of his purposes, Purcell now gained his own door. Poor Cauthleen herself answered his knock. It was her constant practice to anticipate the servants in doing so, when, by the fond fidelity of ear that can distinguish the step, nay the breathing, even at

a distance, of one beloved, she had learned to interpret this signal of Purcell's approach.

She smiled faintly as Purcell entered. He only returned her mute welcome with a ruffianly gathering of the brow ; then, slapping the door, and hastily passing her, he flew into a brawling passion against the servants for neglect of their duty, in not attending to his knock. A foul purpose will seek to nerve itself in preparatory and cowardly excitement, as men, not oversure of their own mettle, have recourse to dram-drinking before they enter the ring.

With drooping head, Cauthleen slowly and silently followed Purcell to the parlour, vainly endeavouring to stem the tears that had flowed plentifully in his absence, and, only dried up at his approach, that again sought vent under this fresh sorrow. Her seducer flung himself rudely into a chair : as she timidly took an opposite seat, her tears became evident, and he instantly seized on this as a new theme for dastardly reproach and outrage, exclaiming in the idiom of a vulgar ruffian :

"Damnation! am I, for ever and for ever, to be met in this manner? Nothing but cry, cry, cry, from morning to night? What do you wish me to do?—have I left you in any way unprovided for? Is there a lady—a married lady in the land—who has more of the comforts of life—who is more her own mistress? Why don't you speak to me?—what is the matter with you?"

Cauthleen only wept on.

"You won't answer me, then?—I advise you, speak.—By the great Lord, if you do not speak, I'll make you repent it, Cauthleen!" He had now wrought himself up to a climax of actual rage, and he uttered the last words with a violent knock on the table, while his teeth set and his eyes flashed savagely upon her.

"My dear Stephen," Cauthleen said at last, trembling with terror, "indeed it is not obstinacy ; only I couldn't answer you in a moment. And—I—I cried first because you were away from me—and now, I believe, because you are come home to me—and indeed I did not mean to vex you, and I will cry no more—there. If 'tis my poor smile you want instead, there it is for you, Stephen, from my heart, too—from the bottom of my heart.—Don't, don't be angry with your Cauthleen, Stephen—don't frighten her in such a way."

Nature, even in the bosom of a scoundrel, asserted her sympathy

to this appeal, and Purcell, turning his face to the fire, remained silent a moment.

"Cauthleen," he then continued, "you can be a good girl when you like. Have you since found that little paper? You'll let me look at it to-night, won't you?"

"Indeed, Stephen, some other time. But to-night I'm too—too—"

"Too what?" interrupted Purcell, resuming his boisterous tone—"Are you sick? or too stupid? or too insolent? Or why can you not oblige me?"

"I can never be too anything not to oblige you, Stephen. But that unfortunate paper—"

"Where is it? Cauthleen, I must see that cursed scribble, for your own sake. I have a particular reason. Go for it. 'Tis in your room, isn't it?—Why don't you go?—Then I'll go myself—and—drawer, box, or press, shall not keep it from me. I'll break them into splinters sooner than let it escape me"—and he rose and took a candle.

"Stay, Stephen," said Cauthleen, also rising—"It would be useless—quite useless—indeed it would.—That paper is not in any room in the house—I declare solemnly it is not."

A startling apprehension crossed Purcell's mind at those words, and, resuming his seat, he said:

"Then you have sent it to the attorney?—What! is that the way you would treat me?"—

The reproach, the insult, the voice and manner completely overpowered Cauthleen, and she sunk into her chair convulsed with tears.

"Answer!—have you sent it away? have you put it out of your hands?—Answer, I say!" and he shook her violently by the shoulder.

"Spare me, spare me, Stephen," cried Cauthleen, falling on her knees—"I have not sent it out of the house to any one—I could never send it where you say—indeed I could not."

"Where is it then, woman?" he asked, stamping, and holding out his clenched hands. At this moment, Cauthleen drew a handkerchief from her pocket, and a crumpled slip of paper fell on the carpet. One glance of Purcell's eye recognised the long-sought document, and he was stooping to pick it up, but Cauthleen hastily anticipated him, snatched it, and placed it in her bosom.

"I'll have it, by Heaven!" exclaimed Purcell, stooping towards

her ; but Cauthleen, starting up, rushed into a corner, and there again, kneeling, addressed him :

“ Do not, do not, Purcell !” she said : “ I'll give it to you when you hear me—to-morrow, when you hear me calmly, I'll give it to you.—Do not,” raising her voice, and wringing her hands as he approached—“ For the love of that Heaven, whose love we have both missed !”

“ So,” resumed Purcell, now standing over her, “ You had it about you, at the very time I asked for it, and you would not let me see it ?”

“ You should not be angry with me for that, Stephen. I'll tell you about it. When you are away from me, and that I am quite alone in the world, I draw out that paper, and read it over and over, and kiss it, and cry over it, and lay it on my heart. 'Tis my only hope—and, if there be any, my only shadow of excuse to myself and before God !”

“ Nonsense!—trash!—folly!—Give it into my hand this moment !”—and he caught her by the wrists.

“ And sometimes, Stephen,” she sobbed, out of breath, blinded in tears, still feebly struggling with him—

“ Sometimes I steal up to the cradle, where our last and only boy lies sleeping. The rest were taken from us, one by one, for a judgment—we deserved that curse. And there I kneel down by the poor baby's side, and ask him, in a voice that would not waken a bird, to look at it, and understand it, and see that he is not entirely the child of shame, and that his mother is not entirely the guilty creature they will tell him she is. Oh, Stephen, have mercy on me !”

“ Come, Cauthleen,” interrupted Purcell, bending on one knee, and using more force—“ give it me, if you have any fears for yourself.”—But, in the paroxysms of passion that Cauthleen felt, he encountered more resistance than he had expected ; and, exasperated to the utmost by her continued struggling, the mean and cowardly ruffian raised his clenched hand—it fell—the girl fell under it—and Purcell got possession of the paper, and instantly approached the fire. Cauthleen, though stunned and stupified, wildly understood his movement, and screamed and tottered after him. But she was too late ; Purcell cast it into the flame, and with—“ There—since we have so often quarrelled about it, that's the only way to end disputes,” he sank into his seat.

Cauthleen, with clasped hands, her tears now dried up by

intensity of anguish, looked with agony at the shrivelled film in the fire, and then, in the hollow tones of despair, said, as she turned away:

“And now you can wive with Mary Grace, to-morrow!”

Purcell, at first startled, turned quickly round. But his features only wore a bitter mockery, while he asked:

“Who told you that fine story, Cauthleen?”

“Never ask me, Purcell, but answer me!” she exclaimed, in a manner the very opposite to her late meekness and timidity—“Is it true?—am I not to be your wife indeed?—after all your oaths—the oaths that stole me from my Mother’s side, and then broke my Mother’s heart. Will you take Mary Grace to yourself, and leave shame as well as sorrow on Cauthleen?”

“Fear nothing; I’ll provide for you.”

“It is true, then?—this, at last, is to be the lot of Cauthleen Kavanagh?—And at your hands?—Whose?—The hands that brought ruin on all of her name!”

“Silence, Cauthleen—or—”

“Or what?—you’ll make me?—how?—Kill me?—Do!—I wish it—ask for it—expect it! Yes, Purcell, I expect it—the Robber, the Perjurer, and the Murderer, need not disappoint me!”

“Fool! take care what words you speak—and listen to me in patience. I courted and won you, because I loved you.—Listen to me!—I can love you no longer—and why should we live in hatred together?”

“Cursed be the hour I saw you, Purcell!”—the maddened creature cried—“Accursed the false words that drew me, from virtue and happiness, under your betraying roof—your roof, that I now pray God may fall on us as we stand here Damning each other!—Oh! I am punished! I trusted the Plunderer of my Family, and the Murderer of my Mother and Brother, and I am punished!”

“I told you to have a care, Cauthleen,” said Purcell, starting from his seat, pale, haggard, and trembling with rage—“I warned you to weigh your words, and you will not;” and his distended eye glanced on a fowling-piece that hung over the chimney.

“I know what you mean, Purcell!” the girl shrieked in a still wilder frenzy—“I saw where your eye struck—and, knowing and seeing this, I say again, Robber and Murderer, do it!”

"By the Holy Saints—then!" he exclaimed, snatching at the weapon of death.

"Aye, by the Saints and all! the Murderer will not want an oath—Pull your trigger, man! But, stop a moment!—first hear that!"

Purcell had the piece in his hand, and was raising it, when the faint cry of an infant reached them from an inside room. His face grew black: he flung the weapon on the ground, and turned away.

"Leave my house," he added, after a moment's pause—

"You and your brat together—leave it this instant!"

"I will," muttered Cauthleen—"I would not stay here now." She rushed through a door, and returned with the infant on her arm.

"The night draws on, Purcell," the wretched girl said. "It was just in such a night you sent my Mother from our own old home, that, in her agony and sickness, the cold blast might deal on her. I leave you, praying that it may so deal on me! My Mother cursed you as she went: I pray to have that curse remembered. And I add mine! 'Take both, Purcell—the Mother's first—the Daughter's last—May they cling to you!"

Having spoken these words, Cauthleen caught closer in her arms the wretch they encircled, and, bareheaded and unmantled, rushed out of the house of crime. After an instant's lapse, Purcell heard her frenzied, and already distant scream, mingling with the wail of her baby, and the bitter gust of the winter night.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

WHILE the last events were occurring, Howard was on his way to Mr. Grace's house. The guide, for whose honesty, as Purcell had stated, Mr. Grace gave a guarantee, was a man of unusually large stature; in height above six feet, broad, well-set, and muscular in proportion. So that he appeared a good subject to inspire Howard with confidence or apprehension, according to the degree of trust his presence induced.

Had Howard taken the main road to his friend's house, no

guide would have been necessary. But he did not choose to expose himself to the too frequent observation of all passengers, and therefore adopted a by-way, which was shorter than the approach by the road. It first led, after crossing the road from Howard's bivouac, over two or three marshy fields, in which a path was scarcely distinguishable, and then continued through a wood, which, with the exception of a few old nut-trees, was recently planted, and therefore, from the slighness of the stems, and the want of brushwood, together with the total absence of foliage, afforded no facilities for an ambuscade.

We should say that this wood clothed the sides of a declivity: consequently, as Howard followed his guide along a winding path, he sank, step by step, from the level of the road they had crossed. After leaving the wood, without danger, or any symptom of it, they entered on a flat sward, through which, at about ten yards' distance, a mountain-stream hurried along. To gain Mr. Grace's residence, it was necessary to pass this impediment: and Howard was preparing to make the attempt, when his guide warned him of probable hazard at that point, and said, that a little way on, by keeping the course of the water, they should meet with an easy crossing. This was all well, and Howard followed in the man's steps.

He followed, without any positive misgiving, and yet with little confidence in his guide. The fellow had, from the outset, resisted Howard's efforts to draw him into conversation, and exhibited none of the native good-humour or heartiness, that the young man had been accustomed to, since his first acquaintance with the Irish peasantry. Absolutely rude, indeed, he was not; yet his short, and apparently abstracted answers, and the deep tone in which they were given, fell, unpleasantly enough, on the ear of the intended victim.

Pursuing their way, they had left the wood behind them, but still were coursing the long ridge of hill, on part of which it grew, and which now presented a rough termination of broken bank and rock to the level ground, that Howard and his guide walked over. The moon rose on them, and began more distinctly to bring out such rugged features of the path as we have just noticed. In passing a particular spot, where an unusual group of rock formed a considerable recess in the side of the hill, the guide, who was some yards before Howard, suddenly started back, and at the same moment Howard thought he observed a figure glide into the recess. After a moment, however, the



man continued his way, seemingly unembarrassed ; and Howard asked :

“Whom have you spoken with?—what man was it that crossed you?” for he fancied that he had heard a hasty whisper as the fellow paused.

“Me! spake, Sir? Who could I spake to?—No one crossed me; an' 'tis only some shadow has frightened you in this lonesome place.”

“Very likely,” Howard replied. But, with sword in hand, having gained the rocky recess, he thrust his head into it, and looked around: so far as he could distinguish, no one appeared, and they continued their route.

The stream now made a sudden bend, widely deviating from the line of the hill to which it had hitherto run almost parallel; and exactly at the apex of the angle it formed, the guide paused, and, pointing to a tree that was flung over the water, told Howard that in this place they must cross.

“It is a slippery and dangerous passage, over,” said Howard, “and the water is much deeper and wider than it was above. I would rather have ventured the leap when we got out of the wood.”

“Och, musha, it's very safe, Sir,” replied the man; “sure I know it well this many a day.”

“Lead on, then. What—are you fearful? Why do you step back?”

“Throth an' I'm not afeard,” said the fellow, “only I can do the best fur you, by followin' close.”

“Take your hand out of your breast, you scoundrel, or I'll run you through the body!”—cried Howard—“Pass on—and quickly.”

“Hoght mille duoul!—Go on yourself, then!” replied the man—go on!”—and with his left hand he shoved Howard, as if he had been only a child, within a few paces of the stream, while with the other he presented a pistol.

Howard, recovering from the push, darted on the assassin like a wild cat. Ere they closed, the pistol had been snapped, but it only burned priming; and, as Howard pressed on, he, with a desperate pass, ran the fellow through the thigh. In an instant he was in the ruffian's giant clutch; and, after a few unavailing struggles, was dashed on the ground, and then felt himself dragged towards the stream. In vain did he resist and cry out; the strength that tugged him along was almost superhuman. The verging

prospect of his terrible fate had almost made him insensible to his continued progress towards it, when the startling whiz of a bullet by his ear, and the immediate report of a pistol, called back his powers of observation. Instantly he was free, for his colossal antagonist had fallen, scarcely with a groan. The bullet had gone through his brain.

"He's quiet now, I believe," said a voice by Howard's side, while he was at the same time assisted to rise by an unseen hand. When he had gained his legs, he beheld, close by him, a young man of rather slight figure, buttoned to the chin in a tight grey surtout, and wearing on his legs leather gaiters, also closely buttoned.

"Dead, by Heaven!"—said Howard, in reply to the stranger's remark. "Sir, for this timely aid I must ever be your debtor—If indeed"—he added, in an undecided tone—"the bullet has hit its true mark."

"I don't know well what you mean, Sir," said the young man, proudly drawing himself up; "I fired at this fellow to save your life."

"I readily believe it, Sir," rejoined Howard. "But we were so close, 'twas rather nice shooting."

"Bah!" said the other, "It was nothing at all to talk of. I could do it as well if you both stood cheek by jowl."

"Then, Sir, I must cordially repeat my thanks and gratitude."

"Oh, no thanks. What is it but what one Gentleman should do for another? I only wish you had been with me half an hour ago on the road; you might then have conferred the first obligation."

"I may ask to what you allude?" said Howard.

"Why, yes," replied the lad (for he was little more), with indifference, "I have just been stopped and plundered by Doe, and three of his men."

"What do you tell me, Sir?" asked Howard, in consternation: "I thought I had left him pretty securely guarded?"

"He's out, Mr. Howard, I assure you."

"Perhaps, some other?"

"No, no, no—I saw the fellow, face to face."

"You know his person, then?—have you seen him often?"

"Often."

"They plundered you, you say?"

"They did—I said so."

"Of what, pray?"

"Of what! Of my money and arms, to be sure."

"Your arms?"—repeated Howard, glancing at the pistol the stranger had just discharged, and which he still held in his hand. Immediately after, Howard, fixing his eyes on his face, thought he could recollect to have seen it before.

"Oh—aye—this little pistol," the young man answered; "I found it on the hill after them, and you're just as welcome to it as to the slight service it has done you;" offering it as he spoke.

"Thanks—but you see I have my sword. Will you allow me to ask if ever we have met before, Sir?"—continued Howard, again glancing at the pale, handsome features of his companion.

"Upon my Soul, not that I know of," was the answer.

"But you seem to know my person well," resumed Howard.

"You have been pointed out to me, to be sure," said the other, "and I have often been looking at you, when you little thought it—that's all."

"Pray, what sort of man is this Doe?"

"Something of your own height, I think," said the stranger, surveying Howard from head to foot—"or mine; as I believe you and I stand about the same height in our shoes. But he is much stouter than either of us, and, perhaps, twice as old."

"About forty-five, then?"

"Let me see—yes. About five and forty."

"Well-favoured?"

"No. Black complexion, black hair, strong, rough features, a lowering brow, a haughty, cruel mouth. Altogether, a face of much ferocity."

"Thus I have heard him described by all. But I, too, shall see him, perhaps."

"Perhaps," echoed the stranger, drily; or as if, joining the opinion of the outlaw's cleverness, he slighted Howard's pretensions to out-manceuvre him. The tone fell disagreeably on Howard's ear; nor, indebted to him as he was, could he well relish the easy kind of swagger that ran through every word, look, and action, of his new acquaintance. So that he now turned rather sharply round with a peculiar—"Sir?"

"Let me exhort you, Mr. Howard," said the young man, without at all seeming to notice this change of manner, "to return with speed to your corps, who must now, I think, require your presence. Pardon my freedom."

"You have purchased a right to use it, Sir. May I beg to know to whom I am so much indebted?"

“My name is Sullivan; I live at my father’s house some miles up the country. I went to a fair near Clommel to sell cattle, and was this evening returning with the money, when Doe stopped me. Curse the fellow, these are new tricks, that he might better let alone.”

“You are farmers, then?—you and your father?”

“Farmers in a small way, Sir: we had been better off, but rents and tithes-proctors now leave us little by the trade. If you think of returning to your men,” Sullivan continued, in a manner that had all the appearance of interest, though it still wore a feature of something like dictation—“I shall be very happy to lend you my company: ’tis a bit out of my road—but no matter.”

Howard, rather conciliated by this proof of attention, and overlooking the dash with which it was conveyed, and which he now began to attribute to the manner of the country, rather than to the individual, answered:

“I thank you. I had intended to proceed farther, to Mr. Grace’s house; but your information, and, indeed, this accident, have determined me to return, and a brave friend like you may be useful.”

“Very possible,” Sullivan replied.

“Before we proceed farther,” Howard continued, “I shall trouble you to accompany me to the nearest place, to despatch a messenger with a note of apology to Mr. Grace.”

“First of all,” said Sullivan, turning on his heel to where the dead body lay, “let us quietly dispose of this fellow’s prodigious carcass. *Bon Dieu!*—what a Goliath!—and what a pretty little David am I that gave him his lullaby, just by the edge of the brook, too. Upon my conscience, I thought I should have split with laughing, when I saw the damned queer figure you cut, dangling after him, like a calf tied to an ox’s tail.”

“It was very ridiculous, no doubt, Sir,” replied Howard, rather offended, “and, perhaps, more than ridiculous to one of the actors, though not to the spectator. But, pray,” he continued, in a changed tone, “what are your views towards this wretched carrion?”

“Why, to begin,” answered Sullivan, kneeling, “I claim the well-known right which every honest man who can shoot a robber possesses over him. I beg to see what kind of lining he has got in his pockets. If I don’t mistake, the inquiry will be worth our while:” and he engaged at once in his investigation.

“Worth *your* while, I presume you mean, Sir,” observed Howard.

"Thank you," said Sullivan, half jeeringly, "that's blunt and kind, and what I expected from you. Another poor subaltern in your place would be crying halves, or quarters, at least. But you remember my loss on the road, just now, and so leave me all the luck. And see, here it is, by holy Saint Patrick, crozier and mitre to boot—here it is—one—two—three—four—four one pound notes, and almost another pound in silver. He drank a drop since he got the big five pound slip whole and entire. Well; I believe I know who I may thank for my good fortune to-night."

While Sullivan was speaking, he extracted from the most secret pocket on the person of the dead man a small piece of old rag, carefully tied up, and from this, again, the bank-notes and silver he had enumerated. Throwing away the envelope, he now very coolly deposited the money in his own pocket, and jumping up, continued :

"And the next thing I intend to do, Mr. Howard, is to drop him in the very spot he had an eye on for yourself. Come, my lad, it's all one to you now, you know." He stooped to move the body, but was interrupted by Howard, who, during the entire last scene, had felt disgusted at the levity and hardness of the young man's manner and proceedings.

"I protest, I cannot see," said Howard, "why this should be done. Even for our own sakes we ought to leave the wretch where he has had the misfortune to fall."

"Nonsense, man," replied Sullivan, in an impatient voice. "I know what I am about : just leave me to myself. I commit no crime, I believe? And let me assure you, Mr. Howard, 'tis the best thing for *yourself*, too: indeed, what concern of mine is it at all? There may be visitors here in an hour or two, perhaps in half an hour, perhaps in a moment, who will expect anything but to find him in your place; and you might not be the safer of the discovery for the whole night after. Just let me have my own way, I say."

"You will do as you please, then, Sir," said Howard, turning off, and walking from the spot. As he proceeded, he could distinctly hear the noise caused by the trailing of the body over the crisp soil, and, a moment after, the heavy plunge in the water. In another moment, Sullivan was by his side.

"And now, about your note of apology to Mr. Grace," he said, as he came up, still speaking in an unembarrassed tone.

"I shall have to ask admission into some house to write it," said Howard. "Whose house is that yonder?"

"A black villain's!" answered Sullivan, his voice suddenly altered to a subdued, hissing cadence.

"What is the name of the proprietor?"

"Purcell."

"Let us try to get in there," said Howard.

"Never!" cried Sullivan, almost in a scream, and while he stamped his heel into the sward.

"And why so, Sir?" asked Howard, coolly; for he began to tire of the whimsical impatience of the young man's manner.

Sullivan, changing rapidly into a deeper tone, and almost speaking through his clenched teeth, went on, with passionate vehemence: "Never, I say, but in defiance, shall my foot rest on his threshold. Never shall I darken his door, but when I come as the shadow of death and destruction might come, to darken it for ever. To your quarters—or, stay; here are pen and ink"—and he produced a small tin case containing both—"and here is a scrap of paper, and yonder I see a light in a cabin. Write the line there, and I will faithfully carry it—'tis on my way."

Howard assented, and they rapidly bent their steps towards the cabin. Meantime, his curiosity awakened by the sudden and uncontrollable passion of his previously *nonchalante* companion, he said:

"This Purcell must indeed be a villain, or your prejudice against him is strong."

"Ma Foi! but you have just said the truth twice over," replied Sullivan; "he *is* a Hell-born villain, and I hate him worse than I hate Hell; or fear it, either."

"He has deeply injured you, then?" inwardly speculating how it might be that now and again these French expletives slipped from his farmer-friend.

"Injured mel—hal hal!"—and he laughed a bitter laugh; but whether the emanation of a sense of wrong, or in mockery of Howard's question, could not easily be distinguished. After a moment, however, he checked himself, and then added, in a calmer voice: "*Me*, Sir? No, not *me*; but his doings to others mark him for the detestation of every honest man."

This was not well carried; but Howard contented himself with, "Who or what is he?"

"What he is now, and for years has been, everybody knows. What he exactly sprang from, no one can tell. At least I cannot. But he first appeared here the follower of a Nobleman we never saw; some kind of collector, I believe. Soon after, he

became a tithe-proctor ; then a fire-brand ; and, at last, a bloody traitor and informer. Then, of course, a land-jobber, Gentleman at large, and County Magistrate."

"Pray, explain," said Howard, much interested, and completely astonished.

"The particulars would be a long story. Privately he stirred up the wretched and ignorant people around him to resist rack-rents, that he throve by as privately exacting. When he got them involved by his agents, he informed against them, running their blood into money. Those who held lands on reasonable terms, he thus contrived to turn adrift on this world, or launch into the next, bidding for the vacant land himself, and then letting it, at tenfold its value, to starving creatures, who, though they sweated like the beasts of the field—which they do—could not meet their rent-day. There was one family in particular—but come, let us push on to the light ; I delay you."

"By no means ; you have deeply interested me. There was, you say, a particular family?"

"There was. A Mother and a Son, a Daughter and old Grandfather—the Father was long dead. Purcell, by his underhand practices, ensnared the son, a lad of eighteen or nineteen, in nightly combinations. Then he arraigned him before the landlord ; and then—for their lease was expired—Son and all were turned out of their home—the old man and all. All, except the Daughter."

"And what became of her?"

"Villain—eternally Damned villain!" exclaimed the boy, in another burst, and while his youthful face and figure took a stern and formidable appearance—"What became of *her*? He had trodden her down, beforehand—seduced her—and she went with him into his house. She left her sick Mother, and her old Grandfather, on the field before their own door, and turned to the menial hearth of him who—Pardon me!—the night wears—we walk too slowly."

"Pray, continue. What of the rest of this poor family?"

The narrator, touched, perhaps, as well by Howard's evident sympathy, as by the subject he was about to enter on, answered, in a broken voice:

"The mother, as I said, was ill ; she could get no farther than the ridge that gave her a last look of her old cottage. She sat there till night came on—'twas a bad night—and—she died in it," he added, with a voice scarcely audible.

"My God! And the Son?"

“The wretched Son was not then at home. He returned with an oath to revenge his poor Mother. Purcell gained information of his purpose, and, at the head of a body of soldiers, hunted him through the country. In the North the boy escaped him, and there, it is believed, took shipping for America.”

“It is, indeed, a shocking story,” Howard said, much moved; “and I will not press you to enter the house of such a man. But, since you are so kind as to offer it, I can write my note in the cabin, which, when we have got over this hedge, I presume we shall have gained.”

The impediment to be surmounted was a fence of earth and stones running straight across their path, with, here and there, a bunch of furze or of dwarf-thorn shooting out on the top and at the sides. As they prepared to clamber over it, their attention was caught by the sound of low and continuous moaning, which arose from the opposite side. Howard, first gaining the top of the hedge, saw, on looking across, a young and beautiful woman, who was seated on a large stone, her hair hanging loose about her, her face pale as marble, and an infant resting on her lap. The moon flared fully in her front, and, as she was not above two or three yards distant, developed into a sort of statuesque clearness her face, figure, and drapery. Her head was turned and inclined over her shoulder with an expression of utter woe and helplessness; thick sighs every moment interrupted her lament, and distended her white bosom. Her infant seemed to have just dropped asleep, and now lay back, along the beautiful arm that tenderly enclasped him, his little knees slightly drawn up, his half-open hands approaching his mouth, in that infantine attitude of repose which Westmacott has so well and so touchingly reproduced.

Howard saw, in deep surprise and interest, the mother and her infant, and was silently continuing his gaze, when Sullivan, who soon stood by him, suddenly seized his arm, and uttered a deep curse, the tone of which indicated the utmost consternation and astonishment. His exclamation reached the woman's ear; for she turned her head, ceased her perhaps unconscious wail, and, fixing her eyes for a moment on Sullivan's face, screamed and rushed into the cabin, which was only some yards distant.

“Don't follow me!” exclaimed Sullivan. “This is my affair—I shall be with you in a moment;” and he leaped from the top of the hedge, and rapidly pursued the girl into the cabin.

When he entered, she was crouching down, with her face



hidden on the knees of an old man, who sat by the hearth. One arm hung at her side, the other still pressed her now complaining child, and in reply to the old man's repeated—"Whisht! whisht! à-yourneen," she panted, "His ghost!—his ghost! come over the waters and the mountains to punish me! Hide me, Grandfather! hide me!"—

"Ghost or no ghost, Cauthleen, speak no word to me yet," said Sullivan, who now stood at her back.—"There is an account to settle for you, before we can ever—if we ever do—look straight into each other's faces."—But it was useless for Sullivan to have given this warning: at the very first sound of his voice, the girl had fainted at the old man's knees; her infant still held, however, to her bosom.

"And is this the way so soon?" continued Sullivan, speaking to the old man—"Could he not wait for me a little, but add this last, this very last wrong to all the rest? When did he turn her out, Dha-dhu?"—\*

"This is the first I heard of it, à-vich," said the old man; "I did not think of seein' her to-night, 'till after you called upon him yourself."—

"Hush!"—said Sullivan, pointing out to the door—"Did you tell her I was in the country?" in a lower voice.

"How could I when you bid me not?" returned the old man—"Though last night, as I spoke to her out of her window, and scalded her heart with the story of Purcell's courting of Mary Grace, I was nigh comfortin' her, poor soul, on the head of it."

"Bring her to the barn, Dha-dhu, as fast as you can," rejoined Sullivan—"and stay—we want you in other matters. You must instantly mount and away to the elm-trees—you know for what?" the old man bent his eyes blankly on the ground—"You remember, don't you?"—continued Sullivan, as, from a suspicion of the old man's occasional weakness of intellect, he began to doubt his energy and correctness in the business he wished him to undertake.

"Do I remember, is it?" asked the other, as, recovering from his abstraction, he raised Cauthleen in his arms, and stood upright, with a vigour that in one of his great age was surprising; while a strong colour spread over his cheek, and his grey eyes sparkled insanely—"Do I remember your biddin'? And why it is to be done? With this load in my arms, and you standin' before me, you ask do I remember it?—Do I remember anything?—

\* Grandfather.

Do I remember the day that once was, and the day that is, the day that is to come? And if old age, and the heart-break strove to make me forget, *could* I?—Where, then, would be my dreams on the hill-side, and in the rushes and the long grass by the water's brink, when, night after night, I dreamt it?—When the moanin' came on the hill-breeze, and the cracklin' and the roarin' of the blaze was in the reeds that covered my old head?—When the mountains fell back, and the sky grew clear, and the wide waters were no hindrance to me, and I saw you through them all, afar off, with the sword in your hand, and *him*, twinin' like a red worm at your feet?"—

"Hush! hush! Dha-dhu," again interrupted Sullivan, "there is one abroad must not hear or know: you had better call on God to strengthen you, and make you clear, and watchful, and prudent. And now go your ways to the barn, first, and then to the elm-trees—this lost creature is in a long fit, and we have nothing here to serve her—Go—She seems coming to, a little—Go, now, without a word—Rest with her abroad in the air, and then she'll walk with you—And now—yet one other word—Is Flinn gone to get Father O'Clery out of the way, and to talk to him about the work?"

"'Tis an hour since he went," answered the old man, "and he'll scheme him to the barn, as you told us."

"Then don't lose another moment," said Sullivan—"or just wait where you are while I step out with this rushlight." He took the niggard taper and approached Howard, who still remained on the hedge, his curiosity excited to the utmost, his fears stirring on account of Sullivan's statement as to the escape of Doe, and feeling, as a neglect of duty, every moment that kept him from his men.

"We can't do it in the cabin," said Sullivan, as he stood under Howard, at the bottom of the hedge,—“but come down, and I'll hold the light while you scribble on this stone—The wind is low, and won't hinder you."

Howard accordingly descended, and, using the materials with which Sullivan supplied him, wrote his note to Mr. Grace, and handed it unsealed to Sullivan.

"I'll deliver it punctually," said Sullivan, "within as much time as it will take me to walk and run to the house. And now, Mr. Howard, good night, and make haste to your soldiers. Don't mind walking among these hills with people you are a stranger to, for all the pretty faces about Slievenamon—But

we shall talk more of that, maybe, when I have the pleasure to see you next—Good night, Sir ;” and he turned again into the cabin.

Great as was Howard’s anxiety to get to his quarters, he could not withstand the temptation of concealing himself a moment behind the hedge, in order to watch some continuance of the interesting scene, to the opening of which he had been a witness. So he recrossed the mound, and stooped his head under it, at the side turned from the cabin.

In a few moments he heard Sullivan’s voice wishing some one good luck and speed. Almost immediately after, he saw him leap the stream, of which the course continued so far as the cabin, and Howard watched him running across the low ground at the other side, in the direction of Mr. Grace’s house. His curiosity was next bent to catch a glimpse of the woman and child, and, looking cautiously over the hedge, he saw her, leaning on the old man, walk from the cabin towards the place where he stood concealed. They did not, however, directly pass him, but, continuing their way by the other side of the hedge, issued through it at a gap about twenty yards distant, and then, turning to the left, began to ascend a broken and uncultivated declivity.

Howard argued that this declivity must be a continuation of the ridge over which he had descended with his traitorous guide, when he first left the road that commanded his quarters ; and he concluded that if he also mounted the hill, in the footsteps of the old man and his charge, it must lead him again to the road, some little distance from the point he wished to regain. So, mistrustful of travelling any longer in by-paths that had proved sufficiently dangerous, and also prompted perhaps by anxiety to track the young woman, Howard followed at a distance.

After gaining the brow of the ridge, the old man and his companion disappeared from Howard’s view. He also hastened, therefore, to win it. When he had done so, he looked out, and discovered them still walking in a direct line across a wide waste of marshy ground, bounded at some distance by a low wall, on which the moon shone clear and white, distinguishing even the stones of which it was composed. He felt surprised that, having passed the hill, so considerable a space should still remain between him and the road. But, assured that the wall he now saw was its boundary, he continued to follow the two figures.

They again disappeared over the wall, and Howard, mending his pace, crossed the low barrier, which he perceived to be formed of loose stones, and, in increased surprise, saw another stretch of

open ground before him, over which the figures still moved. The lines of the road and the hill, he thought, must have suddenly departed from their parallel; but it was, meantime, impossible that he should miscalculate his route, and so he persevered in it.

This second wild tract of moor proved nearly twice as extensive as the first; yet it was at length terminated by another loose wall, which was successively passed by the old man, the girl, and Howard. The amazement of our military friend changed into a disagreeable misgiving when he now found himself at the base of a growing ascent, round which, as he gained the other side of the second barrier, his unconscious guides were just winding. In a moment they had entirely eluded him; and, vexed and impatient, he hurried after them to inquire his way to the road, even yet positive he could not be far astray.

As he rapidly turned the bend of the hill, and looked forward for those he supposed before him, they were not to be seen; but the wailing of a female voice, and the shrill cadence of the old man, as if speaking in comfort, guided him in his course. He followed till he found himself at the mouth of a pass, where the hill divided it, and afforded entrance to its own recesses. Up this way, Howard turned to the right, and soon saw the female and old man, the one sitting, the other, with the infant in his arms, standing over her, both continuing to converse in their mixed tones of anguish and feebleness. He hastened on to join them. All were now wrapt in the shadow of the hill, and, as Howard precipitately advanced, he stumbled over some fragments of rock, and fell. The woman and her aged protector, with cries of terror, ran in a contrary direction. Howard rose, not materially hurt, and called loudly after them; but this appearing only to increase their fright and speed, he exerted his own legs in pursuit. They fled, for some distance, along the pass he had last entered, and then turned into another which struck off almost at right angles. He once more missed his guides, till he arrived at the point they had doubled. But he then marked them in the stretch of moonlight, which the sudden turn afforded, flitting over the side of the divided hill, and apparently bent on gaining its top. Still he held chase.

Pausing on the verge of the ascent, he saw them hastening over a wide spread of sloping country, at the extremity of which a huge peak of mountain took its rise. In fact, he had not understood, that all this while, ever since he left the cabin, he had, across moors and all, been rapidly, though imperceptibly, ascending

towards the bleak and craggy summit of Slievenamon. He gazed about, confounded and almost terrified, and shouted louder than before after his mysterious seducers into this maze of danger. They, less than ever heeded his appeal; and when, resuming once more his efforts to overtake them, he endeavoured to keep them in his eye, the two figures suddenly sank from view, and left him completely at fault.

He ran on in the direction they had taken, until, gaining the verge of the moor, he found himself altogether impeded in his progress by a deep gully, that, like a trench before a stronghold, seemed to guard the base of the mountain. As the weather had lately been very dry, scarcely any water now sought its way through this natural canal; and, advancing cautiously to reconnoitre, Howard could perceive that the gully was deep and abrupt, and lined, at either side, and at the bottom, with sharp, projecting fragments of rock. His next investigation was to discover in what part of the pass the old man and his companion lay concealed, for he could not suppose they had been able to cross it; nor could he otherwise account for their sudden disappearance, than by concluding they had descended into it. No trace of them appeared, however. He had paused in much embarrassment, unable to form any plan of proceeding, when they abruptly re-appeared at the opposite side of the watercourse, moving towards a broad, flat stone, that, supported at one end by two props, also of stone, was raised in that direction from the ground, while the other end, that nearest to Howard, seemed buried in the soil. He looked, without knowing its traditional nature, at the ruins of an old Druidical altar. But had he been a thorough antiquarian, and ever so well acquainted with all that has been said and written on the subject of this rude relic, little interest would it have had for him at the moment. His notice was solely directed to the two figures, who hurried towards it; and he hallooed lustily and long in hopes of fixing their attention.

All in vain, however. The figures continued, in speed and silence, to near the stone; and when they had gained it, and while Howard exalted his voice into the shrillest possible key, they became once again, and finally, invisible. But, as if not to allow him to waste his lungs for nothing, scarcely had he emitted the last bellow, when it was caught up in a contrary direction, and prolonged and repeated rather beyond his wishes. He paused a moment, supposing he might have heard an echo; but, when too much time had elapsed, to permit, according to

natural laws, of possible iteration, the shouting was again renewed, by more than one person, now sounding nearer, and awaking the deep voices of the outspread moors and desolate hills. Our adventurer, though no poltroon, felt a disagreeable qualm at heart, as these wild signals of approaching strangers, and to him, foes, closed right and left upon him. He stood one moment in something not unlike consternation, and then the strongest instinct of nature lent him lightning thought, and, as will be seen, scarcely less than thunderbolt execution. Behind the flat stone the figures had found a hiding-place; behind it he, too, would seek safety. He measured the gully with his eye—it was at least four yards over—perhaps more—no matter. Howard drew back for a good run—sprang across the chasm like a chamois-hunter—and lighted on his feet in the shelving sward at the opposite side. But this was only the first consequence of his leap; for, after striking his heels into the soft ground, he next sank through it, and fell, with a chaos about his ears, and a hellish uproar ringing in them, down—down—he knew not where, into the bowels and mysteries of the mountain.



## CHAPTER IX.

Now could we, at our pleasure, and not in violation of the known and admitted privilege of story-tellers, change the scene of our narrative some miles away from Lieutenant Howard, and leave the reader in a consequent agony of suspense as to the issue of his adventure. But we scorn such petty tyranny over the minds of those millions whom it is our wish, in perfect disinterestedness, to treat in the best manner: therefore, we proceed straight forward in our tale.

The first perception of Howard's restored senses brought him the intelligence of his being in the midst of an almost insufferable atmosphere, oppressive, as it was strange and unusual. He breathed with difficulty, and coughed and sneezed himself very nearly back again into the state of unconsciousness, out of which, it would seem, coughing and sneezing had just roused him; for he gained his senses while performing such operations as are

understood by these words. When a reasonable pause occurred, and that reflection had time to come into play, Howard wondered whether he was alive or dead, and whether or no he felt pain. Due consideration having ensued, he was able to assure himself that, so far as he could judge, he lived, and without much pain of any kind into the bargain. Next, he tried to stir himself; but here he was unsuccessful. Some unseen power paralysed his legs and arms, feet and hands. He lay, it was evident, upon his back, and the surface he pressed seemed soft and genial enough. While in this position he looked straight upward. The stars, and a patch of deep blue sky, twinkled and smiled upon him through a hole in a low, squalid roof overhead. This was a help. He remembered having fallen in through the slope of the hill, and, as an aperture must have been the consequence of the cause of his descent, he ventured to argue accordingly. He had intruded, it would rather seem, upon the private concerns of some person or persons, who, from motives unknown to him, chose to reside in a subterranean retreat among the very sublimities of Slievenamon. Here the strange scent again filled his nostrils with overpowering effect. There was some part of it he thought he could, or ought, to recollect having before experienced, and he sniffed once or twice with the hope of becoming satisfied. But a fresh and, he conceived, a different effluvia thereupon rushed up into his head, and down his throat, and he had again to sneeze and cough his way into a better comprehension.

When Howard was in this second effort successful, he observed that he dwelt not in absolute darkness. A pandemonium kind of light dismally glared around him, clouded by a dense fog of he knew not what colour or consistency. Was he alone? He listened attentively. The melancholy female voice that he had heard lamenting at the cabin, and among the hills, came on his ear, though it was now poured forth in a subdued cadence. Still he listened, and a hissing of whispers floated at every side, accompanied by the noise of a fire rapidly blazing, together with an intermittent explosion that very much resembled a human snore.

Again he strove to rise or turn, but could not. "I will just move my head round, at all events," thought he. He did so, very slowly, and his eyes fixed upon those of Jack Mullins, who, bent on one knee at his side, held his left arm tightly down with one hand, while with the other he presented a heavy horseman's pistol. Howard, little cheered by this comforter, turned his head

as slowly in the other direction, and encountered the full stare of another ruffianly visage, while, with both hands of his attendant he was at this side pinioned. Two other men secured his feet.

"Where am I? and why do you hold me? and how did all this happen?"—asked Howard, as he began to comprehend his situation.

"Hould your tongue, and be quiet," said Mullins.

"I know *you* well, Jack Mullins," resumed Howard. "'Tis some time since we met at the Pattern, but I know your voice and face perfectly well."

"Nonsense," said Mullins. "Hould your pace, I tell you."

"You surely would not take away my life for nothing. And it can be no offence to ask you why you hold me down in this strange manner."

"Bother, man. Say your prayers, an' don't vex me."

"Mullins, I have drunk with you out of the same cup, and clasped your hand in good fellowship; and I desire you for the sake of old acquaintance to let me sit up and look about me. I never did you an injury, nor intended one."

"I don't know how that is," observed Mullins.

"Never, by my Soul!" repeated Howard with energy. "This unhappy intrusion, whatever place I may have got into, was an accident: I missed my way among the hills, and wandered here unconsciously. Let me up, Mullins, and you shall have a handsome recompense."

"The divil a laffina you have about you," said Mullins.—  
"Don't be talkin'."

"As you have *found* my purse then," rejoined Howard, easily suspecting what had happened, "You are most welcome to it, so you release me for a moment."

"An' who, do you think, is to pay us for the roof of our good, snug house you have tattered down on our heads this blessed night?"—asked Mullins.

"I will, to be sure," replied Howard—"who else should? Come, Mullins, bid these men let me go, and you'll never be sorry for it. Is this the way Irishmen treat an old friend?"—

"For the sake o' that evening we had together at the Pattern, you may get up—that is, sit up, an' bless yourself. Let him go, men, bud watch the ladder."

The three other men instantly obeyed Mullins's orders, and, Jack himself loosening his dead gripe, Howard was at last free to sit up.



"Now, never mind what you see," he continued. "An', in troth, the less you look about you, at all, at all, so much the betther, I'm thinkin'." And Mullins sat down opposite his prisoner, still holding the cocked pistol on his arm.

This caution seemed in the first instance altogether useless; for Howard could observe nothing through the dense vapour around him, except, now and then, the blank and wavering outline of a human figure, fitting in the remote parts of the recess. The whispers, however, had deepened into rather loud tones; but here he was as much at a loss as ever, for the persons of the drama spoke together in Irish. At length he gained a hint to the mystery. A young man, stripped, as if for some laborious work, approaching Mullins, said, somewhat precipitately: "Musha, Jack, the *run* 'ull go fur nothin' this time, unless you come down an' put your own hand to the still."

Here, then, from all he had previously heard, and could now see, smell, and conceive, Howard found himself in the presence of illicit distillation, at work, though it was Sunday, in all its vigour and glory. He snuffed again, and wondered at his own stupidity, and indeed ingratitude, that he should not at once have recognised the odour of the pottheen atmosphere—a mixture of the effluvia of the liquor and the thick volumes of pent-up smoke, in which for some time he had, under Providence, lived and breathed.

When the young man addressed to Mullins the words we have just recorded, that person's ill boding face assumed a cast of more dangerous malignity, and, after a ferocious scowl at the speaker, he said, with much vehemence: "Upon my conscience, Tim, a-gra, you're just afther spakin' the most foolish words that your mother's son ever spoke: an' I don't know what bad blood you have to the Sassenach officer, here, that you couldn't lave him a chance for his life, when it was likely he had id. Musha, evil end to you, Tim, seed, breed, an' generation!—Mahurp-on-duoul! What matther was it if the whole *shot* went to Ould Nick this blessed evenin', providin' we didn't let strangers into our secrets? Couldn't you let him sit here awhile, in pace?—Bud since the murther's out, take this, you ballour\* o' the Devil,"—giving the pistol,—“while I go down to the pot. An', Tim—lave well enough alone now, an' if you can't mend what's done, try not to do any more. Don't be talkin' at all, I say; you

\* Babblers.

needn't pull the trigger on him for spakin' a little, if it isn't too much entirely. Bud take care o' your own self, Tim, au' hould your gab 'till I come to you agin."

After this speech, the longest that Mullins was ever known to deliver, he strode away from Howard's side towards the most remote end of the place, where the fire was blazing. Howard comprehending that Jack's indignation was aroused, because of the revealing summons of the young man, and that his own life might probably be sacrificed to his innocent advancement in knowledge, very prudently resolved to avail himself of the hints contained in the harangue he had heard, by observing, in Mullins's absence, the most religious silence, and withal the most natural unconsciousness. The latter part of his resolve was, however, soon rendered superfluous and unavailing. The wind rose high, abroad, and entering at the recent aperture, attributable to Howard, took an angry circuit round the cavern, agitated the mass of smoke that filled it, and compelled the greater portion to evaporate through another vent at the opposite side. In about five minutes, therefore, the whole details of the apartment became visible to any observer, nor could Howard refuse to his curiosity the easy investigation thus afforded. And what he saw is now to be written.

The place was evidently an excavation scooped in the side of the hill, and then, as Howard could remember from his observations abroad, added to his present survey, roofed over with trunks and branches of trees, and covered with sods level with the contiguous soil. Into this den one entrance was now visible; for, looking across, Howard saw the rude ladder, of which Mullins had spoken, guarded by the three fellows he had ordered to that point. Against the sides of the cavern, almost all the way round, turf, furze, or well-filled sacks were piled. One end appeared to be dedicated to the purposes of a barn, for it was stuffed with sheaves of corn at one side and straw at the other, while on the ground lay two flails, half-hidden amid a litter of a compound description.

At the other end—Heaven bless the mark!—the genius of pottheen had established his laboratory. On a tremendous fire of turf and furze sat a goodly pot, of comprehension sufficient, perhaps, for thirty gallons of pot-ale. This cauldron was well covered with a wooden lid, which, at its junction to the sides of the vessel, as well as over all its casual crevices, received an earthy impasto of some kind, to make it airtight. Out of the top of the lid issued

the worm ; so called in courtesy, only ; for it bore little resemblance to its licensed prototype in loyal distilleries, and was in shape no logical symbol of the word. Truly, it did not coil ; but rather ran in and out, crinkum-crankum, in sharp angles, right, acute, or obtuse, at every turn. Its material was common tin, daubed most uncouthly with solder—the clumsy production of some hill-tinker, who was but too well remunerated for his work by a few draughts of the first oozing it brought forth. The greater part of this curious apparatus passed through a large tub of cold water, called familiarly the cooling tub, and representing the condenser of more formal establishments. At length the end protruded, free of all impediment, over another wooden vessel, and therein deposited, drop by drop, its precious and fully-matured product ; in fact, the *bona fide* pottheen, regularly distilled.

About the fire, and at the end of the worm, and from vessel to vessel of different compass, in which the yielding corn underwent its different processes of fermentation, previous to a final enclosure in the pot, Jack Mullins now appeared busy, the presiding and directing spirit of the scene. He moved heavily and silently, with bent brow and closed lips, only condescending to the various questions levelled at him, a—“ Bother—don't be talkin'.” Two or three other men were also busy at the vats. An old woman, with lank streaming locks, and her neck almost entirely bare, and a dirty girl, of about fourteen years of age, stood near the worm, pouring, from time to time, upon it, and into the vessel through which it passed, their contributions of cold water. Around the blaze, on straw, lay perhaps a dozen men, old and young, keen observers and anxious expectants. The fire glared on all, throwing into sympathetic shadow many a wild or sinister eye, and touching with red light the top edges of their shaggy eye-brows, their prominent cheek-bones, hooked or snub noses, and ample chins.

Howard, continuing his observations, surveyed the height from which he had fallen. It might be about seven feet ; but he sat elevated above the floor of the cavern ; and this remark, causing him to examine the material under him, enabled him to account for having escaped so well. In truth he had descended, where he now remained, upon a heap of litter, composed of the residuum of the pot, and some bundles of straw strewed lightly over, so that the whole substance was soft and unresisting as any man in his circumstances could have wished.

He was, however, little pleased on the whole with the scene thus become revealed by the partial expulsion of the smoke. Mullins's

late hints still rang in his ears; and, while contemplating the faces of those round the fire, the unintentional visitant thought he looked on men who would have little hesitation, all circumstances of prejudice and relative place duly weighed, to assist the master-ruffian in any designs upon an Englishman and a red-coat. Then he recollected his untimely absence from his men; the intelligence Sullivan had given him; the disastrous consequences that to them might ensue: and his cheek and brow flamed with impatience. While, the next moment, a recurrence to his own immediate peril corrected, if it did not change, their courageous glow.

The young man who had relieved guard over Howard, well obeyed the parting orders of Mullins; for he did not open his lips to the prisoner, contenting himself with watching his every motion, and keeping fast hold of the pistol. Utter silence, therefore, reigned between both, as Howard also strictly observed his own resolution.

After he had fully investigated every thing and person around him, and when thought and apprehension found no relief from curiosity, this blank pause disagreeably affected him. It was uncertainty and suspense; fear for others and for himself; or, even if he escaped present danger, the unhappy accident might influence his future character and prospects. Under the pressure of these feelings, Howard most ardently desired the return of Mullins, in order that his fate might be at once decided.

And in his own due time Mullins at length came. Everything about the pot seemed prosperous; for, with a joyous clatter of uncouth sounds, the men now gathered near the worm, and, one by one, held under it the large shell of a turkey-egg, which was subsequently conveyed to their mouths. Mullins himself took a serious, loving draught, and, refilling his shell, strode towards Howard, bumper in hand.

"First," he said, as he came up, "since you know more than you ought about us, taste that."

"Excuse me, Mullins," said Howard, "I should not be able to drink it."

"Nonsense," resumed Jack—"dhrink the Queen's health, good loock to her, in the right stuff, that is made out o' love to her, an' no one else. Dhrink, till you see how you'd like it."

"I cannot, indeed," said Howard, wavering.

"Musha, you'd better," growled Mullins. Howard drank some.

"So you won't finish it?—Well, what brought you here?"

"Ill luck," answered Howard—"I knew of no such place—had heard of no such place; but, as I told you, lost my way, and—and—in truth I tumbled into it."

"An' well you looked, didn't you, flyin' down through an ould hill's side among pacable people?—An' this is all throe? no one tould you?"

"Upon my honour, all true, and no one told me."

"By the vartch o' your oath, now?—Will you sware it?"

"I am ready for your satisfaction to do so."

"Well. Where's our own Soggarth, 'Tm?" continued Mullins, turning to the young guardsman.

"In the corner, beyant, readin' his breviary," replied Tim.

A loud snore from the corner seemed, however, to belie the latter part of the assertion.

"Och, I hear him," said Mullins—"Run, Peg," he continued, speaking off to the girl—"run to the corner, an' tell Father Tack'em we want him."

The girl obeyed, and, with some difficulty, called into imperfect existence a little bundle of man, who there lay rolled up among bundles of straw.

"What's the matter now?" cried he, as badly balancing himself, with the girl's assistance, he endeavoured to resume his legs, and then waddle towards Mullins at a short dubious pace.

"What's the matter at all, that a poor Priest can't read his breviary once a day, without being disturbed by you, you pack of—"

"Don't be talkin'," interrupted Mullins, "but look afore you, an' give him the Buke."

"The Book," echoed Father Tack'em—"the Book for him!—Why then, happy death to me, what brings the like of him among us?"

"You'd bether not be talkin', I say, bud give him the Buke at once," said Mullins, authoritatively; and he was obeyed. Howard received from Tack'em a clasped volume, "much the worse of the wear," as its proprietor described it; and, at the dictation of Mullins, swore upon it to the truth of the statement he had already made.

"So far, so good," resumed Mullins—"an' hould your tongue still, plase your Reverence, it's bether fur you. Now Captain Howard—"

"I only want to ask, is the *shot* come off?" interrupted Tack'em—"for, happy death to me, I'm thirsty. And," he

mumbled to himself, with a momentary expression that showed the wretched man to be not unconscious of the sin and shame of his degradation;—“it is the only thing to make me forget—” the rest of his words were muttered too low to be audible even to Howard, beside whom he stood.

“Here, Tim,” said Mullins, giving the shell to the young man, and taking the pistol, “go down to the worm, an’ get a ddrop for the Soggarth.”

The shell returned top-full, and Tack’em, seizing it eagerly, was about to swallow its contents, when, glancing at Howard, he stopped short, and offered him “a taste.” The politeness was declined, and Tack’em observed, with fresh assumption of utter flippancy:

“Ah, you havn’t the grace to like it yet. But wait awhile. I thought like yourself at first, remembering my poor old Horace’s aversion to garlic—which, between ourselves, à-vich, is a wholesome herb after all:” and he repeated the beginning of the ode—

“Parentis olim si quis impia manu,  
Senile guttur fregerit ——”

“Bother,” interrupted Mullins, “ould Hurish, whoever he is, an’ barrin’ he’s no friend o’ your Reverence, could never be an honest man to talk o’ ‘gutter’ and the pottheen in one breath.”

“Och! God help you, you poor ignoramus,” replied Tack’em, draining his shell: “What a blessed ignorant crew I have around me! Do *you* know humanity, à-vich?” he continued, addressing himself to Howard.

“Nonsense,” interposed Mullins, “we all know *that* in our turns, and when we can help it. Don’t be talkin’, bud let me do my duty. I was a sayin’, à-roon,” he went on, turning to Howard, “that all was well enough so far. Bud, somehow, or other, I’m thinkin’ you will have to do a thing or two more. ’Tisn’t clear to myself, a-gra, but you must kiss the Primer agin, in the regard of never sayin’ a word to a Christhen sowl of your happening to stray down through that hole over your head, or about any one of us, or anything else you saw while you were stayin’ wid us.”

Howard, remembering that part of his duty was to render assistance at all times to the civil power of the country in putting down illicit distillation, hesitated at this proposition; doubtful but he should be guilty of an indirect compromise of principle in concealing his knowledge of the existence and situation of such a

place. He therefore made no immediate answer, and Mullins went on.

"There's another little matter, too. Some poor gossips of ours that have to do with his Captain John—God help 'em!—are all this time in the bog, we hear, in regard o' the small misunderstanding betwixt you and them. Well, à-vich. You could just let 'em out, couldn't you?"

"I can engage to do neither of the things you have last mentioned," said Howard, who, assured that concession to the first would not avail him unless he also agreed to the second, thus saved his conscience by boldly resisting both.

"Don't be talkin'," rejoined Mullins, "throth you'll be just afther promisin' us to do what we ax you, an' on the Buke, too;" and his eye glanced to the pistol.

"It is impossible," said Howard, "my honour, my character, and my duty forbid it. If those unfortunate persons yet remain within my lines, they must stay there, or else surrender themselves, unconditionally, as our prisoners."

"I don't think you're sarious," resumed Mullins. "Suppose a body said—you *must* do this."

"I should give the same answer."

"Thonomon duoull don't vex me too well. Do you see what I have in my hand?"

"I see you can murder me if you like; but you have heard my answer."

"Stop, you Bloodhound, stop!" screamed Tack'em—"Happy death to me, what would you be about?—Don't you know there's wiser heads than yours settling that matter?—Isn't it in the hands of Father O'Clery by this time? An' who gave you leave to take the law into your own hands?"

"Bother," said Mullins—"who'll suffer most by lettin' him go?—Who, bud myself, that gets the little bit I ate, an' the dhrop I taste, by showin' you all how to manage the still through the counthry?—An' wouldn't it be better to do two things at once, an' get him to kiss the Buke fur all I ax him?"

"You don't understand it," rejoined Tack'em—"you were never born to understand it—You can do nothin' but pull your trigger or keep the stone in your sleeve—Let better people's business alone, I say, and wait awhile."

Mullins, looking as if, despite previous arrangements, he considered himself called on, in consequence of a lucky accident, to settle matters his own way, slowly resumed.

"Then, I'll tell you how it 'll be. Let the Sassenach kneel down in his straw, an' do you kneel at his side, plase your Reverence, an' give him a betther preparation nor his mother, poor lady, ever thought he'd get. Just say six Patterin'-Aavees, an' let no one be talking. Sure we'll give him a little time to think of it."

"Murderous dog!" exclaimed Howard, with the tremulous energy of a despairing man; "Recollect what you are about to do. If I fall in this manner, there's not a pit or nook of your barren hills shall serve to screen you from the consequences! Nor is there a man who now hears me, yet refuses to interfere, but shall become an accessory, equally guilty and punishable with yourself, if indeed you dare proceed to an extremity!"

"Don't be talkin'," said Mullins, determinedly, "bud kneel down."

"I'll give you my curse on my two bended knees, if you touch a hair of his head!" Tack'em cried, with as much energy as his muddled brain would allow. "And then see how you'll look, going about on a short leg, and your elbow scratching your ear, and your shins making war on each other, while all the world is at peace."

"An' don't *you* be talkin', either," resumed Mullins, who seemed pertinacious in his objection to the prolonged sound of the human voice. "Bud kneel by his side an' hear what he has to tell you first. An' then say your Patterin'-Aavees."

Evidently in fear for himself, Tack'em at last obeyed. The other men, with the old hag and the girl, gathered round, and Howard also mechanically knelt. He was barely conscious, and no more, of the plunging gallop in which he hastened into eternity. He grew, despite of all his resolutions to die bravely, pale as a sheet; cold perspiration rushed down his face; his jaw dropped, and his eyes fixed. Strange notions of strange sounds filled his ears and brain. The roaring of the turf fire, predominantly heard in the dead silence, he confusedly construed into the break of angry waters about his head; and the muttering voice of Tack'em, as he rehearsed his prayers, echoed like the growl of advancing thunder. The last prayer was said—Mullins was extending his arm—when a stone descended from the aperture under which he stood, and, at the same time, Flinn's well-known voice exclaimed from the roof: "Take that, an' bloody end to you, for a meddling, murtherin' rap!" Mullins fell senseless.

"Bounce up, à-vich—you're safe!" said Tack'em, while kneeling



himself, he clasped his hands, and continued, as if finishing a private prayer that had previously engaged him—" *in secula seculorum—Amen!*—Jump, I say—jump!—*O festus dies hominis!*—*via sum apud me!*—jump!" but Howard did not rise till after he had returned ardent thanks for his deliverance; and he was still on his knees when Flinn rushed down the ladder, crying out: "Tundher-un-ouns!—it's the greatest shame ever came on the country!—a burnin' shame! Och! Captain, à-vourneen, are you safe an' sound every inch o' you? And they were goin' to trate you in that manner? Are you in a whole skin, à-vich?"—he continued, raising Howard, and clasping his hands.

"Quite safe, thank you, only a little frightened," said Howard, with a reassured, though faint smile.

"Oh the murtherin' thief!—where is he?" resumed Flinn— "Where is he till I be the death of him!—get up, you unloocky bird"—giving Mullins a kick—"get up, if the brains are in your head. Musha, I pray God the stone mayn't have left 'm—get up an' go on your errand. Purcell is waiting for you, an' the farmer's son is there. Get up, an' that you never may!"

"Musha, I meant all for the best—don't be talkin' ;" muttered Mullins, as, recovering from the stunning blow, he scrambled on his feet. "Is Purcell ready?"

"Yes, you black dog, he is," answered Flinn—"go your ways to him—an' tell him you're afther doing all he axed you—be sure o' that."

"Father Tack'em must come wid me," said Mullins—"Purcell wants him to make all sure—an' I promised."

"I'll not budge a peg in your company," said Tack'em. "There's neither luck nor grace at your side."

"For that matter, there's a Priest in the house already," observed Flinn, carelessly.

"Is there honey?" asked Tack'em, much interested—"then, where's my breviary?"

"An' you'd better go, for another raison," rejoined Flinn. "There's one abroad that came wid myself to the barn—(only I left him a little way off, when I saw the hole in the roof, to make his own way)—that your Reverence wouldn't be over-pleased to see—By the powers, here he comes down the ladder!"—Howard looked in some alarm, but was greatly relieved to see the portly person of Father O'Clery in the situation Flinn had described. The friends, in mutual surprise and pleasure, advanced to each other.

"Move aside, please your Reverence," continued Flinn to Tack'em, as the gentlemen conversed apart—"An stale out wid Jack as soon as you can—it's the best way for you both."

Poor Tack'em seemed to agree with the speaker. Folding round his body, and over the relic of a coat that once had been black, a loose, dark-blue dreadnought, and hiding his bald head in a slouched hat, while at the same time he tucked his breviary under his arm, the fallen Priest tottered after Mullins towards a dark corner of the cavern.

But Father O'Clery's quick eye rested on the uncouth figure while it was in motion, and, rapidly advancing, and asking—"Who's that?" he confronted in terrible severity his lost brother.

"Wretched man!"—he then continued, his brilliant black eyes half hid by the angular depression of eyelid that accompanied his stern frown—"do I again find you in such a scene, and, indeed, in such a state, as you had solemnly promised never to relapse into?—Is it thus you are to be trusted?—And has this one absorbing vice sunk you so very low, that you have no terror, either on your own account, or on that of the anointed brethren whose cloth you disgrace, of the shameful death such connexions as these must inevitably end in?"

"I rejoice, Reverend Sir," answered Tack'em, while, spite of his efforts to be flippant, his head and eyes drooped, and his tongue faltered—"I say I rejoice, that you mercifully allot me but that one unfortunate failing—I like it, Sir, I like it—God help me! And I believe—that is, I am afraid—that while Heaven spares me a mouth to open, I must be tasting it. Every one has his fate—I don't mean it heteere—e—doxically, Sir—for, through all, I'm firm in the Faith—I'm a sinner, but I believe—But I nevertheless fear, somehow, that we are all born to some misfortune we can never get over. And, as to the cloth, all I can wish is, that having once called me into it—many are called, but few are chosen—and—*nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit*, as we say in syntax—having once called me into it, I wish you could call me out of it again. I am humble enough to admit, I can never wear it well—and little sorrow would I have to strip it off on any other account. For, happy death to me, if I get as much by marrying stray couples, up and down, at the sides of ditches and hedges, and such places, as would keep a second-hand black coat on my back half the year round."

"Go, you miserable creature!" rejoined O'Clery—"hide your

head for shame, and, when you get sober, think and repent, if you can. I can only advise and pray for you. Of punishment you have already had your share. A poor exile from the pale of God's Church; a bad branch of the tree lopped off, and cast aside, I fear, for the burning! Yet are you obstinate in your sin and scandal; yet, alas! the name of Priest is abused in your person—"

"Aye, troth, Sir," interrupted Tack'em, hastily; "a Priest once, a Priest for ever—that's the bite on us both; and the worst is, we can't help it. Good night, Brother, and Benedicite;" and he moved towards the ladder.

"And where now?" asked O'Clery.

"I must go home to read my breviary," answered Tack'em, hobbling up the rugged steps.

"Stop!" cried O'Clery—"Who's that before you?"

It was Mullins, who, taking advantage of the conference between the two Clergymen, contrived to steal up unnoticed until this moment, when his retreating person became visible to O'Clery. As soon as he heard the question directed after him, Jack redoubled his efforts, and removed out of sight every part of his unwieldy person. Tack'em followed as he might, and in silence too, like his leader.

"Here has been infamous work," resumed O'Clery, addressing Flinn and the other men. "Where is the fellow who, as Mr. Howard informs me, meditated a deadly outrage on his person?"

"Your Reverence saw the hinder part of him just now, I believe," answered Flinn.

"I thought so," rejoined O'Clery. "Well, then, my good men, let us settle the business you have invited me here to assist you in: first, Mr. Howard, a word with you." He drew Howard aside, and continued, in a low voice: "You are of course as surprised to see me here as I am to see you. I have your story, and now listen to mine. Sitting at Mr. Grace's table, about an hour ago, I learned that some person wished to speak with me, and when I went down, this young man,"—pointing to Flinn—"was in waiting. From a long conversation that ensued between us, I learned that upwards of one hundred stand of arms were ready to be delivered into my possession for you; and, indeed, other concessions volunteered, which promise to put an end to this petty warfare—on one condition, however, which it is in your power to grant or refuse. But let us continue before the people." Both advanced, and O'Clery went on; aloud:

"I have informed Mr. Howard that you propose, my good people, to give such information as shall lead to the finding of more than a hundred stand of arms, with other things, provided he thinks it safe and prudent to take under his protection the few misguided men—you have told me they are few—now within his lines. And you engage that these men shall approach his soldiers without arms in their hands, leaving them behind, and remaining as hostages until they are, according to true instructions, found on the spot where they have grounded them."

"We just tell you, Father O'Clery, what we were bid to tell you, by some of our gossips that knows more about it. But we'll stand by every word you spake, howsomdever," said Flinn.

"How say you, Mr. Howard?" asked O'Clery.

"On the terms proposed, I shall venture to protect those men," answered Howard, "but with one exception. Their Captain, Doe, must surrender himself unconditionally."

"I fear that will be fatal to the treaty," said O'Clery.

"Not in the laste, your Reverence," said Flinn. "Poor people that are badgered into corners in such a manner must look after themselves.—An' so, if the Captain just promises to lend a hand to the rest, he's welcome, I hear, to Doe, after all."

"I promise, then," said Howard: "But good faith must in the very first instance be shown, by giving up the arms."

"We have little to do wid 'em, please your Honour," resumed Flinn; "only as friends to both sides, an' pacemakers. But I'm tould we needn't go far for the guns an' pistols, anyhow. Arrah, Shawmus," he continued, addressing an old man near him, "wasn't it somewhere here the woman bid us look for 'em?"—And, taking down some bundles of straw, Flinn exhibited a considerable depôt of old muskets, fowling-pieces, pistols, great and small, carbines, and blunderbusses.

"All this is very well," said Howard, restraining his pleasure as well as amazement—"And now I have to say that, if these things remain as they are, until morning, when, with some of my men, I can get possession of them; and if the other concessions and submissions, spoken of by Mr. O'Clery, are made with a good grace, I shall then see about performing my own part of the treaty. But"—he continued, after a short pause, and now pressed by a goading recollection—"but, my dear Mr. O'Clery, I fear I have even yet made a childish arrangement.—Doe, I can learn, is not in my power."

"Indeed, Mr. Howard! Do you speak on good authority?"

"I am afraid I do. But come, 'tis a point easily ascertained if I were once at my quarters—How shall I safely get there?"

"I will, with pleasure, accompany you, and this young man will guide us," said O'Clery, pointing to Flinn.

"Wid a heart an' a half, your Reverence," said Flinn: "an' don't let the Captain be so much down in the mouth about Doe. Whether he's in the bog, or out of it, we'll show him to his Honour, Captain Howard, some time or other. An' sooner than he thinks, maybe."

"Come on, then; there's no time to be lost," rejoined Howard; and he, O'Clery, and Flinn, prepared to leave the cavern by the ladder.

In passing by a recess, which was studiously surrounded with piles of straw, furze, and fern, Howard observed, in deep shadow, the young female and child who had been the first, though unconscious cause of his stumble on such a nest of every kind of disloyalty. She still sat holding the infant to her bosom; but her voice was hushed, and she only kept that peculiar to and fro motion of the body, by which the women of her country gesticulate a heavy sorrow.

"Who is she?" asked Howard of Flinn, as they passed.

"Troth, plase your Honour, I dunna," was the reply.

Howard looked round for the figure of the old man, who had accompanied her over the hills; but, of all those in the place, none resembled his. Father O'Clery, in leading the way, had not noticed the young woman, and Howard now hurried after him up the ladder.

"Let your Reverence an' the Captain take care o' your heads," said Flinn, as he followed them. "The stones cover the hole all over, an' you'll have to stoop fur it a little."

Father O'Clery, from his exploring and unassisted descent, was prepared for this intimation, and cautiously observed it. But Howard, whose entrance had been in an independent way, found much difficulty in lowering his person, neck and knees, as he almost crawled, once again, up to the face of the earth.

The moon had gained her zenith as the party emerged into her reviving beams; and Howard and Mr. O'Clery both paused an instant to examine, in the broad light, if any appearance of suspicion was attached to the secret entrance they had just cleared. As Flinn truly premised, the large flat stone completely covered the mouth of the excavation; and, at either side, as also at its elevated end, fern and furze-bush formed such a screen as must

beguile the eye of any uninformed wanderer. After remarking that the concealment was perfect, the gentlemen, attended by Flinn, pursued their mountain-path to Howard's quarters.

"I must say, Mr. O'Clery," observed Howard, after they had made some progress downward, "that though other things agitated me more, nothing through the course of this eventful evening so utterly astonished me, as to find a person of your profession—and such a member of it!—in the place we have just quitted. I mean Father Tack'em."

"Poor creature!" said O'Clery, in accents of genuine sorrow; "he is, indeed, a source of shame and grief to us. But it will also be acknowledged how very rarely such unhappy instances are to be found in our body."

"I know it, Sir," Howard returned—"My only wonder is, why, when you have ascertained the obstinate unworthiness of a minister, you do not at once discard him from your Brotherhood. Tack'em, if such be his name, is evidently in Priest's orders still."

"We cannot Canonically do what you suggest," answered O'Clery; "the rule, in such a case, differs in our separate Churches. You have heard the poor fellow, himself, say, a Priest once, a Priest for ever: such is our discipline. We deem that, although we assist in sanctioning the vow by which an anointed Priest dedicates himself to the service of his Master, we have no power to declare the solemn contract annulled, under any circumstances. All we can do in a case of irreclaimable error is to forbid, to the unworthy Priest, the exercise of his priestly functions, and to deprive him, so far as in us lies, of all lawful opportunity of assuming them."

"Meantime," asked Howard, "can he assume them if he please?"—

"Certainly, and we say with as much spiritual efficacy as ever. For we argue, that the grace, having once adopted its human conduit, cannot, by any accident that may befall that conduit, be defiled in its transmission to other human souls. In other words," continued O'Clery, striking on one of his less serious tones, "Tack'em—which you have sagaciously surmised not to be his real name: in fact, 'tis only an expletive of his present contra-band trade—may—(and he does)—join in holy wedlock scores of runaway couples, who dare not solicit the good offices of their Parish Priest, or any of his Curates."

## CHAPTER X.

HOWARD had sent word that he should be at Mr. Grace's house at seven o'clock, and he had left his quarters at six, in order to keep his appointment. Seven o'clock came, and Howard did not appear. But it was about this hour that Father O'Clery, while sitting with Mr. Grace and the Protestant Clergyman, Mr. Somers (the Parish Priest had been some time gone), received an invitation to speak with a strange man in the hall. Returning to the company, and generally hinting the result of his conference with Flinn, he was strongly dissuaded by his friends from setting out alone on such an invitation. Mr. Grace urged, that even Father O'Clery's spiritual calling was no certain shield against the displeasure of the deluded people, whom the exhortation of the day might have provoked into hostility towards the preacher. Nor did he suppose an unprecedented case. It had before now happened that a Roman Catholic pastor was visited with the vengeance which a sense of his efficacious interference had aroused.

"And on my conscience, Father O'Clery," continued Mr. Grace, "I know not what to make of Captain John : he will legislate for us all in our turns. I thought my poor old Papist name, Mr. Somers, might have been respected ; but, no later than last night, he sends me a notice to lower my rents and plead gratis for all defendants in the tithe-proctor's court."

"Aye," said Mr. O'Clery, smiling, "and this morning I tore off the chapel-door, before daylight, a paper signed by him, advising the Clergyman at whose house I slept to give over all sermons against his government, as he was pleased to call it ; to take two shillings per annum for his Christmas and Easter dues ; to marry at five shillings a pair, and christen at tenpence a head. Then, Father Doyle, in the next parish, has had a visit from him and his men. These are strange times, and Doe a strange fellow. Yet will I hazard the visit this young man invites me to : there is nothing to fear."

He left the house accordingly, and his friends remained anxiously speculating on his return. Mr. Grace, consulting his watch, began to feel additional uneasiness on Howard's account. It was now half-past seven, and no sign of Howard : it was eight,

and yet he came not. Mr. Grace and Mr. Somers grew seriously alarmed.

To another person, under the same roof, his absence caused even livelier pain. Mary Grace had, before seven o'clock, retired to her apartment to make some little preparation for receiving her lover, as also to discharge some religious observances of the day. She proceeded half way in her toilet: the long, fair hair was let down and freshly arranged, a simple flower its only extraneous ornament. Then Mary consulted her glass, with, it must be admitted, much innocent satisfaction at her appearance. But, recalling at the moment her neglected duty of Sunday devotion, a reproving blush deepened the healthy bloom of her young cheek, and, hastily drawing a chair to the fire, she opened her prayer-book, and strove, with all virtuous seriousness, to detach her mind from personal vanities, from her lover, and from everything distracting and earthly. She scolded herself sharply for having set about her toilet before discharging her spiritual duties, and vowed that, to make amends, she would not proceed in her dressing, would not even glance towards the glass, until she had reverently performed her devotions.

Just then, the clock struck seven. This was an untoward intrusion: Mary found it the more difficult to banish forthwith from her mind such speculations as she had penitently sentenced to temporary exile. Howard was always so punctual to his appointments—at seven he was to arrive, and it was seven now, and he would be in the house in a few minutes at farthest. So that he would have to wait awhile for Mary,—while Mary, being good-natured and considerate, was loath to keep him waiting. Her eyes and thoughts wandered as she listened for his knock. She caught herself inattentive; scolded herself anew, and again resumed her devotions.

There were further distractions, and further chidings; but at last Mary had finished. As she rose from her knees her feelings changed first into impatience, then into anxiety, at the prolonged absence of her lover. He could not have knocked without her hearing it:—even were that possible, Nora, her maid, would have come to inform her of his arrival. Her heart sank as a fear of danger or treachery to Howard crossed her mind, and she sat down, trembling, her toilet forgotten, her thoughts all in alarm. We shall here, availing ourselves of the privilege of authorship, venture to give our readers a glimpse of the maiden and her bower.



Having doffed her dress while proceeding with her toilet, she sat in her stays and petticoat, leaning back in her chair, her ankles crossed, one arm hanging by her side, the hand still clasping her prayer-book. Mary had, however, laid her rosary upon the table, taking up in its stead a miniature of her lover, which she now held in her right hand. Her face was, however, unconsciously turned away from the likeness, as, with tears in her soft eyes, she sighed forth her loving and most devout intercessions for his safety. Her slender, but rounded figure was prettily developed by the undress ; the short petticoat permitted a more than usual exhibition of her plump, but not heavy ankle ; while her polished shoulders and snowy neck must have excited the admiration of such aerial sprites as alone enjoy the freedom we have presumed, for the nouse, to emulate—that of entrance to a young lady's chamber.

Upon the table, immediately beside the dainty red case out of which she had taken the miniature, stood a carved ivory crucifix. At the other side was a tall glass filled with glowing flowers. Emulative flowers, the creatures of Mary's pencil, adorned the walls of the room, and in the place of honour thereon was her girlish *chef d'œuvre*, a Madonna and Child, in crayons. A small, but well-filled book-shelf hung to the right, while before the toilet-mirror lay (as a matter of course, even in Ireland) an Album most elaborately ornamented as to binding.

Immediately behind Mary was her bed, fitly draped in virgin white. The fire blazed strongly upon her as she sat, heightening the colour of her cheek, sending soft flashes into her eyes, and toying with the golden cloud of curls around her face and neck. Through her figure, her attitude, her expression, as well as through all her surroundings, there ran a blended character of softness and purity—of innocence and of grace. Her thoughts of her lover were such as Angels would not deem unfitting to mingle with the prayers she had just knelt before her God to offer at His feet.

It was some time before Mary remembered her neglected dress. The sound of the clock, striking eight, at last roused her, and she rang for Nora.

Nora entered. A fast-fading maiden of forty was this country Abigail, with strong, staring features, her head surmounted by a stiff-starched, high-cauled cap, pinned under her chin ; and, further, wearing a brown stuff gown, tucked up behind, and leaving her arms bare from the elbows. A blue check apron, a

flaming silk kerchief drawn down between her shoulders, blue stockings, and sharp-pointed shoes, with large square buckles in them, completed her attire.

"Not come yet, Nora?" asked her young mistress, whom the very matter-of-fact presence of the tirewoman seemed to have roused from her misgivings.

"Not yet, Miss Mary, an' myself thought you would never ring for me. 'Tis lonely down stairs, for bein' Sunday evenin' every soul is out, barrin' me. All the servants, I mane, be coorse. What's wrong wid me, darlin'?" For Mary, with a face of mischievous horror, had recoiled from the proffered cares of her attendant.

"Why, you dreadful woman!" Mary cried, holding up her hands, "you have been again indulging in the habit I so often scolded you for, and which you so often promised me to give over."

Nora, with every appearance of virtuous indignation, protested that "Never a shaugh o' the pipe had herself taken since the blessed mornin', not six months agone, when Miss Mary forbid her doin' it." This was, however, a rather loose assertion; for, in good truth, Nora, after many laudable efforts, had failed in prevailing on herself to surrender a much-indulged and long-loved delight. "It rises my poor heart," she would soliloquize, "better nor anything else in the world. An' sure, there's neither sin nor shame in givin' into it a little, now an' then, when I have no work to do, an' nobody the wiser, an' the dours shut to keep the smoke from upstairs." Nora accordingly sought her own opportunities for such enjoyment. Nay, the tingle of her mistress's bell had just summoned her out of the centre of a good cloud that for the previous hour she had been industriously accumulating.

"I cannot quite believe that, Nora," the young lady said, in reply to Nora's voluble defence. "Still, I hope you are too good a Christian to tell me a story—this holy evening too. But Mr. Howard has not come yet?"

"Musha, no; God presaarve him!" sighed the handmaiden.

"Oh, Nora!" cried the girl, involuntarily echoing the sigh, "Heaven send that no evil has overtaken him on the road!"

"O, yea. Amin from my heart, girleen," groaned Nora, who, spite of her addiction to the sin of smoking, was a loving and a privileged attendant of the mistress she had cared from infancy. "I'm thinkin' that you love the handsome Captain dearly, Miss Mary, seein' how unasy you are for him."

Miss Mary blushed, but spoke out bravely, like a loving, innocent girl as she was.

"Indeed, Nora, I do love him dearly, dearly!—Better," she added, in a lower tone, and with an air of something like self-reprehension, "Better than I thought I could ever like anybody again."

"Agin? Musha, good loock to you, girleen. An' how long since we liked anybody before? An' we only seventeen now!"

"Oh, Nora! you knew it well," Mary said, softly.

"Avoch! Poor young Kavanagh you're thinkin' of, darlin'?"

"Ah, yes! Poor boy!—Nora, do you know there are times when it seems base to me that I could so soon have forgotten—"

"Ullaloo! child. What was that but childer's folly?"

"It *was* childish, I suppose. Yet, perhaps, sweeter for that. It was silly too;—vain and romantic, I know. Still, Nora—laugh if you will—the recollection of my childish love is very dear to me."

"Lord presaarve me! Love, indeed! Why, sure it's now four years agone. You were then only thirteen, an' he a slip of sixteen or so."

"No more, I believe, was either of us. But—"

"Well, if ever I heard the like! An' to be thinkin of it still! Musha, Miss Mary, 'twas an early notion. Troth, there's many a colleen in the country, as ould as you are this blessed day, that never yet thought of it. An' no wonder! Here's myself that might be your mother—God bless the mark!—an' I'm sure I was a start past eighteen before an idea of it ever crossed me. 'Twas many a long year afther I had my first sweetheart. Thin, there was such a differ betwixt ye in the world, sure I never guessed ye could ever dhrame anything about lovers or the like. Lord save us!"

"But, Nora, I was so young—"

"That you were—over young, alanna."

"I was so proud of—of the boy's fresh and unbounded love. Unbounded it seemed to me: fresh and innocent, it surely was. There was between him and me some distance: that I know. But, after all, my father was not then so rich as he is now, and Harry and his mother were respectable, well to do in the world, and thriving fast to something better. Oh, Nora! I often thought that—that only for that wretch, Purcell—Heaven knows what might have come of what you mock at as so childish."

“ Well, quarer things have come about, surely. And then our handsome Captain—what of him, Miss Mary ?” Nora asked, with a sly smile. Mary coloured, and drooped her head. But involuntarily her clasp tightened round the miniature she still held. The tenderness of the grasp said more for the strength of the girl’s love, than for that of the romance of childhood. But—it is hard to know a girl’s nature.

“ Were you ever tould what became of poor Harry, girleen ?”

“ Yes. He escaped from the North to America.”

“ An’ the Mother died. An’ they say—Lord presaarve us !—that the ould Grandfather roves about the country, for mad, just like a ghost, frightenin’ the people out of their lives. Though, musha, I don’t grudge it to some of them. He came across Purcell once or twice, and, they say, turned him white wid his curses.”

“ Then he must have cursed deep indeed,” Mary said, with a curl of her pretty lip.

“ An’ that villain of the world, Miss Mary, that Purcell, to have the impidence to look at you, afther all his black doin’s, an’ wid his upstart consequence that come in such a way !”

“ Yes !” the girl cried, with a sudden flush of warm colour, and speaking with a generous indignation that was more womanly than the false delicacy that to another would have suggested avoidance of such a theme ; “ and that while he kept in the shadow of shame and sorrow, the poor creature he had degraded—the poor, unhappy creature he had led astray, I am assured, by giving her his written promise of Marriage. Surely that was enough to make me scorn him, even if there were no other reasons—even if it were possible I could ever love such a man. Thank God !—thank God ! that I am now free from the humiliating pursuit of such a being. Thank God ! I am now—or shall soon be—protected from it for ever, by the brave and honourable man I have chosen for my husband.”

“ Musha, yes. An’ we hope you’ll do your duty by him, Miss Mary.”

“ That I will—be a good little wife to him you mean ?” she added, laughing.

“ Avoch, no. Only make a Christen o’ the Sassenach, Miss Mary. Throth it’s your duty afore God an’ us.”

“ Hold your foolish tongue, Nora—and—Hush !” with a quick start and blush—“ there is his knock at last. It is louder than usual—oh ! I hope he is indeed safe with us. There, there, I am

very well. Run to the door. Or, stay,—I am sure my Father will prefer going himself." And Mary, in the prettiest flutter, ran down to the dining-room, where her Father and Mr. Somers still sat.

"Mr. Howard at last, dear Father," she said, gaily entering.

Both gentlemen smiled as they looked up at her, so rosy, so eager, so glad, so frank.

"Most likely, Mary," Mr. Grace replied. "Yet we must be sure before we admit our late visitor. Are the doors and lower windows all barred?"

"Oh, yes! As usual. Do you fear anything?"

"No, but better leave them so till we question our friend without." Mr. Grace threw up a window, and called out—"Who's there?"

"A friend to Lieutenant Howard," replied—to Mary's disappointment, and somewhat to her apprehension—a sharp voice from below. "I have a letter from him."

"Is he well, Sir?" cried Mary, whose anxiety had brought her to the window, and now impelled her to give utterance to the demand that sprang to her lips.

"He is, quite well. Let me in, Madam, I pray, or take his letter. The night is cold, and grows too inclement for tarrying here."

"Throw in the letter, and, if it be from Lieutenant Howard, you will be heartily welcome," said Mr. Grace. "I know, meantime, that you will excuse a precaution which the times render very necessary."

"Here, then. I could quite excuse your caution if the night were finer." And with that the letter dropped into the room.

It was addressed to Mary, who caught it up, and, glancing over the contents, cried eagerly: "Oh, Father, we must instantly pray the gentleman to come in. Mr. Howard writes: 'be kind to the bearer, for my sake, as he has just rendered me a signal service.' Hasten, dear Father, or he will be gone!"

Mr. Grace smilingly complied. He at once went down to admit the stranger. In his absence, Mr. Somers inquired of Mary if anything disagreeable had happened to keep Howard away. She answered: "No; he only mentioned a necessity for not quitting his present post."

She was yet speaking when her father returned, saying to Sullivan, who followed: "Indeed you are welcome, Sir—cordially

welcome. If you have to travel farther, better not speak of it till morning."

"I thank you, Mr. Grace," the young man said, "and accept your hospitality freely as 'tis offered." Here he bowed courteously to the young hostess, to whom Mr. Grace hastened to present him.

"You are welcome, Sir," Mary echoed, graciously saluting the visitor.

"Madam, I thank you also," the young man said, with an earnest glance at her.

"Mr. Howard speaks of a particular service you have just rendered him. Has he then been in danger?" she inquired, in her anxiety drawing close to him.

Sullivan did not immediately reply. As she raised her eyes to his face, she met his fixed upon her with an intensity of expression that for a moment startled, while it half offended her. But, recollecting himself, he added carelessly: "Bah! no, Miss Grace. I pointed out to him the best road to his wild quarters, as I met him straying in quest of them. *Voilà tout.*"

"Will you not be seated, Sir," the girl said, in a tone and manner of growing embarrassment. Her eyes were, in their turn, riveted upon the stranger with a doubtful, yet eager scrutiny. Her colour came and went; she essayed to speak something more, but her deepening agitation, from whatever cause it sprang, made the words die upon her lips.

"Aye, Sir, be seated," Mr. Grace said, "and let us have the pleasure of drinking your health."

"In genuine mountain-dew, I hope?" the stranger said, and Mary sighed a breath of relief to find his deep gaze diverted from herself. He spoke in a tone of almost condescending pleasantry, and, turning easily away, seated himself at table with a careless grace of manner that went far to still the girl's half-aroused suspicions. She was silently leaving the room, when her Father called to her, and, feeling as though under the influence of some wild dream, she returned, and took a chair by him.

"Do not leave us, Mary," Mr. Grace said: "sit by me, child, and we will all presently adjourn to the drawing-room, where you shall give us a song. Yes, Sir," to Sullivan, "the right sort, I can assure you. Mr. Somers, there, though, makes it a case of conscience, and has some 'Parliament' to himself."

"I reverence the gentleman's scruples," the young man said, with a covert mockery of voice and glance. Mary sat a little

behind her Father, her eyes, as though by some irresistible attraction, watching every movement, every look, every trick of face or manner in the newcomer.

"Anything new of Doe, Sir?" asked Mr. Grace, presently.

"Why, yes," Sullivan answered; "I heard just now—that is, your friend Howard told me—he had escaped. Is there no mention of it in the letter, Miss Grace?"

Mary started on being thus appealed to. Her voice, too, was troubled, as she replied that there was in it no word of anything of the kind.

"Ha!" Mr. Somers remarked: "the omission, and your account, seem to hint cause for alarm."

"Bah!" Sullivan said, without raising his eyes from the glass in which he was now compounding his pottheen punch: "Howard is too many for him."

"I hope so," cried Mr. Grace. "Welcome once more, Sir. May we add a name?"

"Now!" Mary's lips all but uttered the word aloud. In her eagerness she bent forward, and when Sullivan, looking towards her, met the full gleam of her eyes upon him, he in his turn coloured, and was perceptibly—to her at least perceptibly—stirred from his *nonchalance*, real or assumed.

"Surely Mr. Howard has named me to you?" he asked.

"He has *not*, Sir!" and Mary's voice had an unwonted ring in it.

"That is odd," the young man said, with a smile. "You may call me Sullivan, Mr. Grace. 'Tis an old name."

"That it is. Mr. Sullivan, your health;" and the old-fashioned greeting went round. At her Father's hearty suggestion, the young hostess took a wine-glass in her hand to join in the toast. As she did so, Sullivan rapidly glanced at her. Again she met his eyes, her hand trembled, her colour deepened even to crimson, she hesitated, and in addressing him pronounced the name of "Sullivan" in a voice so broken as to be scarcely audible. Her Father and the Clergyman looked at her with astonishment, then with pain: they attributed her agitation to alarm on Howard's account, but feared that to the stranger it might perhaps appear offensive, a dread in which they were confirmed by seeing that his emotion, however subdued, was scarce less than that of the young girl. His eyes were cast down, his lips compressed, his breast rose and fell painfully. A rather awkward pause ensued, which Mr. Grace broke by suggesting that they should

proceed to the drawing-room. A suggestion which seemed a welcome relief to all.

Here, while Mary busied herself with drawing down blinds, closing curtains, and the like, Sullivan threw himself into a chair, and taking up a book of engravings, ostensibly amused himself with its contents. In reality, his dark, flashing eyes followed Mary in her movements to and fro. And though she carefully avoided glancing towards him, she felt that he was thus watching her. The two elder gentlemen, left to themselves, resumed, in a low key, a conversation which Sullivan's arrival had interrupted.

"I had no idea," Mr. Somers said, "that Purcell had acted so very basely towards the unfortunate young person we spoke of."

At the mention of Purcell's name, Sullivan slightly, though quickly started; but the movement was so slight as to pass unnoticed by the speakers. He himself continued, to all appearance, absorbed in his book of engravings.

"I tell you fact, Mr. Somers," Grace returned. "She holds his written promise of marriage."

"I am astonished," the clergyman resumed; "for in the discharge of what I conceived to be my duty, Purcell being a Protestant, I spoke to him on the subject, and he assured me, with solemn oaths, that he had never entered into any such engagement. In fact," he added, sinking his voice still more, "he swore to me that the connexion was not of his own seeking."

"He lied and was perjured then, like the liar and perjurer he is," the stranger said, deliberately breaking into the discussion.

Mary looked sharply round; but no extraordinary interest, sufficient to give positive confirmation to her suspicions, was visible in the face or manner of the speaker. Having so spoken, he returned to his examination of the engravings. Mr. Grace eyed him curiously, but said nothing.

"His assertions with respect to her unfortunate young brother appear to have been equally unfounded," Mr. Somers continued, making the remark more general than before.

"Why, what did the fellow say different from what I have told you?" asked Grace.

"Everything different. In particular, he stated that the boy had, joined to his disloyal combinations, provoked the laws of his country by robberies on the highway."



A more evident agitation was here perceptible to Mary in the person she read so anxiously. He writhed round in his chair, pressed his hand across his brow, and as she glided past she could hear him draw in his breath, and grind his teeth together.

"Then you may just term that another slander, false and malignant as the first, Mr. Somers," Grace decided warmly.

Touched and fired, apparently, by the kindly indication, Sullivan, whose identity with the boy, Kavanagh, the reader, as well as Mary Grace, will have already suspected, here flung down his book, and burst out:

"*Sacré sang de Dieu!* A mean Villain! A mean Thief, did he say? a common Thief!" And the young man pushed away his chair, and paced angrily about the room.

Mary grew deathly pale; Grace and the Clergyman exchanged glances. In a minute, however, Sullivan was calm, and turned to the rest with a smile on his proud young face.

"A thousand pardons," he apologized, "for speaking so warmly on what little concerns me. Though concern me it does, as such a story must move and concern any one of right feeling, who, like me, might chance to have heard it in all its hideous truth. But this is no theme for the present. You sing, Miss Grace? I think I heard your Father promise us a song from you."

"Well, Sir," the host said, "if you are no very fastidious critic, I am sure Mary will be glad to sing to you." The kind old man was puzzled by the mingled vehemence and indolent grace of the stranger's manner, and was glad to get rid of a subject that had called for the recent explosion.

Sullivan bowed, and leading the hostess to the piano, busied himself with opening it, placing her seat, and looking for her music. Mary was trembling visibly; her heart had sunk low within her. Yet she seated herself, and mechanically turned over some sheets of music by her side, until Sullivan, stooping over her shoulder, took up a manuscript song she had just put down, and mutely placed it on the stand. The girl's suspicions were now all but certainty. The song was one the words of which had been sent her by her boy-lover, and which he had adopted to her favourite air of "Aileen Aroon." Bowing her head, and without coherent thought, she commenced, with a tremulous hand, the opening symphony.

"Aye, Mary," her father said, when she had played a few notes, "that is a pretty song, and a favourite of mine. Give it us now, my girl."

“Pray do;” Sullivan’s voice entreated, while he continued to stand at her back. “Pray sing that for us.”

Mary, with a strong effort to compose her hand and voice, complied. The song was as follows:—

## I.

’Tis not for love of gold I go,  
 ’Tis not for love of fame;  
 Tho’ Fortune should her smile bestow,  
 And I may win a name,  
     Aileen;  
 And I may win a name.  
 And yet it is for gold I go,  
 And yet it is for fame;  
 That they may deck another brow  
 And bless another name,  
     Aileen;  
 And bless another name.

## II.

For this, but this, I go—For this  
 I lose thy love awhile;  
 And all the soft and quiet bliss  
 Of thy young, faithful smile,  
     Aileen;  
 Of thy young, faithful smile.  
 And I go to brave a world I hate,  
 And woo it o’er and o’er,  
 And tempt a wave, and try a fate,  
 Upon a stranger shore,  
     Aileen;  
 Upon a stranger shore.

## III.

Oh! when the bays are all my own,  
 I know a heart will care!  
 Oh! when the gold is wooed and won,  
 I know a brow shall wear,  
     Aileen;  
 I know a brow shall wear!  
 And, when with both returned again,  
 My native land to see,  
 I know a smile will meet me then,  
 And a hand will welcome me,  
     Aileen;  
 And a hand will welcome me!

How Mary contrived to get through this song, it would be difficult to explain. It had always been a favourite air of her boy-lover : she had often, in the old days, sung it at his request ; and as, previous to their sad separation, he had cherished the romantic notion of seeking his fortunes in a foreign country, he had written for it words applicable to their situation—the words she had now sung for this stranger. A confused crowd of associations, doubts, and fears, filled her mind, yet she sang it, brokenly indeed, but with peculiar expression : the very hurry and agitation of her soul lent it strange energy and pathos. She had just ceased to sing, when a hot tear fell upon her neck, and then came another, and another, and another, fast as the big drops from the swollen and sultry cloud. The girl started, shrank, burned, cringed under them. Now they felt like tricklings of molten lead, parching her skin, and sending a wild glow through her frame ;—now, like the drippings of a thawed icicle, making her blood run chill, and her very bones to shiver. Yielding at last to her feelings, Mary sank back in her chair. But, raising her eyes, she saw reflected in a glass over the piano, the man she had before hesitated to recognise ;—his face now relaxed to all its boyish tenderness,—the haughty mouth now quivering in anguished recollection,—the flashing eyes clouded, and sadly bent upon the mirrored image of his early love. Their looks met in the glass. Tried beyond control, the girl could no longer restrain herself. She screamed wildly, and, rising precipitately, rushed, with clasped hands, to her Father.

Mr. Grace and Mr. Somers had risen in alarm, and were striving to ascertain the cause of such emotion, when a new sound from without arrested their attention, and diverted it from her. Mary's scream had scarce subsided, when a loud shout arose outside the house, accompanied by the discharge of a gun or pistol.

“Not Captain Doe, I hope !” cried Sullivan, instantly recovering his *nonchalante* manner. Mary, her Father, and Mr. Somers stood in mute dismay. Another shout, with exclamations of “John Doe !—John Doe !” broke forth, as though in answer to Sullivan's conjecture.

“By Heaven, it is, though !” Sullivan cried, rushing to a window. Ejaculations of apprehension and dismay broke from the others, and Mary, ghastly white, stood with her arms hanging by her sides, leaning mute and terrified against the wall.

At the same moment Nora bounced in. The noise without had

surprised her while enjoying her secret indulgence, and forgetful of her caution in her fear, she now dashed into the drawing-room with a short, black pipe spasmodically secured between her jaws, while, speaking through her teeth, she cried out :

“ Mistress ! Master ! We’re all undone ! Ruined for ever !—ruined for ever !” Here, running to Mr. Grace, she got behind him, gripped him fast round the waist, and continued : “ Mr. Grace, Mr. Grace, your house is destroyed ! It’s all over wid us !” And totally unconscious of the promulgation of her forbidden pastime, Nora mechanically emitted a short puff between every sentence, and, at the end, fell into a hysterical fit of laughing, crying, and screaming.

The uproar abroad increased every moment. To the shouts and exclamations now joined a loud knocking at the front door, mixed with fiercely imperious cries of “ Open ! Open !”

“ Merciful God ! What will become of us ?” Mary faltered, shivering from head to foot. Sullivan had left the window, and now, taking advantage of the general confusion, he sprang to the side of the terrified girl, and, taking in his one of her nerveless hands, whispered, in a tone altogether different from that in which he had hitherto spoken :

“ Mary ! don’t you know me ?”

“ I do ! I do !” she answered, trembling even more violently than before, and drooping her looks before his earnest gaze. “ I knew you almost from the first, Harry Kavanagh !”

“ Hush, dear Mary ! But fear not. I am here to protect you.” Then, approaching the bewildered host : “ You have arms, Mr. Grace ?”

“ Yes, yes !” the old man returned. “ But you know they are the first things we shall have to give up.”

“ Give up ? No, by Heaven, Sir ! Let us arm ourselves at once—you, and I, and the Parson there—and we may yet beat them off. Your arms, Sir—quick !” he added, in a tone of something so like command, that Mr. Grace, who was a weak man, instantly obeyed by leaving the room in search of them.

“ My weapons are my words, young gentleman,” Mr. Somers said, in a tone of gentle reproof. “ I am a soldier of peace.”

“ Mine are more to the purpose, Sir, on such an emergency as the present,” Sullivan—or, as we may now call him, Kavanagh—cried with a half sneer. “ Soldier, or no soldier, they get a shot or two from me, the rascals ! Ha ! Mr. Grace, that is something like,” as that gentleman returned with firearms. “ Mary, trust in

me, whatever happens," he added, in a whisper, while passing her.

"Stand near us, Mary, and be of good cheer," Mr. Grace said, as he stooped over the chair into which the girl had now sunk, and tenderly laid his hand upon her head.

"Och! yes, Master, we will!" Nora cried, again drawing near him.

"Speak to them first from the window," said Kavanagh.

Mr. Grace flung up the sash, and asked boldly: "What do you want here?"

"Open your door, and you shall know," two or three rough voices exclaimed together.

"Do you seek arms?" demanded Kavanagh.

"No! Who are you that asks that question?"

"We have no money in the house at present," parleyed Grace.

"Not a rap, good Christhens!" Nora screamed, at his back. "It's all in the bank—all in the bank!"

"We don't want your money," was the contemptuous return.

Here Kavanagh, who, for the last minute, had been anxiously peering out, as if to distinguish a particular object, now, to the surprise of the rest, suddenly dropt on one knee, and leaning his carbine on the edge of the framework, cried, in a suppressed, yet sharp whisper, to some one beneath:

"Mullins! Mullins!—move an inch aside!" Then to himself: "Ha! he moves though he does not hear me. Now! No! Confound that imbecile! He covers the scoundrel again!" And, regardless of the astonishment of his companions, he continued kneeling, still on the watch.

Shouts and knocking waxed louder and louder, and Mr. Somers, in his turn, advanced to the window.

"Misguided men," he said, "what brings you here? Retire, in the name of Religion and Honesty!"

"Sure we don't want either the money or the lives o' you," answered a voice.

"Though, since the Parson is there," added another, less coarse than the last, and evidently feigned, "we shall borrow him for an hour or so. He may be useful."

"Rascal! villain!" Kavanagh hissed between his teeth, still kneeling and watching.

"My God, Father, what can this mean?" Mary whispered, her

fears taking a more poignant turn as she listened to this last announcement.

"Och! we're lost!—lost! Our *vartue* isn't worth a pin!" Nora sobbed, concluding with a gasp, and dancing with her heels, in an acme of tribulation, as she gripped her Master afresh for protection.

"Open! open! 'tis betther for you, Mr. Grace. Open, or we'll break in!" threatened those below, amid still increasing clamour, and while they battered still more violently at the door. At this moment, Nora, to the surprise of all present, abruptly ceased her lamentations, rapidly quitted the room, and ran down stairs.

"Do you rely on the strength of the hall-door, Mr. Grace," Kavanagh asked, still kneeling.

"It ought to be able to withstand all the force they can bring against it," answered Grace. "But the back-door is, unfortunately, worse framed for long resistance."

At this point Nora was heard slowly ascending the stairs, with heavy groans, toilsome steps, and strange mutterings. She entered at length, carrying in her arms a tremendous stone, while the short pipe remained wedged in between her teeth. All looked at her in amazement as she continued her laborious way to a window immediately over the hall-door. This she opened, and with much caution deposited her burden on the window-sill outside. Then, squatting down, she watched, with a mixture of the cat and hare in her position and manner, proper time and opportunity for a valiant deed. She had not long to wait. The crowd of assailants all gathered to the hall-door, and commenced a serious attack upon it. Nora pushed her stone. With its deafening fall a loud groan was heard, and then the hurried noise of feet running in confusion from the door. Nora, uttering a hideous giggle, sprang up, and resumed her old post behind her Master.

As the crowd decreased, Kavanagh looked out with increased earnestness, and, an instant after, again levelled his piece, and with a sharp "Now!" discharged it. His head and neck were almost at the same time thrust out to mark the effect of his shot. But as quickly he started up with a vehement bitterness of action, and flung the carbine on the floor, with: "No!—curse that angle!—I've missed him! Fire, Mr. Grace. Or, give me the pistol! Yet, no. It is now useless. They flock to the back-yard."

"And over that," cried Mr. Grace, "we have no command from any window in the house."

To the rear of the house, indeed, the besiegers now directed all their efforts, and, enraged apparently by the joint outrages of Nora and Kavanagh, attacked it in good earnest. Amid a continued clatter of kicking, shoving, and knocking, as if with sticks or the butts of guns, one mighty blow was heard, probably the effect of a ponderous stone hurled at the door by the united strength of two or three men. Profound and painful silence reigned above, after this intimation of what was coming. A second blow—and the crash of the yielding door followed, mingled with a triumphant yell from the assailants.

"Heaven save us! They are in!" exclaimed Mr. Grace. Mary fell on her knees, and Nora flat upon her face.

"Let me try—let me reason with them first," Mr. Somers cried, as the victorious party were heard rushing up stairs.

"All is vain for the present," Kavanagh said, quietly. Then advancing to the terrified Mary, he whispered, tenderly, but with impressive earnestness: "Again, and spite of all, be not alarmed. Remain quiet, whatever may happen; trust to me, and fear nothing."

He had scarce done speaking, when at least a dozen men, wearing red waistcoats and having their faces blackened, broke into the room, headed by another, who also wore a red waistcoat, but whose features, instead of being smeared over like those of his party, were disguised by a black mask. Around his waist was tied a red sash, in token of authority. All were strongly armed and completely disguised, except the last man who entered, and who, having taken no precaution with his face and person, exhibited to all whom it might concern the identity and totality of Jack Mullins.

"John Doe! John Doe!" shouted the leader, as he appeared, and the shout was well echoed. "Speak for me, Mullins," he continued, aside, as this person followed.

"Lawless men!" Mr. Somers exclaimed, approaching them; "what seek you in this unoffending house, and in so ruffianly and savage a manner?"

"First, your arms!" Mullins said, clicking the lock of his blunderbuss, while the others made similar display of their weapons. At a whisper from Kavanagh, the household arms were given up.

"Mullins," resumed the leader, still aside; "Get the Parson

with us. Tack'em will not be sufficient, as the girl and I differ in religion. 'Twould not be a legal marriage, though the Priest might satisfy *her* scruples."

"Well, unfortunate people," good Mr. Somers persisted: "your demand is answered; why not depart in peace? You have said you did not want money. What else seek ye?"

"Why, then, next, by your Reverence's lave, no less than yourself," replied Mullins, laying his hand familiarly on the Clergyman's shoulder. "Here, Men, take the best care o' the Minister." And, spite of his expostulations, the good gentleman was immediately guarded by two men.

"Next, my handsome Misthress," Mullins went on, approaching the shrinking Mary. "Our Captain has a word to whisper wid you."

Nora started up indignant. "Wid me!" she cried; "wid me, you-ugly Christhen! Never lay a finger on me!" This to Purcell, who had crossed over to where she and her young Mistress were.

"Stand out of the way, an' he won't," Mullins said, with a grin.

"I guessed it!" Mary moaned, as Purcell caught her arm to raise her. "All through I guessed it. Father, Father, save me!" And, with a desperate spring, she reached and clung to her Father's arm.

"My child, my Mary, my only and good child!" the old man said, tremulously. "Men!—if ye are men—spare my innocent child, and you shall have all I am worth!" he added, imploringly, while tears ran down his cheeks.

"Dare not to touch the young girl, if you fear God or Man!" added Mr. Somers.

"No harm is intended her," said Mullins, unmoved by these appeals. "Only a pleasant ride in the Moonshine, wid all her friends about her. Come, Miss. We are waitin' for you." He seized her arm, and Mary shrieked and struggled in desperation.

Again Kavanagh was beside her; his low, earnest whisper at her ear. "Dearest Mary," he said, "do not exhaust yourself with useless resistance. Submit for the present. Have you no faith in me? I tell you, I swear to you on my life, on my soul, you shall not be harmed."

The leader noticed the whisper, though Mary's ear alone could distinguish its import. "Mullins, seize that man," he cried, pointing to Kavanagh.

"Musha, I believe it is the best, for a sartainty," the man



assented with matter-of-fact coolness, as he laid hold of Kavanagh. The leader now succeeded in separating from her father the young girl, whom the last-whispered assurance addressed to her seemed to have calmed ; but Mr. Grace broke into passionate cries of :

“ My God ! my child ! my daughter ! Is it thus we are parted ? ”

“ Not at all, Mr. Grace,” Mullins said ; “ sure you’re coming wid us yourself, Sir.”

“ Let us be off, then,” the leader cried, impatiently, as he grasped Mary roughly by the waist. “ Are the horses ready ? ” to Mullins.

“ Yes, all below. Lead on, Captain.”

“ Come, then ! ” the Captain commanded, as he left the room with his prisoner, who, more dead than alive, had little trouble in obeying Kavanagh’s injunction to submit, or seem to submit, passively.

“ The Ministher next ! ” Mullins said. Mr. Somers was led out.

“ Now the ould Attorney ! ” Mr. Grace followed, also guarded.

“ Go on ! ” The rest of the men obeyed his command, and with Kavanagh as his own prisoner, Mullins at last left the apartment.

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## CHAPTER XI.

ASSUMING our prescriptive privilege of scene-shifters at pleasure, we now return to Lieutenant Howard, and his friend, Father O’Clery.

They were faithfully guided by Flinn to Howard’s quarters, where that gentleman found his soldiers in some alarm at the long absence of their officer. A serjeant was in waiting, of whom Howard anxiously inquired concerning the probable escape of Doe. Nothing had been heard of the matter.

“ ’Tis very strange,” said Howard ; “ my information was particular, and such as I have no reason to doubt.”

“ To satisfy you, Sir,” answered the serjeant ; “ I can inform you, that, to the centre of the bog, I have myself seen a fire that must have been kindled by no others but Doe and his men. Precaution had been taken to screen it from us by lighting it between some clumps of turf ; but I gained a particular point from which it was visible.”

"Then hasten, serjeant—return again to the men, with orders to keep a more watchful eye than ever. For this night let them do good service:—you may mention, that it is likely to-morrow morning early will give them relief." The serjeant touched his cap, and left the cabin.

"I am resolved," continued Howard, turning to O'Clery, "to draw a complete line round the bog at the very first light, and one by one get those poor wretches out, so that their leader may not escape me. And now, Mr. O'Clery, let us do something to rest and refresh you. Our fire is pretty good—Be seated—and here is the pottheen. You," he added, addressing Flinn, who all this time had deferentially stood aloof, seemingly unconscious of what was going forward—"you, too, shall warm yourself, and take some refreshment. Come over."

The party were thus disposing themselves to be comfortable, when a woman, rushing by the sentinel at the door, pushed into the cabin, and, with loud screams, cast herself on her knees, then sat back on her heels, and, clapping her hands, cried :

"Your honour an' your worship! we're all undone! All ruined! Oh! Captain Howard, we're all ruined, murdered, and kilt dead as herrings! Ochone! Ochone!"

It was Nora; the pipe still between her teeth; her starched and, heretofore, unwrinkled and spotless cap, now soiled and torn; her lank hair escaped from underneath it; one shoe off, and her face a universal convulsion. Howard and Father O'Clery started up, and even Flinn seemed excited and interested.

"What do you mean, Nora?—Is any one ill? or—dead?—How is Miss Grace?" asked both gentlemen in a breath.

"Och!—little do I know!—Bud it's all over wid us! over wid us!"

"Foolish woman! Speak, can't you? What's the matter?"

"Captain John, a hinnies ma-chree! Captain John!"

"What of him? Where is he?"

"He came to take me off wid him! Oh!—o—oh! To take me off wid him!"—

"You rave, woman!—She's mad!" said Mr. O'Clery.

"Did you see him?" Howard cried.

"Saw him an' hard him!—He came to ruin me!—to ruin me!"

"But you have escaped—you are safe!" said Howard, impatiently.

"He has *not* taken you off.—He has *not* ruined you?"—echoed Mr. O'Clery, with an odd twinkle of his eye.

"That's nothin' at all!—nothin' at all!"—howled Nora.

"What then?—what has he done?"—

"Run off wid the Minister!—the Minister!"

"Is that all?"—Howard asked, much relieved.

"An' my poor ould Masther!"

"Why, you brainless creature!"—began Father O'Clery.

"And your lady, then?"—cried Howard, white with apprehension.

"An' my poor young Misthess!—my poor young Misthess!"—

"Death, idiot!—why not say that at once!" cried Howard. When?—How?—Whither?—Sentinel!"—he shouted, rushing to the door. The man entered.

"How long since, Nora?"—

"Avoch, I dunna!—I dunna!"—

"Wretched, stupid fool!" cried Howard, stamping his foot—"Sentinel, I say!—has White gone with my last orders? After him quickly—fire your piece as a signal—see him—let him countermand my orders—Which road, Nora?—and draw off all the men instantly—Doe is out—has been to Mr. Grace's—Let them meet me there—quickly.—Begone!—Stay!—Which road, Nora?"

"Which road, you wretched woman?"—questioned O'Clery, losing all patience.

"Avoch, I dunna!—I dunna!"—

"Be off then, sentinel! Mr. O'Clery, let us go to Grace's house, first—I know you will with me—come!"—

"They're afther lavin' me!" Nora wailed, still in her first position, and with uninterrupted clapping of hands. A shot startled her anew. "Och!" she screamed, "I'm kilt dead!—I'll be ruined again! worse an' worse!—worse an' worse!—Captain!—Soggarth!—Captain!"—and the dazed creature ran howling out of the cabin.

"Troth," said Flinn, thus left alone at the fire—"Maybe this turn 'ud sarve our poor gossips in the bog, widout waiting for the mornin'. It's a bad wind, à-vourneen, that blows nobody good. If a body could get to spake to them, faith it's likely enough bud they'd help Mary Grace betther nor the red-coats, themsefs. We'll try it, anyhow." And, after coolly helping himself to a bumper of pottheen, Flinn also left the cabin.

Meantime, the motley cavalcade continued on its route from Mr. Grace's house.

When Mary, led by the Captain, gained the end of the winding approach to her Father's residence, she saw, standing under the shade of some old alder-trees, a horse, bridled and saddled, with a pillion behind the saddle, such as is used by the humble class of Irish females. To this pillion her companion unceremoniously raised her. A moment after, he was in the saddle before her. Her father was obliged to mount one of his own horses; Mr. Somers another; Mullins and his prisoner got on the bare back of a fourth; and the rest of the party also rode double, and without saddles. When all were in travelling order, the leader ordered four men, thus mounted, to the front. After these, Mr. Grace and Mr. Somers were compelled to fall in. Four other men followed. Then Mary and her companion. Then the remainder of the party. And when Mullins, with his prisoner, Kavanagh, took the lead of all, on an understanding that he was to act as guide, the journey was commenced at a brisk trot.

Avoiding the wild bridle-road which, if pursued, would lead in the direction of Howard's quarters, Mullins guided the party up another narrow and rugged lane, that, at some distance, ran by the front of Mr. Grace's house, and continued beyond it, towards the bare solitudes of the country. Much inconvenience occurred from the deep ruts that, from time out of mind, had indented this way, it being a constant passage for the turf-cars that received their loads among the recesses of the hills around. Large stones also profusely strewed it, with, here and there, pools of water, or patches of miry slough. Neck or nothing, however, the party pushed on; horses tripping, and stumbling, and falling, and riders cursing, laughing, or crying out, as, with different tempers, they bore their mishaps. The rapid and uncomfortable motion first called Mary out of the torpor into which she had sunk; and one or two serious stumbles of the horse had the effect of causing her to use some precaution for holding her seat on the pillion. Spite of her loathing for the person whose prisoner she was, the poor girl, having narrowly escaped being flung to the ground, was forced, in self-preservation, to cling to him for support during the remainder of the rough journey on which she had been so rudely forced.

After about half a mile's progress, the way continued over an uninclosed space, by the verge of a descent to the left-hand side, which was less rough than the commencement of the journey.

Taking advantage of this favourable change, the party went on at a gallop. The wind, about the same time, rose high ; and in the rush through it, Mary almost lost her breath and senses, and was again in danger of falling. She rallied herself, however, and tried to collect her thoughts, and even to make observations on what was passing.

Looking before and behind her, she saw herself surrounded by the rude men who had forced her from her home. With much difficulty she was also able to keep her head sufficiently long in an averted position to discover the figures of her Father and Mr. Somers. She endeavoured to catch their voices, but the rushing of the wind nearly overmastered even the noise of the horse's feet ; and no other distinct sound reached her. Now and then, indeed, a hoarse laugh, or the burst of many voices, came in some pause or turn of the breeze ; or the distant watch-dog's bark or howl ; or the sudden dash or shriek, heard and lost in the same moment, of some concealed stream, that gave to hill and fell its wild and sleepless plaint. She strove to examine the scenery through which she passed, for the purpose of noting, by old and well-known landmarks, her probable destination. But this effort was also vain. Mary could only apprehend that hill gathered unto hill, and valley running into valley, lay tossed around and beneath her. The black masses varied in shape each time she looked. Even while she looked, line chased away line ; the moonlight faded into shadow, and the shadow became light ; heavy clouds, that for some time had been mustering in the lower part of the sky, mixed and blended with the curving of the mountains ; and all comprehension of form and locality was lost. The very stars, breaking through thin vapour, seemed to run disarranged through their deep blue field of space, and, she thought, glanced in bright terror on her reckless speed.

Another half mile might have been past, when the party emerged on a by-road, that, for the whole distance they had come, ran parallel to that which led to Howard's quarters. The reins were now tightened, and along this road they went with somewhat slackened speed. Some distance on, there was a halt before a wooden barred gate, opening into the back part of the demesne of the principal proprietor of the district. Mullins dismounted to open the gate, and holding it till all had passed, resumed his uncomfortable seat on the bare-backed horse, and followed at a hard trot through a neglected plantation of old trees, and over a narrow path, that was barely visible to any but an habituated eye.

Here the mishaps and distresses of the party were renewed to excess. All over the path, and around in every direction, the roots of the trees, protruding through the spare soil, spread and coiled like serpents; and, rendered slippery by the state of the weather, opposed obstacles, at every step, to the safe progress of the party. Many horses, straying from the path, tripped, fell, and rolled about with their riders. The animal on which Mary sat, though evidently of gentle blood, twice came to his knees. In other respects, also, the way proved difficult and hazardous, from the constant occurrence of branches of trees that shot directly across at the level of the men's breasts or faces. More than once these unseen impediments, giving sudden resistance to a rider, tumbled him to the ground; and Mary's guide suffered severely from the same cause. The cries and imprecations of the scrambling party added to the wild character of this unusual scene, which was further heightened by the uncertain quivering of the moonbeams through the leafless branches overhead, by the whistling of the night-wind through them, and by their own clatter and groaning, as the grove tossed her arms to the breeze.

At last, this unsafe path was cleared, and through another gate, like the first, badly secured, a second by-road was gained. This kept straight only for a little way, and then suddenly turned to the left, round the hill. Mullins stopped at the beginning of the turn, and, waiting till the leader came up, informed him, that, to their destination, the way by the road was a great round, while, if he chose to walk straight over the hill, he could gain it in about five minutes. The horses, Mullins added, might be sent round under the care of two men. The person to whom Mullins addressed himself yielded, after some consideration, to this arrangement. The whole party dismounted, and, through a gap in the fence of the road, began to ascend the hill, observing the same order in which they had ridden. Mary, still by the side of the Captain, and, with the exception of those sent with the horses, the men still divided as at first.

Owing to her feebleness and terror, Mary made but slow progress: her companion remained, however, close at her side. Mullins, taking advantage of this circumstance, used vigorous efforts to outstrip, with his prisoner, the rest of the party. They walked in a very rapid pace against the hill, gained its brow before any of the others, and then ran down its descent, and jumped on a narrow and rough road at the bottom.

“Do you think them two gorcoons will ever find us by the road

they took, wid the horses?" asked Mullins, jocosely, as they gained a covered side of the way.

"Hardly," Kavanagh answered. "This is the place, is it not?"

"Thry," replied Mullins. "Just give the least bit of a whistle in the world."

Kavanagh did so, and was immediately answered from a little distance.

"All right!" he cried, in tone of triumph, "all's as it should be. But see! who is this coming up to us on horseback? Stand close."

The horseman was passing them at lightning career, when Kavanagh exclaimed: "Flinn, or the Devil, by Saint Denis! Stop—you rider of the wind," he continued, waving his arm. "Come under the shelve of the hill, here, and in six words tell us what you are about."

"Howard is after you, wid his men, Jack," said Flinn to Mullins, in a rapid whisper, and while he quickly obeyed the directions of Kavanagh. "Bud, the cat gone, the mice may play; an' so, I axed them he left behind to help you. An' they will, please God. Keep him in sight, and if he finds you out—"

"Away!" interrupted Kavanagh, "I hear the others coming down after us—Enough—Go—meet them—Steal quietly by this hedge for awhile, and then spur! Move, I say!" Flinn disappeared in a moment.

"His poor Reverence, Father Tack'em, that thinks we are so in earnest to-night, ought to be somewhere here too," resumed Mullins, when he and his prisoner were again alone. "Faith," he continued, having peered about him, "I think I see something like himself an' his auld gray mare, standin' in the shelter o' the corner, beyant."

Mary and her leader had now won the rugged road on which Mullins and Kavanagh stood, and here she distinctly recognised her situation, though she concluded that they had led her to it by an unusual way, or that her speed and agitation had prevented her continuous notice of the route. At the hill-side of the bridle-road there ran a fence; but, at the other, the ground was open, stretching, in the moonlight, flat and cheerless, to some distance. Hither she had often walked with Howard; and, in the sequestered space to the right hand, Mary distinguished five or six gigantic trunks of trees, that had repeatedly attracted the notice of herself and her lover. Perhaps they were the last relic of a

plantation attached, a century, if not centuries ago, to some ancient edifice near the spot, but, of which, all traces were at present lost. To whatever accident they owed their existence in this place, the trunks were very aged; they should, indeed, be more properly called shells, for they stood completely hollow, though, from the top of each, a few branches still shot, in summer sprinkled with scanty foliage. Mary and Howard had sometimes sauntered into them, by low openings that bore some resemblance to Gothic doorways, of rude and fantastic shape. Struck by the unexpected spaciousness of their interior, they had on one of these occasions amused themselves by calculating that a body of at least twelve men could find shelter in each, while to half the number these primitive receptacles might afford ample accommodation for sitting, standing, or other movements.

Mary was interrupted in her remarks on the place, by the voice of her guide calling "Mullins!"—when they had descended to the road.

"I am here," said Mullins, advancing. "You were very long comin'."

"This way—a word,"—continued the other, beckoning:

"How much farther is the retreat you have chosen?" he added, aside.

"About half a mile."

"So far still? Then, Fellow, you have misinformed me."

"Thonomon duoul! No!—to the best o' my knowledge. Sure we'll see it very soon."

"Why not keep our horses, and push on with all speed?"

"Curp-on-duoul!—don't be thick-skulled. Why, I told you that the short cut over this hill is a good mile off o' the road."

"You are sure you have got accommodation for the night in the old building?"

"Yes—fire an' candle, an' good fern beds, an' the atin' an' drinkin', an' plenty of everything."

"Where is Tack'em to meet us?"

"Can't you see him yet? He's snug under the fence, farther ap."

"Shall we meet our horses soon?"

"Aye—in a minute."

"Proceed, then." Once more he drew Mary's arm through his, and was slowly following Mullins, when the old man whom Kavanagh had spoken to in the cabin, issued from one of the hollow trees, and, confronting the Captain, drew himself up to



the full of his unusual height, and, with a shivering and shrill voice, exclaimed: "Let go the colleen's hand!" All paused.

"Death! Mullins," whispered the Captain, "It is that old madman, Kavanagh, and his cursed brawling may spoil all."

"Aye, faith," observed Mullins, drily enough.

"Stand away, Idiot!"—resumed the leader, passing, or endeavouring to pass.

"Stand you, where you are, and let her go, I say!" resumed the old man, in a yet shriller tone, to which, through the pausings of the wind, the hills rang—"Let go the hand of Mary Grace!—Free her of a touch she should never feel!—Perjurer and Informer, let her go!—Tyrant of the Poor, Spoiler of the Wake and Old, and of the humble fire-side—Purcell!—Stephen Purcell!—let go her hand!"—

Mary uttered a thrilling scream at these words. Her father and Mr. Somers, with exclamations of surprise, also drew near with their guards, who made no effort to keep them from doing so.

"He is stark mad, and raves wildly," said the Captain—"Stand back, old man:—Mullins, remove him."

"He would not lay a hand on me, to harm me," resumed the old man, "though it was to save *you*, body and soul, from what is prepared for you! Purcell! Purcell! Let the colleen go to her father!"

"Fool!—you call me by a name I know nothing of"—answered the leader, still trying to move on.

"Och! Another lie, black as the thousands you have lived and thriven on!—as the thousands that brought shame, and wreck, and madness, on us all!—that lifted the roof from the poor man's cabin, and made his hearth cold as a grave-stone;—that took my daughter from me—and my daughter's daughter,—and left my white head houseless, to-night, to meet you by this wild hill, and bid you prepare for a reckoning——Purcell! 'tis nigh at hand! 'tis nigh at hand!" he continued, in a pitch of enthusiasm, as, by a sudden and unexpected movement, he plucked the mask from Purcell's face, and added—"Do you know him yet?—Do you know him for the Liar he is, yet?"

Mary, now fully convinced, struggled hard to escape from Purcell's hold: while Mr. Somers, taking her disengaged hand, cried out—"Ruffian!—dare you attempt such an outrage?—Yield me the young lady's hand this moment!—yield it!"

There was an increased struggle, but Purcell at last loosed his

hold. Mary just felt herself clasped in her father's arms, when she fainted.

"I yield up her hand, Mr. Somers," said Purcell, after a short pause, "that you may bestow it as I command you. Ye know me, now; 'tis but a little sooner than I purposed, and I care not. Hear me, Mr. Somers—Mr. Grace, hear me—I love Mary, and she shall be mine!"—

"Never!"—exclaimed Grace.

"Never is a big word," resumed Purcell, with insolence and boldness.—"Remember that Mary Grace is in my power, and might, according to any form, or without any, be mine."

"Never according to any form,—though here you shed our blood. We will resist while we have a drop to spill!"—answered Grace.

"And I swear by my sacred character," added Mr. Somers, advancing to Mary, and taking her passive hand, "the arm that tears this pure young hand from mine shall first be raised against my life!"—

"Hear me, I say, Fools!—No blood shall be spilt—no force but what is necessary, used,—no advantage taken but what is lawful and honorable—The young lady shall be my Wife!—Mr. Somers, do your office!—Mr. Grace, stand by your child!—Resistance is vain—I have taken my measures too well—You are here in a solitude where no help can reach you—Look around upon my men—they are armed, and numerous—Do not cross, and, perhaps, provoke me!"

"These men will not assist you in a sacrilege—they dare not!"—exclaimed Mr. Somers.

"They will see me through my present purpose, Sir—They are my own tenants—I have sworn to them not to touch life or limb, and they have sworn to do anything else I command—have ye not?"—continued Purcell, turning to them.

"We have! we have!"—shouted his followers.

"But do you not recollect that all this must be useless to you," rejoined Mr. Somers:—"even supposing that by threatening our lives you can force us into your measure—that you can force me to go through a nominal ceremony—it would still be only nominal."

"Pardon me, Mr. Somers," said Purcell. "I think I am aware of what I do. Your marriage of a Protestant and Roman Catholic is as legal and binding as it could be between two of your own persuasion."

"It is, Sir, with a certain proviso," said Mr. Somers, "that is, after publication of banns, or under license, my ministry is legal in both cases; but, without one preparative or the other, the contrary in both."

"By Heaven, and I forgot that!"—exclaimed Purcell, almost immediately adding, however:

"But come, all is safe yet—Father Tack'em!"

"Happy death to me, here I am, honey," said the degraded man, emerging on his blind grey mare, as the unusually loud summons of Purcell reached him, above all the late conversation.

"And a long ride, and a cold station I have had of it," he continued. "Why I'm a cripple, sitting there so long."

"Are you ready, good Father," sneered Purcell, "to join in holy wedlock myself and this young lady."

"God forgive me, that's all my vocation now. Yes, I am ready to tack ye together."

"You surely cannot think, Sir," said Mr. Somers, addressing Tack'em, whose person and character he knew, "of proceeding in such a ceremony without due permission and allowance?"

"Why, happy death to me, I came here for that especial purpose. As I said before, 'tis the only sacerdotal function remaining to me—*mea culpa, mea culpa*. I wouldn't, bad as I am, attempt to officiate in any other way than as a miserable couple-beggar. No, I would not. Happy death to me, I would not—no—no! And, indeed, happy death to me, it is glad I am that the name I bore at my ordination is known to few, if to any. I'm Father Tack'em, nothing else, and this name, now my only name, denotes my ministry."

"But, Sir," interrupted Mr. Grace, "from all I have heard, you do not attempt to officiate except with the consent of the parties you join in wedlock?"

"Why, honey, it is seldom the consent of parents is sought, where I discharge my mission. Happy death to me, I'm never called on except where there is a runaway affair like this. There is seldom a wedding-supper, and no such condiment as a wedding-cake, when the tipsy Father Tack'em, as I'm called, celebrates the marriage ceremony by the light of the stars."

"Proceed, Father Tack'em!" Purcell exclaimed, assisting the dignitary to dismount.

"Wait a bit, Mr. Purcell, honey."

He waddled close to Mr. Grace.

"I hope you understand me, Mr. Grace. I never seek the

consent of father or mother, sister or brother, and for the best of reasons: because it is ever and always in utter defiance of all such sanction that I give the marriage benediction. It suffices for me, as in the present case, that the two people I bind together know each other's minds—"

"But if one of them refuses consent?" Mary eagerly interrupted, who, recovering her senses, had heard the latter part of the debate. "Will you, Sir, proceed not only against the will, but to the abhorrence, and certain misery, here and hereafter, of the poor creature before you, and who now joins her supplications to those of her father, praying you, if you believe in God or have a human heart, not to make us both irrecoverably miserable!"

"Eh, honey?" whined Tack'em, the tears running down his own cheeks.

"I'll quadruple your fee," whispered Purcell.

"No!—nor if you squared it, or if you cubed it, twice over!" squeaked Tack'em, suddenly turning on Purcell with all the fierceness his poor face, voice, and manner were able to express. "Happy death to me, I'll wash my hands of it."

"First, then, give me up the bank-note I feed you with," cried Purcell, advancing angrily.

"What bank-note, à-vich?"—demurred Tack'em, taking his place in the opposition ranks: that is, between Grace, Mr. Somers, and the old man, who had stood a stern spectator of this scene. "Wait a bit, 'till I bring you to reason. You see, Mr. Purcell, I was to be paid for each distinct part of my agency in this matter, for the extraordinary trouble as well as for the marriage itself; well, the last understanding between us, for the whole, was four times the amount of that shabby bit of paper you talk of. Now, let us say that three parts of the gross sum were to come down for the wedding-money. Sure the fourth part, at least, would be little enough for the long ride, and the sitting there beyond, on my old grey mare, for a long hour, like a pelican in the wilderness, or a solitary sparrow on the house-top. What more am I asking from you? Happy death to me, 'tis a case of conscience, and as clear as day. I'll leave it to your own honest minister, Mr. Somers, here, and let him decide between us."

"Give him back the note, Father Tack'em, and I will make it up to you," said Mr. Grace.

"Will you?" asked Purcell, assuming, after another short pause, all the ruffian of his character. "And so you, and he,

and all of you, think I am baffled, or to be baffled, amongst you? You shall see. I cautioned you not to cross and provoke me too far, and I promised forbearance only under the belief that you would not—that you dared not. Now, let us see what else I can do. Men!" he continued, addressing his followers, "you are witnesses of the trifling and imposition practised on me, particularly by this outcast Priest, who is a shame to your religion, and, in this instance, would doubly disgrace it. If you are faithful to me, or sensible of my past kindness and services, and alive to those that are to come, you will see me righted—you will!—I am assured of it. Bind the excommunicated wretch to his saddle, and lead him after us to a still more silent and distant place." The men advanced to obey.

"Desperate and unprincipled madmen!" exclaimed Mr. Somers, stepping before poor Tack'em, who sent up a most pathetic lament, "What are you about to do?—on your own Priest!—I am not one of your persuasion, but I vow to God it makes my blood run cold! What!—lay your hands on him!—on the head that other hands have visited, in another spirit, and for another purpose! He is a degraded Minister, your leader says—what have you, or I—and, least of all, what has *he* to do with that? How can—how dare any of you judge it? His Church still allows him the name of Priest, and will you commit a ruffianly outrage on that name? Could you even stand by to see it done?"

The men hesitated; Purcell stamped and raved; and poor Tack'em, now crying like a child, took off his broadbrim, and extending his hand to Mr. Somers, said, piping all the time: "I give your Reverence thanks. I am, as you say, a degraded Priest, and a scandal to my cloth; but I give thanks, little worth, for your defence of an erring brother; and, as your best reward, I promise, happy death to me, from this moment to watch and pray, and strive and wrestle, that at last I may grow more worthy of the fellowship I have abandoned."

He was interrupted by Purcell, who, after holding out, in whispers, abundant reward to his party, and having succeeded in rallying their bad determination, came on, with loud threats, to Tack'em, and cries of encouragement to them.

"Seize and bind him, I say! Mary Grace, we once more proceed together."

"Touch her not!" exclaimed the old man, again unexpectedly raising his shrill voice. "And you—blind slaves of an accursed

master!—touch not the white hairs of the father, nor the holy head of God's Priest! Too long I have stood here, waitin' to see and to hear somethin' that her tears, and their words, and tears too, might work on him, but did not. Now, there is only time to ask, will ye, afther all has been said, assist Stephen Purcell in his bad scheme?"

"They will assist me!" shouted Purcell, and was echoed by his party.

"More, then. Are you ready to stand the struggle, and do your best, if he is prevented?"

"Prevented! mad and dotin' wretch! can *you* prevent it?" cried Purcell.

"I say, are ye ready?" resumed the old man.

"We are ready for anything that comes!" they answered.

"Then, Stephen Purcell," continued the aged speaker, "I do not say *I* can prevent you. But—(try to get aside, Mary Grace, with your father, an' the Priest, an' the Minister, too—Run for the elm-trees, an' stay behind them)—but, Purcell," the old man went on, turning to him after he had spoken the last words, in a hasty whisper, to those by his side, "maybe there's one near you that can and will. Stand out, Grandson! Harry Kavanagh, stand out!"

"Kavanagh! Kavanagh!" shouted the person who was addressed, springing forward with Mullins from the midst of Purcell's people. "Kavanagh! Kavanagh!" echoed Mullins. Kavanagh blew a horn, that hung under his frock, and, at the sound, an overpowering force, wearing loose blue great-coats, and strongly armed, rushed from the hollow trees. At the first intimation from the old man, Mr. Somers and Mr. Grace, apprehending the result, had contrived, with Mary and Tack'em, to edge away from the immediate ground of contest. So that when Kavanagh sounded his signal, they were within a short run of the trees, and gained them, just as, to their utter surprise, the ambushed allies issued forth from them.

## CHAPTER XII.

"On, and flash away!—Kavanagh!" continued the summoner, as the men advanced; he taking, with Mullins, a place at their head. All repeated his word and cry, and set, with wild shouts, upon Purcell's party.

Purcell, at the first signal of attack, had also headed his men, and now made desperate resistance. He rapidly formed them into a close body, with their backs to the hedge that fenced the hill, and thus awaited the assailants.

On they came, armed with pistols, fowling-pieces, muskets, and bayonets screwed on the ends of poles. Before the two parties closed, a volley was exchanged betwixt them, from the effects of which two of Kavanagh's people fell, one dead, the other wounded; while only one man went down on Purcell's side. Amid the smoke and confusion that reigned for a moment after, Purcell judiciously got his men across the fence, over which they knelt, and, reloading their arms, prepared, in this strong position, to continue battle.

"Steal round, with six of the boys, by the slope of the hill, and attack them behind, Mullins," said Kavanagh, when he had observed this movement—"and, of all things, keep your eye on Purcell—Meantime we will have another blaze at them, here." Mullins readily obeyed; and, after a short pause, the other volley was given and returned, Kavanagh still the sufferer, by the loss of two men more, and Purcell, this time, untouched.

"Do that again, my boys!" shouted Purcell, "and the next shot we are safe, and the outlaw our own into the bargain!"

"Are you sure of it?"—bellowed Mullins, now within a few yards of Purcell's back, as he and his detachment hurled themselves down the hill on the rear of the whole party.

"Now, every man up the fence!"—cheered Kavanagh, pushing, with the rest of his battalion, into Purcell's front.

An appalling struggle followed. Three of Purcell's faction lay in the trench at the back of the fence; the rest fled over the hill, hotly pursued. Kavanagh singled out Purcell. Both were too close to use their pistols, and could only twist and strain for a fall. At last Kavanagh slipt, and his antagonist, discharging at

him a random shot, jumped over the hedge upon the road. Kavanagh, unharmed, was on his legs in an instant; and, in the next, and when Purcell had scarcely touched the ground outside, he made a desperate spring after, and over him, and landed on the road some yards beyond his foe, so that Purcell stood between him and the fence, and could not, therefore, readily escape.

Both glared on each other a moment, panting, foaming, and equally excited by effort and aversion. At last Kavanagh exclaimed:

“Do you doubt the word you heard, that you look on me so hard?—Villain—accursed villain!—it is Kavanagh!” He covered him with a pistol.

“I see you, and know you well, now,” answered Purcell; “but it is so long since we met, no wonder I like to look at you, Kavanagh:” and he moved a little, in order to recover an upright position, which, since his leap, he had not yet assumed, having been surprised by his pursuer in an effort to rise, so that with his body and neck half stooped and wrung round, Purcell, to this moment, returned the gaze and challenge of Kavanagh.

“Stand to me, and yield!”—exclaimed Kavanagh, when he saw him move—“Love, alone, could pay you with a poor shot and a moment’s pain—I owe you more than that—yield, abhorred wretch! yield!”—advancing as he spoke.

“Thus, then!”—cried Purcell, suddenly discharging into Kavanagh’s face a small pistol he had hitherto kept concealed. Kavanagh reeled, and fell; mechanically, but impotently, pressing his own trigger as he went down. Purcell was gone.

At this moment the old man, returning with Mullins from the pursuit, saw his Grandson stretched, alone, on the ground. With a wild cry he ran, knelt, and raised him in his arms. Blood profusely flowed down Kavanagh’s face from a wound in the temple. The old man commenced a heart-rending lament, of which the shrill tones soon had the effect of restoring his Grandson to perception.

“Who is this?—where is Purcell?”—he said, disengaging himself and standing up. The ball had only grazed his temple, and Kavanagh was no more than stunned, though, from injury done to a branch of the artery, the flow of blood was considerable.

“Curse on the false weapon or false hand that never before failed me!”—he continued—“Come, Mullins—Come, Grandfather—Mullins, a pistol—let us take different directions—spread



out the men—Come!" and the whole party left the scene of contest.

Meanwhile, Mr. and Miss Grace, Mr. Somers, and Tack'em, had, previous to the discharge of a shot, gained the backs of the hollow trees. Of all the group, Tack'em displayed, from the first moment of danger, the greatest degree of cowardice. He fell on his knees, and, alternately, in good Latin and bad English, prayed for deliverance. He groaned, he chattered, and sent forth very agonized ejaculations, as the firing and shouting increased. At last a better thought occurred. He looked round, embracing, however, a circuit of observation sufficiently prudential, and his companions could hear him mutter—"Naubocklish!—Naubocklish!—where is the unlucky baste?—Where can she be?—Naubocklish!"—and they understood that he repeated the name of his grey mare; which name, translated for the Britannic reader, signifies, "Never mind it." An appellation, by the way, frequently bestowed by Irish sportsmen on their favorite animals of the same species. We recollect a racing-mare of much worth, so called, on the "Curragh of Kildare;" the Newmarket of the sister island.

But for some time, Naubocklish did not appear. It seemed, however, that Tack'em became aware of her proximity, for after a pause he was heard to add—"That's she—that's she—Comé à-chorra, come à-vourneen," accompanying these coaxing words, with his best coaxing tone. Presently his party also became aware of the approach of a horse, indicated by a succession of hysteric snorings, that, if the language of quadrupeds may ever be rendered, loudly proclaimed the excessive astonishment and mortal fear of the said Naubocklish. At length she made her appearance at the side of the hollow trees, occasionally cocking or lowering her ears, standing quiet, or rearing on her hind legs and prancing upward and forward, and to this side and that, her feelings still expressed as has been intimated, and her white, sightless orbs, rolling fearfully in their sockets.

"I'll promise her oats," continued Tack'em, still muttering to himself. He took off his ample hat, and, stretching his neck as far as he dared towards the animal, shuffled his hand in the crown of the beaver, his supplicating and beguiling tones and words rapidly continued. The finesse succeeded. Wheedled out of her fears, the gaunt animal approached, with outstretched nose and neck, in the direction where Tack'em stood; when she was within arm's length, her master dexterously succeeded in catching

her by the forelock ; after two or three unhappy failures he next deposited himself on her back, and then, spurring with all his might, Tack'em and Naubocklish soon disappeared over a path diverting from the bloody plain. As they receded, her snorts and his groans were audible through the whole roar of battle ; and, ere they had become entirely lost in distance, Tack'em could be seen lying down on her neck, his arms clasped round it, while, Gilpin-like, his bald head remained uncovered ; a distinct object even at a great distance, as the moon brilliantly illuminated its polished surface.

After he had departed, Mr. Grace and his daughter, with their worthy friend, Mr. Somers, continued in anxious, and by no means unapprehensive, silence to await the result of the struggle on the plain. The shots and yells became less and less, as Mullins pursued the defeated party over the hill : and there was an aching pause left after Purcell and Kavanagh had terminated their personal encounter. When the cries of the old man arose, Mr. Somers ventured to look out towards the ground of action, and so became a witness of the ensuing scene. And when, in obedience to Kavanagh's commands, all separated in pursuit of Purcell, he communicated the state of affairs to Mr. Grace and Mary.

"Our foes have been routed, and are fled," said Mr. Somers. "Thanks for this great, though terrible preservation !"

"Oh ! Mr. Somers !" said Grace, "I fear we have only escaped one bad fate for another—My poor Mary, my child !"—and in an agony of apprehension he strained his daughter to his breast.

Mr. Somers demanded what he meant.

"You recollect the unfortunate young man, Kavanagh, about whom we this very evening conversed ?—Well, our preserver is the same person—and—" Grace hesitated, while Mary added, though barely above a whisper :

"My Father fears, Mr. Somers, because—because—this unfortunate young man, Harry Kavanagh, was once attached to me. And," she added, after a pause, "and I should, in truth, add—and I to him."

Mr. Somers received this avowal with evident surprise. He hesitated what to say, and Mary, half ashamed of having said so much, added falteringly :

"But, Mr. Somers, we were only children. The attachment was—was a childish one—"

"How can we know in what light he looks upon it?" Mr. Grace asked, in a tone of vexation.

"You fear, then, that if his affection for Mary be not forgotten, he will take advantage of the obligation you owe him to renew his attentions?"

"What else can we expect from a desperate man like him? an outlaw, and, evidently, with force at his command?"

"Do not speak so harshly, dear Father," pleaded Mary; "I am sure we need not fear anything base or ungenerous from Harry Kavanagh. He had once a gentle, if not a tender heart:"—she checked herself, and an accusing blush spread over her pale cheeks.

"Why cannot we take advantage of his absence, and now, while the way is clear, fly from him?" suggested Mr. Somers.

"If you think we may venture it, come, then—come, Mary, and Heaven guide us!"

"Stay a moment, dear Father, and let us rather consider," Mary said, earnestly, and spite of the painful nature of her position, rallying her clear, natural judgment. "Whatever may be Kavanagh's views towards us—whether he means to protect us to our home—or—or—in fact, to make *me* the subject of a fresh claim in his own person—still, we may be assured, he will expect to find us here, and will return to seek us. If we appear to avoid him, after receiving an obligation at his hands, how can we venture to arouse his displeasure? He has many active and desperate men at his side: were he to pursue us, we could not possibly evade him. This very moment even, I fear it would be impossible to proceed far without meeting him or some of his party. Therefore, it appears to me, that however Kavanagh may be inclined to act, there would be no use, and might be danger in doing as you say. And—oh, Father!—would it not be at once ungrateful and ungenerous to attribute thus to our Deliverer views ignoble and—yes, I dare add—unlike him?"

The poor girl had spoken warmly, but, as she finished, her face fell in her hands, and thick sobs broke from her.

Mr. Somers drew his friend aside. "Permit me to ask you—and excuse the abruptness of the question—How far did Miss Grace, at the time she has spoken of, return the affection of this young man?"

"You probe me on a subject," answered Grace, "that this instant occupied, while it distracted my mind. I must candidly

tell you, Mr. Somers—but Mary was then a child—a mere child—and he was quite a boy also—Yet I must admit, that, from my anxious observations of Mary, I thought she was foolishly partial to the lad.”

“Then, excuse another question—Do you think that in her present advocacy of Kavanagh, there is any recollection of the past, and—any wish to renew it?”

“God have pity on me, if there be!” said Grace, vehemently.

“But what do you think, my good friend?”

“I cannot believe it, yet I fear it,” he replied, with increased distress and apprehension.

“Then let us, at any risk, try to escape homeward,” urged Mr. Somers.—“Your Father and I, Miss Grace,” again turning to where the weeping girl stood, “have considered the matter we were speaking about, and it seems best, after all, to remove immediately out of the presence of a desperate man—a man”—he added, with some severity—“of blasted character and ruined prospects.” But all further movement was impeded by the appearance, at the instant they were about to turn towards the hill, of Kavanagh at one side, and Mullins at the other. During his absence, Kavanagh had contrived to wash the blood from his face, and his cool, easy manner was again adopted.

“Stay, Mr. Grace!” he cried, as soon as he saw the party—“Stop, Sir, till I am ready to attend you.” Then, turning to Mullins—“Have you seen him?”

“No—nor nobody else—this time he’s safe,” answered Mullins—“The only thing we found war the horses strayin’ by the wrong road, an’ the two grooms looked so quare when we axed ’em!—ho! ho!”

“He’s safe but for a day,” resumed Kavanagh—“For that matter, I might at once order you and these fellows on a pursuit he could hardly even now escape. But here we have work yet to do.”

“You have saved us, Sir, from outrage and shame,” said Grace, addressing Kavanagh, as he rejoined the party. “We owe to you the preservation of our honour—of our lives—and we deeply thank you.”

“Do you remember me, Mr. Grace?” demanded Kavanagh, abruptly turning his full front to the speaker.

“After the services you have just conferred on me, Sir, I should be forgetful, indeed, if I did not easily recognise you,” replied Grace, unwilling to admit any acquaintance of more ancient date.

Kavanagh's lips curled with a bitter smile.

"Let me inform you, Mr. Grace," he said, proudly, "that our old friendship might be renewed without odium to your name, station, or fortune. I, too, have grown wealthy since we last met. Not by such means as you suppose, either. I believe," he continued with composure, and as if following a mental calculation while he spoke—"I believe I could, this moment, purchase you, out and out, and then throw all you are worth into the bottom of the sea, and still be a man of weight.

"It is very probable, Sir," said Grace, timidly.

"As to the slander I have suffered from foul tongues," Kavanagh ran on, with vivacity, "a tithe of my possessions—possessions honorably won, too, in other lands—were enough to ensure eternal silence on that head. *You* know in your heart, Sir, I have never been really guilty of a moral crime or a dishonorable action even here in my own country. What say you, Mr. Grace, shall we be old friends on the old understanding?"

"It would afford me sincere pleasure, Mr. Kavanagh, to meet you on terms of perfect equality."

"You evade me, Sir," the young man cried, with passion, his eye kindling, and his voice rising—"I can fully conceive your meaning. First, you doubt my declarations of ability to establish that character; and then, even supposing all the power on my side, you would prudently step back and watch me setting to work in the endeavour to do so, refusing your countenance, till you had ascertained my success or failure. Oh! brave—I thank you, Sir, for your condescension. And so it is, the world round. So are the unfortunate, the wronged, and the oppressed, always sure to be treated. Show me the man of what you call most benevolence and charity amongst you, and I will show you the over-cautious hypocrite, who can wink, or shrug, or whisper, or cast up his eyes, over the lying story that deprives an innocent fellow-creature of rank and estimation; who will never be the first to meet him half way in his solitary struggle towards reinstatement in the world's opinion—if so contemptible a thing were worth the struggle. But, mark you, who will ever be the first—oh! yes, the very first—to hail him with the holiday smile, when he has fought, and won his own battle, and sprung, without a hand, or voice, or wish to assist him, back again to the firm ground he would never have lost, if villainy and perjury were not too strong for single, unbenefriended innocence!"

Kavanagh strode about in chafing silence: Grace remaining

prudently without speaking. Then, coming to a sudden stand, he continued :

“And, so help me God, here am I the most belied and trampled of innocent men. I have not a friend in my native land under the blessed canopy of Heaven, wide and beautiful as it spreads above and around us, who would this night lend me a moment’s counsel, kindness, or confidence, to save me from the worst fate, here and hereafter. Not one!—to save me from *my own* counsel—and in my state of lonely recollections and temptations—the dark things it urges me to, every hour I trust it! Not one to give me the composing shelter of a Christian roof, or to fling me a Christian pillow, that my aching brows might take Christian rest, and waken out of it, with Christian temper, passions, and consolations! Not one!” The young man resumed his quick walking, every step almost a stamp, while his clenched hand was often raised to his forehead. Again, while he continued in motion :

“This, then, is no country to me!” he broke out; “I owe it nothing—nothing but my birth, and for that I curse it, and pray that, in utter woe, it may be confounded! It gave me nothing—nothing but a name—which, in cruelty and wrong, it wrenched from me again—why should I love it? What are its blue hills and its pleasant fields to me—though, in distant banishment, I have thought of them, till, as the foolish tear filled my eye, their shadowy forms wavered through the sultry horizon, and the fresh noise of their streams, and all their old sounds, came on my ear, and were heard in my soul, and at last I wept and sobbed to see them again. Yet, why should I love it? Least of all, why should I fear it? And, since it will not cherish or assist me, why should I hesitate to do, in the teeth of its arbitrary prohibition, whatever may, for a moment, assert, satisfy, and revenge me?”

Mary Grace, who had listened with intense interest to all he said, now could not refrain from breathing one word of appeal, remonstrance, and comfort; one word; but its tone and spirit contained a volume of persuasion.

“Oh, Harry!” she softly cried. He stopped, turned, looked tremblingly upon her; walked slowly to some distance; again stopped; and, after some thought, muttered something to himself in a tone so low as to be inaudible to the others.

“Young man,” at this moment said Mr. Somers, “all the gratitude, all the services, we can command, are yours; and we doubt not but your final disposal of us will still be honorable and just.”

Kavanagh returned no answer. To himself he went on, unconscious of having been addressed :

" I know that once she loved me too ;—Mullins !"

" Here," answered the summoned party, walking to his side.

" Did you not say—answer me below your breath—did you not say that to-morrow night Roving Jack is expected at the harbour ?"

" Yes ; wid his tight ship. As fast a sailor as ever ran in an honest hogshead."

" How soon to weigh again ?"

" How soon ? Why the same hour, if he can : just as soon as the ship's lightened."

" Well—leave me. 'Tis a happy dream," he continued, after Mullins had strode away : " though country be given up, I should still have with me the only creature that now makes country dear. And, perhaps—though my character is altered, and though men have here stamped a brand on my name, perhaps, even yet, Mary might remember the past, and love the outlaw."

" He does not answer," whispered Mr. Grace to Mr. Somers, " but there stands, as if planning some desperate scheme. Heaven befriend us."

" In truth," answered Mr. Somers, " I do not like his hesitation, and least of all his secret communication with that bravo. Young man," he continued aloud to Kavanagh, " we have spoken to you, to offer our thanks and gratitude, and, notwithstanding all you have said, our services, if need be."

Still Kavanagh made no answer: did not seem, in fact, to hear. " Yes," resumed Grace, " and to express our full reliance on your manliness and honour."

" Can we trust you?" asked Mr. Somers, after another silent pause.

" We can!" Mary interposed warmly.

Kavanagh caught his breath, and with face half turned towards her, seemed to await her further speech.

" We can!" she repeated fearlessly. " Yes! alone with him, and in his power in a desert, I fear not the honour of our deliverer. Whatever he does—whatever his feelings may lead him to attempt, he will act with delicacy, and at the proper time and season. In any views he may have, Harry Kavanagh is not the man to imitate a villain. Harry Kavanagh is not the man to blacken a noble action with a bad one!"

The person addressed heard this appeal evidently with deep

feeling. He pulled his hat over his brows, and changed frequently from one foot to another: as his clenched hands hung by his sides, they crushed hard within them the folds of his frock. When Mary had ceased, in the deep silence that followed, the breath was distinctly heard to labour in his throat, rapidly coming and going, as if with alarmed precipitancy it struggled to make way for a burst of combatted resolution. He beckoned Mullins with two or three impatient motions of his hand. The man came; when he turned quickly upon him, and, with flashing eyes fixed on his, gasped and gaped in an effort to pronounce a word: the difficulty seemed, by irritating him, to increase his paroxysm of passion. He waved his hand and arm over and over again; and at last, stamping violently, was able to utter in a choked tone, half scream and half whisper—"Lead on!"

"Whither—whither?" asked Grace and Mr. Somers, both advancing.

"Oh, Harry!—whither?" echoed Mary, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, confronting him.

"To your Father's house!" he exclaimed, in a burst of voice; "There we can find your proper time and season!—Mullins, get those horses sent round to meet us at the other side of the hill—and do you direct our course—I cannot—I will remain behind—Lead on."

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### CHAPTER XIII.

THE narrative left Howard and Mr. O'Clery setting out, after Nora's intelligence, in great speed to Mr. Grace's house.

They soon gained, by the short path well known to O'Clery, their destination. As the gentlemen hurried along, it occurred to both that much reliance was not to be placed on Nora's dazed information, and, all the way, they had hopes she might have misconceived or exaggerated the real circumstances.

The first thing that raised Nora's credit was the appearance of the little avenue gate, wide open. The friends looked at each other, and pushed hurriedly on to the house. As they approached the door, Howard stumbled over something:—a moment's



examination showed them the dead carcass of a fine mastiff watch-dog, which it had been the intruders' first care to despatch. This was a worse symptom:—a still worse, the hall-door remained unclosed. They entered the house. The hall and staircase were in darkness, and with some difficulty they ascended to the drawing-room. Here was a scene of dreary, and, to the spectators, afflicting desolation. Of four lights, two had burned out; one lay crushed and extinguished on the carpet, and one only lent imperfect illumination to the apartment. The fire was black: the hospitable hearth chill and cheerless. On a table near it lay, broken and disordered, the little nick-nacks usually adorning it. The chairs were disarranged or overturned, and the carpet soiled and crumpled, in token of the recent intrusion of a vulgar crowd. The window which Grace had thrown up, in order to parley with the assailants, still remained open, and at it, in the faint rays of the moon, sat a little, long-eared, silky lap-dog, Mary's own favourite, piteously howling forth his sense of abandonment and loneliness.

With rapid words of alarm and consternation, the friends ran to the door through which they had entered the room, and called, loudly and anxiously, the names of those they scarce expected to hear them.—“Mr. Grace! my dear friend, Mr. Grace!”—cried O'Clery: “Mary! my darling girl, Mary!”—shouted Howard. The empty apartments and staircases feebly answered, like the inarticulate efforts of a child, a shadowy echo of the words spoken; and deep silence again fell around. The friends, snatching the lighted candle, rushed through the other rooms, one by one. At last they gained what they knew to be Mary's chamber. There was her little toilet, surrounded by the books and the drawings:—upon it still lay the crucifix, the glass vase with its delicate flowers, the rosary, the prayer-book, turned down, and Howard's own miniature. As he glanced upon it, a gush of bitter grief blinded his eyes for a moment. He looked towards Mary's bed. It stood, white, pure, and unpressed, as it had been arranged for the night's repose: “O God!” he exclaimed, “and where, instead, is she to lie down to-night!”—The thought was madness, and Howard, dropping into a chair, buried his face in his hands—man's bitter, hardwring tears dropping slowly through his fingers.

Mr. O'Clery, himself deeply afflicted and agitated, strove to administer comfort to the young man, but, for some time, in vain.

“If we had even a trace of the road,” said Howard—“if that

accursed woman could inform us which way they went, there might be some hope. As it is, nothing is certain but the ruin of the young lady—and—" he continued wildly—" my ruin also—I will outlive no shame that this outrage must fix on Mary Grace!"—

"Hush!"—O'Clery said—"here are your soldiers." The rapid and heavy tramp of the men was, indeed, now audible, as they quickly advanced up the approach to the house:—"All is not yet lost with help so near us," added O'Clery. "Come, Mr. Howard, man yourself—distribute them over the country by every path and road the ravishers may possibly have taken—and, Hark!—that bewildered creature comes with them—I hear her shrill cries ringing through the house—Come down—let us again speak to her—Perhaps she is at last calm enough to collect her senses, and yield us some useful information!"

They descended, and, in passing the door of the drawing-room they had first entered, Nora rushed by them, into it, and squatting herself as in the cabin, on the middle of the carpet, set up her old wail, eked out by the incessant clapping of her hands. The little dog, whom the appearance of Howard and O'Clery had for a moment diverted from his howling, now sympathetically chimed in with Nora, and a duet arose from the efforts of both, sufficient to startle the dull ear of the dead.

"'Tis hard to say which is the sillier creature," said O'Clery, as, with Howard, he advanced at Nora's back. "Silence, you obstreperous fool," he continued, addressing her. "Get up and inform us which road these ruffians have taken with your Master and your young Lady."

But Nora accorded no answer: neither did she suspend her part in the performance.

"Answer us, woman!"—cried Howard; "tell us, if you know, which road they first pursued. Answer instantly, or I shall do something unmanly, desperate! Which road, I say?"

"Och! little duv I know. There's no one here! no one here! They're all gone!—The hearth is cold—could!—ochoun! ochoun!"—and she suddenly started on her feet, and raced up stairs, before Howard or O'Clery could stop her.

"Gracious God!" exclaimed Howard, in distraction—"the moments lapse in which a well-directed effort might be made. But I'll after her, and try one other experiment," and, separating the sheath of his sword from his belt, Howard bounded after Nora to the top of the house.

"Aha!—that may do—But lay it on lightly, good fellow," said O'Clery, following him.

Nora's continued outcry soon led them to her presence. She had made her way, in utter darkness, to Mary's chamber; and, when the friends entered with the candle, they saw her in her usual position and gesticulation, half way between the bed and the toilet, while, with tears plentifully rolling down her cheeks, she went on :

"You're not in your room!—There's no one to read your prayer-book—An' och! a-lanna-machree!—you won't put your darlin' white skin under your own white sheets, to-night, an' sink down among the feathers, like a Lily as you are, goin' asleep on its bed o' daisies! You won't! no, you won't!—mille murthers!"

Somewhat affected by the tears and poetical lament of Nora, Howard hesitated in the first instance to treat her too roughly. It was not till, after repeated conjurations, she still obstinately or heedlessly withheld all rational answer, that she felt the scabbard gently introducing itself to her broad shoulders. At the touch she uttered a louder cry than ever, and again succeeded in escaping from her pursuers, first through the chamber-door, and then down the stairs.

They still followed her. She issued through the hall-door, and looking round for the huge stone she had lately precipitated from the window overhead, was moving towards it, when her interminable moan became changed into a shrill squeak, and she hastily ran back to the door. The gentlemen, advancing, discovered the cause of her terror. Beside the stone lay the man on whom it had fallen, his thigh crushed to pieces. Deprived of all power to move, and weakened by pain and fear, the wretch lay stretched on his back; his features—made more hideous by the black smearing they had undergone, and which was now half rubbed off—set in an agony of dread, and his eyes staring straight upward, with the most ghastly expression. Howard and O'Clery shuddered at this spectacle, and could not blame Nora for her cowardice.

The man was sufficiently sensible, however, to comprehend what was going forward. He had heard the repeated inquiries made of Nora, and now muttered, as the friends stood over him :

"Don't kill me—for the love o' God an' the Blessed Vargin Mary, don't kill me entirely, an' I'll tell you where to find 'em."

“Speak, then, and truly,” said Howard, “if you hope to live another moment!”

The man gave a description of the route he had heard proposed by Mullins, and which was really the course taken. Howard listened eagerly; ordered two soldiers to garrison the house till his return, and also to remove and tend the wounded man. Then, heading his party, and accompanied by O’Clery, he set off with all speed: Nora still bringing up the rear.

Along the very way they pursued, Purcell, at about the same moment, was hastening, after his escape at the elm-trees, with purpose to call on Howard and his men for assistance; concluding, from Mullins’s treachery, that such was still available. We need not try to picture his feelings at this juncture; we need not say that all the fiends of hate, disappointment, rage, and bloody impulse, possessed him even unto madness. He ran, he panted, he smote his forehead, and called on the earth to swallow, and the hills to slip and crush, his detested and successful enemy. For, at cautious distance, Purcell had stopped to ascertain the effect of his last shot, had seen Kavanagh arise, and heard him order the pursuit. By an unusual, and yet, for pedestrians, a short path, Purcell then fled, bounding forward alone, with the shouts and curses of the pursuers ringing in his ear, the effort for life and vengeance bracing his sinews, and giving all but wings to his terrible speed. He broke through fences, dashed over streams, and trampled down, indifferently, the barren heath and the pregnant furrow; resembling, with blackest hell in his heart and on his brow, some spirit of the lowest depths, sent forth upon man’s slumbering world, to blight, crush, and destroy.

Dripping with wet, his clothes torn and soiled, without a hat, and his face intensely pale and haggard, Purcell, after avoiding the wood, and the road which led to it, found himself free from pursuit, on the open ground which commenced an approach to the first bridle-road that had conducted him from Mr. Grace’s house. Over this way he was holding his fierce career, when a man appeared running towards him in a cross direction. His nerves strung up to the utmost pitch of sensitiveness, Purcell screamed out a challenge at this person, stooping, at the same time, for a large stone that lay before him, as he was now otherwise unarmed. It proved, however, to be one of his own men, flying like himself from the late scene of confusion and blood. Reassured, and, from the presence of one associate, comforted, Purcell dropped the stone from his weakened grasp, and

poured forth a torrent of inquiries, imprecations, and vows of revenge. Kavanagh, Mullins, and all, should feel, he said, his arm, in time and turn.

"Come!" he continued, "Howard and the soldiers! He is saved for me, though they don't think it! Let us cheer them on! Let us swear that Kavanagh himself is the man who has forced her away—that we interfered to prevent him—that we were—were—Curses!—that they have, by overpowering force, reduced us to this breathless condition! Come! Baffled in every way—at every turn—and by that boy; he that has ever been a stone—a rock on my path! But we will have it yet. Come! The soldiers!"

"The soldiers!"—echoed the sharp voice of old Kavanagh, who at that moment started, like a spectre, before him.—"Dog of an Informer still!—I have traced you as the hound traces his prey—stiff and worn as I am, I have traced you. Now, how do I find you here? how, but on the ould track?—The soldiers!—What do you want with them? Will they assist you to bring shame on another white head?—Or, crossed in your own endeavour, do you only go to loose them on the game you have before hunted down?"

"Stand out of my way, or—I will make you stand out of it!" said Purcell, balefully glaring on the old man.

"Never! till you unsay that word I hard, and promise at last to spare him!—Haven't you done enough?—Haven't you spent yourself on us all? Where's my child's child? Where is my child herself? Never scowl and gnash your teeth at me, Purcell—Where is the comfort you tore, like a villain, from me?—Where the pride and the peace of mind?—Can you make me as I was again? Can you make me not mad, again? Oath-breaker and Robber! Stay where you are, and answer!"

"Out of my way, wretch! or—" Purcell gripped the old man's throat with both his hands. He, however, amid choking breath and utterance, went on:

"Aye!—aye!—do it! do it! Keep them round my neck till I fall stark and stiff under your hands! Kill the old Grandfather, that so you may deal on the three generations!"—

Purcell persevered in his purpose till the sound of approaching feet were heard, and the man who stood by his side, crying out—"We're taken!"—plunged down the slope at the left side, and disappeared. Not till then did he release the old man, and, looking forward, saw, to his great surprise and pleasure, Howard and O'Clery rapidly advancing.

“Hold! hold!” Howard exclaimed as he came up, having heard the cries of old Kavanagh. “What shameful outrage is this?”

“Seize him, Sassenach, seize him! He is the man that this night took off your Mary Grace!”—the old man gasped out, as he rapidly withdrew from the scene.

“Och! saize him!—Hould him fast! Hang him! Shoot him! Tear him limb from limb!” exhorted Nora, coming in front.

“Soldiers! take him prisoner!” said Howard.

“Stop, Sir. You will not surely heed, Captain Howard, the ravings of a madman: all can tell you he is mad. What, Nora, do you not know me? Am I the person this old fool speaks of?” For, we had omitted to mention, Purcell, so soon as he escaped from Kavanagh’s men, took care to divest himself of his red waistcoat and sash.

“Och! no! no! no!”—responded Nora.

“You did not, then, see this man at Mr. Grace’s?”

“Avoch, no!—Captain John! a-guilla-machree!—Captain John! This is a very dacent gintlimin—If he does his best for us now, I mane,” added Nora, in a qualifying tone.

“I will. It is therefore I am here on my way to Captain Howard, with intelligence where to find them.”

“On your way *from* them, then?” asked O’Clery.

“Yes, Sir—directly—this moment from them.”

“And may I ask how you got among them, Mr. Purcell?”

“Mr. O’Clery—Captain Howard—look at me—you may guess by my appearance and manner what I have suffered and escaped at their hands. I tell you, Gentlemen, that—passing the road by chance—by mere chance—I met the whole party—Mr. and Miss Grace—and Mr. Somers—and all—and giving way to my feelings—*you* know how keenly I ought to feel to see Miss Grace in such a situation, Father O’Clery—not considering what I did, I plunged into the midst of them, unarmed; and, after a desperate struggle, am here, scarcely alive to tell you my adventure.”

“Were you alone as well as unarmed, Sir?” still questioned O’Clery.

“Was I alone, Sir? To be sure I was. Who could have been with me? I should be glad to know what you exactly mean, Mr. O’Clery.”

“Why I thought that, in the present state of the country, *you* did not usually venture out at night, unattended and unarmed,

Sir. But I beg your pardon a moment—Mr. Howard, a word. By my Priesthood,” continued O’Clery, aside, “all this is very mysterious, my young friend. I assume sufficient knowledge of the human heart to be convinced, from Mr. Purcell’s character—which, moreover, I have good reason to know—that he is not the man to do any such exploit as he states himself the Hero of. Nor in my conscience do I believe he encountered, alone and unarmed, the persons we are at present in pursuit of.”

“This, then, involves the truth of his information as to their route?”—

“I fear so—And more—do not let him see you startled when I speak it—Purcell may be the author of this outrage himself!—Stop, for heaven’s sake—and let me go on—And his present appearance, before us may be for the purpose of misleading you, while, in the meantime, his agents shall have secured—”

“I’ll run him through the heart!”—Howard broke out.

“Tut!—that would be a bad way of coming at the truth, under the present circumstances. I wish that old man were here, who first gave us to understand that Purcell was the true aggressor. Why should he have his hands on the poor creature, as he came up?—But, no matter—Suppose, Mr. Howard, you now seem to place implicit reliance on Purcell—keeping an eye on him, meantime.—If he does not immediately lead us on the track—or if, at all events, it be finally proved he leads us wide of it—then, you know, he will be in your power still. And, in truth, if we now reject his guidance, the country becomes, a little further on, so full of cross-roads and difficult ways, that I see not what you can do.”

“And all this time is time wasted!” said Howard, impatiently : then, turning round—“Mr. Purcell, we place the utmost faith on your story and your guidance—Pray, have the goodness to fall in with me, between these men—And now, Sir, is your point far off?”

“Not very far, Captain Howard—I will engage to lead you to it in a little more than half an hour.”

“Haste, then—which way?”—

“For the present straight on,” replied Purcell.

“Come, Mr. O’Clery—Soldiers, attention!—Double quick time, and march!”

“Och, no, red-coats!—double quick time, an’ run! run! run!”—countermanded Nora, putting herself in motion to join the main body. But an accident impeded her further career. To keep clear of the soldiers, and yet trot on at their side, Nora had

deviated a little too much towards the edge of the declivity before described, and, in an unlucky moment, slipt at its edge, and, losing her balance, tumbled to the bottom. There, landing on her feet, she stuck fast in a quagmire, from which, in her alarmed and debilitated state of body, it was impossible to extricate herself.

“An’ och!”—Nora cried—“here I am in throuble, an’ nobody comin’ to me! Sunk a past my hams in could wather an’ mud; an’ all alone! alone!—It ’ull be the death o’ me, an’ not a soul near me!—An’ my new quilted petticoat, an’ my Sunday stockin’s! petticoat an’ stockin’s! stockin’s an’ petticoat!”

And here we must take leave of Nora, sympathising in her distress indeed, but too much concerned in the distresses of others to be able to lend her immediate assistance, though, no doubt, she escaped, in good time, to live over this eventful night during many a long and prosperous day.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

MULLINS had led his party, and those they escorted or guarded, through the wood before-mentioned, as part of Purcell’s first route, when Kavanagh rode briskly up to him on the road, and said, in a low tone:

“Mullins—Purcell is coming to meet us with Howard and the soldiers. My poor Grandfather has just returned from them to inform me.”

“Well?”—asked or answered the imperturbable Mullins.

“Our number is too small to check them, and it may happen we shall have to take care of ourselves.”

“An’ so we can, wid God’s help, and others.”

“You think, then, Flinn’s new friends will be up?”

“Never fear:” and both relapsed into silence.

“He seems to keep his word, though his manner is so suspicious,” said Mr. Somers to his friends, while this conversation was going forward in front—“It is certainly our road homeward.”

“It is,” said Grace, “and now I scarcely doubt but he will, at all events, guide us to our house.”



"Do not doubt at all," said Mary.

"Hark!" resumed Somers, "I think I hear the approach of a number of persons over the high ground that leads from your residence to this road."

"If so," said Grace, "we are to be attacked again by Purcell, with a fresh body of men!—He has escaped for no other purpose—The Villain is too desperate to forego a settled scheme so easily!"—Still the advancing footsteps were heard.

"O my God!—who are these!"—exclaimed Mary, once more beginning to tremble.

"No matter—stand close and fear nothing," said Kavanagh, passing her. Again he rode up to Mullins, and whispered, in some anxiety:

"These are the soldiers, Mullins!—"

"Well?—Look far through the moonlight, into the hollow, under them, an' thry what else you can see."

"The red waistcoats I think, by St. Denis!" Kavanagh said, exultingly, while he obeyed the suggestion of Mullins.

"These are not a crowd of common men," Mr. Somers continued to Grace; "the regular, though rapid tramp of their advance, leads me to believe that they are soldiers."

"They *are* soldiers," exclaimed Grace, joyfully; "I see the glancing of their caps and plumes over the edge of the height—Thank God!"

Howard and his party had now, indeed, just gained a point from which the road became observable. Purcell was the first to point out the opposite phalanx in motion over it.

"There they are!" he exclaimed. "And now it is my time and opportunity to inform your reverend counsellor, Captain Howard, that I fully understood the nature of his doubts and cautions expressed to you, a little while ago, though I waited for this moment to say so."

"Praise to God!" said O'Clery to Howard, in a low voice, "These *are* the friends we seek; I can distinctly see my dear Mary Grace in the middle of the party."

"I see her too!" exclaimed Howard: "And now an instant's pause, Mr. O'Clery. Your suspicions of Purcell seem to be ill-founded."

"Perhaps, Mr. Howard—but the whole event, and his future conduct, can alone assure me there were no reasons, of any kind, for my caution."

"I beg your pardon, Captain Howard," resumed Purcell, ad-

vancing a step towards them. "But I think I may have the benefit of whatever new hints his Popish Reverence thinks proper to direct to me."

"You are rash, if not intrusive, Sir," Howard said, coldly.

"Very likely. This, then, I have to add, that, since I am intrusive, and, since that is the only word for my zealous services, I shall instantly withdraw homeward. You are now in sight of your enemy, Captain Howard, and can no longer require the attendance of an unarmed man like myself, whose strength and spirits are already exhausted. Indeed, recollecting that, for my first opposition and present services, I must become a mark of especial hatred and hostility to those wretches, there seems an additional reason why I should take care of myself."

"Do not let him budge an inch," whispered O'Clery, while, at the same time, he elbowed Howard rather vehemently: "You perceive our friends are returning with a party, towards their own residence, not flying from it, and this looks additionally mysterious."

"Why—what do you really think, Mr. O'Clery?"

"Nothing, specifically. My former grounds of suspicion are certainly altered, but I cannot avoid resting on others, though I am not able distinctly to define them. Yet, one question—if this be really the party that perpetrated the outrage—why—I repeat—why, after such a lapse of time, do we meet them moving on the very point they should, of all others, avoid?"

"Good night, then, Captain Howard," resumed Purcell; "I shall, perhaps, find an opportunity to present my greetings to your prime minister also. But, before I go, I too claim the favour of a private word;" and he turned off with Howard. "I know the kind of enemy you have to deal with better than you can possibly know them, and this is my humble but earnest advice and request—prayer, rather—for your own sake, as well as for your friends—do not parley an instant with these ruffians. They are headed by a marked and branded outlaw—you will know him amidst all the others by his haughty air and superior dress. Run that man through the body, or blow his brains out with your own hand!—Let it be your very first act!—If you hesitate, beware of the consequences—*He* is sworn to do the same by you the moment he sees your face—I have the best private information of the fact; I can show it to you to-morrow morning. Therefore have a care, I say, and remember my caution."

"I shall certainly think about it, Sir," said Howard ; "but as to your now leaving us—"

"There are other reasons why you should act prudently," interrupted Purcell, rapidly ; "and as this is no time for squeamishness, I shall just hint them to you. You are betrayed, Captain Howard ! betrayed by the very friends you now purpose to assist !—Listen to me—it would be too long a story, and therefore out of season, to tell you why this is the case, but I can satisfactorily prove it, along with other things, early in the morning. Now, it is sufficient to say, that Grace, aye, and his meek daughter too, have a feeling and interest for the very persons in whose power they are."

"What, Sir !" cried Howard, threateningly.

"You may well be astonished, Captain Howard."

"Then, Mr. Purcell," as, calling to mind O'Clery's hints, and contrasting them with the present information, he became first confounded, and next irritated—"then, Mr. Purcell, I insist on your remaining with us till this affair is at an end, for—"

"Excuse me, Captain Howard."

"Excuse me, Sir ; it must be so—You have spoken things that require to be explained on the spot—No waiting till morning—no waiting an instant, Sir, beyond the opportunity for explanation—I will know what you mean in a few moments—You shall confront my friends, Mr. Purcell, and to them repeat your words, aye, and support them too. Fall in again, Sir—Serjeant, take care of this gentleman : and now, forward !"

This, as O'Clery surmised, was more than Purcell had bargained for. In fact, his first burst of rage and revenge had not left him capable of framing a rational scheme. In calling upon Howard, he obeyed the undigested impulse of the moment. But while they came along he had had some time to reflect on the danger he must front in facing Mr. and Miss Grace, and Mr. Somers, after his known agency in the original aggression. Now, cursing himself, that he had at all guided Howard, Purcell's chief anxiety was to withdraw from immediate detection, while, at the same time, endeavouring, by means of incoherent misstatements, that a cooler moment would also have enabled him to reject, to prepare Howard's mind for what was inevitably at hand. In the fever of agonizing passion, of hope, fear, doubt, and dismay, it is not extraordinary that even a clever villain should thus find all his ingenuity prostrated, his cunning and consistency reduced to wild assertion.

But when Howard insisted on his remaining with the party, Purcell experienced the most desperate pang. His heart felt a spasm of despair; and, with violent energy of manner, he blustered, entreated, and raved, by turns, against the order for his detention. This strange behaviour but strengthened Howard in his resolve, while he was further assisted by the approving whispers of O'Clery. Finally, when Purcell saw no possibility of escape, he could only return to his former tact, and try, by every species of falsehood, to anticipate the accusations ready to be preferred against him.

"Well, then, Captain Howard," he said, "relying on your watchful protection against the enmity of these men, I have only to press upon you the advice and cautions you have already heard. I repeat, you will find your old friends with new faces; and, what I have not before stated, you may expect to hear them charge me in the most violent as well as improbable manner, all in defence of the individual I have before pointed out to your vengeance, and because I am, to him and them, an object of common dislike. You do not know," he added, interrupting himself,—“you cannot conceive, Englishman and Protestant as you are, to what lengths the Papists of this cursed country will go to stick by each other—you cannot imagine what a web of smooth deceit and treachery they can wind round you.”

"Give over, Sir, it is time," interrupted Howard, indignantly. "We shall soon see all this out. Come, soldiers. But I perceive these people have drawn up across the road, and wait for us."

"They have been so placed for some time," said O'Clery. "You may observe, our friends still remain exposed in their centre."

"'Tis so," said Howard, "we must go to work cautiously, then. Soldiers! no firing in the first instance. Give them the steel, and let it be your chief object to support me in getting five or six file round the Lady and her friends. When we have succeeded so far, press those fellows back, and then do your best. Take as many prisoners, however, as possible—so—Forward!"

The whole party were in motion, and about two hundred yards of the sloping ground brought them to the road in front of Kavanagh's men. O'Clery and Purcell remained close in the rear, under the charge of a serjeant and two file.

O'Clery had truly described Kavanagh's position. Miss Grace, her Father, and Mr. Somers, were placed in the middle of his line, fully exposed in front, though well guarded behind. At their

side and back, about six men, mounted on the horses that had previously served Purcell, kept close together. Kavanagh and Mullins also remained mounted. Across the narrow road, at the right hand and at the left, the remainder of the body formed, three deep, and in good order.

The whole were less than Howard's force, whose spirits increased, as, at the first glance, he ascertained his advantage. But Howard reckoned chances, in complete ignorance of his real situation : to explain which, we must retrograde for a moment.

After Kavanagh, in consequence of Mullins's hint, had perceived the distant approach of Flinn's reinforcement, he fell back some ten or twenty yards, and halted on the road, a good distance beyond the little valley through which, in silence and caution, his friends pushed their way. This manœuvre was effected for the purpose of inducing Howard to advance upon him, after also passing the valley, and so afford ground to the appearance, in Howard's flank and rear, of the newcomers. Kavanagh's only anxiety now was, lest he should be charged on before the arrival of his reinforcement. He was relieved by the timely and fortunate pause of the military party on the height over the valley. Gaining, therefore, while his men stood still, a point of the road in which he was concealed from the soldiers, he hoisted his handkerchief on a pole, and waved on the body under Flinn's guidance. They saw and understood his signal, and, in a few moments, were up with him, ready to be disposed of as he should direct.

We should observe, that the hollow, through which they defiled, ran at right angles to the road, and continued to run beyond it, at the other side, while the road passed across the inequality by means of a rude bridge, affording vent to a rapid mountain-stream. Along the road were fences of bank, of bush, and interstices of dry wall, formed by flat, slaty stones, laid close upon each other. The clumsy parapets, or boundaries, of the bridge, continued, on both hands, the same line of fence.

When the strange men came up, Kavanagh proceeded, briefly, but clearly, to give Flinn his orders.

"Station your men," he said, "inside the fences to that end of the bridge farthest from where mine stand. Keep them hid there until the soldiers pass you by, and until you hear a volley from us. That moment let them jump upon the road and close on Howard's rear, while we do the same at his front. Then, Flinn, we can disarm the soldiers without another shot. Remember—I will not have a trigger pulled at your side."

Flinn hastened to obey these orders, and Kavanagh, returning to his own body, continued—"Let every man draw his bullet, keeping a charge of powder only. We need not fear that Howard will blaze on his friends here; and there is no use in wasting lead, when we can have these soldiers just for stretching our hands out. Meantime, attend to what I say. Stand perfectly quiet till I speak to you. Then fire your blank cartridges in their faces, and close in with your prisoners. They dare not return your fire, but it will frighten them. Then, while Flinn surprises them at their rear, all you have to do is to assist in getting up the bran-new muskets and cross-belts. Mind yourselves."

For Howard now quickly advanced, after passing the valley and bridge, crying out—"Charge! charge! but draw no trigger without orders!"

"A word before a blow, Mr. Howard," said Kavanagh, advancing even while he spoke. "What, Sir, is this your return to a man that has served you, and would still do so?"

"Sullivan, by Heaven! Halt, soldiers, and recover arms!" exclaimed Howard. Then turning to Kavanagh: "Sir, that you have served me, my gratitude must ever be a witness—you saved my life. But I have, notwithstanding, to learn how you would now serve me, when I find that lady in your company."

"And is it then so wonderful that I should set a few of my poor tenants to rescue your betrothed Lady, and her Father, from Captain John?" asked Kavanagh, with composure.

"Have you indeed done me that service?"

"He has rescued us!—he has! he has!" cried Mary Grace and Mr. Somers.

Purcell's voice was here loudly exalted, calling on Howard, from behind. Howard attended to the summons, as, in great perplexity, he had just resolved to question Purcell concerning Kavanagh's assertion, backed as it was by the words of his friends.

"These are not, then, the people into whose hands you first traced Mr. Grace and his Daughter?" he said, approaching Purcell.

"They are!—they are!—the very same! Do not heed what the prisoners now would say, for they *are* prisoners, and speak under fear, or, perhaps, as strong a feeling. For, Captain Howard, what I have all along hesitated, through delicacy, to state, must now be plainly told:—before you met Mary Grace, she and this Bravo loved each other!"

"Scoundrell!" cried Howard, "dare you presume to assert such a thing?"

"Ask them both the question, separately. With this caution, that you do not permit them to answer except in a blunt, simple yes or no. By their own words I am ready to abide; and you, I hope, Captain Howard, in remembrance of the danger I told you to fear from the leader of this infamous outrage."

"Come with me then, Sir, and hear the result. Mr. O'Clery, I cannot consent to your kind and zealous wishes for getting into danger; I must use some well-meant force to keep you where you are. Sergeant, do your duty—Mr. Purcell, forward!"

They again confronted Kavanagh, and Howard precipitately asked: "What, Fellow!—how do you answer to this charge?"

"Let me hear it, first, Fellow," retorted Kavanagh, indifferently.

"You presumed to pay attentions to Miss Grace?"

"I loved her with all my Soul," was the reply.

"Speak, Miss Grace!—Mr. Grace, speak!"—Howard cried, in a frenzy.

"It is true," answered Mary, in a tremulous voice.

"'Tis true," echoed Mr. Grace, "but—"

"Silence!"—bellowed Purcell. "Pardon me, Captain Howard, but have you not got your answer? Now will you heed whatever evasion they may advance? Listen not to them, I advise again; they are all leagued against you; they will, as I warned you, endeavour to baffle us; I wonder they have not begun to accuse and falsify *me*. Be assured, Sir, there is but one way to act. Call on these fellows to lay down their arms; if they do not instantly obey, shoot every man of them on the spot. A moment's delay may be fatal to you; give me a pistol, and I will make sure of the leader! and, oh!"—Purcell continued mentally—"Heaven and the Devil grant he may follow my advice; for in the uproar of the fray is Stephen Purcell's chance, if he can ever have any, to close the mouths of every witness against him, Father and all—but the girl's self!"

"I know not what to think, or how to act," said Howard, after a moment's painful and confused pause. "But"—turning on Kavanagh, pistol in hand—"you are my prisoner!"

"Not yet, Ami!" Kavanagh cried, moving back.

Howard presented his pistol—

"That's the way—fire! fire!" roared Purcell.

"Oh, no, no, no! hold, for God's sake! for the sake of justice!" cried Grace, Mary, and Mr. Somers at once.

"Let me reflect for a moment," resumed Howard, lowering his pistol. "Some one—the servant, Nora—yes! She particularly informed me that the person who took away Miss Grace called himself Captain Doe."

"He did! and that person—" began Grace.

"Silence them, or they will talk us into madness!" interrupted Purcell.

"Silence! silence, I say!" said Howard, obeying, though in his bewilderment he knew not why he did so, the urgency of Purcell.

"I, at least, may speak," said Kavanagh. "He *did* call himself Doe—you hear he did; and can I, Mr. Howard, be that person? I met you, alone and unprepared for such an attempt, a short time before it was made. More—I was in Mr. Grace's house, and resisted the assailants."

"He was!" interrupted Grace.

"I fired the only shot that was fired—and—I am now glad of it—missed my mark."

"He did, he did!" cried Grace and Mr. Somers.

"And now, when you find your friends with me, and, observe, on the way to their own home—Must I not have just rescued them from Captain John?"

"It would appear so, indeed," replied Howard, completely mystified.

"It is not so!" exclaimed Purcell, scarcely knowing what he said, but impelled, by a paramount feeling, to contradict Kavanagh.

"True—it is not so!" repeated Kavanagh.

"Then, what am I to think of this monstrous tissue of contrary assertion?" asked Howard, more than ever perplexed and irritated.

"I rescued them—but from the fiend that stands by your side," resumed Kavanagh, not seeming to notice Howard's perturbation.

"A lie! a black lie! Now, Captain Howard, begins the falsehood I anticipated," said Purcell.

"No, no!—the truth! the truth! Will you not listen to my assurance?" ejaculated Mary.

"What! this gentleman?" said Howard.

"Yes, that black villain—Purcell!" answered Kavanagh: "From him who called himself Doe—He who dares attempt in other people's names what he fears to do in his own."

"Here, Corporal, with two men!" exclaimed Howard—"Oh, Sir," turning to Purcell, who vainly continued to assert his innocence—"you will excuse any doubt of your honour this may imply. I would only be cautious in my duty. Remove him."



shreds and tatters, and vile furniture, the materials of her bed should be feathers, a luxury then almost unusual, even in the houses of the better sort of farmers. The unearthly-looking old creature, who had opened the cabin door, was supporting her on the bed as she recovered, and applying strong-smelling plants to her nostrils. Over her stood Crohoore also, his countenance bearing nearly the same expression as when he had spoken the horrible words that deprived Alley of her senses, and that still rung in her ears, and rent her soul. From the aspect and presence of both her companions, the poor young girl again shrank, now with a new cause for aversion and terror, infinitely more powerful than any she had before felt. And in this state we must leave the forlorn Alley, until, in the progress of the story, she again comes before us.

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## CHAPTER V.

MEANTIME, it is our duty to examine into the truth of the account given by old Mickle, at the wake, of the unhappy termination of Pierce Shea's first effort for the recovery of his mistress.

In a frame of mind little short of distraction, he had set out, with his foster-brother, Andy Houlohan, Shamus Whelan (a stout man, rather advanced in years), and Paudge Dermody, the wit (but now grave as the dullest fellow), all well-mounted, well-armed, and resolute. The day, still young, appeared lowering and cloudy as they started, and they had to penetrate a dense fog that rested on the summit of the hill, pointed out as that over which Crohoore had made his midnight way. They traversed, all that day, the bleak heights and spreading marshes, of which the entire neighbouring country was composed, inquiring of every person, and exploring every spot likely to give information of, or concealment to the fugitive. But, except in two instances, they found no clue. The owner of a cabin, that stood on the edge of the most extensive bog they had crossed, told how, during the previous night, he had been scared from sleep by loud and frightful screams. He little thought that anything mortal could have traversed the lonesome and treacherous marsh at that untimely hour: a load was removed from his heart, when he

understood what had been going forward, and he no longer feared to have heard the mournful wail of the *bocheentha*, come to predict the sudden death of himself, or of some dear member of his family. The pursuers also met, straying among the hills, the horse that had been taken from Anthony Dooling's stable, half dead with fatigue, and soiled with sweat and mire, still undried upon him.

This scanty information just served to convince them that the object of their pursuit was concealed somewhere in the neighbourhood: farther, they were compelled to take chance as their guide. The party, when night closed in, had emerged from a scattered wood, that for some miles ran along a ridge of hills, and which they had spent a good part of the day in exploring. They paused on the barren descent, and looked around in every direction for some roof to shelter them. With the falling night, wind and rain began to drive in thick gusts over the desolate country, and all persuasions were lost on Pierce to face homeward, until he should have gained some tidings of his Alley. A black extent of bog lay beyond them, running on, till, in the waning light and growing mist, it seemed to mingle with the horizon. At the bottom of the ridge on which they stood ran a mountain stream, that had its source higher up in the country, among a continuation of the same chain of hills. When crossed by the party, during the early part of the day, this stream had appeared no more than a puny gurgling thread of water, spinning about the large rocks that strewed its channel: but here the channel was ten feet and upwards in depth, and, at the least, from twenty to thirty in breadth. There were times when it became an impetuous torrent. A little to the right of the party, and lower down on the descent of the hill, stood one of those uncouth square castles, so frequent in Kilkenny and some neighbouring counties, built most probably by the English settlers of the Pale and their successors. These served the double purpose of residences and fortresses, affording them the sole shelter they could hope to find in the country, and securing them from the irregular attacks of the dispossessed natives, not yet supposed to be reconciled to the growing sway of their new masters. We may add, that those castles are built all over the country, in such close succession, that the prospect from one to the other is never interrupted—doubtless for the purpose of spreading alarm by fires, or other signals, in case of any of them having been assaulted. After Pierce Shea and his companions had taken a survey of the district

around, it appeared that the old castle we have been describing was the only place that offered the least shelter, now becoming every moment more necessary. The deepest shade of night had almost fallen. The heavy wreathes left the mountain tops, and floated as clouds before the blast; and the rain, which hitherto had been but a spray, blown upward from the damp valleys, now began to fall in heavy and continued drops. To the castle, then, the adventurers hastened, and there established their quarters for the night. A ground-floor of the old building afforded shelter to their horses: the hills gave them scanty and coarse provender. They brought timber from the wood, and in the middle story, to which they ascended by the narrow spiral stairs, a blazing fire was soon lighted. Andy Houlohan, the most provident of the party, displayed a well-furnished wallet of country fare; Paudge Dermody, the thirstiest, a big black bottle of brandy; and all collected round the blaze to partake of refreshment and rest, which, considering the toils and anxieties of the day, were certainly their due.

They soon had to congratulate themselves on these precautions. The wind blew a storm, and dismally howled through the doorless building. Rushing through the narrow slits in the walls, formerly constructed with a view to safety, or to serve as loopholes from which to harass an enemy, rather than as windows to admit the light, the blast whirled to and fro, making the blaze round which they sat eddy and flicker wildly. The rain descended in sheets. One of the men, who had ventured out for an instant, reported that it was so pitch dark, he could not see a yard before him. The moon, which was on the wane, would not rise for many hours; so that, even had they met with no opposition from Pierce Shea, it would have proved impossible, in so gloomy a night, to make way homeward through the dreary paths they had to travel. After their repast, the men felt the influence of the fatigue they had undergone during the day. In a little time their discourse flagged: one by one they stretched themselves by the fire, and fell asleep—all but Pierce Shea, the state of whose mind kept him waking. His feelings were in accord with the night and the situation: with the desolated place of refuge, the tempest, the darkness, and the weeping heavens without. He lay down on the earthen floor, but could not close his eyes; he started up, and walked from side to side of the waste apartment; he leaned his back against the wall; he sat in the deep recess of the window. Every position was

uneasy, because every one was inaction, and had no share in the purpose in which his soul was engaged. At last, with no defined motive, but merely in obedience to the fiery restlessness that swayed him, yet perhaps hoping something, he knew not what, Pierce muffled himself in his great-coat, and cautiously descending the narrow stairs, lest he should disturb his companions, sallied out into the night, regardless of its blasts, and of its drenching rain.

A kind of bellow, as if from the castle, startled him: now hope came in a more certain form, and he rushed in. He looked into the lower apartment; but could see nothing through the thick darkness. He heard nothing there except the munching noise of the horses' jaws, as they strove to make way through their hard provender. He rapidly mounted to the place where he had left his companions. The fire was nearly burnt out, but light enough still remained to show that, with the exception of his foster-brother, Andy, the men continued to sleep soundly. Andy, if not asleep, seemed bewitched. On the spot where Pierce had seen him stretch himself, the man now knelt, the hind part of his large and gaunt person resting on his heels; his head and body thrown back, as if to avoid something he feared might touch him; his left arm extended at full length to prevent a too near approach. While, with his right fist desperately clenched, he smote his strong breast-bone, and muttered, with distorted lips, and at race-horse speed, some prayers in the Irish language. He remained unaware of Pierce's entrance, and persevered in his attitude and occupation till the young man approached, and seized his outstretched arm, calling on him to tell what was the matter.

Andy gave a sudden plunge when his feeler was touched, and in stunning accents roared out the prayers he had before only mumbled. Then, withdrawing his eyes from the vacuum on which they had been set, he recognised his foster-brother. But this caused no abatement of his orisons, if we except a change in the tone of delivery: Andy continuing to pray on, and without answering Pierce's question, till he had finished the whole catalogue. It being well known that he had never burthened his mind with more of any one prayer than by mere force his mother had compelled him to learn in infancy, which scraps, at this time of day, were partly forgotten, poor Andy must have made rather an odd jumble when he went to his devotions. Pierce, over and over, repeated his inquiry.

"Arrah, then, Master Pierce, à-roon, is id yourself?" he at last moaned out, giving, as became his country, question for question, and rising slowly from his knees, while, with the tail of his coat, he wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"What is the matter, I say?" again asked Pierce.

"Didn't you see her, à-vich?"

"Her! who?"

"That cursed—Och, asy, Andrew! Howld a guard over your tongue, and mind what you're for sayin'! I mane the blessed body that was here."

"Good God, Andy! perhaps you mean Alley?"

"Mostha, but if it war Alley, it wasn't like the Alley we used to see, afore now. But the could grave, it's like enough, has spiled her, for good-an-all."

"What do you mean? Would you drive me mad, man? Whom *did* you see?"

"Come, Andy," said Pudge, who was awake since the bellow Andy had emitted when Pierce bore down his arm, and who now drew towards him—"Come, Andy, none o' your auld ways, spake out, clever and plane, at once."

"Go on!" roared Pierce.

"Wait a bit, à-chorra, till I think o' myself. Arrah, there's no use in talkin'. The very heart in my body, within, is frightened out o' me."

Pierce stamped, "Confound you!" Then, altering his manner, he said, in a chiding tone: "So you will not satisfy me, Andy?" and these words were accompanied by a look of reproach and anxiety that made stronger impression on the tardy Andrew than could the most violent fury.

"Mostha, only gi' me time to scrape my senses together—*ma-hurp-on-duoul!*\*—Oh, Chrosh-Christha!" And he drew his thumb over his forehead, as, conscience-smitten at his own untimely impiety, he looked around. "We must bar cursin' an' swearin' till we get out o' this, anyhow. Bud if ye war to see what myself seen, you wouldn't spake a word for this good twelvemonth to come. Well, Pierce, à-roon, I'll thry to think of it, an' don't be lookin' so dismal. I'd betther begin at the first settin'-out. Well: I stretched myself down here afore the fire, an' fell a-sleepin'. Whenever it happens that I don't sleep in my own nat'ral bed, Pierce, agra, I always an' ever have some

\* A curse.

unlucky dbrames; an' so it turned out this time. I thought to myself I seen poor Alley lying on the flure, forment me, a corpse like, only there was no one to wake her, or keen her; an' some baste, like a cat, bud as big as a year-ould calf, at his work pickin' out her eyes, an' makin' away wid 'em. An' I dhramed Alley got up, of a sudd'n, an' came over to me, without walkin'. Never an eye in her head, only the bare sockets. Then I gives my bawl, as I thought to myself, an' was broad awake in a minute. Bud, it's well I wish I never stopped sleepin' an' dhrahmin, ever sence, bad as it was to me at that present time.

"When I awoke, sure I thought, at the first goin' off, I was still snorin', an' hadn't wakened at all. I rubbed my eyes hard, wid my knuckles, to make sartin. Fur it was then I seen what was enough to kill dead any Christian crature—standin' close by you, Shamus"—Shamus started, his flesh began to quiver, and his strong grey hair to stir his old hat. "Standin' close by you there was a *thigha*,\* fresh cum out o' the ground—the windin'-sheet had the clay all over id. Her eyes, red as fire, stared into mine; not the laste like any of ours—blest be the hearers!—bud, for all the world, as if you ramed two red coals into a scull you'd get in a churchyard. An' there was nothin' on the fatures of her, or it, or whatever the Duoul—(och! whist, Andy. Don't let one of us say the Duoul's name again for the wide world)—nothin' bud the bare bones. Myself gave one screech, when she put out her hand, wid the mate scraped as clane from it as any of us could scrape a bone the hungriest day he ever saw; an' then, not a word I could let out. She stepped across the fire, an' was for comin' straight upon me, when God put it into my head to bless myself, an' say my prayers. Faith, the first word was enough for her. Aha! she didn't like that sort o' talk I'm thinkin'—(but that's betwixt ourselves). It's little of it goes far wid 'em, where she came from; so, out she druv through that weeny split in the wall as asy as myself ud go out in the dour, beyant. An'—Bud. Tunther-an'-ouns! (God forgive me!) Do ye mind *that*?"

On his knees Andy again dropped, and into his old position. Not forgetting his prayers, he extended his arm, and stared in a paroxysm of terror, as if on some object, towards the gloom that pervaded the entrance to the apartment. The others, at once conceiving the cause of this sudden change in his manner, slowly turned round, and saw an object, in whitish drapery, move along

\* Ghost.

the passage leading down the stairs of the building. Pierce Shea was the only one who had sufficient hardihood instantly to follow. The rest stood without motion or word. Alone, therefore, he ran forward, and was quickly lost in the darkness without.

This roused the anxiety, if not the courage of Andy, who loudly blubbered forth: "Oh, murther, murther, boys! an' will ye lave him to his death? Musha, then, won't *you* do nothin' to help the gorcoon, Shamus? Paudge, won't *you* run after him? Mille murther! is this the way ye sarve the poor fellow?"

Paudge seemed the most collected of the three. As for old Shamus, he looked quite confounded with terror, and could only ask:

"For what would we go? What good would the likes of us do against a *thigha*?"

"Murther!" still cried Andy—"He'll be bet to chaff! Och! an' nobody near him to put him in mind of his prayers! Paudge, won't you go?"

"An' what's the raison you don't go yourself, Andy?" asked Paudge, able to enjoy the frenzy of his more credulous companion, and to exert his own natural propensity for a joke.

"It's fitter for him, than for us," said Shamus.

"Not a bit," rejoined Paudge. "Only he knows the *thigha* has more ill-blood to him than to any other, 'case why, she was listenen' to all he said of her." Andy groaned an assent.

"But come, boys," Paudge went on: "We'll go altogether, to end disputes."

"For certain that's the only way," said Andy. "Bud you, Shamus, agra, you have your prayers better than myself or Paudge, by far. Little blame to you; you're ould enough to be the Father of us, an' had the time for it. An' so, Shamus, you'll go first."

"To be sure he will," said Paudge. "There isn't a man in the parish has 'em so pat, an', as the *soggarth*\* says, to your shame an' mine, Andy."

Shamus's mettle was touched in the only susceptible point. On a small scale he played the saint among his friends, with a zeal worthy of a more conspicuous sphere of action: his character was now at stake, and not even the most mortal terror could sway him from keeping it up.

"Never say it again," he answered, with a laughable effort at

\* Priest

a bold tone and manner: and out of the chamber he issued, repeating the Lord's Prayer in Irish, and in a loud voice. Paudge followed, and Andy brought up the rear, from pure apprehension of being left by himself.

They paused at the head of the twisted staircase. "Whisht!" said Shamus, in an emphatic whisper.

"Go on with the prayers, Shamus, honey," besought Andy, very imploringly.

"Come down! come down!" cried Pierce, from the apartment below.

"Oh, Veeha-vaugha!"\* exclaimed Andy, "she has a hould of him, an' he won't have a bone left!" And all at once, abandoning his personal fears, in his strong love for his foster-brother, he ran forward, jostling the others aside, and continued with such impetuosity that he tumbled nearly from the top to the bottom of the stairs. But, though severely bruised, Andy was on his legs in a moment, loudly vociferating:

"Pierce Shea!—Pierce Shea, à-chorra!"

"Here I am, Andy," answered Pierce, much nearer to Andy than he had imagined. He started back, and shouted still louder, at the sudden and close sound of his voice.

"But are you dead or alive, à-vourneen?" he continued, recovering his senses.

"I'm no worse than I was, Andy."

"Are you sure you're not spiled, entirely, à-cuishla-machree?" groping about in the impenetrable darkness, then coming in contact with Pierce, and feeling him all over.

"An' didn't the *thigha* give you never a sthuch, or bate you, at-all-at-all?"

"I told you before, Andy, I have met no hurt nor harm."

"Musha, then, God speed her! Bud," lowering his voice, and feeling for Pierce's ear, which he held while he whispered into it—"bud I hope she's gone, for-good-an'-all?"

"She's in this room, whatever she is."—Pierce stood at the door of an inner apartment.

"Och, presarve us! Hadn't we betther lave her her own way, à-vich?" The other men now bobbed up against him; he had not heard their approach, the wind howled so loudly.

"Murther!—who's that?" he bawled out.

"It's only myself, Andy," answered Paudge.

\* Virgin-mother.



"You must go back, Andy," resumed Pierce, "and get me a lighted stick from the fire. I'll search this place."

"Oh, then, Pierce, agra, don't think of sich a thing, if you have a regard for me."

"Or," continued Pierce, "you three guard the door where I now stand, and I'll be down to you in a minute." He re-ascended the stairs.

"He's for ruinin' himself!" exclaimed Andy, then in confidential whisper to the others:

"An', boys, wouldn't we be the three greatest *omadhauns*\* in the world to be stoppin' any honest *thigha* that manes us no harm?"

His companions silently assented, and all withdrew towards the stairs, leaving unobstructed the passage through the outward door. There was a rustle. They elbowed each other, Andy scarcely able to keep in his voice. A moment after they saw distinctly the much-dreaded *thigha* make her exit through the open door into the moonshine abroad, which had just begun to struggle to the earth through the thick clouds and drizzling rain, and of which they were the more sensible, as it formed so strong a contrast with the intense darkness in the apartment.

"Paudge! did you see anything?" whispered Andy.

"For sartin I did, Andy."

"Shamus, did you?"

"Oh, oh!" moaned Shamus.

"It's nigh-hand mornin'," Andy continued, "and she can't come back, plaise God."

"I hope not, blessed be His Holy Name!" said Shamus.

"An' wasn't it a great good luck we warn't in her road, Shamus? She'd cripple us for ever. But boys, for your lives, don't tell poor Pierce a word of her goin' out. He'd be thrapsin' after her thro' the rain an' wind, an' get his killin'. Little do we know where she'd entice him, or if we'd ever see his face again. Don't let on we seen her at all."

"You spake raison," they replied.

Pierce's foot was now heard descending; and he found his valiant men at their post. In his hand he bore a brand from the fire, but it emitted no flame, and of course gave no light. He entered the dark inner room, followed by the others, with their newly-acquired courage, derived from the certainty of having

\* Naturals.

nothing to fear. Blowing with his breath, he endeavoured to create a glare. The brand flickered a little, but not sufficiently to enable him to distinguish any object, and he gave up the task.

"We have no more wood to light a new fire," said Pierce, "but here will we watch till morning dawns." And all exposition was useless to turn him from his purpose.

The "tardy-gaited night" wore away, and the dull and cheerless beams of a damp winter's morning crept over the drooping scene without. But the light brought to Pierce's mind no elucidation of the mystery of the darkness. He searched and searched, and had his labour for his pains, the men closely keeping their own secret.

He ordered them to prepare for a renewed sally after Crohoore and Alley, resolving to spend this day even more assiduously than the former one: his spirit was lashed almost to madness at the thought of the fruitless lapse of time since his mistress had been torn from him. The men engaged themselves with the horses, and Pierce walked out to view the promise of the morning. He had been but a few minutes gone, when those within heard a loud shout, some distance from the castle. They hurried out to learn the cause.

Pierce was flying down the descent of the hill, like the eagle sweeping on his quarry. At some distance before, peculiarly distinguishable by his shuffling movement, yet at the top of man's utmost speed, darted forward Crohoore, the murderer. He had the skirt of his heavy outside coat slung across one arm, and in the other hand he held a short gun.

"There they are, at it, after all! There they are!" the men exclaimed, pausing almost at the first step that commanded a view of the fierce race. Indeed, the distance between them and the contenders rendered useless any immediate attempt at approach: the contest must end before they could come up to either. At least so they thought; or else consternation at the sudden occurrence overpowered their senses, and fixed them to the spot.

"Run, run, Crohoore-na-bilhoge!" exclaimed Andy, clapping his hands. "The swiftest foot in Clarah is ather you!"

"An' run your best, too, Pierce Shea!" echoed Paudge. "Your mother's son never had such a match before him!"

"He *does* run his best," shouted old Shamus, "an' cannot gain an inch on the *sheeog*!"

"*Dar-a-Christ!* No! but he loses many!" rejoined Paudge.

“The hill-wather, sent down by the night’s hard rain, is now afore ’em both, and that must end it!” Andy went on, with increased energy. “The banks are brim-full! See how it tears along, over stone and rock, a good seven yards across! Mortal man can’t clear that! Aye, Pierce, agra, there you’ll have him! Run, run, an’ don’t give him the turn to the bridge! My bouchal you war! Run! *Dar Dieu!* bud it’s a wicked race between them!”

Here all the men at last set forward to the scene of struggle, Pauge crying out, as he bounded along:

“Hould him there, now, Master Pierce, an’ we’ll tie him well for you!”

The fugitive had gained the verge of the boiling torrent. He paused a second, gave a glance behind, to measure his distance from his pursuer; pitched over his gun, flung off his outside coat, and drew back some yards for a run. This delay brought Pierce Shea within a few feet of his game. Panting, and already anticipating a seizure, his arm was extended—his fingers touched Crohoore’s shoulder—he shouted out—When the pursued flew forward, again won the brink, bounded from it like a bird, and cleared the dangerous water. Pierce was at its edge as Crohoore’s feet lightly landed on the other side. He did not hesitate. He also drew back, ran, made the spring, fell headlong in, and was swept away with resistless fury.

The men behind cried out in terror and anguish. Crohoore had wheeled round after his leap, as if conscious of his safety, and saw his pursuer whelmed in the roaring torrent. Instantly he ran with its course. The young man disappeared, rose again, flung his arms convulsively about, gave a piteous and despairing cry, and once more the muddy wave rolled, shrieking in triumph, over him. Crohoore gained, still running, a spot where, at his side, the wild stream struck and eddied against the bank. There he stopped, his eye firmly watching the waters, and his gun pointed.

Again the men called out, and Andy Houlohan, in a key above the rest, exclaimed:

“May my sowl never see glory, but he’ll shoot him when he rises!” and, on the word, he covered Crohoore with a pistol, and pulled the trigger. The flint only struck fire. Crohoore, though he must have been aware of Andy’s movement, did not notice it, but still stood fixedly on the watch. There was no time to aim another pistol at him, when the drowning man, whirled violently

by the current, came thump against the bank, and a second time rose to the surface. Crohoore, on his knee, in an instant reached out the gun, stopped him, and wheeled him into the eddy, from the fury of the stream. Then seizing Pierce by the hair, he drew him up, to all appearance lifeless.

But, placing the helpless head on his knee, and letting it hang downwards, Crohoore shook him, till the water rushed out of his mouth and nose, and a heavy moan bespoke returning life. Then he rubbed the temples and the hands; placed him sitting with his back against a thick and high tuft of rushes, and deliberately advanced to the verge of the water, as if to speak with the men at the other side. They, utterly surprised and confounded, shrank, although the wide torrent was between, a few steps backward. They knew not what to think; they had expected to see him do another murder.

Crohoore addressed them.

“For what stop ye there?—Speed your ways round by the bridge, and never mind the leap. I can’t stop *here*, and Pierce Shea wants a hand to help him.” With that he turned to go away.

“Stand your ground, Crohoore!”—shouted Andy, who, now that no *thigha* was in question, might be called a brave fellow—“Stand your ground!—Or, budge an inch, this way or that, an’ I’ll send the contents o’ this through your body!”—and he presented a musket.

Crohoore paused a moment. His face turned to them, he smiled in savage scorn and indifference. When he moved again, Andy’s gun, and two pistols held by Pudge and Shamus, were snapped at him—but only snapped, for, as in the former case, the powder did not even blaze in the pans. He, a second time, faced round, pushed the hat from his eyes, and approached as near as the water would let him.

“You’re just a set of foolish *sprissauins*,”\* he said, contemptuously. “Do you think I’d stop where I am, if I had any fear your guns could do me harm?—The life of one of ye is now in my hands, if I had a mind to take it.” And, to confirm his words, he fired his piece into the air, deliberately reloaded, and while so employed, added:

“Do as I bid you. Bring the gorçoon where he can have heat and comfort, or his death be on your heads, not mine.”

\* Silly fellows.

Crohoore finally turned away, walked leisurely over the bog, and, crossing a near eminence to the left, was lost to their view, long before the men, though they ran almost as soon as he moved, had gained the rustic bridge, which, at a considerable distance up the stream, gave safe passage to the other side.

Pierce Shea was conveyed home, in a very exhausted state. The torture of his mind and the sufferings of his body brought on, as the old chronicler at the wake had truly related, a bad fever. When past danger, his recovery was slow, owing to his impatience to be well; and two months elapsed before he was able to renew the search for his mistress.

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## CHAPTER VI.

BUT while Pierce himself was rendered incapable of pursuing the ravisher of his mistress, a substitute appeared in the person of one from whom no such zeal or friendship could have naturally been expected.

Jack Doran was the son of an opulent gentleman farmer, who lived two miles nearer to the city of Kilkenny than did Ned Shea, Pierce's father, or Tony Dooling. His sire we may well call a profligate old fellow: he had never married, and, of his many offspring, all were illegitimate. Reared up without a mother's care, and with the loose example of his father before his eyes, it is not to be wondered that Jack lacked morals. He was known as a dashing fellow—to use the local idiom, “a tatterin' tearin' fellow;” dressing well; doing what he liked; riding a great active horse; the *tout ensemble* of his appearance and figure a medium between the blood of the neighbouring town and the rustic *boulamskeech*,\* whose glory was gathered by fighting at fairs and patterns, and drinking inordinate potations of bad beer, in hedge ale-houses. Not that Jack himself did not now and then condescend to eclipse other young fellows at a pattern; then, happy and envied was the girl who had him for a dance;

\* *Boulamskeech*.—Some perversion now prevails of the use of this word. Its ancient meaning was fine—*shield-striker*; its present we have glanced at above.

though, it is added, he often left her cause to rue her vanity. Wherever he was, he would be king. And king he was acknowledged to be, even in title; Rhiab Doran, or King Doran, being generally his appellation. Then, although no vulgar fighter, Jack could command, at pleasure, all the fighting "boys," that is, the most wicked or troublesome fellows in the barony. Absolute reign he had, just as he wished it: none dared say him nay; for treason to Rhiab Doran begat a broken head. In person he was robust and well-formed; but with features hard and harsh, and disagreeable to look at. From his father he had plenty to spend, without doing anything for it. So, indeed, on the same easy terms, had his numerous brothers and half-brothers; none of them ever attending, in any way, to the old gentleman's extensive and profitable farms, from one end of the year to the other. How that liberal giver, as well as begetter, contrived to keep all his glory up, in his own person, as well as theirs—for he lived as gaily and as idly as any of his offspring—appeared to many, notwithstanding his considerable land profits, rather surprising. He and they evidently lived above his ostensible means; yet nor he nor they owed a shilling to any one. Head-rents were duly settled, tithe-proctors and tax-gatherers defied, and the old sinner and his brood paid their way, right and left, as they went along, in a dashing hand-gallop, to—the Devil. He had a hidden mine of wealth, it was said. He had found a veritable pot, choke-full of money. The story was differently told—thus by himself:

Passing by a monastic ruin, in a neighbouring town, one moon-light night—or morning rather—the old gentleman heard voices within in earnest conversation. The singularity of such a circumstance made him stop. He stole softly to the building, peeped in, and saw three men busily employed digging in the rubbish. They wrought hard, and not in silence: from their conversation he could discover that they were digging for nothing more or less than a huge pot of gold, which one of them had three times dreamt was buried in that very place. Suddenly they stopped.

"God save our souls!" said the smallest of the three, "here's something hollow under my spade." "Clear the earth away, quick," said another. And then they stooped into the hole they had made, and with much puffing and blowing lifted up something, and were just about to place it on the ground.

"When," quoth old Mr. Doran, "a loud screech came from the hole, and then a flash of lightning, and away the three ran,

leaving spade, and pick-axe, and everything, behind 'em, the cowardly thieves, that hadn't the courage to stay a moment, and be rich men! For the blessed Name, mentioned by one of 'em, banished the spirit of the person that put all the money there, and, till that moment, had been watching it. He was flying off before their faces, when they cut and ran. I could do no less than step in after them, and take care of the pot. It was too heavy to carry home with me; so I only hid it out of the way, for that time. Many's the night after it cost me to remove it, little by little, to my own house."

From this source, then, it would appear, the old gentleman continued easily to feed his own and his sons' extravagance. Thus turning to a spendthrift account that which might have been better employed, if, as he himself candidly expressed it, the original finders had just had the heart to brave the spirit's scream for the loss of his treasure.

Now, Jack Doran, or Rhiah Doran, eldest son and hope, by the way, of this lucky old night-walker, once danced with Alley Dooling at a wedding, and became desperately enamoured.. Her then almost childish vanity was pleased at the flattering conquest, and, not weighing consequences, she foolishly coquetted with him. Jack, though a constant declaimer against the shackled state, vouchsafed, after some hard conflicts with himself, to ask her of her father. Notwithstanding the honour intended, his reception was none of the best. Old Tony fell into an unseemly passion; turned him from the door by the shoulders; reproached him with his birth; set the dogs at his heels, and commanded him "never to cross the threshold again, as long as his name was Jack Doran." But, worse than all this, Jack got a glimpse of his fair tormentor, while thus suffering for her sake, and she positively seemed to enjoy his disgrace. He saw her giggle and smile at him, and then, with mock gravity, make him a parting adieu.

No matter. Rhiah Doran was not so easily to be put off, in such a way. He summoned his liege men, and had recourse to a method then in almost daily practice, and even at this day of frequent occurrence. He watched his opportunity; made a forced *enlèvement*; and, at the head of his bravos, took Alley by force from her father's house.

It was the harvest season, and Pierce Shea had been to Killenny to hire a number of reapers, who, at that season, always repair in swarms to the streets of large towns, awaiting bidders. He was returning home with them, when the screams of a woman

drew his notice, and Jack Doran came forward, surrounded by his myrmidons, bearing Alley before him on horseback. Her well-known voice called on Pierce for aid. He sprang to her, seized the horse by the bridle, dragged Jack from the saddle, and Alley fell into his gallant arms. Then rose the storm of battle. Pierce, seizing a sickle from one of his followers, and with Alley hanging on his arm, bravely defended himself with the other; his reapers manfully assisted him; every sickle was unslung; and they fought as "reapers descended to the harvest of death," rather than to the cutting of the peaceful crops that awaited their gathering.

But they were inferior in numbers, as also in desperation, to Doran's party, and, we may add, in arms, and the arts of using them: for murderous alpeens, wielded by the most experienced hands, and blithe and ready for just such a field, came down upon them on every side. Victory seemed to declare for Jack; who now, watching his time, aimed a crushing blow at Pierce, still encumbered by his senseless charge. The young man partly broke its force with his sickle, but it nevertheless wounded him severely in the temple: in return, he gave his assaulter a frightful gash, that laid the cheek open from eye to jaw; tauntingly remarking, at the same time, that he thus bestowed on him a mark that, one day or other, would help to hang him.

In this doubtful state of the battle, a timely reinforcement, headed by old Tony Dooling, and his neighbour, old Ned Shea, came up. Doran and his army were driven from the field, and Alley borne home in triumph by her lover, both covered with blood; he, with his own and Rhiah Doran's, and she with the warm stream that flowed from his temples. This adventure extinguished altogether Alley's desire for extensive conquests; her undivided heart was gratefully given to her wounded champion and preserver. During his cure, she was his attendant, and dressed his wound with her own pretty hands. And her soft smile, her tearful eye, and perhaps the honey of her lip—but of this one cannot be positive, as young maidens scarcely ever wish for more than one witness on such occasions—tended more to his recovery than all the salves and cataplasms made up by all the old doctresses in the parish; though many there were of great celebrity in the neighbourhood as rural physicians.

At the time of our history, such an outrage as that perpetrated by Jack Doran was looked upon more as a chivalrous exploit, deserving of praise for the danger to be run, and the courage



and boldness necessary in the execution, than as a breach of the law, subjecting the doers to the law's most awful punishment. We question if, to this moment, the technical "abduction" has any meaning or translation among even the second or third generations of the same people. Anthony Dooling took, therefore, no legal notice of the transaction, thinking that the ill-success of the enterprise, and the ugly wound inflicted on the principal actor, were a sufficient visitation for the outrage.

This affair took place the harvest before the opening of the story, and is here related, in order that the following dialogue may be understood. The speakers are old Ned Shea and Jack Doran; the scene in Shea's house; the accompaniment a huge jug of strong ale, home-brewed, of course, and then the only common drink of those who could not every day afford wine.

"Give me your hand, Jack. *Dhar law ma chordius chreete!*\* but I'll have a hearty shake at it. A good right you have to be the bitter enemy of all belonging to Tony Dooling—rest his soul!—and to me and mine: and where's the man but yourself would be the friend instead of the foe?—My notion of you always was that you were a scatter-brain-o'-the-divil, a raking, rollicking fool of a fellow, but with the heart in the right place; and that makes up for all. I had a drop o' the same blood in me myself, once upon a time, as everybody knows."

"For what should I keep up my ill-will, Ned? Poor Tony used me badly, to be sure; but he's now in his grave; and we hold no malice to the dead. As to Pierce, poor fellow, he did no more to me than I'd have done myself to him, had I met him on the same spot, running away with my *colleen*† from me. And, as for the reaping he gave me,"—holding up his finger to his seamed cheek, which had considerably drawn the muscles of the mouth at that side of the face, and now, when he assumed a careless grin, gave a twisted and rather hideous expression to the seat of risibility—"why, it was only to say, 'thank you, kindly, Jack,' for what I lent him, a minute before. I was doting foolish about Alley, Ned, at that time; and am no ways backward to say I have a hankering regard for her to this day. But I didn't know that herself and Pierce were contracted, or I'd have run my hand into the fire rather than do what I did. I thought she had no great dislike to my ugly face—it wan't so ugly then

\* "*By the hand of my gossip!*" a common asseveration among the old folk.

† *Colleen*, young lass.

as it is now, you know"—And he grinned again, in such sort that, though it must have been meant to make a good impression, old Ned felt uneasy and queerish, and shifted himself on his chair—"And I thought, Tony—rest his soul!—the only bar between us. But all's past and gone, and forgot and forgiven. I'll show her and Pierce that I love them both still, as I told you before. For I'll turn the country upside-down to give her to the boy of her heart: 'bad end to me, but I will!

"Och! never fear you, *ma bouchal!* And it's your own self can do it!" exclaimed Ned Shea, again clasping the hand of his guest.

"Yes, Ned. I make bold to say there's not that other man in the country able to hunt her out so soon as myself. 'The boys' are ready to go thro' fire and water at the turn of my hand, and we have them far and near, at a pinch. It must go hard if that limb-o'-the-divil, Crohoore, can hold out against me, when once I set about ferreting him. Which I *will* do, day and night, from this blessed moment."

"*Slaun-tha-guth*, Jack! I hope poor Pierce will live to give you the thanks you deserve. But the gorjoon is in a bad way now, Jack"—the old man let a tear drop into his cup—"I pray God to leave me my only child. But, living or dead, he'll never be the same to me if Alley is gone from us, or, what's worse, a ruined crature. Come, Jack, here's long life and prosperity to you, and may you have the present wish of your heart!"—

"Thank you, thank you, Ned. And now fill again." He stood up and raised his glass, while he slowly said—"A speedy uprise to Pierce. And, when he recovers, may he get Alley from my hand just as I'd like to give her!"—

They both gulped down the toast, holding each other's hand. As he resumed his seat, Jack gave the old man's fist an additional squeeze of great vehemence, while he exclaimed:

"Ruin to my soul, Ned Shea, but that *is* the present wish of my heart!"

Who and of what kind were "the boys," upon whose assistance Doran so confidently reckoned, now seems an inquiry of some weight and interest.

The time of our story is placed in that period when Whiteboyism first began to appear in Ireland. Labouring under the excessive penal code then in almost full operation, though since partly repealed, and excluded by one of its enactments from

even an opportunity to become educated, and so gain an enlightened, or at least temperate view of their own situation, the Irish peasantry, neglected, galled, and hard-driven, in poverty, bitterness, and ignorance, without competent advisers, without leaders a step above themselves, and scarcely with an object, wildly endeavoured to wreak vengeance upon, rather than obtain redress from, the local agents of some of the most immediate hardships that maddened them. First of all, there was, doubtless, a religious frenzy to urge them on. They saw their creed denounced, their form of worship, under heavy penalties, interdicted. They knew that some years before, their priests had been hunted like foxes, and forced to hide in caves and other places of concealment, from the keen scent and vengeance of the most insignificant professors of the rival religion, who, with impunity, took arms in their hands to enforce the rigid letter of an almost exterminating law, still to their knowledge unrepealed. In the very district in which the scene of our tale is laid,—and the anecdote is put forward as one laying claim to strict belief,—a rustic congregation had once assembled, with their priest, in the open air, to perform their devotions, when three or four mean mechanics of the other persuasion appeared, with guns in their hands, fired among the crowd, killed some, and wounded the clergyman, as, like the Scotch Covenanter of old, he preached to his flock in the wilderness.

Such occurrences operating upon the mind of the wretched and uneducated peasant, who had not intellect or patience to weigh logical distinctions, begot a hatred to the opposite creed, as rancorous as it was whole and entire. He hated it because it was the privileged one; because his own was persecuted; because he attributed to its spirit the civil excommunication against him and his priests, and even the petty and gratuitous annoyances he suffered from its lowest professors. And in such a state of feeling he found himself, while already ground down by unnatural rack-rents, compelled to contribute to the support, in splendour and superiority, of that very rival Church. In fact, to pay to its ministers the hard-earned pittance he could not afford to his own. This view of his situation first made the Irish peasant a Whiteboy.

But perhaps the exquisite tyranny of the merciless being, into whose hands the collection of tithes had fallen, gave the immediate spur to his headlong, and often savage course. With this supposition we shall summon Peery Clancy, tithe-proctor,

at the era of our history, for the parish of Clarah, to stand at once before us.

Having failed in every speculation of early life, and become old without credit to himself; having been twice in jail—once for debt and once for sheep-stealing—Peery Clancy, at fifty years of age, blazed forth a tithe-proctor. He was a waddling, lively old fellow, with a curious struggle of expression in his hard features, and a queer jumble in his manners. The stern bully was on his pursed brow and in his clenched teeth; but, when you looked fixedly at him, there appeared, in his rambling eye, a shuffling consciousness that he had not earned your good opinion. And there was in the general wincing and uneasiness of his person, particularly in the awkward rising, and falling, and see-sawing of his arm, as he spoke to you, something like the fidgets of the shamefaced child, that often dreaded and deserved a whipping. A certain air of purse-pride ran, meantime, through all this. Once in his presence, you would disagreeably feel he was a man who, however aware he might be of the contempt of the world, possessed, in spite of obloquy, or even of the threat and danger to which he stood exposed, resolution of character to act his part without flinching.

His clothes, of good texture, were made half after the country fashion, half after that of the town. He wore his hat hangingly, with the fur brushed the wrong way, to convince, at a look, that it was superior to the common felt vulgarly worn. His many-coloured silk handkerchief, his coat of good broadcloth, composed of as much material as would make two of your modern cut, and his kerseymere small-clothes and leggings, really gave him a look of wealth, and of superiority of some kind.

His speech was made up of rude assertion and frightful oaths. When among those who should bow to his predominance, and tolerate his insolence, it was full of obscene jests and ribald humour, little becoming his grey hairs. Before the last change of profession, Peery had been as bare as Job in his worst day; now, however, his coffers were strong, and he could command a round thousand.

A round thousand, earned, principally, by squeezing from the very, very poorest their last acid shilling: *they* were his best profit; his fat of the land, his milk and honey. Such as could at once afford to pay his exorbitant demands, did so, no matter how unwilling, and got rid of him. But the wretched being, who, from the rising of the sun till many hours after his setting, was

bent beneath the first malediction of heaven, yet gained thereby but a scanty supply of the meanest food, rags for his covering, and despair for an inmate (among many others) of the hovel, that did not keep off the inclemency of the weather—this was the prey Peery contrived to gripe, with a gripe never relaxed till he had crushed his victim.

He called for his tithe. Perhaps the time was not auspicious to dispose of the little crop, or perhaps it was not matured. From any cause, no matter what, Dermid could not pay him. Peery, as an indulgence, suggested a note of hand. If Dermid could write his name, the bill was executed in form; if not, after many bungling attempts to feel or hold the pen in his horny fingers, he set his mark to it. Time wore on; the bill became due: but the amount was still not in the way. Peery vouchsafed some of his rude jests to the daughter or wife, which, though they made them blush, were, perforce, swallowed as a mark of good will by Dermid, who, forcing himself to laugh, handed a *douceur*, and the note of hand was renewed. Meantime, the crop has been unprofitable, or the landlord has seized it for his rent. From the unexpected smallness of the receipts, or the law costs attending the seizure, to say nothing of various other casualties, there is no provision to meet the assiduous Peery, who again makes his appearance. Dermid sells some of his potatoes: by stinting himself and his family of even this miserable and only food, he gives another *douceur*. When payment is a third time demanded, he is worse off than ever. Peery sees the state of affairs. He begins to scowl; thunders out fearful oaths that he must be paid. And abruptly departs to put his threat into execution.

The demand may not exceed—how much will the affluent or easy reader think?—one pound. Peery issues what is called a citation to the ecclesiastical courts. This increases the sum more than double. There is a decree; and this, again, is followed by a civil process. The law generally allows one shilling and one penny (Irish) for the trouble of filling the blanks in the process. Peery generally, takes this trouble on himself, that is, fills them himself, and pockets, to use his own language, *the thirteen*. The same sum is also allowed for the service upon the party. Peery employs a needy understrapper to serve, at twenty pence per pay, and two “throws” of whiskey, one hundred unlucky parties: here he again “fobs” the difference. Thus, Dermid incurs still more debts, and Peery makes still more money.

The understrapper, promising the whole weight of his vast friendship on the occasion, than which nothing is farther from his power or will, contrives to pick up his shilling, too, at the very moment he serves the process.

The sessions come on; Dermid vainly prays for indulgence. By some desperate shift he contrives to scrape together the sum first demanded; but learns, in affright and consternation, that it is now trebled. He cries out that he is ruined; wrings his wretched hands; perhaps the broken-spirited and contemptible man weeps; and perhaps is, at that very moment, reminded by Peery, "that sure his well-lookin' wife or daughter might asily get him the money." Full to the chin with rage he cannot vent, Dermid returns home. His case comes on before the "county barrister;" and, as the mild and sapient lawgivers of the session-court term it, he is decreed. His only horse or cow is carried off. Peery brings the animal to public street-auction, and, at one-fourth of the value, knocks it down to—himself; and then sells it at a good profit. He charges his reverend employer with the expenses for the recovery of Dermid's tithe; against this charge sets the auction-price of the horse; and it sometimes happens that the clergyman is a loser by the transaction.

Need it be observed that, through the whole course of this affair, Peery, and Peery alone, had the advantage. He got the two douceurs from Dermid; he filled the process; he got it served at a profit of eight hundred per cent.; he gained two pounds, at least, on the cow or horse; and, at last, bamboozled and robbed his reverend employer, and sat down in the evening, over a bumper of whiskey punch, to drink (his poor mother calling him a Roman Catholic) long life to the minister's tithes, and may they never fail him!

This is no fancy-sketch, The man and the statements are carefully copied from the life and the facts. And if it be doubted that, exactly at the time of this narration, such a man as Peery did not figure, we can only engage to produce, at a fair warning, as many living fac-similes as may be specified. Observing, that an original for our picture, at the present hour, ought to entitle us to lay claim to an original for it half a century earlier. For society may have improved, the arts and sciences may have advanced, the Bastille may have been torn down in one country, and the Inquisition abolished in another; but the Irish tithe-proctor of this day, and the Irish tithe-proctor of fifty years ago, are individuals of one and the same species.

And what has become of Dermid? Why, he attended the sessions-court to hear himself decreed. He attended the sale of his "baste," to see it knocked down for a song. He turned towards his home, hastily concluding that, for the poor man and the Papist, there was no law or mercy in the land. He continued his long walk, chewing the ever-rising cud of this bitter, and desperate, and obstinate thought. He brought to mind, at the same time, all the life's labour and sweat he had uselessly expended. He crossed the threshold of his puddled hovel, and heard his children squalling for food; and then he turned his back upon them. He walked hastily abroad; gave a kick to the idle spade he met on his way, and sought out some dozen Dermids or Paddies similarly situated with himself. Between them they agreed to take the tithe-proctors and the law of tithes into their own hands; proposed silly oaths to each other: and the result was, "the boys" of whom Jack Doran made mention, called, without abbreviation, Whiteboys.

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## CHAPTER VII.

RHIAH DORAN strictly adhered to the voluntary promise he had given old Ned Shea, and sought Crohoore in every place that could be supposed to afford him secrecy and shelter.

As before stated, it was the general opinion that Crohoore had not removed from the neighbourhood, he being frequently seen, even at a late period; always alone, and walking at a quick pace, his short gun in his hand; and from those who thus casually encountered him, or who averred so, not seeming to shun any observation. But his pursuers vainly looked to meet him: their path he never crossed. And while Rhiah Doran put all his wits to work, and in every way availed himself of the assistance of his subjects, over the extensive range of country under his obedience—thus, it might be said, having on the alert every eye for six miles round—all proved to no purpose. Crohoore-nabilhoge, or Crohoore of the billhook, the surname given to him since the murder, was still at large.

But, notwithstanding the allegiance due to King Doran, a

principle had gone abroad that powerfully operated in Crohoore's favour, and served to counteract the general zeal that might otherwise, by determined combination, have speedily delivered him into the hands of his pursuers. This was nothing else than a now firm opinion, established in the minds of the population of the whole country, arising out of the broad hints given at the wake and fully credited (as we have already seen), that Crohoore lived in constant intercourse with "the good people," and was under their sovereign protection. Those who have had local opportunities to observe, at the period we deal with, the mental habits of the peasantry of Ireland, and their devoted belief in the fairy superstition, will at once accede to the probability of such a statement. To those we appeal, and leave it for them to determine whether or not we outstep, in the present instance, the modesty of nature.

It happened about this time that, having received private and anonymous intelligence, (the informant, divided between his fears and his conscience, thus subtly trying to cheat the devil in the dark), that Crohoore might be come on in a particular direction, Doran led a select party to the ground, and remained anxiously on the watch. It was night. For some hours they guarded together one point. Then the leader left a sentinel there, and withdrew his main body to search in another and nearer quarter. The man thus posted alone, having been wearied with much previous fatigue, unconsciously dropt asleep. How long he slept is unknown, when he was aroused by a smart slap on the shoulders, and desired to stir himself. "Yes, yes, avich, I'm comin'," said the man, scrambling up. Ye have the bloody dog at last, have ye?"

He was now on his legs, and, facing round, saw, instead of the comrade he had expected, "the bloody dog" himself, standing within a few yards of him, his short gun held to his hip, as if prepared for instant action. The valiant, as well as watchful, sentinel started back. Crohoore advanced a step on him, and spoke in a cautious tone.

"Stand where you are, man; I have no mind to harm you. Thady, where's the little sense I thought you had? Loosin' your night's-rest to no purpose? Mind your own callins, Thady Muldowny, an' never mind me. I give the advice, let you follow it, or, as sartin as we both stand here, you'll live to sorely rue it. Jack Doran an' the other boys are down at Tom Murphy's barn, lookin' afther me: that's all they'll have for it, as yourself sees.



Go to 'em ; say I sent you ; say you were spakin' a bit to me, and tell 'em the same words I tould you. Go your ways, Thady, an' remember the friendly warnin' I give. Keep to your warm bed, by nights, for the future." He waved his arm in the direction he wished Thady to travel, then turned on his heel the opposite way, and, to Thady's mortal joy, was quickly out of view, Thady, by the way, attributing to Crohoore's clemency only, the remains of the breath, by aid of which he continued to mutter all the while his bugbear was visible : " Lord save us ; Lord protect an' save us. Praise be to God !"

Running with all his might, Thady gained the barn mentioned by Crohoore, and there, indeed, found his companions where he had been told to look for them. He did not fail to relate the adventure, with some little additions, calculated effectually to disguise the fact of his own drowsiness and subsequent inanity. From this night forward few were found willing to engage personally in the pursuit after Crohoore. The hint given to Thady Muldowny appeared to have reason in it. Mortal might, when put in competition with a person who was concealed and fondled by the mischief-doing " good people," seemed not only useless, but extremely dangerous in the main. And so, except Rhiah Doran himself, and one or two others, who were either superior to the general superstition, or wished, in the teeth of their qualms, to establish a character for unparalleled courage, all refrained from an experiment which was likely, if persevered in, to entail bewitched cows, blighted faces, withered limbs. Aye, even the whole and entire abduction of themselves or their children, whichever happened to be the most comely, with nothing but a besom, or the handle of a pitchfork left in their place, and changed by the hands of the good people, into a general likeness of the corpse of the person thus ravished, while the victim passed a life of deception, jollity, and splendour in the fairy hall contrived within some neighbouring " rath."

Doran, however, continued fixed and faithful to his purpose. He was invariably on Crohoore's track whenever he could indirectly hear a whisper of his probable motions. To those who wondered at his fool-hardiness, and still more at his exemption from hurt or harm, he jocosely said he had got a charm from a fairy-doctor that preserved him in a whole skin. And this plea, although it might have been meant in jest, was argument sound and good with those who boasted no such talisman against the fantastic devilries of the spiteful little race, whom they thought

mischievous, while they pronounced them "good," and who thus, like all dangerous despots, came in for that

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"Mouth-honour, breath,  
Which the poor heart would fain deny, but dare not."

Perhaps Doran gained, by his assiduity, one or two points of some value to him, apart from the self-gratification and reward of doing a generous and humane action. In the first place, his readiness to forget old grievances, incurred from Pierce Shea, and Alley and her father, bought him "golden opinions from all sorts of people." His coming forward so actively to guard in adversity the interests of those who, having once been his friends, had changed into his bitterest foes, made a popular impression, the fervency of which no words could express. Even by the soberest of his neighbours, Jack Doran's bad qualities were now forgotten. Another advantage resulted that, in all probability, he prized still more. "The boys" of the district applauded his intrepidity to the skies, and whispers arose, not lost on Doran's quick ear, that the whole barony did not contain another man so fit to lead them on nocturnal expeditions of a different kind, to concentrate their strength, and direct their half-conceived views. In fact to be their Captain.

Things were in this state, when Pierce Shea, after his illness of two months, was at length able to resume, in his own person, the pursuit after Alley and the Murderer of her parents. Doran's manly conduct had reached his ear from a hundred admiring tongues: his father brought them together, and Pierce could not avoid feeling gratitude and full forgiveness towards his old rival. When Doran once more renewed his offer to join him in all future operations, a bond of amity was immediately formed between them; hands were over and over shaken; old Ned shouted forth his joy and approbation; the cup was more than once pledged to success; and the young men called each other the greatest friends in the world.

But, seemingly assisted, and cautiously followed, by Andy Houlohan,—who at length remained the sole creature that from duty or love (other motives were out of question) would venture to track Crohoore through his own green raths, in some one of which they firmly believed him a resident—the united efforts of Shea and Doran proved useless as ever. Night after night, sometimes day and night, they were on foot, or on horseback,

over the country. Confused rumours of Crohoore's appearances incessantly, though indirectly, reached them: some of these reports seemed sufficiently bewildering and startling. It was averred, though none dared come forward to authenticate the statements, that the *shingawn* had frequently been seen, at one moment, down by a certain stream, in a certain hollow; and—as a comparison of notes demonstrated, at the next moment, and by a different person, many miles away, sitting on as certain a stone, on the top of as certain a hill, his lank red hair fluttering in the wind, and his red eye turned wistfully off, as if watching the progress of some of his many accommodating messengers, through the extreme distance.

Andy Houlohan need not have given to his foster-brother a more unbounded proof of devoted affection than by at present treading in his footsteps. On proper ground, Andy could have braved and despised, as readily as any man, substantial danger from bludgeon, alpeen, or pistol. But let it not be supposed that an iota of courage now came to aid his love. Of all human beings, arrived at years of maturity (we will not say discretion), Andy Houlohan yielded to supernatural creatures of every denomination, whether *thigha*, *banshee*, *fetch*, *phóoka*, or *sheeog*, the fullest credence and dominion, and professed the strongest aversion to a rencountre with any of them, of what class soever. But as the latter race were by far the most numerous, the most intermeddling, and the most mischievous, his dread of them bore proportion to his idea of their nature and numerical importance, and, when once out in a lonesome place, never left him. There was one notion, however, which, distinct from his genuine affection for Pierce (and though it still had no feature of courage), helped Andy to persevere in his perilous wanderings. It got, somehow, into his head, that he might be “under God,” the happy means of preserving his foster-brother from harm. Less likely things had come to pass. Pierce was hot “from a child up,” and, coming in contact (which he must) with the good people, would, if left to himself, be ruined entirely. Andy calculated that the only chance of safety to his *dolth* depended on a prudent or conciliating policy, (and as he resolved it should be), upon the obsequious conduct he prescribed for his own adoption in any such appalling predicament.

So, on he followed, picking his steps as cautiously as if the ground were strewn with new-laid eggs,—or, to use his own expression, “as a hen walking over a stubble-field;” on, through

thick and thin, night and morning, after Shea and Doran : still no Crohoore was found. The prepossessions of the country-people continued to obstruct all regular inquiry : finally, grown inveterate, they now refused to supply even their former reports of accidental meetings with him.

But if *they* conceived that Crohoore ought not to be meddled with, in consequence of his close connexion, identity indeed, with the good people, the magistrates of the county seemed of a different opinion. Daring robberies had lately become frequent. The houses of the rich were broken open at night, and plundered of everything valuable. The very poorest were despoiled of their little pittance. And all this was perpetrated by some unknown and undiscovered gang, every trace of whom had hitherto evaded the civil powers. Now, however, from the stories the magistrates had heard of Crohoore, it struck them that a person showing such resolution, closeness, and cleverness of character, was very likely, whatever he might lack in personal prowess, to be the leader of exactly such a band of secret and adroit desperados. This strong surmise was confirmed by accounts of his having been often met in the direction where the outrages happened. A reward, immediately subsequent to the murder of the Doolings, had been offered for his apprehension ; but the new suspicions mentioned, made him an object of increased interest, and the *posse comitatus* were accordingly straining every nerve on the look out.

Crohoore-na-bilhoge baffled, however, his new pursuers, as well as his old. Sometimes our friends, Shea, Doran, and Andy, fell in with the other party, and all united, following up some hint proposed on either side, in common chase and common cause. But all efforts went for nothing. The game left them still in fault, and—it was rather extraordinary—without seeming to be a whit more in dread of apprehension. To the country-people, if they were beliefworthy, who dared not molest him, and who chanced to stray out at night, his appearance was as frequent as ever, they, meantime, keeping all that snug among themselves.

It were but a dull repetition here to give in detail the trifling circumstances attendant upon the daily and nightly search of Pierce Shea, Andy, and their new friends ; as, up to a certain evening, their toilsome occupation differed only in the different route chosen. But, upon the evening alluded to, an occurrence took place worth recording.

The month of March had began, when a man from a remote

district, sufficiently out of reach of the supernatural tyrants of Clarah, their jurisdiction, or anything to be feared from it, came to Shea's house, where Doran now constantly lived, with information that, but a few hours before, he, the informant, saw Crohoore pass along the hills in the direction of Castlecomer, a village some miles distant. Shea, Doran, and Andy, instantly set forward, pressing their spy to join them. But he declined the adventure; even he thinking that he had run quite enough hazard by pointing out the way. And Andy agreed with him, and thought it reasonable.

Our friends engaged in this expedition more ardently, and with more hopes of success than for a long time they had felt. Their depression was proportionably strong as, after another night of useless toil, they wended homeward, in the cold grey morning, through the little glen of Ballyfoile.

This place, four miles north-east of Kilkenny city, is a romantic dell, formed by hills of considerable height, and of abrupt and almost perpendicular descent, having rather an appearance of art, from the similarity of their form; at some points, approaching each other's bases so closely as not to leave more than eight or ten paces between, while at no part are they more than forty yards asunder. They are clothed to the summit and adown their sides with thick and nearly impenetrable furze-bush, tangled underwood, and dwarf-thorn. Their sides are indented with deep channels, formed by rushing water from above, when, after heavy rain, it falls, with cataract speed, to swell the little brook that, at other times, just trickles through the narrow green slip of valley below. There is nothing of sublimity or grandeur about the spot; yet, to a spectator placed midway up the glen, there is much to create interest. Pent up so closely, no continuous scenery at either hand, nothing but the firmament visible overhead, and, from much abrupt curving, shut out from all view at either end, he would (if a simple and contemplative character, easily acted on by the ever-changing and wondrous aspect of nature) feel that there hung around the place an unusual air of loneliness, making it the fit abode of the prowling fox and timid rabbit, its only inhabitants.

About ninety years ago, this glen was a dark and intricate wood of spreading oak, affording a favourable and favourite rendezvous to a desperate band of freebooters that ruled over the neighbourhood, and who were formidable enough, as tradition goes, to defeat and pursue in Kilkenny a company of "troopers,"

sent against them from that city. Since then it has often given the same refuge to persons carrying on the same profession, though on a more contracted scale. Only a few years ago, the last adventurous fellows who levied tribute upon travellers' purses, in the district, lay concealed here for more than a week, while the whole civil force was in pursuit of them, and were at length only apprehended when they sought an asylum elsewhere.

Shea, Doran, and Andy, pursuing their way homeward through this little solitude (which, at the time of our narration, bore nearly the same aspect it does at present), had gained that part where the hills approached each other nearest. Pierce Shea was a few paces before Doran, and Andy still farther in advance, when Pierce thought he heard something like the snap of a lock behind him. He turned quickly round and saw a man, a little at Doran's back, but out of their line of march, in the act of raising a gun to his shoulder, visibly with intent to fire on one of the party. But before Pierce could use any precaution, or before the fellow could pull his trigger, a shot from the opposite hill, grazing Doran's breast, lodged in the arm of the assassin, and the deadly weapon fell from his hand. Shea sprung upon him and held him fast. Andy, who had heard the shot, but was further ignorant of the transaction, made all speed to his foster-brother, and Doran, looking as if confounded at the suddenness of the thing, or else at his own narrow escape, for the ball had cut through the breast of his coat, was the last to turn to the spot.

"Scoundrel!" cried Pierce, "tell me your reason for wishing to take away my life! Did I ever wrong or injure you? I cannot recollect having seen you before."

"Arrah, man, you never done anything to me," answered the surly-looking fellow.

"Why, then, did you aim at my life? I am now sure I was your mark."

"Sure enough!" said the man.

"For what cause, I ask you again?"

"Tunther-an-ouns! How do I know for what? Ax that question of them that sent me to do it. An' don't shake my arm afther that manner: its smashed enough widout your help."

"And who are they that sent you?"

"Avoch, now!" was the answer.

"Well, God Himself had a hand in it, Master Pierce," here interrupted Andy, who conceived, after some effort, that he had

pretty correctly guessed the occurrence. "He was goin' for to shoot you, Pierce, agra, an' see—it's himself he kilt."

Doran drew nearer.

"I'd swear upon the mass-book, Pierce," said he, "that Crohoore-na-bilhoge is at the bottom of this cursed affair."

"Don't, then, a-bouchal. Maybe you'd swear in a lie," observed the wounded man. "I got my best arm broke by it, howsomever the Duoul that happened to cum about."

"You'll suffer for this insolence as well as for the rest of the job, you villain," rejoined Doran.

"Villain! Arrah, is that the word wid you? *Dhar-Dieu!* bud it will be a sore sayin' to you, or my name isn't Shawn."

"Who was the person that set you on?"—once more asked Shea, shaking him violently.

"Why, there's that honest boy there, says he's ready to swear to him for you."

"Pierce, you'll find I'm right," said Doran. "The first shot from this fellow—"

"You'll never prove that agin me," the assassin interrupted; "I fired no shot—bad loock to the flent for stoppin' me!"

"I heard your piece snap, then," said Shea.

"Nothin' else you heard, agra."

"The first shot," Doran continued, "was meant for you, Pierce; the second for me. And again, I say, I'd lay my life that Crohoore knew of the one, and with his own hands fired the other."

"Answer, is he right?" roared Shea, "or I'll reddan the sod you stand on with your blood! Was it Crohoore sent you? Was it Crohoore fired that shot? Tell me truly, or—" Pierce cocked his pistol.

"Och, avich, you're asy answered," said the man, changing colour for the first time; "he that sent me, stands—"

"Stop!" Doran shouted out in a voice of extraordinary triumph. "He stands on the brow of the hill, this moment! Look, Pierce, look!"

Shea looked up, and on the brow of the hill saw Crohoore indeed standing, and calmly contemplating the scene below. Instantly he fired and missed him, and Crohoore was in another instant of sight.

"Here, Doran!" he then said, "take this man to my father's house, and secure him well. Andy, come your ways with me," and he dashed against the abrupt steep, with too much precipitancy to make the mastering it an easy matter, and his progress

up, through furzes, underwood, and tangled roots, was of course much slower than if he had exerted his strength less, and his judgment more.

But he gained the summit, panting and out of breath; looked around the now wide country, and saw no one. He ran a few steps forward, and stood gazing down into another valley, which was a more open continuation of that he had just quitted, but which, turning quickly round the base of the hill, here met him. The descent he had now to make was much less precipitous than that which he had just clambered up; in fact, only a gentle slope. And opposite was another swell of the same kind, above which stood the old square castle of Ballyfoile, whence the ground imperceptibly sloped, in a high state of cultivation, towards Kilkenny.

There was a field of green corn in the valley, adjoining a pasture where some cows grazed, and where a half-naked boy had his station to prevent trespass, by the cows, or aught else, among the corn. With his hands squeezed tight under his arms to keep them warm, he jigged to his own whistle, if not with grace or skill, at least with violence enough to prevent the blood from growing stagnant in the dense cold of the early March morning. To him Shea made all speed.

“Did you see any one come down the hill yonder?” he asked.

“E—ah!” accompanied by a dull stare, was the only answer. Pierce repeated his question.

“Did myself see any body comin’ down from the hill, is it?”

“Yes, a-vich-ma-cree,” replied Andy, now behind. “That’s the very thing we want to know.”

“Then, mostha, bud if that’s all, often’s the time I did,” with a leer, and resuming his jig.

“Bud tell us, a-vourneen, if you seen any one at all at the present time?”

“Hia-h! pooh-a! *gho-moch-a-sinn!*” piped the imp, as if he had not heard the last question, and shaking a stick he held in his hand at a matronly cow, who had just turned round her head, with a wistful look at the nice green corn.

“Will you give a civil answer?” asked Shea, losing all patience at the loss of time.

“Asy, Pierce, agra, an’ lave the Duoul’s bird to me,” said Andy, in a whisper: then, with his most conciliating tone to the boy—

\* Get out of that.



"Tell us, won't you, a-bouchal, did you obsarve no one in the world comin' down the hill-side this morning?"

"Arrah, then, will yourself tell *me*, i' you please, do *you* obsarve anything like as if I war blind, about me?"

"That's as mooch as to say you did?"

"I seen a very ugly spalpeen as you'd meet in a summer's day, comin' down."

"Thank you, a-vich. It's the very fellow we're lookin for."

"Hauld him fast, then. For, barrin' my eye-sight's bad, it was your own self I seen," and the urchin glanced up and gave a low giggle.

"Musha, but you're a droll gorçoon," said Andy.

Pierce stamped in vexation, and, breaking away, began to ascend the opposite height. Andy remained, and, after bearing with much of the youngster's raillery, and giving way to a little badinage on his own part,—for Andy, in the absence of Paudge Dermody, thought he could pass a joke well enough,—at last learned that the boy had really seen Crohoore descending the hill but a few moments before, and passing in the very direction Pierce now pursued. The lad's attention had been particularly directed to him by his size, from the unusual circumstance of his bearing a gun, and from his visible anxiety to escape observation.

Now, Andy Houlohan, for the reasons before-mentioned, had every objection that Shea should happen to fall in with Crohoore, and sagely resolved to keep what he heard to himself. Besides, hoping but little from this weary pursuit, and tired as well as afraid of it, he had lately determined on a plan of acting of his own, by which he resolved that they should not at all come in contact with each other. But we will not anticipate.

While Andy and the lad were talking together, Pierce had ascended the hill. Some men and women were at work in a field at a little distance below him, and to them he rapidly advanced for information. After the usual salutation, "*Marah-uth*,"\* he inquired if they had seen the object of his search. But, "The Lord keep him out of our path!" and the subsequent determined silence from the whole party, was all the satisfaction he could obtain. Until a young girl, out of breath, and pale with haste and fright, ran furiously through a gap into the field, and, setting herself on a large stone near where Shea stood, seemed ready to faint away.

\* Good morning, etc.

"Musha, what *miau* is come over you, Cauth, a-lanna-ma-chree?" said her mother, abandoning her work, running over, squatting herself down, and looking with maternal anxiety into the girl's face.

"Och, mother, mother, I'll never be a day the better of it!"

"Ochown!—of what, a-lanna?"—The great, strong woman put her great, strong arms around her. The girl cried a little on her mother's bosom, then, somewhat relieved, drew a heavy sigh, and went on.

"Och! I was cumin' along the bosheen, an' just thinkin' of the terrible story yourself tould us about him last night, when, at the short turn, hard by Mulroony's barn, where the elder-bushes makes the place so dark, I sthruck myself plump up against Crohoore-na-bil—"

"Whisht!" cried the mother, raising her hand, and glancing with evident alarm at Shea. The girl, misapprehending her meaning, hid her eyes, and screamed in terror. She was set right in a whisper, and then ended her story in so low a tone, that Pierce could not catch another word. He had heard enough, however, to guide him a step further in the chase. Mulroony's barn, and the spot in the narrow lane, mentioned by the girl, he knew well, and thither hastened in quickened speed, and with renewed hope.

He gained the place, and looked sharply about. No creature was visible. In an opposite route from that by which the girl must have come, Pierce continued to make way, and, following the course of the lane, found himself on the high-road. Here he paused a moment, puzzled as to which side he should turn next, for still he saw or met no living thing. He ascended a contiguous eminence, and far, far off, through the foggy atmosphere, discerned the figure of a man winding close by a fence. It must be he! He marked the spot, and, with the elasticity of a stag, measured the intermediate space across the field. Still was Pierce at fault. From another rising ground he again strained his eyes, and again caught a glimpse of, as he conceived, the same figure. Onward he bounded, and gained his second landmark. Just as he came up, a head was popped over a high hedge at his right hand. Pierce's heart leaped; he drew his pistol; was instantly at the other side of the hedge, and there seized a man—who was *not* Crohoore. Discovering his mistake, Pierce let him go, and, with some embarrassment, asked pardon.

“*Dieu-a-uth,*”<sup>\*</sup> said the astonished stranger.

“*Dieu-as-mayu-uth,*”<sup>†</sup> answered Pierce: scarce able to articulate, overcome by exertion, and the nervousness that generally succeeds the sudden excitation of hope or fear when as suddenly disappointed.

“Savin’ manners,” continued the man, “will you let a body be askin’ you the name that’s on you?—Maybe you’d be Master Pierce Shea?”

“The very man,” said Pierce.

“Why, then, you’re only the very man I tuck you for, an’ the very one I was wishin’ to see, into the bargain.”

“Here you see me, then. And what, after?”

“I hard of your story, an’ could make a sort of a guess to what you’re about, I’m thinkin’. Maybe you’re not huntin’ Crohoore-na-bilhoge?”

“Your guess is as true as is the daylight.”

“Musha, then, as good loock would have it, I have a sort of a notion that maybe I’d be the very boy could tell you where to find him.

“Where, where?” exclaimed Pierce.

“An’ I’ll be bould to say, you’d be for offerin’ somethin’ that would be handsome, for the news.”

“I’d give the wide world!”

“That’s a good dale, if it was yours to give.”

“Or all I have in the world!”

“An’ that’s a purty penny, too, by all accounts that I could hear. But, somehow, myself, ever an’ always, had a likin’ an’ love for *araguthchise*.<sup>‡</sup> An’ if there was sich a thing as a *guineah orrh*.<sup>§</sup> or a thing that a-way, and if we war to see the face of it, who knows.

Pierce ran his hand into his pocket, and drew out a brace of guineas. Bank notes were then a scarcity.

“Here, then,” he said. “And now your information, quick. Oh, quick, quick, and Heaven bless you!”

“They’re the right sort, to a sartainty,” observed the man, stooping down, jingling the guineas separately on a flat stone near him; then folding them up in a dirty piece of paper, thrusting them into the very bottom of his breeches-pocket, and, with great sobriety of face, buttoning them up. At last he thought of going on.

\* God save you.

† Money down.

‡ God and mother save you.

§ Golden Guinea.

"Why, then, I'll tell you every word about it. You must know, Master Pierce, myself is none o' your common country spalpeens (not for to say so by way of disparishment o' the country, where I was bred an' born); but I knows more nor a dozen o' them cratures, that does nothin' only dig an' plough from year's end to year's end. I have a sort of a call to the law, d'ye see me? an' I goes to the neighbours wid a bit o' paper, or may be a bit o' calf-skin, just as the thing happens to be;" winking cunningly.

We may venture to mention here, begging pardon for the digression, that in all probability it was a happy circumstance for the process-server, that Andy Houlohan heard not this intelligence. From his cradle he had mortally hated all "bums,"\* and might have felt little repugnance in knocking a chip from his skull, just out of general antipathy to the race.

"What have I to do with this?" asked Pierce.

"Why, I'm only lettin' you into it for to larn you that I'm not the gourloch to be frightened wid your *sheeg* stories, or the likes, and for that raison, to the ould Duoul myself bobs 'em. Well, à-roon. I overhard them sayin' it, that had a good right to know all about it, as how there was a lob o' money for the man that would lay hould o' this Crohoore. An' so I went here, an' axin' there, and maybe I didn't make out the ups an' downs o' the thing, hopin' I'd cum across him in some o' my travels. An' sure enough I have him cotched this loocky an' blessed morning."

"But where is he, man?" impatiently interrupted Pierce. "What do you keep me here for?"

"Och, a-bouchal, there's two words to a bargain. If you war the *omadhaun* to give your money before hand, that's no raison in life myself would be over soon wid my speech."

"Rascal! do you mean to trifle with me?" rejoined Pierce, clutching his pistol.

"Be peaceable, now, a-vich," said the limb of the law, drawing a brace of them from his bosom. "You see, if you're for that work, I'm not the fool to venture out where rib-breakin', done wid a sledge, is often our best treatment. An' so, here's two good shots for your one. But where's the use of that when we can settle the matter in a more lawful manner? Just listen to me. I was goin' to sthrike a bit of a bargain wid you: you must as good as take your buke oath—an' its puttin' unheerd of thrust in you, when I hav'nt the buke to hand—but I

\* Bailiffs.

hear you come of as honest a stock as myself. Well, you must swear that every shilling o' the reward, for the cribbin' o' this bouchal, will come into my pocket, an' no other body as mooch as sneeze at it."

"I swear by my Father's soul, you must get every farthing of it."

"See now. Sure that's more asy nor to waste our powther for nothin'. Tell me, do you see no sort of a place you'd be for hiding yourself in, supposin' a body was purshuin' you?"

"Do you mean the cave?"

Just across the field was the terrific-looking entrance to the cave of Dunmore.

"That's the very spot, a-vich. Keep your tongue to yourself; keep your toe in your brogue; tell no livin' sowl what we are about. I'm just goin' a start o' the road, to shuv this to a neighbour," showing a latitat, "an' I'll be wid you again while you can shake yourself. Stop in the mouth o' the cave, and watch till I come. An' I'm the Devil's rogue, or we'll ketch a hould o' the bouchal, please God."



## CHAPTER VIII.

THE cave of Dunmore is regarded as the great natural wonder of this district; so much so, that travellers come out of their road to see and explore it. At the time of our narration, it was believed by the surrounding peasantry to be the residence of every description of supernatural beings. Nay, to this day, there are shrewd notions on the point. At a remoter one, the conviction reigned in its glory. Here, on great occasions, did the good people hold their revels: it was also the chosen abode of the Leprechauns, or fairy mechanics, who, from all quarters of the island, assembled in it (the cavern being suspected to ramify, underground, to every point of the kingdom), for the purpose of manufacturing foot-gear for the little race to which they were appended. This could not be doubted, as many had heard the din of their hammers, and caught odd glimpses of their green berkeens, or of their caps with red feathers in them, what time

the stars grew white before the sun. It was the dwelling, too, of more fearful sprites, of whose nature there existed no clear notion, but who, in the very distant abodes of the cavern, roamed along the off-brink of a little subterranean rivulet, the boundary of their dark abode, and who took vast delight in exterminating any unfortunate being fool-hardy enough to cross the forbidden stream, and so encroach on their charmed demesne. This was also fully shown by the splintered human bones that (really) strewed the bed of the rill. Wild shrieks were often heard to pierce the darkness through the gaping mouth of the cavern. But oftener the merry fairy-laugh, and the small fairy-music, tingled to the night-breeze.

The absolute physiognomy of the place was calculated to excite superstitious notions. In the midst of a level field, a precipitate inclined plane led down to a sudden pit, across which, like a vast blind arch, the entrance yawned, about eighty feet perpendicular, and from thirty to forty wide. It was overhung and festooned with ivy, lichen, bramble, and a variety of wild shrubs, and tenanted by the owl, the daw, and the carrion crow, that made rustling and screaming exit into the daylight as soon as disturbed by an exploring foot. When, all at once, you stood on the verge of the descent, and looked from the cheery day into the pitch darkness of this gaping orifice, repelling and chilling the curiosity that it excited,—giving a promise of something to be discovered, and a threat to the discoverer,—suggesting a region to be traversed so different from our own fair familiar world, and yet a nameless danger to be incurred in the progress,—your heart must have been either very callous or very bold, and imagination entirely a blank, if, at this first glance, you felt no unusual stir within you.

After entering the mouth of the cavern, the light of your torches showed you that vast masses of rock protruded overhead, ready at every step to crush, and held in their place as if by miracle alone. A short distance on, two separate passages branched to the right and to the left. To explore the one, a barrier of steep rocks, made dangerous by the damp slime that covered them, should be scaled. Then you proceeded along a way of considerable length, sometimes obliged, from the lowness of the heading, to stoop on hands and knees, still over slippery rocks, and over deep holes, formed by the constant dripping of the roof. Till at last you suddenly entered a spacious and lofty apartment, known by the name of the Market-Cross, from the

circumstance that a petrified mass standing there bears some likeness to the ancient and curious structure in old Kilkenny, so called. Indeed, throughout the whole chamber, the strange freaks of nature bear comparison with art. Ranges of fluted columns, that seem the production of the chisel, only much dilapidated by time, rise almost at correct distances to the arching roof: which columns, by the way, having necessarily been formed by petrification, drop upon drop, it is astounding to think of the incalculable number of years consumed in the process. This is the regal fairy hall. And the peasants say, that when the myriad crystalizations that hang about are, on a gala evening, illuminated, and when the for-ever falling drops sparkle in the fairy light, the scene becomes too dazzling for mortal vision.

The other passage winds an equal distance, and leads to the subterranean rill that bubbles, as before-mentioned, over scraps of human bones, and over bones, entire ones too—; we ourselves having, when led to the cavern for scenic illustration of the facts of this history, adventurously plunged our hand into the clear water, and taken therefrom a tibia of unusual length. Indeed, the fact that such human relics are there to be seen, almost a quarter of a mile from the light of the earth, must, if we reject the peasant's fine superstition, show us the misery of some former time of civil conflict, that could compel any wretched fugitives to seek, in the recesses and horrors of such a place, just as much pause as might serve him to starve, die, and rot.

On the edge of the descent, exactly opposite the blank gape of the cavern, Pierce Shea seated himself, awaiting the return of his accidental acquaintance. It was only natural that he should entertain some misgivings as to the truth of the story just heard from that person, taking into account the kind of character his informant, even according to his own showing, must necessarily be, and viewing as much of his manner and behaviour as had come under Pierce's immediate notice. But a more distressing prepossession seized on his mind, and now banished every other fancy. His poor mistress, his beloved and lost Alley, might have been hurried by her ravisher, when pressed by sudden pursuit and alarm, to this very place. Amid its dank and loathsome darkness she might, this moment, drag on a blighted and hated existence, or prepare to yield up life altogether. Nay, perhaps she was, long ago, a corpse, festering and unburied in its foul recesses. The recollection of the horrors he had experienced on the morning after the murder came upon him, followed by

forebodings of worse horrors, yet to come. He sat stupified with the pressure of these feelings, when Andy's voice at his back startled him from his reverie.

Looking up, he saw the kind and considerate creature standing over him, "doubly armed." It was almost perforce that Andy had, on this expedition, been compelled to carry a gun. He was as much averse to such intricate weapons as honest David, in the Rivals. To his surmise the plain alpeen ranked higher; because, first, from the simplicity of its construction it required no round-about work, such as priming and loading, and cocking and snapping, and putting it to the shoulder and shutting one eye, before you could let it off; and, secondly, because he knew the practice of the one infinitely better than the practice of the other. He now appeared, however, with his gun in his left hand, and, not very appropriately, a wooden "noggin" of milk in his right, which, he said, "he could, wid a clear conscience, take his buke oath was hot from the cow, in regard he had milked the *hugdeen*,\* himself." The fact is, at the house of a fourth cousin of his "father's mother's sister," where he had seen "the blue smoke makin' its way out o' the dour, a sure sign the phatoes were rowlin' out on the table," that is, breakfast in preparation, Andy had gone in. Upon footing of a relationship the good people were till then rather unprepared to admit he had first ventured a hint about a "little bit an' sup for himself." And when he had made a hearty meal of potatoes, and of tolerably stale buttermilk, nothing better being in the way, he next craved and got a nogginfull for Pierce, together with half a cake of "griddle-bread." But, as he was crossing over the fields with this, he espied, "as God would have it," a cow awaiting the milkmaid; and, sliely over-turning the buttermilk into "a gripe,"† Andy approached, and drew from the animal as much "good, sweet milk as he had spilt; an' he was handy enough at the work, in regard that often of a night he used to give a help to Breedge Chree, when the poor crature 'ud be hard pushed." Sitting down by Pierce, Andy gave this tale, with a manner so unintentionally, and yet so truly droll, that his foster-brother, afflicted as he was, could scarce refuse a smile; especially when, with a self-flattering broad grin, he ended by saying: "I'd lay my ould brogues to a laffina,‡ the colleen 'll sware the good people were aforehand wid her, this mornin'."

\* Little honey.

† *Anglice*—a drain.

‡ Halfpenny.



Andy then drew from the breast of his outside coat, that now for the first time in its life had been buttoned, the half-moon of oatmeal bread. "Now, Mather Pierce, agra," he continued, "eat your 'nough as long as the vitt'ls 'll last. But, sure, this isn't the handsomest kind o' place we're sittin' in;" staring down at the cave. "Come, let us make out some other spot that won't look so dismal."

Pierce's feelings all rushed back upon him. He sprang up, with; "There is at present no other place for us, Andy. Crohoore-na-billhoge is in that cave, and I'll drag him from it, or perish in the attempt."

The noggin dropped from Andy's hand, and down flowed the milk that had cost him some time, trouble, and conscience. He plunged at the noggin, but, in the attempt, lent it an unintentional kick, that sent it down to the descent with increased velocity, till it gave many a hollow thump, thump, among the rocks in the mouth of the cavern. His distended eyes followed it for some time. Then he reddened and frowned, and, selecting the vessel as the immediate matter on which to vent a vexation derived from another cause, slowly and bitterly said,

"Musha, then, the ould Duoul speed you on your road down there, below!"

Pierce, sensible of the kindness of his foster-brother, and pitying his loss, exhorted him not to mind the accident, as there was no help for it.

"None in the world," Andy replied, mournfully resuming his seat; "no help for spilt milk,\* all the world over. But tell me, Pierce, a-chora. Sure you're only for jokin' me. Sure you wouldn't be the mad crature to go into that cursed hole, after Crohoore?"

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"Arrah, tell a body who is this wid you?"—

"My own foster-brother; and you may depend your life on him."

"Bud, Duoul take him, it might happen he'd be for cryin' halves wid myself?"

"In my mind, the poor fellow scarce knows the meaning of the matter.—I'm quite sure he wouldn't be paid as an informer, with all the king's gold."

"Then he's just the sort of a soft *omadhaun* we want; he'll do betther nor any other; an' sich a sthrong, big fellow may be of sarvice. I'd fittier be on the road, at once. We can't go in, barrin' we have the lights; and they're no nearer nor 'Comer. Is there any *araguth bawn*\* where the gould came from?"

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before his return. That time had scarce yet elapsed, and Pierce, though almost hopeless from anxiety, did not therefore despair. In fact, to his great joy, and Andy's undisguised consternation, Paddy made his re-appearance about three o'clock, mounted on, as (it was now obvious) he had truly termed it, his "sort of an ould horse," bearing candles, and providently supplied with touch-paper and matches, in case of unforeseen accidents within.

As the preparations were made for entering the cavern, Andy looked on with a stupid stare, except that, now and then, his eye scowled over Paddy Loughnan, from top to toe, as if he hated the very marrow in his bones. When all was ready, Pierce turned and addressed him:

"Andy, you must take up your post here. If the murderer escape us, you cannot possibly miss him. So, shake hands, Andy," he continued, seeing the tears start into the poor fellow's eyes, "and see that your flint and priming are in good order."

"Mostha, Pierce, a-cuishla-ma-chree," replied Andy, making strange faces to conceal his emotion, and dwelling on the squeeze of the hand that had been afforded him—"Pierce, a-bouchal" (growing familiar)—"just be said an' led by me. Once go in there, an' you'll come out a dead man. Or, what's worse, Divil a sight o' your face we'll ever see, dead or alive."

"I'll make the trial, Andy."

"Consider wid yourself what sort they are. Divil a crooked sthraw they care about your gun."

"Yon talk to no purpose, Andy."

"An' then, the poochas, that are in plenty, too."

"Nonsense, man; I'd face the Devil in his den. Let me go."

"What 'ill myself say to poor ould Ned Shea when I must go home widout you?"

"Come—free my hand, Andy."

"You won't get so much as Christhen berrin!"—struggling to keep the hand—"Your bones 'ill be at the bottom o' the poochas' river!"—

"Let me go, I say again!"—

"Mostha! But sence you won't do as a body, that's for your good, would have you, hell to the brogue's length you'll go!" cried Andy, his fears and affection blowing up into a fury, as, more desperately than ever, he clutched Pierce's hand.

"Let the gorcoon come on his lawful business, you great *omadhaun*, you," said Paddy Loughnan, from some distance.

"Let *you* hould your tongue, or I'll break every bone in your

unloocky carcass," retorted Andy. "Lawful! Oh, if I was near you!"

"Do you mean to restrain me by force, Andy?" asked Pierce, smiling.

"*Ma-hurp-on-duoul!* but it's myself that will!" and, casting the gun from his left hand, he suddenly clasped his foster-brother in his arms.

"Tut, tut—you are not the man to do it," said Pierce, giving a smart jerk, that at once freed him, and sent Andy reeling among the rocks at a few yards distance. Before he could recover himself, Shea had disappeared into the cavern, preceded by Paddy Loughnan.

The faithful follower plunged after them. A little way from the entrance he caught a glimpse of candlelight, and after many prostrations among unseen rocks, came so near as to see it above him, over the barrier already described.

"Pierce, a-vourneen, wait, a doochy-bit. Only let a body have it to say he was kilt along side o' you," Andy cried out.

"Go along out o' that wid yourself, you *sprissaun*," growled the voice of Paddy Loughnan. "You're big enough to look at, but you haven't the heart of a *slucheen!*"\*

"Haven't I?"—replied Andy—"haven't I?—Och!—only lend me one hould o' *you*, an' I'll tache you the differ!" and, giving a shout and jump of utter defiance, he cast down, according to irresistible custom, his old hat. But Paddy, progressing as he spoke, had left him to vent his ire, in chill and darkness. While the hat, weary, perhaps, of the long ill-usage it had undergone in his service, kept so close and snug that all Andy's groping and scramblings to recover it were ineffectual. At last, content merely to grope outward to the daylight, he left it, with a hearty curse, to the poochas.

"Well, God be wid you, Pierce Shea," he said, in soliloquy, again sitting down close by the entrance to the cave. "There's little hopes you'll ever see Clarah agin; an' where's the body that ever set eyes on you but 'ud be sorry, not to talk o' myself? *Ma-hoon-chise!* if there was his likes the world over an' over; an' farther, if I'd say it. It was a thousand an' a thousand pities he hadn't more o' the gumption, an' that he was given to go by his own will, afore a good adviser like myself. By the gun in my hand, I'll run for Connaught, or some sich foreign part, sooner nor face home widout my poor Pierce Shea;" and Andy wept plentifully.

\* A little mouse.

“Arrah, what’s the matter wid you, honest boy?” asked a commiserating old woman, who had descended in search of a stray cow, and was surprised to see a tall, robust fellow, sitting there, bareheaded, and blubbing at some rate. “Enough, an’ worse nor enough,” replied Andy. And he told her his whole sad story.

“Why, then,” said the comforter, “it ’ill be God’s hand, an’ God’s hand alone, that ’ill ever bring him out alive again.” And, professing sorrow that she could not stop, she hobbled off after her cow. But, meeting this body, and that body, the story was repeated and repeated; and one peeped down, and then another, and another; and, gaining courage as their numbers increased, they as last *came* down, and Andy saw himself surrounded by a crowd of old men and old women, young girls and boys, all violent in their condolence. In return for his again-told tale, they gratified him with many a frightful anecdote of the cave, and the inhabitants of the cave. And then they turned to Crohoore, surpassing every former horror by accounts of his well-known intimacy with the good people, and of his very latest appearances under the most appalling circumstances, and in the most bewitched places.

The night began to fall on them while thus engaged, and the night’s impressive silence to spread around. The rocks at each side grew browner, and the yawn of the cave blacker and blacker. Their voices sank into murmurs, and they drew close to Andy, no one willing to venture home alone, and yet no movement made to proceed together. They dared not, in illustration of their stories, any longer point or look at the cavern. Indeed, there seemed a general effort to change the subject. But, while they ceased to speak of *it*, the cave suddenly spoke to them, emitting through its vast mouth an awful echo of sounds, that, from the subdued and imperfect way in which they reached the group, it was impossible to ascribe to a particular cause—to human lips and lungs, or to anything else. All shrank closer together.

“Oh, vaugha! vaugha!” cried Andy, clapping his hands—  
“There’s an end of him!”—

“An’ murther! murther! See that!” exclaimed two or three of his companions, in a breath.

A dim, lurid light appeared some little distance in the cavern, flashing upward, half showing a well-known face, and lending kindred lustre to the two red eyes that fixed watchfully upon

them. A general scream arose, and the light was instantly extinguished. But, ere another second had elapsed, there was a stir in the gloom, immediately at the entrance, and Crohoore-na-bilhoge, the incarnate goblin of their terrors, rushed out among them.

Andy Houlohan had the gun in his hand, and in mixed horror and desperation, immediately, and without bringing the piece to his shoulder, pulled the trigger: it recoiled with violence, and he measured his length among the rocks. Crohoore checked not his speed a second, but passing through the very midst of the crowd, and scattering them in every direction, gave Andy one expressive look, and, bounding up the ascent, was quickly lost to view, as, added to the increasing night, the depth in which they stood obstructed their vision. After some minutes of silence, and then a general thanksgiving for their safety, the people departed in a body, leaving Andy to brave by himself all succeeding horrors.

He was yet in the act of ascertaining to what extent he had been disabled by his fall, or by the fairy-blow rather, when Paddy Loughnan, bareheaded, pale, and agitated, stood before him. The knowing, impudent aspect he so lately had worn was now gone, and his look cowering and terror-stricken.

“Who fired the shot?” he hastily asked.

“Myself; an’ sorry I am to say it,” answered Andy, feeling his bones.

“At Crohoore, was it?” continued Loughnan, in a close whisper.

“Aye, à-roon.”

“Did you hit him?”

“Och, to be sure I did. But what hurt was that to the likes of him?”

“Where’s Pierce Shea?”

“Where’s Pierce Shea! Musha, you unloocky bird, do you come out o’ your hole to ax me that question? It was all your doin’s! Let yourself tell me where’s the poor gorçoon, or—”

“Here, man, take the light from my hands—Look for him in the left windin’ o’ the cave—hurry, hurry!” and Loughnan was quickly on the back of his “sort of an ould horse.” But though the wretched animal could not plead the slightest incumbrance of flesh as an excuse for his tardiness; though Paddy was armed, or rather heeled with one rusty spur; and even though they faced homewards, a circumstance, as all travellers know, of power to inspire horseflesh with its best mettle; still did not the “sort of an ould horse” evince much sympathy with his master’s

visible wish to be far away from the cave in as short a time as possible.

Many a pause Andy made, as he crawled or groped through the dangerous intricacies of the cavern, to look about him for his foster-brother, and shout his name to the dense mass of rock. The echoes running through the twinings and hollows, which he translated into a thousand terrible voices and meanings, were his only answer. He dared proceed to the side of the "poochas river," and to confirm his own early and worst prophecies. There lay Shea, without sense or motion.

After a wild burst of sorrow, sincere as ever was sent up over a departed friend, Andy raised his beloved Pierce, and placed his head on his shoulder, with intent, after a moment's rest, to convey him to the surface of the earth, as a first step to the only solace he could now know, that is, "dacent Christhen berrin," for the remains of his *dolth*. In this situation, however, Pierce drew a heavy sigh, and, after a little time, opened his eyes, and stared wildly around him. Recognising Andy, his first word was a request that they should immediately quit the cave: one to which, it may be inferred, Andy made little opposition. The cool night air much revived him. He asked how long it had been since he entered the cave, and if anything had happened outside. A thrill of seeming alarm shook him when he heard of Loughnan's hasty and affrighted departure. But he grew half frantic at Crohoore's escape, and bitterly accused Andy of negligence and want of courage. It was in vain Andy urged the inutility of any attempt to seize Crohoore, and cited the harmless effect of the shot he had fired with so deadly an aim. Pierce insisted on his lack of spirit; and averred that, had he been present, he would have secured the murderer, though surrounded by a legion of imps.

Andy's time came for asking questions. But Pierce seemed very unwilling to give any account of his own adventure. While his foster-brother still continued to urge him, Jack Doran and old Ned Shea appeared: they had for some time been seeking him out, with a led horse for his accommodation homewards, of which, in a very exhausted and harassed state, he availed himself, and all returned to Clarah.

Doran, in compliance with Pierce's request of the morning, had led to his father's house the assassin of Ballyfoile, who, he added, now fully confessed that Crohoore was his employer. But the man either pretended to be, or really was, totally ignorant

of any of Crohoore's affairs, that person having merely sought him out, and with a weighty fee hired him for a specific purpose.

It was hoped, however, that, when brought to justice for his offence, he would give more ample and satisfactory information. Pierce visited him on his arrival at home; the fellow was dogged and saucy, and laughed with brutal levity at every threat. He was confined in a place lately constructed for a cellar; it had no window, and the door and bolts were strong. Pierce, disgusted with the ruffian, locked and bolted the door, and put the key in his pocket.

The next morning he re-opened the door, for the purpose of conveying his prisoner to Kilkenny gaol, but the apartment was empty; and the name, "Crohoore-na-bilhoge," scrawled in imperfect characters on the wall, and as if written with blood, seemed plainly to indicate by whose agency the prisoner had escaped.

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## CHAPTER IX.

THE last-quoted adventure made a deep impression on Pierce Shea. He grew gloomy and thoughtful, and confidently acknowledged to his foster-brother that he was in a degree become a covert to his often-urged opinions, and that they spent their time and energies in pursuit of one who, to all appearance, was protected by unearthly friends and agency. Andy heard this confession in profound silence, but with a catching of breath, and an expression of face that indicated a terrified triumph in the late belief it imported, yet, as if he was mortally frightened at a result he had himself so industriously laboured to produce. Then he left Pierce's presence, his lips compressed, and his eyes bent studiously on the ground, and disappeared, Pierce could not surmise whither.

"By my conscience, Pierce," said Rhiah Doran, when Shea spoke to him also on the matter, "the girl is either bewitched out of her natural senses and feelings, or something worse has happened."

"Something worse—what do you mean?"

"Aye, worse, a thousand times, Pierce."



"That is no answer, Doran. Speak plainer!"

"High hanging to me!"—resumed his friend, as if angry with himself,—“see what I have done, now! I forgot who I was speaking to. Never mind me, Pierce, ma-bouchal, and just put it all out of your head.”

"Jack, you must go on."

"Not I, by my soul, Pierce. I don't want to make your mind worse than it is."

"Doran, 'tis neither fair nor friendly, though I think you a fair and friendly fellow, to keep anything concerning Alley from me. Therefore, I insist on your explanation. You shall not leave this till you satisfy me." They sat, as usual, in the house of Pierce's father, and at a late hour of the night, over their glass.

"Well, my boy, sure I can just stay where I am, then," replied Doran, coolly sipping his liquor; "for I had rather sit here a twelvemonth than finish what, like a cursed fool, I so heedlessly began. Because, though there may be no truth in it, it would only increase your troubles, Pierce, and I like you too well to be the bearer of unwelcome tidings."

"Harkye, Rhiiah Doran, I know you for a true friend—your actions are before me, and show it. But my situation and feelings cannot bear crossing or trifling with. Though we were to break squares for ever, you shall fully quell or fix the frightful dread your words have made. Here—this moment—on this spot—go on, Doran:" he grew pale, and trembled in passion.

"Well, then, sooner than it should come to that, Pierce, and that I should find such a reward for—No matter; I'll satisfy you. But don't think you have threatened me into compliance, Pierce Shea. I suppose you know me well enough to believe that neither yourself nor any man alive can bully me."

"I know and believe it. That's enough for you, Doran. Go on now, and, for the love of Heaven, do not keep me in this torture."

"Well, remember you forced me to speak out, in spite of my wish and inclination."

"I will, I will remember. I acquit you beforehand of all share in the pain or injury your words may inflict. Only be plain and aboveboard, and do a friend's duty by me."

"Why, then, since you must have it, my poor fellow, 'tis thought that, if Alley's not charmed or blindfolded by something not right, she lives with her father's murderer, of her own free consent."

"Aye," said Pierce, during the pause which Doran here made, as if to note the effect of his news on the hearer;—"aye, I guessed what would come out!" He spoke in a stifled voice, his hands clenched on the table, and his eyes fixed on his friend.

"For," continued Doran, "unless the villain has her in some stronghold, or prison, and that's no way likely, seeing that their retreat is in the neighbourhood, and that none of us have ever heard of such a place, surely she could long ago have made her escape, during one other of the occasions when Crohoore was away? You know yourself he has often been absent, and night after night no watch on her. Surely the girl might easily have run home to you, if, as I said before, she isn't either—"

"Where did you hear all this?" interrupted Shea, still successful in a strong effort to keep down his feelings.

"From friends of your own, Pierce. Friends to the marrow of their bones, who are not afraid or ashamed to repeat their words to your face, and do more, maybe, if, along with their regard for you, they saw reason why. You know the boys I mean."

"I do," said Shea, his eyes now turned away, and fixed in stupified abstraction on the floor.

"I have lately got them into good order and spirit," pursued Doran, "and never fear them for helping a friend, along with doing their own little business, if—" he again pursued, and laid his hand on Shea's arm—"If that friend could be trusted, Pierce, my lad."

"May the good God of Heaven defend me from the truth of what you say!"—at last exclaimed poor Shea, giving vent to the bitterness of soul that his friend's touch had, perhaps, freed from its hitherto stern self-command—"that, that would be the heaviest stroke of all!—Doran, I could bear to see her a stiff corpse, the delicate cheek pale and cold, and the soft eye closed, never more to open—I could lean over her grave, and look in as she was lowered into it, and listen to the clod striking on her coffin,—but that I could not bear!—It would drive me mad—it has driven me mad!" As he spoke, he grasped and desperately wrung Doran's hand, the tears choking his utterance and gushing down his face; and he now let fall his head upon his friend's extended arm.

"A heavy curse light on my tongue!" cried Doran, his voice also broken from emotion. "But Pierce, dear, sure it was only

Andy then drew from the breast of his outside coat, that now for the first time in its life had been buttoned, the half-moon of oatmeal bread. "Now, Masther Pierce, agra," he continued, "eat your 'nough as long as the vitt'ls 'll last. But, sure, this isn't the handsomest kind o' place we're sittin' in;" staring down at the cave. "Come, let us make out some other spot that won't look so dismal."

Pierce's feelings all rushed back upon him. He sprang up, with; "There is at present no other place for us, Andy. Crohoore-na-bilhoge is in that cave, and I'll drag him from it, or perish in the attempt."

The noggin dropped from Andy's hand, and down flowed the milk that had cost him some time, trouble, and conscience. He plunged at the noggin, but, in the attempt, lent it an unintentional kick, that sent it down to the descent with increased velocity, till it gave many a hollow thump, thump, among the rocks in the mouth of the cavern. His distended eyes followed it for some time. Then he reddened and frowned, and, selecting the vessel as the immediate matter on which to vent a vexation derived from another cause, slowly and bitterly said,

"Musha, then, the ould Duoul speed you on your road down there, below!"

Pierce, sensible of the kindness of his foster-brother, and pitying his loss, exhorted him not to mind the accident, as there was no help for it.

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As the preparations were made for entering the cavern, Andy looked on with a stupid stare, except that, now and then, his eye scowled over Paddy Loughnan, from top to toe, as if he hated the very marrow in his bones. When all was ready, Pierce turned and addressed him:

"Andy, you must take up your post here. If the murderer escape us, you cannot possibly miss him. So, shake hands, Andy," he continued, seeing the tears start into the poor fellow's eyes, "and see that your flint and priming are in good order."

"Mostha, Pierce, a-cuishla-ma-chree," replied Andy, making strange faces to conceal his emotion, and dwelling on the squeeze of the hand that had been afforded him—"Pierce, a-bouchal" (growing familiar)—"just be said an' led by me. Once go in there, an' you'll come out a dead man. Or, what's worse, Divil a sight o' your face we'll ever see, dead or alive."

"I'll make the trial, Andy."

"Consider wid yourself what sort they are. Divil a crooked sthraw they care about your gun."

"You talk to no purpose, Andy."

"An' then, the poochas, that are in plenty, too."

"Nonsense, man; I'd face the Devil in his den. Let me go."

"What 'ill myself say to poor ould Ned Shea when I must go home widout you?"

"Come—free my hand, Andy."

"You won't get so much as Christhen berrin!"—struggling to keep the hand—"Your bones 'ill be at the bottom o' the poochas' river!"—

"Let me go, I say again!"—

"Mostha! But sence you won't do as a body, that's for your good, would have you, hell to the brogue's length you'll go!" cried Andy, his fears and affection blowing up into a fury, as, more desperately than ever, he clutched Pierce's hand.

"Let the gorcoon come on his lawful business, you great *omadhaun*, you," said Paddy Loughnan, from some distance.

"Let *you* hould your tongue, or I'll break every bone in your

unloocky carcass," retorted Andy. "Lawful! Oh, if I was near you!"

"Do you mean to restrain me by force, Andy?" asked Pierce, smiling.

"*Ma-hurp-on-duoul!* but it's myself that will!" and, casting the gun from his left hand, he suddenly clasped his foster-brother in his arms.

"Tut, tut—you are not the man to do it," said Pierce, giving a smart jerk, that at once freed him, and sent Andy reeling among the rocks at a few yards distance. Before he could recover himself, Shea had disappeared into the cavern, preceded by Paddy Loughnan.

The faithful follower plunged after them. A little way from the entrance he caught a glimpse of candlelight, and after many prostrations among unseen rocks, came so near as to see it above him, over the barrier already described.

"Pierce, a-vourneen, wait, a doochy-bit. Only let a body have it to say he was kilt along side o' you," Andy cried out.

"Go along out o' that wid yourself, you *sprissaun,*" growled the voice of Paddy Loughnan. "You're big enough to look at, but you haven't the heart of a *slucheen!*"\*

"Haven't I?"—replied Andy—"haven't I?—Och!—only lend me one hould o' *you,* an' I'll tache you the differ!" and, giving a shout and jump of utter defiance, he cast down, according to irresistible custom, his old hat. But Paddy, progressing as he spoke, had left him to vent his ire, in chill and darkness. While the hat, weary, perhaps, of the long ill-usage it had undergone in his service, kept so close and snug that all Andy's groping and scramblings to recover it were ineffectual. At last, content merely to grope outward to the daylight, he left it, with a hearty curse, to the poochas.

"Well, God be wid you, Pierce Shea," he said, in soliloquy, again sitting down close by the entrance to the cave. "There's little hopes you'll ever see Clarah agin; an' where's the body that ever set eyes on you but 'ud be sorry, not to talk o' myself? *Ma-hoon-chise!* if there was his likes the world over an' over; an' farther, if I'd say it. It was a thousand an' a thousand pities he hadn't more o' the gumption, an' that he was given to go by his own will, afore a good adviser like myself. By the gun in my hand, I'll run for Connaught, or some sich foreign part, sooner nor face home widout my poor Pierce Shea:" and Andy wept plentifully.

\* A little mouse.



“Arrah, what’s the matter wid you, honest boy?” asked a commiserating old woman, who had descended in search of a stray cow, and was surprised to see a tall, robust fellow, sitting there, bareheaded, and blubbering at some rate. “Enough, an’ worse nor enough,” replied Andy. And he told her his whole sad story.

“Why, then,” said the comforter, “it ’ill be God’s hand, an’ God’s hand alone, that ’ill ever bring him out alive again.” And, professing sorrow that she could not stop, she hobbled off after her cow. But, meeting this body, and that body, the story was repeated and repeated; and one peeped down, and then another, and another; and, gaining courage as their numbers increased, they as last *came* down, and Andy saw himself surrounded by a crowd of old men and old women, young girls and boys, all violent in their condolence. In return for his again-told tale, they gratified him with many a frightful anecdote of the cave, and the inhabitants of the cave. And then they turned to Crohoore, surpassing every former horror by accounts of his well-known intimacy with the good people, and of his very latest appearances under the most appalling circumstances, and in the most bewitched places.

The night began to fall on them while thus engaged, and the night’s impressive silence to spread around. The rocks at each side grew browner, and the yawn of the cave blacker and blacker. Their voices sank into murmurs, and they drew close to Andy, no one willing to venture home alone, and yet no movement made to proceed together. They dared not, in illustration of their stories, any longer point or look at the cavern. Indeed, there seemed a general effort to change the subject. But, while they ceased to speak of *it*, the cave suddenly spoke to them, emitting through its vast mouth an awful echo of sounds, that, from the subdued and imperfect way in which they reached the group, it was impossible to ascribe to a particular cause—to human lips and lungs, or to anything else. All shrank closer together.

“Oh, vaugha! vaugha!” cried Andy, clapping his hands—  
“There’s an end of him!”—

“An’ murther! murther! See that!” exclaimed two or three of his companions, in a breath.

A dim, lurid light appeared some little distance in the cavern, flashing upward, half showing a well-known face, and lending kindred lustre to the two red eyes that fixed watchfully upon

them. A general scream arose, and the light was instantly extinguished. But, ere another second had elapsed, there was a stir in the gloom, immediately at the entrance, and Crohoore-na-bil-hoge, the incarnate goblin of their terrors, rushed out among them.

Andy Houlohan had the gun in his hand, and in mixed horror and desperation, immediately, and without bringing the piece to his shoulder, pulled the trigger: it recoiled with violence, and he measured his length among the rocks. Crohoore checked not his speed a second, but passing through the very midst of the crowd, and scattering them in every direction, gave Andy one expressive look, and, bounding up the ascent, was quickly lost to view, as, added to the increasing night, the depth in which they stood obstructed their vision. After some minutes of silence, and then a general thanksgiving for their safety, the people departed in a body, leaving Andy to brave by himself all succeeding horrors.

He was yet in the act of ascertaining to what extent he had been disabled by his fall, or by the fairy-blow rather, when Paddy Loughnan, bareheaded, pale, and agitated, stood before him. The knowing, impudent aspect he so lately had worn was now gone, and his look cowering and terror-stricken.

"Who fired the shot?" he hastily asked.

"Myself; an' sorry I am to say it," answered Andy, feeling his bones.

"At Crohoore, was it?" continued Loughnan, in a close whisper.

"Aye, à-roon."

"Did you hit him?"

"Och, to be sure I did. But what hurt was that to the likes of him?"

"Where's Pierce Shea?"

"Where's Pierce Shea! Musha, you unloocky bird, do you come out o' your hole to ax me that question? It was all your doin's! Let yourself tell me where's the poor gorcoon, or—"

"Here, man, take the light from my hands—Look for him in the left windin' o' the cave—hurry, hurry!" and Loughnan was quickly on the back of his "sort of an ould horse." But though the wretched animal could not plead the slightest incumbrance of flesh as an excuse for his tardiness; though Paddy was armed, or rather heeled with one rusty spur; and even though they faced homewards, a circumstance, as all travellers know, of power to inspire horseflesh with its best mettle; still did not the "sort of an ould horse" evince much sympathy with his master's

the little man,—“or do any of you know where Alley Dooling is to be found?”

“Fair an’ asy, now,” replied the schoolmaster, who seemed, by general consent, or undisputed privilege, to be official spokesman—“for it’s fair an’ asy that goes far in the day. Do we know anything of your sweetheart, is it? Maybe we do, maybe we don’t. In case we do, what’s the *raison*, I say oncé again, that you’re not like a son o’ green Ireland, the crature, doin’ as mooch as you can, an’ sorry in your heart that you can’t do more, against the riev’in’, plunderin’, murtherin’ rapparees o’ tithe-proctors, the bitter foes of ould Ireland’s land—slingein’ at home, because the blow doesn’t sthrike hard on yourself, an’ never heeding the moans o’ the poor neighbours, that are left to starve, or rot like ould horses in the ditches, because the Sassenach Clargy, that doesn’t care a crooked sthraw for them or theirs, must have grand houses to live in, brave horses to hunt, coaches to take their pleasure in, an’ costly fastes, where there’s the mate of all kinds, every day in the year, Fridays an’ all, an’ wine galore to dhrink.” The orator paused in his set speech, now for the hundredth time repeated, to ply his noggin, with, no doubt, a bitter and indignant regret that his was not the wine to which he had alluded. “Why, you don’t look like a boy that ’ud be a *sprissaun*, or afeard to do a thing because a bit o’ danger might lie in the way,” he added.

He here made another pause, as if inviting some reply; and, as Pierce looked up to speak, he observed a leer on the face of the younger part of the assembly, which he suspected might be interpreted into scorn of his want of spirit, hinted at in the latter part of the pedagogue’s address. His eyes, rapid as lightning, glanced on Doran,—who all this time continued his half-sitting posture at one end of the table, coolly tapping it with a switch,—to ascertain whether or not the general sneer was borrowed from him. But his friend’s countenance betrayed no traces of anything insulting or disagreeable. Knitting his brows, and looking hard at the fellow who wore the broadest grin:

“Is there anyman here,” he asked, “who dares to question my courage, or say I fear danger?” The lad, immediately apprehending his meaning, changed at once the expression of his features, and thrusting his hand in amity across the table, “Never a one would say it to your father’s son, Master Pierce, à-bouchal,” he exclaimed. “But,” assuming a jocose cast of face, and winking at Pierce, while he nodded at the orator, “there’s one thing Mourteen left out in his noration, an’ myself was goin’ to put in his

mind. That it's from us, poor cratures of Romans that we are—*go vnoch a Dieu uriv!*\*—it's from us, an' we have the sin of it on our heads, that the Sassenach Clargy takes what buys the mate they ates of a Friday. An' will we be afther lettin' 'em do a thing that no Christhen sowl 'ud do, barrin' he was a dog?"

"Whoo! by my sowkens," said another, "that's the worst o' the story. Arrah, Mourteen, what made you forget that?"

"Musha, how can a body think of everything at once?" said a third: "an' tho' Mourteen happened to spake about the *mishnock*† o' the boy, it's well known that if he war as handy at everything as he is at the tongue, the divil himself—Lord save us!—couldn't stand afore him."

But old Mourteen, nothing discontenanced at this raillery, and looking upon himself as much above them as mind is above matter, only vouchsafed a scornful glance at his boyish companions, and, pulling down his wig with both hands, prepared to conclude his speech, while they, leaning forward on their elbows, put on faces of mock gravity and attention. In fact, Mourteen prided himself on his eloquence, and never failed to exercise it when good occasion offered. The opportunity of haranguing and converting Pierce was too rare and too favourable to be neglected. He had enlisted many in the war against tithe-proctors, and so far was valued: but like his great prototype, the Athenian orator, Mourteen was rather the cause of courage in others than distinguished for that virtue in his own person. In one word, his friends knew him to be a rank coward; and at this constitutional weakness the shafts of their satire were now directed. Pierce, however, unacquainted with the fact, and not understanding the humour of the party, listened attentively to the conclusion of Mourteen's lecture, which ran as follows:

"Hasn't the Sassenach Clargy, I say, all Ireland to itself every tenth year, while the world is a world? Sure, if it had a conscience along wid it, *that* might be enough, an' not for to send the bloody proctor on our back, to lift the double o' that, again. To take the food from our mouths, our Christhen mouths, an' the rag o' coverin' from our beds an' our bodies. An' our own poor Clargy—God bless 'em!—that kept wid us in want an' sorrow, an' cums to us night an' mornin', thro' wet an' dhry, could an' hardship, to stand by our sick beds, an' make Christhen souls in us,—what do *they* get but the bits an' scraps, the scrapins and shavins

\* God look down on us!

† Courage, or spunk.

the Sassenach laves behind. The Sassenach that rises the hire without earnin' it, robbin' it from them that does. The Sassenach that thought to tear and burn us up, root an' branch; that hunted our Soggarths like bastes o' the field, an' hung an' shot them an' all of us, just because we said our prayers afther the fashion o' them that went afore us, an' cum after us, and 'ill do the same for ever an' ever, amin, praise God, and thank God that laves us the wondher to tell that we're here to do id at all—Musha, musha!" Mourteen added, hastening his peroration from a misgiving of some slight confusion of ideas, and a dread of getting farther *bogged*—(as he would himself have called it). "Musha, an' ochown-a-rie, it's enough to make a body run mad to think iv id!"

"I believe what you say is true," said Pierce, in reply to this holding forth, and anticipating Mourteen's tormentors, who, with many a shrewd wink, were preparing to open their battery on the spokesman. "But my father has all along taught me to ask what I now ask you. How much good has come or can come from all you are able to do? Little mischief to your real oppressors, and your own death upon the gallows, more certainly than the relief you look for."

His attention was here rivetted by the miserable man opposite to him, who, at once, with that violence of action and furious contortion of countenance for which the Irish peasant is remarkable, poured out a speech in his native tongue, adopting it instinctively as the most ready and powerful medium of expressing his feelings; for one who boggles, and stammers, and is ridiculous in English, becomes eloquent in Irish. We follow the speaker in translation, which will necessarily show none of the rude *patois* he must have betrayed had he attempted, as all the others did, to display his feelings in a language almost unknown to them and him. "Who talks of the good we can do?—we look not to do good. We are not able nor fit to do good: we only want our revenge—And that, while we are men, and have strong hands, and broken hearts, and brains on fire with the memory of our sufferings—That we can take! Your father, young man, never writhed in the proctor's gripe. He has riches, and they bring peace and plenty, so that the robber's visit was not felt or heeded. But look at me!"—With the fingers of one hand he pressed violently his sallow and withered cheek, and with the other tore open the scanty vesture, that, leaving him uncovered from the shoulders to the ribs, exhibited a gaunt skeleton of the human form—"I have nothing to eat, no house to sleep in. My starved body is without covering:

those I loved and that loved me, the pulses of my heart, are gone. How gone, and how am I as you see me?—Twelve months ago I had a home, and covering, and food, and the young wife, the mother of my children, with me at our fire-side. But the plunderer come on a sudden. I was in his debt: he has a public-house, and he saw me sitting in another in the village. He took my cow, and he took my horse; he took them to himself; I saw them—and may all ill-luck attend his ill-got riches!—I saw them grazing on his own lands. I was mad; everything went wrong with me. My landlord came and swept the walls and the floor of my cabin. My wife died in her labour: who was to stand up for me?—Where had I a friend, or a great one to help me?—No one; nowhere. There is no friend, no help, no mercy, no law for the poor Irishman. He may be robbed—stripped—insulted—set mad—but he has no earthly friend but himself!”

The wretch sprang from his seat, seized his vessel, and with the look and manner of a maniac, indeed, added:

“And here let every MAN pledge me! May *his* heart wither, and his children and name perish!—May the grass grow on his heartstone, and no kin follow his corpse to the grave, who will refuse to wreak on the hard-hearted proctors the revenge they provoke by the sorrows they inflict!”

All had arisen. Even the old woman had stretched her wrinkled face and stringy neck into the circle, and, as the toast was quaffed, her shrill tones mingled with the hoarse “amen” that followed. In this moment of frenzy and inebriation—his youthful sympathy in their cause grafted on the hope of recovering his mistress—did Pierce Shea take the Whiteboy’s oath, and with wild clamour was his inauguration celebrated.

“And now,” said Doran, when the uproar had somewhat subsided, speaking in a calm and earnest voice and manner, “listen to me, all. I appoint Pierce Shea my first Lieutenant for the parish of Cjarah. Are all content?”

A general hurrah, joined with new congratulations, shaking of his hand, and drinking to his health, was the answer.

“And you freely accept the commission?” Doran resumed, fixing his eye on Shea, and proffering his hand also.

“I accept it; but—no matter!—I accept it unconditionally. I join you for your own sakes; for your cause, your wrongs and your revenge. For your success or failure—for good or ill—redress or the gallows.”

“It is enough,” said Doran, violently squeezing Shea’s hand,

while his eyes sparkled and his cheeks grew pale with strong emotion.

"Meantime," resumed Pierce, "let me fairly own that another motive first led me this evening among you."

"We know what you mane," interrupted Mourteen, "an' are ready an' willin' to remember it. Sure one good turn desarves another."

"You all know my situation, men," said Pierce, after a pause, dropping his head on his hand, to hide the overflowing tears that a moment's recurrence to his personal misfortunes rendered irresistible.

"We do! we do!" they cried out, "an' it's the hearts in our bodies that are achin' for you, Masther Pierce, à-roon. Wait 'till we show you so mooch, widout more talkin' about it."

"It's only thought an' expected," continued Mourteen, "that our new Lieutenant will come wid us one night, just to make clear an' clane his good wishes for the cause. The next night will bring him sthraight a-head on Crohoore-na-bilhoge."

"That's it; that's the very thing," the men repeated.

"I shall not fail," answered Pierce.

"Then, I believe," said Doran, "our business for to-morrow night is to call, out of love and kindness, on Peery Clancy, the friend of poor Terence Delany here," nodding at the man who had haranged them in Irish.

"Life will be spared?" asked Pierce.

"Life and limb; unless ears are legs or arms," answered Doran. Pierce objected or questioned no further; though he saw a grim smile of disagreeable expression on the features of Terence Delany.

"An' in throth," said one of the young fellows, "I'm tould the poor man is hard o' hearin'. A great pity, sure, when it's a thing so asy to be righted. For there is nothin' in the wide world to do, but just crop the ears as close to the head as a body can, an' I'll take my swear he'll hear a Whiteboy, at any rate, for a good mile o' ground, as long as he lives, ever after."

"Musha, that will be no more nor a Christhen turn," said another; "for who wouldn't pity a poor body that's deaf, like him? An' Bryan Whichpatrick must scrawb him a good tune on the fiddle, when he gets the gift o' hearin'."

They had attached to their body a man of the name here mentioned, or rather of a name like it, *Fitz*-patrick being its true pronunciation, who was their poet and musician, and who always added effect to their processions, when they paraded a poor proctor to the place of his punishment.

“Aye,” said Mourteen, “an’ we may as well plant him in the ground up to his chin, just too see if he’d sprout into an honest man.”

“Aroch, there’s little fear o’ that,” he was answered. “If you war to sow an acre o’ proctors, the Duoul a worse crop could a poor body have to look at in the harvest-time.”

“Och, an’ have a care, boys,” said another, “bud they’d grow up into a nate crop o’ hemp, that ’ud make caravats for some of us, as asy as we’re takin’ it.”

Thus in the spirit of that peculiar levity and jeer which the Irish peasantry mingle with the feeling and execution of their very hardships, despair, and revenge, did they discuss the business of the night. Until Doran, rising up and smartly rapping the table, said :

“Come, come, enough for to-night. Every man quietly and by himself to his home—if he has one. Murthock, don’t sleep over your part of the work. Be careful to warn all the boys ; you’re better at it than at your music, my good fellow.”

“Hahl hahl Rhiiah Doran ; you’re welcome to your joke. Afore to-morrow night, all the boys in the parish ’ill know id, plaise God, if Murthock does be a live piper.”

Upon this, the council broke up, and Pierce and Doran returned to old Shea’s house.

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## CHAPTER X.

WHEN Pierce Shea had slept away his intoxication, and with it the enthusiasm it had excited, he awoke to feel the goadings of an upbraiding conscience. He recollected he had broken his father’s most positive injunction. The old man’s good sense early perceived that the acts committed by the Whiteboys, even divested of their immoral and cruel character, could only, in the end, bring ruin on themselves. He was rich, as Terence Delany remarked, and the tithe-proctor had been to him but the cause of a pecuniary loss, which, however unwillingly he might have suffered it, was in itself of little inconvenience. His passions, therefore, had escaped undue agitation, and his reason exercised a comparatively unbiassed sway.

Pierce was a dutiful son, as well from principle as inclination.



His father was, to his only child, a fond and good father; and, exclusive of the affection this ensured in a warm and virtuous heart, he entertained the highest opinion of his parent's good sense. It was, therefore, afflicting to him to reflect on what he had done, in joining an association, from all intercourse with which the paternal voice had repeatedly commanded and warned him. In addition to his other causes of unhappiness, the thought made him very wretched; and when, the next night, he stole with a felon's step from his father's roof, to assist in an illegal outrage, a foreboding of heavy and retributive evil caused his heart to sink in his bosom.

But he had solemnly sworn to obey his Captain in all things, and a refusal to comply with the present order, Pierce shuddered to think, might lay the sin of perjury on his soul. His courage and consistency, too, would at once be questioned; and then came the strongest and most beguiling argument of all. His conduct on this night was to aid in discovering and releasing his mistress, and in dragging to punishment the murderer of her parents. Right or wrong, it was a sacrifice called for at his hands by the united voices of love, duty, and necessity. So he braced himself to concede to it, like a man to whom desperate recourses are the only alternative.

Doran awaited him, and joined him at a short distance from his father's house, wearing over his clothes a shirt, the distinguishing garb of the fraternity, whence was derived their denomination of Whiteboys, and armed with two pistols secured in a belt; whilst at his back was slung a huge bullock's horn, which, besides, being used to sound the different signals, was a badge of command worn only by leaders. Pierce, according to orders, had also provided himself with a shirt, horn, and arms, which, being now adjusted, the friends set out at a brisk pace.

Even to Doran, Shea disguised his real feelings, apprehensive that any doubt or misgiving might be construed into pusillanimity or cowardice, terms ever most humiliating and distressing to a young man's ear. He even forced himself to affect the swagger of a bravo, than which nothing could be more loathsome to his mind and spirits, while Doran volubly rehearsed, half in laughter, the feats and glories that night to be realised.

After some smart walking, they ascended an eminence, about half a mile from Pierce's home. Here Rhiah Doran, putting his gigantic horn to his mouth, blew a deafening blast, that—our veracious old chroniclers have often assured us—could be distinctly

heard at the distance of three Irish miles, if the night was still, and the low breeze favourable. In an instant he was answered from other eminences, contiguous and far off, and all around. A final flourish, that startled the ear of night in the low country, almost at their feet, terminated the signals.

“And now, Lieutenant, to the place of muster!” said Doran; and, descending the hill together, they approached a number of men who were assembled in a field at a little distance. As the friends joined them, others were seen scrambling or leaping over fences on every side, all garbed like themselves, but only a few with horns and weapons, the majority being unbadged and unarmed. After a short pause, the muster seemed completed. They gathered in silent bustle round Doran and Shea, and the former inquired:

“Is everything ready with you, boys?”

“All right, an’ nate, an’ purty, Captain, agra, an’ in our glory,” he was answered.

“The nags, then!” cried Doran. They ran to the four corners of the field, or jumped into the adjoining one, and every man returned holding a horse, that had been pressed from different farms on their route. Nor were the worst put in requisition. The two finest steeds having been presented to Doran and Shea, the leader at once mounted, exclaiming:

“Well, then, jolly boys as ye are, up and along; and the devil take the hindmost for his supper.”

All were instantly on horseback, and with a stifled, though general “hurra!” dashed off at full speed, first, over the hedges and fences immediately around them, then, sometimes over a bit of road, if it happened to come in the way, but for the most part over hedge and ditch, hill and hollow, stream and bog, like mad and evil spirits careering with the night-blast—their hoarse and guttural “hurra!” still occasionally breaking out in wild and unearthly cadence.

Few accidents occurred on this headlong ride, and those of no importance, if it be taken into consideration that, with the exception of Doran and Shea, no man of the party sat in saddle, nor had even a bridle to direct or govern his steed. Blessed was he that boasted so much as a halter; and it must be allowed that, under such disadvantages, they displayed considerable skill in horsemanship. Much more, we are inclined to think, than a regularly drilled squadron of dragoons would show, if similarly accoutred and situated.

And "hurra! hurra!" they still muttered as they swept along, until, after somewhat more than an hour's mad driving, the horses began to stumble and totter from fatigue. Then Doran's voice was again heard.

"We ought to be near upon the place for a change," he said to those immediately around him.

"At the foot o' the rath afore you, Captain," was the answer.

He sounded his horn, and was promptly answered from the direction pointed out. Spurring and lashing, he set the example of one desperate push to gain the point of relief.

"*Faultha! faultha!*"\* to the rattlin' boys that dhrive by night!" was shouted by many voices, as at last they came up to the destined hill.

Doran instantly flung himself from his saddle, asking: "How many horses have you?"

"Five-an'-forty, Captain, you darlin' o' fellows!"

"Enough; and enough is as good as a feast." Then turning to Pierce, during an instant's delay in changing their saddles. "Come, Lieutenant, your hand. By the blessed moon, you are a brave Whiteboy, already!" The girths were now tightened, the bridle flung to him, and he was again on horseback in a twinkling, adding, to the party that had met them: "We'll be here again in an hour: be sure to have the horses ready. Up, and along, boys!" was again the word, and onward all again dashed at the same furious rate as before.

At last they entered amid a few straggling huts, built at irregular distances, and in disorderly lines, dignified by the inhabitants with the name of a village. The stillness and sobriety of night prevailed. No light gleamed from the wretched cabins: labour and life seemed to have sunk in repose. Yet, as they clattered along, door after door was stealthily opened, half-dressed figures, male and female, appeared at each, and the oft-repeated salutation of "*Dieu liuwe a-voucheeleen*,"† uttered in that bitter and gurgling tone in which they would have set their mastiffs on a detested enemy, told that the mission of the riders was understood and appreciated. When they reached the forge, or smithy, a man issuing thence with candles, a lighted sod of turf, and a sledge, proved that they had been duly expected.

"Is the ould bird in the nest?" asked Doran of this person, as he pulled up.

\* Welcome, welcome.

† God speed you, lads.

“Och, an’ that he is, snug an’ warm, an’ waitin’ fur you, Captain, a-chorra.”

“Well; that’s civil and dacent of him, after all, poor soul. Show the way, Thady.”

There was a house standing apart from the others, distinguished from them as well by its station as by its great superiority of extent and appearance. Through its thatched roof protruded a forked stick, to which appended a signboard, that, had it been daylight, might be seen to boast a dull raddle ground, with a black shape thereon, having, very necessarily and wisely, “The Black Bull” painted in black letters above its head and beneath its feet: and lower down still, also painted,

	mint.
Entertain	
for man and horse—	
— — — — —	

At the door of this doomed abode, the party stopt. It was the residence of Terence Delany’s undoer, the same swaggering tithe-proctor whose portrait we have before attempted to sketch.

With the utmost possible silence, the Whiteboys ranged themselves about the house, so as to prevent escape. Then, having lighted their candles, by blowing at the red turf, one clash from the eighteen-pound sledge burst the door open. Doran, and three others, who were armed, rushed in, Pierce being left in command of the main body outside. The visitors took their measures so well and so speedily, that they seized on the terrified proctor as he crept under the bed from which he had just arisen.

“Arragh, then, crawl back wid yourself, here, my ould bouchal,” said one of the men, as he dragged him by the legs into the middle of the room.

“An’ isn’t it a burnin’ shame,” cried another, “to see a responsible, well-doin’ body, like you, go fur to hide yourself like a *chree-chraw-tha*, after we comin’ so far a journey to see you? Foch upon you! To sarve your own cousins in sich a way, in your own house.”

“Mostha, becuse he does so shabby by us, it’s a long day ’till we cum see him agin,” said a third.

“In throth, Peery, agra, it’s little right you have to give us the

*neen-sha-sthig*;\* fur your mother's people, and that's oursefs, that are all come o' the Mulcabys, is an auld decent stock."

"Don't be spakin' to our cuseen affther that fashion. Mysef is a'most sure, by the pleasant face that's on him, he's glad in the heart to have us undher his roof this blessed night."

Such was the mockery bandied from one to another, while the unfortunate man sat stupified in the middle of the room, looking around him in hopelessness and horror, and in dreadful anticipations of the tortures he well knew awaited him. Twice had he been admonished to rise, without showing any sense of the words addressed to his ear, until at last a smart application of Doran's whip to his shoulders, and the shrill tones and terrible words of, "Come out for your tithing, Peery!" that accompanied the blow, roused him from his lethargy. But he only clasped his hands, and cried for mercy. And when by main force the three men proceeded to carry him out, his instinctive struggles for freedom only called down, again and again, an answer from Doran's whip.

"Och, gentlemen, gentlemen, honies, take pity on a poor man!" he repeated, as they bore him over his own threshold.

"Asy now, Peery. Consider wid your conscience. Don't be axin' from us the thing you never yet had for man or baste, your own sef;" was the reply, that showed how little commiseration he had to expect.

Outside the door, Doran refreshed his men with some liquor, for which he had ransacked the house, and then proceeded to put them in order of procession. First he called for Bryan Fitzpatrick, poet, and musician to the body, as has before been mentioned, who manufactured all their songs, and who was so intimately acquainted with the muses, that, by their assistance, he gave his own history; beginning thus:

"Och! sure 'twas from the sweet county of Leithrim I came,  
An' I plays on the fiddle, Bryan Fitzpatrick by name."

A most important personage on show occasions like the present, he now came forward at call to take rightful place at the van of the array. Peery Clancy, mounted on his own pampered gelding, had the next place. Immediately followed Captain Rhiadh Doran, with Shawn O'Burke, who had learned to emit from that most primitive, though unwieldy instrument, his bullock's horn, such a variety of strain, suited to every occasion, whether martial,

\* Not at home.

triumphant, or pathetic, as with some created him a rival of Bryan Fitzpatrick, muse, fiddle, and all. To the unprejudiced ear, his variations equalled, at least, the different transitions from high and low howling, to high and low bellowing, once practised by the animal to which his instrument had originally been an appendage. Shawn rode at the right hand of the captain. At the left was Yemen O'Nase, "the finisher of the law;" the rest, brought up by Pierce, followed in what order they might. At the first movement from the house, Bryan Fitzpatrick drew his fiddle-stick, and was instantly seconded by Shawn O'Burke, whose doleful blate certainly outdid his competitor, in every way, on this occasion. Heretofore, whatever Bryan lost in loudness and power, he had been enabled to make up by melody; but now he only produced a most unaccountable noise, and, in pure comparison with noises, a contemptible one. Truth is, he had been so unlucky as to tumble from his horse during the rapid ride, and, to his great consternation, when he uncased his fiddle, it appeared woefully disabled by the accident, one side being battered in, and all the strings snapped across. His only resource had been in the short pause afforded, to knot together two lengths at random, each of which he afterwards found was composed of different scraps of different strings, first, second, third, and bass, as they came to his fingers. The result we have described. But as the troop passed along in order, the loud shouting of the men rose to his relief, drowning, in the outcry which rent the air, his pitiful minstrelsy; the inmates of the hovels, at their doors, or lying on their straw, joined the uproar; and even the shrill scream of women, and the tiny pipes of children, could be distinguished. There was no pity for Peery Clancy.

They arrived at the place where he was to undergo his punishment. History, the faithful mirror of truth, the rigid chronicler of facts, proceeds in her duteous detail without consideration for the squeamishness of nerves. Among other instances of the principle, the legal retribution visited on Damien and Ravailac has found its careful chroniclers; nor, in this transcript of real scenes, shall the illegal violence done to an Irish tithe-proctor want true and courageous historians. Therefore, proceed we with the circumstances.

Conformably with the other preparations, a grave was dug for the proctor's reception, close by a hedge in a contiguous field. In this he was laid, and covered with loose earth to the chin. Then did Yemen O'Nase, who, like Shylock, had for some time been busily

occupied sharpening upon a flat stone the broad blade of his pruning-knife, advance, and in the in-felt pride of being a dexterous operator, exclaim:

"Well, we're all ready; an' it's a sweet bit of a blade that's in you, for one knife. Och, bud it isn't none o' your blades that's fit for nothin' but cuttin' butther. I gi' you my conscience, this holy an' blessed night, 'twould take the horns of a ten-year-ould bull, not to speak of a poor proctor's ears, though them same does be hard enough in regard of all the prayers they won't hear, an' all the lies they tell. Come, come," interrupting himself, as he knelt down to his work, "none o' your ochowns, Peery. Don't be the laste unasy in yourself, a-gra. You may be right sartin I'll do the thing nate an' handy. Tut, man," in reply to a shrill scream, "I'd whip the ears of a bishop, not to talk of a crature like you, a darker night nor this. Divil a taste I'd lave him: an' wouldn't bring any o' the head wid me, neither—Musha, what ails you at all?" after he had half accomplished his task. "You'd have a bethier right to give God praise for gittin' into the hands iv a clever boy, like me, that—stop a bit, now—that 'ud only do his Captain's orders, an' not be lettin' the steel slip frum your ear across your windpipe—Lord save the hearers! Stop, I say! There, now; wasn't that done purty?"

"Why, Peery," said another, "bear in mind that it's all for the good o' your poor sowl we're so kind to you. Sure there's no doubt at all that the proctors, every mother's son o' them, go sthrait-a-head to the Divil. But I'll be bound to say that Peery Clancy, that was buried—an' a dacent berrin he got, wid his own people around him—an' Peery Clancy, that 'ill be afther him, won't be the same body, at-all-at-all, in regard that one had wings to his head, an' the t'other not one in the world. You won't be the same man, only some one else. More betoken, the penance o' this night 'ill be mighty good fur you in the time to come. Take care o' yourself there, a-vich."

"Good night, Peery. Sure you have all the crop we can gi' you," added others.

"To make everything sure," said Doran, "you must just swear as I desire you, Peery, or have Yemen at your throttle, along with your ears. Give me the book."

A prayer-book was handed to him, which he held to be kissed by the proctor, and the buried-alive swore never again to follow his unpopular profession. A sentinel was then placed over him, also sworn to release the sufferer in an hour.

"And now for the *sallin-na-morra!*" cried Doran. "Strike up, Bryan. Shawn! your horn. Attention, men, and chorus."

The *sallin-na-morra*, or death-prayer, was a celebrated chant, pathetic-ludicrous, composed and sung to his fiddle, by Bryan Fitzpatrick, on all such occasions as the present. While the party gathered round the proctor, it now arose, according to orders, first as a plaintive solo by the son of the muses, and then chorused in terrific diapason by the whole body, joined to the utmost effort of Shawn's horn, and, indeed, of all the other horns present. After one encore, Doran flung himself on his horse, and his words, "Up, and along!" were the signal for the retreat of his troop, whose wild "hurrah!" testified their triumph, and readiness to accompany him, as they at once vaulted on their barebacked coursers. And away they set, over the ground they had already travelled, at the same savage speed in which they had arrived.

After driving some miles, Doran, who kept abreast with Shea, carelessly said:

"I'm sorry we have left the poor Divil in Terence Delany's hands, after all."

"I was going to say the same thing," replied Pierce, "and to ask you if you think there is any danger of the unfortunate creature's life."

"Heaven knows, not I. But you remarked the tone of his voice, and expression of his face, when he repeated my words, *to release his prisoner in an hour?*"

"I did; and for that very reason have my doubts. Suppose we turn back?"

"Nonsense!" shouted Doran, with a laugh; "do you suppose I could get my men to run the risk of any probable alarm that may now be spread in the neighbourhood? Or that I would dare it on my own account? Let Terence and the proctor settle it together."

"No, Doran; we have already done enough—too much. I, at least, regret, and during the whole scene, I regretted my share in such an unwarrantable and cruel outrage. I, at least, will endeavour to prevent murder."

"Oh, very well, Lieutenant. I have no wish or cause to order you from such a benevolent turn. Only it may now be too late. You intend riding back by yourself?"

"Have I much to fear for my own life, if I do? You said something of risk just now."



"Nothing of risk to a single man and horse, though; all is quiet, I believe. You didn't notice any one leave the house while you guarded it?"

"No,—good night," answered Pierce, checking and turning his horse towards the village.

"Good night, then, and let us see you soon. On, boys, on!"—and the friends galloped in opposite directions.

The last clang of the Whiteboys' horses, and the echo of their far "hurrah!" were lost in distance to the victim's ear, and his faint moan was then the only sound that disturbed the silence of the night around him. Terence Delany, his guard, stood over him, speechless and motionless: even his breathing was not whispered by the still air. But, after a considerable pause, he walked a few paces to the fence near which the grave had been dug, and returned bent and panting with some heavy burden round which his arms were clasped. It was a huge stone: he stooped and laid it down beside the bleeding head.

Again he paused, and stood motionless; but at last his husky tones broke suddenly and ominously upon the dead calm; for the proctor's moans had subsided into the feeble breathings of exhaustion. He spoke, as was his almost invariable custom, in the Irish language, of which we will endeavour to give the substance and turn of speech.

"Know you, Peery Clancy, who it is that stands over you in the lonesomeness and silence of this night?"

The answer came also in Irish: "I know not whom you are; but, if you have a Christian's soul, you will release me from this misery."

"Did you never bring it to your mind, and did the recollection of it never put your sleep astray, when, stretched on a bed of comfort, after a pleasant meal, that, by your deeds, Terence Delany, and his wife, and his three poor little children, were left houseless and hungry?"

"Oh! I am lost for ever!" moaned the wretched man.

"Hah! you know who stands over you, now! Yes, you sunk them and me in poverty and the grave! You made me mad! and you now lie there, sure of the death-stroke from the arm of the madman you made!"

The victim shrieked.

"Waste not your breath in idle cries. I will turn away, and give you a few minutes to make your prayer of God. When you hear my step again near you, cry mercy on your own soul."

He walked aside. By one of those singular coincidences which occur oftener than they are noticed, the face of night suddenly changed; the stars became extinguished, and the wind howled through the leafless branches. He turned his brow upwards, as if confusedly affected with the change; and paused a short time in that position. Then, starting wildly, he hurried back, and heedless of the frightful scream for life and mercy, felt with his foot for the exact situation of the head—stooped, and after many efforts raised the ponderous stone—poised it a moment over the mark—when Pierce Shea bounded upon him from the other side of the hedge, forced him from his stand, and the rock fell, with a dull and hollow sound, harmless on the earth.

Delany instantly sprang on Shea, and with both hands griped his throat. Pierce seized him in return, and swung him about. But the iron grasp became firmer; the blood stopped and throbbled in his head, and could not circulate; so that breathing became a painful labour. In a violent attempt to free himself, both fell to the ground, and Delany entangled and locked his legs with those of his adversary, who now felt the man's hold tightening more and more, and heard the gnashing of teeth at his ear, while the pang of suffocation closed on his heart. In a moment's rapid thought, however, Pierce recollected a sleight he had learned in wrestling, by which it was possible to release himself from the disabling bondage the would-be murderer held over his legs. Using it, therefore, and immediately after summoning an effort that the fear of death could alone supply, he sprang to his feet, bringing the other with him. This shook Delany's grasp; and Pierce, instantly relieved, bethought him of another sleight, acquired also in the wrestling-ring. It was successful as the first; his enemy swung loose from him, and a well-directed blow in the throat brought him down senseless.

The victor stood a moment, faint and staggering, before his strength or thoughts were sufficiently recruited to follow up his success. In good time, however, he recovered, to bind with his neckcloth, handkerchief, and garters, the ankles and arms of the prostrate man. Then, the blood resuming its channel, and his breath coming and going freely, he lost not a moment in shovelling the earth off the nearly expiring proctor, catching him in his arms, and conveying him with incredible speed to his own house, where, so soon as he had deposited his burden, he sank himself, breathless and feeble with the unusual exertion and struggles he had made.

The near noise of horses' hooves recalled his senses to activity. At first he felt assured that his friends, anxious about his absence and danger, had come back to protect him. But a fear that the riders might be enemies, not friends, next sprang up in his mind, and he took refuge under the bed, on which he had just left the proctor, assured that, even if his worst surmise were true, the man whose life he had saved, at hazard of his own, would, by silence at least, shield him from present danger.

In a moment he heard the shrill tones of a boy calling out to some persons to follow, and soon after a party of dragoons, headed by a magistrate, clanked into the room. The boy, suspected to be a natural son of the proctor, had (not without the observation of Doran, whose after-question on the road to Pierce may be remembered) escaped from the house just as the Whiteboys had gained it, and, seizing a horse that grazed in a neighbouring field, set off for Kilkenny, where he gave notice of what was going forward, and quickly returned with civil and military aid.

To the questions put by the magistrate and dragoons to the proctor, as to the probability of apprehending any of the Whiteboys, Pierce, it may be supposed, listened with natural perturbation; and for some time the total silence of the person interrogated seemed to argue him safe from danger. But the proctor, at last breaking a silence that bodily pain and fatigue had alone caused, inquired whether or no he should be entitled to a reward for discovering a Whiteboy. When answered in the affirmative, poor Shea heard the ungrateful wretch immediately name the place of his concealment, and charge him as being one of those who had assisted at his torture; a fact fully corroborated by his white shirt and his arms, which, in his hurry, he had not thrown aside. The reward of his humanity, then, from the very person who owed him his existence, was, in a few seconds, to find himself a prisoner, with the dreadful certainty staring him full in the face of ending his life prematurely and ignominiously on the gallows, when that life had so many great and tender claims upon it. We think we cannot exalt Pierce's praise more highly than by adding, that in this hour of trial—of outraged generosity and personal despair, he did not regret what he had done.

## CHAPTER XI.

It were easier for the reader to imagine, than for us to describe —(the remark is, by the way, an old ruse among us storytellers, adopted—when unable to trace, or comprehend distinctly enough for description, the various changes of the mind under strong and peculiar sensations—in order to put the reader in good-humour with our lack of ability, by thus slyly complimenting him on his own superior discernment.)—It were easier, we say, for the reader to imagine, than for us to describe, the thoughts and feelings of Pierce Shea, in his present appalling situation, when the next morning's dawn brought with it tardy remorse, and un-availing repentance. An habitual offender is in constant apprehension of the punishment he knows society has decreed against those who violate its laws, and, when his career is at last about to be terminated, he is found in some degree prepared for the fate he had always dared and dreaded. This was not the case with Pierce. His life had been calm, and free from crime; and his participation in the acts that now subjected him to a dreadful death was a fatality rather than a choice. Forced into the Whiteboy association and expedition, by a master-motive very different from that which impelled the others, he spoke but the truth, when he declared to Doran that he was an unwilling spectator of the cruelties practised. In truth, he had taken no part in them: his heart had all along commiserated the sufferer, his present fate proved how sincerely. Poor Pierce's situation was therefore terrible; yet less from a fear of death than from overwhelming horror at the ignominy his public execution would entail on his father, his mother, and himself. He recollected, too, that the first step towards his fate was a breach of filial duty and reverence. And Alley, for whom he had ventured all, and now lost all—and who remained not a whit the better for his rashness, his error, and his ruin—what was to become of her?

During the night, they had confined and closely guarded him in the proctor's house. Terence Delany was his fellow-prisoner, and the man's dogged aspect would have repelled all converse,

even did not the presence of a sentinel effectually prevent it. At the first break of morning they were tied, each behind a dragoon; and the party, fourteen in number, exclusive of the serjeant in command, set out for Kilkenny gaol.

They had travelled about half of their journey, and had just left behind a slip of mountain-road, on each side of which hills clothed with heath and fur, and rocks bleached white by time and the weather, were the only scenery, and were now approaching a trifling hamlet, to which the more fertile land gently sloped, when a wild cry came on their ears. Presently a funeral procession, formed by a great concourse of country people, of both sexes, appeared in view. As the mournful crowd drew near, the serjeant halted his men in the centre of the road, closed his files, got the prisoners in the midst, and, only recommending all forbearance of insult, thus remained to let it pass.

"D—n my eyes, Jack," said one of the men to his comrade; "but them 'ere women 'owls confoundedly after the dead fellor."

"Curse, me, aye," replied his comrade, "'tis a noise might scare Neddy, 'ere, from his corn."

"Oye, that 'twould," observed another, a Yorkshire giant, leaning forward on the pummel of his saddle to join in the conversation in front. "'Tis the Hoirish cry, as 'em calls it, what such loike woild Hoirish always howls, dom 'em."

"Demme, though," cried a cockney, "if them ere vimen, what are arter the coffin, ben't on a lark, like. They don't come down a tear, for all they clap hands, and hollar, the velps, their d—d gibberish, what none understands but themselves."

"Whey, noa, mon," rejoined the third speaker, "'em doant care a curse for dead choap, for all their outlondish bawling; and—"

"*Chise! Chise!*"\* roared out a number of stentorian voices, that made their horses bound under the riders. The coffin was dashed down; the crowd closed and sprang on the dragoons as they passed by, and, in the twinkling of an eye, every soldier was unsaddled and disarmed, and the prisoners, with grand and deafening acclaim, set at liberty. The matter had been altogether so unexpected, and so electric, that no precautions could have been taken. The military were not yet recovered from their surprise, when the man who had given the first signal-word addressed them with a face of laughing raillery:

"Arrah, then, maybe that wasn't as nate a thrick, an' as

\* Down! down!

nately done as ever you seen in your lives, afore? Myself 'ud a'most sware you'll be for killin' all the corpses you meet on your road, from this day. An' faith you may as well biggin now," pointing to the coffin that lay on the ground, of which the lid had fallen off, and allowed a parcel of large stones to trundle about. "Bud, my darlin' red coats, as our work is done we wants no more. No hurt or harm is intended to a sowl among ye: though, to be sure, 'twould be no great bones to do it, wid your own purty firelocks, too," glancing at the polished barrel of the carbine he held in his hands. "Bud, up on your horses, an' go your ways. You know you can say you just dropt your prisoners on the road—an' so you did, faith! like a hot phato, when you couldn't hould 'em—an' don't know what the Duoul come o' them. An' that 'ill be no lie for you."

"Brave fellows," cried the serjeant, "for brave you are to attempt and succeed in an action, such as you truly say we have never seen equalled, and generous fellows, too, to give us life and liberty, when we least expected either—brave and generous men, listen to me. You say no harm is intended us. But to send us to our quarters without our swords or carbines, would be the heaviest injury you could inflict. We should all be tried and punished for cowardice. I should be turned into the ranks; these poor fellows tied up to the triangle, and half lashed to death. In short, you ruin us, if you keep our arms. I propose a treaty. Discharge our carbines with your own hands, and then let us have them back, when we cannot further use them to your annoyance. As for the swords, we shall each of us swear on his own, as you restore them, instantly to put them in our sheaths, and ride off without drawing them: by the faith and honour of soldiers and of men, we will!"

"It 'ud be too bad on the poor cratures not to listen to 'em," said the leader to his companions.

"Faith, an' it would," said another.

"An' they so mooch in arnest, an' promisin' so well," said two or three more.

"We are not your enemies," resumed the serjeant, seeing them waver, "but English soldiers come into your country as brothers, and only doing, as soldiers, a disagreeable duty. Besides, you have bound us to you in gratitude for ever, and treachery, even if it was in our power, would be impossible."

"Arrah, we'll gi' them the arms," now burst from the whole crowd.

"Stop!" said Pierce, advancing: "it is my duty, as this rescue has been undertaken for my advantage, to see that no evil grows out of it to my unknown friends. Let the carbines be first discharged." His commands were obeyed. "Now, serjeant, you will prove your sincerity by handing us your cartridge-pouches." The serjeant readily complied. Pierce emptied them, separately, and returned them, together with the carbines and swords, which latter were, according to treaty, at once sheathed, while the dragoons remained still dismounted. The military party, with many professions of thanks, then gained their saddles, superfluously assisted by their new friends, who zealously opened to give free passage. Their miserable throats were also opened for a parting shout, when the serjeant, wheeling his troop round, gave the word, "Soldiers, fire!"—The pistols, hidden in the holsters, had been, by one party, overlooked, and were now discharged. Every ball took effect, and fifteen men fell.

"Follow me now, lads!"—the serjeant continued, dashing spurs into his horse, and plunging forward amid the throng, his horse's head pointed towards his Barracks. Three file closely followed him, and he and they cut through the dense crowd, who had not yet recovered breath or action from this sudden change of affairs. But on the remainder of the troop they closed in an instant after, with frantic cries and gestures of desperation and revenge.

The dragoons, thus surrounded, at first spurred and spurred to free themselves; but the outward circles of the country people pressed on those within, so that the horses stood wedged and powerless. A second volley from the holster-pistols then immediately followed, with effect as deadly as the former. Louder and louder, fiercer and fiercer, grew the shouts and efforts for vengeance. The wretched people were unprovided with any weapons except sticks, but they were furious as bulls, active and ferocious as tigers. Some grappled the reins of the horses, and others dragged the riders to the ground. Though cut and hacked with the sabres, that were still available, and trodden and trampled under the prancing feet of the affrighted animals, or themselves treading and trampling on the bodies of their dead companions, they did not flinch a jot. While their antagonists, unable to act in a party, every moment found their single bravery useless, or overpowered by repeated and ceaseless onsets. One man among the peasantry bounced up behind a dragoon, clasped him in his arms, and both tumbled to the earth. In an instant he was on his legs again, jumped on the breast of his prostrate enemy,

wrenched the sword from his grasp, forced it through his temples, and, emitting a shrill cry that was heard above all the other clamour, waved it aloft, and with the rifled weapon proceeded to inflict deep and indiscriminate wounds on men and horses, until one well-aimed thrust brought him down, and he was crushed beneath the hoofs of the chargers. A goaded horse, unable to plunge forward, reared up and fell on his haunches. The ill-fated rider was instantly deprived of life by the crowd that, bounding into the air, leaped and danced upon him. He who at the first commencement of the affair had acted as leader, laid hold of one of the poles of the mock bier, and with it much annoyed the soldiers. A sabre reached him in the abdomen; he snatched a handkerchief from a woman's neck, bound it round the ghastly wound, and, darting forward on the assaulter, grappled with him till the dragoon was lifeless, and, the handkerchief giving way, his own intestines burst from his body with the exertion. While all this went on, frantic women lined the fences at either side of the road, and with terrible outcries of fear and encouragement, prayers for their friends and curses for their enemies, clapping of hands and tearing of their hair, added to the already deafening yell of the combatants, to their shouts of savage onset or savage triumph, and to the groans or shrieking of the wounded.

This bloody scene was enacted in little more than a few minutes. In fact, the serjeant and the three men who had at first broken through the crowd with him, after discovering that they were galloping alone along on their road homeward, scarcely had time to face about again to the relief of their eleven comrades, and to re-approach the outward lines of the infuriated crowd, when those eleven were reduced to one. From their elevation above the heads of the assailants they were then able to form a pretty correct opinion of how matters stood. They had not yet discharged their second pistols, but, after a moment's pause of indignation, did so, and, as before, every shot told. The wildest cry that had yet been heard arose, a number of voices exclaiming, together, as the dragoons followed up their volley with a furious charge—"Make way, boys, and let them in!"—The crowd accordingly divided. This was what the serjeant had wished and tempted; he fell back with his little party, and cried out:

"Fly, comrades! retreat! retreat!"

The single survivor rushed pale and bloody through the human gap, escaping many missiles aimed at him by the baffled people, and—



"Away, serjeant, away!" he shouted, striking, for one push at life, the sides of his snorting steed.

"Where are the rest?" asked the serjeant,—“why do they lag behind?”

"They can't help it," answered the rescued, and, till that moment, despairing man, spurring past,—“nor we either—on, on!”

"Is it so?" resumed the serjeant; "Let us gallop, then!"—and all instantly tore off at their horses' utmost speed, a mingled roar of disappointment, rage, and triumph, following them for the short time they remained in view.

It would be setting up a claim for more of mildness than generally belongs to humanity, or perhaps expose him to the charge of pusillanimity in the opinion of some of our readers, were we to represent Pierce Shea as an inactive spectator of this affair. Our regard for facts is too strong not to acknowledge, that with the dragoon's sword, on which he now leaned, panting for breath, he had evinced, during the desperate struggle, a revengeful sense of, to his apprehension, the cruel treachery practised on his too credulous friends. The yet uncalmed passions of those around him were for some time indulged in undiminished uproar and confusion of sounds. Some loudly rehearsed their exploits, or exultingly exhibited their wounds, or, brandishing the arms of their foes, told of what they would have done: shouts of victory, or the boisterous congratulations of triumph were sent forth: the ferocity of unsatiated vengeance was exhibited by a few, who, with mad curses and imprecations, ran to trample or hack anew the slaughtered dragoons and horses. But dearly were that day's vengeance and triumph bought. Upwards of thirty peasants lay dead on the mountain-road, and near a dozen more were wounded. Then was heard the scream of women, as they rushed from body to body, recognising a husband or brother among the slain or dying. Or, what rings more awfully and terrifically on the ear, the rough commanding voice of men changed to weakness and lamentation, as they, too, knelt in sorrow over the corpse of a father, a brother, or a son.

The scene that now presented itself, together with all his late adventures, might well seem to Pierce, as he stood gazing around him, exhausted and scarce able to exert his judgment or recollections, but the confusion of a terrific dream. His thoughts were yet uncollected, when a body, that had hitherto lain as if lifeless, stirred at his feet, and a faint voice, not unfamiliar to his ear,

pronounced his name. Shocked and thrown off his guard, he started aside, and then his eyes fell upon Terence Delany. There was a long and deep cut across the wretch's temple, and the blood flowed in a now thickened stream over his cheek, neck, and bosom. Pierce knelt, and endeavoured to raise him, but the gasping voice, that came at intervals, requested his forbearance. He spoke, as usual, in Irish. "No, son of the Sheas, disturb me not, if you wish to leave my dying moments free for what I have to say. I am almost dead. Promise to fulfil my last prayer."

"I do promise, before God."

"Here, then, untie this"—pointing with his feeble finger to his bloody shirt, where Shea found a few shillings carefully secured by a thread—"you must take that to my mother—now the only mother of my children; I begged it for them since we parted. You will find them all, not far from this, in a ruined barn, near to the blackened walls of Murtoch Maher's house. Lead her to my corpse. Tell her I died wishing for her blessing; and blessing, though they are not here with me, her son's children—and"—His voice grew for a moment stronger, his glassy eye lit up, and he was able to raise his clenched hand and braced arm as he added—"Tell her, too, I died with the traitors' blood upon me." He sank down, and Pierce thought he was dead. But soon after he again opened his eyes, and, without motion, resumed:

"I am going to meet you, *Aillean*, wife of my heart! Yes, the pulse of my heart you were, when it was young and joyful: when it grew black and sorrowful, still you were its darling. You might have been rich, but you were poor with Terence. Oh! tell my mother, young man, to be kind to poor *Aillean's* children." A rapid convulsion passed over his face, his limbs unconsciously quivered, and the black blood gushed fresher from his death-wound, in consequence of a violent effort he made to grasp Pierce's arm, as, with unwinking eyes rivetted on him, he just had time to say:

"You saved me from the crime of murder. I owe it to you that, now as I go to face my Maker, I have not that red sin on my soul. And I would requite you. First, I pray that your young days may be full of joy, that your beloved may be like my *Aillean*, and that your children, and your children's children, may rise up to be a comfort to you—and—and—" the last words were scarcely audible or intelligible—"Listen, and do not move me—Listen with your Soul—An enemy is close upon you—put no trust—" He stretched out his gaunt limbs, and died.

The tears streamed down Pierce's cheeks. General carnage does not start a tear, when a particular misery, like this, will unlock the sluices of human feeling. With the assistance of two women, he bore the body to the village, where, in a spacious barn, the remains of those whose homes were not near were "laid out" in ghastly array, but with all reverence and decency. As Pierce Shea was most anxious to be at his father's house, he lost no time in first fulfilling the sad request of the dying man, and therefore quickly turned his feet towards the place where, by poor Terence's description, he might expect to find his helpless survivors. It may not be out of course here to remark, that if the language uttered by Terence Delany appear too refined for one in his situation in life, it is ascertainable as only in strict unison with the genius and idiom of the language in which he spoke, and from which we have literally translated. In the Irish, there is nothing of what is known by the name of vulgarism. Its construction, even in the mouths of the peasantry, who to this day use it, has been and can be but little corrupted. Nor could the familiar colloquy of the meanest among them be rendered, in English, into commonplace or slang.

Inquiring his way to Murtoch Maher's barn, Pierce found the place was on his nearest way homeward. A destructive fire had, some time previously, consumed the dwelling of a wealthy farmer: from a contiguous barn, part of the thatch roof had, to prevent the spreading of the flame, been torn: one end was yet covered, but through the other end rain and storm found free admission. And this was the comfortless dwelling of Moya Delany and her three grandchildren.

Pierce soon came on the desolate group. The old woman, of unusual height, and bearing in her mein and features a strong likeness to her deceased son, stood erect, with her back to the entrance, as he approached; the youngest child was asleep in her withered bosom, and the other two hungrily watching a few potatoes, that were roasting in the white ashes of a fire made upon the floor with green furze. Till the moment of his entering, Shea had not sufficiently reflected on the difficulties of his mission, and now felt painfully at a loss how to convey the dismal tidings he bore. The old woman had not perceived his entrance, and he stood behind her for some moments, ere his "*Dieu-a-uit*" startled her as if from a trance. Turning quickly round, she then stared at him in silence, neither uttering another word. At

last she spoke in a firm, though mournful voice, and the following dialogue ensued in Irish :

“My heart is sorry, young gentleman, that I cannot offer you a seat in this poor place.”

“There is no necessity, good woman :” and his throat choked up, as he looked around ;—“I have only a message from your son.”

She advanced, and fixed her eyes upon him.

“My son?—and what tidings from my son?—I did not see him last night, but my dreams were with Terence. Your face frightens me, young man : tell me your errand.”

“My face ought to show the sorrow of my heart,” said Pierce, in a broken accent, handing the little legacy.

“God of glory!—I dreamt I sat by his corpse—and this moment I was looking at his coffin in the fire.”—She caught his arm, and gazed more wildly and keenly into his eyes.—“My son is dead!—aye, and here is blood upon you, and you are his murderer!”

“A merciful Heaven forbid!”—

“But he is gone from the old mother, and the little orphans?”—This was asked in a tone of the deepest misery, whilst her own tears now came fast.

“Christ have pity on you!” was Pierce Shea’s only answer, while he covered his face with his hands.

She was stupified, but did not fall. Then she wept plentifully, but without loud lament. She sat and called the children around her, and told them they had no father, now; at the same time pressing, with one arm, until it screamed, the infant that lay on her breast, and with the other encircling the two elder ones, whose piercing cries arose, as they clung to her tattered but clean vesture. After some time she desired Pierce to relate the manner of her son’s death. As he went on, rage, revenge, and, when he had uttered the last part of Terence’s dying message, triumph, flushed her face, and dried the tears on her cheeks; and the widowed and childless old woman asked, in a stern voice :

“He died with the blood of the traitors upon him?”

“He did—I saw it wet upon his hands.”

“Then he died as I would have him die,” she resumed, rising up, “and no tear shall ever more drop from his mother’s eye, to wet the early grave of Terence Delany.” Pierce saw her, with astonishment, catch up a wooden vessel full of water, and extinguish the embers of the fire. Then she took the second-eldest

child by the hand, motioned the other to the entrance, and, with the youngest still held on one arm, added, in a tone more of command than of entreaty: "Lead me to my son's corpse: it must be stretched, and watched, and buried, and those he has left behind him must sit at its head."

Thus admonished, and under such afflicting circumstances, Pierce, notwithstanding his own anxiety to get home, could not hesitate to comply. Taking the infant from the old woman's arms, he led the way; she, with a firm step, and holding the two other grandchildren each by the hand, silently following.

It was known that Terence Delany had no home; and when they arrived at the barn in which, as we before noticed, his body was "laid out," they found that all the usual attentions had been bestowed upon it. The mother walked straight up to his bier, only casting a few rapid glances at each side, on the other corpses that lined her way. She stood erect for a moment over the silent features of her only son. Then she slowly stooped, and kissed his lips. At last, bursting into an irregular and dismal song, she uttered, in many an unequal *dhhas*, or verse, his Keenthecaun.

"I nursed you at my breast; I baked your marriage cake; I sit at your head—Ullah!

"I gave you my milk; I fed you with my heart's blood. I look upon yours!

"I rocked your cradle; I nursed your children; I must follow in your funeral.

"Your children are about me; I see my child's children. But I see not my child.

"I remember your face in youth: its brightness was manly like the sun's; it made daylight round about me.

"I remember your form in the dance; and strong was your arm when you wrestled with the young men; none was like my son to me.

"And none was like him to his own Aileen, the wife of his bosom: Aileen, with the blue eyes, and the yellow hair. Her children look at me with her eyes.

"Many strove for Aileen: but she left her father's riches to share your cabin. She chose you above all: she was your bride.

"Aileen was beautiful and good; you loved one another; and my heart laughed to see you in your own house. The old mother's heart, sitting by your fire!

“ And all your days were pleasant till the destroyer came. Then your young cheeks grew pale, and the light left your eyes, and I laughed no more.

“ Ruin blackened your youth, and made your hearts old too soon, and ended your days. Aileen died first; you see her now where she is; tell Aileen your mother loves her.

“ I am left alone; and the little children of Aileen have no father.

“ But I weep not for you now. You fell revenging yourself on our enemies. The blood of the traitors shall alone nourish the green grass on your grave.

“ I nursed you at my breast; I baked your marriage cake; I sit at your head!—Ullah!”



## CHAPTER XII.

THE blast fumed and blustered through the bare fence, and through the leafless orchard. The pelting hailstones drove adown the gaping, wide-open, and perfectly straight chimney of old Ned, Shea's kitchen, and fizzed in the roaring turf fire before which our friend, Andy Houlohan, and a new acquaintance, whom we beg to introduce by the dangerous name of Bridge Chree, or Bridget *Heart*, were seated, enjoying their *tête-a-tête* in the sense for which that term was at first invented. For Andy and Bridge were, as a lapidary would say, lovers of the first water, or, in their own idiom, and pretty much in the same words, “jewels at the business.”

“ Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,” &c.,

in humble prose, is a most unconscionable tyrant; his ambition expanded as the earth; and, from the monarch of many nations, to the lowly proprietor, nay, to the drudge of the lowliest cot, making all bow before his empire. He fetters the free, and upon the slave casts additional bondage: he humanizes the savage, subdues the bravo, and, haply, makes the coward valiant. Now is he the presiding deity of the gorgeous palace, where delicious music and balmy perfumes mingle in the flattered air: where costly viands and sparkling wines eke out the banquet: where

downy couches tempt his languid limbs to dalliance or repose : where beauty, made awful by rank and dazzling attire, lavishes upon him her ambrosial sighs and goddess-smiles, to tempt his eternal sojourn. Yet, anon, we trace him to the smoky kitchen, clothed in a suit of clumsy frieze, peeling the humble potato with divine little thumb-nail ; and his witching little mouth surrounded by a white circle, that has remained on it since his last hearty draught of acid buttermilk. With the cricket's chirp, or the kitten's purr, his only music ; with a rush for a chandelier, or galaxy of argands ; with a three-legged stool for his only lounge, and the unpretending Bridge Chree for his inspiration.

We could follow the mischief-doing urchin into many a stranger scene. We could unmask his various disguises, and the endless arts to which he has recourse to spread his universal sway. But having brought him to our present sphere—(in which, for our lawful purposes, we have ourselves seen him, and here pledge our veracity to the fact, but would not that our fair and gentle readers should quarrel with him for his mean versatility ; and we think we may add, in an “ aside,” of this there is no danger)—Having shown, we say, that, in his thirst for universal dominion, he deigns to visit such humble folk as are of our acquaintance, we shall follow his vagaries no further, lest, as the imp is spiteful, he might turn on us in revenge for our *exposé*, and incapacitate us for our task of grave historians.

No matter how homely their place of welcome, the wide world did not supply him with a heartier one than did Andy and Bridge. It could not be said that the perishable thing called beauty had, on either side, been accessory to their mutual attachment. They had no fear that they should cease to love as soon as they should grow ugly : as their passion was derived from what could not change or decay, it was more likely to be constant and durable, and well-fitted for the “ wear and tear ” of life.

Among his compeers, Andy went by the title or surname of “ Andy Awling,” or airy Andrew. A term significant of a certain, irresistible heedlessness of action and manner, thought and speech, by which he was distinguished, and applicable, indeed, as well to his outward as to his inward man. Never did matter mould itself to mind more agreeably than in the form and face of Andy. Tall, square, slight, loose, and bony, he seemed to have been put together carelessly, or by chance : looking like a bold yet imperfect sketch of a big fellow. His swarthy visage, entirely devoid of flesh, with the skin fitting tight to his high

cheek-bones, and with its mixed expression of good-humour, foolishness, fidget, and subtlety, was in keeping with his figure. Even his clothes hung around him at odds and ends, as if they had been tossed on with a pitchfork. And his hat, that part of every man's costume, in its shape and adjustment most redolent of character, was sometimes pushed back to the very last holding-point of his skull, sometimes dragged down into his eyes, and sometimes only half-covering his head, just as the head happened to be humorously, gravely, or rakishly inclined. Winter and summer he wore, in common with almost every man around him, a mighty outside blue coat, that fell from his shoulders, pioned his arms, and trailed in the puddle or dust. The knees of his inexpressibles always swung wide open, as did his shirt-collar, and, all but one or two buttons, his vest: so that the vision of a black hairy chest was seen in all weathers. His stockings festooning down to his brogues, generally left his legs half naked.

But then we have seen that he was the most loving and faithful creature under the sun; to all (except when fighting at fairs or patterns) good-natured; and, above all, possessed of a quality in high esteem with the weaker sex, of every degree, that is, utter fearlessness of danger or death in mortal combat. It was Andy's courage and prowess, in fact, that first recommended him to Bridge Chree: and, in the manner following. We love to rehearse the story.

Pudge Dermody, whose name the reader will recollect, was a little of the rustic *petit-maitre*, making advances, through sheer vanity, to every girl he met. To own the truth, and giving due honour to his mastership in the art of love, many were Pudge's conquests. But he boasted of the favours he received, nay, equally vain of his wit, often amused his companions as well by his own folly as at the expense of those he set a sighing. Among the rest, Bridge Chree was distinguished by his flattering attentions; and one evening, while sitting with some friends over a cup of ale, he heard the name mentioned, as the most recent of his conquests. But he seemed only half-willing to admit the honour of having vanquished poor Bridge; swore a raking oath that she was an ugly jade, by far too humble for his notice; and "had crooked legs, made after the ould Munsther fashion, wid the wrong ends down, an' she squinted worse nor a dog lookin' at the edge of a rapin'-hook."

"Why, then, may this dhrink be my pison," observed Andy Awling, who did not relish the slight cast on a fellow-servant of



his own, living in the same house with him, "bud Bridge Chree has two as good eyes as ever looked straigh't afore 'em." (Although he said this, he knew in his heart there was more gallantry than truth in the assertion.) "An' as for the bits o' legs, I'll be bould to say I can spake about 'em the same, afther a manner, as if they were my own. Case why, walkin' about undher the one roof wid 'em, I seen 'em farther up, an' oftener nor yourself, Paudge Dermody." We again interrupt our knight, and we do so for the sake of the fair one whose cause he may be supposed to advocate rather injudiciously, for in truth she was a modest creature enough, and we can aver, whatever innocent bungling Andy is here guilty of, that he never had a glimpse much beyond the ankles. "An' I'd swear down upon the spot, this present moment, they're as even, all the way, up an' down, as the blessed kippin in my hand." The comparison held, whatever was his authority, for the stick alluded to might well represent the identical legs in question. "So, my nate bouchal, you must just say your words backwards, as your master (you know who I mane) says his prayers. Or, by the sowl o' my father—God rest him!—you'll sup sorrow afore you leave the place."

But Paudge Dermody was a fellow of too much mettle to be thus forced into an acknowledgment of excellence that all the world knew did not exist. He therefore demurred to Andy's dictation, who not only at once proceeded to put into execution his threat against the real offender, but, while his hand was in, fairly drubbed out of the room two others who were in company, and who had said no word against the fair cause of quarrel, nor in any other way provoked such treatment. So, by the success of her champion, and the laws of chivalry, Bridge Chree's eyes squinted not, neither were her legs crooked, nor did they taper in any unusual manner.

Fame, who delights in publishing deeds of valour, soon conveyed to the ears of the vindicated damsel the tidings of this battle. Her smiles, and her fuss about many little matters that appertained to Andy's household comforts, together with whispers in his ear when all were assembled round the kitchen-fire, after work, fully evinced her gratitude.

"She was mooch behouldin' to him, for standin' up for a poor girl, that had no one else to take her part, God help her!"

Andy answered:

"Don't spake of it, ma colleen-beg, the *sprissau* wasn't able to rightify his words. I'd do the same by the Theage, there—"

meaning a mastiff that slept by the fire—"or any creature under Ned Shea's roof, not to talk of you."

This reply, though it rather seemed to take away any personal compliment from his services, did not lessen the poor girl's gratitude. She forthwith commenced a series of attentions and kindnesses, that gradually won on Andy's vanity, drew his regard, his thanks, and at last his love. Breedge had a draught for him, of a morning, when he met her after milking the cows; she was never without the means of "a treat," at fair or pattern; she bought him a pair of red garters, as a keepsake, and tied them on with her own hands. Andy wore them for the better part of one day, but we take shame to ourselves, on his account, to acknowledge, that on the next day they were thrown by, as too cumbrous about his knees, and calculated to give cold, by keeping the stockings tied up, "in way he wasn't used to." On the road to a dance—(Andy was "the divil at dancing," and so, in truth, was Breedge Chree—that is, they wrought laboriously at it, and could hold out a day and night)—he, in consequence of all this, boldly told his love, and flourishing over her head the very stick to which she was so much indebted, and which shared a portion of the esteem she bore its owner, declared that "He was taken' wid her more nor wid the varsal world besides, always barrin' Pierce Shea, an' the mother that bore him. An' ready an' willin' he was to slash half the parish for any of their sakes." To which tender declaration, she answered: "there was no love lost." And thus did matters stand on the night of which we at present find it necessary to speak.

But, in spite of the trial combat, the criticism of Paudge Dermody on Bridget Heart was not altogether malicious. She was Andy's negative. Perhaps this might be one cause of his subjugation, if mankind, as it is asserted, always undervalue what they have, and sigh for what they have not. He was tall; she was short in the extreme. He was lean; she was stout—fat. His face was dun and skinny; hers was rosy, round, and full. His two eyes stared for ever on before him; the pupil of her left one rested plump against the wall of her nose. (It is doubtful if, in love affairs, this be not an advantage, as the proprietor of such an eye can give a more lengthened ogle from one corner to the other; whereas a person having the pupil exactly in the middle of the ball, must perform the same evolution by two distinct movements, for which reason the effect may be less powerful. Besides, the former individual can, if of the bashful sex, look, amid a room-full of people, full at her lover, while all present shall think her

regards are fixed on the wall, or on the lady at the far corner of the table.) Breedge waddled in her gait, her legs being indeed bowed; but then she had red, rich lips, a little large, but ever smiling; teeth, regular as those of a comb, and white as ivory; and her eyes, even that to which so much allusion has been made, were black and sparkling. Thus outwardly constructed, Andy and his mistress were inwardly similar, both being simple, gay, and affectionate.

They sat, as some paces back we have said, before the blazing fire, which it had been Breedge Chree's care to heap up, after all the other members of her master's family had retired to bed. How close they sat, we are not bound to declare. Indeed, when, as veracious compilers of our history, we are admitted as witnesses where others would be unwelcome, we dislike to reveal all we see and hear. Some prefatory placing, and disposing, and employing of their persons, must therefore be passed over; as also much of their conversation, until we arrive at that part of it which it is necessary the reader should know. In this case, it is plain he must be content with what we choose, or, after due reflection, deem advisable to give him; seeing that we might keep it all to ourselves, were we so inclined, or did it suit our purposes.

"Musha, hould up your own likely face, now, a hudgeen-machree," said Andy, Breedge having dropped it on her breast, at something in the previous course of the coversation.

"Andy, Andy, wasn't it a cryin' shame for you to make sich a vow as that?"

"Ma colleen-beg, mysef would have no comfort in the married state, when I'd see our poor Pierce sorrowin' fur the want of a wife."

"An' so you went to make a vow afore God, that you'd never do it for yoursef, till his weddin' night?"

"Aye, à-roon; because I was so knocked of a lump, at all his moanin' an' sorrowin', that I'd a'most sware, if he went an' got a suggan, and put it round his neck—the Lord keep us frum temptation!—I'd just do the same thing along wid him."

"An' here was I, getherin' for it, and scrapin' for it, this penny and that penny, and puttin' odds and ends together, all to no good!"

"Och, then, my darlin', is it cryin' you are? Don't now, a-cuishla, don't."

"Oh, Andy, an' afther you come round me, in the way you did, an' made me so sure of it."

"Well, Breedge, honey—"

"It's thrue enough what the poor mistress says. The boys—God mend 'em!—says she, is all rogues. Anasthause an' myself used to think she'd be only sayin' it to keep us to the work. But it's now I'm sartin of it, to my sorrow."

"Hearken to me, a hudg."

"An' what 'ill Peggy Bawn say now, because she begrudged me sich a clane boy? He made a vow, my dear, never to marry 'till Pierce Shea would be doin' it along wid him, an' Pierce Shea 'ill never lay his eyes on Alley Doolin' while the world is a world, nor never take up wid another after her, that's sarten. . And so, by coorse, Andy Awling 'ill never marry Breedge Chree. Och, God forgi' you, Andy—praise be to His name for all things—it's a grate thrial you brought on me."

To gain a certain point with his mistress, Andy had acquainted her with the vow in question; but seeing her take it to heart more grievously than he expected, or, indeed, could bear, he now resolved to patch up the matter.

"Musha, Breedge, what signifies a small little twelvemonth, afther all?"

"A twelvemonth, Andy?"

"Aye, à-roon; sure we'll both live it out, plaise God. And then, maybe, some one 'ud show the mistress how the boys can be loyal as well as the girls; an' make Peggy Bawn's heart grumble within her, when yourself an' myself 'ill take wid one another till death, afther the Soggarth lays his loocky hands over us. An' I'll kiss my wife, an' you'll kiss your husband, an' that 'ill be myself, that's here to the fore."

"What is it you mane at all, Andy?"

"Why, a-cuishla, do you think I'd be the ownshuch, to go an' make a vow, if I hadn't a barrin along wid it? No, faith! I'll make a holy vow afore God, says I—an' blessed be your name, sure you well know betther nor I can tell you, that it's as great a penance as I could put on myself, because Breedge Chree is the darlin' o' my heart—that I'll never marry till my poor Pierce Shea is at the same work wid me. Barrin, says I, agin—barrin he lets a twelvemonth go by. Becase I can't wait a day longer fur him."

"An' why didn't you tell me that afore, Andy?"

"Musha, I couldn't get in a word, you war breakin' your heart an' my own, cryin' in sich a way. Bud dhry up your eyes now, agra" (taking her apron, and doing it himself). "There now."

"Fur sarten, Andy, you're a born rogue."

"Don't say that. Barrin it's the turn of a rogne to be foolish-fond o' you, ma colleen-beg, I don't know any other roguery that's in me."

"Well, be asy, now, wid yourself."

"Mostha, I'm sorry enough to make the vow at all. An' faith, only I have no money, I knows how it could all be brought about sooner nor a twelvemonth, any way."

"An' might a body be axin' you, how, Andy?"

"Och, it's a quare thing you'd ax, that Andy would deny you. But don't be lookin' straight at me, afther that fashion, or them rogues of eyes 'ill put it all out of my head."

"Oh, you're a bouchal, Andy. Well, here: I'll look up at the bacon."

Breedge, to her own conscience and satisfaction, might have kept her word, but an unprejudiced spectator would have sworn she looked far wide of the bacon.

"Aye, that 'll do better, for it's a thing unpossible for a poor boy to think of anything bud the girl that owns him, when two sich burnin' black eyes is lookin' at him—See there agin, now."

"You're a coaxin' boy, Andy, a-vourneen."

"What was I sayin' at all? But let us feel if your head is on your sholders, a-cuishla."

"Be asy, Andy, I say agin."

"*Slaw tha Mellish*,"\* said Andy, smacking his lips. "Well, Breedge, as I was goin' to say, it's a thing plain to be seen as the handle on my spade, that all our purshuin' of Crohoore-na-bilhoge is of no more use than for me to thry to put the moon in my pocket. Becase all the world knows he has his faction at his back—God bless the hearers, an' no harm meant!—and has poor Alley livin' among 'em. This very blessed day, Mather Pierce himself tould me as mooch, afther all his bogglin'. An' the only way to cum at her is for myself to take a short stick in my hand, an' trudge off to Lheem-na-Sheeg,† that lives up in the hills, in the very thick o' them. Bud there's no more nor one skillen in my pocket, within, an' he'd do little for the likes o' that. Sorry in my heart I am it isn't God's will I have the thrife of money, case why, the longer I stay away from Lheem-na-Sheeg, the longer will Alley stay where she is, and the longer Pierce stay widout her. An' then, agin, the longer we must stay as we are—maybe the whole twelvemonth."

\* It is sweet.

† Lheem—William of the fairies.

Breedge instantly pulled out a little tin box, whence she drew half a guinea, and slid it into Andy's near hand.

"Och, you darlin' o' the world, there's not your match from the place where we sit to where the Connaught men cums from!—Sure wid this to stick on Sheenum's eye, I'll make him spy out for us I'm thinkin'."

"It's a good notion o' your's, Andy, honey—Bud, our ould mather, here, doesn't give ear to a word about Crohoore an' the good people."

"Musha, good loock to him, what sort of a thick head is there on him, at all, then?—If he war wid us, in our good-for-nothin' chases after Crohoore, he'd think in another way. There was the mornin' we cum upon him near the ould castle, didn't I see him, wid my two livin' eyes, get straddle-legs on his short gun, an' fly over the strame, betther nor an ould hare 'ud do it? Sure you're in the knowledge, yourself, Breedge, that Mather Pierce is as good at a leap as any boy in the counthry round, an' he wasn't able to go half-way. There's not that Christhen born would do it, barrin he had others' help. An' whin we thought to shoot him as dead as a dour-nail, warn't our own guns bewitched, so that the sorrow a spark 'ud lave 'em? Whin we went afther him to the cave, wasn't Pierce a dead boy, only for myself; an' the red Devil, Paddy Loughnan, frightened to the back-bone, whatever happened the both in the cave, within. An' whin he came out among us, all of a sudd'n, didn't I fire straight into his face, an' do him no more hurt nor if I struck him wid a thrawneen?\*" An' I was nigh hand payin' well for it; tumbled about, like a pusheen-cat, on the broad o' my back, wid the fairy-blow. God must have a likin' to me, or I was a gone crature."

"All thruen enough, Andy. An' if the ould mather war afther discorsiu' wid Biddy Grasse, that lives at Knockbulligeen, she'd let him see whether there war good people in the world, or no."

"What happened her, Breedge?"

"I'm afeard the story would be a long one."

"Och, no, à-roon; the night's young. Betther for us be here at this good fire, sayin' to the wind that's widout, blow your best, a-bouchal, nor be perishin' alone by oursefs in our could beds."

"Well; hould your hands, now, Andy, an' I'll tell you about Biddy Grasse."

"I will, a-cuishla; I'll be a good boy." They drew their stools

\* Fairy-weed—a sort of grass.

—or stool—we disdain to say which—closer to the blaze, and prepared, the one to speak, and the other to listen, with that peculiar pleasure storytelling imparts.

“Now, Andy, this is as thrue a story as ever you hard. I had it from Biddy’s own gossip, an’ she had it from Biddy’s own mouth. Biddy Grasse had as fine a boy born to her as God ever sent, an’ she was doatin’ fond of it, to be sure, because all the rest o’ the childer were girls—”

“An’ good loock to ’em, for girls, every day they get up. What would the poor boys do, only God was good enough to send ’em to us?”

“None o’ your thievin’ ways, Andy, an’ let me go on.”

“Well, yes; I’ll hould my whisht, agra.”

“The child thruv’ well, an’ was a pleasure to look at, ’till a’most a twelvemonth ould, or thereaway. When all at once, Biddy observed it to pine an’ pine away, till it war no bigger nor my fist. It used to laugh out in the most sthrange way, an’ grin, an’ look about it, as cunnin’ as a mouse; an’ then bawl and squall, in a minute, agin, in a manner noways like a Christhen child. An’ whin she’d put it to the breast, ’twould a’most tear her to pieces, an’ then make faces up to her; so that the poor crature of a woman was frightened to look at it. Well; she thought to wane it. But it wouldn’t ate a bit fur her, an’ was ever an’ always wheenin’ an’ wheenin’ from mornin’ to night. She thought it war goin’ to die, sorry in her heart at the same: bud, to the wonder o’ the world, it lived on, three months, widout any food that she knew of, not growing bigger nor less, only just the same way. Many a weary night she had a-watchin’ it.

“One night she went to her bed, but didn’t fall a-sleepin’, her mind was so crossed, thinkin’ of her puny child. She left a rush, lightin’, an’, behould you, Andy, a little while afther, lyin’ still an’ quite, only her eyes half open, she sees it sit up straight in the cradle, an’ turn about its wizzened face, an’ peep here an’ there, to see if every body was sleepin’. Then it gets out on the flure, an’ goes over to the hob, where there was a lapreen\* of oaten bread for the next mornin’. An’ it’s as thrue as the fire is burnin’ afore us, down it squatted on its hunkers, an’ munged an’ munged, ’till the whole was gone, all the while lookin’ about it, like a cat that ’ud be thievin’. Then it creeped back agin to the cradle, an took up its fairy bagpipes, an’ played a fairy tune.”

\* Half a cake of bread.

“Lord save us an’ keep us! but that was frightful, sure enough,” said Andy, who sat pale as death.

“An’ sarten you may be, Andy, that poor Biddy was sore afeard, herself. Now she bethought in her mind, many’s the piece of bread she missed for a good while back. An’ many’s the time whin her man, an’ hersef, an’ the girls ’ud be out, she cum alone to the dour, an’ hard the wild music within, bud couldn’t tell how, well knowin’ she left only the child at home. She didn’t tell the man o’ the house a word of all this; he was a conthrary, cross-grained, dark man, an’ she thought wid hersef he might kill her an’ the child. But she went her ways to an’ oudl knowledgeable woman, that they called Noseen Branan, in regard o’ the nose was on her, bein’ no nose at all, for it fell off in the frost, or a thing that-a-way. Wid the tears in her eyes, she tould her story. Sure enough, Noseen guessed how it was, at the first goin’ off. ‘As you’re alive, standin’ there, Biddy,’ says she, ‘that’s no more your child nor I am.’ ‘Och, God be good to me, Noseen,’ says Biddy, ‘what else is it?’ ‘Some old man belonging to the good people,’ say Noseen, agin; ‘they tuck him away whin he was a child, an’ had him among ’em ever sence, married to some o’ their women, but now he’s too oudl to be among ’em any longer, an’ so they left him in the place o’ your fine boy. ‘Och-hone-a-rie, what’s to become o’ me?’ says Biddy. ‘Are you a bould woman, for you must do a bould action?’ Noseen axed of Biddy Grasse. ‘I’d do anything to get back my boy,’ Biddy made answer. ‘Why, then, you must watch your time, wid a brave heart, an’ lay hands on the oudl man, an’ put him into a bag, an’ take him wid you to the river side, and throw him in. But don’t let the heart fail you, or you’re a gone woman. Be sure you lave him plenty of oaten bread, an’ don’t mind his ways, but call him all the coaxin’ names you’d call your own child, ’till it’s done.’

“Well, Andy—”

“Did she lay fingers on him?” interrupted Andy.

“Wait ’till you hear. Home she came, an’ went to the cradle. The child, as it seemed to be, was in it, as if fast asleep. Bud the moment she bent over him, he opened his eyes an’ grinned up at her, as mooch as to say, she thought, I knows all how an’ about it; an’ she hid her face, an’ ran to the other side o’ the cabin, an’ sat down to bring her wits about her. One time she grew afeard to throw him wid the river, thinkin’ Noseen might be wrong, an’ maybe she’d take the life of her own born child. But then she bethought her of all she had seen, an’ reasoned wid herself that



sure no right child could do the like. An' she went arguin' and pondherin' what coorse to take, an' at last got courage. So, whin she found him sleepin' in arnest, Biddy slipt him into a mail-bag, tyin' the sthring fast on him. But, while she was tyin' it, he squeeled, an' bawled, an' kicked so hard, that the poor sowl let him ddrop frum her hands, an' hadn't spirit to lift him up agin for a long while. He worked away 'till he got a bit of his nose out, an' she hard him givin' a wild curse,—the *sheeog*, that if he war a Christhen infant couldn't spake a word for months to come. So this made her sure, an', while he was sthrugglin' an' kickin' in the bag on the flure, down she stooped—"

"Murther!" cried Andy, knitting his brows, while his teeth chattered, and the cold perspiration broke out on his forehead—"Oh, by the sowl o' man! I wouldn't put a hand near him for the King of England's throne."

"Down she stooped, an' in a minute had him on her back. Away she ran, screechin' hersef, to the river, an' there she shook him out o' the bag into the deepest an' maddest part o' the current. He sunk, an' rose agin; an, as he dhrove down the sthrame, sittin' on it like anything, Biddy saw he was an' ould little man, sure enough; an' she just hard him cryin' out—"Oh, *Ma-hurp-on-duoul!* I'm sorry I didn't do for you last night, as I intended!"—when she run home. An' there was her own fine boy, lost an' gained, in the cradle afore her."

"Well," said Andy, relieving himself by a long-drawn breath, "Biddy Grasse was the truth of a bould woman, that's sarten. Musha, myself 'ud no more do it nor I'd ate a harrow for my supper, an' the spikes 'ud be mighty apt to hurt a body, I'm tauld. Sure, Breedge, as you said afore, if Ned Shea hard that story, he wouldn't be sayin' anything bad o' the good people, in haste, agin."

"There's nothin' in the world 'ud persuade ould Ned Shea, Andy. He gives the bothered side to all kinds of witchcraft. Tho' little right he has, in regard his own family suffered well by it."

"What's that you say, Breedge, à-roon?—There was witchcraft in the family?"

"Aye, à-vich; did you never hear tell of it?"

"Musha, never a word; bud won't be long so, please God, havin' you to the fore."

"I'd tell you wid a-heart-an'-a-half, because I likes well to hear a story, or tell a story. Only I'm afeard o' my life it's

growin' too late, an' what 'ud become o' me if the ould mistress war to waken, an' ketch us here?"

"An', case she did, what could she make of it? Did she never coort a bit, herself, I wondher?"

"Avoch, Andy, them times is gone wid her, an' now it's nothin' bud 'Mind your work,' from week's-end to week's-end. Well, à-vich, here's the story, anyhow."

"You know what a wicked set o' people the *Bocchochs* is, given' to all sorts o' witchcraft an' evil doin's—the Lord save us! It was upon a time, now fifty years or more; I don't remember it—"

Andy here interrupted Breedge to rally her on the simplicity of soul that urged her to assert her personal ignorance of facts that, according to her own statement, had happened before her mother was born. We take advantage of the interruption to remark, that, without meaning to say we have led the reader so far in this chapter for nothing,—a particular degree of attention will be necessary while Breedge Chree proceeds in her second story.

"Thru enough, Andy, a-cuishla," in reply to his criticism. "But, as I was sayin', of a time, durin' the pattrern o' John's Well, there came people from all parts o' the world, to do pilgrimage at the holy place. A power of Bocchochs came too, to beg of the good Christhens, as yourself may see 'em to this day, an' to sell beadses, an' gospels, an' them sort. Well; whin the pattrern was over, an' all good people gone away, there was a Bocchoch cum a beggin' to Ned Shea's father's door, the same house we're sittin' in at this prasent time. By coorse he got shelther, and the best of everything in the way. People is afeard, you know, to refuse them anything, because they might bewitch all afore 'em, cows an' horses, an' all, man an' baste, the growin' crop, an' the seed in the ground. So he ate an' dhrank, an' had lodgin', like one o' the family. I'm tould he was a clane, clever, likely young fellow, Andy, mooch the same of yourself—frum bein' well to look at, I mane—bud you have none of his rogue's thricks about you, I hope in God. Be asy, now, I tell you. So he stopt at ould Ned Shea's house—not the ould Ned Shea that is now, but the ould fellow of all, that was his Father—fourteen or fifteen days, or there-a-way. Maybe he'd do a start o' work, but very little of it; only in the night he'd set himself down among 'em, an' rehearse many sthrange an' wonderful stories of his ramblin' way o' life. As far as their fear an' dread of a Bocchoch 'ud let 'em go, everybody loved an' liked him—the villain o' the world, that gave sich a bad return for all!

“Ould Ned Shea, that is now, had a sither, a clever, handsome creature, as I’m tould by them that seen her. She was much like Pierce in the face, only nowadays so big, as you may suppose, an’ rich an’ well she used to dhress. No farmer’s daughter in the place, or the next to it, went finer nor braver, because her Father could afford to give, an’ he gave wid all his heart, to his own an’ only girl, that was the light in his eyes. An’ tunderly she was brought up. An’ many o’ the richest an’ best born o’ the young men o’ these parts came a coortin’ of her. But she wasn’t asy to be pleased, or else had no notions in that a way, goin’ about, an’ walkin’ wid her head up, an’ her heart simple; troublin’ herself not the laste on anything but her maid’s thoughts. Now, mind me, Andy. What do you say to this thing of a Bocchoch, bud he moost go an’ make love to her in an underhand way? An’ what do you think it ended in? Why, first, if she war shy an’ lofty to them that war her aquils, or more, maybe, fur sarten she didn’t give ear to a rovin’ Bocchoch: the grand colleen knew what was her place an’ part. Bud he swore an oath to her, if she’d tell any o’ the family, he’d bring sorrow and poverty to their dour, an’ she was loth to say a word for that good raison. An’ when he found he couldn’t cum round her by fair manes, he tried foul manes, to be sure.

“You often hard, Andy, that the Bocchochs can make bewitched pins, sich as if they gives one o’ them to a young crature of a girl—or an ould one, no matter which, she’ll go wid ’um the world over, in misery and in hardships, if she war a King’s Daughter?”

“Often I hard of the thing,” replied Andy. “But I never could come across any one ’ud tell me how the charm was put upon the pin, a-chorra.”

“Och, then, Andy, I’d tell it, bud it’s too fearful to rehearse at this lonely hour o’ the night.”

“Musha, no, a-cuishla. Sure myself ’ill stay as near you as ever I can, while you’re tellin’ it, an’ devil a once we’ll look about from the fire fornent us.”

“I had it of a cuseen o’ my own, who was taken wid a young girl, that had no likin’ for him, an’ he went to an ould Bocchoch to get a bewitched pin. Curos he was to see how the charm was made: and the Bocchochs, for a good fee, dhressed him in their tattered clothes, an’ passed him for one o’ themselves. An’ so he *seen the whole wicked work*. God forgive him, it war a great *sin*, an’ a heavy penance he got for it, the next time he went to

his Easter duty. He seen two o' their ould withered women go to a lone bog, in the dead o' the night, sayin' words, all the while, that he couldn't understand; they war like prayers, bud not the same a Christhen 'ud say. They seeked out, crawlin' on hands an' knees, for a little herib, an' they pult it. Wid undressed hemp, wetted in the dew o' the night, they spun a thread, an' then dyed it wid the little herib. He went wid them to a berrin-place an' they scooped out a grave, an' tuck up a could corpse, that was nine days berried. It was a man that died widout a priest in his last moments, an' was a very wicked man; for no other 'ud do. They lifted off the coffin-lid, an' the corpse lay bare in the moonlight."

"The Lord be good to us!" ejaculated Andy.

"Amen, I say! He seen the withered women put nine long pins into the left palm; an' they tied it wid the black hemp-string, in the Devil's name. God keep us from his evil ways! Then they berred the corpse agin, an' he seen 'em goin' round an' round the grave, backard an' forard, in the blessed moonshine, shinin' on their bad doin's. After nine days an' nights he went wid 'em agin, an' they had the same corpse up agin. Takin' the pins from the hand, they tied the black string round the thumb, an' through an' through the fingers, or what was left of 'em, an' the pins had the charm on 'em, an' the charm was done."

"Did he give it to the Colleen?" asked Andy.

"No, Andy. His conscience sthruck him, an' he went an' confessed all, an' threw the pin into the runnin' wather, an' parfomed his penance. But the girl, pityin' him mooch, an' out o' thanks for not bewitchin' her in a wrong way, let him do it in a right way, a little time afther, an' all ended in a Christhen manner. But to come back to Dora Shea—

"The Bocchoch put his charm on Dora, lavin' her one of the pins, an' went his road, sure an' sarten of what was to come about. For thru it is, Andy, that poor Dora, the pride of her father, an' the love o' the world, soon went afther him. From that day to this, auld Shea, Pierce's father's father, would never let a beggar-body see the inside of his house. Many's the one he whipped away from it; but one in particular. It was a cauld, blowin' night, in winther time, when a poor, tattered creature come to his dour, an' axed charity for the love o' God, houldin' a baby in her arms, an' the snow fallin' on the both, an' they a'most naked. A little scrap o' food she begged for herself an' her babby, for she had the faintness wid hunger, an' a night's shelter in any hole or corner nuder

his roof. Bud he only tuck his heavy horsewhip, an' slashed her back into the dhrift an' could o' the storm, fur the ould man's heart was scalded sore by his daughter's loss, an' hardened, an' what it useint to be, so that, from the hour she left him, he never riz his head, nor opened his hand in charity. He whipped the poor night-beggan from his gate, I say, till, as the shiverin' crature ran from his blows, she screeched out her name, an' it was Dora, his own child! Bud the change o' want an' woe was on her, an' he that nursed her on his knee, an' for seventeen years followed her wid eyes o' love, as she sat by his side, or moved round his house—her father, Andy a-cuishla, didn't know her. And sure she was never heard of afther."

"God help her, Breedge, bud she met a bad fate. I wondher, Breedge honey, I never hard o' that story afore."

"They don't like to have it talked about, becane it's a blot on the family. But when will you be goin' to Lhecum-na-Sheeog, Andy?" They rose to part.

"Wid sparrow-chirp in the mornin', plase God I live an' do well."

"Musha, loock an' speed to you, Andy a-vourneen, an' take care o' yourself, and keep out o' the way o' the good people."

"Faith, an' I will so, or no fault o' mine, Breedge. Och, you crature, how I longs to make my own o' you!"

"Mysef 'ud be glad the time was cum too, Andy. Bud now it's far in the night, an' I must be up two hours afore day, becane we have a week's churnin' to do in the mornin'. And so, good night, an' God be wid you."

After some tender expostulations on the part of Andy, and—but we are discreet. Any of our readers who happen to be lovers, or who have been—and we believe this includes a pretty considerable majority of those who shall delight in our pages—may easily imagine, or recollect, how lovers generally separate. Thus, no matter about the distinction of rank, they will have the parting of Breedge and Andy. He stealing off in his stocking vamps, that he shouldn't awaken any of the household, while she remained to say her prayers, with her back to the fire. In which pious and comfortable vein and position, she did not forget her wonted "pather-an'-avy," for the good of the soul and body of her own Andy Awling.

## CHAPTER XIII.

HERETOFORE, a description of persons, known by the general denomination of Bocchochs, infested Ireland, of whom, indeed, some traces yet remain, but to a comparatively trifling extent. These people resembled, in their practices and habits, the gypsies of other countries (who, it is perhaps remarkable, never were known in Ireland), differing from them only in the circumstance of their not being a distinct race, or the descendants of one. A crafty, knavish, and withal talented fraternity, they lived well by practising on the charity, the superstitions, the unwariness, or the terrors of their more simple countrymen. And from the various ailments they exhibited, or were skilled in counterfeiting, as well as from their begging profession, came their general name of "Bocchochs," "lame people," or "lame beggars." For they appeared with broken or distorted limbs or features, affected blindness; or compelled sympathy by the display of loathsome sores, deceptively caused by the application of well-known caustic herbs to the skin.

From this it may be inferred, that their popular denomination of Bocchochs was but very partially merited. The fact is, they were for the most part hale and well-looking, when they doffed their various disguises, and assembled together to enjoy the profits of their knavery. Or when a fellow, who during the day had seemed lame or blind, cast away, with his old clothes, his assumed defect, and joined in riot and debauchery, and without suspicion, those from whose charity and credulity he had extorted the means of spending as freely as the richest among them.

Following their occupation of mendicants, they frequented fairs and markets; and at one other place of popular resort were to be met in the greatest numbers. It is sufficiently known that throughout Ireland there were, and on a diminished scale still are, in certain districts, holy wells, each sacred to some particular saint, whither the very devout portion of the people repair, on the festival of the beatified patron, to perform self-inflicted acts of atoning pilgrimage and prayer. Among such crowds, the Bocchochs most successfully displayed their deformities, or else imposed on the credulous by exhibiting, in their own persons, pretended miraculous cures, avowed to have been performed at

the shrine where the pilgrims were assembled. Some were happily restored to sight, who never had a mote in their eye; others recovered the use of a limb that, at least in the exercise of running or filching, had never been much paralyzed. The stentorian recital of such wonders, mixed with seasonable appeals to the charity and zeal of the auditors, never failed to bring them large "offerings." Others sold rosaries or wooden crucifixes, to create an opportunity for their accomplices to pick the pockets of those who were gathered around, making purchases.

Even here their accomplishments did not end. The best *Keeners*, or reciters of the Keenthecaun, were to be found among them. Well patronized for the exercise of their spontaneous talent in elegiac poesy over the dead,—at which, from constant practice, they had acquired great facility,—they trudged through the country, from wake to wake; their retreat from such places being generally remarkable for a simultaneous disappearance of everything that could be carried off. They were concerned, indeed, in all petty robberies, either as principals or accessories, and known to be the most approved channels for the disposal of stolen goods; their wandering habits, and skill in disguising their local derivation, greatly assisting them in this agency. For the *Bocchochs* passed everywhere for strangers. In Leinster, they were Munstermen, and, in Munster, Leinstermen, as their altered and well-feigned accent and idiom, in either province, plainly evinced.

Breedge Chree has truly informed us that their character for witchcraft was high. Altogether the peasantry dreaded them to excess. If refused relief, or but scantily afforded it, they threatened vengeance; and vengeance was sure to follow. The father trembled lest his daughter should be lured away: the mother trembled lest her infant should be kidnapped. Or if neither of these grounds of apprehension existed, the destruction of property was dreaded. Cattle found dead without marks of violence, and therefore attributed to the witchcraft of the disobliged *Bocchoch*, or the mysterious removal of all portable articles of domestic use, were causes for behaving hypocritically civil to the wandering beggars. Thus, when no place of general assemblage attracted them, they rambled about singly, from house to house, living luxuriously and lazily on the abhorring conciliations their superior cunning and cleverness commanded.

So much of preface was found necessary, in addition to Breedge's anecdotes, to introduce the following true scene and situation.

In a narrow lane, among the very outskirts of the straggling and dirty suburbs of Kilkenny, lived a wee woman, who had a weeer mother. Her name was Christien Moore; though her neighbour, Molly Dungan, in consequence of their many battles concerning Molly's pig and Christien's brood of young ducks, called her, contemptuously, alluding to her stature, Chreestheena, or wee Christien. For Molly had a juvenile swine, that would sometimes regale itself on one of Christien's ducklings, at which the sufferer fluently rated pig and mistress, and Molly would excuse the esteemed animal by pleading its youth and want of sense. Until, words growing high, our present subject received the epithet we have recorded, and, calling all the vinegar into her vinegar system, charged Molly in return with being "a virago;" Christien having once travelled as part of a soldier's baggage, and learned some good English. But this agreeable gossip is far away from our present purpose.

Chreestheena knew fifty summers, and her mother closed on a century. They were tireless spinners; one spun with a distaff, the other with a wheel; and the product of their eternal industry was manufactured into coarse blankets, coarse sheets, and ticking. Chreestheena had had her husbands three, and, it was whispered, was now on the look-out for a fourth. With this, however, we again say, we can have no concern. It is only mentioned for the purpose of entitling us to relate, that she had employed her second good man, with a hatchet borrowed from a neighbouring cooper, to chop points, on short pieces of oak wattles, and then drive them, at short intervals, into the mud floor of her cabin, next the wall, until some ten or twelve of them encompassed a space, little more than the length and breadth of an ordinary-sized man. Against the outer sides of these, the still-obedient husband laid rough boards; and the area, so contrived, was next filled with dried bark brought from a contiguous tanyard. Over this Christien put a good coarse tick, stuffed with oat-chaff; a bolster of the same; sheets coarse enough for a Scotchman infected with the plague of his country; and, lastly, a pair of heavy warm blankets—tick, sheet, and blankets, all derived from the spinning of herself and her little blind mother. In process of time, six good beds of this formation and material were arranged round her cabin, to the occupation of any one of which any person was welcome who paid a penny per night for the repose therein to be obtained. There was a fire-place in the hotel, but, agreeable to custom, without the superfluity of a chimney; so that the stifling sulphur of the stone-coal of her



native city filled the atmosphere of the always confined spot, and might be considered a foretaste of the fumigation said, in every Christian country, excepting Wales, to prevail in the lower regions; and to which, if report err not, some of her penny customers were, as a needful anticipation, well entitled. But Chreestheena's "fire without smoke" was generally bright and hot, and her beds seldom empty.

The night on which Andy Awling and Bridge Chree enjoyed their own peculiar blaze, and their own peculiar conversation in Ned Shea's kitchen, three of the very description of persons of whom she and we have last spoken, had taken up their quarters for the evening at Chreestheena's well-swept hearth. For the weighty consideration of twopence, instead of a penny, each, they bargained to have entire possession of the premises; and it will clearly be seen that, by this arrangement, Christien was no loser. For the further consideration of sixpence halfpenny, of common stock, she consented to replenish the fire for their exclusive use. Having done so, she led her wee mother to bed, into a wee inner apartment, where they together enjoyed the luxury of a bedstead to themselves; Chreestheena congratulating her own heart on the profitable bargain she had struck, as, besides the saving of wear and tear in three of the beds of her hotel, she had received for the coals threepence farthing above prime cost.

So soon as the hostess was heard to snore, Risttharde Bocchoch (Limping Dick) pulled from his two-sided wallet a pair of dead ducks, having their necks awry, and, skilfully plucking them, raised up one of the ticks, and proceeded to deposit under it the superfluous feathers. Padhre Keaoch (Blind Peter) brought forth three large skregs or cakes of brown bread, remarking that the crust looked to him a little over-browned. Sheemun Croonawnee (Simon the Whining Singer) added two large horns of genuine smuggled brandy, such as it would be difficult in the same city of Kilkenny to match at the present day, and which he had received to bribe his silence respecting a hogshead he by chance saw dropped in a certain hiding-place, whither he had subsequently, for another bribe, introduced the district exciseman. And such were the materials of the *petit souper* of the three worthies.

Having completely plucked, and otherwise prepared his ducks, Risttharde, by the agency of a large pocket blade with which he was seldom unprovided, dismembered and arranged them for broiling. Good white wooden trenchers were brought down from Christien's dresser, to hold the dainty fare.

"Bow, wow, wow," barked Padhre Keaoch's black shock dog;" while the three were thus pleasantly employed.

"And, who the Duoul is thumpin, now?" said his excellent master, as a sounding knock, as if from the head of a heavy stick, came to the door.

"Let him just stay abroad, whoever he is," said Sheem Croonawnee, "fur a ddrop o' this holy wather 'ill never pass his breath."

The knock came again.

"Who's that, I say?" asked Risththarde, in a gruff voice, "wakenin' honest people at this hour o' the night."

"Musha, aye, let him stay at the wrong side o' the dour, Sheemun. I'd kiss the book that he'll never get the taste o' these ducks: Pudge Keefe that owned 'em didn't give lave."

Knock, knock, knock, knock.

"Go out o' that wid yourself," roared Padhre, "an' let poor people take their night's sleep."

"Arrah, what a sleep you're in, Padhre Keaoch," said a voice outside. "I smell what's good, an' must have my share."

"The black Duoul whip me round the market-cross," resumed Padhre, "bud it's one of oursefs, boys. More nor that, I'm a blind cullawn of a downright arnest, an' deaf along wid being blind, if it isn't Shaun-law-thecaum, every inch of him."

"Och, of it's that poor desolate crature, the Lord forbid we'd keep him abroad in the could o' the night," said Risththarde.

"'Twouldn't be the part of a Christhen to do such a thing," said Padhre. "So afther all he'll get a sprinklin' o' the holy wather."

"What's the name is on you?" asked Sheemun.

"Shaun-law-thecaum I'm called by them that knows me well," answered the voice; then added in a whining, snuffing cadence—

"Good tinder Christhens, look wid an eye of marcy on a poor desolate crature that hasn't the use of his own hands to arn a male o' victuals for himself an' his ould bedrid mother, an' four small brothers an' sisthers, at home."

"That 'll do," said Sheemun; "stay a little, you poor sowl, an' you must cum in, for God's sake."

"May He mark you wid grace, an' pour a blessin' on you an' yours!" resumed the voice, still in its professional key: then familiarly—"Make speed, Sheemun, for I'm could an' hungry."

But here arose a little unforeseen difficulty. Chreestheena had, according to wholesome practice, locked the door of her caravan-

sary, lest, during the night, her guests and her blankets might happen to vanish together. Sheemun Croonawnee went to arouse her; and when she saw, suddenly startled from her sleep, a black, wicked-looking fellow standing, rushlight in hand, over her in her bed, Christhien screamed with all her soul, and was joined by her blind mother, who, because she could not see anything, feared everything, and a thousand things too terrible to mention. When at length made sensible of what was wanted, she would not entrust another with the key, but arose herself to admit the newcomer. Finally, when arrived at the door, she would by no means open it, unless twopence additional was paid down by those already in possession. Her terms being agreed to and fairly met, however, Chreestheena at once gave the visitor admission, without ever looking at the sort of person that entered.

"Och, you three schamin' rogues," said Shaun, as he joined his old friends; "well I knew where to find you."

"An' what, in the name o' the Vargin, brought you a ramblin' at sich an hour?" he was asked.

"Why I cum all the ways from Garrodhe Donohoo, to seek ye."

"An' what does Garrodhe want of us?"

"That's a story to be tould. You must, all three o' you, make the best haste you can to him, afther the fair, next Wednesday night."

"Och, very well. We ought to have good gatherin's at the fair, boys," said Sheemun.

"God is a plentiful providher," replied Risttharde.

"Are you as blind as ever, Padhre?" asked Shaun.

"In the desolate darkness!—a poor crature stone blind! an' that can't see the day from the night!"—said Padhre, throwing back his head, and half-closing and turning up the whites of his eyes.

"Ho! ho!" Shaun chuckled, "we're just four great big rogues, fit to thrapse the world, wide. But come, boys; the night's goin' on, an' we're all in a fair way for atin' a bit. Risttharde, let yourself, an' poor Padhre Keaoch, cook up the prog. As Gorrodhe skinned a sheep to-day, sure I brought ye somethin' to help the faste."

"Graw-ma-chree you war, Shaun, I never seen worse by you," said Risttharde; and, while the cooks were busy, Shaun and Sheemun Croonawnee held converse in an undertone.

"Well, Sheemun; an' you didn't thrap Rhiah Doran, yet?"

"Avoch, no, God help me."

"Arrah, now, Sheemun, leave off them blessed sayin's. They're

words your rogue's tongue has no call to, among friends, anyhow, that knows you better nor the mother that bore you."

"You spake right, Shaun. Well; as you war axin' me about Rhiah Doran, myself could never get the other body along wid him, sence the first moment Crohoore set me afther 'em."

"Spake lower, Sheemun. Them two ar'n't to know sacrets : they're too bould an' hearty."

"That's a thruth; but, Shaun, I'm afther thinkin' it ud be a great shame for me to be the manes o' takin' o' the life o' Jack Doran. He desarves better at my hands."

"How is that now, Sheemun?"

"May I never die doin' sin—"

"Arrah, then, give over your purtendin' sort o' talk, I say; spake wid a curse in your mouth, like a world's rogue as you are, if the plain words won't do."

"You moost just lave me to myself, Shaun," said Sheemun; "it comes in a way nat'ral to my hand, an' I can't give it over."

"Then you may go the Duoul wid a prayer in your cheek if you like it. Bud you war sayin' Jack Doran desarved better by you, nor to get his gallows end on your account?"

"May the heavens be my bed, if he doesn't. He has money *galore*,\* an' never spares it on a body he loves; an' that's myself."

"Do you mane to hould back, now, Sheemun Croonawnee?" asked Shaun, sternly.

"Musha, God forbid; I'll stick close on him, moruin', noon, an' night, 'till I can ketch him an' the t'other at a grab. Then I'm done wid him; an' he's done wid the sinful and sorrowful world. You may tell Crohoore the same from me. Bud what does Gorrodhe want wid us, in arnest, to-morrow night, Shaun?"

"He wants you to be in the Glen o' Ballyfoile, where Pierce Shea 'ill come, too. I don't know what I'm about, but, you must help to tie him hand and foot, an' run with him to the ould haunted place, up in Munsther."

"The Lord forg' me my sins. Did I hear ye speakin' right, Shaun. Did you say young Pierce Shea?"

"Devil another bud his own sef."

"Well, Crohoore-na-bilhoge, above all I ever heard tell of, it's yourself has quare ways in you," ejaculated Sheemun, clasping his hands.

The cooks interrupted the dialogue.

\* In plenty.


“ Here, now, an’ may the first bit choke ye. Come here, an’ thry can you ate, as well as whisper an’ talk, you cullodgin’ rogues,” cried Padhre Keaoch, the banquet being ready. The summons was readily obeyed. All gathered round a small deal table, and despatched the broiled ducks, and the mutton, also stolen, and the twice-smuggled brandy, with the ease and *gout* of genuine Bocchochs. At which occupation we shall leave them, not having any inclination to remain in such company longer than is necessary for the progress of our story.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

A FAIR-DAY is a day of great bustle and excitement in the city of Kilkenny. Being chiefly a mart for black cattle and pigs, the streets are invaded at an early hour, and the ears of the quiet, snoring citizens outraged by the unusual noise of lowing cows and bullocks, trotting or rushing along under peaceable chamber windows, by the shouting of their drivers, and the clattering of alpeens on their back-bones and horns. Among them, the curious eye, that has a taste for such studies, may easily distinguish, by its bold step, its erect head, its impatient bellow, and its staring eyes, distended in admiration of the change from its native fields and streams, to the “ streets paved with marble,” over which it paces, the kine of the good fat pasturage, from the poor cotter’s half-starved cow, that moves with a plodding gait, indifferent gaze, and drooping neck, careless where it goes since no change can be for the worse. A good illustration of its human attendant, who, lean as the beast he follows, in tattered garb, trailing pace, and sharp vacant countenance, conveys, at a glance, the broken and grovelling spirit of conscious poverty, and want of self-importance. There might be observed, too, the strongest contrast, in outward ease and inward content of mind, in the persons of the pampered swine and its thin proprietor, between whom and his self-willed and obstinate pet many strange and ridiculous struggles occasionally arose; both disputing and wrangling for an hour together, to see which should have his way.

Besides these principal articles of sale, the fair of Kilkenny offered many other rare and tempting commodities to the country



visitor. Coopers, brogue-makers, hatters, nailors, and makers of chairs, tables, stools, and bedsteads, displayed the various products of their separate ingenuity. Bright crockery-ware glittered around; and when in our youthful days, as at the time of this tale we were, there used to be a display of goodly pewter plates and disbes, and two-handled pots and pints. But the use of delph has done away with these durable commodities, which now exhibit but as the heirloom ornaments of the country dresser: and the excise laws, restricting to those who can afford a license the manufacture of home-brewed ale, have sent the pots and pints to the public-house, so that general demand no longer requires them in the fair. Under rude awnings of sack or blanket, and spread out on doors that had been taken off their hinges for the purpose, numerous establishments of fancy articles further attracted the eye; such as knives and forks, scissors, garters, thimbles, threads, tapes, and a great and rich variety of other nick-nacks. Similarly disposed on unpainted deal doors, or planks, there was gingerbread, and all such humble confectionary; the coarsest fruits in season; white and yellow cheese, and wooden trenchers and noggins, and the *et ceteras* of the turner's ware, picturesquely thrown together. The proprietors of these commodities might be seen, early in the morning, running in breathless haste to secure good and safe spots for opening their sales. And while they clattered along in by no means silent emulation, or contested with each other the right to a favourite stand; while the cattle bellowed and the sheep bleated, and the horses neighed, and the headstrong pigs ran through their grunting gamut, and the surrounding rush and roar of a thronging multitude was heard over all;—startling, as we have before said, was the commencement of a fair-day to the tranquil and by no means commercial or bustling citizens of Kilkenny.

On such a morning, too, the milk-maids, coming in as usual to serve their city customers, with snow-white pails skilfully poised on their heads, without hand to hold them; the servant-maids—in fact, all the maids, and some of the matrons, too—make it a point to ask their “fairing” of all their male acquaintance; less, it is conjectured, in hope of profit, than to hear over and over again the shrewd reply that “they are the fairest seen that day.” To the younger part of the generation, it is the day of days, long sighed for and rapturously welcomed; for holidays are granted in every school throughout town, on the score of not exposing poor little boys to the throng of the fair, a precaution of which the poor little boys remember not a word. Besides, they are on a gleish

and greedy look-out for their matured and monied acquaintances, "to put their fairing on them," with a prospective eye to the disposition of the gingerbread-stall, or toy-booth.

Let us, in kindly feeling, be permitted to dwell a moment longer on the well-remembered features of a scene with which are associated the purest pleasure that even advanced and experienced life can supply—the pleasures of early and innocent recollection.

In flock the young country girls, fair and fresh, plump and rosy, ostensibly, perhaps, to buy a pair of garters, a row of pins, or a ribbon, but in their best and quaintest attire, really to see and to be seen by their rural squires and admirers; to get their fairing, and in every shape to partake of the unloosed and affluent spirit of holiday enjoyment. We shall omit any positive mention of the occasional fracas between those same squires, the heroes of the cudgel and alpeen, in systematic arrangement of their interminable and mysterious causes of dispute; such incidents, though characteristic, being, at the same time, an intrusion on the pleasing reminiscences we wish to indulge and communicate. The Bocchochs, who sang and bawled their miseries at every turn, we must not, however, forget; nor their rivals, the ballad-singers—(and oh! none are like to thy ballad-singers, green land of song and of our birth! nor, their competitors again, the reciters of prose effusions, who, in the blotted rather than printed slips of tea-paper in their hands, found not a word of the wonderful or facetious rigmarole that issued from their mouths, and yet that gulled, over and over, the gaping or grinning rustic.

In fact we might, with our delighted readers, pass a good hour in the now mid-day bustle and uproar of the fair. We might pause to admire the more than Ciceronian art of the buyer and the seller of "a slip of a pig;" the half-proffered earnest-money, technically slapped down on the open palm of the vendor; his demur, the seemingly determined turn-off of the purchaser, and the affected carelessness of the other, who, meantime, watches shrewdly every motion of his man; the expected return; "the splitting of the differ;" and, last, at the final close, one protesting he gave too much, and the other swearing he sold too cheap; but both sensible that the unconscious grunter has been obtained exactly at his fair value. Please might we stop to view and hear the temptations of the nick-nack merchants, and the longing and wandering side looks or whispers of the girls at the finery; or the extravagant country-boy, who, despoising cakes and ginger-

bread, treats himself to a pennyworth of curdy cheese, and smacks his palate as, little by little, he consumes the luxury. Or the real oratory of the flax-seller, and the imperturbable wisdom of the cunning old woman, carefully examining, after all his flourishes, the article she had not yet purchased. Or the fine national hyperbole of the felt-hat vender, who, leaving Sterne's perukier not a word, assures the dubious peasant that the hard and bare surface of the felt "blows like any meadow!" We might even peep into the regular shops along the main street, and witness, in one or all, the self-flattering praises of the dealers on their goods, and the suspicious and heretic looks of the country buyers, certain, in exaggerated mistrust, that, along with hearing nought but misstatement, they can purchase at five times less than what they are asked. An hour, did we say?—alas! the whole day,—or else our memory is treacherous, or our tastes altered—might be well spent in the ever-changing varieties of the fair. We regret that now, when we have not rehearsed the hundredth part of its novelties, pleasures, and incidents, we are no longer free to indulge our teeming garrulity: but the story to which we have yoked ourselves requires immediate attention.

Of all the Bocchochs that day eminent, none distinguished themselves so much, or gained more commiseration or money by their well-feigned miseries, and well-uttered appeals, than did Chreestheena's four guests of the former night. They had, according to usual practice, separated in different quarters of the fair, and for some time continued their efforts apart. Late in the day, Shemun Croonawnee came, as if by accident, upon Shaunlaw-thecaum's walk, gave him a secret sign, and both withdrew into a narrow lane, that branched from the main street about half way in its course or extent.

"A favourable judgment to me, Shaun," said Sheemun, "bud I think I have Rhiah Doran and the other nabbed at last. My eyesighth is bad, if I didn't see 'em both discoorsin' together, a little while ago, in the thick o' the fair."—

"*Nor-i-eeen-thou-lath*, bud you're a great fellow of a Bocchoch. Did Doran see you?"—

"Och, God be good to us, what 'ud be the matther, supposin' he did? Do you think he'd know Ned Farrel, wid the two eyes he fixed on poor Sheemun Croonawnee?"—

"Sorrow a fear, I believe. An' did you make off who his comrade was?"—

"Lave me alone for that. Sure I never let him out o' my sight,



till I thracked him to his den, an' then I had all was worth hearin' about him. We have him to get whenever we want him."

"*Ma-ho-bouchal* you war; you'll be a welcome boy to Crohoore, this night."

"Yes; an' the richest Bocchoch that goes *shoolin*,\* by that job. Bud, Shaun, did you see Pierce Shea in the fair?"

"'Tis a truth that I did."

"Well; look out for him agin. In one hour, if he's seen in the town, he'll give work to the *skibbeeah*;† I hard as mooch on my thravels. I'll tell you how I got the knowledge, over the next pot of ale. Be off to him now, or we'll never have him in our hands: an' that 'ud set Crohoore as mad as the ould Duoul."

"Och, be my father's sowl, whoever he was, an' wherever he is, at the prasant time, they musn't take him from us in sich a way."

"Well; stir your stumps, an' do your work."

Shaun issued forth into the main street, singing, in doleful cadence, an Irish elegy, descriptive of how his house, wife, goods, and chattels, had been burnt, and his fourteen children scorched, and his own arms and breast disfigured in the effort to save them, as the compassionate might plainly see. And Sheemun exhibited his hands and wrists crippled from his birth, and also recited his poetical appeal to the charity and tenderness of all hearers.

Pierce Shea had, indeed, attended the fair of Kilkenny that day, when his ears were startled with the news of the execution of six of the men in whose company he had witnessed, only two days before, the attack on the dragoons. It was assizes time; their apprehension took place as soon as a sufficient detachment could be sent out from Kilkenny, after the intelligence of the serjeant; and the unhappy peasants got but one night for preparation. Hearing this, Pierce naturally wished to be safe at home. As he was quite a stranger to those who had rescued him, and whose voluntary assistance sprang from their disinclination, as Whiteboys, to allow him to be sacrificed to his laudable zeal of the previous night, he confidently reckoned on a safe concealment within the limits of his father's farm, where no one, save Doran and his corps, suspected even his sortie to the proctor. For Pierce, reasonably apprehending the paternal displeasure, had not acquainted his father with a single circumstance of his illegal proceedings.

\* Strolling.

† Jack Ketch.

Amid a throng of cattle and of people, Pierce now stood meditating a sudden retreat from the fair, when a wild-looking woman, her hair streaming about her shoulders, and her face pale and distracted, rushed towards him. At first she seemed as if hurrying on without a determined course; but when near him she stopped suddenly, and glaring full in his face, addressed him in Irish—

“Hah!—you are there!—You were not hanged and beheaded to-day—and why were you not?—You earned your death as bravely as Matthew Moran, my husband!—I saw you with these eyes among the Sassenach troopers!—Aye—he died for freeing you! and by the Judge above, who is now judging Matthew, that is foul play!—Look! here is his blood on me!—I was at the block—the head rolled at my feet!—and—(whisper)—I have it with me—I’m stealing it home—but tell no one—they would have taken it from my hands—but I can run fast—fast!”—

And seeming to forget the former part of her address, she disappeared, shrieking wildly, among the distant crowd.

This rencounter, which had fastened upon him the regards of the people around, froze Pierce to the spot, while it supplied still stronger reasons for a speedy escape homeward, of which he was not yet able to avail himself. Before he could rally his senses, a different kind of person addressed him.

“Give a help to a poor disabled body, one o’ God’s cratures, like yourself, good charitable young man,” said a miserable beggar, standing close before him, an old hat, tied by a string, hanging down from the neck to the breast, his arms bare, and shockingly twisted from the wrists to the elbows.

Scarce conscious of what he did, Pierce drew forth a small piece of money, and dropped it into the hat.

“May He that gives the riches increase your store, a-vich-machree! For your charity to the poor an’ the forlorn, listen well to the words I’m goin’ to say.”

The beggar advanced nearer; but Pierce, whose thoughts were still fixed on the frantic woman, did not appear to attend.

“Son of the Sheas—Pierce Shea!” resumed the man, in a low but distinct voice. Pierce started at the sound of his name, and stared on the speaker.

“Speed home from the fair, without loss of time,” continued the mendicant, still whispering closely. “In half an hour, if you stand in the sthreet’s o’ Kilkenny, your day o’ life is gone. While I talk, they come to seek you; while I stay here, there is one

tellin over to the justhuse-o'-peace,\* your night doin's on Peery Clancy, and your day-work among the throopers. Speed, speed I say to you, an' don't hear my words widout heedin' em. Let no grass grow undher your horse's feet, an' no wind bate your race on the road to Clarah—and mind—mind me still. Take the Wind-gap road."

A suspicion of treachery—of an arrangement to seize him on a particular road, instead of attempting his apprehension amid the throng and riot of the fair, darted across Pierce's mind, and he asked:

"How does it happen you can know me, and whence is your intelligence?"

"Lose no time askin' questions, only put your hand into my hat, and take out what you'll find in it," was the answer.

In one of his visits to Kilkenny, Pierce had got his miniature painted in a sort of way. It might lay claims to some general likeness, but we can vouch no further for its fidelity as a portrait, or its excellence as a work of art. Such as it was, however, he had presented it to his young mistress, and she sufficiently prized it for the giver's sake, and for the novelty of the toy. Indeed, Pierce had reason to know that Alley always wore it round her neck, and to believe that, in his occasional absence, she never went to rest without calling it twenty fond names, and kissing it twenty times over. He now held it in his hand.

"The owner o' that sends you word to be bid by me. An' so, stand here no longer, if you wish in your heart to see her again," the beggar went on, as Pierce remained speechless, looking alternately from him to the miniature—

"I'll see *you* again, before the danger comes on you; but now, for the last time, speed!"—

At this moment old Ned Shea, who had gone some distance to look at a drove of bullocks, called loudly to his son. Pierce turned to make a sign of speedy attendance, and when he resumed his position the beggar was gone.

He looked round and round, but could catch no glimpse; the man, though mingled with the crowd, must not, he thought, be far off. He rushed in every direction to seek him; still vainly. Then, joining to his terrors of legal apprehension, excessive wonder at the beggar's intimations, knowledge of his affairs, and connexions with his mistress, Pierce, divided between a hope of friendly meaning, and a fear of treacherous intent, was soon on the road homewards; choosing, in the teeth of his worst thoughts, that named by the mendicant.

\* English, Irished.

## CHAPTER XV.

NOTWITHSTANDING his serious arrangements, Andy Awling could not, until the morning of the fair day of Kilkenny, when his master's absence from home gave him command of his own time, put into execution his purpose of visiting Lheem-na-Sheeg. But on that morning, he took care to set out as the day dawned, on his perilous mission. And the tender-hearted Breedge Chree did not fail to rise also, to wish luck to her lover's laudable undertaking.

It is necessary to relate here, as concisely as possible, and on the authority of Breedge Chree, Andy, and, indeed, the general repute of the whole country, who Lheem-na-Sheeg was, what his profession, and from what circumstances he had been led to embrace it.

First, then, he was not a native of the place where he resided. When, twenty years before, he had suddenly appeared in the neighbourhood of Clarah, no one could tell whence he came; but every one was able to supply the following anecdotes.

Friday night is the night of the week least eligible to meet the good people. On a Friday, Lheem had been to a fair, and was returning home, having a little overstepped the limits of moderation, as to the quantity of liquor he had quaffed, but still noway impaired, in his own apprehension, as to the clearness and soundness of his judgment. Although the night was an extremely dark night, in November, he had such reliance on himself, and he knew the pathways across the fields and bogs so well, that he could entertain no doubt of his progress directly homewards. Nay, the light in his father's cabin, over the edge of the fen, already beamed brightly to his vision; and on he journeyed, alternately whistling the Fox's Sleep, or lustily bawling out a verse of the Anacreonic Cruiskeen Lawn.

After a reasonable ramble, however, Lheem began to suspect that his father's cabin was, on this night, farther off than usual, and that, with all his walking, he was as far from it as ever. Not being able clearly to comprehend how this could happen, or not allowing himself time to engage in the investigation, he had nothing for it but to redouble his speed and energies, and push forward. But still and still the well-known light burned distant as before; so that he either was bewitched himself, and did not move an inch,

although he thought he did, or else the cabin moved with a vengeance, receding imperceptibly as he advanced. Perhaps some vague idea that he was bewildered by the Fodheen Marabull,\* and a victim to his untimely pranks, at last dawned in his mind.

While he was yet opening his eyes wide enough to take a good observation, the treacherous flame gave a few quivers and capers, as if making sport of him, and instantly disappeared, so that he was left in the profoundest darkness, not able to see anything, or without anything to be seen. Down he sank in increased misgivings, heart-ache, and head-ache. Suddenly the brisk notes of a bagpipe, in capital tune, broke the silence. Pricking up his ears, they plainly informed him, beyond possibility of doubt, that the always-loved, and now more than ever welcome strains, could not be far distant. This was blessed relief: he regained his legs, and groped and crept in the direction of the music. As he approached it—for it evidently grew louder—cheering peals of laughter, song, and conversation, also struck on Lheem's comforted ear. A high "rath" obstructed his course; he hastened to wind round it. But, when he had doubled the base of the little hill, a most unexpected scene of brilliancy and festivity, at only a few yards before him, dazzled his eyes and ravished his senses.

There were no tapers; he had before proved the night afforded no moon; and sunshine it assuredly could not be. Yet the spot, and that spot alone, on which sported a multitude of little men and women, beamed with exceeding and fascinating splendour. There was no musician; no hiding-place for any; not even an instrument that one might endow with the power of playing of itself: yet the music, the sweetest he had ever heard, went merrily on. A dainty board, indeed, there was; but covered with viands and liquors such as he had never before seen. He could recognise no potatoes; nothing he might call mutton, or beef, or pork (though of these substances, it must be owned, Lheem was not the best judge, having contemplated or tasted them, in their boiled or roasted state, only twice or thrice at a wedding or a christening). Yet, unable as he might be to identify the different species of viands before him, all certainly looked most tempting. The liquor that went round, quaffed out of vessels like in form and colour to the

\* Will-o'-the-Wisp; or, according to the shortest translation we could ever get of these two words—the fellow of the burning sod, that sets people's heads giddy.

meadow "buttercup," was not ale, nor wine, nor brandy, but resembled, if any earthly thing, the divine whiskey, just then coming into sublunary use, for it was silvery, and pellucid, and without a bubble or a head on it.

The little people all wore grass-green "sherkeens," or short jackets; various nether garments, with, meantime, a general distinction by which the sexes were made manifest; red conical caps, and gay feathers. Some were stretched on the sward, feasting, or sipping their nectar, or chattering blithely or rapidly, or laughing loudly; some were divided into pairs, and seemed making love. Amazed to the uttermost Lheem was, to behold a blooming female cousin of his own—the selfsame girl whom he thought he had seen dead and buried three months before, though it was now evident a mock corpse had been left in her stead—listening, with an abstracted air, to a brisk little fairy, who, with his cap set smartly on one side of his head, and a tight though minikin leg stretched out as they sat together, appeared doing his very best at the ear of the unwilling damsel. But by far the greater part of the assembly engaged themselves in dancing; and, sure enough, they tripped it away, in frolicsome time, to the real Irish jig, played by the invisible music.

A man with one eye might, after having for a moment contemplated this scene, know that he looked at a fairy revel. With his two good eyes, Lheem could not long remain in suspense or uncertainty of the fact. Silently and cautiously he determined to move off from so dangerous a neighbourhood, but his legs refused their office. When he found himself almost literally chained to the spot, so great was Lheem's consternation, that his teeth chattered, his knees knocked against each other, the hairs bristled up from the pores of his skin, and a cold perspiration ran down his face. He thought to say a prayer; but though his priest could not reproach him with ignorance, nay, though on the contrary he was rather a favourite of the good man, Lheem could no more recollect a word, "no more nor if he never set eyes on a Soggarth's horse." Until, after many efforts, his tongue, instead of obeying the fair intentions of his thoughts, let out a thundering Irish curse—" *Thonomon duoul!*" said Lheem, aloud. Instantly the feast, the music, the sparkling light, the glancing and busy throng, everything passed away, like the lightning's flash, amid a general shout or outcry of ten thousand tiny voices, and Lheem, losing all his remaining senses, fell helpless to the earth.

When he recovered, he was somewhere, he knew not where;

living he knew not how; but, at all events, in the fairies' dwelling. What he saw there, and what he did there, for ten long years, was not to be told; and he never told it. But when he came back, partly a free and forgiven agent, he made use of the secrets he had learned, no matter whether in joy or suffering, for the benefit of the surrounding neighbours—and for a small pecuniary consideration. Which, indeed, he well earned, inasmuch as the good people would beat him black and blue upon almost all occasions when he interfered with their whims and pleasures.

Nor did Lheem lack suitors or fees. Such men were considered public blessings, and revered and treated accordingly. Eternally and actively mischievous as the good people were, it would be difficult for poor powerless mortals to live, were it not for the counteracting influence and assistance of Lheem-na-Sheeg, and his brethren. He sometimes, though not always, cured those disfigured by fairy-blasts. He restored bewitched children; wrought charms on bewitched cows; and was eminently celebrated for pointing out where strayed cattle might be found. Constantly forced to bear company with the fays in their nightly excursions, far and wide, such matters naturally came under his observation.

He lived up in the hills, as Andy Awling has truly mentioned, in the direction Pierce Shea had at first taken in pursuit of Crohoore-na-bilhoge and Alley Dooling. The party led by Pierce did not fail to visit Lheem's artlessly-constructed dwelling. But, the door lying open, and affording free entrance, a glance was sufficient to assure them that the naked hovel, then completely untenanted, could afford no concealment to the objects of their search.

The spot in which Lheem had raised it was, at the time of his industry, the midst of a wild solitude, though, at present, population and the progress of agriculture have entirely changed the face of the country. It was built within a few yards of the bed of a mountain-torrent—the same, but further towards its source, over which Crohoore had leaped when pursued by Pierce Shea—against an abrupt elevation, apparently for the purpose of having the hill-side to serve as one of the gables, and thus save time and trouble. The side walls ran at right angles with the hill. A second gable, composed of rude stones, cemented only with yellow clay, faced the stream; and through this gable, by means of a low and fragile door, exclusive entrance was afforded to visitors, the air, and the light: in fact, it was the only orifice

in the building. The roof, carelessly covered with rushes, fern, and furze, could scarcely be distinguished from the hill against which it rested, and from which these materials had been taken; so that a person, coming in the rear of the dwelling, might almost step upon it before he perceived it.

The outward physiognomy of this wild hovel bespoke its internal accommodation. Here and there, a few rough shelves of bog-wood, strewed with dried herbs, earthen vessels, and small phials, hung against the uneven walls: from the edges of these appended black beetles of the largest species, and some *Dorch-euchres*, the description of small lizard common in Ireland, much abhorred by the peasantry, though quite harmless. A deal table, and two low stools, formed the rest of the furniture. There was no appearance of a place reserved for sleeping; no hearth, hob, or chimney. A particular blackened spot by the wall showed, however, that a blaze was occasionally kindled; and some furze, heaped against the bare hill-side opposite the entrance, was stored there for fuel.

This was a poor and cheerless residence for a man of such might as Lheem-na-Sheeg. It served, however, well enough as an audience chamber: he spent none of his hours of pleasure or privacy in it. It was known that, during the night, mounted on a *thrawneen*, like themselves, he drove through the air with the good people—for many of their missions and occupations required the agency of mortal hands. Or that he, night and day, participated in their festivity within the fairy hall of the rath against which his cabin was constructed. Persons who by chance strayed that way reported of the sound of mirth and music heard within it, sometimes at deep midnight, sometimes early in the morning, and sometimes in the outspread and sunny silence of noon itself. But, when such music came on the wanderer's ear, he crossed himself, no matter what the hour, and fled away, resolving never again to visit the deserted place, and more than willing to compromise his curiosity with his terrors.

But, driven by irresistible motives, Andy Awling took the hill-road to this very suspected solitude, on the morning of the fair of Kilkenny.

“Well; God, in His marcies, purtect you, Andy, a-gra-bawn,” sighed Breedge, as he set out, after having given him some good precautionary advice as to his behaviour in the awful presence of the fairy-man.

“Och, then, Breedge, your prayer is worth its weight in pure



gould; an' mooch sarvice it 'll be to me, I'm sure. So, here goes, in the name o' God!"

When he had got a few paces, he bethought himself:

"Arrah, Breedge, a-lanna, won't you pelt the ould brogue afther me, for loock?"

"Well thought on, Andy, a-chorra;" and she stooped, plucked off her paved "pantoufle," and, in the energy of her zeal, flung it after Andy with too true an aim, and too superfluous a force. It smote him on the back of the head, with a violence that would have stove in the thin paper-skull of a genius. But Andy's substantial cranium only sounded under the blow, and he only staggered a little, as, putting his hand to the assaulted part, he exclaimed:

"Why, then, upon my conscience, Breedge, agra, an' that's as good as if I tuck my oath, if there's loock or grace in it, you gave me enough an' plenty, and some to spare. Musha, only I wouldn't do it—" he paused, rubbing his head, and looking at the brogue as if he wished to return it to the owner. But the dread of casting back his luck along with it made him give up his purpose; and at last he turned on his heel, and set out in good earnest, as much out of humour with poor Breedge as his nature permitted, and adding in a grumble, "that tho' she meant well, she might have done the thing aisier, anyhow."

Having gained the lonely dwelling of Lheem-na-Sheeg, Andy took post at the angle of the side wall, out of view of any one within, and, pulling off his hat, was about to commence, according to Bridge's instruction, and, indeed, his own determinations, a preparatory prayer, when—"Come in, Andy Awling!" said a sonorous voice from the hovel. There was a sudden finish to Andy's orisons; his jaw dropped; he opened his eyes wide as the lids would permit him; and it was not his fault if his ears also did not expand to listen. He had never beheld Lheem-na-Sheeg; nor, to his knowledge, had Lheen-na-Sheeg ever beheld him. How, then, did the wizard know who was there? Or, indeed, since Andy had taken care to approach without coming in sight of the entrance, how could he know any one at all was there? While pondering these things in some consternation, the voice again spoke:

"Andy Awling!—Andy Houlohan! come in to me, I say!"

Andy turned the corner, and crossed the threshold, as if he were obeying some outward impulse, rather than acting by his own free will. He had to stoop low, in entering the hovel, and,

when he again raised his eyes, he stood before one who could be no other than Lheem-na-Sheeg.

"Ho! you are there, Andy Houlohan: why did you keep me waitin'? I expected you: *se chise*."\* And he pushed over a low stool, upon which Andy settled himself, as commanded, though in doing so he was obliged to cripple his knees up to a level with his mouth.

Lheem-na-Sheeg, although robust, was an old man: his almost snow-white locks hung about his yet fresh-coloured face. He wore a rusty blue great-coat, fastened tight up to his chin; and a leathern belt buckled round his waist. He had quivering black eyes, of which the expression, when they seized on Andy's dead stare, was, by the visitor, inwardly acknowledged as very unusual and disagreeable. Altogether, Andy had never before found himself in the presence of a human creature so calculated to inspire feelings of awe, reverence, and mistrust. For a moment they silently regarded each other, from their opposite stools; Andy wearing the selfsame face he had unconsciously assumed when the first surprising words, while he was outside, had startled him. At length, the fairy-man resumed:

"I see you can't spake; no matter; I'll save you the throuble. You come here to find out if I can help you to get Alley Dooling from the good people?"

"Och, murder!" was all Andy could gasp forth.

"Aye; I know well what you'd be for sayin', if you could. You'll think it a wondher how I come by the knowledge; but that's no concern o' yours."

The person addressed here put on a face as if he were going to cry; though, perhaps, it was only the beginning of an effort to assure his host that, however he might be astounded at this unceremonious rifling of his innermost thoughts, he had no intention to call him to an account for anything. But before a word could be found to eke out the preface of Andy's face, Lheem-na-Sheeg abruptly went on:

"Where's the money I'm to get for my helpin' you, and to comfort me for the bad treatment I'll meet in your sarvice?"

Andy, without taking his eyes from the wonderful man, stole his fingers into the profound pocket of his vest, and presented what they hooked up. Lheem-na-Sheeg took the proffered fee; viewed it a moment; and then, darting at Andy the glance of an old rat, said in a high tone:

\* Sit down.

"This beggarly skillin won't do. There's a *guineah-beg*\* in the t'other pocket, ma bouchal."

Andy caught breath, and jumped on his stool—"I ax your thousand pardons, over an' over: sure it was never my manin' to put you off wid that." The other made no answer, but kept his terrible eyes fixed on the agitated Andy, while he busied himself fumbling for Breedge Chree's present, and which he at last found in the very remote corner of the pocket pointed out, as if it participated in his terror, and was hiding from the touch of the mysterious sage. As he handed it:

"Ma—" he began, but Lheem interrupted him with a stamp, and a—"Hah!—be upon your guard, Andy—no cursin' or swearin' here"—and the trembling Andy did acknowledge to himself that he had, irreverently and unconsciously, begun a curse, and would have finished it but for the interruption.

"You war goin' to say, again, you had no design in offerin' me the skillin' instead of this; an' I know that, too, widout your swearin'. But now to the business that brought you here."

The fairy-man retired into the far corner, where the gloom almost hid him, and in a short time returned with a piece of flaming bog-wood, and a bunch of furze, taken from the heap, which having also lit, he again addressed our observant friend, in a tone of command:

"Stand on your long legs, Andy Awling!"—Andy bounced up. "Now, take that noggin' o' clear wather in your hand."

"If it war the same thing to you, à-roon-machree, an' if I had my choice, I'd rather not take it."

"Ho! ho! hold it in your hand, I tell you."

"I'm no way droothy; but behowldin' to you as mooch as if I war—" Breedge Chree had particularly enjoined him not to partake of fairy meat or drink.

"Lift the vessel from the ground, I say!"—with a deep frown, and another stamp, Lheem said.

"Sure you wouldn't have the heart to make me dhrink, when it's hungry I am, if anything ails me."

"Aye; you have the look of a hungry fellow, an' you moost get a scrap to ate when we've done—"

"Och," interrupted Andy, "never a morsel 'ill go below my breath 'till I see Clarah agin,—if it's the will o' God I ever see it—Not the big of a bee's knee—I have a vow."

\* Little guinea—half a guinea.

“Don’t stand talkin’, there. Take up the noggin, or I’ll put you in a way that your own mother won’t know you, if ever you *do* get home;”—and he forced Andy to lay an unwilling hand on the noggin. The blazing furze had by this time burnt into white ashes. Of this the conjurer took some, and, together with a dead *Dorch-luchre*, flung it into the noggin; all the time repeating some wonderful words. Having attentively watched the vessel, he continued:

“Ho! all right, Pierce Shea; the fire swims up, bravely.”

Taking the noggin from his attendant, he laid it on the table; and, snatching an herb from the shelf, still spoke on.

“This is *canavaun-beg*, pulled before the night-dews rose to the sun, this mornin’;” and, when he had again muttered something, he rubbed the herb between his hands.

“Bravely, bravely, still,” he exclaimed; and, rising quickly, drained some of the water out of the noggin into a phial.

“And now, Andy Houlohan, all is done that was to be done. Take this flask, and this herib, an’ listen to my words. Afther the first crow o’ the cock, to-night, let Pierce Shea stand in the glin of Ballyfoile, on the spot where his life was aimed at. Let him throw three sprigs o’ the *canavaun-beg* against the wind, and Alley Doolin’ will be wid him, undher the stars o’ the night. Then let him give her what’s in this little bottle to dhrink, an’ she’ll follow him to his father’s house. But tell him—an’ be sure you mind my words—tell him he moost be alone in the glin; no livin’ thing can be next or near him. Or else, woe to Pierce Shea; and woe, a thousand times, to him that’s in his company. Now, put on your hat, an’ go your ways.”

Andy paused a moment, and then ventured to speak.

“Och, maybe if you burnt a bit o’ kippin for me, I’d get lave to go wid him?”

“No!” roared Sheeum-na-Lheeg;—“an’ moreover, if you attempt the like, the flesh ’ill be withered on your bones.”

“I havn’t another *laffina* in the ’varsal world, this moment. Bud here’s a dacent coat;—the ould *caubeen*\* isn’t very bad, because it’s my Sunday one, an’ not the ould one of all, and isn’t wid me more nor a year; an’ my ould brogues is bran new; not six months agone since they war in the brogue-maker’s basket. Sure all put together is well worth another *guineah-beg*. An’ I’ll lave ’em wid you, not axin’ betther nor to thrapse home a’most

\* Hat.

as bare as I was born; an' I'll make my sware to be here agin to-morrow mornin' afore you cum back—"

"Come back from where?"—

"Avoch, that's a question fit for more knowledge nor God gave me. But if you get lave for me to go wid Pierce to-morrow night, you shan't be put off wid half a guinea, if I war to rob the altar for it."

"*Goh-mock!*—*Goh-mock!*—go your ways!"—exclaimed the fairy-man, in a voice of full command, his eyes flashing, and his brows knitting and knitting as he advanced on Andy, who, gradually receding, unconsciously passed the threshold, and then the door was slammed and barred against him.

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## CHAPTER. XVI.

BREEDGE CHREE took care to be just going out to milk the cows as Andy Awling made his appearance from the hills. Her inquiries as to his success, safety, and adventures, were rapid and incessant. Andy answered that he had things to tell should make her gape "the full length and breadth of her mouth;" and he forthwith rehearsed everything that had befallen him. The frightful omniscience of Lheem-na-Sheeog; how he knew, beforehand, of his coming, and the business of his visit; how he told him where to find the half-guinea; how he dived into the very depths of his thoughts, and, finally, how he, Andy, scarce escaped a fairy-blast at their ominous parting;—these matters formed his first budget of communication.

Then, to Breedge's renewed questions, he went over all that related to Pierce Shea and Alley Dooling; and, if Breedge looked frightened before, she now smiled in heartfelt satisfaction. No one had ever heard the like, she said; she was about to despair when first she looked in Andy's face, for it had not anything like good news in it; but his latter words made her mind easy; all would end well. He had only to give the herb and the little bottle to Master Pierce, and send him off to the glen, at the earliest cock-crow that blessed night.

Here Andy demurred, however. He suspected, after all, that *her nice bit of gold* might just as well have been jerked over the

moon, or into the bottom of the river ; for not a single step should Pierce Shea trudge to Ballyfoile.

"Musha, for what reason?" Breedge asked, in her crossest tone.

He would tell her that. He knew well what kind of a boy Master Pierce was. God did not please to give him much sense ; he was a hot, scatterbrained fellow, overbold and hearty. If he had to do with honest Christians, like himself, that a body could lit with an *alpeen*, no one could blame him for being "fractious" when occasion offered ; but, when his business lay among a very different kind of people, the more easy and civil was his speech, the greater his chance of success, and the better for himself. Pierce—Heaven help him for an *omadhour!*—did not mind that theory a bit ; and, instead of taking off his hat, and making his scrape, and saying soft words (the way a body would do that had to deal with a hard landlord, that we didn't care the Devil had in his pocket all the while)—instead of this, why, Pierce would be inclined to use high words, and to call them bad names, in revenge, for keeping Alley so long from him. Nay, if they did not yield her up at the first word, who could tell but he might strike at them : and then see what a pretty piece of work we should have of it !

And so, Breedge again asked, did he not intend to tell Master Pierce a word of his morning's journey ?

Never a word, then. Since Andy could not go along with his foster-brother, to keep him out of harm's way, on the spot, determined he was to keep him at home, anyhow.

And what would Andy say, if Lheem-na-Sheeg should make a cripple of him, all the days of his life, for disobeying his commands ?

No danger of that. If Andy was to assist in taking Alley from the good people, like enough, Lheem might "turn his head wid his face behind him," or put the back part of him before ; and then, upon his conscience, he should be a show to look at, sure enough. But, when it would be all the other way ; when, in fact, instead of forcing or conjuring her from them, he was to have a hand in keeping her where she was ; in leaving among them the comeliest colleen in Leinster county, barring Breedge Chree, who stood before him ; why, for such a turn as this, Lheem-na-Sheeg would be obliged to him, and think well of him, on his friends' account, rather than do him any harm.

Well—Breedge didn't care to cross him, and she saw it was

better let Andy have his own way in time. But, considering a the good money it had cost—and money does not grow on the bushes in the field—would it not be a pity, a sin, and a shame, to throw away the bottle or the sprigs of *canavaun-beg*?—So, she asked Andy to give them to her.

“For what to do wid ’em, Breedge, à-roon?”

Avoch, there was a poor creature of a cousin she had, who was bewitched. And, sometimes of a night, she stole off with the fairies, and used to be out with them till morning dawn, in spite of herself, as her own lips avowed. Maybe the little bottle and the herb might cure her, and keep her in her bed, for the future.

Like enough, Andy said; and instantly presented them to Breedge, wishing her luck in her attempt.

But Breedge wanted the bottle and the *canavaun-beg* for another purpose.

Pierce Shea had just arrived from the fair, his mind agitated by the danger of his present situation, and additionally embarrassed that he could not disburthen it, for sympathy or advice, to any one around him. Even from his foster-brother he had disguised the truth of his nocturnal adventure, and the bloody accidents of the following day; accounting for his absence by a story of a new and still fruitless search after his mistress and her ravisher. Doran he had seen but once, and then only for a hasty moment, since the Whiteboy outrage. The warning of the mendicant at the fair led him to apprehend that private informations either were or would be sworn against him: and all his fears and thoughts, experience and reasonings, pointed to Crohoore-na-bilhoge as the informer. How this abhorred and mysterious individual could have come by his evidence, still remaining matter for discovery.

While pondering these doubts, as he sat silently gazing at the parlour fire, Pierce was surprised by a sudden pressure of his foot, from some one who had entered the room without his notice, and who immediately walked to the door. Looking around, he perceived Breedge Chree; and he was more and more surprised to observe that, as if to avoid the observation of his mother, who sat knitting in the window, she now winked the crooked eye at him. Of late, Breedge and he had been only passing civil; for, aware as he was of the honorable attachment subsisting between her and his foster-brother, he sedulously avoided any of those little *romping* civilities that rustic politeness expected of him, but that

he feared might give Andy uneasiness. He could not, therefore, but marvel at the pressure and wink of the betrothed Breedge Chree. As his looks followed her through the door for an explanation, she winked again and again, and added an unequivocal motion of her head, that was plainly translatable into "follow me as fast as you can." His late train of thought now took fire, and believing, with a quick spasm and sinking of the heart, that a tale other than a love tale was to be communicated, he hastily followed her footsteps.

Breedge, still beckoning silence with her hand, led the way through the house and yard, to "the haggart;" and there, between two huge stacks of corn, where there was scarce room to push in, and where she judged they were effectually screened from observation, began her story. Pierce heard, with relief and wonder, the whole account of Andy's journey to Lheem-na-Sheeg, and received from her hand the bottle of charmed water and the sprigs of *canavaun-beg*, accompanied by directions when, and where, and how to use them, and for what purpose. After which, with many cautions and prayers to conceal her agency from Andy Awling, Breedge glided back to her kitchen, and left Pierce to his own reflections and resolves on the strange and unusual occurrence.

Night was fast falling. We do not say that Pierce Shea was entirely free from the shadow of the great cloud of local superstition which since his infancy had hovered over him: we are just as far from asserting that he believed a word of the promise of the fairy-man, or of what had been said concerning the power and virtues of the simple drop of water and the withered weed he held in his hands. But, along with the shattered and restless state of mind that, while it deprived him of the power of calm thought or reasoning, enfeebled him also, he had heard, no matter how or from whom, an assurance of meeting, that night, his long-lost and dearly-loved mistress; and this imparted a hope, or, at least, an impulse that was irresistible. He resolved, even though it should prove but an act of stupid absurdity, to try the charm that Breedge and the sage of the hills had recommended. Danger, too, stared him in the face, from the prospect of exposing himself alone, far from human assistance, and in the dead hour of the night, on the very spot where a recent attempt had been made on his life. But the form of Alley again flitted before his imagination and his hope, and all other considerations vanished. Nor would we have the reader think so humbly of Pierce Shea



as to suppose mere personal hazard could influence him even in such a mortal debate.

At all events, whether he believed or doubted, or whether or no he once truly debated the subject—which is a doubt to us—Pierce Shea, at the time prescribed, closing on midnight, with only the host of frost-cleared stars witnessing his motions, stood, in the lone and distant glen of Ballyfoile, on the spot where an assassin had once levelled at his heart. He flung, separately, the sprigs of *canavaun-beg* in the wind's eye; and, turning hastily round, as a faint breathing seemed to arise at his back, Alley Dooling was before him.

The figure was at rest, showing no sign of the motion that must have brought her to the spot, except that her light drapery fluttered, and that her bosom quickly rose and fell, like a chord trembling after it had ceased to sound, or a bird just perching after a frightened flight, with its little plumage yet in disorder. She was pale and thinner than her lover had before seen her, and her eye widened and darkened, in an expression new and startling to him. Yet, under this change, and only assisted by the weak starlight, Pierce knew his mistress at a glance. His first instinctive action, prompted by wild surprise, with perhaps a dash of supernatural consternation in it, was to start back, uttering a low cry; but the master-passion instantly resumed its sway; and while the pale girl extended her arms, as if in reproach, they were locked in a lover's embrace a moment after.

For a considerable time, tears alone found their way; and during another pause they could but exchange the words—"Oh, Alley!"—"oh, Pierce!"—until relieved by successive showers of weeping. Pierce was the first to speak.

"My heart's darling! My own poor Alley!—how often, and in what despair, I have sought this blessed meeting. Oh, I had no hope we should ever see each other again! And least of all did I think, after all my days and nights of toil and suffering, the joy was so near me!"

"My beloved Pierce," she sobbed forth, in undisguised tenderness—"God knows whether or not I wished to see *you*. My poor heart was almost broken with its early sorrows, and you were not near me—you, that poor heart's only remaining comfort!"

"Do not think of the past, Alley; the storm is blown away; *and our future lives shall be spent in the sunshine.*"

"Oh, Heaven grant it may be possible!—for, indeed, indeed, the storm was black and bitter. But has its cloud so surely passed away?"

"It has! it has! My heart bounds to tell you so; and your own, dearest Alley, should confirm the answer. What do you mean? I have many things to ask you, and many things to tell—but this is no place—here under the cold night—let me conduct you home."

"Home, Pierce!"—and she burst into fresh tears.

"Yes, dear Alley, the home where you will be welcome dearly—where I, and my mother"—

"Your mother! but mine, Pierce, where is mine?"

"Forget it, my beloved girl—forget it, for the present at least. Come now—lean on me—come, come."

Alley showed no symptom of motion, or of willingness to accompany him, and only answered, with her hands spread over her face: "Pierce! Pierce!"

"Well, darling? Speak, dearest Alley; and quickly. This is no place to stay in."

"I cannot. No, no, Pierce, I cannot go with you!"

"Cannot! Now I recollect—your presence—the wild joy of seeing you—of holding you once more to my heart—this banished all other thoughts, Alley. But tell me: who sent or led you here? Had Lheem-na-Sheeg anything to do with my seeing you?—'tis a foolish question—but had he?"

"He had, indeed."

"He had!—what am I to understand? And now you cannot let me be your conductor from this wild glen?"

"Pierce, it is impossible. You and I must still live separate."

"Must! I ask again, Alley, what can you mean? You stand beside me—my arms are round you—you are unaccompanied—free to act—free to make me blest or curst—happy or mad! Yet you say we must part again?"

"I am *not* free to act, Pierce. And though my heart should break while I say it—still I do say we must part here—here on the very spot where we met."

"We must not, by Heaven! Whatever may be your mystery—whoever the agents that control you—spirit or mortal—man or devil. Hah!" he interrupted himself as one horrible recollection darkened his soul. "Listen to me, Alley, and answer me. I have a right to ask the question. You left your father's and your mother's house with their bloody murderer?"

"Pierce, Pierce, spare me!" was her only reply, given in a low and shuddering accent.

"If I could—if I dared, I would, Alley! Your heart is not more riven to hear, than mine to speak—but recollect it is Pierce Shea that speaks, and Alley Dooling that hears. How did the villain act towards you? where did he convey you?"

She was silent.

"Do you still live with him, I say?"

"I dare not answer you."

Echoing her words in horror and agony, he untwisted her arms from his neck, held her from him, looked with glaring eyes into her face, and resumed, in a hollow, broken voice:

"Only one word more, Alley, and answer, or be silent again, as you wish. Do you refuse to quit him?"

She *was* again silent.

He continued to hold her from him, and to look into her eyes, until the gradually rising passion gurgled and at last shrieked in his throat. Then he let her go, and with arms still extended as he stepped backwards, exclaimed:

"Stand by yourself, then! We part, indeed."

"Pierce, Pierce, do not throw me from you!" She sprang wildly to his neck again.

"No! no! take your hands—your touch—from my neck and me! God, O God! how am I requited by this girl!—by her for whom my heart has lain waste, my peace and life been a wreck and a struggle!—whom to embrace once more, pure, and innocent, and faithful, was my soul's only hope and effort!—And now—now"—the tears interrupted him—"and now she returns to me, a dishonored, worthless, false creature! No, no, Alley," he continued, turning from her; "no, no. Free me of your arms—and there—there—stand for yourself, I say!"

She sank on her knees, clasped her hands, and cast her eyes upward, till they were hid in the sockets, and had almost cracked with the straining, appealing effort.

"God, that rules in Heaven!" she muttered; "pity and comfort me!—give me strength to bear what I must bear—this, the worst of all. And, Father—Mother—you that are now enjoying the light of glory, pray to God for your miserable daughter!"

With the last word, the poor girl sank on the earth, her face downward, sobbing as if she craved it to open and give her rest.

An agony so utter and so touching could not fail to smite the lover's heart, amid all its workings of rage and disappointment, with hasty remorse. He reproached himself for having been too cruel and too stern ; and now, standing over her, said :

" Alley, dear Alley !—dear yet, though lost to me for ever—check this terrible sorrow—rise up—come with me—I—Oh ! I do love you still, though we can never be anything to each other—But, come—come to my mother's home and comfort—we will spend our lives to make you happy—Save yourself from further woe and infamy—rise, and come with me."

He touched her, and she sprang up, exclaiming : " No, no, Pierce, come not near me—lay no hand on me—I have now to do an act I could not do were your arms around me."

She retreated, from him clapped her hands loudly, and cried out : " Now ! now ! Here ! here !" and Pierce found himself instantly overpowered—pulled to the earth, in spite of all his efforts—his hands tied behind his back, and his feet also secured ; the rapid work of four strong men, who took him unprepared for their sudden and alarming attack.

" And now, Pierce," said Alley, stooping down and kissing, as he lay on the sward, his shrinking cheek—" Farewell ! I am going from you. I said we should part on the spot where we had met : may we meet again, and be happier."

" The curse of a betrayed and broken heart come between you and happiness, Devil in an Angel's shape !" he exclaimed.

" Pierce, I forgive you ; may God forgive you !" She turned and disappeared, and he sank into a horrid lethargy.

The exertions of those who had overpowered him to raise him up, and bear him along on their shoulders, confusedly restored his senses. He became just conscious of being hurried through the glen ; but his thoughts never once turned to their probable purpose or destination. Alley Dooling, lost, blasted, base, and treacherous, was all he could comprehend. When—

Thwack ! thwack ! thwack ! came three successive and tremendous blows of Andy Awling's alpeen against the skulls of three of his captors, and down they fell of course. Down came Pierce Shea, of course, also : the fourth man, as Andy afterwards said, " gave leg bail, an' cleared off." The deliverer pulled and tugged to loose the fetters of his foster-brother ; but, as they were formed of tough leather straps and buckles, it was some time before he succeeded. When, at last, Pierce was free, and when Andy, as the next pressing consideration, turned to look

after the prostrate enemy, they were not visible, a resurrection and a retreat having taken place while he was otherwise occupied. Then he proposed an instant pursuit.

"No, no," groaned Pierce, "they are Alley Dooling's friends; and she is—no matter what—I will go home—to forget her if I can—Heaven pity and strengthen me!—I will attend to nothing but my business—nothing. Come, Andy; my heart is cold, Andy—cold. Come away." He did not afterwards open his lips.

Andy happened to be near the corn-stacks as Pierce and Breedge glided between them. Naturally curious, to say the least, he concealed himself, "handy by," and overheard the conference. He knew that, Pierce once in possession of the secret, he could not prevent his visit to the glen; he knew, also, the threatened danger that awaited himself should he venture to accompany him. Yet something was to be done. First, then, he sought out Breedge, to scold her heartily. But his recollection of the amiable motive, so flattering to his vanity, that had governed her actions, together with Breedge's unbounded smiles and home arguments, considerably turned away his anger. Next he watched the live-long night till he saw Pierce set out; the suspense and misery that followed were not to be borne. He stole out to his "loft," or sleeping apartment, for his alpeen; clutched it, turned it round in his hand, spit on it, and gave a jump and a shout in the dark. Then, fairy-blast or not, cripple or no cripple, he stole off to Ballyfoile. At some distance he watched Pierce and Alley; witnessed her treachery; got sense enough, after all, to see he had no fairies to deal with—though, even if he had, his alpeen would not, therefore, be the more quiet; coolly seized his proper time, and rescued his foster-brother.

He rescued him, alas! but for a short time to have him free. Whatever might have been the unknown fate that awaited Pierce from those into whose hands Alley Dooling had delivered him, the fate for which he was reserved was terrible as any that could befall him.

When he reached his father's home, Pierce threw himself, without undressing, on his bed; his heart wretched, his mind dull and stupified, and not performing with regularity any of its accustomed movements. Sleep came not, yet he might be said, with regard to the functions of waking life, to sleep profoundly. Thus, lying motionless, his eyes shut, and his ears inattentive, he was for some time unconscious of an unusual bustle that,

Almost since he entered his chamber, had filled the house. At last, however, it reached his senses: he was about to leap up to inquire into the cause, when his father, pale and shaking, rushed into the room. This sight reduced Pierce to a state of stupor, worse than that from which he had just roused himself. He became indifferent to the voice and action of his father, who questioned him on something, and urged him to do something. *He* talked of Alley Dooling;—and he was seized by the officers of justice. The sheriff of the county, assisted by a military force, arrested him on a well-founded charge of Whiteboyism.

As an electric shock restores feeling to the paralyzed, this announcement brought him to himself. As he was led forth, a guarded and marked criminal, and beheld the tearless horror of his father's look, and felt the desperate clinging of his aged mother, while her frantic screams pierced the paternal roof, as the sobs and wailings of his poor foster-brother, and the universal grief of all around him, rung in his ears—a chill, deathlike, by anticipation, closed on Pierce's heart. One poor effort he did make to bear himself like a man. But when, obeying his emotion, he clasped and wrung his father's hand, and on his knees begged forgiveness for the disobedience that must now bring him to a felon's death, and bow down that stricken head with sorrow and with shame; when, again and again, he returned the embraces of his shrieking mother; gave back Andy Houlohan's kiss; shook hands, for the last time, with all the weeping household; and with lingering fondness patted the head of the old faithful mastiff, as he cast a long look to the old hearth that henceforth should never blaze for him, nor be a place of simple and holy recollections to those he left around it; when, in a convulsive struggle for resignation, he attempted all this, nature refused to support him. He wept like a child, and the "Mother, mother, do not break my heart!"—"Father, forgive me, and pray for me!"—and the last, last—"God be with you all!"—came from a bosom overflowing in bitterest anguish, and in a voice faint and wailing as that of a cradled infant.

## CHAPTER XVII.

WE have said it was the assizes time of Kilkenny. Pierce Shea arrived there before the morning sitting of the court. In two hours afterwards he was put on his trial before God and his country. The evidence was conclusive against him, on different charges; here he saw he had again to encounter the cool, well-concerted machinations of Crohoore-na-bilhoge. One of the witnesses was the assassin of Ballyfoile; the same who, under the influence of Crohoore, had personally attempted his life. Pierce felt it not difficult to conceive that, having failed in the attempt to assassinate him, the murderer now hired this wretch to swear away his life in a court of justice.

The man was cross-examined as to the fact of his having been employed to fire at Shea: he denied it sturdily and scoffingly. Two persons only could contradict him, Doran and Andy Houlohan. But Doran did not appear, as he was himself hiding from justice; while poor Andy felt so bewildered by the situation of his foster-brother, that, when called upon, he could neither answer nor recollect anything with the necessary distinctness.

This person deposed to the presence of Shea at the attack on the dragoons. One of the surviving soldiers also easily identified him: the proctor, with equal readiness, accused him of having assisted in the outrage upon his person. It was, however, elicited in cross-examination, that Pierce had subsequently saved his life at peril of his own; owing to which slight extenuating fact, the criminal was allowed forty-eight hours to prepare for death. Sentence was passed on him at two o'clock in the afternoon of the morning of his arrest, which was on a Tuesday.

About eleven o'clock the next night, Wednesday, a thundering knock pealed at the door of a fine house, situated in the great square of Stephen's-green, in the metropolis of Ireland.

The proprietor of the house was a young gentleman of family, talent, and education. Though young (not more than twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age), he held an office of trust and consideration under the Irish government, and was the representative of one of her boroughs, in the then native parliament. *Other, and more private anecdotes of him, claim our attention.*

Since his father's death, which happened in his childhood, Mr. Barry had been landlord of Clarah. When a boy, his school-vacations were often spent in the hospitable farmhouses of Ned Shea and Tony Dooling, where he found comfortable accommodation, and abundance of joyous exercise and country sports, with, in the person of Pierce Shea, a companion every way fitted to share or lead in his rural pursuits. Pierce rode as good a horse as his young landlord, and rode him as well; he was as good a shot, a better courser, and knew to a certainty where game of every kind could be had for the starting. Their ages were alike; their tempers both amiable; their tastes, too, notwithstanding the difference in social rank, similar. For, as we have before observed, Pierce's education had by no means been neglected. So that if he could not invariably follow the more extended or more systematic attainments of the young squire, as shown in their occasional conversations, it required but little effort to make him do so; and his youthful zeal and quickness in asking questions, were repaid by the ingeniousness of his admiring tutor, who, along with the wish and pleasure of communicating knowledge, felt, perhaps, a degree of natural vanity in displaying superior acquirement. In fact, they became friends; and an accident further served to fix and enlarge the the good-will Mr. Barry bore his esteemed young tenant. Pierce had preserved, if not his life, his limbs at least, by checking, with imminent danger to himself, on the verge of a precipitate quarry, a restive horse, over which his companion had lost all control, and which was plunging headlong to the precipice.

With maturer years, indeed, came different occupations; distinct places in different ranks of society; and, of course, mutual estrangement and darkening, if not some forgetfulness of the early intercourse of boyhood. But Mr. Barry was too worthy a young man to have altogether a bad memory.

The tremendous knocking at his door roused Mr. Barry from a sound sleep; for he had gone to bed early. He listened: it was repeated. He rang his bell violently, and shortly appeared his favourite attendant, with a light in one hand, and a letter in the other. He took the letter; glanced over it, and asked with much interest:

“Who is the bearer of this, Pat?”

“As ugly a little fellow, please your honour, as ever you'd wish to see.”

“Leave the light, and show him instantly up stairs.”



"Into which room, Sir?"

"Into this—this room. Make haste."

"I'm thinkin', if your honour war aafter seein' him, you wouldn't bid me let him up."

"That will be decided when I do see him. Begone, Pat, and obey my commands."

"Faith, it's quare enough," muttered the servant, as he descended, "to go an' bid us show the spalpeen of an ugly little Divil all the way up to his own bedroom.—Will you plase, Sir," standing at the head of the staircase that commanded the hall—"will you plase, Sir, to walk up to his honour's bedroom?"

"I don't plase;—I'll stay where I am for your master's answer."

"Eh!" said the servant, staring.

"Are you deaf?—Didn't you hear me?"

"Do you mane that I'm to repeat that aafter you, to my own masher, in exchange for my civil message?"

"Yes, tell your own masher I don't choose to go up, but will wait here for his answer: that's what I said afore. Can't you hear me yet, that you look so foolish?"

"Musha, 'pon my conscience, but it's a high joke, sure enough," mumbled Pat, turning up stairs. "Tell your masher," says he, squatting down to reduce himself to the height of his subject, while he mimicked his words—"tell your own masher I don't choose to come up. Well! sorrow the like ever cum across me. An' he looked as if he had a grate mind to ate a body, though, upon my honour, I think he'd fit in my riding coat pocket."

He re-entered his master's chamber.

"Faith, glory to your honour, if the dawny, ugly-mugged fellow that brought that same lether isn't grate in one way, he's grate another way. Tell your masher, says he to me, I don't choose to come up, but 'ill stop where I am for his answer." Again stooping on his haunches, and making a hideous face, to render evident the cause of his surprise or amusement.

"Will you ever be serious, Pat?" asked Mr. Barry, who was now up, and attired in his morning-gown.

"When we're both married, plase your honour."

"Well, well. Tell this mighty great little man I will come to him."

"Ulla-loo!" said Pat, as he again withdrew, "This bates all before it." He tarried a moment on the landing-place, to study how he should address the strange animal below: ere he had

proceeded farther, his master passed him, descended the stairs, and approached the stranger.

The almost exhausted lamp had been re-lighted in the hall, but was not sufficient to illumine it fully. In the remotest gloom, leaning against a pillar, stood the diminutive figure of the midnight courier. He put his hand to his hat as Mr. Barry approached him.

"Miss Lovett writes me that she owes you much for a signal service, my good friend."

"I thank her for owning it to your honour."

"But she writes in a hurry, and without any particulars. Pray, how did the cause for obligation arise?"

"Doesn't Miss Lovett mention it in the letter?"

"She does not—I have said as much before."

"Well, your honour, self-praise is no praise; an' I'm a bad hand at it, any way: you'll be in Kilkenny yourself early to-morrow, please God, an' then you'll have it from her own mouth. An' it's thought," he added, with a frightful grin, "your honour wouldn't wish a better storyteller."

"Very well," replied Mr. Barry, whose cheeks coloured a little. "It is certainly my intention to be in Kilkenny by twelve o'clock to-morrow; and you may be assured that—exclusive of the lady's request, which is law to me—I should, of my own free will, do my utmost in this matter."

"May your honour get your reward. You'll have more than one grateful heart to bless you."

"When did you leave Kilkenny?"

"Ten hours ago." The distance was fifty-seven miles.

"Indeed!—then you have not loitered."

"No, your honour; nor can't loiter now. I have much business before me yet; and must be back in nine hours, if the horses meet me fair."

"You will convey these few hasty lines to Miss Lovett," giving him a note.

"That I'll do, please God, early in the mornin' o' this day, comin' on."—He turned to go.—"An' we may depend on your honour in regard o' what Miss Lovett writes about?"

"You may. My eyes shall not close till I am in Kilkenny, and the prayer of the letter you have brought me fulfilled."

"The Time is short."

"This is Wednesday night—and—let me see—to-morrow, at noon, you say?"

“To-morrow, at one o’ the clock, your honour.”

“Depend on me. Farewell.”

“Well, I must be for Kilkenny this moment. So I wish your honour a good-bye.”

“Open the door, Pat!”—and Pat, running down with a light, obeyed in increased wonder. When it was opened, the stranger slowly moved from his position; gained the street steps; pulled off his hat, and, with a “God guard your honour,” flung a paper into the hall. Just as he turned to walk down the steps, the light held by Pat fell on his face, and Mr. Barry started suddenly at the now well-known features of one about whom he had reason to feel peculiar interest.

“Seize that person, Pat!”—he exclaimed, stooping to pick up the paper. The servant shot through the hall-door; his master read the document; and, when he had done, said—“This, to me, is wonderful.” In a few minutes Pat returned alone, his clothes soiled with the mire of the street, and his countenance pale and agitated.

“What’s the matter with you, man?” asked Mr. Barry.

“Faith, an’ I don’t well know, plase your honour,” answered the servant, now gravely enough. “I cum up to the little man two dours off, just at the turnin’; an’, ‘Cum back, if you plase,’ says I, ‘the masther wants you.’ ‘What’s his business?’ says he, stoppin’, and facin’ round upon me. ‘He’ll tell you that when you come,’ says I. ‘Then he’ll never tell me now,’ says he, ‘for I’m in sich a hurry I can’t come back at all.’ ‘Be asy,’ says I, an’ I put out my hand to grip him; when—I lave it to my death that I don’t know how he done it—but up wid my heels, and down wid my head, anyhow. And, before I was upon my legs again, he was on the back of a horse, I didn’t see till that minute, and away wid him like the Divil in a high wind. And, by Gor, savin’ your honour’s presence, the Divil himself couldn’t do the whole thing a bit better, if he was ped for it.”

“You are a goose, Pat,” said Mr. Barry. “But now no more of this. Prepare with all speed for my immediate departure.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

“MURDER, murder, won't you let me see him at all?”—petitioned Andy Houlohan, clinging to the bars of the iron-grated door of the prison in which Pierce Shea was confined.

“Go along out o' that, you ugly-lookin' thief,” answered the gruff voice of the ruffian, who filled at once the offices of jailor and turnkey, as he locked the door, after admitting the broken-hearted old Ned Shea to a last interview with his son, on the morning of the day of his appointed execution.

“Och! you don't know that we war reared up together, a'most ever since the day we were born,” poor Andy continued, in tears.

“Ha! ha! aye. An', maybe, deserve to be hung up together, the last day o' your lives, just to keep you from parting,” retorted Matthew.

“An' aint I poor Pierce's own foster-brother?”

“Rot you, have you the Sheriff's ticket?”

“Ochone, I dunna know what it is.”

“Put your hand in your pocket and try:” looking knowingly, and making a show as if reckoning money on the palm of his hand.

“It's not mooch that I have, God help me; but I'll give it wid a hearty good will, wishin' it was more for your sake, Sir”—and he handed a sixpence through the bars.

“The curse of Cromwell on you, for a poor beggarly rogue! I thought as much. You have no money thrashed”—putting it up deliberately.

“Musha, I brought no more wid me.”

“Nor left none at home, I'm thinkin'”—and Matthew turned off towards the interior of the prison.

“Oh, the Lord protect you, an' won't you let me in afther all?”

“Is it for that?—no, no; I've let you take a peep for your sixpence. But two thirteens for a turn in; that's the rule.”

“Murther, murder, if I had a bit of a sledge!” cried Andy, dancing with madness, and making several ringing blows at the bars with his alpeen.

“Sodger!”—said Matthew, returning, and speaking to a sentinel outside—“Sodger, turn this thief's breed from the place he ought to be put in.”

"Sodger, ma-chree," in his turn exclaimed Andy to the grenadier, who quickly pressed him back with the butt of his musket—"you'll be pitiful to me, an' ax 'em to let me see my poor Pierce Shea!"

"No concern of mine—stand back."

"He'll never die asy widout just saying God be wid you, Andy."

"Back, man—can't tell, I'm sure—back."

"Considher, sodger, a-hudg. You might be in his case yet."

"Damme, fall back."

"An' how would you look if they kept your own poor foster-brother from you?"

"No more talk, or"—presenting his bayonet—

"Musha, thrust away. Little myself cares I was kilt dead this moment."

And Andy scarce stirred, until the sentinel, again reverting his piece, shoved him off his post with sufficient force to send him staggering among the crowd his cries had attracted in the street before the prison.

"He'll never get a word o' me;—He'll die widout partin' from me! an' I'll never know pace again, 'till the sod covers myself!" It was now past nine o'clock.

"Andy Houlohan!"—whispered a sharp voice in his ear.

Andy turned to the speaker. It was Paddy Loughnan: but Andy did not recognise him.

"There's pity on my heart for you," Paddy continued.

"Musha, good loock to you. It's little of it is to be found here."

"What 'ud you do for a body, supposin' he got you inside the dour o' the cage?"

"I'd lay my life down for him the next moment."

"That 'ud be no great bargain; little I'd get for it. Bud I ax no sich thing; just keep your eye on me, an' come when I call you."

He moved to some distance, and Andy saw him lay hold of a helpless little cripple, who, seated in a small car, had just been drawn by a more active mendicant before the prison gates.

"Och, Lord save us! what 'ud you want wid a poor lame crature?" asked the cripple.

"None o' your devil's tricks, now," replied Loughnan. "You made a fool o' me once on a time, an' that's more than the law allows. So, come your ways. By good loock we're nigh hand to a lodgin' for you."

"I'm a crippled body, that does harm to no one. Don't you harm me, if you're a Christhen."

"By the vartue o' the oath I tuck on the green cloth, you can tell as big a lie as if you war the size o' the house. Come in here."

"Help, help, good Christhens, for a poor cripple!" cried the little fellow in the car.

"That's Loughnan, the bum-bailiff," said a young man in the crowd.

"Touch his head to the paving-stones," said another.

"Clean the kennel with the thievin' bum," said a third.

"Loughnan, take your hands from the cripple," exclaimed several.

"What call have you to him?" asked a stout-built shoemaker, who, with his hands under his well-waxed leather apron, now advanced.

"Ax that o' one that 'ill tell you," answered Paddy; "an' take away your big fists there, from my prisoner."

"Divil a take, to plase you."

"Neighbours, don't let a poor crature, widout power to help himself, be ill-used for nothing at all," still appealed the cripple.

"Let him go!" resumed the commiserating Crispin.

"Bother!" replied Loughnan, dragging the object from his car.

"Where's your warrant?" demanded the shoemaker, with a face of knowledge and importance.

"Musha," laughed the bailiff, "what a way you're in, to know! An' 'tisn't the way you're in, but the figure you cut. Come along *a-bouchal*."

"Let him go this moment,"—the champion stept up fiercely.

"Right, Joe!"—and—"that's the way to serve him!"—and—"smash the bum!"—cried his seconders.

"God bless you, honest good gentlemen!" prayed the subject of dispute.

"I'll tell yez what," roared Loughnan; "he's a fair caption. There's lawful money ready for the job; an' I'll sware a sazure agin every ugly mother's son o' you."

"Curse your law," resumed Crispin; "do you think we'll take it from you? Show your warrant, an' then no harm done. If not, let God's cripple alone." And there was a general shout, as prefatory indication of putting into force their resolve to rescue the cripple. Loughnan tugged at his prisoner, and received many smart blows on his hat from behind, some of which sunk it over

his eyes. He shoved it up, looked round, and could see none but demure faces, but was again similarly assailed; turned again, and again could see only countenances of fixed gravity. It was evident that fun, as much as compassion, was the motive to a row. He now became assured he could not carry his point by himself.

"Where are you at all, Andy Houlohan!" he cried.

"Here I am," answered Andy, jumping thro' the ring, alpeen in hand.

"Tell the devil's-limbs who this is," Loughnan continued, snatching off the hat and blanket of the supposed cripple.

"Oh, Dieu-na-glorive!" shouted Andy as he jumped back in horror—" 'tis Crohoore-na-bilhoge!"

"An' what did he do, Andy?"

"Och! the Lord keep us from all harm!—sure didn't he murder Tony Doolin' an' his wife in the middle o' their sins!"

"Oh, ho!" said the shoemaker, wagging his head knowingly, and replacing his hands under his apron, "that's a horse of another colour. We all heard of that bloody business, and of a certainty, just such a kind o' creature they say done it."

"Ram him in! ram him in!" was now the general cry.

"Andy," said Loughnan, "ketch your own houl't o' the cullaun, an' you'll get snug into the crib for your trouble, where there's some, this moment, just as mad to get out."

We omitted to say that the sturdy beggar who drew Crohoore to the front of the jail had disappeared into the crowd at the beginning of the scuffle. Crohoore now seemed to invoke him, or some other individual.

"Sheemun! Sheemun!" he exclaimed, starting on his legs, and clapping his hands, while his face was stern rather than agitated—"Run for me, now, or I'm lost! You know the road they took—run, run!"

"I'll do my best, plase God!" answered a voice in the crowd. No one could tell the other who had uttered the words.

"He's spakin' to the Divil," remarked Paddy Loughnan. "They're just like two brothers, together. But let me once get him inside, an' the ould bouchal may have him afterwards, if he doesn't repent of his bargain." So saying, he dragged Crohoore to the prison-door; Andy, who, but for the reward held out, would not have laid a finger on him, cautiously assisting.

"Here," said Paddy, as the jailor appeared, "just let this *bouchaleen* into the rat-thrap."

“On what account?” asked the gruff Matthew.

“Did you never hear tell o’ one Crohoore-na-bilhoge?”

“Whoo! he’s heartily welcome; an’ his nate dry lodgin’ ready this many a day.” The door opened to Paddy, Andy, and the at-last captured Crohoore. “Lug him along, lug him along,” barked out Matthew, as he waddled before.

They had, for some distance, to walk through a low-arched passage, until they arrived at a trap-door, which, by means of a step-ladder, gave descent to the lower regions: and before they arrived at this point, Paddy Loughnan spoke half to himself, half to Andy Houlohan:

“Well; he’s no witch afther all. I ought to be tied to a cow’s tail, and sthreeded to death. Arrah, what a purty hand I made of it in the ould cave o’ Dunmore! I was ashamed to bid the good-morrow to myself even the next mornin’. To go for to run away, as if it war the livin’ Duoul that crossed me; an’ it was only when I got home on my sort of an ould horse that I consithered an’ thought o’ the thing. Why, bad end to you, Paddy Loughnan, says I, ’twas only Crohoore that made them noises, an’ gave you them blows that you couldn’t see, an’ said them dismal things to bother you. An’ ’twas his two eyes, an’ nobody’s else, that looked at you out o’ the ground, when you roared to Pierce Shea that you saw the horrid Divil, an’ frightened him, too, an’ tumbled him down by the little river. An’, Paddy Loughnan, you’re not worth a thrawneen, to let sich a little sheeog of a thing make an ownshuck o’ you. Then I swore a big oath I’d never rest asy ’till I had a hould o’ the lad; an’ sure now I’ll sleep in a quiet conscience. Aye, faith; an some good money undher my head to snore on.”

They gained the trap-door. Crohoore was heavily ironed and handcuffed at its edge, and then shoved down to his straw and his reflections.

Soon after, Andy was able to reach the cell where old Ned Shea had previously arrived, to take a last farewell of his son.

The young spirit springs lightly from the pressure of affliction. But when the frost of many winters have stiffened the fibres of the heart, and that the pulse within is but a puny throb, the blow of calamity shatters as it falls on them, and the beatings of hope are not heard triumphing in the silence of that wreck. When the old man entered his child’s cell, the poor criminal could scarce recognise his father. Little more than a short day had elapsed since the still healthy rose of youth blushed on the cheek.



that was now white and livid: the eye that, secure in happiness, used to sparkle with almost boyhood's fire, was beamless and hollow. He appeared at the low door, as doomed and judged a being as the prisoner he came to visit; one for whom there was no longer a hope or purpose on earth; one from whom the world and life had passed away; who was indebted to the one but for the light it lent, and which he loved not, and to the other for a puff of breath, to which he was indifferent.

After Pierce, springing from the bedside, on which he sat with his confessor, had clasped his Father in his arms, and both had remained long in the wordless agony of their meeting, they parted a moment to gaze on each other. Then the Father reeled and staggered: as the Son strove again to support him, he, too, felt the tremors and weakness of anguish and despair, and tottered under his sad burden.

"Put me somewhere to sit down, Pierce," said old Ned Shea. "Neither of us can stand."

The clergyman assisted them to the side of the wretched bed, the only sitting-place in the cell. There Pierce still held his father in his arms.

"Oh, Pierce," he continued, gasping and choking, "I am struck down; the old heart is as weak as it will be desolate. I am come to speak to you for the last time in this world; to kiss your cheek for the last time; to feel your arms around me for the last time."

"I cannot speak to *you*, Father:" answered Pierce.

"Pierce, Pierce, don't turn the face from me. Soon shall I see it no more—the face of my only child. Try an' speak, - vich; try an' speak; for your voice, too, 'ill soon be gone from my ear. An' sit closer, and let me hold you; for the cold clay will soon hide you from your Father."

"You are greatly changed, Father," said Pierce, endeavouring to say something.

"Oh! I thank my God for that!" replied the old man, in a loud shrill voice—"tis a good sign, Pierce—a good sign!"

Pierce shuddered in his soul.

"Father, for the love of God, be comforted."

"Comfort! Comfort! There is none for me, boy. And I want none—none when you are gone! All my comfort will then be with you in the grave: there I'll look for it."

"Father, father, you break my heart, and make my death too bitter."

"Well, I never wished to do that; I'd wish your sufferin' an easy one, Pierce. But oh, Father of all, look down on us this day! Come, à-vich, come to me—this is the only time I can lay hand on you."

"Oh, have pity on me, Father."

"But no; I spoke wrong. Once again I will lay my hand on you. But then," he added—in a voice of the blackest despair—"then, Pierce, you will be a strangled corpse."

"Ned Shea, compose yourself," interrupted the clergyman. "Your good son will then be with the Great Father you have invoked, in Heaven."

"Thaih! thaih!\* you are not an ould man like myself, and you have no boy like mine"—and he pushed back the curling and clustering hair from his son's forehead, and with a quick glance ran over his features—"You have no boy like mine, the joy and pride of your heart, to be taken from you—and taken for ever."

"Yet can I feel for your lot," the priest returned; "do you feel for his and mine. He has but a short time, dear friend, to prepare for a long account; and I have to assist him in his duty. Let us kneel and pray together."

"Yes; let us pray together," repeated old Shea. But, as they moved, he again caught his son in his embrace:

"Pierce, Pierce," he said "the—the poor mother could not come to see you!"

This took Pierce unprepared, and went like a knife through his heart. He shrieked in agony, and cast himself on his rustling straw.

The clergyman again gently exhorted to prayer. After some time all were about to kneel, when a bustle in the passage attracted their notice, and Andy Houlohan rushed by the underturnkey, who appeared at the open door of the cell.

"My poor fellow, have you come to see me?" said Pierce, holding out his hand, as Andy, now stationary in grief and horror, stared upon the group.

"Yes, à-vich—just—just to say—God be wid you," stammered the faithful creature.

"We were going to pray," resumed Pierce; "come over, my dear Andy, and join us—Father, when I am gone, you will be kind to this poor lad, for he was kind to me."

A feeble moan came in answer from the father.

\* Father—as the Irish call their priests.

"I'm thankful to you, Pierce, a-cuishla-machree," continued Andy, still standing: "but there's no need—no need. I'm not goin' to stay in this part o' the counthry."

"God bless you, wherever you go, my poor Andy," said Pierce, pressing his hand.

"Don't spake in that manner—don't Pierce, or my throat 'll burst!" He put his hand to his neck; his face became red, swollen, and distorted; and a catching and wheezing of the breath arose, gradually louder, until it gained a terrible gush of rough sorrow. "I'm lookin' at you," he resumed, "never to look agin. We war childer, together; we war gorçoons, together. I thought we'd be ould together. But now you lave me behind you. I'll put the sod on your early grave."

"This must not be," again interrupted the priest; "my penitent must be left alone with me." Just then the entrance of the jailor served to assist him in putting his wishes into effect.

"The curse o' Scotland on you," said this man, turning to Andy, "what brought you here, or how did you come here?" He had not recognised, in the person that helped to bring in Crohoore, the same he had ordered from the gate—"Be off, you jail-bird; or maybe you'd get the length o' your tether, afther all."

Andy flew to Pierce's arms. The jailor tore him away. He continued to look on his foster-brother, as he continued to go backwards, till the cell-door was dashed in his face. The clergyman then silently led the Father and Son to a last embrace. It was wordless, as the first they had exchanged at their meeting. After a long pause, in obedience to a whisper from his ghostly adviser, Pierce sunk on his knees, crying out:

"Father, your blessing! and a forgiveness for the disobedience that brought me to this fate!"

But the moment he undid his arms from his Father, the old man fell, a dead weight, on the echoing floor of the cell. Pierce cried out, for he thought his father was dead. The priest soon ascertained, however, that he had but fainted; and urged Pierce, as soon as the slightest symptoms of recovery appeared, to consent, before old Shea could again become aware of his situation, to a parting. It would be kind and merciful, he said, and easiest for both. The criminal at last yielded; and when, over and over, he had embraced his insensible parent, the old man was, *still* in a state of unconsciousness, conveyed out of the prison.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE lark,

“ His feathers saturate with dew,”

was mounting to salute the risen sun with the first song of spring, when Mr. Barry, to whom we have before introduced the reader, was far on his way from Dublin to Kilkenny. At an inn, about ten miles from the last-named city, where he had stopped to change horses, while his servant Pat was busy seeing that everything about the carriage was “nate and purty,” and occasionally inspecting the operations of the village smith, who exerted his skill to set to rights one of the wheels that had somewhat suffered in the rapid journey, Mr. Barry, referring to his watch, found, in considerable alarm, it was an hour later than he supposed it could be. He wondered how the miscalculation could have occurred. It was, in fact, now half-past ten o'clock, and, even if the despatch of the smith should allow him to start that moment, he scarce expected to complete the ten long Irish miles still before him in less than an hour and a-half. So that it must be noon as he reached Kilkenny; and if any other accident or delay should occur!—If the smith did his work badly—If the wheel failed again—If but a pin—or a brace—or a pivot gave way!—His heart beat high, and the blood tingled through his frame at the thought.

He rushed from the inn-door to question the smith. The man was pausing for the return from his smithy, at some distance, of a gorgoon he had despatched thither, to fetch a something or other, Mr. Barry did not care to listen what. He stamped, and called for a hackney coach. There was not one at home. For a horse!—a horse was led to him on three legs, for the wretched animal only touched the very point of the fourth to the ground. “Good God!” Mr. Barry cried: “what is to be done? at such an hour!” And now came the only comfort the smith, innkeeper, hostler, waiter, and chambermaid, could afford him; his honour’s watch was too fast, they said; much too fast, they assured him. “Them Dublin clocks and watches of ten set people astray;” and

even so, though "the chay" was not just then at home, it was expected every minute, fresh from the road: so, little time would be lost, after all, even supposing his honour's own carriage wasn't done up before that.

Endeavouring to believe and rely on these people, and urging the smith, whose gorçoon now appeared in distant view, Mr. Barry stood silent for some time, until, even in the agitation of the moment, he was interested by a new circumstance. At a part of the road-side, a little way down from the inn, there was the termination of a thick grove of firs. Through it suddenly broke the figure of an old man, tall, straight, and hale, and though his garments were wretched, of striking character. But what most attracted Mr. Barry was his action the moment he appeared. The old fellow stood on the edge of the fence, and, with hat in hand, and his long white hair shaken by the breeze about his face, raised himself to his full height, as he strained his eyes along the road in the direction of Kilkenny. Intense anxiety was in his look. In a moment he bent down a little, raised his hand over his eyes, as if to make sure, by a second critical glance, of the approach of some person he had wished to see. Then, apparently assured, he clapped his hands, in self-gratulation, jumped with the vigour of youth on the road, and using his long two-handed stick, that had a great knob at the end of it, slowly approached the group near the inn-door, and leaned against a house immediately opposite; his eyes drooped, and his air now seemingly indifferent.

In a few minutes a strange-looking figure made his appearance, mounted on a still stranger animal. It would be difficult to penetrate his mind through the expression of his countenance: whether it betokened folly or knavery, or such a mixture of both as we sometimes meet with, was a question. He wore a hat, bruised and battered, open at the top, that is, without a crown; leaving to the visitation of whatever weather happened to blow, the pate it served but to adorn. This relic of a chapeau was stuck at one side of his head, almost as if it had hung against a wall, giving a finish to the idiot impudence of his look. If his face puzzled a physiognomist, the most expert Moses in Monmouth Street would feel at a loss to determine the texture or material of his attire, so besmeared was it with grease and filth, and showing such a sovereign disregard of button and button-hole, that a pin, a skewer, or any other random means of fastening, was the only agency to keep its parts together. Then his

shirt (any colour, excepting white, the reader pleases) was open at the throat; his shred of a vest, and the knees of his *culottes* swung wide; his pieces of blue stockings were bundled round his ankles, leaving his shins, marbled with the fire, bare. And his old brogues—(or if not old, like a rake's, prematurely so)—would have fallen from his feet, but that they were secured by cords. This was the sole symptom of providence about him. In his mouth he held a short pipe, black from constant use; the shank of sufficient length to allow the barrel to project immediately under his nose; so that by the same instrument he gratified two of his senses; for, when he had enough satisfied his palate with the vapour he drew in, he sent it forth again to ascend his nostrils, as kitchen smoke ascends a funnel.

He bestrode a rib-marked, lob-eared horse, of which the trappings were in character with those of their owner, and the miserable beast they—we cannot say, furnished. They consisted of a rusty bridle, knotted in many places; a “suggaun,” or hay-rope, looped at either side, through which, by way of stirrups, the knight thrust his feet; while he sat on a large wallet, equally laden at both ends, that in a degree served charitably to hide the ribs of the poor horse over which they hung.

The inn-door at which Mr. Barry's carriage stood was at the side of the road, and the way was nearly blocked up by it and the four horses that stood unharnessed, and the other four, “putting to.” Nevertheless, the newcomer might easily have passed if he wished; but this did not seem to suit his humour.

“Do yez hear, ye scullions. Move a one side wid yourselves, an' let a body pass,” he cried out, stopping a few yards from them.

They took no notice of his command, and he personally addressed the hostler, who was now leading off the jaded horses.

“Come, my cullaun. Lug dat umperin'-box out o' my road;” meaning the carriage, and speaking in the town slang to be heard in Dublin and Kilkenny.

On such an occasion, Ned hostler might have been a little hoity-toity, and nothing more, with his superior. But, not relishing this language from the kind of person that now addressed him, he looked fiercely over his shoulder, and threatened to roll horse, rider, and wallet, in the kennel.

“Musha, never mind him,” interrupted the old man we have before spoken of, looking up for the first time. “That's Tim Lyndop, the butcher, from Kilkenny; a half naatur'l.”

"De Devil take de liars between you an' me, Sheemun Croonawnee," was the courteous reply. "An' what brings you here?"

"As I hope for glory, then, it was yourself I wanted to see—wid another by your side, I mane. I have a message from his father: where is he?"

"Ax *him* dat takes care of him; how do I know?"

"Why, ye war in the sthreets o' Kilkenny, this mornin', arly; an' he was to take the road wid you."

"He turned back, den, to see de hornpipe in de air, at one o'clock to-day," answered the traveller.

"O-ho!" observed Sheemun, and quickly resumed his station at the road side, from which he had advanced to converse with his friend.

Mr. Barry overheard the whole of this dialogue, and felt much interested with the speakers, particularly with him who had last arrived. As his carriage was at last almost ready, and his mind more at rest, he hazarded a question:

"And pray, what have you got in the sack, my good fellow?"

"It's a token you don't know, or you wouldn't inquire," replied the impudent dog, not a whit influenced by the evident rank and gentlemanly address of the speaker.

"Why, plase your honour," said Sheemun, "its a thousand to one bud he has some honest poor man's bacon in id."

"What a guess you make, Croonawnee. Why, then, for all your knowledge, of ould, you know just as much about it as a cow does of a holiday, or a pig of a bad shillin'. An', Croonawnee, you had better be quiet; for, by my sowl, an' dat's an oath, maybe you oftener helped to shove in a poor man's door, wid de head o' your walkin'-stick—aye, an' a rich one's too—oftener dan he would let you for the axin'."

He was moving on, and approaching Sheemun as he made an end of speaking. Whether he had touched his friend in the sore point, whether, for his downright detestation of malpractices, Sheemun felt indignant at such an attack on his honesty, or that some other motive weighed against the traveller, which at present we cannot elucidate; certain it is, that the mendicant, having started a moment aside, and whispered Mr. Barry—"I had no message for him or his comrade, but I was on the look-out for 'em both—mind this, now!"—Having, we say, directed these words to Mr. Barry, Sheemun suddenly raised in both hands *his long staff*, and planting, under the left ear of Tim, that very knob or head, so uncautiously spoken of, down came the unlucky

satirist; and down came, with him, the wallet that had served as a saddle, and was the cause of the incident.

The assaulted person had, indeed, seen his coming danger, and endeavoured to escape it. With the heels of his brogues he thumped against the ribs of his steed: but while the hollow sound thereby produced clearly denoted it was no pampered beast, and therefore should have been no restive one; and while intimation was further given that the state of his stomach agreed with the marks of piety on his knees, with the single difference only, that it knelt of its own accord, but fasted perforce; while all this became evident, still the old adage, "a friend in need is a friend indeed," was also illustrated. A look convinced the most casual observer that neither its rider, nor any one for him, had ever been cordial to the poor animal; had ever excited its gratitude by treating it well. Now, therefore, it left its proprietor in the lurch. The only acknowledgment of the buffeting on its sides shown by the creature, was to shake its head slowly to and fro. It would have kicked up its heels, had it been able; but this, and a stock-still stand, as if it had reflected and reasoned on the matter, and calculated that the descent of Sheemun's staff would free it of its old tyrant, were its sole proceedings. And, when the butcher and his wallet plumped on the road, it only wagged gently the bare stump of its tail, in token of satisfaction, turning, philosopher like, and resolved to make the most of the opportunity, to pick a morsel of fresh grass from the neighbouring fence.

Meantime, while the noise of the butcher's fall seemed to create around only unmixed indifference, if not satisfaction, the noise of the sack caused a stronger feeling. As it struck heavily upon the hard road, there was a clashing, gingling sound, very like what might happen had it been filled with large pieces of silver. This roused the suspicions of all who heard it, and of Mr. Barry in particular.

In an early part of the story, we have said that daring robberies had of late been very frequent in the neighbourhood of Kilkenny, with which it was supposed Crohoore-na-bilhoge was secretly connected. A few nights before the transaction here detailed, an outrage of the kind was perpetrated in the house of the father of the young lady, from whom Mr. Barry had received the letter in Dublin; and Crohoore, as it had often before happened, on similar occasions, was seen near the spot. A considerable quantity of plate had been rifled from Mr. Lovett's house. Mr. Barry, of course, knew the facts; and it now struck



his quick mind that the butcher's sack, and the butcher's self, might help to throw light on the subject.

He, therefore, instantly gave orders that the prostrate hero should be secured, and that he and his wallet should be conveyed into the inn, for the purpose of undergoing an examination. The man would answer no question directly, or seriously; but the sack being opened, was found literally to contain a heap of silver plate—part broken up, and part yet perfect. A tankard, which Mr. Barry took in his hand, still bore, undefaced, the crest and cypher of his friends. Further investigation enabled him to discover the same marks on many of the broken pieces; and, on other articles, different crests, that belonged to different families, who had also been plundered by the yet unknown gang. He was still engaged in the examination, when the fellow, in whose possession these articles had been found, and whom, having, in the first instance, refused to answer any questions, Mr. Barry sent out of the room, again, by his own motion, appeared before him.

Not entirely recovered from the effects of Sheemun's staff, his former foul attire, rendered more foul by the puddle of the road, he appeared a very disagreeable object. Barry was struck, too, by the altered expression of the wretch's face. When he had first seen it, saucy idiotism seemed its prevailing character; and a cast of silliness, derived from the, perhaps intentional, dropping of the lower jaw, still attached to it. But there was also a newly-come scowl and gloom of dogged ferocity; and Mr. Barry thought that murder glared from the large, dull, grey eye, overshadowed by thick eyebrows, heavily drawn together, and forming a black, rigid line across the forehead.

Mr. Barry placed him before the strong light of the window, and looked long into those eyes; but the disgusting stare of the other never wincd.

"How did you come by this stolen property?" he demanded in his sternest tone.

"Tunder-an'-ouns! what news you want," was the only answer.

"You should be aware, my good fellow, that your life is, this moment, in the hands of the law. I am a magistrate in the county of Kilkenny. You should also know that your sole chance of mercy depends on a full and prompt confession. For your *life's sake*, then, do not dare to trifle with me. Where did you get it, and from whom, the plate that now lies before me?"

“Och-own!” prefaced by a smack of the tongue against the palate. “An’ so, all you want to know is fere I got it?”

“For the present, no more.”

“Did you ever hear tell of how the Divil got de friar?—by cripes, he got him just fere he was. That’s your answer, a-bouchal, an’ make much of it.”

Mr. Barry declined, for two reasons, any further communication with a creature so loathsome; first, because he had not patience to continue his interrogatories; next, because his carriage was now announced as quite ready, and a more pressing duty hurried him away. Nor must the reader suppose that, even for an investigation of such moment, any time beyond that which the smith’s preparations rendered unavoidable was spent in the inn. In fact, though our description has been necessarily long, scarcely more than ten minutes elapsed from the arrival of the old Bocchoch, to the termination of the young gentleman’s inquiries of the butcher. Now, rapidly replacing with his own hands the pile of plate in the wallet, he put it into his carriage, flung himself after it, ordered his servant to follow in the chaise that had just arrived, with the suspected person in custody, and giving directions for fiery driving to his own postillion, started off for Kilkenny. We should not forget to say, that on his quick passage from the inn to his carriage-door, he looked round in vain, and inquired in vain for the old man, whose strange whisper, before he wielded his staff, now occurred to Mr. Barry’s mind, as something very necessary to have explained. Disappointed, however, in seeing him near, he could, in his urgent despatch, only leave additional commands with his servant to look after this person, and, if possible, convey him also to Kilkenny.

Pat gaped, thunderstricken, at the order to sit down in the same vehicle with the greasy and otherwise soiled butcher.

“Plase your honour,” said he, just as his master drove away, “wouldn’t it be well done to make the hostler rub him down a bit?—he’s so mortal dirty!”

“Pat,” answered his master, “your joking, as I have frequently told you, is often ill-timed. Obey my commands carefully; look to your pistols; and see that you have this man forthcoming, within two hours, in Kilkenny.”

“Upon my conscience,” resumed Pat, as the carriage dashed off, “it’s a mighty purty joke, sure enough. Faith he might just as well say to me, Pat, put a hape o’ manure in the chay, an’ take good care of it. It hates all I every hard of.”

"Ullaloo, Pat," here interrupted his charge, as two men approached to place him, bound, in the chaise; "yez are goin' to put me fere I never tought I'd see myself. Well, by de hokey, de butcher boys o' Kilkenny 'll have fun for a week, fen dey sees myself peepin' out at 'em from a grand pò-chay windee. I say, Masther Pat, you scullion, you, come wait on me."

"Get out, you nasty baste," answered Pat.

"Get in, you mane. An' here I goes; an' fait, a-graw-bawn, I'm the boy dat never liked to be tumpin' through the gutter, upon a long road, fen 'tis so very asy to get an umperin' all de way home for notin'."

"Move over to the far corner," said Pat, as he ascended the steps of the chaise, to place himself by his scurvy companion.

"None o' your gab, you lick-plate. How daare you spake to your betthers?" said the other; and the tone, only, of Pat's indignant rejoinder was heard, as the chaise drove rapidly away in the track of Mr. Barry's carriage. But when, some three miles on the road, the postillion pulled up a moment, to take his "offer" of strong liquor, and *en passant* peered into the windows of the vehicle, the appearance of the servant, nearly as soiled as his fellow-traveller, with a swelled lip, that must have come from the knee or head of the other, and that other's battered eye and blood-besprinkled visage, plainly told they had not agreed so well as might have been expected from the coolness of the butcher or from Pat's genuine good-humour.

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## CHAPTER XX.

THE hour for Pierce Shea's execution on the gallows, or rather for his progress to it, sounded from the town-clock of Kilkenny. All was ready for the terrible procession from the prison-door to the gallows-green, at the extremity of the city, where he was to suffer. The guard of horse and foot, and the hushed multitude without, awaited the appearance of the doomed man. In a few minutes, a universal murmur of commiseration, with audible prayers for mercy on his soul, and happiness in the life to come, announced his entrance into the street.

He came forward, clad in a jacket of white linen, leather small-clothes, fitting tight to his limbs, white stockings, and

shoes with buckles. His head was bare; and his long locks, the rich waves combed back, hung in curls around his face and shoulders. At the instant of his appearance, the young man's face was flushed, even beyond its natural ruddy hue, to a scarlet blaze, the evidence of the burning fever of mingled emotions that reigned within him—of human shrinking from his horrible fate, spite of manly effort and religious zeal to endure it bravely. The moment his eye met the gazing crowd, it fell, and his cheeks rapidly became livid as death. This change was not, however, the effect of moral cowardice. He was soon able to man himself again, and to take a second and composed survey of the thousands of living creatures that stared so strangely and so fearfully upon him. His countenance then assumed an expression in unison with the prepared and resigned state of his previous thoughts; and which, together with his handsome, manly form, drew down unqualified pity and compassion. All was once more prepared. The soldiers closed around him and the priest; his arms were pinioned. The left, however, he passed through that of his reverend companion; his right hand held a prayer-book; and the cavalcade moved on.

The sheriff, with his white wand, attended by the still gruff jailor, immediately preceded him. A car, holding Pierce's coffin and his executioner, the last agent of the law—disguised from popular recognition by a large outside coat, a slouched hat, and a black mask—closely following.

As they very slowly moved along the streets of the city, the shops, to prevent accidents from the crushing crowd, were closed:—this arrangement gave an idea of mute sympathy with the mournful exhibition. It was a fine day, and the sun shone brightly; yet none of the influence of a fine day was felt. Somehow, the sunlight seemed to fall with a strange and unusual glare, making no one and nothing cheerful. The windows of the houses were partially occupied by those among the inhabitants whose nerves or curiosity were strongest:—now and then a female might be observed, hazarding a hasty glance at the poor young culprit, and instantly retreating to the interior of the room, struck with awe or horror, or overpowered by more tender emotions.

We were young and giddy on that memorable day, and pushed with childish eagerness to behold so novel a sight:—we remember to this hour the impression made upon our minds by the face and manner of the unfortunate man. The character of both was

unearthly and startling :—he seemed a creature of a different kind from the living among whom he walked :—the grave had already stamped him with its brand. His eye kept no recognition for the beings or things around him ; it strayed not, here and there, as man's eyes will stray, to seek notice, or help, or gratification, or assurance, from the bright varieties of animate and inanimate creation. Though he stepped with a firm and courageous step, that action seemed the result of a previous command of the will, still unconsciously obeyed by the muscles of his body, rather than a continuous exercise of mental and animal function. His parched lips moved rapidly in prayer ; so rapidly, that one might have thought he feared to miss, in making his great preparation, a second of his measured time. When, occasionally, he knelt with his priest at different turns of the streets, it was terrible to see the upturning of his eyes, that rolled and strained to heaven in supplication, or else seemed to turn shudderingly inward upon himself, until nothing of them appeared but the dull blank white, without life or meaning.

The procession gained the last turning of the last suburb street it had to traverse. The high gallows-tree was straight before the culprit. At first sight of it he stepped back a little, and pressed tight the arm of his priest. A few words of kind and sublime encouragement from the zealous clergyman gave him new nerve : now he walked on quicker than ever. At this moment some stir and noise in the crowd behind diverted general attention from the chief object. The bustle increased ; the crowd fell back. A carriage drove furiously up in a cross direction ; and a voice was heard crying out, in accents hoarse with earnestness and emotion :—“Mr. Sheriff ! Mr. Sheriff !”

A hum of eager conjecture, and of hope, they knew not why or wherefore, ran through the crowd. Poor Pierce himself started from the trance that had fallen on him, and listened to those sudden words with a hysteric catching of breath that betokened only a half consciousness of their having sounded on his dulled ear, with an effort, like that of a doating old man, to connect some past recollections and present knowledge with the accents of a well-known but long-forgotten voice.

The sheriff instantly hastened to where the carriage had drawn up, and was seen to listen to some rapid communication addressed to him by a person within. In less than a minute the conference was over. The sheriff bowed profoundly at the carriage window, and the carriage again drove away towards the main street of the

town. It was followed by a post-chaise, from which Tim Lyndop the butcher nodded smilingly on his many acquaintances among the crowd, to their utter astonishment, and, for the sake of human nature, we blush to record, to their merriment too. Even amid the horrors of such a scene, our fellow-creatures can be merry.

The greater part of the multitude were, however, too remote to be influenced by the shameful occurrence. As the sheriff returned, they only whispered, and conjectured, and still hoped something or other. But he gravely took his place at the back of the culprit, and gravely motioned to proceed to the fatal spot. All again moved on, more melancholy than ever; Pierce seeming to have lost power or will to follow up anything distinct from his situation, or which was not at once made clear to him; and the crowd concluding that the communication with the chief officer could have had no concern with him.

The culprit and his priest stood under the gallows. Pierce saw the guard of horse and foot close darkly and sternly around him: he felt that they came, like the shadow of death, between him and existence. Still he stood bravely, as a Christian man, looking from this world into the glory of the next, and therefore able to think more of what he hoped to gain, than what he was about to lose. The clergyman, a young man like himself, held his hands, and, with tears of mingled grief and zeal running down his cheeks, continued to speak the last grand words of comfort and promise. Then he kissed the sufferer's lips, and intimated to the sheriff that his penitent was ready for his fate. But scarcely had he spoken, when a piercing scream was heard without, and a young woman, darting like lightning through the throng and the guards, broke into the inward space, and clasped Pierce in her arms. He heaving off the pressure of the grave, in which his thoughts already were interred, gazed at Alley Dooling.

Her cap had been rent from her head in the wild struggle; her mantle, too, she had left in the hands of the resisting guards. Her bosom's covering was partially displaced; her shining golden hair fell luxuriantly down, as if anxious to supply its absence; and, alas! from her fair temples a ghastly stream of blood—the effect of a blow given her by one of the soldiers, more cruel than the rest, ran over her ashy cheek and beautiful neck.

Her lover had but one sentiment for Alley, as he now stood encircled by her arms. He looked at her with love alone. All

her late conduct was forgotten. He could not return her embrace, because his arms were pinioned with the felon cord; but his head sank on her shoulder, and he wept the only tears that had that day escaped him.

She, too, acted and spoke as if her love for him had never been excelled by woman's love for man, and as if she never had let it cool or slumber in her bosom. She was, indeed, distracted with the agony of that hour: her words were those of a lunatic. Addressing the guards around, she told them they could not, dare not part her from her lover: *she* would not part him from her arms; he was her own Pierce, and she was his own poor Alley Dooling. Then, turning and smiling in his face, she asked him to confirm what she had said, and to declare he would come with her, and not stay near them.

Pierce pronounced her name, and she started and looked at him, and watched his lips, as if to listen to her own sentence of life and death. One advanced to part them. Her quick eye caught the person's motion, and, again screaming wildly, she clasped him closer, and hid her face in his bosom. But her terrors were vain; for, at a signal from the sheriff, the soldier withdrew to his ranks.

"God bless you, Sir," said Pierce, addressing the humane officer:—"I ask but a moment's indulgence. Our young hearts loved each other; and, although this is the last parting, it shall not be a long one. I did not wish it; but, now that it is come upon me, I thank you for your kind permission to go through it as I can. Alley, my darling Alley," he continued, "I cannot take you in my arms: the cords will not let me. Clasp me close, then; kiss me; and let me die like a Christian."

He bent his head; their cheeks only touched; for Alley could attend but to one word of his address. That word—"die!—die!"—she repeated in shrieks that rose to the heavens. All the while the sheriff had appeared as if watching some sound or the approach of some one from a distance, more attentively than the scene of which he might have been so close a witness. At this moment, as Alley's terrible shriek was interrupted by a very faint and distant shout, he was seen to strike his rod smartly against the ground, and clasp his hands joyfully. All heads instantly turned in the direction from which the shouts came. Pierce and his mistress stood silent and motionless.

The cry was repeated, and repeated; nearer, and nearer. Now it seemed one unbroken roar of human voices, rather than inter-

mittent shouts. The crowd around started into livelier action, and broke their own dead silence; first whispering quickly; then muttering; then talking loudly, in question or assent. Until at last, as the foremost of the running throng came near enough to convey their ecstatic word to the outskirts of those who surrounded the gallows, the people present burst into one mighty answering cheer. "A reprieve! a reprieve!"—they exclaimed to a man, jumping here and there as they spoke, and throwing up their hats and caps; yet only showing, in the whole of their mad joy, at the saving of one fellow-creature's life, how dear, beyond words or utterance, is the love of life in the human bosom.

The tumult rose higher, as the noise of carriage wheels was again heard approaching the gallows-green, and as all caught the sight of a white handkerchief waving high in the air, at the top of a long rod.

"Make way! make way!"—cried the sheriff. "Soldiers, fall back, and make way!"—

"Make way!—way, way!"—echoed every voice. The soldiers themselves shared the gladness and zeal of the multitude; joining their shouts; but further manifesting an active spirit, somewhat to the annoyance of their civil brethren, as with the butts of their muskets, and the flat of their swords, they carried into effect the orders they had received, more promptly than the motions of a distracted and unreflecting crowd could, with all their eagerness and rapture, anticipate.

At last a clear way was made to the sheriff. In drove the carriage that had before been seen; Pat, seated on the box with his rod and white flag, and Mr. Barry half way out at the window. It stopped; Pat was down in a twinkling, to pull the door open; Mr. Barry jumped out, and handed a paper to the sheriff; and that officer instantly confirmed, by officially repeating it, the magical word the crowd had a thousand times before shouted. With which they once more rent the air, in a final acclaim, that, reinforced by the presence of the second throng, was tremendous.

In the next instant, Mr. Barry was by the side of Pierce Shea, assisting in tearing away the cord that pinioned him, shaking his hands heartily and triumphantly, and speaking rapidly to ears that heeded him not. We have not attempted to describe the workings of Shea's heart during the last few minutes; nor shall we now attempt it. We content ourselves, therefore, with relating the appearance only of Pierce Shea, at this great moment.—He stood without word or gesture: he stared beseechingly around



him; he seemed incredulous to the announcement of preserved life, and a long vista of happy days to come. Death and he had already made acquaintance; they had shaken hands on the very limit of the unknown world, as the youth's back was turned on the reality of this, his eyes withdrawn from its sunshine, and his ears shut against its happy sounds: hope had fled his heart; the last, last hope of life; he had even ceased to think he lived! And now to be told it was a dream! To be told that death had yielded up his victim! To be told of life again, and of days and years of blessed life! To feel the second birth of hope within him! He looked as if he durst not believe it.

Mr. Barry soon saw the inutility of continuing to give any detailed information to his young friend, and for the present attended only to his situation. He gently released Alley from his hands: she had fainted under the first announcement of the joyous news, and Pierce caught her, and held her from falling. Then, causing wine to be brought to the spot, Mr. Barry gave some to the rescued man; made him seat himself; and, by degrees, restored the tone of his thoughts and sensations, until poor Pierce could at length gratefully and rapturously return the salutations of his true friend, and kneel down in thanks to Heaven and to him.

Now, too, he was able to understand the subjects his zealous friend and patron had before vainly endeavoured to explain. Mr. Barry stated that, owing to the suddenness of the account he had received of Pierce's misfortune, the late hour of the night at which it had reached him, and the necessity for instantaneous departure from Dublin to Kilkenny, as scarcely a minute could be spared, he had preferred a first application to the judge by whom Shea had been tried, and who was on the spot, rather than run the hazard of remaining an hour away in negotiation with the viceregal government. The letter he had received in Dublin, together with his personal knowledge of Pierce, enabled him at once to give the judge such information of his character, of the circumstances by which he had been reduced into Whiteboyism, and of his guiltless conduct during the outrage on the proctor, as at once procured the respite of which he was the bearer, and would finally insure a free pardon from the Lord Lieutenant. So that Pierce had now but to endure a few days of confinement, rendered happy by the certainty of coming enfranchisement. Mr. Barry added, that his own mind had suffered exceedingly on the road to Kilkenny, particularly when, after starting from the stage where we last left him, his carriage wheel again failed, and much

precious time was spent in repairing it. In fact, as we have seen, he had nearly come too late. His interview with the sheriff was before his application to the judge, to create time, by praying of that officer, to whom he was well known, a short pause, till he could return from the county court-house, whither he hastened to appeal to the sitting judge on the very bench of justice.

After this explanation, Mr. Barry again shook hands with Pierce, and got into his carriage; acquainting him that he had pressing business of another nature to transact at the instant, with Mr. and Miss Lovett. Which allusion partly bore reference to the detection of the stolen plate, and partly to the general statements the young lady had made in her letter of Shea's Whiteboy connexion.

The carriage drove off amid renewed cheers. The guards once more closed round Pierce, to re-convey him to his temporary imprisonment. Ere he left the spot, he observed an old hag make way through the crowd, and attend on Alley, who had just recovered from her swoon in the arms of some female, to whom Mr. Barry, in his haste, had been obliged to consign her. Shea had never before seen this person; but she looked mean and squalid; and, as he wondered how such a creature could presume to exercise over his mistress the authority and officiousness he now saw her evince, remembrance, bitter remembrance, awoke. Alley's behaviour during their interview in the glen of Ballyfoile came to his mind; and the sad thought, that she was unworthy of his love, checked the exultation of his vivified spirits, and cast a shade even over the daylight to which he had just been so miraculously restored. As he lost sight of the place they occupied, Alley withdrew through the crowd, clinging to the old woman.

But, at this moment, a new occurrence attracted him. An amazing yell, superior to the din of all the other voices that still kept cheering and huzzaing, came up the street, along which the soldiers conducted their prisoner. A hat was cast into the air, three times higher than any other hat, and a bareheaded fellow appeared running at the top of his speed, jumping and capering, and smiting the stones with his tremendous alpeen, and terrifying all that beheld him. He pranced and bellowed like an escaped bedlamite: he pushed aside, or shouldered, or knocked himself against every one he met. The women of the suburb houses, running to the doors as he passed, raised their hands and eyes, and hastily pulled in their children. Some fun-loving boys, who had

at first looked at him in amazement and misgiving, ventured to join their "shilloo" to his, and then set scampering at his heels. They were soon strengthened by others, and all proceeded towards the soldiers; the mad fellow leading the way, and the delighted urchins mimicking, as far as in them lay, his cries and gestures.

They gained the slow-moving body of soldiers, and Pierce recognised his foster-brother. Andy made a headlong jump upon the guards, to reach him; he was at first violently repulsed; but, at a word of explanation from the prisoner, they paused a moment, and admitted him. He plunged on Pierce like a tiger; squeezed him desperately in his gigantic arms; let him go; danced round him, yelled again, and again smote the paving stones at every bound. Then, suddenly darting through the soldiers, he raised his voice louder than ever, and galloped off, in a contrary direction; no one knew whither, why, or wherefore.

But Andy knew very well. He raced, followed by his own admiring crowd, to the gallows-green; made a rush at the wooden paraphernalia there erected. In two jostles it was prostrate; and he leaped and danced on it, while there was a fresh shout for him and his achievement. An old man, leaning on a staff, while he swayed from side to side, not able to support himself, even by its assistance, stood near. Feelings not yet vented had left his face a ghastly blank; he did not weep nor smile. With one side-wind of his alpeen, Andy Awling struck the staff many yards away, and old Ned Shea, deprived of his prop, fell to the earth. There was a horse and car near the old man, just about to be led off: to this Andy next directed his attention. As he too rapidly approached, an individual, in a black mask, protected but by a single soldier, and one who had attentively watched the hero's last movements, jumped from the car, and very wisely ran towards the main body of guards. Andy sent an expressive shout after him, and, instantly bounding on the vehicle, tore from it a coffin, which he flung to the ground, jumped upon, again and again, and soon reduced to splinters.

The work of destruction done, he instantly retraced his steps, still at utmost speed, through the town, until he again came up, on their solemn march, with the guards that surrounded his foster-brother. And here, while he still pounded the paving-stones and mud around them, he splashed the well-whitened small-clothes of the tolerant soldiers—who, by their passiveness, evinced as much good-nature as could be expected from soldiers. *While he flourished the primitive and yet formidable weapon*

over their heads, or gaily shouldered it, and walked, an imitative animal, by their side; and, while he bent down his very back to "screech," or shot upward and downward, like the rod of a steam-engine, Andy occasionally addressed them.

"Whoo!—*chora-ma-chree* war the Sodgers!—Whoo! to the Duoul wid the Skibbeeah!—Long life to the Sassenachs, an' glory for ever!"

And, when they had delivered their charge to the thereby discontented jailor—

"Stay, a bit, my darlins!—*Ma-hurp-on-duoul!* we must have a dhrop together, afore we part!—the best in the town, an' your skins full of it!—Bad end to me, your honour," addressing the officer whom he just then perceived, and whose face, he thought, conveyed a doubt as to the intended treat—"Bad end to me, your honour, but themsefs an' yoursef must have as mooch an' as good as ever ye can suck in!—Lashins an' lavins! whoo!"

It was necessary to put him aside at the point of the bayonet, before they could get rid of his importunity. But Paddy Loughnan and two or three of his cast were lookers-on; and, determining to take advantage of Andy's generous mood, he proposed that his companions and himself should accept what the churlish red-coats refused. In his moment of exuberant rejoicing, Andy Awling made no prejudiced calculations, but pulled them all into the next public-house. The same evening saw the three limbs of the law swearing assault and battery against their entertainer and his alpeen. For he no sooner got tipsy enough to recollect the kind of persons with whom he was associated, than his natural antipathy to all of their tribe returned full upon him, and he took the first favourable opportunity of breaking their pates. Even had the soldiers accepted his invitation, he would, most probably, have treated them just in the same way. For if, from his cradle, a bailiff of any kind was with him synonymous to a thing made and ordained to be pounded whenever and wherever one could meet with it, Andy entertained a like jealousy of red-coats, or Sassenach soldiers; disliking the colour of the king's livery as heartily as the great big turkey-cock at Ned Shea's barn-door. And, as to a plausible reason or motive for such swelling hostility, no doubt the one could assign it as well and as distinctly as the other.

## CHAPTER XXI.

We have detailed the manner in which, a few hours before Pierce Shea was led out for execution, Crohoore fell into the hands of Paddy Loughnan, and under the lock and key, bolt and bar, of Matthew, the grim jailor. It was the very last day of the assizes, and he was almost immediately arraigned and tried on the charge of having murdered his master and mistress, and their poor female servant. All those requisite as witnesses were in Kilkenny, to be present at the execution of Shea, and not a moment's indulgence was thought necessary towards a wretch who stood accused of crimesso monstros. The trial rapidly went on; the chain of evidence was conclusive. The fact of his sharpening the billhook on the night of the murder; the quarrel, and the blow given him by his master, which, operating on a nature so dark and misanthropic, seemed the immediate cause for vengeance that had been long threatened, or at least indirectly alluded to; the marks of the feet on the litter at the stable-door, exactly corresponding with the pair of old brogues found after him; the print of bloody fingers on the hasp, as he went in to steal the horse; and finally the encounter with him on that horse, as he bore away the wretched daughter of his wretched victims. Nothing, exclusive of the testimony of an actual witness of the bloody scene, could be more convincing; and Crohoore-nabilhoge stood convicted, to the satisfaction of a crowded and abhorring court, of a cruel and hideous murder of three human beings. When the verdict was returned, without the jury leaving their box, there even arose a murmur of approbation, louder than the decencies of a court of justice could at any time admit.

He had called no witnesses; he had examined none of those produced against him; he had made no shadow of defence. His face, during the trial, had undergone no change: on the contrary, as the whole terrible detail proceeded, he was observed to stare about him with a careless and unmoved air. Meehawl, or Mickle, whom the reader will please to recollect as one of his first acquaintances at the wake, and who was now, notwithstanding all *his horror* of the crimes committed, rather an unwilling witness, made his own shrewd surmises, whispering to a neighbour that

“it was nonsense from beginning to end; Crohoore-na-bilhoge ’ud never be hanged; because he had them for his friends that war able to snap him from among forty regiments o’ red-coats, in spite o’ their bagnets.”

At the moment of his conviction, something like a spasm of terror shot, however, across the wretch’s uncouth features. As if to hide from all that looked on him the evidence of that emotion, he bent his head, and rested it on the front of the dock.

After going over the usual preamble, in a mumbling voice, the clerk of the crown called out, in a rather more distinct pronunciation:

“Crohoore-na-bilhoge, otherwise Cornelius Field, what have you to say why sentence of death and execution should not be pronounced upon you?” A pin might be heard to drop in the crammed court, as the convicted murderer slowly raised his head from the edge of the dock. Looking, with a composed eye, around him, he finally fixed it upon the judge, who, his little black cap put on, sat ready to pronounce the law’s dread sentence.

All shrank from that cool and assured look; given as it was by a creature of such revolting physiognomy, and who stood branded with murder of the most appalling kind. A general drawing in of breath told the general shudder; and the seated judge, himself, as the deep red eye fastened on his, scarce was able to retain his solemn self-command of feature. For a moment the dwarf did not speak; whilst he remained silent, hasty whispers flew from one to another of the crowd. “What a murderous face he had!—how expressive of his acts and his nature!” was the common remark, communicated with awe from one to another. No spark of pity touched the breast of one human being that gazed upon him.

He opened his large bloodless lips to speak, and the silence became breathless.

“My lord the judge,” he said, in a steady and not unmelodious voice—it was nature’s sole gift to a being she seemed otherwise to have formed in aversion; and the full, unquailing tone slowly rolled over the deep pause.

“My lord the judge, go on. I stand here to listen to your sentence: nothing have I to say against it; my time to spake is not yet come. You will tell me I must hang like a dog upon the gallows; but—” a grim smile crossed his features—“the skibbeeah’s fingers will never be laid on my neck. Do your duty.

my lord the judge; your words cannot harm me. No more have I to say."

Another murmur of astonishment and terror arose. Some there were that trembled: the great presiding dignitary himself again felt an impression for which he could not account. While the criminal stood undaunted and fearless, his whole appearance in unison with his words, the judge, after some moments, began to pass sentence.

"Cornelius Field," he said, "you have been found guilty, by a jury of your country, of a cool and deliberate murder; and one of a character the most frightful that ever shocked a court of justice. Language cannot express the enormity of your guilt. You have cruelly and savagely taken away the lives of your benefactors; of those who found you a deserted, helpless infant; who saved you from the perishing death to which you were left exposed; who nurtured you as their own child; brought you up in their own house; gave you to drink of their own cup, to eat of their own bread, and to sit at their own fireside."

At this part of the address, tears started into the convict's eyes, and the hectic struggle of some great and overpowering emotion warped his disagreeable features. He brushed the tears away with one hand; bent his head on the other; and, when he again looked up, his face was calm as before. The judge continued:

"You have deluged with blood the hearth that so long cheered you,—and with the blood of your generous protectors: for all kindnesses and charities received, you have brought down woe in every shape, on their happy and hospitable roof. For, it also appears, that you have torn from home, drenched in her parents' blood, the miserable and only child of your victims. In my long experience of the horrors of a court of justice, no such criminal as you has ever stood before me. You are out of the pale of men: human nature shudders to behold you. Prepare for a terrible and prompt reckoning. But, before I proceed to pass upon you the sentence of the law, I would, for your soul's sake, earnestly advise you to offer to an outraged God, and a detesting world, by restoring—if she yet lives—the probably ruined creature you have carried off,—the only slight propitiation it is in your power now to make."

"I will restore her," interrupted the culprit, slowly and deliberately.

"Do so: and Heaven give you the grace to keep that expressed

resolution during the very short space of time allotted you on this earth. The sentence of the court is, that you be taken from the place where you stand, to the place whence you came, and in one hour—?”

“In one hour!” again interrupted the wretch, at last completely thrown off his guard, and clasping his hands in evident terror and confusion—“In one hour, my lord judge!—oh, be more merciful! I can do nothing in one short hour!—I cannot keep my promise!”

A person who leaned against the lower part of the side of the dock, here turned his face half round to observe the prisoner, and Crohoore, suddenly changing his manner, darted his body over the barrier, and, with the ferocity and certainty of a wild beast, clutched him by the breast. “Help! help! give help, here!” he roared. The court became a scene of confusion:—“He will murder the man!” was the universal cry.

The judge called loudly on the sheriff to quell the tumult, and restrain the maniac violence of the desperate culprit, ere mischief could be done: that officer, not being himself a very athletic, courageous, or active person, ran to collect the force in attendance. Matthew, the jailor, who occupied his usual place on the barrier between the outer and inner docks, strove, with all his might, to tear away the hands of the dwarf from the breast of the person he held. But the gripe was kept with almost superhuman force. The man himself, a powerful, athletic figure, exerted his strength to the utmost. At first he pushed with his arms against the side of the dock, and swung out from his captor: then he was seen to snatch a pistol from his bosom, and, ere hindrance could be offered, he fired it in Crohoore’s face. But, from the struggling, the shot took no effect; glancing upward, fortunately for the spectators, also, and striking near the ceiling of the court-house. Then Crohoore redoubled his efforts. Hitherto, he had stood on a form, placed in the dock to elevate him sufficiently before the eyes of the court; from this he jumped into the body of the dock; there, still holding firmly to his man, flung himself down; and by the hanging weight of his body, unwittingly assisted, indeed, by Matthew’s continued tugging, as well as by the amazing power of his own arms, actually succeeded in dragging over the wooden bar the object of his unaccountable hostility.

Both rolled on the ground within the dock, and a dreadful scuffle went on between them. The man fastened his hands on



Crohoore's throat, and the dwarf was nearly suffocated. Again he cried out for help; and—

"Ho! ho!" he continued, half choking—"My lord the judge, give your orders to saze upon this man—I'll have more than an hour, now, if a friend is as loocky as I am—help, or he is gone!—He chokes me, to keep down my words!—saze him!—THIS IS THE MURDERER OF THE DOOLINGS!"

"Yes, sir," exclaimed Mr. Barry, rushing in, and addressing the sheriff, who had just re-entered with his force. "Here is your warrant for the apprehension of that man. As a magistrate of your county, I commit him to your charge."

"Thanks to your honour," said Crohoore, loosing his grasp when he saw his antagonist secured by other hands; "give your noble honour thanks from my heart. I knew you'd be in time to stand my friend;" and he lightly bounded to the form, upon which he had formerly stood, at front of the dock.

"My lord," continued Mr. Barry, addressing the judge, to whom he was personally known, "accident has this morning put into my hands one of the real perpetrators of the murder with which the person at the bar stands charged, and of which he is convicted. But, my lord, he is innocent as I am. The man he has himself just seized, and whom I have now arrested, is one of the true murderers. The other I have spoken of is secured also."

A burst of astonishment and incredulity escaped all the hearers, as Mr. Barry passed to the bench to converse with the judge. While one neighbour whispered his doubts or wonder to the other, the other might be seen smartly turning his head, compressing his brow, and throwing all his wisdom into his look, as in brief speech he asserted, what he knew in his heart to be untrue, that, all along, he had expected something of the kind. And every one evinced sympathetic sentiments of surprise, caution, or assent, by up-raised hands and quick shakings of the head, while the rapid comment flew around, in different directions. "It bates ban-nacher," said some, meaning to express their surprise or consternation. "Tut—it can never be;—look at him," observed others, who persisted in their skill in physiognomy. "Faith, after all," whispered the most credulous or charitable, "he's as ugly as sin; but handsome is that handsome does. Let us see the rest of it." And then each made the most of the place in which he happened to be stuck; and bodies were protruded, and necks and noddles poked forward, mouths opened wide, eyes and ears distended and

pricked up, and a vast quantity of idle breath held in, to see, hear, and if possible understand, the wondrous sequel, that by their own calculation was immediately to follow.

All eyes were, of course, now bent on the man who had been so unexpectedly taken into custody, and so suddenly accused of the dreadful crimes for which another was about to suffer. He stood there, surrounded by the sheriff's power. He wore an ample outside coat, of which the standing collar reached above his ears, and was clasped with a hook-and-eye over the lower part of his features. A large black patch covered one of his eyes; and a black silk handkerchief, as if applied to an ailing part, extended along one side of his face. While his hat, of unusual dimensions in the leaf, and which he had hastily put on in the scuffle, slouched down so far as scarce to leave a trace of feature visible.

"Take off that outside coat from the prisoner," said the judge, pausing in his conversation with Mr. Barry. His commands were obeyed; and the handles of two large pistols, exclusive of that discharged at Crohoore, and which he had dropped, were seen projecting from the bosom of his inner garb.

"Remove his hat, and the patch and handkerchief from his face," the judge continued. This, too, was done; and the guilt-stricken countenance of the real murderer was that of our old acquaintance, Rhiah Doran.

Here was fresh occasion for the wildest wonder, as Doran's person had been previously well known by most of the lookers-on, of town and country. After a new buzz, the crowd once more prepared themselves to witness a grand explanation of the whole mysterious case. But their curiosity was doomed to disappointment. As matter of form, the judge proceeded to pass sentence of death on Crohoore, who was then conveyed to the dungeons underneath; and Doran also experienced the tender care of the jailor.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

INTO the domestic sitting apartment of the trustworthy jailor we have next to introduce our reader. Before we communicate the wished-for *eclaircissement* that there occurred, it seems desirable to describe the place itself.

The smoky walls were decorated—without any view to uniformity

of position, for some of them hung upside down—with sessions and assizes notices, “Last dying words and declarations,” Hue-and-Cry proclamations, and rough draughts of jail calendars, interspersed with many ponderous keys, polished from constant use; not rusty, as they used to be in the old romances. A large cumbersome clock, without an hour-hand, furnished one corner; its drowsy and laborious tick, tick, like the heavy breathings of an asthmatic man, indicating the loads of dust and oil that clogged its lungs. In the diagonal corner stood an immense old carved cupboard, inlaid and japanned, and fretted and filigreed out of all meaning or purpose. The rest of the furniture consisted of a huge oak table, with falling leaves, two inches thick, and stout turned legs, terminating in sprawling claws of tiger, lion, or any other beast the fancy might suggest. Four or five massive chairs, of different shape and material, some oak, some ash, picked up, here and there, as chance threw them in the way; the whole set commanded by an amazing two-armed superior, of roughest workmanship, which, from its weight, was never stirred out of the snug corner by the fire.

In speaking of this chair, we have been induced to say it commanded, or seemed to command the others, from a similitude that since occurred to us, when we beheld the scarleted and embroidered bravery of the city in which our tale finishes, when public danger threatened the state, and the peaceful followers of trade assumed the martial costume, and left the quiet entrenchment of the counter to shoulder “those vile guns.” They were drilled by a bluff, portly man, transcendant over the rest in size of paunch, and weight of flesh, who would try to bring the word of command to the dull capacity of the “transmogrified” traders, by showing that, at the “present arms!” “the lock of the musket should just touch the waistband of the breeches.” Such as this commander, by a peculiar association in our minds, was the vast two-armed chair; and, such as the soldier-merchants, were its awkward squad, strewn about Matthew’s apartment.

In Matthew’s apartment, however, such as it is, are now assembled the persons whom, we flatter ourselves, the reader is disposed to follow anywhere, that he may witness the investigation with which they are engaged.

They consist of Mr. Barry, aided by two other county magistrates; the hitherto formidable Crohoore; Pierce Shea—the rescued Pierce Shea; Rhiab Doran, well guarded and handcuffed; his acquaintance, Tim Lyndop, also attended; Sheemun Croonawnee, whom Mr. Barry’s servant failed to secure, but who now came at

call; Andy Awling, as Pierce's shadow; the jailor himself (being master of the house, he could not with decency be excluded, although we have no immediate concern with the man); and a low female figure, clothed in a faded and tattered crimson cloak, the gathered hood hanging over her head and face, and covering whatever other drapery she wore.

"Now, gentlemen," began Mr. Barry, addressing his brother magistrates, and handing in a paper, "Have the goodness first to read that deposition. It is Miss Lovett's, and of much importance."

They did so. Mr. Barry then went to the door, and returned, leading in the lady and her father.

"Is that your signature, Miss Lovett?" asked one of the magistrates, showing the deposition.

"It is my signature," answered the graceful and beautiful deponent.

"Have you read the contents of this affidavit, and are they true?"

"They are;" and Miss Lovett swore to their truth.

Mr. Barry now led her towards Rhiah Doran, and demanded, "Is that the man?"

"That is the man," said the young lady; and with her father left the room.

"By this evidence, then," resumed Mr. Barry, "the taller of the prisoners clearly stands accused of having led the gang of robbers, who, only a few nights ago, plundered Mr. Lovett's house.

"The plate I have shown you, gentlemen, and part of which, by the crest and cyphers upon it, is proved to have been carried off in that robbery, I found in the possession of the other prisoner. He, therefore, stands charged as an accomplice. Let us now trace their common connexion with a more horrible outrage. Jailor, remove out of hearing, into separate places, the two prisoners and the mendicant."

Doran, Lyndop, and Sheemun, were accordingly led out, and the door closed.

"Crohoore," Mr. Barry continued, "proceed with the explanation we are all anxious to hear."

"Will your honour give me my own way?"

"Yes; proceed."

"Come forward, Dora Shea, the sister of Ned Shea, and the aunt of Pierce Shea, who is to the fore. Come forward, and first tell in the face of these gentlemen, and of your own nephew, who

and what I am." The speaker elevated his low figure to its utmost height: a smile of pride and triumph gave a new, and not unpleasing expression to his generally repelling features, as the little, stooped hag tottered from the background at his word.

"The name you got when the Soggarth christened you," she began, in a shrill, piercing voice, the same that had grated on Alley's ear the night of her abduction.—"The name you got when the Soggarth christened you, was Anthony Dooling. The murdered Tony Dooling was your Father, an' the murdered Cauth Dooling was your own Mother. I am ould, I am withered, and I am sinful," she continued, flinging the hood of the cloak from her head, and pushing back the matted white locks that fell about her wrinkled face, while a spark of more than age's usual intelligence lit her dark eye—"but I was once young, blooming, and happy. Aye, Dora Shea was once the delight of many an eye, the ache of many a heart. 'Till she left the joys of her father's roof, to wander the world with a beggar! Then sufferings and sin soon changed me; and when I prayed charity from my father, with heavy strokes he drove me from his door, and didn't know his daughter.

"When this creature saw the light," she continued, turning to Crohoore, "I came begging to his father's house. My own child died in my arms under Tony Dooling's roof. I took him from the cradle, and put the stiff, cold infant in his stead. The father thought his son died, and Cauth Dooling dropped mother's tears over him. After some little time I gave over the *shoolin* life. My husband, Garodhe Donohoe, the Bocchoch, went to live among the hills, where, fast by his cabin-door, he had a way into the ould hidin'-place in the rath, and people called him Lheem-na-Sheeog. I didn't want Tony Dooling's boy to help me begging, any more, and I left him where his father found him." Here the shrill voice of Dora Shea failed.

"You have more to tell, à-roon?" said Crohoore.

"Yes, I have; and I will tell it. It was many years before the murder that young Anthony Dooling, now before ye, came with his gun among the hills, and strollin' into my cabin, found out the secret of Gorodhe Donohoe's place in the green rath. To keep him silent, for he was a hearty boy, not afraid of the fairies, nor to be imposed upon like the others, I told him—God forgive me all my long sins!—I told him he was my own son; and I reminded him of a mark upon his body, no one but himself or a mother ought to know. It was plain to me he never wished to see such a mother, but I found him good and dutiful, like a son, from that day

out. He never knew the truth of his real birth, 'till the night he brought his own sister Alley to my cabin. Then, wishing to save him from a sin I now know he never intended, I whispered in his ear, the minute they came together before me, the words that gave him all the knowledge."

"Aye," said Crohoore, interrupting the narrator; "I was then told I had a Father I could be proud of, and a Mother I could love, and I knew they lay murdered that very night. All my life I was a poor friendless creature, the thing to be jeered at, and trod upon, and abused by everybody. The words of my mouth grew rough and passionate, but meant nothin'. My heart was only desolate, dark, and scalded. It loved none, because none would let it love them; but it never had malice against a living thing. I was told I had a Father, but he was gone; I was told I had a Mother—she was gone, too—Oh! I thought the heart in my body would burst that night!" The tears ran down his cheeks, and sobs rent his bosom.

"Now," said he, when he had gained some degree of composure, "I must tell your honours all I know about that night:

"On that night, that bloody night, I stole out, after the family rested in their beds, as I often done afore. Not to go wid the good people, as the charitable bodies said of me, but to set snares for rabbits, to give my ould mother, as I then thought her. I had a lantern in my hand. Returning nigh to home, I heard a screech from the house. I said to myself it was odd; but I walked on. I found the house open; I found the murder done. I lifted the old man's corpse, and my hands were bloody; but I didn't know I was lookin' at my dead father then. I went through the house, and found that Alley Doolin' was gone;—Alley Doolin'—the only one in the wide world that was ever poor Crohoore's friend, because her nature was as sweet as herself was comely. I took the best horse; I stayed not for a saddle; I guessed the way the murderers went, by the screechin' that still I heard; I dashed across the country, to be on a turn o' the road afore 'em. The moon was bright; I tied the horse under the shade of a fence; and I stood on the fence, where a bush gave me a sure hiding-place. While I waited there, an ould man, Sheemun Croonawnee, the Bocchoch, came to me, by a cross-cut in the fields, on his way to Gorodhe Donohoe's rath. I beckoned to him, an' made him stand to watch along with me. We spoke never a word. The villains soon drove up. I had only a large stone in my hand. I knew Doran; I minded no other, because he had Alley on the horse afore him.

I aimed my blow well ; and he tumbled on the road. Sheemun and I jumped out, an' they speeded away widout their plunder.

" I put Alley on the horse, senseless, and turned my face, Sheemun near us, but out of sight, to her bloody home. She came to herself, knew me, an' called me her destroyer, prayin' me to restore her to her father. In a minute, I saw how the case was. Alley had never seen who carried her off; the bandage was on her eyes till I removed it, and now she thought I was the man. I feared to be called a murderer. Everything was against me; I feared I'd be made to suffer for the deeds of others. I knew I had no friend to stand by me—not a human creature to believe the ugly shingawn innocent. So, I made up my mind to take Alley away; to hide her; to bear the charge; an' in secret, wid auld Sheemun, who, for all his *shoolin* thrade, I found loyal, to work heaven an' earth until we made off the only man that could fasten the crime upon the thure person. I mane the man that rode by the side o' Rhiah Doran, that night, and whose face we saw well enough never to forget it.

" I joined myself to the Bocchochs. I paid them high. I made Alley sure, by other tokens than what ould Dora Shea had told your honours, that I was her born brother, and I acted by her like a brother. She told me where I'd get money hid in her father's house, that Doran and his man did not come upon ; and I visited the spot red wid their blood, to bring away the manes of revengin' the death of my Father and Mother. That was the night of the wake. I followed Doran's thrack to find the man I wanted along wid him. Doran was a robber: I paid Sheemun and another to come round him. They done their business well, and brought me word of all his doin's. But though they and I watched him and watched him, we could not for many a long day find that man in his company."

" By the book, an' it was hard for you," interrupted Matthew, who had returned alone, " when I had the lad in the stone jug, 'till he was let out, the fair day of Kilkenny."

" It was on that very day," resumed Crohoore, " that my spy first saw Doran and himself together. I came to take a look at 'em, but they were gone. This mornin' early he saw them again on the streets in this town, with the knowledge that Lyndop was to be on the road to Dublin, to sell what was in his wallet. Sheemun and myself were to thrack 'em, on two good horses, whichever way they went, in company or alone; and I only came, like a *cripple* in a cart, to meet ould Ned Shea comin' out of the jail, and

to spake the word o' comfort to him, because I knew his son would not die. But I was taken there."

"Are you sure of the face and person of the man you saw with Doran, on the night of the murder?" asked Mr. Barry.

"As sure as of any face and man I now see forenent me. He was in the room just now."

Mr. Barry whispered Matthew, who again withdrew, returning with at least a dozen ill-looking fellows about him.

"Is he in the room, at present?"—asked a magistrate.

Crohoore took only one keen survey of the group, and immediately identified the butcher.

"Call in the mendicant. You, Crohoore, do not now speak a word."

Sheemun made his appearance, and in clear answers to a raking cross-examination corroborated Crohoore's statements, in the minutest particular. Then, being desired to look at the crowd under Matthew's direction, he also identified, without hesitation, the skulking Tim Lyndop.

"So far, gentlemen," our evidence seems connected and consistent, Mr. Barry went on to the magistrates. "But perhaps you have wisely said, that on the charges of Crohoore and the mendicant alone, however they support each other, some question of doubt may arise. If, however, we are able to support the character of this extraordinary Crohoore in more than one instance, and by the mouth of more than one person, with whom he could have held no collusion, that, I presume, will enhance his and old Sheemun's testimony, so long as both agree as they now do."

The magistrates assented; and Mr. Barry produced another deposition from Miss Lovett, which set forth that, under the following circumstances, she owed her life and honour to Crohoore. On the night of the attack on her father's house, the leader of the gang, Doran, after having rifled the other apartments, entered her chamber, and laid ruffian hands upon her. She screamed and struggled for some time, in vain; until at last a body of servants, led on by Crohoore, rushed in and saved her, the villain escaping through an open window. He wore a mask, but it fell from him in the shocking struggle, and Miss Lovett was therefore enabled to swear positively, as in her previous affidavit she had done, to his face; the ghastly wound on his jaw rendering it peculiarly remarkable.

Here Pierce Shea could not but recollect the prophecy he had hazarded when he inflicted the wound—"that, under God, it would one day help to hang him."



The evidence of a servant, now called in, supported that of Miss Lovett. The man declared that, when the robbers came to his master's house, they surprised and immediately bound himself and his fellow-servants, and locked them up in a room, while they proceeded to rifle the premises. That, while they lay in that state, a strange man suddenly entered a window at the back of the house, cut the cords that bound them, and led them to rescue their young mistress. And that man he recognised in Crohoore.

"Yes," said Sheenum, "the night of Mr. Lovett's robbery, Crohoore an' myself, guided by the Lord, were close at the heels o' the gang, on our own business. We hard the lady screetchin', an' he left me, like a bould fellow, to save her."

"This is almost conclusive," said the magistrates.

"And it is most remarkable," rejoined Mr. Barry, "that of leading this gang, to whose career he seems to have proved fatal, this very poor man, Crohoore, was long suspected. I, myself, believed the conjectures of the county magistrates to that effect. And when he brought me to Dublin the letter from Miss Lovett, that, along with the request to save the life of my young tenant, Shea, contained the first intimation of his own services; and when, at his departure from my door, I got a glimpse of his face, which I had often before seen in the country, my impulse, notwithstanding the recommendation of him I had received, was to arrest him as a robber, and, indeed, also recollecting the other horrible charge against the friendless creature, as a murderer, too."

During this speech, Pierce Shea felt, as may be supposed, the strongest emotions of surprise. He only waited till it was done to ask Mr. Barry—"Was Crohoore the bearer of the letter that saved my life, Sir?"

"He was, indeed," was the reply. "Miss Lovett pressed upon me, as the only return he would take for this important service, and therefore as the only proof of gratitude she could evince, my immediate interference in your behalf. More than that, her letter gave the heads of the extenuating circumstances under which you had been seduced, I may say, into Whiteboyism. And Crohoore himself left an authentic paper of the proceedings of those unfortunate men on the night of your inauguration, that explained the lady's brief allusions."

"Then, Crohoore," said Pierce Shea, advancing to him, "you have twice preserved my existence," and he wrung his hand gratefully and warmly. The tears ran down poor Crohoore's cheeks as he answered:

"Yes, Pierce; I knew that the man who sthruck your palm in friendship was your bethrayer. I knew all his plaus. He put a fellow upon shooting you: this failed, because I was near. Then he made you a Whiteboy, an' brought the same fellow to hang you for it. And that very man set you for the soldiers at your father's house."

"A third time, then, I am your eternal debtor!"—Pierce again pressed the dwarf's hands between his own.

"Say no more of it, à-vich," Crohoore said, in a broken voice—"say no more. Anything I done was too little for this. Too little to see myself, at last, so spoken to by a fellow-creature."

The magistrates had been privately consulting during this explanation. Mr. Barry again spoke aloud:

"That the accused man has acted as he declares he has towards the young woman, I shall soon make appear. First let me add to all the previous evidence of the commission of the murder by Doran and Lyndop, this decisive proof." And, referring to the butcher's sack, he produced the handle-half of a large tablespoon and two dessertspoons, entire.—"I discovered them," he continued, "when at my leisure I went attentively through the different articles of plunder. Your worships will perceive on these spoons the initials A. C. D.—Anthony and Catherine Dooling, the first letters of the names of the murdered parties, from whose house they were stolen. Examine them. And now attend to their farther identification."

He withdrew, and came back with Alley Dooling. She was sworn, and positively deposed that the two smaller spoons had been her father's property. Mr. Barry seated her near him, and Alley never turned her eyes round.

"Your honour's sarvant has just come in wid the auld bird, hot from the nest," here observed Matthew.

"Has he!"—cried Mr. Barry with vivacity, and not at a loss to understand the jailor's slang—"that tells well. He would not bring the old gentleman for nothing. Call him in."

Pat appeared, attended by two baronial constables. They stated that they had gone, with some military assisting, to old Doran's house, which they had searched closely. "And along with other nice little things, your honour," continued Pat, "sure we found this, that one o' the men thought he knew." He drew from his pocket a large watch, the sight of which made Alley cry out and turn ghastly pale. It had been her father's; Pierce also identified it. "If we wanted any further proof," said Mr. Barry,

"this, then, supplies it." The magistrates instantly assented, and their clerk began to make out a committal for the two Dorans and their friend.

"One point more seems necessary for my poor *protégé*, Crohoore," continued Mr. Barry. "You are sworn, Miss Dooling, to give an account of this man's conduct towards you, in your concealment."

"It was the conduct of the Brother, he proved himself to be," answered Alley. "All the comfort he could procure me in the secret place, where, along with my unfortunate Aunt and her husband, I remained, Crohoore provided. Seldom, indeed, did he visit us; but I knew he was out in danger for my welfare. I knew, in fact, that Doran, for his own purposes, still tried to get me into his power. And I was content to stay where I was, under my Brother's protection, until better days might come for me—and for others." At her last words, Alley's eye turned involuntarily to Pierce Shea.

"I presume, gentlemen, I shall now have your co-operation in forwarding to government such a vindication of this surprising man as shall induce an immediate rescinding of the unmerited sentence passed upon him?" asked Mr. Barry. His brother magistrates expressed their great willingness and anxiety to make the necessary statement. Once more the gentlemen conversed in private, as Pierce Shea, recovering from a sudden convulsion of new and joyful feelings that, during Alley's answer, had crowded round his heart, sprang toward her, exclaiming:

"Great God! how have I been every way imposed upon!—Alley," he added, holding both her hands in his, and looking eagerly into her eyes, while his words sank almost to a whisper, "answer me one question. Why did you refuse to accompany me from the glen of Ballyfoile?"

"Because, Pierce, on that very night, we had information that Doran, while he planned your arrest, was more busy than ever on the search for me, and I had no sure refuge but the place I came from to meet you."

"But why was I assailed by those men?"

"Sheemun will tell you that," interposed Crohoore.

"Musha, God forgi' me my sins, I can, sure enough, in regard I was one o' them myself, an' Shaun-law-thechaum another, an' poor Ristthharde Bocchoch, and Padre Keaoch, along wid us. After Shaun gave him the warning at the fair, may I never die

in sin but we just wanted to have him out o' Doran's way, till Doran himself was put up safe."

"An' now, Pierce Shea, Friend of my father, is your mind at rest?" asked the Dwarf.

"It is, indeed," answered Shea. "Oh! I have wronged my Alley, I fear, beyond forgiveness."

"Never say that," said Crohoore. "Since we hid our plans from you, as we thought you too hot to be guided by 'em, or to keep 'em close, no wondher you had your own thoughts about us. But we never changed from you, as you now know. Here, Pierce, ma-bouchal, take her from her poor Brother's hand, as good a colleen as the sun ever shone upon. And as you can't have the Father's blessin',"—his voice again failed—"take mine."

The young couple were in each other's arms, oblivious of all present, save each other. At the moment, all the persons assembled started round at a sudden whoop, uttered from a corner, by no other than Andy Awling; who, when Mr. Barry rather sharply inquired the cause of this indecent interruption, thus explained:—

"We ax your honour's ten thousand pardons, but it's a fashion we have in screechin' that-a-way, when we're glad, or sorry, or mad, or a thing o' the kind. An' by the holy an' blessed chair in my hand, my heart, this moment, is as big as a house. For, barrin' all we see an' hear, at present, there's a crature, at home in Clarah, 'ill be as glad as myself. One that's willin' to be married to a body I know." Andy walked once more temperately to his friends.

"Masther Crohoore," scraping respectfully, "maybe you'd tell a body a matter or two, that he'd be very glad to know?"

"Anything, Andy, and welcome."

"Was it only a *morya of a thiga*,\* we seen one night in the ould castle among the hills?"

"It was myself," interrupted old Dora Shea. "Some people were bringin' stray cattle to Gorodhe Donohoe's hidin'-hole, and because Alley was with us, I went out to warn them away. When I saw ye goin' into the old castle, with guns in your hands, I knew ye were after Crohore. So, while ye lay asleep, I poured water in the guns to keep them from doin' harm."

"Then, little wondher we didn't hit him across the sthrame," quoth Andy, musing. "Bud, Crohoore, à-vich, the time I shot

\* A pretended ghost.

you in the head, outside o' the cave—what's the rason you warn't kilt dead, then, at any rate?"

"Oh! that's a story to be tould, Andy. And some long winter's night, when our griefs an' our throubles are past by, when Pierce is married to Alley, an' when Breedge Chree has your own legs spanselled, Andy, we'll tell it all over, round the fire, plaise God."

## NOTES TO CROHOORE OF THE BILLHOOK.

NOTE—PAGE 189, CHAP. I.

The ground on which the actors of this tale perform their parts, lies in the neighbourhood of Kilkenny, and was well known to the writer, having been often traversed by him with his dog and gun. Clarah is a rich tract, chiefly of pasture land, below a range of hills to the north-east of "the faire citie." These hills, when surmounted, overlook a valley of bog and pasture lying between them and a more distant range, the old Castle of Castlewarren in view some distance to the right. One of the events of the tale occurs in this Castle. I have wished to give the aspect of the district as distinctly as my descriptive powers enabled me to do.

The tale of "Crohoore of the Billhook" was written by its present editor. That is, written as all the other tales were (with one or two exceptions, which shall be duly noticed)—the tales written by me, sent to my brother for criticism, scrutiny, and, if need be, for alteration; the tales written by my brother sent to me to undergo a like process at my hands. Such was our plan of working together; and this being understood, I assign the authorship of each tale to the original writer thereof.

When the first edition of the O'Hara Tales appeared, of which this story was the leading volume, my brother and I were both young—he not quite twenty, and I somewhat more than a year his senior.

At this early age he was a married man, residing at Brompton, in the same apartments not long before occupied by John Philpot Curran: so he informed me in his letters home.

My brother had brought with him to London, directly from her father's country residence in the county Kilkenny, a wife even younger than himself. For more than a year he had met the heavy responsibility he had undertaken, chiefly by contributing to the periodicals of the metropolis. In his letters to me at this period, he describes his life as one of privation and struggle, almost leading to despondency; yet, to use the language of Barnaby Rudge's raven, he was resolved to "never say die." Ultimately he realized independence; then, by the breaking down of his health, his brightened prospects were at once clouded.

While he was engaged elbowing his way through the unaccommodating crowd of the London wilderness, I was busily employed at home, my entire time occupied. Constantly during the day, and while

engaged at my avocations, I revolved in my mind the incidents of my story ; and at night, when my routine employment ceased, I committed the result of my cogitations to paper.

Thus was it that "Crohoore of the Billhook" was put together ; it was sent in portions across the water to my brother, and by him prepared for the printer.

Referring to his letters, written on the receipt of each parcel, I find that while he accorded me praise with all a brother's partiality, he teased me constantly for my tardiness, overlooking the fact, in his eagerness, that I could only devote a modicum of each day to my task.

He jocularly urged me to speed, by informing me of a covert rivalry between himself and another—each desirous of figuring as a writer of Irish stories, and each anxious to be on the ground before the other ; both calculating that the primary occupier of the course had the chance of reaching the winning-post. The contrivances of both to ascertain the progress of each other, he relates amusingly. I believe both came almost at the same time before the public. I refer to the tale of "To-day in Ireland."

In the year 1825, the postal arrangements were still on the old plan ; Sir Rowland Hill had not yet channelled for the stream of letters now going post wise, and ever flowing, sufficient, as an ingenious calculator informs me, annually, to circumscribe the globe.

Book post, that boon to needy authors, was not then in operation ; a constant succession of heavy letters was not to be thought of ; so that "Crohoore of the Billhook," as it developed, was forwarded to the Earl of Clifden, whose parliamentary privilege enabled him to receive the adventurer, and assist him by speeding him to his destination.

#### NOTE—PAGE 190, CHAP. I.

Indiscriminate assemblages at the waking of the dead have been so determinedly warred against by the Roman Catholic clergy throughout Ireland, that the extremely anomalous practice has been given up. The custom was so unseemly and inappropriate, that the weight of clerical authority was brought to bear against it, and with success. At the present day, near relatives only, or sedate and pious neighbours, sit in the death-room as watchers, and these come to pray for the soul of the dead.

I remember when it was not so ; when the "wake-house" was open to all comers, and when, as noted in the tale, the old conversed pleasantly on topics becoming their years, and the young spent the night in every amusement they could devise, short of music and dancing.

The wake-house used to be pre-eminently devoted to "playing at forfeits," so-called. "Small plays," similar pastimes, are named in assemblies of the young, above the resort of the "wake-house."

The "wake-house" "playing at forfeits," was generally carried on under the supervision of some accredited adept, who had attained reputation as a director ; who assumed a dictatorship on such occasions, and to whose authority on such matters there was a general deference.

Such a master of the ceremonies, would appear to be endowed with the peculiar sense of smell possessed by the raven or the vulture, being

able to sniff the odour of a dead body afar off, as no corpse within an area of some miles could lie in its grave-clothes undetected. It is no great strain of terms to say he was a ghoul; in one sense, he might be said to feed on the remains of his fellow-creature. His meals were furnished from "the funeral baked meats," if not "baked meats," properly speaking, from whatever in the way of food or drink was distributed to the watchers of the wake.

One professional and pre-eminent ruler of "playing at forfeits," presents himself to my memory: I dare say there are many others who will recall him also. He was a well-known character in our city in his day.

I cannot tell what may have been his proper surname, and I doubt if there were any wiser than myself in this particular. He was known as "the Lord of the Lough," other name I never heard applied to him. He recognised the high-sounding title himself, and would acknowledge no other. Sooth to say, he was a tatterdemalion member of the peerage.

The distinction conferred on him was bestowed as referring to the position of his castle; the castle being a ruinous hovel on the margin of a sheet of water locally named "Walken's Lough," which overspread a considerable area of the suburbs of Kilkenny, but which has since been drained away.

The professional avocations of "the Lord of the Lough," as manager of the revels at wakes, commencing with the nightfall, and continuing until day dawn, he was not an early riser. He did not make his appearance in the streets of our city until somewhat late in the afternoon. But scarcely did any day pass, that he was not seen creeping along through the principal thoroughfares.

Whatever may have been his youthful appearance, to my recollection, he was a rickety, half paralysed little man, of advanced age.

As he progressed, he made sure, between one drawing step and another, that his stick was firm under his hand, and, as he dragged his limbs along, he shook as if his bones were artificially connected by springs of easy vibration. His head, however, seemed firmly fixed in one position; it was never turned to the right or left. It was said, notwithstanding, that he could not only discern objects on either hand, but that he was gifted with the vision of the hare, and could see what was passing behind him.

As he tottered on, his eyes rolled in every direction, with an expression of keen, sarcastic inquiry; and no occupant of the street through which he crept, could escape the scrutiny. He never paused during his slow and shaky progress, but, almost continuously, his quavery, screaming voice was heard accosting such of the passengers as he selected for his salutations. His address was ever some bitter sarcasm, couched in humorous terms, but withal severe and caustic. He appeared to have, at the tip of his tongue, the most secret peccadilloes of all on whom his ever-wandering eye rested; these he published, in a discordant, piercing scream, as excellencies and virtues, distinguishing the object of his proclamation.

He addressed all those he complimented by Christian name and surname, at full length, and this with the high and the low alike, without



respect to persons. His venomous and satirical humour was sure to raise the street-laugh, as he stumbled on, while there was no mark of risibility on the features of the satirist.

Such was the "Lord of the Lough" during his afternoon promenade. It was plain to be seen that, from his bodily incapacity for any employment, he could not earn his support. The demesne of his castle on the shore of Walkin's Lough, was of no more extent than three feet by six. That could yield but little revenue. He not only craved no charity, but his trenchant tongue lacerated, to the right and to the left, those likely to aid him.

His wake-house presidency produced his incomings. He dined and supped, aye, and breakfasted too, as he never wended home with an empty pouch, on the "funeral baked meats," and he drank deeply of the funeral cup. He collected toll, or tribute, from those who played at forfeits; and so, "the Lord of the Lough," being an independant peer, could afford to cauterize with his tongue whoever he encountered during his snailpaced progress through the city.

There was one characteristic recreation, suiting the decrepitude of his limbs, in which he delighted. It was to him an enjoyment beyond value, and which he relished with a zest proportionate to the sense of exhilaration of spirits it imparted.

When a forfeit was to be released by a stout young fellow, active of limb, and a weight-carrier; it was decreed by the arbitrary "Lord of the Lough," that he himself should mount the back of the forfeit owner, that, astride there, he should be carried along a prescribed, and by no means limited route, until borne back again to the spot whence he had set out.

So mounted, "the Lord of the Lough" would issue forth from the wake-house, and awake the midnight slumberer with a screech such as an owl, increased in bulk to his size, might send forth, while he flourished his stick, and pummelled the sides of his bearer with his heels, to keep him at a canter through the darkness.

His Lordship was placed in the assizes dock on one occasion, charged with participation in some nocturnal outrage of which he was really innocent, and of which he was acquitted.

When called on by the officer of the court to say if he was prepared for his trial, he startled and astonished the judge by one of his sudden and discordant screams. He refused to answer or to plead at all, in that inferior court. He claimed his privilege as "the Lord of the Lough," and demanded to be tried by his peers, not by a jury of commoners.

#### NOTE—PAGE 228, CHAP. VI.

Doran, the name given to the character of the story, is a substitution: the name only is fictitious, however. The proper appellation I cannot give, as direct descendants of the real personage are to be found at the present day. I will continue, therefore, to use the title already adopted.

At the time when the events related in Crohoore of the Billhook are assumed to have occurred, a man, the original of Doran's character, was the organizer of a gang of robbers, carrying on their malpractices in Kilkenny and its neighbourhood.

Shortly antecedent to this time, the locally-famed "Freney the Robber," was the leader of a band of freebooters in the county of Kilkenny, on a more daring and more extensive scale of operation than his successor, Doran. An antiquarian friend of mine informs me, that this "Freney the Robber"—"Captain Freney," as he was dubbed by himself and his compeers—came in a direct line from a Norman family of consideration—the family of "De La Frene," once the owners of the district subsequently the chief theatre of their descendant's exploits, as a highwayman and burglar.

This being the case, Captain Freney may have reconciled his evil doings to his conscience, by considering himself entitled to levy his exactions by way of reprisal on all travellers over the possessions of his forefathers, and on all residents thereon.

In strong contrast were the depredations of Doran and of Captain Freney placed by the commentators of the day. While there was a light, something like a halo of chivalry, accorded to the one, gilding (with false lustre, to be sure) his worst transgressions, and while the Captain was spoken of with a degree of admiration little short of approval, the darkness of crime alone was said to rest on the deeds of Doran.

Captain Freney, it was insisted, rifled the wealthy only. The gallant, discriminating Captain was never known, it was urged, to lessen the pittance of the needy: on the contrary, it was averred that Freney had an ever-open hand for the poor, sharing generously with them what he had levied from the rich. As surely as a landlord cleared out a haggard, or impounded the cattle or the pig, so surely did the product, in the identical coin, if possible, resulting from the sale, go back again to the denuded tenant, when Captain Freney was appealed to. Instances were adduced by his admirers of his flinging the untouched purse he had risked his life for, into the lap of the widow, for the behoof of herself and her orphans.

Then, Captain Freney's personal daring was said to approach the heroic. His hair-breadth escapes were marvellous; he faced all possible odds without flinching, when pursued; on more than one occasion he had fought his way singly through opposing numbers, when all chance of resistance seemed hopeless. Then his expertness in devising and executing his robberies—were they not admirable?

Some there were who insisted that Captain Freney was a small man, active and nimble, with a face half-eaten away by the small-pox, and having but one eye therein to see his way with. Although this was certainly the fact, it was looked on generally as descriptively apocryphal, inasmuch as it was judged to be sheerly impossible for a man with one eye to be so clear-sighted, or for a man of diminutive stature to do battle like the Captain.

Taking all this into account, and adding that Captain Freney abhorred the shedding of blood, except in extreme cases of need, where his life was in immediate peril, Freney was popularly little blamed in his day—if he was not lauded.

This was not the case with the robber of this story. He and his confederates were a skulking, dastardly crew; they rifled the poor as well as the rich; they were cruel, and they took away life remorse-

lessly; they did not recommend their depredations by any redeeming quality, and they were regarded with unalloyed aversion.

In the personal description of "Rhiah Doran," as given in the story, a deep wound-mark along his cheek is prominently noticed. Such a mark did really disfigure the face of the original from whom the sketch is made.

The gash causing the mark was received by the real personage, not in the manner related in the text, but in a tavern brawl; and the scarifier, when inflicting it, accompanied his act with words to this effect: "I have branded you for the gallows!"

A robbery by Doran and his gang (I use the assumed name of the tale) was really perpetrated in a lone house, close by the river Nore, and about a mile south of Kilkenny. This house had been, in times gone by, a mansion belonging to a family of note, named Purcell, and the land on which it was erected is still known as "Purcell's Inch." The castle, or mansion, is no longer in existence. Forty years ago it was inhabited, and was called "Inch House."

While engaged in his pilfering researches, Doran went from place to place, bearing a light in his hand. It is said, but I do not vouch for the fact, that a young woman, one of the family then occupying "Inch House," had succeeded in escaping unobserved into a press constructed in the thickness of the wall of the principal room, and which was unnoticed by the robbers. Through a slit in the door of this press, the concealed girl watched the motions of the rifer. She had not seen him previously, but the deep seam along his cheek was particularly noted by her, and the remarkable incision enabled her to identify him fully when he stood in the felon's dock.

When Doran was escorted through the streets of Kilkenny to the place of execution, the tavern companion who had so indelibly incised his cheek, stood on some elevated doorstep, overlooking the line of procession. As the culprit passed his place of observation, this looker-on shouted forth triumphantly, so as to be distinctly heard by the wretched man: "D— S—, remember my words: I branded you for the gallows."

#### NOTE—CHAP. VI. PAGE 233.

The Whiteboys so styled themselves because, during their nocturnal excursions, they covered their usual attire with white shirts. This disguise was used, principally, to enable them, while scouring through the darkness, the more easily to recognise each other; for, be it noted, that when a sentence of retribution or a deterrent example was resolved on, the Whiteboys, thirty miles distant from the scene of outrage, not those immediately on the spot, were the perpetrators. The motive for this arrangement need not be pointed out; they assisted each other most loyally in this interchange of good offices.

The Whiteboys made war, ostensibly, against the exaction of tithes; but with the view of demonstrating their impartiality, and to exemplify their sense of even-handed justice, they regulated also the fees to be paid to their own clergy, and visited, with exemplary chastisement, any who should exceed the prescribed donation.

During the time of Whiteboy administration, tithes were exacted, it

may be said, altogether from the tillers of the land ; and while to the single ear of corn, and to the single tubor, the farmer's and cottager's crop was valued by the tithe-proctor, preparatory to assessment, the far-stretching demesne of the landowner was exempt from valuation, and paid no tithe at all.

This arrangement was of itself calculated to produce what could not be regarded as groundless discontent and aversion to the levy. Tithes were not only enforced from the classes least competent to bear the burthen, while those of better ability escaped scot-free, but they were at the same time exacted, nearly altogether, from non-frequenters of the benefited Church, while into the pockets of those most profiting by the ministration of the recipients, the tithe-proctor's grasping hand entered not at all.

But were the assessment ever so just in principle, the manner of levying and collecting was of itself a provocative to opposition of the direst nature ; so that, taking into account the character of the tax in the first instance, and the machinery by which it was gathered being duly examined, the Whiteboys deemed they had sufficient justification for hating the name of tithe with unmitigated hatred, and for bearing uncompromising enmity to all connected with it, whether such were valuers, collectors, or receivers.

It should not be lost sight of, when wishing to understand the object of the Whiteboy confederacy, and the character of the outrages committed in opposition to tithes, that the peasantry to a man believed, and that with the fullest credence, that any appeal to the law of the land was not for them, that laws were enacted invariably not for, but against them, and that if they were not their own legislators, other legislation was for their punishment only.

NOTE.—CHAPTER VI. PAGE 236.

Peery Clancy, the tithe-proctor, is not a hearsay or fancy sketch. For his portrait I had a real sitter. The picture, if it possess no other recommendation, is painted with fidelity.

Shortly following the publication of the tale, a country friend of mine, while passing me, turned his head over his shoulder, and nodding backwards towards the object of his recognition, uttered the two words, "Peery Clancy." He did not pause to make further remark, but I accepted the brief hint, and the accompanying motion of the head, as a very significant compliment to my artistic truthfulness.

The original study for the tithe-proctor of the tale was my immediate next-door neighbour, when the story was written. I cannot now, after the lapse of forty years, do injury to any one by revealing his name. Michael, or as generally pronounced, Mickle Ryan, was my model for Peery Clancy. Mickle Ryan was my next-door neighbour. For the purpose of my story, I made it my business to pry into the mysteries of his calling. I made myself acquainted with the devices of his craft ; so much so, and so close was my study, that I could, on my own account, have undertaken the tithe-proctor profession, had my tastes inclined that way.

I have in no wise, either as to personal delineation, or in my revela-

tions as to the machinery by which wealth was manufactured out of such crude and unpromising materials, outstepped the strict reality in the person of Peery Claucy, taking as I did my next-door neighbour, Mickle Ryan, as my prototype.

It will not be out of place to state here a fact of which I was perfectly cognizant: that while Mickle Ryan was, as his many non-admirers termed it, "busting with money," and hourly adding to his store, the minister of the parish, for whom he acted as tithe-proctor, was frequently without the means to meet his necessities.

All tithe-proctors, whether at remote or recent periods, accumulated wealth. There was one set off, however, which afforded great consolation to the unwilling tithe-payers. It was, aye, and to this moment is an unremovable conviction. I give it in the words used—"That proctor's money never had luck."

The believers in this retributive fatality are as numerous to-day as they were when opposition to tithes was at the highest. They will even now adduce innumerable instances in verification of the balsam-like prognostic.

Certainly Mickle Ryan's money melted away, as if it had been fairy coin—scraps of slate only, having the likeness of guineas, only while the fairy ointment remained on the possessor's eyes.

NOTE—CHAP. VII. PAGE 239.

Clay-besprinkled and burrowing archæologists, have gone great lengths to deprive the fairies or good people of their rightful residences, in the raths which are of such frequent recurrence in Ireland.

For my own part, I profess myself an unflinching opponent of all such learned despoilers: and I regard it as little short of sacrilege, thus to depopulate our rural solitudes. I still cling to the popular faith of rath proprietorship.

A humble fellow-disciple of mine, with whom I lately compared notes, was willing to temporize; and rather than give up the point altogether, I feel inclined to take his view of the subject. He and I agree, that the raths may have been originally shovelled up by human hands and for mortal use. Still, and notwithstanding the admission so far, we stand up for it, he and I, that the "good people" took possession of them subsequent to creation; dwelling under ground during the hours of garish day, issuing upward at nightfall to congregate behind the green breastwork, or on the tumulus overlooking it, and scouting away when the whim seized them, astride on their "thrawnens," to play their "merry tricks on travellers."

To say nothing of the adaptability of the rath for fairy purposes, on which my friend and I lay great stress, we adduce one fact, which cannot be gainsaid, and which we look on as conclusive.

No presumptuous demolisher of a rath had ever one day's luck thenceforward—not one day's luck, from the day of demolition to the day of death. Not one of those who, in irreligious defiance of the good people, removed the pulverized clay of the rath for agricultural purposes, ever mowed or reaped a good harvest afterwards. All such fool-hardy experimentalists "went to the bad."

There can be no doubt on this subject; evidence of the fatality can

be had in abundance. The red-worm, and smut, and blight in every shape, has fallen invariably on the produce of the land, manured with the clay of fairy rath.

I leave this incontrovertible statement to be explained away by the archaeologists.

NOTE—CHAP. VII. PAGE 244.

The glen of Ballyfoile lies, as the tale states, four miles north-east of Kilkenny. There are, in fact, two glens so called, one leading by a detour into the other; that in which the occurrences of the story take place the more impressive; the other less contracted, and the bounding hills less precipitous. In the latter, the square ruinous keep of a Norman castle stands, such as are of frequent occurrence in the neighbourhood.

It is a tradition of the lesser glen, that while the roof of this isolated tower still afforded protection against the weather, it was inhabited by a lone, stern woman, morose and haughty in her bearing, and masculine in her mode of thought and action. She was maiden aunt to the proprietor of the lands around, and of a considerable tract of the adjacent county. It was said that in her youth she had outraged her family by a low connexion, and that she had retired to the ruinous keep as to a kind of banishment from her kindred. Over the lands immediately adjoining her retreat she assumed ownership, and her title was not disputed. Even in her isolation, and with scant means of subsistence, she retained her pride of birth. She partly subsisted by cultivating flax to a considerable extent, for which the soil near her castle was well adapted, but this appropriation of the land was but a minor source of income. She was in connexion with a formidable band of freebooters, whose principal place of shelter was the glen of Ballyfoile, and she was the caretaker of their plunder.

It was stated to me by the narrator of the legend, it may perhaps be that the powerful nephew of the lone woman of the castle participated in the profits derived from this discreditable alliance, and screened and protected the depredators in return. It was said, that all the articles of plate decorating his board were not honestly come by.

To give the greater weight to his narrative, the relator pointed out to me a portion of the glen that had been excavated by the robbers, and into this subterranean hiding-place they retreated when pursuit was hot—the interlaced roots of the impervious furze or gorse, with just sufficient soil left for their nurture, forming a roof overhead. Here they were screened as well by their underground invisibility as by the impenetrable prickly shrub above them, while, through interstices left for the purpose, they could fire on their pursuers, if such were desirable.

After years of unsuccessful attempts to disperse the gang of marauders, thus harbouring in the glen, four of the band were so closely followed by a military force, sent especially against them, that time was not afforded the fugitives to remove the screen of their cavern, and they were forced to seek immediate shelter in the tower of their treasurer.

The small entrance-door being time-decayed and dilapidated, could

not be sufficiently secured, and it was at once driven in. A desperate defence was made on the narrow spiral stairs, up which two could not ascend abreast, by the enraged robbers; while the lone woman, through the orifice, called by the peasantry "the murdering hole," and which projects from the upper story immediately above the entrance door, hurled down heavy stones on the heads of the assailants.

The contest continued as long as the ammunition of the defenders on the stairs held out, but the besiegers were successful.

The booty in the lone woman's keeping was in the uppermost room of the castle, and was hidden beneath a quantity of flax prepared for the spinning-wheel.

When longer resistance was impracticable, and while the conquerers were engaged securing the persons of their prisoners, the lone woman retired into her storeroom with a light in her hand. Hurriedly she gathered close around her the easily ignitable flax, then she applied her brand, and was instantly enveloped in flame.

Her charred remains were found amidst a burnt heap of cinders.

With herself she had consumed all direct identification with the freebooters, and all tangible identity between them and her nephew; so the object of her self-sacrifice was gained.

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A year or so before the first publication of Crohoore of the Billhook, the very last professional Irish robber who levied contributions on travellers, in the twilight or in the glare of day, flourished. His name was Grant—Captain Grant he was generally named, in compliment to his fame as a Turpin-like highwayman. For some weeks he lay concealed in the glen of Ballyfoile, baffling all pursuit, while he was eagerly sought after in every direction.

While lying perdue there, he laid claim to the hospitality of the neighbouring farmers, and his claim was acknowledged. His meals the best each house could furnish, were brought to him in his concealment, and at night he received shelter from his entertainers. He had openly and unconditionally cast himself as a proscribed outlaw on their mercy; and although a large reward was offered for his apprehension, not one was found to enrich himself as his betrayer. He removed from Ballyfoile to a neighbouring county, was seized there, almost immediately on his arrival, and shortly after suffered the extreme penalty of the law.

NOTE—CHAP. VIII. PAGE 252.

The cave of Dunmore is in the neighbourhood of Ballyfoile. It is pre-eminently the sight of the County Kilkenny, and not unworthy of a traveller's visit. The great Wizard of the North, the unequalled Sir Walter Scott, explored its recesses shortly after the publication of this tale.

Many of the credences connected with the cave of Dunmore are now relied on with less confidence than of yore.

A very conclusive experiment, so it was considered at the time, was made two generations back, with the view of ascertaining the extent of the cave's ramifications.

A resolute party of penetrators brought with them the town-drummer of the day. Between the difficulty of progressing, and the distance, more than half a day was spent before the adventurers reached the undoubted termination of their journey, beyond which no further progress could be made.

Here the drummer braced up his drum, and beat it triumphantly. While he was so engaged, persons passing near the market-cross of Kilkenny were astonished, and little wonder they should be surprised, to hear the rattle of a drum. The sound was not on a level with them, nor was there a drummer to be seen. It was not overhead either, and all who had paused to listen were of one mind, that the noise of the drum came booming up from beneath.

On a comparison of time, subsequently, it was ascertained, that the invisible drummer of the market-cross was no other than the identical town-drummer, who beat his tat-too in the cave of Dunmore.

Thus was the extent of the cavern most satisfactorily proved to be not less than six long Irish miles, from the entrance to the spot where the town-drummer sounded his tat-too. If, at the present time, no one, be he ever so daring, can penetrate so far, it must have come to pass, that the impending rocks have fallen down and blocked up the ancient passage. If these could be removed, the six miles might still be journeyed.

The "good people," or Irish fairies, having, of late years, disappeared from many of their former haunts; it is not now insisted on that they still assemble, as in the olden time, at the market-cross, so named, in the cave of Dunmore, and illumine its pendant stalactites to give brilliancy to their revels.

The sudden appearance of a very singular personage at the gaping entrance, between eighty and ninety years ago, I have been assured of by eye-witnesses.

As this supernatural, or flesh and blood visitant, whichever he may have been, has a duty to perform for me by assisting the progress of the next story of mine that shall appear before the public, I will not forestall my purpose by further allusion to him for the present.

NOTE—CHAP. IX. PAGE 269.

I obtained my information as to the proceedings of the Whiteboys from actual participators in their misdeeds. In making use of the materials furnished to me, I have been careful to avoid the imaginative, merely adapting my acquisitions to the action of my story.

My principal chronicler of Whiteboy escapades was one remembered, I dare say, by many others in Kilkenny as well as by myself. Should any of the anglers, rabbit-catchers, surreptitious hare-hunters, or plover or duck shooters of fifty years ago, be still alive, these will at once bring to mind my chief instructor in Whiteboy lore.

His name was Tom Gwynne, by profession a tailor; but so thorough a sportsman was he, that were he engaged preparing for the needle even a wedding suit for his best customer, and that you stood within his view, and waved your arm backward and then forward, or that you placed a stick to your shoulder, closed your left eye, and looked along ~~that~~



stick, as if it were a gun-barrel, Tom Gwynne would laugh his inexplosive liquorish laugh of comprehension, give a nod of assent, roll up the cloth he was operating on, pitch by his shears and his parchment measure, and in as short a time as possible, he and his dog Freney were your companions for the day, leaving the impatient bridegroom to get married in his old clothes, or to defer his nuptials.

Tom Gwynne had understood by the waving of your arm, that you were bent on a day's angling; and by your espial along the stick, that you were about to set forth for a tramp over the crisp, frosty sod, in pursuit of feathered booty. In either case, Tom was your man, whatever might betide. Be the object to be sought for under the water or on the land, or even beneath the land, no matter, it was all the same to Tom Gwynne, and all the same to his dog Freney, as good a sportsman Freney was as his master.

Tom Gwynne was always better pleased you should intimate your wishes by dumb show, and outside his shop-window, than verbally and within doors. He could then sally forth without his wife's knowledge, leaving her to make whatever excuses she might to his customers.

I have given Tom Gwynne's name without hiatus or abbreviation. Many relatives survive him. If I had anything to say to the prejudice of my angling tutor, Tom Gwynne, I would use disguise; but as I do no more than appeal to his shade—for he has "paid the debt that flesh is heir to"—as to the verity of my Whiteboy descriptions, I see no reason why my authority should not be openly avowed.

Although the Whiteboys had banded themselves together, pledged to uncompromising hostility to tithes; and although they avowed their detestation, by word and deed, of everything and of everybody identified with the Established Church; and although Tom Gwynne declared himself, with no small assumption of superiority, to be "a staunch, honest Protestant," and adhered unflinchingly to his creed to the very last; yet, notwithstanding the palpable anomaly, Tom Gwynne had been in his youth a thorough-going, rampaging Whiteboy—aye, as decided a Whiteboy as any "Roman" (so he styled those differing from him in faith) that ever mounted a white shirt, or bestrode a barebacked horse for a night ride.

Tom Gwynne, when describing his neck-or-nothing gallop through the darkness, was enthusiastic. It appeared to him on such occasions, he said, as if he were one of a band of disembodied spirits broke loose from the churchyard, driving along over all obstacles, without fear of bonebreaking, because there were no bones to break. Tom Gwynne boasted that there was no tailor in the land of the living could compete with him in horsemanship; and he owed his equestrian superiority over all of his craft to his Whiteboy tuition.

Tom Gwynne, when giving me an account of a tithe-proctor's interment, which I have copied into my tale, imitated for me, through his truncated fist, the "Sallin na morragh," or death dirge, as sounded over the grave through the bullock's horn.

Tom Gwynne, laughing his subdued laugh, for he loved a merry reminiscence, assured me that his expertness at clipping the ears of puppy dogs into a close resemblance to the ears of a fox, was acquired by the exercise of his shears on the obnoxious tithe-gatherers.

## NOTE—CHAP. X. PAGE 292.

Through the village of Newmarket was the direct route between Kilkenny and Carrick-on-Suir, in the Whiteboy time. It was then of more consideration than at present—now it is nearly altogether out of the way of intercourse, the few inhabitants little more than half-alive, and most of humble dwellings fallen to decay. It lies south-east of Kilkenny, and distant about eleven miles.

I only notice the existence of this obscure hamlet to mark the locality, as in its immediate neighbourhood the *ruse* of the mock funeral adapted into the story I am noting was practised—the events, as related in the tale, being given without material deviation from what actually occurred.

Newmarket adjoins the locality between Kilkenny and Waterford, called “The Walsh Mountains,” so entitled, I have learned, in consequence of having been possessed in past times by the clan Walsh; and the name applies up to the present time, inasmuch as the “Walshes of the Walsh Mountains” are still the principal tillers of the land, form a large “faction,” or clan there, and nearly outnumber all the other inhabitants collectively.

“The Walsh Mountains,” so called, are not mountains at all. The greatest elevation rises to no more than the height of a moderate hill; but the entire surface of the district is billowy—a constant irregular succession of rise and fall, strewn with grey rocks, and interspersed with patches of tillage-land, patches of pasture and of moor, of pool and of hollow. Frequent remnants of the aboriginal oak wood, that occupied the country in the very olden time, still remained when the Whiteboys flourished.

The houses of the inhabitants of “The Walsh Mountains” scarcely ever stood singly, but were built in clusters; and this characteristic still continues. They were so erected, in the first instance, with the view of affording combined defence in case of need, against the bands of freebooters harbouring in the woods around. The clustering of houses still prevails, and produces sociality and neighbourhood.

The inhabitants of “The Walsh Mountains” were, at the date of the story, and continue to be so in a degree, an isolated people, primitive in their habits, and not holding much intercourse outside their own locality. They dressed after a fashion of their own, sufficiently original, as described to me, to be regarded as outlandish elsewhere. They were a stalwart, comely race: the men athletic, the women tall, naturally graceful, and said to be steady and grave of manner.

“The Walsh Mountain” men had not, nor have they been, noted as leaguings with the agrarian confederacies springing up from time to time. It has been stated to me, that there was no direct affiliation between them and the Whiteboy association. Yet, without being actually banded together in secret combination, and pursuing systematic outrage, it is a remarkable fact, that they have occasionally broken out into unexpected and determined opposition to authority, when exercised directly against them.

“The Battle of Carrick Shock,” as the rustic combatants in that deadly encounter magniloquently call it, took place almost on the spot where the mock funeral attack on the dragoons was made beyond sixty years before; and the immediate descendants of the slayers of the escorting dragoons were the slayers of the police at Carrick Shock.

## 410 NOTES TO CROHOORE OF THE BILLHOOK.

The cause and manner of the encounter of Carrick Shock being recent, is well remembered :

A considerable body of police was on duty escorting a bailiff engaged distributing tithe-processes through the district of the Walsh Mountains. The nearest chapel bell pealed out an alarm peal, others took up the signal, and the tocsin sounded on all sides. The people hurried from every point in answer to the summons, bearing in their hands whatever in the shape of weapons they could grasp at. The bailiff's guides were hemmed in on every side. The surrender up of the process-server and his documents was clamored for. And one more daring than the rest essayed to seize the agent of the law. The captor was shot in the act of dragging the man from the centre of his escort. The crowd rushed headlong on ; the arms were wrested from the hands of the police ; few of the force escaped with life from the spot ; and the assailants, terrified at their own act, dispersed as rapidly as they had assembled.

An occurrence, widely differing in character from the attack on the dragoons, at the period of the story, or the onslaught on the police protectors of the tithe bailiff of 1831, I am tempted to relate, as showing a varied phase in the temperament of the same people.

When O'Connell was released from prison, on the reversal of his conviction by the House of Lords, there was great public exultation through the length and breadth of the land in Ireland. From the mansion of the highest Roman Catholic, to the lowliest cabin in the unsheltered bog, there was rejoicing. The bonfires on the superior eminences of the Walsh Mountains, lit up the entire area. There was one spot in comparative gloom, it was an out-of-the-way hollow, in which was a lonely wigwam. There was no blaze near this isolated dwelling, although O'Connell had no more devoted subject than was the dweller therein. He looked around him ; there was no answering beacon-light near at hand ; he hurried into his cabin, he brought forth a piece of flaming bogwood, ignited the thatch above the heads of his wife and children, and shouted triumphantly as it flamed up—magnificently. That night he and his family were obliged to seek shelter under some neighbouring roof ; ultimately, however, by his conflagration in honour of his liberated leader, his condition was improved ; another and far better dwelling was built for him by his approving neighbours of the Walsh Mountains.

### NOTE—CHAPTER XII. PAGE 312.

The Bocchochs of Ireland, at the period of the tale, were not, as the gipsies of other countries, of a race foreign to the soil. They were of genuine Irish breed, singing out their clamorous supplications for charity in the true Hibernian tongue.

The Bocchochs, as beggars, were artists in counterfeiting every malady that "flesh is heir to." They could imitate every possible and impossible malformation or distortion of limb. They could tax compassion by the exhibition of raw and cancerous sores, on any part of the body. There were amongst them "stone-blind cratures," unable to distinguish "the light from the dark." Assisted by a nearly nude, shivering wife, a Bocchoch could totter along, his shaky limbs scarcely bearing him up, and his head incessantly and rapidly vibrating from the shoulder, so

kept vacillating by the palsy. Crippled in his lower extremities, another could be strapped down to a wooden bowl, and one twisted foot could be hooked into a strap passing round his neck. Thus accoutred, he could, with the aid of his hands, jerk himself forward, the wooden bowl, at every jerk, thumping the earth with a hollow sound, appealing directly to the heart. Or still, another cripple could progress on his padded knees, his shrivelled or shapeless legs protruding directly backwards. One could be totally disabled from head to heel by paralysis; he could stretch himself at full length in a fitting machine, and be slowly drawn along, his eyes and inaudible mutterings supplicating the crowd, while his afflicting tale was told in Irish blank verse by his motive power—his partner. The Bocchoch undertaking to be “troubled with the falling sickness, Lord bless the hearers,” should possess high professional talents. When the paroxysm of the disease came on—and the visitation should always occur in the very centre of the fair—he should be able to make it evident that, if not held fast by the “charitable Christians” near him, he must, inevitably, batter in his skull, by whacking it against the ground, and destroy himself in various ways, while writhing in contortions, unless restrained by strong hands.

If the Bocchochs were skilled in every ruse that could rouse commiseration at fairs, at markets, at patterns, or other places of rustic assemblage, they knew how otherwise to enforce their demands when these direct sources of income could not be immediately resorted to.

Their connexion with beings of the other world, including a good fellowship with the evil one himself, was almost a general belief with the peasantry; and terror of their power to command supernatural agencies secured for them a superstitious deference. Even where this credence did not operate in their favour, it was considered wise to be conciliative, not defiant. Whichever motive might operate, the Bocchochs were certain of admittance into every farm-house they pleased to enter; here they were lodged and fed as long as their roving habits permitted them to abide in one place.

At the time of the present tale, the Bocchochs were a banded body, formidable as to numbers, and ready to act in concert if need be. They were ruled by district chiefs, whose mandates were obeyed implicitly. The district chief prescribed the area of each Bocchoch's operations, so that one did not interfere with the walk of another. The chief allotted also to each of his subjects the professional character he was to assume, while following his calling, thus preventing rivalry or collision of interests. In all cases of dispute, appeal was made to this absolute sovereign; and in all cases when the Bocchoch's were to act collectively, no matter what might be the nature of the service required, obedience was yielded to this ruler of the fraternity.

The absolutism of the Bocchoch governor was limited, however, in one particular instance. It would be a compromise of his dignity were he to clamour as his subjects did at places of public resort. He did not interfere with those he governed as an avowed mendicant. He was at liberty, notwithstanding, to quarter himself and his family at any farm-houses he might select. Two articles only, exclusive of board and lodging, was he to accept as donations; these were butter and wool. If money, or meal, or potatoes were offered, he refused the tender—butter and wool alone were regarded as royal perquisites.

The Bocchoch chief was not without a distinguishing title; he was

styled "Moontheen na Bocchoch," freely translated, "King of the Bocchochs." Moontheen is, literally, a height or eminence above the general level, and above even inferior eminences. Figuratively applied, as in this case, the "Moontheen" denoted one raised above the commonalty; Anglice, "King of the Bocchochs."

It would appear that, disallowed from infringing on the general sources of profit open to his inferiors, the "Moontheen na Bocchoch" must be circumscribed as to his royal revenue. But this was not the case. Twice in the year, at midsummer and at Christmas, he made regal progress through his dominions. At every village on his route, he provided, at the principal public-house, a plentiful entertainment. To partake of this, all the Bocchochs, permitted to ply their calling in the neighbourhood, were bidden. I have been informed that when those festive gatherings took place, the honoured village was, for the time being, in absolute possession of the "Moontheen" and his lieges. At the assemblage, none of the blind, or paralysed, or crippled, were to be seen: all such, it was believed, had been excluded from invitation. The lookers-on could not recognise in the stout, able, well-looking young fellows, or in the blithe colleens, or in the venerable men and matronly women thronging in, one individual provocative of compassion.

The uproar of the Bocchochs, from the afternoon of their arrival until the dawn of the next day, might well astound the villagers; while the lavish abundance of the repast provided for them, and the unbounded flow of shebeen that was set going, might equally create their envy.

Let it not be supposed that these glorious gatherings were solely for the purpose of feasting and enjoyment. Before the banquet was "furnished forth," obeisance was rendered, and tribute was yielded, to the "Moontheen na Bocchoch," by each invited subject. If the guests fared royally, they paid for it as became their loyalty and allegiance. When the "Moontheen" departed from the scene of revelry, to resume his royal journey, a proud and a wealthy monarch was he.

#### NOTE—CHAPTER XIV. PAGE 239.

FIVE of those concerned in the mock-funeral attack on the dragoons, near Newmarket, were hanged, and afterwards beheaded, on the same day. Three were first suspended, and two immediately following, the gallows not affording accommodation for the five culprits at the same time.

In this case, the extreme penalty of the law was not inflicted, at to use the judicial phrase, "the usual place of execution." An attempt at rescue, by the Whiteboys, in strong force, was apprehended, and "the usual place of execution" was deemed more assailable than "the unusual place" selected.

The occurrence made use of in the tale is traditional. A woman snatched up the head of her husband as it fell from the butcher's block, used on the occasion, instead of a more artistic one. With this in her apron, she ran from the spot where she had seized on it, and without abating her speed (unless occasionally to exhibit her booty), she raced a distance of eleven Irish miles, to her own cabin, in the Walsh Mountains.

THE END.

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