



CROHOORE OF THE BILL-HOOK,

AND

THE FETCHES.

BY

THE O'HARA FAMILY.

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1848.

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# CROHOORE

OR

## THE BILL-HOOK.

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### CHAPTER I.

— mortal remains of old Tony Dooling and his wife lay, the night before their interment, side by side, in the awful billiments of the grave. The inhabitants of Clarah, a parish in the county of Kilkenny, were assembled at the “wake.” The bodies, according to usual practice, appeared “laid out” in their highly-adorned shrouds, in an extensive barn, contiguous to the comfortable dwelling-house of which they had been the late owners; by the side of the couch of death sat the female relatives; the gossips,—that is, those connected with the family by having stood sponsors for any of its numerous cousins,—and a few near neighbours; while at the front were the hired mourners, who, in sorrowful cadence, sung the *Keenthechann*, or funeral wail; their gestures, faces, and manner, extravagantly affecting the sorrow they were only paid to counterfeit. At times, however, and probably wrought upon by the nature of their subject, they seemed to abandon themselves to all the real frenzy of woe, or melt into its true pathos. The song commenced in praise of the deceased; rehearsed their virtues, their riches; recounted the history of their family connexions, through an endless chain of kindred, and then burst into a wild lament for their untimely and weighty death. When one ceased, another took it up; the whole delivered in the Irish tongue, and in irregular rhyme, imposed on the instant; and verse followed verse with surprising volubility.

Through the spacious barn was ranged a concourse of people, listening to the rhapsody, or whispering their comments in that half-tone in which a tale of fear and mystery is always told; and, when the song ceased, an old man arose from his seat near the bodies, and uncovering his grey head, laid kneeling, his example was followed by all present, and the united prayers of the assemblage went up for the repose of the souls of their deceased neighbours.



An Irish wake was, at the period we would illustrate, seldom characterized by conduct so becoming the house of death;\* generally, however inconsistent and unfeeling it may appear, a wake was the scene of feasting, frolic, and mirth. The old came there to fill their pipes and boxes from the plates of tobacco and snuff laid for that purpose on the dead bodies, and then they got together in knots, smoked, comforted their noses, and indulged their appetite for *shaunachs*, a word peculiarly expressive of reverend gossip, when entered into by a pleasant conversational party. The younger part of such an assemblage amused themselves in a manner more conformable to their time of life; small plays were set on foot, under the superintendence of some established droll fellow, there being generally one of the kind in every neighbourhood, who made it his business never to be absent from any wake seven miles round, who ruled the diversion, and under whose guidance "the boys and girls" carried on their sport, with all that humour and wit for which the Irish peasantry are so deservedly praised, and which, we make bold to say, nowhere exists in such abundant perfection. Thus, noisy and careless mirth was the order of the night, and while, in the very chamber of death, nothing, it is admitted, could be more incongruous and unseemly, nothing, meantime, was more common and less thought of.

At the wake of Anthony Dooling and his wife, there was, however, no such exhibition. The general horror excited by the circumstances of their tragical death had power to restrain a custom so universally indulged; and the mournful Keenthee caun, the frequent prayers, and the story of their fate, alone filled up the long and gloomy winter's night.

## CHAPTER II.

It was Christmas eve, in the year 17—, that Anthony Dooling and his family were seated round the kitchen fire. He was a substantial farmer, renting a large and fertile tract of land; one of the good old times, who, except his broad-brimmed felt hat, his buckled shoes for Sundays and market-days, and his brogues for tramping round his farm, wore everything of his own manufacture. Little money went out either for what Tony ate or drank; he killed his cow at Christmas and Easter; he bred his own mutton, his bacon,

\* Owing to the Roman Catholic clergy the custom is now much discontinued.

his fowls; he baked his own bread, brewed his own ale, and altogether was vain of applying to himself the old song—

"I rear my own lamb,  
My chickens and ham,  
And I shear my own sheep, and I wear it."

Plenty was in his house; he had a ready hand to relieve the poor, and the stranger never turned from his hearth without amply experiencing its hospitality. Yet, with all these perfections, Anthony had his dark side. He was of a violent temper, and would fall into paroxysms of passion with his workmen, and sometimes ill-treat them, for the purpose, it almost seemed, of making it up with them when he became cool, and all was over.

A turf fire blazed in the large open chimney, the red light of which glittered among the bright pewter plates and dishes and the burnished copper vessels that decked the opposite dresser, and showed the vast store of bacon hanging within and the chimney, at the same time that it lit up the figures of as merry a group as ever blessed the

of a warm fire, after a day's labour. On one side of the fire, and within the wide canopy of the chimney, in his stationary two-armed chair, one leg crossed the other, his short pipe rested on his projecting under-bench, which he frequently withdrew in a hurry, to partake of the merry laugh that was passing him—there, and so, sat the master of the house, Anthony Dooling. Opposite to him was the *vanithee*, an orderly, innocent, and even-tempered dame; her character in her face, mild, peaceable, and happy; as in her low tone she chaunted the ancient ditty of *Colloch-a-thusa*,\* which the busy hum of her spinning-wheel confined within the circumference of her own immediate atmosphere. At one side stood a long deal table, off which master and workmen, mistress and maids, ate their meals, except when a guest of distinction was entertained in the boarded and well-furnished parlour at the back of the kitchen; and in front, appertaining to the table, was a form, occupied at their ease by five or six workmen, who enjoyed the full lustre of the merry blaze, and the familiar and venerable jokes of their kind-hearted master.

Among them was Pauge Dermody, whose rustic wit and shrewd tongue, never at rest, but now particularly vigorous, kept the group in a continued roar: and none enjoyed his display more than Chevaun Darlduck, who, in the background, squat on her haunches, was giving the final polish to the pew-

\* "Old hag in the blanket."

ir, brass, and copper utensils of the dresser, as one by one he took them down, burnished, and again replaced them: the other females of the house had gone to spend Christmas-day with their friends. Chevaun had few personal charms to boast of; in her the old adage, "God fits the back to the burden," was fully exemplified; she wore a bluff face, that neither sun nor storm could affect, as red as frost-bitten haws; and altogether was blest with a strong, robust form, well calculated for the drudgery of her employment. She had been brought up by her present mistress, Cauth Dooling, and was highly valued, and not entirely unrewarded; for Chevaun had saved a "little penny," and looked forward to be the possessor, one of those days, of a cabin of her own, an entire acre of ground, a cow, a pig—and, in her mind's eye, a husband was casually added to the list of comforts.

Chevaun, therefore, had been casting that eye about her for one on whom to bestow her gracious self and accumulated wealth. But the soft cogitations of her pillow, and the steady and sober thoughts that came by day, were at continued variance, and kept her bosom and her choice undecided. At night, when it was allowed to assemble after work, in the kitchen, the humour and brilliancy of Paudge Dermody, his handsome person, and his frolicksome kiss, caused her to forget his idle habits and spendthrift disposition, and sent her to her couch to dream of him and happiness; but then with the daylight, which routs all fanciful visions, came her observations of the industrious and also talented Andy Houlohan, foster-brother to the lover of her young mistress: Andy could build a house from top to bottom—a weighty consideration with one who had to build a house; he could mend a plough or a car, and boasted various other qualifications of a solid nature; so that, between the showy fascinations of Paudge and the more valuable acquirements of Andy, her inclinations and her prudence held a sad conflict; the day constantly effacing the impressions of the night, and the returning night—that time when the softer impulses have their sway—exhibiting Paudge in his glory, and again giving him the full empire of her heart.

The handsome daughter of the old couple had not yet taken her accustomed seat by her mother's side; she was employed, or seemingly employed, in some trivial house-concerns; but conscious expectation appeared in the glances of her eyes towards the door, and she frequently paused and started a little, as she tripped across the floor, and bent her head as if attentively listening. By-and-bye, the latch was lifted, and the cordial smile she gave the newcomer, who entered with

the usual salutation of "God save all here," showed he was an unwelcome visitor; and another smile, of a different character, with which she answered his whisper, as he passed, told that they pretty well understood each other. In fact it was Pierce Shea who came in, the son of a neighbouring farmer, and the young girl's betrothed admirer.

Alley Dooling, now about eighteen, was tall and slight in person, but with a delicate roundness of form, the contrary of bony leanness; her step free and bounding; and her whole carriage, though it wanted the polished elegance of the drawing-room, possessing that unacquirable grace which perfect symmetry bestows. Her face was oval, her eye soft blue, her cheek blooming in health, exercise, and happiness; and she never played about her smiling mouth a disposition to humour, sweet, not extravagant: her shining gold hair, smoothly combed back, showed the full height of her beautiful forehead, and was confined—the more the pity—in her ample muslin cap. Having been to market with her father, she was still dressed in her holiday clothes; that is to say, her crimson poplin gown, open before, which thus allowed to be seen her fine quilted silk petticoat, partly shaded by a thin muslin apron, and also short enough modestly to show the undeniable symmetry of her ankle, fitted closely by light blue cotton stockings of her own knitting. Her shoes were decorated with large silver buckles, reaching entirely across the instep.

In the eyes of her lover, Alley had never looked more beautiful than on this evening. He, too, was a fine young fellow, just such a one as we would willingly give Alley for a husband: above the middle size, well formed, with a handsome and intelligent face, full of the smiles and the fire of youth, the result of a mind at ease, ingenuous, yet bold withal; and there was a manly dash in his bearing that became his years; he was just entering his twenty-first spring.

It might have been said, indeed, that Pierce Shea was, in other respects, a step above Alley. Although her education had not, according to the notions and opportunities of the time, been neglected, his was more perfect; as, at ten years of age, he had left the humble schools in the neighbourhood, for the best polish and acquirements the adjacent city of Kilkenny, apart from its college, could afford. In birth, too, he had a nominal advantage, being the only son of the only son of an old officer, who, about forty years before, retired to the country to assist his half-pay with farming pursuits and industry. Altogether, Pierce was, to the rustic community around, an incomparable person; and, while admiring tongues declared him a match for any lady in the land, evil ones

thickness, the colour of his hair; his eyes fell far into their sockets, and his cheek-bones pushed out proportionably with his forehead, so that the eyes glared as from a recess; then, his cheeks were pale, hollow, and retiring; his nose, of the old Milesian mould, long, broad-backed, and hooked; his jaws came unusually forward, which caused his teeth to start out from his face; and his lips, that, without much effort, never closed on those disagreeable teeth, were large, fleshy, and bloodless, the upper one wearing, in common with his chin, a red beard, just changed from the down of youth to the bristliness of manhood, and as yet unshaven. These features, all large to disproportion, conveyed, along with the unpleasantness deformity inspires, the expression of a bold and decided character; and something else besides, which was malignity or mystery, according to the observation or mood of a curious observer. Had they, together with the enormous head, been placed on the shoulders of a man of large size, they would not perhaps have created much extraordinary remark; but attached, in the present instance, to a trunk considerably below the height of even men of low stature, their unnatural proportion probably heightened their unfavourable expression, and joined to another cause we shall have occasion to notice, created, among his rustic compeers, a feeling of dislike and dread for their possessor; repelling all freedom, which, by the way, he did not seem anxious to encourage.

Having said this young person was very short in stature, it should be added, that he was not at all deformed. Across his shoulders and breast, indeed, was a breadth that told more for strength than proportion, and his arms were long, and of Herculean sinew; but the lower part of the figure, hips, thighs, and legs, bespoke vigour and elasticity, rather than clumsiness; and it was known that, strange-looking as the creature might be, he could run, leap, or wrestle, with a swiftness and dexterity seldom matched among men of more perfect shape and more promising appearance.

He took no share in the diversions of the evening, but seated far back on the hob, so far that the blaze of the fire shone between him and the others, and gave occasion to Paudge Dermody to remark, "that he looked like the ould bouchal\* himself, in the middle of his own place," he seemed busily employed in whetting a rusty bill-hook, while, from under the shade of an old broad-leafed hat—formerly belonging to Anthony Dooling, that from constant wear had become much wider than at first, and was, therefore, squeezed with a small hay rope, causing it to flap, in many irregular bends,

\* Old Nick.

around his face—the fiery eyes glanced round, and were clandestinely and sternly fixed, now on one, now on another, with a dangerous or hidden meaning.

Anthony Dooling, by frequent applications to the copper can, became at the long run, as he would himself term it “*suguch*,” in Scotch, *fou*; Anglied, approaching to intoxication; and his temper grew, consequently, irritable. In this mood, the grating of the bill-hook against the whet-stone, so much in discord with the harmony of Andrew Muldowny’s pipes, offended his ears, and more than once he called out to the operator to stop. Finding himself unheard or unheeded—

“What are you grinding that for?” he asked, in angry tone, of Crohoore, the name of the person we have just described; but a surly look was the only answer.

“Did you hear me spakin’ to you, *a vchoon grawnna*?”\*

Anthony went on; and subdued resentment, at the disgraceful and stinging term applied to him, knitted Crohoore’s brow as he slowly raised his head to answer.

“What am I grindin’ it for? I know, now, it’s myself you mane,” the man replied; “I thought, afore, you were discorsin’ the piper.”

“You didn’t!” retorted Anthony, springing up in wrath, at the brisk tone of his insignificant cow-boy; “no, you didn’t think any such thing, *a-vich-na-sthreepeen*!”†

Another savage look was given in exchange for this opprobrious epithet.

“None o’ your dog’s looks!” continued Tony, replying to it; “take yourself to bed out o’ that, since your black heart won’t let you share in the innocent diversion.”

The vanithee here interfered in a mild, beseeching tone, and said to her husband, “Never mind him, Tony a-roon; he’s doin’ no harm, poor crature.”

“No harm, woman! arrah, bad end to me, but his black looks ’ud turn the May-day into winter—go to your bed, I say,” roared Tony.

Crohoore rose from the hob to go; he slowly laid the bill hook where he had been sitting; his brows were knit closer than ever, his teeth clenched, and his eyes rolling.

“And do you hear me, bull-head?” the angry master continued, “don’t let it be wid you as it was this morning; have the cows in the bawn by the first light, or I’ll break every bone in your lazy skin.”

The dwarf, as he may be called, was passing his harsh master while these words ended, and he fixed the full meaning of

\* Ugly wretch

† Son of a jade.

his look on Anthony, and said, "That same 'ud be nothing new, for tryin' at laste; it's an old trick you have."

"What's that you say, there, you *shingawn*\* you?" questioned Tony, his passion raised to the utmost at thought of a saucy answer from a creature so contemptible.

"An' it's well you know I *am* a shingawn, or you wouldn't be so ready with your bone-breaking," still retorted Crohoore. This was past enduring.

"Take that for a patthern!" cried Anthony, the moment the speech was uttered, raising his clenched and ponderous hand, and dealing the miserable offender a violent blow with the whole force of his arm. Crohoore spun round and fell; his head, as he went down, striking against a chair so smartly as to draw the blood in some profusion.

The piper stopped suddenly; the dance ceased, and Pierce Shea was the first to raise and support the senseless Crohoore, while Alley, trembling and weeping, gave him a handkerchief to bind the wretch's temples, and stanch the welling blood. Cauth Dooling, with eyes of pity, looked at her husband, fully comprehending his feelings, as he stood the picture of shame, sorrow, and repentance. Indeed, the blow had scarcely been given, when, from the bottom of his heart, he blamed and hated himself for it; and, in his present mood, he would have offered half his little wealth as atonement.

Crohoore, suddenly recovering, sprung on his legs, and freed himself from his supporter with a force that made him reel, and a manner that seemed to spurn all obligation; his face was horribly pale, covered with blood, and every hideous feature rigid in checked passion. Without opening his lips, he dropped his head upon his breast, and trying to walk, but staggering, crossed the apartment to an opposite door that opened into a passage, through which he should go to the loft where he slept. While the whole group looked on with wonder and alarm, Anthony called after him, and in a crying voice said, can in hand, "Crohoore, a-vich machree, come back an' make it up; dhrink to me, an' be friends."

But there was no reply to this pacific and penitent overture; Crohoore only turned round his ghastly face on his master, as he held the door in his hand, gave him one parting look, and then banged the door after him. That look was afterwards well remembered, and often commented upon.

Anthony set himself down without speaking. He felt a return of dudgeon at the manner in which his advances had been received, and this in some degree served to reconcile his

\* *Shingawn*, a diminutive being.

conscience to the cruelty he had been guilty of. But a general damp fell over the whole party, and its effects soon became visible; the workmen, silently or in whispers, withdrew to an outhouse, where they slept, and the now superfluous piper as silently plodded after them. Pierce Shea took his leave, but not without his parting kiss from Alley, and the renewal of an understanding with her and the old people to call for them next morning, at a very early hour, when all were to set off to the chapel for the six o'clock mass, it being the practice throughout Ireland, whenever it can possibly be done, to assemble at devotion before daybreak on the Christmas morning.

### CHAPTER III.

At half-past four o'clock the following Christmas morning, Pierce Shea rode into the farm-yard of Anthony Dooling, and dismounted at the door where he had lingeringly bidden adieu to Alley on the former night. His stout horse, ready caparisoned for the intended journey to a chapel about three miles distant, was provided with a pillion, on which his mistress was to be seated. He got the door open, and thence concluded his friends were up and ready to receive him. Some surprise ensued, however, on entering the kitchen, the scene of the last night's festivity, to find no appearance of any person stirring. There were a few decaying embers on the hearth, but, except the feeble light they gave to the immediate spot on which they glimmered, all else was darkness, and a dead silence prevailed.

He became convinced, from these appearances, that none of his friends or their servants had yet arisen; and he was therefore astonished at having found the door open. He groped towards the fireplace, in the hope of finding, what in reality was there, a rushlight left on the hob overnight for the purpose of being lit at the turf embers; on his way his foot struck against something on the floor: he stopped, felt about for it, and took it up. It was a bill-hook. He laid it on the hob, and lighted the candle.

"Heaven protect and save me! what is this?" Pierce now ejaculated, perceiving, by the light of the candle, his hands bloody. He paused a moment to reflect how it could have occurred, and then brought to mind that the bill-hook had felt moist in his grasp. He took it up again; it was besmeared with clotted gore.



A rapid conviction of the frightful manner in which it had been used darted across his mind. Murder had been committed!—The open door, and the silence that prevailed when he expected to have found his friends ready to set out on their pious journey, were now dreadfully accounted for. The inmates of the once happy house were no more, and the murderers had left the door open at their hurried departure.

A youthful, ardent, and devoted lover, such as Pierce Shea then really was, may picture the state of his thoughts and feelings as he stood, paralysed with the almost certainty that his adored mistress, his all but wife, had, during the few hours between their last loving kiss and the present moment, been hurried into eternity, and, by the arm of midnight murder, torn from him for ever. The contemplation of deliberate murder, to an innocent mind, and even where one is not personally concerned in the victim's fate, commands a sensation of unmingled horror; but when the slayer's red hand is thrust into a bosom, hitherto the seat of happiness, to tug away its heart-strings, dreadful and indescribable must be that anguish!

Pierce Shea felt himself sicken, and his head grew dizzy; he staggered, and would have fallen, but that the wall gave timely support. His mind became a chaos; the rich colour fled his cheeks, his teeth chattered, the flesh crept along his bones, and every joint failed, as with eyes starting from their sockets, and his hair bristling on his head, he firmly clutched the candle in one hand, and, by its dim light, stared at the bloody weapon he held in the other. A considerable time elapsed before he could commune with himself, but at last he was able to groan out:—

"In the name of the Saviour, on his own blessed morning, I will see what is the matter;" and he tottered forward with a desperate resolution to know the worst.

We have before mentioned a little boarded parlour, entered from the kitchen, the state-room of the farmer's house; this he gained. A door at one side of it opened into Alley's bed-chamber, and another at the opposite side into that of the old couple; he rushed through the former, and, panting with terror, approached Alley's bed. The bed had been lain in, but was now empty. His eye rolled slowly round the room, daring certainty, yet almost sure of lighting on the cold corpse of her he loved—no such object appeared. The clothes she had worn on the preceding night next became a subject of his search; they were not to be seen either. He returned to the bed—there was a mark of a large bloody hand on the sheets. He dashed to the opposite door, burst it in, and in his desper-



Roused by his voice, the men who slept without ran, half-dressed, to inquire into the cause of the outcry; to their impatient questions he could only answer, that black murder had been committed; while they, more calm than he was, proceeded to investigate the bloody business. Left alone, Pierce, conceiving that Alley might have sought safety at his father's house, it being the nearest, and one in which she would be sure of protection, hastened thither to inquire: perhaps she had shunned the direct way that he came, and chosen a less open and dangerous one. As he passed out, circumstances that had previously escaped his notice, his mind being absorbed by other emotions, now presented themselves. The corner cupboard that decorated the parlour, and which had been furnished with some substantial plate, appeared open, and rifled of its contents; and the desk, too, in which it was known to Pierce the old man kept his money, lay wrenched asunder and empty, its papers strewn the ground. After a look at these matters, Pierce mounted his horse, and galloped to his father's.

Meantime the workmen, three in number, and who were Paudge Dermody, Andy Houlohan, Pierce's foster-brother, and Shamus Whelan, went over the house, and saw the scenes and sights we have already described. For some time they scarce spoke to each other, so powerfully did the appearance of the corpses of their old master and mistress seize on their minds and feelings. In the heavier woe of that loss, poor Chevaun was almost forgotten; even Paudge seemed entirely occupied, without a thought of his generous admirer, partly, it was supposed, on account of having never felt much flattered, notwithstanding Chevaun's riches, at her preference. After looking on the bodies of the old people, the three men hastened into the kitchen, as if glad to escape from the immediate presence of such objects; and there, securing the door, huddled together, still in silence, and labouring for breath. At last—

"It is a dhreadful murther," said Andy Houlohan, in a whisper, as, for the first time, his eyes met those of his companions.

"The most frightful ever poor sinner heard of," echoed Shamus Whelan.

"An' it was done wid his bill-hook," said Paudge Dermody, pointing to the weapon where Pierce had dropped it, when he left the kitchen to enter the little parlour; "it's their ould blood is on id."

They stooped with the candle to look closer at the instrument of death; white hairs clung to it, and they sprang back again.

"An' that very same bill-hook Crohoore was whettin' last night," said Shamus.

"Yes, when our poor masther (God rest his sowl!) sthruck him about id," Paudge rejoined.

"As sure as we live to see this holy mornin'," said Andy, "he was sharpenin' it, at the same time, to make it do his bloody work so well."

"The Lord presarve us!" all exclaimed, and crossed themselves. Shamus resumed—

"Right enough, Andy; you guessed right at the first offer. Do ye think of his look, wid his hand on the dour, when he went away bleedin', last night?"

Again they stared on each other in terrified silence, their manner and looks expressing full conviction that they had fixed the deed on the proper person.

"An' where is Crohoore himself, then?" asked Paudge, the first to start from stupid inaction, and take the necessary steps—"Let us find the murderer!" All proceeded on the search.

They gained the loft where Crohoore usually slept; he was not there, nor had he been in bed. They went through the outhouses, sheds, and stables. There was the red mark of a hand on the stable-door, near the hasp; the door was open, and the best horse gone; and footprints appeared in a heap of litter contiguous to the stable, on which it was conjectured the *shingawn* had stood to enable himself to mount the tall horse. These prints exactly corresponded to a pair of old brogues found by his bedside.

Daylight dawned while the men were vainly employed in tracing the murderer; and Pierce Shea returned, accompanied by his father, having got no intelligence of Alley, and still raving and distracted with apprehensions for her fate. He came up just as the workmen were satisfied that Crohoore was the slayer of the three human beings that lay stiff within the house, and when to this conviction another had been added, and was intimated by Shamus Whelan, the eldest of the three, whose silvered locks gave value to the solemn tone in which the following ejaculation was uttered:—

"Lord look down on you wid eyes of pity, poor Alley Dooling; the *miau*\* and the *miroch*\* has come over you in your young days; an' it would be better for you, *mille times*,† to be lyin' stretched an' dead with them that are within, this mornin'!"

"Then you know about her?" said Pierce. "Where is she? What has become of her?"

\* Sorrow and trouble.

† A thousand times.

"Nothin', for sartin, do we know, Master Pierce, a-roon, only we make up our minds that the father's murtherer is the child's undoer," Shamus answered. The young man groaned aloud.

"Ay, God help you, a-vich, God help you; it's a mournful Christmas to you," said all.

No doubt seemed now to exist of the identity of the cruel assassin. The news had spread by this time; the neighbours crowded in to gratify, although to shock, their eyes with the evidences of the thrilling story; and amongst them came one whose words served to fix upon Crohoore the last crime attributed to him.

He told, that, having been in search of a stray sheep, he was returning home about two hours after midnight, along the road that ran at the foot of the descent on which stood Anthony Dooling's house, and there heard the quick tramp of a horse's feet behind him; and that, surprised at so unusual an occurrence, and frightened, too, on account of the fame of a desperate band of night-robbers then in existence, he had retired under the shade of a ditch to observe the horseman. The frosty moon was bright, and, whilst the rider passed, he recognised the remarkable person and face of Crohoore; and, though the horse went rapidly by, he had opportunity enough to note that, before him, the *shingawn* held with one arm something like a human figure enveloped in dark drapery. The man called after him, but Crohoore, without looking behind, put his horse to full speed, struck into the fields, and distinctly made way up one of the opposite hills, and then descended from view at the other side. \*

With this clue, Pierce Shea determined on immediate pursuit. He provided himself with arms; equipped, in like manner, Pudge, Shamus, and his foster-brother Andy; and, mounted on good horses, they set out without loss of time, resolved to persevere to the last till they should have secured the murderer, and rescued Alley, if—and the thought was heart-breaking to poor Pierce—it was not already too late to save her from a fate worse than direst death.

"An' they spent all that day and night," said the narrator of this tale, the same aged retainer of the family who, at the wake, gave the circumstantial account of his master's death here set down, to a circle of attentive and affrighted hearers, and amongst whom we still suppose him speaking:—

They spent that day an' night, an' a good part of the next day, among the bogs and mountains, an' they came home as empty-handed as they went out, an' worse, by far; for they brought poor Pierce Shea half dead to his father an' mother,

an' he's now lyin' in the hoith of a great faver, ravin' like mad; swearin' that he's up to his knees in poor Tony Doolin's blood, an' callin' to them to take the bruised head out of his sight, an' thinkin' he sees his poor Alley strugglin' wid Crohoore, an' cryin' out to him to save her; so that they're forced to have Andy Houlohan, his own nurse's child, an' another o' the sthrongest they can find, to hould him down in the bed; an' little wonder it is, God help him, that his thoughts should be runnin' on the sight he saw."

The listeners glanced for a moment at the disfigured bodies, and turned their eyes away again in haste.

"I'm tould," continued the old man, "by one o' the boys that went wid Pierce, that they met the cursed *shingaun* on the hills, that Pierce was within arm's length of him, an' that he slipt away like any *sheecog*;\* the boy himself was so tired an' kilt, I couldn't get the whole story from him; but to-morrow I'll know all about it. One thing is sartin, they cum home widout tale or tidings of Alley Doolin'; there's no knowin' where Crohoore has hid her, but it's not far away, I'm thinkin'."

"That Crohoore was always a bad sight to me," said an elderly dame, stooping across, looking cautiously around, and whispering as if she feared the walls would hear her. "I never cared to see him crossin' my road; there was somethin' not right about him; an' the look of his two eyes wasn't like any other Christhen's I ever seen; if you said 'God save you,' to him, he was never the one to give you the civil answer; I couldn't for the life o' me, think well of him, Mickie, a-roon."

"Myself always had the same mind o' the cullaun," rejoined Mickie, or Michael, "since the first hour I ever set eyes on him. I was in the field wid my poor ould masther that's gone—rest his sowl" (bending his head reverently towards the bier), "when he found the unlucky *sheecog* in the thrench; it's the six-acre field at the back o' the haggart; an' Mickie, says the masther to myself, see what God has sent us this mornin', as he tuk up the brat at the same time; that mornin' is now twenty-an'-three years ago, come next Shroft,† an' the poor sowl little thought he was goin' to be the provider for his own murtherer, when he spoke the words I tell you; no, I could never bear him sence the first moment; for when the masther held him in his hands an' looked in his face, though I'm sartin sure he was then no more nor eight or nine months born, the thing grinned up at him like a little ould man; an' it came into my head, he belonged to the good people, from that out,

\* *Sheecog*—Fairy.

† *Shrovetide*.

though I never tould my plain mind to anybody, just for fear of what you guess yourselfs.

"Well, a-roon, when Crohoore was only a weeny gorgoon, he was too sharp an' knowin' for the ouldest amongst us; an' he never did like the other brats o' boys of his age, but always went mopin' by himself; an', when every soul was asleep around him, many's the night he passed out in the most lonesome places; sayin', whenever he was missed and axed about it, that he only staid up afther the hares an' the rabbits, you know; but it was no sich thing. One time—I'll never forget it as long as I live—I was a little bit hearty,\* an' as the diaoul would have id, he came across my path, an' I gave him a kick; to be sure I done it without no raison, but the rest of the boys had a fashion of makin' him stand out o' the way; an' the liquor, that puts the fool on the best of us, being in my head, I thought I might as well have a bit o' fun as another; so I made the kick at him; but—an' may I die in sin if it isn't the blessed thruth I'm tellin'!—that very night the one cow I had was fairy-s thruck an' died."

"As sure as the day, Mickle," said Anasthause Farrel—a little old skeleton of a woman with a cracked, squeaking voice, and one side of her face a dirty purple hue, and the other pale as a corpse—"as sure as the day, what you're for sayin' is only the sartin thruth; it now comes into my mind that just tin years apast, Crohoore (save us an' keep us!) once brought a cock, an' set him to fight again' my cock, as fine a bird, of a common cock, as ever you seen; well, he set them at one another till the life was a'most gone from the both; I cotech him in id, an' gave him a luggin'; an' it's now I think of the look *he* gave *me*; an', as I'm a sinner afore God, that very day myself got the fairy-blast along the side o' my face—the marks is here to this very hour;" and she held out the side of the face alluded to, that her neighbours might have ocular testimony of Crohoore's supernatural power.

The idea that he was connected with the "good people" had before been no more than an interesting presumption, which it was pleasant occasionally to glance at over the winter's fireside; but now, under Mickle's guidance, it seemed to seize upon the minds of all the gossiping auditors; they hustled nearer, took rapid pinches of snuff, or "shoughs" of the pipe, breathed shorter, lowered their voices, and went on.

"The Lord save us!" said one, "isn't it a wondher he didn't get the 'good people' to strangle his ould mather and mistress, an' nobody the wiser, because no marks 'ud be left, an' not go to the throneble of doin' it himself, afther such a manner."

\* Tipsy.

"It's not the laste wondher," rejoined Mickle, who gave the law in fairy lore; "the good people, they say, havn't the power to take away a life; they can only spile an' wither a body entirely, like Anasthause there—but a death-blow must be struck by some livin' Christhen sowl."

"Well, well, that may be as you say it, a-roon," rejoined the former speaker; "but don't you think it the most likely thing for him to have our poor Alley among them?"

"You just guessed my mind. I'd hould a good heifer, if it war God's will I had the like, that this blessed moment she's in some o' the green raths\* they live in; sure well we know they're to be seen in plenty the very road he tuck her," answered Mickle.

"An' tell us this, Mickle—you have as good a right to know id as any other in the world, because you lived undher the same roof wid the both ever sence they were weenuchs—I hard it many a year ago, that Crohoore was dyin' in love wid Alley."

"You hard no more than the thruth, Mauga; 'twas plain to be seen as the daylight; an' I often was by when poor Tony—rest his sowl!—jibed Alley herself about id; tellin' her, as he chucked up her darlin' chin, that if she was a good colleen, he would give her Crohoore for a husband; everybody laughed at id; but myself, though I never said a word afore, always thought it 'ud end bad in the long run. Alley, poor crathur, was kind an' tinder-hearted, an', while the one and the t'other had their pluck at Crohoore, she never gave him a sour look or angry word; maybe he bewitched her, by Gor; for it was the hoith o' wondher to see her so sweet on such an ill-come *shingawn* that everybody was afeard of; an' as for himself, he never cared to do anything right that any other body bid him, but one word from Alley 'ud send him forty miles in the dead o' the night-time."

"It's sartin sure, I'm thinkin', that the news of her goin' to be married to Pierce was one reason for Crohoore's doin' what he done; an' so he whipt her off, an' tuck his revenge at the same time; for, between oursefs, Tony Doolin' was often a hard masther to him; to be sure he well deserved it, for an idle, lazy rogue as he was; bud it's what I'm goin' to say is this:—About a month or so ago, one night, instead of mindin' together the cows, he went off on his own business—you know what I mane—an' Tony found the cows sthrayin' about, an' some time after met Crohoore comin' over the stile into the *haggart*;† so he says no more but gives him a clipe of his stick that tumbles him into the litter; an' it's well I remember Cro-

\* Little hills.

† Part of a farm-yard.



hoore sayin', when he passed me afther gettin' up, '*Mu-chorpan-diaoul!*\* you'll pay for all this, together!'—an' sure he brought his own black words to pass."

Thus did the gossips run on with their shanachus till the long night wore away. The crowd of people left the wake one by one, as the morning approached; and at length there remained but three or four women, who, with half-shut eyes, and heads drooping and nodding for want of rest, scarcely attended to the melancholy and still-uttered keenthecaun. The wild song was chanted by a tall, worn woman, with matted locks and a haggard face. She changed abruptly from her praises of the deceased into the most dreadful maledictions against their murderer, and then the women were somewhat aroused; but, when suddenly starting up, and pausing for a moment, she exclaimed, "See him! he comes to hear my curses, and to look on his work!" they, too, sprang to their feet, and beheld the witch-like poetess, with eyes starting from their sockets, and her skinny arms extended, pointing at a person who stood so close to the corpses that his hand touched the old man's head. He was carefully muffled up, and his face turned away; but a second look at the diminutive figure told who he was. A momentary pause of terror ensued; and Crohoore—for it was no other than he—taking advantage of their inaction, flapped his broad-leaved old hat over his face, as if to hide some strong emotion that visibly shook him, and then, turning and walking rapidly to the unobstructed door, escaped.

The women at last shrieked wildly, and called for assistance; but, when assistance came, the intruder was beyond reach. No one could tell or conjecture how he had entered or approached the house; and, when the women were angrily questioned as to why they had not given timely alarm, they solemnly and earnestly averred, one and all, that their senses had become paralyzed, fairy-stricken in fact, by his presence. Anasthause was among them, the most eloquent and impressive of the group; for she declared that the moment she saw Crohoore, the purple side of her face had grown scorching hot, and the ghastly side "could as the clay; and once more she proffered, in support of her assertions, and to sight and touch, the two-handed face, that looked like an ill-baked cake, burned on one side and left raw on the other.

\* An imprecation.

## CHAPTER IV.

ON the night of the murder of her father and mother, Alley Dooling was startled from a sleep more than usually profound, the consequence of her exercise of the day and night, by becoming sensible of rough personal violence. When first awakened, she strove to look around her, but her eyes were blindfolded; then she tried to rise, but a strong hand pressed heavily on her chest, and some person was in the act of squeezing violently round her mouth a tight-folded linen cloth; so that not only was she effectually prevented from screaming, but scarcely could she even breathe. Her arms and ankles, too, were firmly bound, and all struggles to free herself, to speak, or give alarm, proved ineffectual.

When the bandage round her mouth had been well secured, the weight on her chest, so far as her bewildered senses could comprehend what was going forward, ceased to inconvenience her, and along with her day-clothes (in which, with an idea of being ready dressed for Pierce Shea's early call, she had lain down), poor Alley was wrapped in the coverlet of the bed, and then lifted up by a powerful arm.

During all this she had heard no voice; short, thick breathings, as of one hastily and laboriously employed, alone came against her face; but, as she was raised up, an indistinct curse, grumbled in a low murmur, reached her ear, and she became convinced that she was treated in this ruffian sort by one not of her own sex. Suddenly disturbed in so frightful a manner from her sleep, excess of terror at the discovery completely overpowered her, and she fainted away.

The cold and pinching blast of the winter's night restored her to animation; but her thoughts continued vague, as if in a terrific dream, and she was just sensible of being borne rapidly along in the clutch of some person of great strength. The bandage that had been tied across her mouth loosened and fell off for a moment, and she screamed aloud; and suddenly the person who bore her stopped, and it was again fastened on with such increased pressure and violence, that Alley's breath and senses again failed her, and she relapsed into a swoon.

When recovered from the second fit, eyes and mouth were both free, all muffling having been removed; her self-possession gradually returned, and she could ascertain her situation. She was on horseback, and a man's arm, from behind, passed round her waist. The frosty air had benumbed her flesh, and

tingled even through her bones; her teeth chattered, and every joint shook with weakness, fright, and cold. Fearfully and slowly did she now turn her head to look into the face of her conductor. The moon flared broadly upon that face as her eyes fixed on it, and discovered the hideous features of Crohoore, deadly pale, distorted with passion, and stained with blood. Only a few inches' space was between them at this dread recognition, and his small red eye shot fire into her blue one during the hasty glance in which it was made.

Shrieking, and sickened at the bottom of her soul, Alley turned away her head. All the hints she had previously received of his dark and savage nature, and all the warnings to keep him at a distance and be on her guard against him, recurred to her affrighted memory, and she gave herself up as utterly lost. She shrank from the rude clasp of his arm, she writhed, she loathed his touch, his nearness to her, his very existence. She could not bring herself to speak to him, although the speech were for mercy, and although persuasion was her soul's only hope in her present terrible circumstances, and more terrible prospects; so that for some time not a word was uttered between them.

At last, however, the master-impulse humbled every other feeling; and, suddenly turning round, Alley exclaimed:—

"In the most holy name, Crohoore, where are we going, and where are you dragging me?"

"You're going to your only home, Alley, where woe and sorrow wait to meet you," he answered.

"What do you mean by that?" she resumed. "Crohoore, as you hope to see the light of the world to come, carry me back to my own home—to my father!"

He remained silent; from what motive, whether through sullenness or cruelty, or from abstraction of thought, it was impossible to discover. Alley could only repeat her passionate adjuration, to which the dwarf at length replied:—

"Alley, Alley, you and myself, this night, are two unfortunate, miserable creatures!" and then he immediately increased the speed of his horse, holding Alley tighter on her seat, and from the swiftness of their course, and her exhausted and agitated state, she could not continue the conversation.

She imagined, however, that she recognised the country on each side as they passed along, and that she was contiguous to her father's house; but even this the speed and her fluttered state of mind rendered doubtful. In a little time they proceeded at a less violent rate, and then Alley thought she heard a voice calling from behind, and she screamed for assistance; when Crohoore, with much dexterity, holding her on her seat

or pressing his elbow against her breast, put his hand on her mouth; and resumed a full gallop.

Dashing from the road into the fields, they had to go over the flat country, and with scarcely slackened pace ascended one of the low chain of hills which, Alley now perfectly recollected, were situated but about a quarter of a mile from her father's house. Descending on the other side, they rapidly traversed a large extent of wild and dreary bog; again ascended and descended other small hills, and continued for some time their journey among them. It was remarkable with what certainty Crohoore travelled a waste of marsh and mountain so pathless and difficult; his rein was, indeed, now and then tightened in consequence of the difficulty of the footing; but not for a moment was he at a loss to make out the proper and only way through bogs where a single false step, at one side or the other, would have sunk his horse to the shoulders, and something baffled, if it did not entirely impede, his progress.

Alley employed such occasional relaxations of speed in endeavouring to move the pity of her stern guardian; but he persevered in a deep and unaccountable silence. Once or twice they passed close by a cabin, of which a few were scattered at a distance from each other through those desolate places, scarcely distinguishable in the moonlight, on account of their similarity of colour, and indeed material, from the turf-clamps, tufts of rushes, or barren knolls, by which they were surrounded; and still hoping to bring some person to her relief, Alley, in approaching these wretched hovels, cried out with all her might, Crohoore not now interfering to prevent her. But her cries were unheard; or, if heard, the inmates only crossed themselves, and prayed to be delivered from the unhallowed wanderers of the night.

They had crossed over one range of hills, and they again pressed against another range, of what the inhabitants call mountains, but which were not of sufficient elevation to lay claim to that title; they were, however, abrupt, fatiguing to ascend, barren and dreary, chequered with heath and furze, and here and there a stunted oak, the relics of the large woods that about fifty or sixty years before had overspread the district. Through these wilds Crohoore for some time journeyed, and at last, after looking long and carefully around him, suddenly halted, dismounted, and helped the suffering Alley also to descend from her irksome situation. He placed her on her feet, forgetting that, from cold and fatigue, and misery of mind, as well as from the bonds which tied her ankles, it was impossible she could stand; and so Alley no sooner touched the ground, and was deprived of his support, than she fell

prostrate. Instantly he stooped to raise her, and his savage nature seemed touched with pity; for low moanings escaped him, when he saw her tender ankles cut and bleeding from the pressure and friction of the rude cord that bound them. Still on his knees, he hastily undid that cord; then gave liberty to her arms also, and led her a step forward.

Alley, unmindful of everything but her misfortunes, had not observed that they were at the door of a miserable cabin, at which Crohoore stopped, and, with the butt-end of a pistol which he drew from his breast, knocked loudly. There was a long pause, and no answer. He knocked again, still louder, and to his second summons a squeaking, querulous voice sounded from within, asking, who was there?

"It is I, Crohoore," he answered; the harsh voice screamed some observation in a dissatisfied cadence; footsteps were then heard inside, and lights shot through the chinks of a badly-made and half-rotten door, which, after many shakings and creakings, at last half opened.

From the vision that appeared, Alley drew back in natural terror. She had heard tales, such as all country girls hear, of witches scudding on the blast, and hiding themselves in holes and corners to do deeds of wickedness; and she thought just such a being stood before her. It was a crone much under the middle size of women, and made still lower by an unusual bend in her back, which sent her shoulders and head forward and down, almost to a level with her hips. Her face might seem a parchment mask, loosely adapted to the staring bones, and therefore shrivelled up into innumerable wrinkles, which ran lengthways and crossways, and here and there, without union, beginning, or end; and of this face the chin came out like a pointed horn, and the mouth, when closed, was but one of the many wrinkles around it; and, when open, showed bloodless gums, without teeth. Matted grey hairs hung down the cheeks, escaping from an old red handkerchief that entirely covered her head, and was knotted under the stringy throat. The rest of the figure, with its costume, does not invite description: it was withered skin and bone, foul and disagreeable, with but a few shreds of covering. The only trait about the animate mummy which interested, and to which one would turn again, though not for gratification, was her eyes; and they indeed possessed a strange vivacity, if not energy, unfitted and unnatural to such a carcass.

She held up a lighted rushlight as Crohoore entered, bearing, or rather forcing in, his instinctively resisting companion. The beldam viewed them closely, a moment, with half-shut eyes; then the wrinkled lids suddenly expanded, and while

her looks, flashing on Crohoore, expressed all the impotent frenzy of age, she squeaked out in the shrillest key.—

“Villian o’ the world! an’ you dared disobey my commands? didn’t I warn you, on peril of the hereafter, not to lay hands on Alley Dooling? Ugly *shingawn!*—be your misdeeds on your own head!”

“Whisht, whisht, now, *asthore,*” said Crohoore, hastily, though not angrily; and then he whispered something—a few words only, yet they seemed to convulse his frame through every fibre. The hag whispered in her turn, and his paroxysm gained its height; he started back, trembled still more violently, grew more deadly pale, and cast a mournful, or, at least, strange glance on the poor terrified Alley. She, eagerly catching at the change that took place in the features of her extraordinary conductor, again tried every appeal to divert him from the infamous intentions she believed he held towards her. Flinging herself on her knees, and using the Irish language, the sound and idiom of which she conceived might have most effect on him—

“In the name of the God of Heaven, Crohoore, Alley said, “be not to me, the only child of your old master and mistress, the villain you intend to be! think and repent in time! restore me to my father this blessed Christmas morning, and you shall not only be forgiven, but, I swear by my father’s soul, you shall be rewarded!”

During this address Crohoore groaned fearfully, staggered backward, leaned against the damp wall of the wretched hut, spread his hands over his face, and Alley saw, with astonishment and delight, tears of, she hoped, pity and repentance forcing their way through his fingers, and running along the backs of his hands. “You *will*, Crohoore,” she then continued, clinging to him—“you will take compassion on me, and bring me home to my poor father?”

But now the wretched girl was, for the first time, to learn the extent of her misery. Crohoore uncovered his face, which horror, grief, despair, and every frightful passion seemed to agitate; then he advanced a few steps, stood over her as she knelt, and with a voice choked and almost inaudible, said, “Woe, woe be to you, child of the Doolings! and double woe to myself, miserable crature that I am! Alley, Alley, you have no father, you have no mother!—their blood is swimming about them—they are both murdered!” She gave one piercing shriek, and fell, in strong convulsions, on the wet earthen floor.

When she recovered, she found herself in a different apartment from that where she had fainted, and of which the aspect

was entirely new to her; she had never before seen one like it. The walls around were built of solid masonry; and overhead, instead of the bare thatch of the cabin, there was a ceiling of some black timber, from the middle of which hung, by a cord, part of an old metal pot filled with grease, and this fed the flame of a rag that sent its flickering and lurid beam around the unplastered sides of the ample chamber. In a remote corner stood a dirty deal table, and a few chairs of the commonest kind; and on one of the two squalidly-furnished beds which the place also contained Alley was lying. It appeared extraordinary, however, that in the midst of shreds and tatters, and vile furniture, the materials of her bed should be feathers, a luxury then almost unusual 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; and 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.

## 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, however, that anything mortal could have traversed the lonesome and treacherous marsh at that untimely hour; and 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, but, 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; for, 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, even though she were hid in the bowels of the earth. 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 appeared no more than a puny, gurgling thread of water, spinning about the large rocks that strewed its channel; but the channel itself was ten feet and upwards in depth, and, at the least, from twenty to thirty in breadth, showing that, at times, 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 castle squares so frequent in Kilkenny and some neighbouring counties, built, most probably, by the English settlers of the Pale and their successors, and which 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 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 fire and 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 sudden shelter now becoming every moment more necessary. The deepest shade of night had almost fallen; the heavy wreaths left the mountain tops, and floated as clouds before the summoning 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, and the hills scanty and coarse provender; they brought timber from the wood, and in the middle story, to which they ascended by 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 had soon to congratulate themselves on these precautions. The wind blew a storm, and dismally howled through the doorless building, agitating the blaze round which they sat, through the slits in the narrow walls, formerly constructed rather with a view to safety than convenience, or as much to serve as loopholes, from which to annoy an enemy, as for windows to admit the light. The rain descended in sheets; and 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 in 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 to make way homeward through the dreary paths they had to travel in so gloomy a night. After their repast, the men felt the influence of the fatigue they had undergone during the day; and, in a little time, their discourse flattened, and one by one they stretched themselves by the fire and fell asleep—all but Pierce Shea, the state of whose mind naturally kept him waking. His feelings were in accord with the night and his 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 away from 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, and perhaps hoping something, he knew not what, Pierce muffled himself in his greatcoat, 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; and 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; and he heard nothing 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 decayed; but light enough still remained to show that, with the exception of his foster-brother Andy, the men continued to sleep soundly; and Andy, if not asleep, seemed bewitched. On the spot where Pierce had seen him stretch himself, the man now knelt, the aft part of his large and gaunt person resting on his heels; his head and body thrown back, as if to avoid something he feared would touch him; and his left arm extended at full length, to prevent a too near approach; while, with his right fist desperately clenched, he smote his obviously 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 out-stretched 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 nearer home from the vacuum on which they had been set, he recognised his foster-brother. But this caused no abatement to his orisons, if we except a change in the tone of delivery, Andy continuing at length, and without answering Pierce's question, till he had finished the whole catalogue; and, as it is suspected he had never burthened his mind with more of any one prayer than, by mere force, his mother compelled him to learn in infancy, and as, at this time of day, even those scraps 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, and,—

"Arrah, then, Master Pierce, a-roon, is id yourself?" h 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, a-vich?"

"Her! who?"

"That cursed—och, asy, Andrew! hould a guard over your tongue, and mind what you're for sayin'; I mane the blessed body that was here."

"Andy! God send! 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 Paudge, 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 ould ways, bud let the thing out, clever and clane, at once."

"Go on!" roared Pierce.

"Wait a bit, a-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, "No use!" then, altering his plan, 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-chorp-an-diaoul!*—oh, Chrosth-Christha!" and he drew his thumb over his forehead, as, conscience-smitten at his own untimely impiety, he looked around; "we must bar cursin' and swearin' till we get out o' this, any how; bud, if ye war to see what myself seen, you wouldn't spake a word fur this good twelvemonth to come—well, Pierce, a roon, I'll thry to think iv id, an' don't be looking so dushmal; I'd better 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 unlooky dhrames, an' so id turned out this time. I thought to myself I seen poor Alley lying on the flure, fornent me, a corpse like, only there was no one to wake

her, or keenth 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 iv a sudd'n an came over to me, without walkin', an' never an eye in her head, only the bare sockets; an' 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' dhramin' 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' didn't waken at all, an' I rubbed my cyes hard, wid my knuckles, to make sartin; for it was then I seen what was enough to kill dead any Christhen cratur—standin' close by you, Shamus." Shamus startled; 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, for the windin' sheet had the clay all over id; her eyes, as red as fire, starin' into mine; an' not the laste like any iv ours, blest be the hearers, bud, for all the world, as if you rammed two red coals into a shkull you'd get in a church-yard, or a place of the kind; an' there was nothin' on the fatures iv her, or id, or whatever the diaoul (och! whisht, Andy, an' don't let one of us say the diaoul's name again fur 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 id as any of us could scrape a bone the hungriest day he ever saw, an' then not a word I could let out; an' 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; an', faith, the first word was enough for her; aha! she didn't like that sort o' talk, I'm thinkin'—but that's betuxt oursefs—it's little iv id goes far wid'm, where she came from; so out she druv, through that weeny split in the wall, as asy as mysef 'ud go out in the door, beyant; an'—bud, tunther-an'-ouns (God forgive me)! do ye mind *that*?"

On his knees Andy again dropped, and into his old position; and, not forgetting his prayers, 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 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.

\* Ghost.

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 gorgoon, Shamus? Paudge, won't you run afther 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 'ud we go? what good 'ud the likes iv 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 iv 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 exert his own natural wish for a joke.

"It's fitter fur him nor fur 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 listenin' to all he said iv her." Andy groaned an assent.

"But come, boys," Paudge went on, "we'll go all together, to end disputes."

"For certain that's the only way," said Andy: "bud you, Shamus, agra, you have your prayers betther nor myself or Paudge by far; little blame to you, as you're ould enough to be the father iv us, an' had the time for id; 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; so—

"Never say it again," answered Shamus, in a laughable effort at 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, and "Whisht!" said Shamus, in an emphatic whisper.

"Go on with your prayers, Shamus, honey," said Andy, very imploringly.

\* Priest.

"Come down! come down!" cried Pierce, from the apartment below.

"Oh, Veeha-vaughal!"\* exclaimed Andy, "she has a hould iv 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, a-chorra!"

"Here I am, Andy," answered Pierce, much nearer to Andy than he had imagined; who started back, and shouted still louder, at the sudden and close sound of his voice.

"But, are you dead or alive, a-vourneen?" he continued, recovering his senses.

"I'm no worse than I was, Andy."

"Are you sure you're not spiled, entirely, a-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, a-vich?" the other men now bobbed up against him; he had not heard their approach, the wind howled so loudly; and,

"Murther!—who's that?" he bawled out.

"It's only myself, Andy," answered Paudge.

"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 such 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 *omadhaunst*† in the world, to be stoppin' any honest *thigha* that maues us no harm?"

His companions silently assented, and all withdrew towards

\* Virgin-mother.

† Naturals.

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; and, 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?" asked 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, please God."

"I hope not, blessed be his holy name!" said Shamus.

"An' wasn't id a great good loock we warn't in her road, Shamus? she'd cripple us for ever. Bud, boys, fur your lifes, 'on't tell poor Pierce a word iv her goin' out; he'd be thrapsin after her thro' the rain an' wind, an' get his killin'; little duv 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 now found his valiant men on 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 nothing to fear. Blowing with his breath, he endeavoured to create a glare; the brand flickered a little, but not enough 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 exhortation 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 slowly 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 journey after Crohoore and Alley, resolving to spend this day even more assiduously than the former one, as 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 they 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, and 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 the first step that commanded a view of the fierce race; and, indeed, the distance between them and the contenders rendered useless any immediate attempt at approach, for the contest must have ended before they could come up to either: at least so they seemed to think, 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, "for the swiftest foot in Clarah is aafter you!"

"An' run your best, too, Pierce Shea!" echoed Paudge, "for 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-Christh! 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 id!"—Andy went on with increased energy—"the banks are brimful!—see how it tears along, over stone and rock, a good eight yards across! mort'l man can't clear it!—Ay, Pierce, agra, there you'll have him!—run, run, an' don't give him the turn to the bridge!—ma bouchal you war! run!—dar Dhea! bud it's a wicked race between them!"

Here all the men at last set forward to the scene of struggle, Paudge 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, and 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, but 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, as if in triumph, over him. Crohoore gained, still running, a spot where, at his side, the wild stream struck and eddied against the bank; and 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, Andy 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; and 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, and wheeled him into the eddy, from the fury of the stream, and, then seizing Pierce by the hair, drew him up, to all appearance gone for ever.

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 his temples and his 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, shrunk, 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 you there? Speed your ways round by the bridge, an' never mind the leap; *I can't stop here, an' Pierce Shea wants a hand to help him!*" and he turned to go away.

"Stand your ground, Crohoore!" said Andy, who, now that no *thighs* 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, and smiled in savage scorn and indifference; when he moved again, Andy's gun, and two pistols held by Paudge 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, however, pushed the hat from his eyes, and approached as near as the water would let him.

"You're just a set of *sprissauns*,"\* he said; "do you think I'd stop where I am if I had any fear your guns could do me harm?—the life o' one o' you is now in my hand 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 gorgoon where he can have heat and comfort, or his death be on your heads, not mine;" and 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.

## 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 Ned Shea, Pierce's father, or Tony Dooling. His sire we may 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: accordingly, he was known as a dashing fellow; to use the local idiom, "a tatterin', tearin' fellow;" dressing well, doing

\* Silly fellows.

what he liked, riding a great active horse, and the altogether of his appearance and figure a medium between the blood of the neighbouring town and the rustic *boulamskeach*,\* whose glory was gathered by fighting at fairs or patterns, and drinking inordinate potions of bad beer in hedge alehouses. Not that Jack himself did not, now and then, condescend to eclipse at a pattern, and then happy and envied was the girl who had him for a dance; 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; Rhia Doran, or King Doran, being generally one of his appellations. 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, and absolute reign he had, just as he wished it; none dared say him nay, for treason to Rhia 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, as 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 this glory up, in his own person—for he lived as gaily and as idly as any of his offspring—and in their persons, too, 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; and 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 downright pot, chokefull of money. The story was differently told, but thus by himself:—

Passing by a monastic ruin, in a neighbouring town, one moonshiny 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 in digging the rubbish. They wrought hard, and not in silence; and from their conversation he could discover they were digging for nothing more or less than a huge pot of gold, which

\* *Boulamskeach*.—Some perversion now prevails of the use of this word. Its ancient meaning was *fine-shield-striker*; its present we have glanced at above.

one of them had three times dreamt was buried in that very place. Suddenly they stopped; and—

"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 they then 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, laving spade, and pickaxe, 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; and 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; and 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 son's extravagance; 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 Rhia 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 this well-turned flattery; 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; but, 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 enduring for her sake, and she seemed to enjoy his disgrace; he saw her titter and point at him, and then, with mock gravity, make him a parting adieu.

No matter; Rhia 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 almost in daily practice, and even at this

day of frequent occurrence; he watched his opportunity; made a forced *enlève*; 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 Kilkenny, to hire a number of reapers, who at that season always repair in swarms to the streets of large towns, awaiting bidders; and 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 sprung to her, seized the horse by the bridle, 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 one 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 the murderous alpeens, wielded by the most experienced hands, and blithe and ready for just such a field, came down 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; and 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 another, 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 Shen, came up; and 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 Rhia Doran's, and she with the warm stream that flowed from his temples.—This adventure extinguished altogether Alley's desire for extensive conquests; and 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; but 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 salvos and cataplasms, made up by all the old doctresses in the parish;

though many there were of great celebrity as rural *medecins* in the neighbourhood.

At the time of our history, such an outrage as that perpetrated by Jack Doran, was looked upon more as a chivalrous exploit, deserving a degree 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.

This affair took place in the harvest before the opening of the story, and is here related in order that the following dialogue may be understood. The speakers were old Ned Shea and Jack Doran; the scene in Shea's house; the accompaniment a huge jug of strong ale, homebrewed, of course, and then the only common drink of those who could not every day afford wine.

"Give me your hand, Jack; *Dhar lav ma chordius chrecte!*\* 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 'ud be the friend instead of the foe?—My notion of you always was, that you were a scatterbrain-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 *colleent*† from me; and 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, to suit his careless words, 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

\* "By the hand of my gossip!" a common asseveration among the old folk.

† *Colleen*, young lass.

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 wasn't so ugly then as it is now, you know"—and he grinned again, in such a 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; and 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 through fire and water at the turn of my hand, and we have them far and near, at a pinch; and 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."

"*Slauu-tha-guth*, Jack! I hope poor Pierce will live to give you the thanks you deserve; but the gorcoon is in a bad way now, Jack;" the old man let a tear drop into his cup;—"I pray God to lave 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 creature: 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 up-rise 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; and, as he resumed his seat, Jack gave the old man's 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; and 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 profession 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: and this view of his situation first helped to make the Irish peasant a White-boy.

But perhaps the exquisite tyranny of the merciless being into whose hands the collection of tithes had fallen gave the immediate spur to this headlong and often savage course; and, with this supposition, Peery Clancy, tithe-proctor, at the



era of our history. for the parish of Clarah, stands 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, as well as 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 a shamefaced child, that often dreaded and deserved a whipping. A certain air of purple-pride ran, meantime, through all this; and, 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 threats 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 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; and 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 the look of wealth and superiority.

His speech was made up of rude assertion and frightful oaths; and when among those who should bow to his predominance, and tolerate his insolence, full of obscene jests and fat 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 unwillingly, 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; and the 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; any cause, no matter what, Dermid could not pay him; and 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, and Peery vouchsafed some of his rude jests to the daughter or wife, which, though they made them blush, were taken 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 had been unprofitable, or the landlord had seized it for his rent; and 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; and, 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 his affairs; he begins to scowl; and thunders out, by J—— and by the Holy G—— 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; and Peery, as generally, takes the 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 day, and two “throws” of whiskey, one hundred; and here 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 a 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 and daughter might aisyly 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 sessions-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; 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 Bastile 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; walked hastily abroad; gave a kick to the idle spade he met in his way; 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, apart from the abbreviation, *Whiteboys*.

## CHAPTER VII.

RHIA 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, being frequently seen, even at a late period, always alone, and walking at a quick pace, with 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 absolute pursuers vainly looked to meet him; their path he never crossed; and while Rhia 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—still proved to no purpose: Crohoore-na-billhoge, or Crohoore of the Bill-hook, 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; and this was not thing else than a now firm opinion, established in the minds of the population of the whole country, 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. Moreover, 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 superstitions, will at once accede to the probability of such a statement: to them, however, we appeal, and leave it for them to determine.

ther 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; and 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 dropped asleep. How long he slept is unknown, when he was flattered with a smart slap on the shoulders, and desired to stir himself. "Yes, yes, a-vich, I'm comin'," said the man, scrambling up; "an' 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, losin' your night's rest to no purpose? Mind your own callin's, 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, an' 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 told you. Go your ways, Thady, and remember the friendly warnin' I give, an' 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 was quickly out of view to the mortal joy of Thady, who, by the way, attributed to Crohoore's clemency, only, the remains of the breath by aid of which he continued to mutter all the while his long bear 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 sub-

sequent inanity; and from this night forward, few were found willing to engage personally in the pursuit after Crohoore. The hint given to Thady Malone appeared to have reason in it; mortal night, 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 Rhia 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, and 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 himself, or herself, 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; and 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, come in for that

"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 a golden opinion from all sorts of people; his coming forward so actively to guard their interests in adversity, and to venture his limbs and life in their defence, who, having once been his friends, changed into his bitterest foes; this made a popular impression, the fervency of which no words could express, and, even by the soberest of his neighbours, Jack Doran's bad qualities were now forgotten. Another advantage resulted

that, in all probability, he prized much 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; Pierce could not avoid feeling gratitude and full forgiveness towards his old rival; and, when Doran once more renewed his offer to join him in all future operations, a bond of amity was immediately formed between them; his 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 Houlahan only—who at length remained the sole creature that from duty or love (other motives were out of the question) would venture to track Crohoore through his own green raths, in some one of which they believed him to be a resident—the united efforts of Shea and Doran proved useless as ever. Almost night after night, and sometimes day and night, they were on foot, or on horseback, over the country, confused rumours of Crohoore's appearances incessantly, though indirectly, reaching them; and 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 Houlahan 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 would 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, sheecog, or phooka, the fullest credence and dominion, and professed the strongest aversion to a rencontre 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 lonely 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 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; and Andy calculated that the only chance of safety to his *dolth* depended on the prudent avoiding, or conciliating, and, as he resolved that it should be, 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 was 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 continuing to obstruct all regular inquiry, and, finally grown inveterate, now refusing 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 very 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 desperadoes; and 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 at fault, and—it was rather extraordinary—without seeming to be a whit more in dread of apprehension; for to the country people, if they were belief-worthy, 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 begun, 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 just 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; and 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, and, 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 with thick and nearly impenetrable

fern-bush, tangled underwood, and dwarf thorn; and, adown 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 to be acted on by the ever-changing and wondrous aspect of nature) feel that there hung about the place a strange and 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 into 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; and, but 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 the fellow 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 sprang 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.

"Secoundrel!" said Pierce, "tell me your reason for wishing to take away my life; did I ever wrong or injure you for I cannot recollect having seen you before."

"Arrah, man, you never done anything to me," answered the surly-looking fellow.

"Why, then, did you level at my life? I am now sure was your mark."

"Sure enough," said the man.

"For what cause, I ask you again?"

"Tunther-an-ouns! how duv I know for what? ax that question iv them that sent me to do id, an' don't shake my arm afther that manner—it's smashed enough widout your help."

"And who are they that sent you?"

"Avoch, now!" was the answer.

"Well, God himself had a hand in id, 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 kilf."

Doran drew nearer.

"I'd swear upon the mass-book, Pierce," said he, "that Crohoore-na-billhoge is at the bottom of this cursed affair."

"Don't, then, a-bouchal, fur maybe you'd swear in a lie," observed the wounded man; "I got my best arm broke by it, howsomever the diaoul that happened to cum about."

"You'll suffer for this insolence as well as for the rest of the job, you villain," rejoined Doran.

"Villian! arrah, is that the word wid you? Daar Dhea, oud 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 redden 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, a-vich, you're aisy 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 out 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 fell, 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, as, 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; and—

"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 anybody comin' down from the hill, is id?"

"Yes, a-vich machree," replied Andy, now coming 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.

"But tell us, a-vourneen, if you seen any one at all at the present time."

"Hia—h! pooh—a! *gho-moch-u-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 with the loss of time.

"Asy, Pierce, agra, an' lave the diaoul's bird to me," said Andy, in a whisper: then, with his most conciliating tone to the boy—

"Tell us, won't ye, 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 plase, 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."

"Hould him fast, then, for, barrin' my eyesight'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 gorgoon," 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, the unusual circumstance of his bearing a gun, and his visible anxiety to escape observation.

Now, Andy Houlohan, for the reasons above 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 at converse together, Pierce had ascended the hill. Some men and women were at work in

\* Get out of that.

a field at a little distance below him, and to them he rapidly walked for information. After the usual salutation, "*Mara-huth*,"\* he inquired if they had seen the object of his search; but, "The Lord keep him out of our path!" and then determined silence from the whole party, was all the satisfaction he could obtain, when 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.

"Musha, what *miau* is come over you, Cauth, a-lanna-machree?" said her mother, abandoning her work, running on, squatting herself down, and looking with maternal anxiety, into the girl's face.

"Och, mother, mother, I'll never be a day the better iv id!—"

"Ochone!—iv 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 comin' along the bosheen, an' just thinkin' iv the terrible story yourself tould us about him last night, when, at the short turn hard by Mulroony's barn, where the eldher bushes makes the place so dark, I sthruck myself plump up against Crohoore-na-bill——" "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; but 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 improved speed and a renewed hope.

He gained the place, looked sharply about, and no creature was visible. In an opposite route from that 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 to 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 and still was Pierce at fault. From another

\* Good morning, &c

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 earnestly asked pardon.

"*Dhea-a-uth*,"\* said the astonished stranger.

"*Dhea-as-mayu-uth*,"† 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' mauners," 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 iv your story, an' could make a sort iv a guess to what you're about, I'm thinkin'; maybe you're not huntin' Crohoore-na-billhoge—?"

"Your guess is as true as the daylight."

"Musha, then, as good loock 'ud have id, I have a sort of a notion that maybe I'd be the very boy could tell where to find him."

"Where, where?" exclaimed Pierce.

"An' I'll be bould to say, you'd be for offerin' somethin' that 'ud be handsome fur 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' and love for *araguthchise*;‡ an' if there was sich a thing as a *guineah orrh*,|| or a thing that-a-way, an' if we war to see the face iv id, 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 sartinty," observed the man,

\* God save you.

† Money down.

‡ God and mother save you.

|| Golden guinea.

stooping down, jingling the guineas separately on a flat stone near him, and 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.

"Why, then, I'll tell you every word about id. You must know, Master Pierce, myself is none of your common counthry 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 maybe a bit o' calfskin, just as the thing hap pens 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, as from his cradle he 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 id fur to larn you that I'm not the gourloch to be frightened wid your sheeog stories, or the likes, an' fur that raison, to the ould diaoul myself bobs 'em. Well, a-roon—I overhard them sayin' id that had a good right to know all about id, as how there was a lob o' money fur the man that 'ud 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 thravels; 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 for?"

"Och, a-bouchal, there's two words to a bargain: if you war the *omadhawn* to give your money beforehand, that's no raison in life myself 'ud be over soon wid my speech."

"Rascal! do you mean to trifle with me?" rejoined Pierce, clutching his pistol.

"Be paccable, now, a-vich," said the limb o' 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 o' that when we can settle the matther in a more lawful manner?"

\* Balliffs.



Just listen to me. I was goin' to strike a bit of a bargain wid you; you must as good as take your buke oath—an' it's puttin' unheard-of thrust in you, when I havn't the buke to hand—but I hear you come of as honest a stock as myself—well, you must swear that every shillin' o' the reward, fur the cribbin' o' this bouchal, 'ill go 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'; an' tell me, duv you see no sort of a place you'd be for hiding yourself in, supposin' a body was pursuain' 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're about; I'm just a-goin' a start o' the road, to shove 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, an' 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 narrative, 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; but, at a remoter one, the conviction reigned in its glory. Here, on great occasions, did the "good people" hold their revels; and 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, under ground, 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 sherkens, 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 horrid spirits, of whose nature there existed no clear notion,

out 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 foolhardy enough to cross the forbidden stream, and so encroach on their charmed domain; and this was also fully shown by the splintered human bones that (really, however) 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 feet wide; overhung and festooned with ivy, lichen, bramble, and a variety of wild shrubs, and tenanted by the owl, the daw, and the screech owl, that made rustling and screaming exit into the daylight as soon as disturbed by an exploring foot; and 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 its containing a petrified mass that has some likeness to the ancient and curious structure so called. Indeed, throughout the whole chamber, the awful frolic of nature bears 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: by-the-way, having necessarily been formed by petrification, drop by drop, it is astounding to think of the incalculable number of years consumed in the process. And this is the regal fairy hall, and the peasants say that when the myriad crystallizations 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 some entire ones too; we 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; and 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 peasants' fine superstition, show us the misery of some former time of civil conflict, that could compel any wretched fugitive 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 the forebodings of worse horrors yet to come; and he sat stupefied 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 his 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 roundabout 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 hudgeen\* 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 phaties were rowlin' out on the table;" that is, breakfast in preparation; Andy had gone in, and (upon footing of a relationship the good people were, till then, rather unprepared to admit) 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 nogginful 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 slyly overturning the buttermilk into "a gripe," Andy approached, and drew from the animal as much "good 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 Bridge 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 scarcely 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 'ill swear the good people were aforehand wid her this mornin'."

Andy then drew from the breast of his inside coat, that now for the first time in its life had been buttoned, the half-moon of oatmeal bread; and "Now, Master Pierce, agra," he continued, "eat your 'nough as long as the vit'ls 'ill last; but sure this isn't the handsomest kind o' place we're sittin' in," staring down at the cave; "come, let us make some other spot that won't look so dushmal."

Pierce's feelings all rushed back upon him. He sprang up, and said—

"There is at present no other place for us, Andy; Cro-

\* Little honey

Halfpenny,

hoore-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 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 diaoul 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-chorra; sure you're only for jokin' me; sure you wouldn't be the mad cratur to go into that cursed hole after Crohoore?"

"Have I come here for nothing, Andy, when I know he is in it?"

"An' you're sure he is?"

Pierce gave his authority, and all the circumstances of his meeting with the law officer.

"Well, a-vich; but sure you'd have no chance iv him there, of all places on the face o' the earth, where the good people, Christ save us! are as thick as the crows about him?"

"Except it was hell itself, nothing else should stop me, Andy; and nothing shall."

"Mostha, but there's little in the differ."

Pierce's new ally, Paddy Loughnan, here interrupted the conference. Glancing enviously at Andy, he drew Shea aside, and whispered—

"Arrah, tell a body who is this wid you?"

"My own foster-brother, and you may depend your life on him."

"Bud, diaoul take him, it might happen he'd be for cryin' halves wid myself?"

"In my mind the poor fellow scarcely knows the meaning of the matter; and 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 omadhoun we want; he'll do betther than any other; an' sich a sthrong big fellow may be of service. 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 *aragath bawn*\* where the gould came from?"

Pierce handed him a shilling.

"Sweet was your fist. I've a sort of an ould horse to bring me back, an' I'll never stay leg till I'm here again. Dhea-a-ith!" and the law Mercury vanished.

From his observations of this man, and a guess at his calling, Andy comforted himself, and tormented Shea, with the expressed belief that his story of having seen Crohoore enter the cave was a falsehood, framed to get money, and that they should never again lay their eyes on him or it. "An' I'm sorry I have id to say of your father an' mother's son, bud you're ever an' always over foolish wid your money," continued Andy, who, on proper occasions, deemed it his bounden duty, being by a few years Pierce's senior, to assume the mentor with his foster-brother; though, if he examined his conscience, thriftiness was none of his own feelings.

Shea only drew a heavy sigh in answer to this observation; and, as the day wore on, Andy became more certain, and Pierce more tortured at his certainty, that Paddy Loughnan was "a bite," and that Crohoore was no more in the cave than he, Andy—"Lord keep him from any sich thing!"—was 'n it. But as it was near noon when Paddy had set off for Castlecomer, and as the distance was five miles, three hours, at least, even including the service of the "sort of an ould horse," must necessarily pass before his return; that time had scarcely yet elapsed, and Pierce, though almost hopeless from anxiety, did not therefore despair; and in fact, to his great joy, and Andy's undisguised consternation, Paddy made his reappearance 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 providentially 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 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 eye, "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."

"Considher 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 herrin'!"—struggling to keep the hand—"your bones 'ill be at the bottom o' the poochas' river!"

"Let me go, I say again!"

"Mostha!—bud sence you won't do as a body, that's fur your good, 'ud 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, at some distance.

"Let *you* hould your tongue, or I'll break every bone in your unlookky carcass," retorted Andy; "lawful!—oh, if I was near you!"

"Do you mean to restrain me by force, Andy?" asked Pierce, smiling.

"Ma-horp-an-diaoul! bud 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; and, 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 id to say he was kilt alongside o' you," Andy cried out.

"Go along out o' that wid yourself, you sprissau," growled the voice of Paddy Loughnan; "you're big enough to look at, but you havn't the heart of a slucheen!"\*

"Havn't I?" replied Andy; "havn'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 scrambling to recover it were ineffectual; and at last, content merely to grope onward to the daylight, he left it, with a hearty curse, to the phookas.

"Well, God be wid you, Pierce Shea," he said in soliloquy, again sitting down close by the entrance to the cave, "fur there's little hopes you'll ever see Clarah agin; an' where's the body that ever set eyes on you bud '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 id; 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 fur Connaught, or some sich for'n part, sooner nor face home widout my poor Pierce Shea;" and Andy wept plentifully.

"Arrah, what's the matther 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 at 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

\* A little mouse.



former horror by accounts of his well-known intimacies 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; and the rocks at each side grew browner, and the horrid yawn of the cave blacker and blacker. Their voices sunk 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 shrunk closer together, and—

"Oh, vaugh! vaugh!" cried Andy, clapping his hands—"there's an end iv 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, and 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, bare-headed, 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 id," answered Andy, feeling his bones.

"At Crohoore, was id?" continued Loughnan, in a close whisper.

"Ay, a-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, duv you come out o' your hole to ax me that question? It was all your doins! Let yourself tell me where's the poor gorgoon, or——"

"Here, man, here; take the light from my hand—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 horse-flesh 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; but 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 towards the only solace he could now know, that is, "dacent Christhen berrin'," for the remains of his delth. 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; and 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 devils.

Andy's time came for asking questions; but Pierce seemed very unwilling to give any account of his own adventure; and 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 reopened the door, for the purpose of conveying his prisoner to Kilkenny gaol, but the apartment was empty; and the name "Crohoore-na-billhoge," scrawled in bad characters on the wall, and as if written with blood, seemed plainly to indicate by whose agency the prisoner had escaped.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE last-recited adventure made a deep impression on Pierce Shea; he grew gloomy and thoughtful, and confidentially acknowledged to his foster-brother that he was in a degree become a convert 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, and 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 Rhia 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?"

"Ay, 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, 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."

"Why, 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, a-vich, 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, my boy, and I like you too well to be the bearer of unwelcome tidings."

"Harkye, Rhia 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; and, though we were to break squares for ever, you shall fully quell or fix the doubt 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 sa-

tisfy 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 and blindfolded by something not right, she lives with her father's murderer of her own free consent."

"Ay," said Pierce, during the pause which Doran here made, as if to note the effect of his news on the hearer; "ay; 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 or other of the occasions when Crohoore was absent, and you know yourself he has often been absent, and night after night no watch on her; surely the girl might have easily 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 stupefied 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 paused, 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 cheek pale and cold, and the 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 the people's thought—what they all say—and I, for one, don't believe a word of it.”

“Dhar Dieu! you dare not believe it!” repeated Pierce, starting on his feet, his tears scorched up, and his tone and manner entirely altered—“you dare not, man, believe a word of it, nor anything like it; I will suffer no living creature to believe it of Alley; there never was a holy saint, standing before the throne of God in his glory, whiter from shame and sin than was my poor Alley! Deny it, you or any man, and I will send your soul to its maker with the lie upon it!”

“I see you want somebody to quarrel with,” said his companion, in an offended and reproachful tone, “but you shall not fix the quarrel on me; I feel for you and pity you too much, Pierce, to mind anything you say to me in your present fury;—and is this my reward for all I have gone through, unasked, and of my own accord, for your sake and hers?—and when you were lying on your back, Pierce, not able to wag a finger in your own cause, and without another friend, or another fool, to stand up for you?”

The young man's brow relaxed, and the natural reflux of his better feelings again brought tears into his eyes, while he sat down, offered his hand, and said—

“I ask your pardon, my dear Doran; I should have recollected—if I *could* have recollected anything—it was a friend that spoke.”

“It was, Pierce,” replied Doran, warmly returning his pressure; “and now put the foolish words out of your head; by the soul in my body, I would not myself hear an ill word said of poor Alley; put the thing out of your mind; there is nothing in it.”

“That will not be easy for me to do, Jack,” said Pierce; and he was right: it was no easy task to pluck out the thorn that now festered in his heart's core; he was never before.

great as were the griefs and horrors he had encountered, so truly miserable. "But," he resumed, "you said something just now—what was it?—I heard you very imperfectly—of your friends having it in their power to be of use to me; how, Doran, and what do you mean?"

"It's now useless talking it over, Pierce; but all they have told me I'll tell you, and more you cannot expect. They give me to understand, in the first place, that they have a clue to Crohoore's retreat—"

"Where?—where?—how have they been able to discover it? I thought they had long ago given up all interference in the matter."

"You see, Pierce, that was when I had little or no command over the boys, and when I was only getting by degrees into their good opinion, and they were without much union or courage; but now that I am their lawful captain for the parish of Clarah, and have led them on one or two little expeditions, with every success, their spirit is up, and their services at my back, under certain terms that you alone can take or leave; so that they are no fools, and don't care a blackberry for fairy or tithe-proctor, and would just face the ould lad with his horns on. As to where and how they made this discovery, I do not know; in fact, they have not made me the wiser, nor can I insist on a point that has nothing to do with our lawful business; only this much they say, that if you, Pierce Shea, will step in among them, one of these fine evenings, and behave like the lad of mettle they and I know you to be, it will go hard but in a night or two Alley will stand before you, and Crohoore-na-bilhoge have his lodging in the stone jug in Kilkenny."

"What do they want me to do?—join them?—take an oath?" asked Pierce, after a pause.

"Whisht, man—walls have ears—never mind particulars now; only can't you just hear what the poor gorçons have to say to you, and then judge for yourself?"

"Where are they to be found?"

"I can find them for you; we may as well look for them together," said Doran, carelessly; "but follow your own bent, Pierce, a-vich; I wish to advise you to nothing, one way or the other."

"How soon can we meet?—to-morrow night?"

"To-morrow night, sure enough, they will be near at hand; about ten, I think."

"Very well," muttered Pierce, dropping his head on his breast, and again relapsing into silence; but his set teeth, his rigid features, and unsteady eye, showed the agitated nature

of his reflections. After an unbroken pause of more than two minutes, he rose quickly, snatched a candle, and repeated—

"Very well;—let us go together; and you had better be out of the house at the time, Doran, waiting for me at the broad stone in the bosheen, to escape my father's suspicions: good night."

"I will," said Doran, "but cannot wait long: good night;" they joined hands.

"You shall not wait a moment; my mind is made up; I'll engage in anything—any risk, any fellowship—I would rush on death—hell—for present satisfaction and ease of mind. Ten, you say?"

"Ten, exactly; good night, Pierce." They exchanged a hearty shake of hands, and retired to their separate chambers.

At ten o'clock the next night, and by the broad stone in the bosheen, the friends accordingly met. Few words were exchanged between them; and Doran rapidly led the way, often stopping to look about him, over lonesome and broken paths, with which Pierce was not well acquainted, until, after half an hour's forced march, they stood before a miserable hut, that was built in a deserted waste, covered with furze and rock, a hill rising at its back, and no other human habitation within view.

Light glanced through the chinky door, and through a hole in the side of the hovel, that, as usual, served at once for window and chimney; and from within issued a confused clatter of wild mirth, loud talking, the dull music of the bagpipes, and stentorian singing.

"There is the place," said Doran to his companion, as they paused some distance from the door. At the sound of his voice, a tall figure started from behind a thick clump of furze and rock within a few paces of them, and asked,—“Who's there, and what sort o' night is in id?”

"It's a fine night," answered Doran, in a whisper, though the clouds were low and swollen, the wind muttering, heavy drops falling, and not a star to be seen.

"An' so it is," said the challenger; "go your ways, an' God be wid ye,"—and he instantly disappeared.

"Come on, then," Doran resumed, and they walked up to the door of the cabin.

"Stop a moment," said Pierce, as his friend felt about the door for the knotted string that moved the wooden latch—"I did not quite expect this; I do not like to enter such a place."

"Nonsense,—trash,—childishness!" retorted Doran, in a quick, sharp tone—"the heart to change now! doubts and fears to come now!—what can you fear in my company? are you a man?"



He held him by the breast of the coat with one hand, with the other violently pulled up the heavy latch, the door swung wide open, and they walked in briskly.

There was an immediate cessation of all sounds among the inmates of the cabin, and eight or ten men springing up, and, thrusting their hands into their bosoms, showed, by their scowling brows and ferocious looks, nothing of hospitable welcome to the supposed intruders until Doran's password, "It's fine weather, boys," and their ready recognition of him, caused an instant relaxation of feature, and "Cead mille failte, Rhia Doran!" was shouted in no gentle accents from every tongue. When the enthusiasm of his welcome had somewhat abated Pierce observed glances of constraint, if not of suspicion, at himself; but as soon as Doran, sitting, or rather resting with one thigh on a rude table, round which the men were grouped, and assuming an air of careless good-fellowship, as he looked about him, had passed something in a quick whisper, room was made for Shea; and "Sha-dhurth, a-bouchal,"\* addressed to him, as in rapid succession they quaffed their liquor, proved that his friend, or his own name, had sufficient influence to change into cordiality and interest whatever disagreeable feeling his entrance might have caused: in fact, the men lost all constraint before him, abandoning themselves, in a few moments, to their natural manners and noisy humour.

Being seated, he had leisure to examine the kind of place in which he was, and the description of persons amongst whom he found himself. The whole extent of the interior of the hovel was a single apartment, not exceeding fifteen feet in length, and ten in breadth, and scarcely of sufficient height to allow a tall man to stand erect in the middle of the floor; the mud walls were unplastered; and the straw that had been mixed with this primitive material, to keep it together, started and bristled out at every side; overhead the puny wattles of the roof, black and shining with smoke and soot, badly connected the inartificial covering of heath; the floor, full of inequalities of bedded stone and uneradicated furze, differed but little from the open moor without, from which it had only recently been deducted; and everything, in fact, showed a hasty and careless construction.

Close by one wall ran a rough deal plank, supported by piles of loose stones, forming the seats upon which at a narrow table, about a dozen men were crowded; and, at its other side, large stones, without any plank or board, supplied seats to some half dozen more. There was no chimney; but two

\* Your health, lad.

benches, made of slate and clay, enclosed an area within which a few sods of turf emitted a feeble blaze; and sitting very near, crippled up into a lump, her knees reaching higher than her head, her bleared eyes steadfastly fixed on the decaying embers, and her whole air and position showing an unconsciousness or carelessness of the dinning noise, was the hostess of this lowly *auberge*. In the corner to her left appeared an enclosure of rough stones that fenced in the heath on which she lay; and, in the other, a roughly-constructed and uncouthly-shaped barrel, from which, by the agency of spigot and faucet, she drew, in wooden noggins, and as her guests claimed it, the stout, though now exploded, shebeen.

At one side of Pierce Shea, and immediately next him, sat a prim-looking little fellow of middle age, with a large, bloated, goat's-hair wig, that, cocking up behind like a drake's tail, left the roots of his skull visible, with a red silk handkerchief under his neck, remarkable, when contrasted with the bare and scorched throats and breasts of the others; and altogether he had a way about him very different from, if not superior to, his companions—a look of self-defined and long-established importance and wisdom; as well he might, being by day the only schoolmaster of the district, and by night the only writer of notices, regulations, and resolutions, and orator in general to the reformers of Clarah, as Cloutz was to the human race. Opposite to him, in appearance as well as situation, sat a tall, bony, squalid being, of a meagre, sallow face, hung round with an abundance of coal-black hair, bent brows of the same sable hue, shading deep, wild eyes; his beard four weeks unshaven, and his habiliments, from head to foot, only the tattered remains of a vesture that, in its best day, had been but indifferent. Pierce thought he should recollect to have before seen this man, in the following situation:—

Passing by a cabin, which it was known the tithe-proctor had recently spoliated, a heavy shower of rain overtook him, and he knocked at the door for admission, supposing it to be secured. A husky voice desired him to come in; he did so, and beheld such a scene of misery as his eyes had never before experienced. The large, waste den, with its sides rough as a quarry, and the black roof dripping rain and soot, did not contain a single article of the most common domestic furniture; and on a small bundle of straw, at one side, lay a shivering girl of some nine or ten years; while two other children, a boy and girl, not more than five and six, squatted on the damp clay floor, which was strewn with straw and rashes, not in childish sport, but in that premature melancholy and abstraction that the children of want and misery so often ex-

hibit to the eye of a susceptible beholder. For some time he saw no other human creature, and, addressing one of the children, asked, suddenly, "Have you no father?"

The same hoarse voice that had spoken before he entered now made answer, in a kind of scoffing laugh, from the chimney-corner: "To be sure they have 'em, why shouldn't they?"

Pierce turned towards the place: there was no fire on the hearth; but upon the hob, and deeply shaded by the projection of the huge chimney, sat a man about forty, without shoes, stockings, coat, or vest, small-clothes and a soot-stained shirt his only covering. His arms were folded hard, his chin sunk into his breast, his bare legs crossed, and he swang and jogged them to and fro, in action that betokened a sullen and desperate indifference to the ruin about him.

"Ay, there they is, now," he continued, as Pierce stared at him in silence; "one, two, three iv them; an' I'm their father, an' what am I to do wid 'em?"

"Where's their mother?" asked Pierce.

"Avoch, an' what a question you put on me! I went down the bosheen, yesterday, after the proctor left us, an' I tould 'em she was gaspin'; yes, I tould 'em my wife was gaspin'; an' the good Christhens wouldn't believe me; an' yet she was stiff afore me when I cum back, an' I buried her widout a wake, or a sheet to wind her in; an' see here—here's what she left me."

He stooped and took up a bundle of dark rags, which, from the weak cries that immediately reached Pierce's ears, he discovered to be at once the cradle and swaddling-clothes of a new-born infant. The man laid the babe on his lap, and added—

"An' I'm to sit up all night an' watch this dawny bit iv a creature, and feed it, havin' nothin' more nor a few coult phatics; ay, there's three of them fur you, an' I'm their father, if you want to know id, an' what am I to do wid 'em sure that's jist the way it's wid me, a-vich."

Pierce was sure that this same man now sat before him. The rest of the company were not particularly distinguished being young fellows, gay, heedless, and uncharacterized.

The table was covered with slops of liquor, and the whole behaviour and appearance of the men showed they had been for some time before Pierce's entry, trying the potency of the home-brewed ale, some of which Doran also procured for his friend and himself, as, with half a cake of oaten bread, it was the only refreshment the old "colluch"\* could or would produce. Perhaps, joined to the riotous mirth that now we

on, serious business had been in debate before the appearance of Shea; for he could perceive that, in the midst of their wildest hilarity, whispers and looks occasionally went round: at all events, he certainly missed the accompanying hubbub of the bagpipes, previously heard at the door; and hinting at the first circumstance, and particularly mentioning the last to his companion—

"Come, Murthock," cried Doran, slapping on the lumpy shoulders a stupid-looking blind creature, who was seated apart from the others, and who, his music silent, seemed to have sunk into sympathizing nonentity, as if he had only existed while his instrument was at work, or as if the breath that gave him life had been blown into his lungs by one of its complex pipes, part of the stock by which it was itself vivified, and that, the one exhausted, the other must fade away: "Come, Murthock, strike up 'Andrew Carey,' or 'Sheelah-nagig,' or something that's hearty."

The bent and lethargic figure instantly got a little motion, as the bellows gave the first puff, and he answered, "Ha! ha! I wouldn't doubt you, Rhia Doran; you war always the boy for my money; faith, an' I'll give you purty nate music as ever left a poor piper's bag;" then, busily stirring his arm, he emitted a very dismal, and, as he played it, a very discordant air.

"Oh, murther, murther! your pipes want a drink, Murthock, they're so sorrowful; here, man, take this, and try something that won't set us crying."

"Sba, sha, sha, Rhia Doran; you war never fond o' bein' sad yourself, an' small blame to you, for your blood is hot an' sthrong;" he seized the noggin, and stretched his neck to have a good guzzle; "that was 'The Whiteboy's Lamentation';"—another draught;—"bud stay now till I give you 'The Whiteboy's Delight'; here goes."

"Do so, Murthock; something that has fun in it, or by this blessed liquor I'll take you to the threshold, cut your bags, and let your music about the fields."

"Never fear," said Murthock, stirring his arms with somewhat quicker motion, though he only repeated the former air (if air it might be called which air had none) in more jigging time; in truth, except in the instance of his having been born blind, nature never intended Murthock for a musician. His strains did not fail, however, to impose on his audience, and inspire them with many a vociferous shout, at which, well pleased, the creature smiled in self-flattery, and then plied his bellows with might and main, so that his chanter squeaked more and more shrilly, and his drone grunted more and more

deeply, as if in ill humour with its own music; the whole effect not unlike a noise to which, we believe, it has sometimes been locally compared, namely, a litter of young pigs making clamorous demands on their poor worn-out dam, which in gruff expostulation she admits or rejects.

Pierce had sat down among these people unwillingly, and with a mind unfit to mix in such a scene of loud and rude merriment; but the noggins were often and often emptied to his long life, and reign, and health, and he could not fail to pledge his companions in as oft and repeated draughts. We have heard experienced sages complain (as who has not?) that the miserably thin potation of our degenerate day is nothing to that of the substantial shebeen of the days that are gone; and Pierce Shea felt and proved the truth of half at least of this assertion. After the ice of temperance and self-command is once broken, there is no heartier tippler than a sorrowful man; the sudden and wild relief he has received he will wildly endeavour to keep up, and this can only be done by successive libations; so Pierce drank on as rapidly as any around him; felt his heart grow lighter and lighter; and at last, to Murthock's extreme consolation, became as noisy as any other man in the hovel.

In the midst of his utmost enjoyment, the little rustic prig who sat by his side, laying his hand on Pierce's arm, said—

“Bud, musha, my poor boy, that's thrue—you're still on the hunt for Alley Doolin', we hear; an' isn't it a strange thing to be supposed, an' a shameful thing to be hard spoken of, that you're livin' to this day of your life among your neighbours, an' never joined yourself to the jolly lads, that, sayin' nothin' o' their glory in the good cause, are the only livin' sows to help you to a sight iv her?”

Pierce was about to reply with much vivacity, when one of the young peasants, commencing by a prefatory yell, sang out—“Yes!—

They must lave off their tithin' an' rackin' iv acres,  
Or we'll roast 'em as brown as a loaf at the baker's;  
An' we'll nip off their ears, and we'll lave their heads bare,  
As they do wld the calves in the county Kildare.”

These lines were chorussed by the whole set, at a mad, shouting pitch of voice, that made the wattles of the roof ring again, and Pierce could scarcely get in his earnest question of—“Do *you*,” to 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 iv your sweetheart, is id? Maybe we do, maybe we don't; an' 'case we do, what's the raison, I say once agin' 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', plundherin', myrtherin' rapparees o' tithe-proctors, the bitter foes iv ould Ireland's land;—slingin' at home, because the blow doesn't sthrike hard on' yourself, an' never heedin' the means 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, as speaking is dry work, and with a bitter and indignant regret, no doubt, 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 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 mark of anything insulting or disagreeable; then, knitting his brows, and looking hard at the fellow who wore the broadest grin—

"Is there any man here," he asked, "who dares to question my courage or say I fear danger?" The lad, immediately apprehending his meaning; change at once the expression of his features, and thrusting his hand in amity across the table, "Never a one 'ud say it to your father's son, Master Pierce, a-bonchal," 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 'is goin' to put in his mind that it's from us, poor cratures iv Romans that we are—*go vioch a Dhea urio!*"—it's from us, an' we have the sin iv id on our heads, the Sassenach clargy takes what buys the mate they ates iv a Friday, an'

\* God look down on us.

we will 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 iv everything at once?" said a third; "an' tho' Mourteen happened to spake about the *mishnoch*\* o' the boy, it's well known that if he were 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 discouraged at this raillery, and reckoning 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; and 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 himself every tenth year, while the world is a world? an' sure, if he had a conscience along wid id, *that* might be enough, an' not for to send the bloody proctor on our back, to lift the double o' that agin; 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 and mornin', thro' wet an' dhry, could an' hardship, to stand by our sick beds, an' make Christhen sowls in us,—what do they get but bits an' scraps, the scrapin's and lavin's the Sassenach laves behind?—the Sassenach that rises the hire widout arrin' id, robbin' id from them that does; the Sassenach that thought to tear and burn us up, root and branch; that hunted our sog-garths like bastes o' the field, an' hung an' shot them an' all iv us, jist because we said our prayers afther the fashion o'

\* Courage, or spunk.

them that went afore us, an' cum afther 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' ochone-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 riveted 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; and 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 fireside; but the plunderer came 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, added,—

“And here let every MAN pledge me! May his heart wither, and his children and name perish—may the grass grow on his hearth-stone, 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 Whiteboys’ 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 Clarah; 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 id; sure one good turn deserves 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, a-roon; an' wait till we show you so mooch, widout more talkin' about id."

"It's only thought and expected," continued Mourteen, "that our new lieutenant 'ill come wid us one night, just to make clear an' clane his good wishes for the causc, an' the next night will bring him straight ahead on Crohoore-na-bilhoge."

"That's id; 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 Claney, the friend of poor Terence Delany here," nodding at the man who had harangued them in Irish.

"Life will be spared?" asked Pierce.

"Life and limb, unless ears are legs or arms," answered Doran; and 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 aisy to be righted; fur there is nothin' in the wide world to do but jist 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, fur a good mile o' ground, as long as he lives ever afther."

"Musha, that 'ill be no more nor a Christhen turn," said another; "fur who wouldn't pity a poor body that's deaf, like him? an' Bryan Whichpatrick must scrawl him a good turn 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.

"Ay," said Mourteen, "an' we may as well plant him in the ground up to his chin, just to see if he'd sprout into an honest man."

"Arrah, there's little fear o' that," he was answered; "fur if you war to sow an acre o' proctors, the diaoul a worse crop could a poor body have to look at in the harvest-time."

"Och, an' have a care, boys," said another, "but they'd

grow up into a nate crop o' hemp, that 'ud make cravats fur some iv us, as aisy as we're takin id."

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."

"Ha! ha! Rhia Doran; you're welcome to your joke; bud, afore to-morrow night, all the boys in the parish 'ill know id, plaise God, iv Murthock does be a live piper."

Upon this the council broke up, and Pierce and Doran returned to old Shea's house.

## 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; for 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 escaped, therefore, 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 insured 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 to follow 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 loudest voice of love, duty, and necessity; and so he braced himself to concede to it, like a man to whom desperate resources are the only alternative.

Doran awaited, 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 realized.

After some smart walking, they ascended an eminence, about half a mile from Pierce's home, where Rhia 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; and 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 and grandest steeds having been presented to Doran and Shea, the leader at once mounted, exclaiming—

"Well, then, jolly boys as ye are, up and ram along; and the devil take the hindmost for his supper!"

All were instantly on horseback, and with a stifled though general "hurrah!" 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, again hill and hollow, stream and bog, like mad and evil spirits careering with the night-blast, their hoarse and guttural "hurrah!" 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 in 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 "hurrah! hurrah!" they still muttered, as they still 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, and spurring and lashing, he set the example of one desperate push to gain the point of relief.

"Faultha, faultha,\* to the rattlin' boys that dhrove by night!" was shouted by many voices, as at last they came up the destined hill.

Doran instantly flung himself from his saddle, asking, "How many horses have you?"

\* Welcome, welcome.

"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 bastes ready," and "up and ram 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, and the hour of 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 "*Dhea liuve a-souchaleen*,"\* 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; and 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.

"Och, an' that he is, snug an' warm, an' waitin' for you, captain, a-chorra."

"Well, that's civil and dacent of him, afther all, poor sowl—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 rattle 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 was also painted—

mint  
Entertain  
for man and horse—  
— — — — —

At the door of this doomed abode, the party stopped; it

\* God speed you, lads.

was the residence of Terence Delany's undoer, and the same swaggering tithe-proctor whose portrait we have before attempted to sketch.

With the utmost possible silence, the party ranged themselves about the house, so as to prevent escape, and then, having lighted their candles, by blowing at the red turf, one dash 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 risen.

"Arrah, 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*, afther 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, because 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 Mulcahys, is an ould dacent stock."

"Don't be spakin' to our cuseen afther that fashion; myself 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; an'

\* Not at home.

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 it was 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; and immediately followed Captain Rhia 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, triumphant, or pathetic, as, with some, created him a rival of Bryan Fitzpatrick, muse, fiddle, and all; whilst, 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'Nasc, "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 bleat 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 wofully disabled by the accident, one side being battered in, and all the strings snapped across; his only resource was, in the short pause afforded, to knot together two lengths at random, each of which, he 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 for his relief, drowning, as the outcry rent the air, his pitiful min-



streels; the inmates of the novels, at the 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 right chronicler of facts, proceeds in her duteous details without consideration for the squeamishness of nerves; among other instances of the principle, the legal retribution visited on Damien and Ravallac has found its careful registrars; 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 in 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; and 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 off a ten-year-ould bull, not to speak iv 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 ochones, Peery; don't be the laste unasy in yourself, agraw; 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 off a bishop, not to talk of a cratur 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 betther 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 from your ear across your wind-pipe, 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 fur the good of your poor sowl we're so kind to you; sure there's no doubt at all that the proctors, every mother's son of them, go sthrait ahead to the divil; but I'll be bould to say that Peery Clancy, that was buried—an' a decent 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; an', more betoken, the penance o' this night 'ill be mighty good fur you in the time to come: take care o' yoursef there, a-vich."

"Good night, Peery; an' 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-prayers, was a celebrated chant, pathetico-ludicrous, composed and sung to his fiddle by Bryan Fitzpatrick, on all such occasions as the present; and, 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 chorussed 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 ram 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 bare-backed coursers; and away they set, over the ground they had already travelled, at the same savage speed in which they had arrived.

After riding 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; and 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 shall 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 who you are; but, if you have a Christian's sowl, 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 now know who stands over you! yes, you sunk them and me in poverty and the grave: you make 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 to God; when you hear my step again near you, cry mercy on your 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; paused his time in that position; but then starting wildly, 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 heavy sound, harmless on the earth.

Delany instantly sprang on Shea, and with both hands gripped his throat; Pierce seized him in return, and swang him about, but the iron grasp became firmer; the blood stopped and throbbed 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 tightened 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 murderer held over his legs; and using it therefore, and immediately after summoning an effort that the fear of death could alone supply, he sprang on his feet, bringing the other with him. This shook Delany's grasp; and Pierce, instantly relieved, bethought of another sleight, acquired also in the wrestling-ring; it was successful as the first; his enemy swung loose from him; and then 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; and 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 proc-

tor, 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 the horses' hoofs 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 (not without the observation of Doran, whose after-question on the road to Pierce would seem to imply as much), 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; and, 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; and we think we cannot sound 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 (and the remark is, by-the-way, an old ruse among us story-tellers, 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)—but 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 novel and appalling situation, when the next morning's dawn brought with it tardy remorse and unavailing repentance. A habitual offender is in constant apprehension of the punishment he knows society has directed 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 and just 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 fact, he had not taken part in them; his heart all along commiserated the sufferer; and his present fate fully 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 should 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 sergeant in command, set out for Kilkenny gaol.

They had travelled about half of their journey, and just

left behind a slip of mountain road, on each side of which hills clothed with heath and fir, 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, and 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 sergeant 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 howls confoundedly after the dead feller."

"Curse me, ay," replied his comrade, "'tis a noise might scare Neddy here from his corn."

"Oye, that 'twould," observed another, a Yorkshire giant, leaning forward on the pommel of his saddle to join in the conversation in front; "'tis the Hoirish cry, as 'em calls it, what such loike woid Hoirish always howls, dom 'em."

"Denme, though," cried a cockney, "if them 'ere vimen, what are arter the coffin, beint on a lark, like, east-why, they don't come down a tear, for all they clap hands and hollar, the velps, their d—d gibberish, what none understand but themselves."

"Whey, noa, mon," rejoined the third speaker, "'em doan't 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 their 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; and the military were not yet recovered from their surprise, when the man who had given the first signal-word, with a face of laughing raillery, addressed them.

"Arrah, then, maybe that wasn't as nate a thrick, an' as nately done, as ever you seen in your lifes, afore! Myself 'ud a'most sware you'll be for killin' all the corpses you mee on your road, from this day; an' faith you may as well begin 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

\* Down! down!

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 id, 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 phatie, when you couldn't hould 'em—an' don't know what the diaoul come o' them, an' that 'ill be no lie for you."

"Brave fellows," cried the sergeant, "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; and, 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 shall!"

"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 sergeant, 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; so, let the carbines be first discharged;" his commands were obeyed; "and now, sergeant, you will prove your sincerity by handing us your cartridge-pouches;" the sergeant readily complied. Pierce emptied them separately, and returned them, togethe



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; and their miserable threats were also opened for a parting shout, when the sergeant, wheeling his troop round, gave the word, "Soldiers, fire!"—The pistols hidden in the holsters had been by one party forgotten, and were instantly discharged; every ball took effect, and fifteen men fell!

"Follow me now, lads!"—the sergeant continued, dashing spurs into his horse, and plunging forward amid the throng; his horse's head pointed towards his quarters: three file closely followed him, and he and they cut through the dense crowd; who had not 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, and louder and louder, and 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, and 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, then 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 hanches, and

...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 his 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 the groans and shrieking of the wounded.

This bloody scene was enacted in little more than a minute. In fact, the sergeant and the three men who had at first broken through the crowd with him, after discovering that they were galloping along on their road homeward, scarcely had time to face about again to the relief of their eleven comrades, and to 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 sergeant 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, sergeant, away!" he shouted, striking, for one push at life, the sides of his snorting steed.

"Where are the rest?" asked the sergeant,—"why do they lag behind?"

"They can't help it," answered the rescued, and till that moment despairing man, spurring past them,—"nor we either—on, on!"

"Is it so?" resumed the sergeant; "let us ride, then!"—and all instantly ~~walked~~ <sup>galloped</sup> their horses' utmost speed,

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; and 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; the shouts of victory, or the boisterous congratulations of triumph, were sent forth; or 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. And 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 corse of a father, a brother, or a son.

The scene that now surrounded him, together with all his late adventures, might well seem to Pierce, as he stood gazing around him, exhausted and scarcely able to exert his judgment and recollection, but the confusion of a terrific dream; and 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 fixed his staring eyes on 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, and 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; and 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 sunk 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, *Aileen*, wife of my heart; yes, the pulse of my heart you were, when it was young and joyful; and 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 *Aileen'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 riveted on him, he had just 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 *Aileen*, 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 corpses of those whose homes were not near were "laid out" in ghastly array, but with all reverence and decency: and, 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 of life, it is ascertainable as only in strict unison with the genius and idiom of the language 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 thatched roof had, to prevent the spreading of the flames, 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 grand-children.

Pierce soon came on the desolate group. The old woman, of unusual height, and bearing in her mien and features a strong likeness to her deceased son, stood erect, with her back to the entrance, as he approached, the youngest child 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 on 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 "*Dhea-a-uth*" 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 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!—ay, 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 stupefied, 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; and 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 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; and 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

Thus admonished, and under such afflicting circumstances, Pierce, notwithstanding his own anxiety to get home, could not hesitate to comply; so, taking the infant from the old woman's arms, he led the way; she, with a firm step, and the two other grandchildren held 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 slowly stooped, and kissed his lips; and at last, bursting into an irregular and dismal song, uttered, in many an unequal dhash, 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, and the molten light shone

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-à-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 brave, and, haply, makes the coward valiant. Now is he 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; and 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 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 farther, lest, as the imp is spiteful, he might turn on us in revenge for our expose, and incapacitate us for our task of brave 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; but, 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; and 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 this 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, pinioned 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; and 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:—

a little of the rustic *petit-maitre*, making advances, through sheer vanity, to every girl he met—and, to own the truth, and giving due honour to his mastership in the art of love—many were Paudge'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, Paudge 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 "she had crooked legs, made after the ould Munsther fashion, wid the wrong ends down," he said, "an' she squinted worse nor a dog lookin' at the edge of a rapin'-hook."

"Why, then, may this dhrink be 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 C'ree has two as good eyes as ever looked sthraight afore 'em," (although he said this, he knew in his heart there was more gallantry than truth in the assertion); "an' as for the bils 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 kip-pis 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 masther (you know who I mane) says his prayers, or by the sowl o' my father, God rest him, you'll sup sorrow afore you lave the plate."

But Paudge 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, he 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, and 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;" and Andy answered—

"Don't spake iv id, ma colleen-beg, the sprissaun wasn't able to rightify his words, an' I'd do the same by the Theage, there," meaning a mastiff that slept by the fire, "or any cratur 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, and 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. Bridge 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; and 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 a way he wasn't used to." On the road to a dance—(Andy was "the divil at dancing," and so in truth was Bridge 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, used to say, "he was takin' 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 as usually 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 Pudge

Dermody on Bridget Heart was not altogether malicious. She was Andy's negative, and perhaps this might be one cause of his subjugation, if mankind, as it is asserted, always under-value 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 (but 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 is seen to be less powerful; and besides the former individual can, if of the bashful sex, look amid a roomful 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); she waddled in her gait, her legs being indeed bowed; but then she had red, rich lips, a little large, and 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 pages back we have said, before the blazing fire, which it had been Bridge 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; and 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; and, in this case, it is plain he must be content with what we choose, or, after due reflection, deem advisable to give him, seeing we might keep it all to ourselves, were we so inclined, or did it suit our purposes.

"Musha, bould up your own likely face, now, a hudgeenma-chree," said Andy, Bridge having dropped it on her breast, at something in the previous course of the conversation.

"Andy, Andy, wasn't id a cryin' shame for you to make sich a vow as that?"

"Ma colleen-beg, mysef 'ud have no comfort in the married state, when I'd see our poor Pierce sorrowin' fur the want iv a wife."

"An' so you went to make a vow afore God, that you'd never do id, for yourself, till his weddin' night?"

"Ay, a-roon; becace I was so knocked iv a lump, at all his moanin' an' sorrowin', that I'd a'most sware, if he went an' got a suggan, and put id round his neck, the Lord keep us from temptation! I'd just do the same thing along wid him."

"An' here was I, getherin' for id, an' scrapin' for id, this penny and that penny, and puttin' odds and ends together, all to no good."

"Och, then, my darlin', is id 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 iv id."

"Well, Bridge, honey——"

"It's thrue enough what the poor misthress says; 'the boys, God mend 'em!' says she, 'is all rogues.' Anasthause an' myself used to think she'd be only sayin' id to keep us to the work, but it's now I'm sartin iv id, to my sorrow."

"Hearken to me, a-hudg."

"An' what 'ill Peggy Bawn say now, becace she begrudged me sich a clane boy? he made a vow, my dear, never to marry till Pierce Shea 'ud be doin' id 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 afther her, that's sartin; and so, by coorse, Andy Awling 'ill never marry Bridge Chree—Och, God forgi' you, Andy! praise be to his name fur 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, Bridge, what signifies a small little twelvemonth, afther all?"

"A twelvemonth, Andy?"

"Ay, a-roon; sure we'll both live id out, plaise God; and then, maybe, some one 'ud show the misthress 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 id you mane at all, Andy?"

"Why, a-cuishla, duv you think I'd be the ownshuch to go and 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 Bridge Chree is the darlin' o' my heart, that I'll néver marry till my poor Pierce Shea is at the same work wid me; barrin',<sup>\*</sup> says I, agin; 'barrin' he lets a twelvemonth go by, because I can't wait a day longer for 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."

"For sartin, Andy, you're a born rogue."

"Don't say that; barrin' it's the turn iv a rogue 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 id 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 'ud deny you; but don't be lookin' straight at me, afther that fashion, or them rogues of eyes 'ill put id all out of my head."

"Oh, you're a bouchal, Andy; well, here I'll look up at the bacon." Bridge, to her own conscience and satisfaction, might hve kept her word, but an unprejudiced spectator would have sworn she looked far wide of the bacon. "Ay, that 'ill do betther, for it's a thing unpossible for a poor boy to think iv 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 showlders, a-cuishla."

"Be asy, Andy, I say agin."

"*Slaw tha mellish,*"<sup>\*</sup> said Andy, smacking his lips: "Well, Bridge, as I was göin' to say, it's a thing plain to be seen as the handle on my spade, that all our purshuin' iv Crohoore-na-billhoge is of no more use than fur me to thry to put the moon in my pocket; because 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, Master Pierce himself tould me as mooch, afther all his bog-glin'; an' the only way to cum at her is for mysef to take a short stick in my hand, an' trudge off to Shecum-na-Sheeg,<sup>†</sup> that lives up in the hills, in the very thick o' them; bud there's no more nor one shillin' in my pocket, within, an' he'll do

\* Sweet as honey.

† Shecum—William.

little fur the likes o' that; an' sorry in my heart I am it isn't God's will I have the thriffe of money, 'case why, the longer I stay away from Sheeum-na-Sheeg, the longer will Alley stay where she is, and the longer will Pierce stay widout her, an' then, agin, the longer we must stay as we are—maybe the whole twelvemonth."

Bridge 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-mens cum from!—sure, wid this to stick on Sheeum's eye, I'll make him spy out for us, I'm thinkin'."

"It's a good notion o' yours, 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 iv a thick head is there on him, at all, then?—If he war wid us, in our good-for-nothin' chases afther 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 sthraddle-legs on his short goon, an' fly over the sthrame, betther nor an ould hare ud do it? sure you're in the knowledge yersef, Bridge, that Master Pierce is as good at a lep as any boy in the counthry round, an' he wasn't able to go half-way; an' there's not that Christhen born 'ud do id, barrin' he had others' help; an' when he thought to shoot him as dead as a door-nail, warn't our own goons bewitched, so that the sorrow a spark 'ud leave 'em? whin we went afther him to the cave, wasn't Pierce a dead boy only fur mysef, an' the rid divil Paddy Loughnan, frightened to the back-bone, whatever happened the both in the cave, within'; an' whin he came out among us, all iv a sudden, didn't I fire straight in his face, an' do him no more hurt nor if I sthruck him wid a thrawneen?\* an' I was nigh hand payin' well fur id; tumbled about, like a pusheen-cat, on the broad o' my back, wid the fairy-blow; an' God must have a likin' to me, or I was a gone cratur."

"All thrue enough, Andy; an' if the ould mather war afther discoorsin' 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, Bridge?"

"I'm afeard the story 'ud be a long one."

"Och, no, a-roon; the night's young; an' betther fur us to be here at this good fire, sayin' to the wind that's widout,

\* Fairy-weed.

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-cuisnla; I'll be a good boy:" they drew their stools—or stool—we disdain to say which—closer to the blaze and prepared, one to speak, and the other to listen, with that peculiar pleasure story-telling imparts.

"Now, Andy, this is as thrue a story as ever you hard; I had id from Biddy's own gossip, an' she had id from Biddy's own mouth. Biddy Grasse had as fine a boy born to her as God ever sent, an' she was doatin' fond iv id, to be sure, because all the rest o' the childer were girls—"

"An' good look to 'em fur girls, every day they get up! what 'ud the poor boys do, only God was good enough to sen' '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 obsarved it to pine an' pine away, till it war no bigger nor my fist; an' it used to laugh out in the most strange way, an' grin, and look about id, as cunnin' as a mouse; and then bawl an' squall in a minit, agin, in a manner no ways like a Christhen child; an' whin she'd put id to the breast, 'twould a'most tear her to pieces, an' then made such faces up to her; so that the poor cratur iv a woman was frightened to look at id. Well, she thought to wane id, but it wouldn't ate a bit fur her, an' was ever an' always wheenin' an' wheenin' from mornin to night, an' she thought id war goin' to die, sorry in her hear at the same; bud. to the wondher o' the world, it lived on three months, widout any food that she knew iv, not growin' bigger nor less, only just the same way, an' many a wear, night she had a-watchin' id.

"One night she went to her bed, but didn't fall a-sleepin' her mind was so crossed, thinkin' iv her puny child, an' left rush, lighted; an' behould you, Andy, a little while afther lyin' still an' quite, only her eyes half open, she sees id sit u straight in the cradle, an' turn about its wizzened face, as peep here an' there, to see if everybody was sleepin'; an' the it gets out on the flure, an' goes over to the hob, where ther was a lapreen\* iv oaten bread for the next mornin'; an' i thrue as the fire is burnin' afore us, down it squatted on i

\* Half a cake of bread.



munkers, an' munged an' munged, till the whole was gone, all the while lookin' about id, like a cat that 'ud be thievin': and then it creeped back agin to the cradle, an' took up its fairy-bagpipes an' played a fairy tune "

" Christ save us an' keep us! but that was frightful, sure enough," said Andy, who sat as pale as death.

" An' sarten you may be, Andy, that poor Biddy was sore afeard herself; an' now she bethought in her mind, many's the piece of bread she missed for a good while back; an' many's the time when her man, an' herself, an' the girls 'ud be out, she cumalane to the door, 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 iv all this; he was a counthrary, cross-grained, dark man, an' she thought wid herself he might kill her an' the child: but she went her ways to an ould knowledgeable woman, that they called Noseen Branan, in regard o' the nose was on her, bein' no nose at all, fur it fell off in the frost, or a thing that-a-way, an' wid the tears in her eyes, she tould her story; an' 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 id?' 'Some ould man belongin' to the good people,' says 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 ould to be among them any longer, an' so they left him in the place o' your fine boy.' 'Ochone a-rie! what's to become o' me?' says Biddy. 'Are you a bould woman, fur you must do a bould action?' Noseen axed iv Biddy Grassc. '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 ould 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; an' be sure you lave him plenty iv 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, an' the child, as id seemed to be, was in id, 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 id; 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 into the river "

thinkin' Noseen might be wrong, an' maybe she'd take the life iv her own born child; but then she bethought her iv all she seen, an' reasoned wid herself that sure no right child could do the like: an' she went arguin' an' pondherin' what coorse to take, an' at last got courage; so, whin she found him sleepin' in arnist, Biddy slipt him into a male-bag, tyin' the sthing fast on him; but while she was tyin' id, he squeeked an' bawled, an' kicked so hard, that the poor sowl let him<sup>s</sup> dhrup from her hands, an' hadn't spirit to lift him up agin fur a long while; an' he worked away till he got a bit iv 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. While he was strugglin' an' kickin' in the bag on the flure, down she stooped—”

“Murther!” cried Andy, knittin' his brows, while his teeth chattered, and the cold perspiration broke out on his forehead —“och, by the sowl o' man, I wouldn't put a hand near him fur the king iv England's throne.”

“Down she stooped, an' in a minute had him on her back, an' away she ran, screechin' herself, 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 dhrup down the sthramc, sittin' on it like anything, Biddy saw he was an ould little man, sure enough; an' she just hard him cryin' out— ‘Oh! ma-chorp-an-diaoul! 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 thruth iv a bould woman, that's sarten: musha, myself 'ud no more do id nor I'd ate a harrow for my supper, an' the spikes 'ud be mighty apt to hurt a body, I'm tould; an' sure, Bridge, 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 o' witchcraft: tho' little right he has, in regard his own family suffered well by it.”

“What's that you say, Bridge, a-roon?—there was witchcraft in the family?”

“Ay, a-vich; did you never hear tell iv id?”

“Musha, never a word; but won't be long so, plaise God, havin' you to the fore.”

“I'd tell you wid a-heart-an'-a-half, becace 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 iv the ould mi-thress war to waken an' ketch us here?"

"In case she did, what could she make of id? Did she never coort a bit, herself, I wondher?"

"Avoch, Andy, them times is gone wid her, an' now it's nothin' but 'mind your work,' from week's-end to week's-end. Well, a-vich, here's the story, any how.

"You know what a wicked set o' people the bocchochs is, given to all sorts o' witchcraft an' evil doins, the Lord save us. It was upon a time, now fifty years or more, I don't remember id—"

And here Andy interrupted Bridge 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; and we take advantage of the interruption to remark, that, without meaning to say we have led the reader so far into this chapter for nothing, a particular degree of attention will be necessary while Bridge Chree proceeds in her second story.

"Thru enough, Andy, a-cuishla," in reply to his criticism; "but, as I was sayin', iv 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, an' a power of bocchochs came too, to beg of the good Christhens, as yourself may see 'em to this day, an' to sell beads, 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 present time; an' by coorse he got shelther, and the best iv everything in the way; people is afeard, you know, to refuse them anything, becace 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; an', I'm tould, was a clane, clever, likely young fellow, Andy, mooch the same iv yourself—frum bein' well to look at, I mane, bud you have none of his rogue's thricks about you, I hope in God—beasy, now I tell you;—so he stopped at ould Ned Shea's house,—not the ould Ned Shea that is now, but the ould fellow iv all, that was his father,—fourteen or fifteen days, or thereaway; an' maybe he'd do a start o' work, but very little iv id, only in the night he'd set himself down among 'em, an' rehearse many s'trange an' wonderful stories iv his ramblin' way o' life; an', as far as their fear an' dread iv a bocchoch 'ud let 'em go, everybody loved and liked him—the villian o' the world that give sich a bad return for all!

"Ould Ned Shea that is now had a sisther, a clever, hand-

some cratur, as I'm tould by them that seen her; much like Pierce in the face, only no ways so big, as you may suppose, an' rich an' well she used to dress; no farmer's daughter in the parish, or the next to it, went finer or 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' tenderly she was brought up: an' many o' the richest and best born o' the young men o' these parts came a-coortin' iv her; but she wasn't aisy to be plaised, 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 duv you say to this thing iv a bocchoch, but he moost go an' make love to her in an underhand way? an' what duv you think id ended in? Why, first, if she war shy an' lofty to them that war her aquils, or more, maybe, for sartin 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 an' poverty to their door, an' she was loth to say a word fur 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 cratur iv 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 iv the thing," replied Andy, "but 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 id, but 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' id, an' divil a once we'll look about, from the fire fornent us."

"I had id iv a cuseen o' my own, who was taken wid a young girl, that had no likin' fur 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, fur a good fee, dhressed him in their tatthered clothes, an' passed him fur 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 fur id, 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; an' they seeked out, crawlin' on hands an' knees, for a little herib, an' they pult id; wid undhressed hemp, wetted in the dew o' the night, they spun a thread, an' then dyed id wid the little herib; he went wid them to the berrin'-place, an' they scooped out a grave, an' tuck up an' ould corpse, that was nine days berrid; an' the man died widout a priest in his last moments, an' was a very wicked man—fur 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; an' he seen the withered woman put nine long pins into the left palm; an' they tied id wid the black hemp-sstring, in the devil's name,—God keep us from his evil ways! Then they berrid the corpse agin, an' he seen 'em goin' round and round the grave, backard an' forard, in the blessed moonshine, shinin' on their bad doins; afther nine days an' nights he went wid 'em agin, an' they had the same corpse up agin, an' takin' the pins from the hand, they tied the black sstring round the thumb, an' through an' through the fingers, or what was left iv 'em, an' the pins had the charm on 'em, and the charm was done."

"Did he give it to the colleen?" asked Andy.

"No, Andy; for his conscience strucked him, an' he went an' confessed all, an' threw the pin into the runnin' wather, an' performed his penance; but the girl, pityin' him mooch, an' out o' thanks fur not bewitchin' her in a wrong way, let him do id 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 iv the pins, an' went his road, sure an' sartin iv what was to come about; for thrue it is, Andy, that poor Dora, the pride iv her father, an' the love o' the world, soon went afther. From that day to this, ould Shea, Pierce's father's father, 'ud never let a beggar-body see the inside iv his house; many's the one he whipped away from id, but one in particular. It was a could blowin' night, in winther time, when a poor tattered cratur came to his door, an' axed charity for the love o' God, houldin' a babby in her arms, an' the snow fallin' on the both, an' they a'most naked; a little scrap o' food fur herself an' her babby, fur she had the faintness wid hunger, an' a night's shelther in any hole or corner undher his roof; but he only tuck his heavy horsewhip, an' slashed her back into the drift an' could o' the storm, fur the ould man's heart was scalded sore by his daughter's loss, an' hardened, an' what id usen't to be, so that, from the hour she left him, he never riz his head, nor opened his hand in charity: he whinned the poor night,

beggar from his gate, I say, till, as the shiverin' cratur ran from his blows, she screeched out her name, an' it was Dora, his own child; but 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, Bridge, but she met a bad fate; I wondher, Bridge honey, I never heard o' that story afore."

"They don't like to have id talked about, becace it's a blot on the family; but when will you be goin' to Sheeum-na-Sheecog, Andy?" They rose to part.

"Wid sparrow-chirp in the mornin', plaise God I live an' do well."

"Musha, loock an' speed to you, Andy, a-vourneen, an' take care o' yourself, an' keep out o' the way o' the good people."

"Faith, an' I will so, or no fault o' mine, Bridge;—och, you cratur, how I longs to make my own o' you!"

"Mysef 'ud be glad the time was cum too, Andy; but now it's far in the night, an' I moost be up two hours afore day, becace 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; and thus, no matter about the distinction of rank, they will have the parting of Bridge 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.

**HARERORORE**, 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 gipsies of other countries (who, it is perhaps remarkable were known in the sister island) differing from them



spontaneous talent in elegiac poetry 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 Munster-men, and in Munster, Leinster-men, as their altered and well-feigned accent and idiom, in either province, plainly evinced.

Bridge Chree has truly informed us that their character for witchcraft was high; and 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; and 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, was a cause for behaving hypocritically civil to the wandering beggars, who thus, when no place of general assemblage attracted them, 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 Bridge'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 little woman, who had a less 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 tan-yard; over which 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 fireplace in the hotel, but, agreeably 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 two pence, instead of a halfpenny each, they bargained to have entire possession of the premises; and it will clearly be seen that, by this arrangement, Christien

was no loser; while, for the further consideration of sixpence halfpenny, of common stock, she consented to replenish the fire for their exclusive use; and, having done so, she led her wee mother to bed, into an inner apartment where they together enjoyed the luxury of a bedstead to themselves; Chiees-theena 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 three-pence farthing above prime cost.

So soon as the hostess was heard to snore, Risttharde Boechoch (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 Keach (Blind Peter) brought forth three large skreags or cakes of brown bread, remarking that the crust looked to him a little over-browned; and 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 hog'shead 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; and good white wooden trenchers were brought down from Christen's dresser to hold the dainty fare.

While thus employed, "Bow, wow, wow," exclaimed Padhre Keach's black shock dog.

"And who the diaoul 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 Sheemun Croonawnee, "fur a dhrop o' this holy wather 'ill never pass his breath."

The knock came again.

"Who's that, I say?" asked Risttharde, in a gruff voice, "wakenin' honest people at this hour o' the night."

"Musha, ay, let him stay at the wrong side o' the dour, Sheemun; an' I'd kiss the book that he'll never get the taste o' these ducks; Paudge 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 diaoul whip me round the market-cross," resumed Padhre, "bud it's one iv oursefs, boys; an' more nor that, I'm a blind cullawn iv a downright arnest, an' deaf along wid being blind, if it isn't Shaun-law-theaum, every inch iv him."

"Och, iv it's that poor desolate crature, the Lord forbid we'd keep him abroad in the could o' the night," said Risth-tharde.

"'Twouldn't be the part iv a Christhen to do any other thing," said Padhre, "an', after all, he'll get a sprinklin' o' the holy wather."

"What's the name is on you?" asked Sheemun.

"Shaun-law-theaum I'm called by them that knows me well," answered the voice; then added in a whining, snuffling cadence, "Good tinder Christhens, look wid an eye iv inarcy on a poor desolate crature that hasn't the use iv his own hands to arn a male o' victuals for himself an' his ould bed-rid mother, an' four small brothers an' sisthers, at home."

"That 'ill do," said Sheemun; "stay a little, you poor sowl, an' you must cum in, fur 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, fur I'm cowl'd an' hungry."

But here arose a little unforeseen difficulty. Chreestheena had, according to wholesome practice, locked the door of her caravansary, lest, in 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, Christien 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 by no means entrust another with the key, but arose herself to admit the new-comer; and, finally, when arrived at the door, she would by no means open it, unless two pence additional was paid down by those already in possession: her terms being agreed to and fairly met, however, Chreestheena at once gave the visiter 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 rain-bl'in' at sich an hour?" he was asked.

"Why, I cum all the ways from Garrodhe Donohoo, to seek ye."

"An' what does Garrodhe want iv 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 gatherins at the fair, boys," said Sheemun.

"God is a plentiful providher," replied Risttharde.

"Are you as blind as ever, Padhre?" asked Shaun.

"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 resumed, "we're just four great big rogues, fit to thrapse the world wide; bud come, boys, the night's goin' on, and we're all in a fair way fur atin' a bit; Risttharde, let yourself an' poor Padhre Keaoch cook up the prog, an', 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 under tone.

"Well, Sheemun, an' you didn't thrap Rhia Doran yet?"

"Avoch, no, God help me."

"Arrah, now, Sheemun, lave off them blessed sayins; they're words your rogue's tongue has no call to, among friends anyhow, that knows you betther nor the mother that bore you."

"You spake right, Shaun. Well; as you war axin' me about Rhia 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'nt to know sacrets; they're too bould an' hearty."

"That's the truth; bud, Shaun, I'm afther thinkin' it 'ud be a great shame fur me to be the manes o' takin' o' the life o' Jack Doran; he desarves betther 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 to the diaoul wid a prayer in your cheek.

iv you like id; bud you war sayin' Jack Doran deserved 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 id on a body he loves; an' that's myself."

"Duv you mane to hould back, now, Sheemun Croonawnee?" asked Shaun, sternly.

"Musha, God forbid; I'll stick close on him, mornin', noon, an' night, 'till I can ketch him an' the t'other at a grab; an' then I'm done wid him, an' he's done wid the sinful and sorrowful world; an' you may tell Crohoore the same frum me. Bud what does Gorrodhe want wid us, in arnest, to-morrow night, Shaun?"

"He wants you to be in the Glin o' Ballyfoile, where Pierce Shea 'ill come, too; an' I don't know what I'm about, bud you must help to tie him, hand an' foot, an' run wid him to the ould haunted place up in Munsther."

"The Lord forgi' me my sins!—did I hear you spakin' right, Shaun? did you say young Pierce Shea?"

"Divil an' other bud his own sef."

"Well, Crohoore-na-bilhoge, above all I ever heard tell iv, it's yourself has quare ways in you," ejaculated Sheemun, clasping his hands.

The cooks interrupted the dialogue.

"Here, now, an' may the first bit choke ye; come here, an' thry can you ate, as well as whisper an' talk, you cullogin' rogues," cried Padhre Keaoch, the banquet being ready. The summons was readily obeyed; and 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 goit of genuine borchochs; at which occupation we shall leave them, not having any inclination to remain in such company longer than was necessary for the progress of our story.

## 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, their trotting or rushing along under peaceful chamber windows, the shouting of their drivers,

\* In plenty.

and the clattering of alpeens on their back-bones and horns; while, 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 cottier's half-starved cow, that moves in sober and plodding gait, indifferent gaze, and drooping neck, careless where it goes or is, 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, cringing and 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 visiter. Coopers, brogue-makers, hatters, nailers, and makers of chairs, tables, stools, and bedsteads, displayed the various products of their separate ingenuity; bright crockery-ware glittered around; and when we were in our youthful days, as at the time of this tale we were, there used to be a display of goodly pewter plates and dishes, and two-handled pots and pints; but the use of delf has done away with these durable commodities, which now exhibit but as the hair-loom 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 were 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 gleeish and greedy look-out for their matured and monied acquaintances, “to put their fairing on them,” with a prospective eye to the dissipation 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 pleasures that even advanced and experienced life can supply—the pleasures of early and innocent recollection.

In flocked the young country-girls, fair and frosh, and plump and rosy—ostensibly, perhaps, to buy a pair of garters, a row of pins, or a ribbon, but, in their best and quaint attire, really to see and to be seen by their rural squires and admirers; to get their fairing, in one shape or other, and in every shape to partake of the unloosed and effluent spirit of holiday enjoyment. We will 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 will 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 still,

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 vender; 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 at last 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. Pleased 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, despising cakes and gingerbread, 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 flux-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 perruquier 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 mis-statement, 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; and 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; for the story to which we have yoked ourselves requires immediate attention.

Of all the bocchoos that day eminent, none distinguished themselves so much, or gained more commiseration or money by their well-feigned miseries and well-uttered appeals, than 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, until, late in the day, Sheemun Croonawnee came, as if by accident; upon Shaun-law-theaum'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 Rhia Doran and the other nabbed at last; my eyesight if I didn't see 'em both discoorsin' together, a little while ago, in the thick o' the fair."

"*Nor-i-een-thu-lath*, bud you're a great fellow iv a bocchoch; did Doran see you?"

"Oh, God be good to us, what 'ud be the matther, supposin' he did? Duv 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 fur 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; an' 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 *shibbeeah*† I hard as mooch on my thravels; an' I'll tell you how I got the knowledge, over the next pot of ale; bud be off to him now, or we'll never have him in our hands; an' that 'ud set Crohoore as mad as the ould diaoul."

"Och, by my father's sowl, whoever he was, an' wherever he is, at the present time, they mustn't take him frum us in sich a way."

"Well; stir your stumps an' do your work."

And Shaun issued forth into the main street, singing, in a 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

\* Strolling.

† Jack Ketch.

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 sergeant; 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.

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 be-headed 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!—Ay—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.

Scarcely 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! an' fur 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 in terror on the speaker.

"Speed home from the fair, without loss iv time," continued the mendicant, still whispering closely; "in half an hour, if you stand in the sthreeets of 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 justhus-o'-pace\* your night-doins on Peery Clancy, and your day-work among the throopers; speed, speed, I say to you, an' don't hear my words widout heedint' 'em; let no grass grow undher your horse's feet, an' no wind bate your race on the road to Clarah—and—mind me still—take the Windgap 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 id," 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 promise 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, iv you wish in your heart to see her agin." The beggar went on, as Pierce remained speechless, looking alternately from him to the miniature,—

"I'll see you agin, before the danger comes on you; but now for the last time, speed!"

\* English Irished.

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: and 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.

## 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 Sheeum-na-Sheeog; but on that morning he took care to set out, as the day dawned, on his perilous mission; and the tender-hearted Bridge Chree did not fail to rise also, to wish luck to her lover's laudable undertaking.

It is necessary here to relate as concisely as possible, and on the authority of Bridge Chree, Andy, and indeed the general repute of the whole country, who Sheeum-na-Sheeog 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; and 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; but, on a Friday, Sheeum 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 no way 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 hedge 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 Anacreontic "Cruiskeen Lawn."

After a reasonable ramble, however, Sheeum 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: or perhaps some vague ideas that he was bewildered by the Fodheen-Marahull,\* and a victim to its untimely pranks, at last dawned on 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 game of him, and instantly disappeared, so that he was left in profoundest darkness, not able to see anything, or without anything to be seen; and down he sank in increased misgivings, heartache, and headache. Suddenly the brisk notes of a bagpipe, in capital tune, broke the horrid silence; and, 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 Sheeum'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 brilliance 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 up of itself; and yet the music, the sweetest he had ever heard, went merrily on. A dainty board, indeed,

\* Will-o'-the-Wisp; or, according to the shortest translation we could extract of these two words—the fellow of the burning and that sets people's heads

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, Sheeum 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; and then the liquor that went round, quaffed out of vessels like in form and colour to the meadow "butter-cup," 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, without a bubble or a bead 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; and red conical caps and gay feathers. Some 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; and amazed to the uttermost Sheeum 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, in 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 an 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; and, with his two good eyes, Sheeum 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; and, when he found himself almost literally chained to the spot, so great was Sheeum'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 bethought 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—Sheeum 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 diaoul!" said Sheeum, aloud; and 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 Sheeum, losing 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 or pleasures.

Nor did Sheeum 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 Sheeum-na-Sheeog 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; because, 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 Sheeum'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 Sheeum 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 bogwood, strewed with dried herbs, earthen vessels, and small phials, hung against the uneven walls; and from the edges depended black beetles of the largest species, and some *dorch-luchres*, 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, seemed stored there for fuel.

This was a poor and cheerless residence for a man of such might as Sheeum-na-Sheecog; 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 *thraumeen*, 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, night and day, participated their festivity in the fairy hall of the rath against which his cabin was constructed; for 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 knowledge 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 mercies protect you, Andy, a-gra-bawn!" sighed Bridge, 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, Bridge, your prayer is worth its weight in pure gould, an' mooch sarvice it 'ill 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, Bridge, a-lanna, won't you pelt the ould brogue afther me, for loock?"

"Well thought on, Andy, a-chorra;"—and she stopped, 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—(we pay ourselves no compliment);—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, Bridge, agra, an' that's as good as if I tuck my oath, iv there's loock or grace in id, you gave me enough an' plenty, an' 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 Bridge 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 Sheeum-na-Sheeog, 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 determination, 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 Sheeum-na-Sheeog, nor, to his knowledge, had Sheeum-na-Sheeog ever beheld him; and 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 Sheeum-na-Sheeog.

"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.

Sheeum-na-Sheeog, although robust, was an old nian; 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 was buckled round his waist. He had quivering black eyes, of which the expression, when they seized on Andy's dead stare, was, by the visiter, 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 self-same face he had unconsciously assumed when the first surprising words startled him outside the door. 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, murther!" was all Andy could gasp forth.

"Ay; 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, Sheeum-na-Sheeog abruptly went on.

"Where's the money I'm to get for my helpin' you, and to comfort me for the bad tratement 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. Sheeum-na-Sheeog took the proffered fee, viewed it a moment, and then, darting at Andy the glance of an old rat, said in a high tone,—

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\* Sit down.

K

' This beggarly shillin' won't do; there's a *guineah-beg*\* in the t'other pocket, ma bouchal."

Andy caught breath, and jumped on his stool—"Murther, murther! I ax your thousand pardons, over and 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 Bridge Chree's present, and which he at last found in the very remote corner of the pocket pointed out, as if it participated his terrors, and was hiding from the touch of the mysterious sage. As he handed it,—

"Ma—" he began, but Sheeum 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, agin, you had no design in offerin' me the shillin' 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 bogwood, and a bunch of furze, taken from the heap, which having also lit, he again addressed, in a tone of command, our observant friend.

"Stand on your long legs, Andy Awling!"—Andy bounced up;—"now take that noggin o' clear wather in your hand."

"Iv it war the same thing to you, a-roon machree, an' iv I had my choice, I'd rather not take id."

"Ho, ho! hould it in your hand, I tell you."

"I'm no way drouthy, but behowldin' to you as mooch as if I war—" Bridge 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, said Sheeum.

"Sure you wouldn't have the heart to make me dhrink, when it's hungry I am, if anything ails me!"

"Ay; you have the look iv a hungry fellow, an' you moost get a scrap to eat when we've done—"

"Och," interrupted Andy, "never a morsel 'ill go below my breath till I see Clarah agin,—iv it's the will o' God I ever see id—not the big ov a bee's knee—I have a vow."

"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

\* Little guinea—half a guinea.

hand on the noggin. The blazing furze had by this time burnt into white ashes; of which the conjuror 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 spok<sup>e</sup> 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, and 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 Dooling will be wid him, undher the stars o' the night; and then let him give her what's in this little bottle to dhrink, an' she'll follow him to his father's house: bud tell him—an' be sure you mind my words—tell him he moost be alone in the glin; no living 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-Sheeog;—"an' moreover, if you attempt the like, the flesh 'ill be withered on your bones."

"I haven't another laffina in the 'varsal world, this moment; but here's a dacent coat; the ould *caubeen*\* isn't very bad, becase it's my Sunday one, an' not the ould one iv all, an 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; an' 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 as bare as I war born; an' I'll make my swear to be here agin to-morrow mornin' afore you come back—"

"Come back from where?"

"Avoch, that's a question fit for more knowledge nor God gave me; but iv 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 id."

"Goh-mock—Goh—mock—go your ways!"—exclaimed the fairy-man, in a voice full of 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 slapped and barred against him.

## CHAPTER XVI.

BRIDGE THREE 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 Sheeum-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 Bridge's renewed questions, he went over all that related to Pierce Shea and Alley Dooling; and if Bridge 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; and 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?" Bridge asked in her crosslest 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 scatter-brained fellow, over-bold and hearty:—if he had to do with honest Christians, like himself, that a body could hit 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 omadhaun! 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 divil 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, Bridge again asked, he did 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 Sheeum-na-Sheeog 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 Sheeum might "turn his head with 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 Bridge Chree, who stood before him; why, for such a turn as this, Sheeum-na-Sheeog would be obliged to him, and think well of him, on his friends' account, rather than do him any harm,

Well—Bridge didn't care to cross him, and she saw it was better to let Andy have his own way in time. But, considering all 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, Bridge, a-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; and maybe the little bottle and the herb might cure her, an' keep her in her bed for the future.

"Like enough," Andy said; and instantly presented them to Bridge, wishing her luck in her attempt.

But Bridge 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-billhoge 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 Bridge 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, Bridge and he had been only passing civil; for, aware as he was of the honourable attachment subsisting between her and his foster-brother, he sedulously avoided any of those little romping civilities that all his mother's maids expected of him, but that he feared might give Andy uneasiness; and he could not, therefore, but marvel at the pressure and wink of the betrothed Bridge 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.

Bridge, 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 Shocum-na-Sheeog, 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, Bridge 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; and 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 Bridge 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; 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 Doocling 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 has 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 reassumed 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—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;—and 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—and 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, love?—speak up, dearest Alley, and quickly; this is no place to stay in.”

“I cannot!—no, no, Pierce, I cannot go with you!”

“Cannot!—and 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 me here? had Sheeum-na-Sheeg anything to do

with my seeing you?—'tis a foolish question—but had he?"

"He had, indeed."

"Astonishing!—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! and yet you say we must part again?"

"I am not free to act, Pierce; and though my heart at last break while I say it, still I do say we must part here—here on the very spot where we have met."

"We must not, by Heaven! whatever may be your mystery—whoever the agents that control you—spirit or mortal—man or devil—ha!" 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, and then, when it had gained its utmost, he let her go, and with arms still extended, as he stepped backward, exclaimed,—

"Stand for yourself, then, woman! 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, oh, 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 dishonoured, 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 casting 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 deeply, “ 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 avoiding 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 shapel” 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: and 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; and 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 Bridge 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; but something was to be done. First, then, he sought out Bridge, to scold her heartily; but his recollection of the amiable motive, so flattering to his vanity, that had gravely governed her actions, together with Bridge's unbounded smiles and home arguments, considerably turned away his anger. Next, he watched the live-long night till he saw Pierce set out, and 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, spat on it, and gave a jump and a shout in the dark; and then, fairy-blast or not, cripple or no cripple, stole off to Ballyfoile; watched at some distance 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 now 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; and, whatever might have been the unknown fate that awaited Pierce, from those into whose hands Alley Dooling had deliv-

cred him, the fate for which he was reserved seemed 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 stupefied, 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; and 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; and 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 paralysed, this announcement brought him to himself. And, 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; and as the sobs and wailings of his poor foster-brother, and the universal grief of all around him, rang in his ears, a chill, death-like by anticipation, closed on Pierce's heart. One poor effort he did make to bear himself like a man; but when, obeying its motion, he clasped and wrung his father's hand, and on his knees begged forgiveness for the culpable 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 terrible 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, and in wretched smiles, 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 that 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; and here he saw he had again to encounter the cool, well-concerted machinations of Crohoore-nabillhoge; one of the witnesses was the assassin of Ballyfoile; the same who, obviously under the influence of Crohoore, had personally attempted his life; and 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; and poor Andy felt so truly bewildered by the situation of his dear 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; and 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; and, owing to this 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 splendid mansion, situated in the great square of Stephen's Green, in the metropolis of Ireland.

The proprietor of the mansion was a young gentleman of family, talent, and education; and, 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,



"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 bed-room.—Will you plase, sir," standing at the head of the staircase that commanded the hall, "will you plase, sir, to walk up to his hono<sup>ur</sup>'s bed-room?"

"An' 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 afther you, to my own masther, in exchange for my civil message?"

"Yes, tell your own masther 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 masther,' says he," squatting down, to reduce himself to the height of his subject, while he mimicked his words—" 'tell your own masther I don't choose to come up.' Well, sorrow the like ever come 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 letter isn't grate in one way, he's grate another way; 'tell your masther,' says he to me, 'I don't choose to come up, but I'll 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. B. 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 shall come to him."

"Ullaloo!" 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; and, ere he had proceeded farther, his master passed him, descended the stairs, and approached the stranger.

The almost exhausted lamp had been relighted in the hall, but was not sufficient to illumine the spacious apartment; and 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. B. approached him.

"Miss Lovett writes me that she owes you much for a signal service, my good friend."

"I thank her for owing 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; but 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 bettther story-teller."

"Very well, sir," replied Mr. B. 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! an' 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?"

"Yes, 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."

"Then depend on me;—farewell."

"Well; I must be for Kilkenny this moment; and 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. B. 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. B.

"Faith an' I don't well know, plase your honour," answered the servant, now gravely enough; "I come up to the little man two dours off, just at the turnin'; an' 'Come 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 betther, if he was ped for it."

"You are a goose, Pat," said Mr. B.—"but now no more of this; prepare with all speed for my immediate departure."

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## 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 gaoler 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.

"Hal! hal! ay; an' maybe deserve to be hung up together, the last day o' your lives, just to keep you from parting," retorted Matthew.

"An' ain't I poor Pierce's own foster-brother?"

"Rot you, have you the sheriff's ticket?"

"Ochone, I dunna 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! bud I'll give id 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 out wid me."

"Nor left none at home, I'm thinkin'"—and Matthew turned off towards the interior of the prison.

"Oh! the Lord purtect 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, murther, iv I had a bit iv a sledge!" said 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 scarcely stirred, until the sentinel, again reversing 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' frum 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; fur it's little iv id 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: jist keep your eye on me, and 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 divil's tricks, now," replied Loughnan; "you made a fool o' me once on a time, an' that's more nor 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, and 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 story 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 shoe-maker, 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 stepped 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 of 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 sank 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 only see 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, and—

"Where are you at all, Andy Houlohan?" he cried.

"Here I am," answered Andy, jumping through the ring, alpeen in hand.

"Tell the divil's-limbs who this is," Loughnan continued, snatching off the hat and blanket of the supposed cripple.

"Oh, *Dhea-na-glorive!*" shouted Andy, as he jumped back in horror—"tis Crohoore-na-billhoge!"

"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?"

"Oho," 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 sartinty, jist sich a kind o' crature they say done it."

"Ram him in! ram him in!" was now the general cry.

"Andy," said Loughnan, "catch 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 gaol had disappeared into the crowd at the

beginning of the scuffle; but 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 devil," remarked Paddy Loughnan; "they're jist like two brothers together; but let me once get him inside, and the ould bouchal may have him afterwards, if he doesn't repent of his bargain:" and 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 gaoler 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-billhoge?"

"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;—and "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 after all; I ought to be tied to a cow's tail and sthreeled to death; arrah, what a purty hand I made of id in the ould cave of 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' diaoul that crossed me; an' it was only when I got home on my sort of an ould horse that I considered 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 dushmal things to bother you; an' his two eyes, an' nobody's else, that looked at you out o' the ground, when you roared out to Pierce Shea that you saw the horned devil, an' frightened him, too, an' tumbled him down by the little river: an' Paddy Loughnan, you're not worth a thravneen, to let sich a little sheeog iv a thing make an ownsuch 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: ay, faith. an' some good money under 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 frosts of many winters have stiffened the fibres of the heart, and 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 scarcely recognise his father. Little more than a short day had elapsed since the preserved rose of youth cheerily blushed on the cheek that was now white and livid; and 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; and as the son strove again to support him, he too felt the tremor 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; and there Pierce still held his father in his arms.

"Oh, Pierce!" he continued, gasping and choking, "I am struck down; the ould heart is as weak as it will soon 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 round me for the last time."

"I cannot speak to *you*, father," answered Pierce.

"Pierce, Pierce, don't turn the face from me; soon an' I'll see it no more—the face of my only child; an' thry an' spake, a-vich; thry an' spake, for your voice, too, 'ill soon be gone from my ear; an' sit closer, an' let me hould yqu, for the ould clay will soon hide you from your father."

"You are terribly changed, sir," said Pierce, endeavouring to say something, and in a rallied tone.

"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; an' I want none; none when you are gone; all my comfort will then be with you in the grave, an' 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, a-vich, come to me—this is the only time I can lay my 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," resumed the priest; "do you feel for his and mine: he has but a short time, dear friend, to prepare for a long account, and I 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:

"And, 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; and after some time all were about to kneel, when a bustle in the passage attracted their notice, and Andy Houlohan rushed by the under-turnkey, who appeared at the open door of the cell.

"My poor fellow, have you come to see me?" said Pierce,

\* Father—as the Irish call their priests.



holding out his hand, as Andy, now stationary in grief and horror, stared upon the group.

"Yes, a-vich—jist—jist to say—God be wid you," stammered the faithful creature.

"We are 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.

"I'm thankful to you, Pierce, a-cuishla-ma-chree," 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 'ill burst!"—he put his hand to his neck, and 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: and, "I'm lookin' at you," he resumed, "never to look agin; we war childher together; we war gorcoons 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;" and just then the entrance of the gaoler 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?"—for he had not recognised, in the person that helped to bring in Crohoore, the same he had ordered from the gate—"be off, you gaol-bird, or maybe you'd get the length o' your tether, after all."

Andy flew to Pierce's arms, the gaoler tore him away; but he continued to look on his foster-brother, as he progressed 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 sank on his knees, crying out,—

"Father, your benediction, and 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 recognise 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, as Mr. B. 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, and 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. B. 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 scarcely 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 ere 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. B. 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. B. cried, "what is to be done? at such an hour!"—And now came the only comfort the smith, innkeeper, ostler, 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 often 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 before that.

Endeavouring to believe and rely on these people, and urging the smith, whose gorçoon now appeared in distant view, Mr. B. stood silently 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; and 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. B. 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 that he had wished to see; and then, apparently assured, clapped his hands in self-congratulation, 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 dubious-looking figure made his appearance, mounted on a still more rare animal. It would be difficult to penetrate his mind through the expression of his countenance; for 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 happened to blow, the pate it served but to adorn: and 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 *culotte* swung wide; his pieces of blue stockings were clustered round his ankles, leaving his shins, marbled by the fire, bare; and his old brogues (or if not old, like rakes, prematurely so) would have fallen from his feet, but that they were secured by cords; and 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; consisting 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. B.’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 new-comer 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 ostler, 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 met with in Dublin and Kilkenny.

On such an occasion, Ned Ostler 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 natur’l.”

“De devil take the liars between you and me, Sheemun Croonawnee,” was the courteous reply: “an’ what brings you here?”

“As I hope fur 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 streets 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.

"Oho!" observed Sheemun, and quickly resumed his station at the road side, from which he had advanced to converse with his friend.

Mr. B. overheard the whole of this dialogue, and felt much interested with the speakers, particularly with him who had last arrived; and 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 Mr. B.

"Why, plase your honour," said Sheemun, "it's 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 jist as much about it as a cow does of a holiday, or a pig of a bad shillin'; an', Croonawnee, you had betther be quiet; for by my sowl, an' dat's an oath, may be you oftener helped to shove in a poor man's door, wid de head o' your walkin'-stick—ay, an' a rich one's too—oftener dan he would let you for de axin'."

He was moving on, and approaching Sheemun as he made an end of speaking; but whether he had touched his friend on the sore point, or whether, from 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. B.—"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. B., Sheemun suddenly raised in both hands his long staff, and planting, under the left ear of Tim, that very knob or head so incautiously 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 its stomach agreed with the marks of piety on its 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; and 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, turned, philosopher like, and resolved to make the most of the opportunity to pick a fresh morsel of 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; for, as it struck heavily upon the hard road, there was a clashing, jingling 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. B. 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-billhoge 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. B. 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. B. 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. B. took in his hand still bore undefaced the crest and cipher 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. B. had 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; and Mr. B. 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. B. 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. B. placed him before the strong light of the window, and looked long into those eyes; but the disgusting stare of the other never winced; and at last—

"How did you come by this stolen property?" he demanded, in his sternest tone.

"Tundher-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; and 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, and from whom, the plate that now lies before me?"

"Ochone!" 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 devil got de friar?—by cripes, he got him just fere he was; an' dat's your answer, a-bouchal, an' make much of it."

Mr. B. declined, for two reasons, any further communication with a creature so loathsome—first, because he had not patience to continue his interrogatories; and 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 by Mr. B. 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 till the termination of the young gentleman's inquiries of the butcher; and 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. But we should not forget to say that, on his quick passage from the inn to his carriage-door, he looked round and inquired in vain for the old man, whose strange whisper, before he wielded his staff, now recurred to Mr. B.'s mind, as something very necessary to have explained. Disappointed, however, in seeing him near, Mr. B. 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 thunderstruck at the order to sit down in the same vehicle with the greasy and otherwise soiled butcher; and just as his master drove away—

"Plase your honour," said he, "wouldn't it be well done to make the ostler rub him down a bit, he's so mortal dirty?"

"Pat," answered his master, "your wit, 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 bates all I ever 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 i'll have fun for a week, fen dey sees myself peepin' out at 'em from a grand po-chay windee. I say, Masther Pat, you scullion you, come wait on me."

"Get out, you nasty bastel!" answered Pat.

"Get in, you mane; an' here I goes, an' fait, a-gra-bawn, I'm the boy dat never liked to be stumpin' through de 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; an' how daar 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. B.'s carriage. But when, some three miles on the road, the postillion pulled up for 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 the had not agreed so well as might have been expected from the coolness of the butcher, or from Pat's genuine good-humour.

## 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; and, 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 its long fair locks, decently 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, and manly effort and religious zeal to brave it; but, 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; and he was soon able to man himself again, and take a second and composed survey of the thousand 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 manly form, drew down unqualified pity and compassion. All was once more prepared. The soldiers closed around him and his priest; his arms were pinioned; with the left, however, he linked 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 gaoler, 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; and this arrangement gave an appearance 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; and 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; and 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; yet we remember to this hour the impression made on our tender minds by the face and manner of the unfortunate man. The character of both was unearthly and startling, bearing and showing a something not of this world, and he seemed a creature of a different kind from the living among whom he walked; the grave had already stamped him with its likeness. His eye kept no recognition for the beings or things around him; it strayed not here and there, as man's eye will stray to catch notice of, or help, or gratification, or assurance from, the bright varieties of animate and inanimate creation; and, though he stepped with a firm and courageous step, that action seemed the result of a previous command of the will, still unconsciously obliged 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; and 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 shudderingly and darkly 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; and 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; and poor Pierce himself started from the deathly 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 dull ear, and an effort, like that of a bed-ridden and doting old man, to connect some past recollections and present knowledge with the accents of a long-known but long-forgotten voice.

The sheriff instantly hastened to where the carriage had drawn up, and was seen to listen to some rapid instructions 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 streets of the town, 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, merriment too; for, 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; and, 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 rushed like lightning through the throng and the guards, broke into the inward space, and clasped Pierce in her arms; and he, as if 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, and her shining auburn 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.

And 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, and 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: and then, turning and smiling frightfully in his face, she asked him to confirm what she had said, and to declare he would come home 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, dear 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; and 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; and 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 shout came, and Pierce and his mistress stood silent and motionless, in the action of statuary only.

The cry was repeated and repeated, nearer and nearer; indeed it seemed one unbroken roar of human voices, rather than intermittent 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 out-skirts of those who surrounded the gallows, the people present burst into one mighty answering cheer, and—"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 general 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 sharing 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, and in drove the carriage that had before been seen—Pat seated on the box with his rod and white flag, and Mr. B. appearing half way out at the window. It stopped; Pat was down in a twinkling, to pull the door open; Mr. B. 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, and 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. B. 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. For all our previous detail we have had the visible facts before us, but here should be an effort of imagination alone; and mere imagination cannot pretend to reach the extraordinary mysteries of the human soul in such a conflict of feeling. 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 quite, quite 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, we say, as if he durst not believe it.

Mr. B. soon saw the inutility of continuing to give a series of information to his young friend, and for the present attended only to his situation. He gently released Alley from his hands, whom, as she fainted under the first announcement of the joyous news, Pierce had mechanically caught and held from falling. Then, causing wine to be brought to the spot, Mr. B. 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 Mr. B. and kneel down in thanks to Heaven and to him.

And now, too, he was able to understand the subjects his zealous friend and patron had before vainly endeavoured to explain. Mr. B. 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 seduced into Whiteboyism, and of his guiltless conduct during the outrage on the proctor, as at once procured the respite of which Mr. B. 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. B. 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; and his first 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. B. 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; but, ere he left the spot, he observed an old hag make way through the crowd, and attend on Alley, who was just recovering from her swoon in the arms of some female, to whom Mr. B. 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 command 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 revived 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 bare-headed fellow appeared running at the top of his speed against them, 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; and 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 "shiloo" 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, 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 the 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 it 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, splashing 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!—*chorra-ma-ckree* war the sodgers!—whoo! to the diaoul wid the skibbeagh!—long life to the Sassenachs, an’ glory for ever!”

And when they had delivered their charge to the thereby discontented gaoler—

“Stay a bit, my darlins!—*ma chorp an diaoul!* we must have a dhrop together, afore we part!—the best in the town, an’ your skins full iv id!—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, Loughnan 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; and 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 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 gaoler. 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 crimes so monstrous. The trial rapidly went on; the chain of evidence was conclusive. The fact of his sharpening the bill-hook 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 a vengeance that had been long threatened, or at least indirectly alluded to; the marks of 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 daughter of his wretched victims: nothing, exclusive of the testimony of an actual witness of the bloody scene, could be more convincing; and Crohoore-na-billhoge 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 hardened air; and Mehawl, 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 ending; Crohoore-na-billhoge 'ud never be hanged, bekase he had them for his friends that war well 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; and, 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 pronounciation,—

"Crohoore-na-billhoge, otherwise Cornelius Field, what have you to say why sentence of death and execution should not be pronounced upon you?" and 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, and looking with a composed eye around him, 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, was scarcely able to hold the solemn self-command of his features. For a moment the dwarf did not speak; and, 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, fearfully communicated. 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, and the great presiding magistrate 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; and for all kindnesses and charities received you have brought down woe in every shape on their happy and hospitable roof. For it also appears, and in the crime you further stand convicted, that you have torn from that 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: and,——“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; and that officer, not being himself a very athletic, courageous, or active person, ran to collect the force in attendance. Matthew, the gaoler, 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 and 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 hinderance could be offered, he fired it in Crohoore's face; but, from their 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, he flung himself down; and, by the hanging weight of his body, unwittingly assisted, indeed, by Matthew's continued tuggings, 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 seize upon this man—I'll have more

"Aye, sir," exclaimed Mr. D. 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; "I 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. B. 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 as 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 as secured also."

A burst of astonishment and incredulity escaped all the hearers, as Mr. B. passed to the bench to converse with the judge; and, 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 upraised hands and quick shakings of the head, while the rapid comment flew around in different directions. "It bates Banagher," said one, meaning to express his surprise or consternation;—"Tut—it can never be;—look at him," observed others, who persisted in their skill in physiognomy;—"Faith, afther 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.

And all eyes were of course now bent upon 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, surrounded by the sheriff's party, in 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 scarcely to leave a trace of feature visible.

"Take off his outside coat from the prisoner," said the judge, pausing in his conversation with Mr. B. 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, Rhia 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; and, 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 gaoler.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Into the domestic sitting apartment of the trustworthy gaoler we have next to introduce our reader; and 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 drafts of gael 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; and 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; and 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; the seat hollowed into two distinct concavities, to receive the two fat thighs of the fat Matthew.

In speaking of this chair, we have been induced to say it commanded, or seemed to command, the others, from a similitude that has since occurred to us, when we beheld the scarleted and embroidered bravery of the city in which our tale finishes, what time public danger threatened the state, and the peaceable 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, transcendent 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 in which they are engaged.

They consist of Mr. B. aided by two other county magistrates; the hitherto formidable Crohoore; Pierce Shea—the rescued Pierce Shea; Rhia Doran, well guarded and handcuffed; his acquaintance, Tim Lyndop, also attended; Sheemun Croonawnee, whom Mr. B.'s servant failed to secure, but who, nevertheless, now came at call; Andy Awling, as Pierce's shadow, and the gaoler 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. B. addressing his brother



magistrates, and handing a paper, "have the goodness first to read that deposition: 'tis Miss Lovett's, and of much importance."

They did so. Mr. B. then stepped 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. B. led her towards Rhia 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. B. "the taller of the prisoners stands clearly 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; and he, therefore, also stands charged as an accomplice. Let us now trace their common connexion with a more horrible outrage. Gaoler, 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. B. continued, "go on with the explanation we are all anxious to hear."

"Will your honour gi' me my own way?"

"Yes: proceed."

"Come forward, Dory Shea, the sister of Ned Shea, and the aunt of Pierce Shea, who is to the fore; come forward an' first tell in the face o' these good gentlemen, an' o' your own nephew, who and what I am;" and the speaker elevated his low figure to its utmost height, and a smile of pride and triumph gave a new and not displeasing 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; and the murdered Tony Dooling was your father, an' the mur-

thered Canth Dooling was your own mother. I am ould, an' I am withered, an' 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, an' blooming, an' happy; ay, Dora Shea was once the delight of many an eye, an' the ache of many a heart, till she left the joy of her father's roof to wandher the world wid a beggar; then sufferins an' sin soon changed me, an' when I prayed charity from my father, wid heavy sthrokes he druv' me from his door, an' didn't know his daughter.

"When this crature saw the light," she continued, turning to Crohoore, "I came a-beggin' to his father's house; my own child died in my arms undher Tony Dooling's roof; I tuck him from the cradle, and put the stiff'ould infant in his steud; the father thought his son died, and Canth Dooling dhropt mother's tears over him. Afther some little time I gave over the *shoolin'* life; my husband, Gorodhe Donohoe, the boerchoch, went to live among the hills, where, fast by his cabin-door, he had a way into the ould hidin'-place in the rath, an' people called him Sheeum-na-Sheecog; I didn't want 'Tony Dooling's boy to help me beggin', any more, an' I left him where his father found him." Here the screaming voice of Dora Shea failed.

"You have more to tell, a-roon," said Crohoore.

"Yes, I have; an' I will tell it. It was many years afore the murther that young Anthony Dooling, now forment ye, came wid his gun among the hills, an' sthrollin' into my cabin, found out the saicret o' Gorodhe Donohoe's place in the green rath; an' to keep him silent, for he was a hearty boy, not afeard o' the snuries, nor to be imposed upon like the others, I tould him—God forgi' me all my long sins!—I tould him he was my own son; an' 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 sich a mother, but I found him good an' dutiful, like a son, from that day out: an' he never knew the truth of his real birth, till the night he brought his own sister Alley to my cabin, an' then, wishin' to save him from a sin I now know he never intended, I whispered in his ear, the minute they came together afore me, the words that gave him all the knowledge."

"Ay," said Crohoore, interrupting the narrator, "I was then tould I had a father I could be proud of, an' a mother I could love, an' I knew they lay murthered that very night. All my life I was a poor friendless crature, the thing to be jeered at, an' throd upon, and abused by everybody; an' the

words o' my mouth grew rough and passionate, but meant nothin'; my heart was only desolate, an' dark, an' scalded; it loved none, because none would let it love 'em; but it never had malice against a livin' thing:—an' I was tould I had a father, but he was gone; I was tould 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.●

"An' 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, afther the family rested in their beds, as I had often done afore, not to go wid the good people, as the charitable bodies said o' me, but I went to set snares for rabbits, to give my ould mother, as I then thought her. I had a lanthern in my hand. Returnin' nigh to home, I hard a screech from the house: I said to myself it was odd, but I walked on. I found the house open; I found the murther done; I lifted the ould man's corpse, an' my hands were bloody; I didn't know I was lookin' at my dead father then. I went through the house an' found that Alley Doolin' was gone;—Alley Doolin'—the only one in the world that ever was poor Crohoore's friend, bekase her nature was as sweet as herself was comely. I tuck the best horse; I stayed not for a saddle; I guessed the way the murtherers went, by the screechin' that still I hard; an' I dashed across the counthry, to be on the turn o' the road afore 'em. The moon was bright; I tied the horse undher the shade o' a fence; an' 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, an' I beckoned to him, an' made him stand to watch along wid me. We spoke never a word. The villians soon druv 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; 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 o' 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 never seen who carried her off: the bandage was on her eyes till I removed it; now she thought I was the man; I feared to be called a murtherer; everything was against me. I feared to be made suffer for the deeds of others;

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 ould 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 thrue person: I mane the person who rode by the side o' Rhia Doran, that night, and whose face we saw well enough never to forget it.

"I joined myself to the bocchochs; I paid 'em high; I made Alley sure, by other tokens than what ould Dora Shea has tould your honours, that I was her born brother, an' 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; an' I visited the spot red wid their blood, to bring away the manes o' revengin' the death o' my father an' mother: that was the night o' the wake. I followed Doran's thrack to find the man I wanted along wid him. Doran was a robber: I paid Sheemun an' another to come round him; they done their business well, an' brought me word of all his doin's; but, tho' they an' I watched him an' 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."

"An' it was on that very day," resumed Crohoore, "that my spy saw Doran an' himself together; an' I came to take a look at 'em, but they were gone. This mornin' arly he saw them agin on the sthreets in this town, wid the knowledge that Lyndop was to be on the road to Dublin, to sell what was in his wallet; an' Sheemun an' myself were to thrack 'em, on two good horses, whichever way they went, in company or alone; an' I only came, like a cripple in a cart, to meet ould Ned Shea comin' out o' the jail, an' to spake the word o' comfort to him, bekase 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. B.

"As sure as of any face an' man I now see fornent me; he was in the room just now."

Mr. B. 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; and 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, and then, being desired to look at the crowd under Matthew's direction, also identified, without hesitation, the skulking Tim Lyndop.

"So far, gentlemen, our evidence seems connected and consistent," Mr. B. 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. B. 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 Sheemun, "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 schreechin' 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. B. "that of leading this very 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 good 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 immediate impulse, notwithstanding the recommendation of him I had received, was to arrest Crohoore 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 the strongest emotions of surprise, and only waited till it was done to ask Mr. B.—  
"Was Crohoore the bearer of the letter that saved my life, sir?"

"He was, indeed," replied Mr. B.—"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 on 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 rapid 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 struck your palm in friendship was your betrayer. I knew all his plans: he put a fellow upon shooting you; this failed, because I was near; an' then he made you a Whiteboy, an' brought the same fellow to hang you for it; an' that very man set you for the soldiers at your father's house."

"A third time, then, I'm your eternal debtor!"—Pierce again took his hands.

"Say no more of it, a-vich," replied Crohoore, in a broken voice—"say no more; anything I done was too little for this; too little to see myself, at last, spoken kindly to by a fellow-creature: oh, this is a great day!"

The magistrates had been privately consulting during this explanation: Mr. B. 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 Mr. B. referring to the butcher's sack, produced the handle half of a large table-spoon and two tea or dessert spoons entire;—"I discovered them," continued Mr. B. "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 by the hand. She was sworn, and positively deposed that the two smaller spoons had been her father's property. Mr. B. seated her near him, and Alley never turned her eyes around.

"Your honour's sarvant has just come in wid the ould bird, hot from the nest," here observed Matthew.

"Has he!"—cried Mr. B. with vivacity, and not at a loss to understand the gaoler'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, searched it 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; Alley screamed when she saw it; it was her father's; Pierce also identified it. "If we wanted any further proof," said Mr. B. "this, then, supplies it." The magistrates instantly assented, and their clerk began to make out a committal for the two Dorans and their filthy friend.

"And one point more seems necessary for my poor protege, Crohoore," continued Mr. B. "You are sworn, Miss Dooling; please 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 old aunt and her husband, I remained, Crohoore kindly 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 his protection, until better days might come for me—and others;" at her last words, Alley's eye turned to Pierce Shea.

"I presume, gentlemen, I shall now have your co-operation in forwarding to government such a vindication of this very surprising man as shall induce an immediate rescinding of the unmerited sentence passed upon him?" asked Mr. B. His brother magistrates expressed their great willingness and anxiety to make the necessary statement; and once more the gentlemen conversed in secret, as Pierce Shea, recovering from a sudden convulsion of new and joyful feelings, that during Alley's answer had crowded round his heart, advanced to her, exclaiming,

"Great God! how have I been every way imposed upon!—Alley, 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," said Crohoore.

"Musha, God forgi' me my sins, I can, sure enough, in regard I was one o' them myself, an' Shaun-law-theaum another, an' poor Ristharde Boccoch, an Padre Keaoch, along wid us; an' 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 Crohoore.

"It is indeed," answered Shea; "but I have wronged poor Alley beyond forgiveness."

"Never say that," resumed 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 wonder you had your own thoughts about us;—but we never changed from you: here Pierce, ma-bouchal, take her from her poor brother's hand, as good a colleen as the sun ever shone upon; an' as you can't have the father's blessin'"—his voice again failed—"take mine."

The young couple were in each other's arms; and, 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. B. rather sharply inquired the cause of this undecent 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 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 mysef; one that's wiilin' to be married to a body that I know;" and Andy walked once more temperately to his friends.

"Masther Crohoore," scraping respectfully, "maybe you'd tell a body a matther or two, that he'd be very glad to know?"

"Anything, Andy, an' welcome."

"Was id only a *morya iv a thigha*\* we seen one night in the ould castle among the hills?"

"It was myself," interrupted old Dora Shea; "some people war bringin' sthray cattle to Gorodhe Donohoe's hidin'-hole, an' bekase Alley was wid us, I went out to warn 'em away; an' when I saw ye goin' into the ould castle, wid guns in your hands, I knew ye war afther Crohoore; so while you lay asleep, I poured wather in the guus to keep 'em from doin' harm."

"Then, little wondher we din't hit him across the sthrame," said Andy musing—"bud, Crohoore, a-vich, the time I shot you in the head, outside o' the cave—what's the raison you warn't kilt dead, then, at any rate?"

"Oh, that's a story to be tould, Andy; an' some long winter's night, when our griefs an' our throubles are past by—when P'ierce is married to Alley, an' when Bridge Chree has your own legs spanselled, Andy—we'll tell it all over, round the fire, please God."

\* A pretended ghost.

**TALE II.**

**THE FETCHES.**



# THE FETCHES.

## INTRODUCTION.

LETTER FROM MR. ABEL O'HARA TO MR. BARNES O'HARA,  
GRAY'S INN, LONDON.

*Inismore, December 4, 1824.*

MY DEAR BARNES,—At last I send you, by a careful friend, my long-promised contribution to our series of Irish tales; having nothing to say in excuse for my remaining so long behind-hand with it, but that I could not by possibility finish sooner. I am at a loss, indeed, to account for my slowness in composition, when I hear of other folk throwing off their twenty or thirty pages of an evening; as Richard, for instance, boasts he did with his Crohoore-na-billhoge, and as he says you have done with your John Doe. The five hours each day and night for which you stipulated, and which I agreed to, I have faithfully spent in my study; but not to impose on you, I further admit that scarcely more than one hour out of the five was employed in actual writing. I do not know how it is; my general plans and notions come well enough, but the misery lies in torturing my brain to divide them into a succession of incidents and situations. If you had seen me at work, and if your old vivacity has not forsaken you, you would have laughed heartily. I often laughed myself, when I caught in a looking-glass that sometimes stood on the table the pinched and hard-pressed expression of my naturally sharp visage, and when I called to mind that, for the hour before, I had been leaning back in my old leather-bottomed arm-chair, unconsciously regarding every accidental spot or stain on the ceiling, and biting and nibbling away till “my ould pen was worn to the gristle.” Heaven send something has at last come of all this hideous labour!

I have not adopted for my tale any of the popular superstitions you recommended, although you gave me my choice of “the good people, or of our peculiar fraternity of ghosts,

or of our still more eccentric sisterhood of witches." You will perceive I have taken leave to decline all these subjects, in preference to one you had overlooked: I mean the Fetch superstition, so prevalent in this part of Ireland. Yet I did not reject the others merely on account of my liking for this one, but as much because I despaired of giving to any of them the effect of which I feel they are individually susceptible, and, indeed, which the greatest men have tried and failed to give them; and how could I dare, by using other means than those great men had used, attempt my own contemplated and and different result?

You will ask what I mean by this half modest half-impudent theory, and you will also call on me to yield better satisfaction for my breach of your sovereign commands. I obey, on condition of your extending to me your fraternal indulgence; it is already granted, I know; and here, then, you may peruse in detail my chief reasons, or whims, as perhaps you will call them.

The efforts of literary men, even of the highest class, to embody national superstitions, to give them action and scene, have, to me, almost always seemed in a degree abortive. They do not come up to my own preconceived notion of the legend deposited, Heaven knows when or how, in my own mind; of the immaterial actor, or the fairy ground from which such pictures profess to be drawn.

They do not, in spite of myself, chill and awe me like the authentic prepossessions of childhood.

On the pages of the "Fairy Queen," or of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," Mab is a different personage from the creature of my established superstition: in fact, I can scarcely separate her from the mere palpable dramatis personæ with whom Spenser or Shakspeare has surrounded her. Her limbs are not less corporeal, her language is not more intelligent, her motion is not lighter. I am obliged to look on her body, face, and features; she smiles or frowns, laughs or weeps, like any every-day little lady of my acquaintance. The worthy Bottom, with his bewitched head resting on her real lap, is not a more real individual: nay, the "Welsh Fairy" at Heron's Oak, who could not, the moment he opened his mouth, deceive even the conscience-smitten Jack Falstaff, represents her as well as she represents my intellectual Mab or Titania. And this I may call disagreeable—distressing to me: the misty quietness of my early dream is by it broken up; the visionary weavings of my brain, from which I own I have derived pleasure, and which, perhaps, most of us love to enjoy in the twilight of the closet, or in a sequestered situation—all are brushed away

and I only see a well-drawn academic group, indifferent to me from the very correctness of their outline, the symmetry of their proportions, and the common reality of their existence.

Ghosts appear to me to have been, if possible, worse treated; I ought to say they have been well drawn, and that would convey all my objection: for I believe they should never have been delineated. I believe the failure to have risen from the effort to give us fixed ideas of them. We do not want those fixed ideas—I, at least, do not: on the contrary, they are precisely the things to destroy the only true notion I can have of ghosts. For instance, what downright-alive creatures Æneas and Telemachus meet under ground—for it is only under ground—the identical men, using the same feet and hands, with whom they had before held intercourse, dined and supped, in the world! Why, this is but sailing to Van Diemen's Land, or, at best, descending into a mine to visit an old acquaintance. As to stage ghosts, they are my laughter. "Enter the ghost of Banquo!"—the very sound of the words unghosts the third-rate actor before he comes in. In fact, since the first existence of the literary world, and throughout its whole range, it has only thrice been visited by your true legitimate spectre. One appeared to Eliphaz the comforter, in the land of Uz; the second, to the mad author of Ossian's poems; and the third is the Bodach-Glas of poor Vich Ian Vhor. You will immediately recollect each of these, therefore I need not quote any of them; but I must call on you to observe, that all are fascinating and sublime, because they are sketches only, loose and general as our own nursery ideas of what such beings are and ought to be. In them person or materiality is not even indicated; they exist we know not how: they come and go, we know not whence or whither; they are and they are not.

Although the depicting of witches does not require the same beautiful indistinctness of execution, and although we do not contemplate them as immaterial creatures, yet I have been also inconvenienced by the violence done on my primitive notion of witches. I cannot, perhaps, readily express the reason why; but let me endeavour to illustrate. Otway's famous witch only disgusts—she does not control or agitate me: she is a feeble, squalid old woman to whom I could fearlessly walk up, in the most selfish solitude, and give an alms. Macbeth, too, seems to me a silly person to be at first so much moved by his weird sisters: they are mere animals, and of the very poorest class of animals; one could coolly hand them over to the parish beadle and see them put to hard labour. But this I could not do with the weird sisterhood of my own imagination, whom, though they wear a fashion of the human

form, I have been taught to regard as possessing a portion of superhuman spirit and existence; and while wandering in silent, deserted places, among the cowering loneliness of deep hills and forests, I confess I have often felt that I should have instinctively shrunk from the sudden vision of an ancient gentlewoman, shaped, featured, and habited, out of the picture gallery and wardrobe of my childish prejudices, which, after all, give the only sovereign impressions of supernatural appearances and agents that it is the poet's business to copy and reproduce before us.

With those views I declined, for that time at least, your suggestion to mould out of ghost, fairy, or witch, my Irish tale; because, as I before said, I would not presume to try, with any one of them, for an effect different from the effects already relied on by great and immortal hands, and, still worse for me, accepted by the world; and to imitate where I disapproved seemed only a cold and repulsive task. But this leads me to the more direct object of my letter, as I rather write to acquaint you, my dear Barnes, of some circumstances that, while I wavered and was uneasy for a new subject, caused me to select that which is at length before you.

I was sauntering in hot summer weather by a little stream that now scarcely strayed over its deep and rocky bed, often obliged to glance and twine round some large stone or the trunk of a fallen tree, as if exerting a kind of animated ingenuity to escape and pursue its course. It ran through a valley, receding in almost uniform perspective as far as the eye could reach, and shut up at its extremity by a lofty hill, sweeping directly across it. The sides of the valley bore no traces of cultivation. Briers and furze scantily clothed them, while here and there a frittered rock protruded its bald forehead through the thin copse. Ponderous stones, rounded or polished by the winter impetuosity of the now trickling streamlet, lay hurled along its mountain course in different shapes and irregular grouping. No shadow broke or relieved the monotonous sheet of light that spread over every object. The spare grass and wild blushes had become parched under its influence; the earth, wherever it was seen bare, appeared dry and crumbling into dust; the rocks and stones were partially bleached white, or their few patches of moss burnt black or deep red.

Up the valley, far as my eye could travel, and at last over the broad bosom of the distant hill, which seemed torn and indented with the headlong torrent it had once poured down, far and uniform on every side a vertical July sun was shining. The whole effect was fiercely brilliant, and so unbroken that

a sparrow could not have hopped, or a grass-mouse raced across, even in the distance, without being immediately detected as an intrusion upon the scene—as a sudden speck with which nothing else must have held any relation or keeping.

The desertion and silence of the place sympathized well with its lethargic features: the peasant seemed to have shunned it (no theory is, you know, forbidden to the rapt vision) as haunted or unholy ground. Not a single cabin met my eye through the range of the valley; overhead, indeed, the gables of one or two peeped down, half hidden by their sameness of colour with the weather-tanned rocks on which they hung, or with the heather that thatched them; but they and their inmates were obviously unconnected with the solitude in which I stood, their fronts and windows being turned towards the level country, and thence the paths that led to them must also have diverged. No moving thing animated my now almost supernatural picture; no cow, horse, or sheep, saunteringly grazed along the margin of my wizard stream. The very little birds flew over it, I conveniently thought, with an agitated rapidity; or, if one of them alighted on the shrivelled spray, it was but to look round for a moment with a keen mistrustful eye, and then bound into his fields of air, leaving the wild branch slightly fluttered by his action. If a sound arose, it was but what its own whispering waters made, or the herdboy's whistle faintly echoed from far-off fields and meadows, or the hoarse and lonesome caw of the rook, as he winged his heavy flight towards more fertile places.

Amid all this light and silence, a very aged woman, wildly habited, appeared, I know not how, before me. Her approach had not been heralded by any accompanying noise, by any rustle among the bushes, or by the sound of a footstep; my eyes were turned from the direction in which she became visible, but, again unconsciously recurring to it, fixed on the startling figure.

She was low in stature, emaciated, and embrowned by age, sun, or toil, as it might be; her lank white hair hung thickly at either side of her face; a short red mantle fell loosely to her knees; under it a green petticoat descended to within some inches of her ancles; and her arms, neck, head, and feet, were bare. There she remained, at the distance of only about twenty yards, her small grey eyes vacantly set on mine, and her brows strenuously knit, but, as I thought, rather to shadow her sight from the sun than with any expression of anger or agitation. Her look had no meaning in it, no passion, no subject. It communicated nothing with which my heart or thought held any sympathy; yet it was long, and deep, and



unwincing. After standing for some time, as if spell-bound by her gaze, I felt conscious of becoming uneasy and superstitious in spite of myself; yet my sensation was rather caused by excitement than by fear, and, saluting the strange visitant, I advanced towards her. She stood on a broad slab in the centre of the bed of the stream, but which was now uncovered by the water. I had to step from stone to stone in my approach, and often wind round some unusually gigantic rock that impeded my direct course; one of them was, indeed, so large that when I came up to it my view of the old woman was completely impeded. This roused me more: I hastily turned the angle of the rock; looked again for her in the place where she had stood—but she was gone. My eye rapidly glanced round to detect the path she had taken. I could not see her. Now I became more disturbed. I leaned my back against the rock, and for some moments gazed along the valley. In this situation, my eye was again challenged by her scarlet mantle glittering in the sunlight, at the distance of nearly a quarter of a mile from the spot where she appeared. She was once more motionless, and evidently looking at me. I grew too nervous to remain stationary, and hurried after her up the stony bed of the stream.

A second time she disappeared; but, when I gained her second resting-place, I saw her standing on the outline of the distant mountain, now dwindled almost to the size of a crow, yet boldly relieved against the background of white clouds, and still manifested to me by her bright red mantle. A moment, and she finally evaded my view, going off at the other side of the mountain. This was not to be borne: I followed, if not courageously, determinedly. By my watch, to which I had the curiosity and presence of mind to refer, it took me a quarter of an hour to win the summit of the hill; and she, an aged woman, feeble and worn, had traversed the same space in much less time. I have since supposed the circumstance might be owing to my ignorance of some clear and unobstructed path, of which she had availed herself. However this may be, when I stood on the ridge of the hill, and looked abroad over a widely-spreading country, unsheltered by forest, thicket, or any other hiding-place, I beheld her not.

Cabins—or, to use the more poetical name authorized by the exquisite bard of "O'Connor's Child," sheelings—were now abundantly strewed around me, and men, women, and children, at work in the fields. I concluded they, at least, must have tracked her, and proceeded to make inquiries of them; but one and all assured me no such person had that day met their notice, and added, indeed, it was impossible

she could have crossed where I asserted she did cross, without becoming visible to them. Then I went into the cabins, and tired myself to no purpose with other inquiries. I never again beheld (excepting in my dreams) that mysterious visitant, nor have I ever been able to ascertain who or what she was. Meantime I believe what I like about her; and, leaving you also to exercise your discretion, I shall proceed to mention—while, at the same time, I forward the purpose of my letter—the only opinion, apart from my own, that has since reached me on the subject.

After having spoken to the peasants, I continued my walk, descending the breast of the mountain which faced the valley, but now avoiding the latter, and sauntering against the thready current of the stream, with no other feeling, that I can recollect, but an impatience to ascertain its hidden source. It led me all round the base of the hill. I had a book in my pocket, with which I occasionally sat down in an inviting solitude; when tired of it, I threw pebbles into the water, or traced outlines on the clouds; and the day insensibly lapsed while I thus rioted in the utter listlessness of perhaps a diseased imagination. I thought of ghosts, witches, and apparitions of every class and name. I wished for their appearance, and had courage enough, in anticipation, to commune with them, if they would only become visible. I called; but, to the discomfiture of a more potent challenger, Hotspur has long ago proved that any one may “call.”

Evening fell. I found myself, in its deepest shades, once more on the side of the mountain opposite that which turned towards the valley. I sat upon a small knoll, surrounded by curves and bumps wild and picturesque in their solitude. The dark-green furze bush spread a sombre mantle down to the foot of the knoll, and the parti-coloured patches of vegetation, which in daylight had beautifully chequered the prospect around me, were now almost entirely blent up with the tintless expanse. I was listening to the shrill call of the plover, which sounded far along the dreary hills, when a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a clattering thunder-crash, roused me from my reverie. The big, heavy drops were already beginning to fall; I ascended the mountain's side, studiously bent on getting home time enough to evade the storm, but had not reached the ridge when it became too unreasonable for farther opposition; so I was glad to take shelter in one of the cabins, which I have described as rather numerous strewed in that direction.

25. The poor people of the cabin received me with an Irish *cead mille faile*—a hundred thousand welcomes—and I soon sat in

comfort by a blazing turf fire, with eggs, butter, and oaten bread, to serve my need as they might.

The family consisted of an old couple, joint proprietors of my house of refuge; a son and daughter, nearly full-grown; and a pale, melancholy-looking girl of about twenty years of age, whom I afterwards understood to be niece to the old man, and, since her father's death, under his protection. From my continued inquiries concerning my witch of the glen, our conversation turned on superstitions generally. With respect to the ancient lady herself, the first opinion seemed to be—"The Lord only knows what she was;" but a neighbour coming in, and reporting the sudden illness of old Grace Morrissey, who inhabited a lone cabin on the edge of the hill, my anecdote instantly occurred to the auditory, one and all; and now, with alarmed and questioning eyes, fixed on each other, they concluded I had seen her "Fetch," and determined amongst themselves that she was to die before morning.

"The Fetch" was entirely new to me, but I had never before been afforded so good an opportunity of becoming acquainted with its exact nature and extent among the Irish peasantry. I asked questions, therefore, and gathered some, to me, valuable information.

In Ireland, a Fetch is the supernatural fac-simile of some individual, which comes to insure to its original a happy longevity or immediate dissolution: if seen in the morning, the one event is predicted; if in the evening, the other.

During the course of my questions, and of the tales and remarks to which they gave rise, I could observe that the pale, silent girl listened to all that was said with a deep, assenting interest, or sighing profoundly, contributed only a few melancholy words of confirmation. Once when she sighed, the old man remarked—"No blame to you, Moggy Mavourneen, for it's you that lives to know it well, God help you, this blessed night." To these words she replied with another long-drawn aspiration, a look upwards, and an agitation of feature which roused my curiosity, if not my sympathy, in no ordinary degree. I hazarded queries, shaped with as much delicacy as I could, and soon learned that she had seen, before his death, the Fetch of her beloved father. The poor girl was prevailed on to tell her own story, in substance as follows:—

Her father had, for some days, been ill of a fever. On a particular evening, during his illness, she had to visit the house of an acquaintance at a little distance, and, for this purpose, chose a short-cut across some fields. Scarcely arrived at the stile that led from the first into the second field, she happened to look back, and beheld the figure of her father

rapidly advancing in her footsteps. The girl's fear was, at first, only human—she imagined that, in a paroxysm, her father had broken from those who watched his feverish bed; but as she gazed a consciousness crept through her, and the action of the vision served to heighten her dread. It shook its head and hand at her in an unnatural manner, as if commanding her to hasten on. She did so. On gaining the second stile, at the limit of the second field, she again summoned courage to look behind, and saw the apparition standing on the first stile she had crossed, and repeating its terrible gesticulations. Now she ran wildly to the cottage of her friend, and only gained the threshold when she fainted. Having recovered, and related what she saw, a strong party accompanied her by a winding way back to her father's house, for they dared not take that one by which she had come. When they arrived, the old man was a corpse; and, as her mother had watched the death-struggle during the girl's short absence, there could be no question of his not having left his bed in the interim.

The man who had come in to us, and whom my humble host called "gossip," now took up the conversation, and related, with mystery and pathos, the appearance, to himself, of the Fetch of an only child. He was a widower, though a young man, and he wept during the recital. I took a note of his simple narrative, nearly in his own words; and a rhyming friend of yours and mine has since translated them into metre. As I think the verses read better than my own poor prose, I here subjoin them.

•

The mother died when the child was born,  
 And left me her baby to keep;  
 I rocked its cradle the night and morrow,  
 Or, silent, hung o'er it to weep,  
 'Twas a sickly child through its infancy,  
 Its cheeks were so ashy pale;  
 Till it broke from my arms to walk in glee,  
 Out in the sharp fresh gale.  
 And then my little girl grew strong,  
 And laughed the hours away,  
 Or sung me the merry lark's mountain song,  
 Which he taught her at break of day.  
 When she wreathed her hair in thicket bowers  
 With the hedge-rose and hare-bell blue,  
 I called her my May, in her crown of flowers,  
 And her smile so soft and new.  
 And the rose, I thought, never shamed her cheek,  
 But rosy and rosier made it;  
 And her eye of blue did more brightly break  
 Through the blue-bell that strove to shade it.

One evening I left her asleep in her smiles,  
 And walked through the mountains lonely;  
 I was far from my darling, ah! many long miles,  
 And I thought of her and her only.

She darkened my path like a troubled dream,  
 In that solitude far and drear;  
 I spoke to my child, but she did not seem  
 To hearken with human ear;

She only looked with a dead, dead eye,  
 And a wan, wan cheek of sorrow—  
 I knew her Fetch! She was called to die,  
 And she died upon the morrow.

After the adventures and anecdotes of this day and evening, you may believe I comforted myself with having found, what I had long sought, a subject for my tale; and, while turning the matter over in my mind, chance still more befriended me. You recollect the celebrated Doctor Butler, of whom we have, in our childhood, heard so many traditionary wonders, and who, on the faith of the old ladies of this our native place, was assuredly endowed with skill superior to any living Sangrado. I suppose that almost the first, if not the very first, regular practitioner in so small a town, and in the primitive times, might well attract such admiration, and, indeed, nearly superstitious homage. Well, speaking of my Fetch-anecdotes to a lineal descendant, by the female branch, of this gentleman, the lady recollected some papers, professing to be in his handwriting, that contained notes of a true and real Fetch history, the actors in which were known to the good Doctor. At my earnest entreaty, and after wading, "with spectacles on nose," three or four days through old chests choko-full of old papers and other trumpery my excellent acquaintance presented me with those notes, and the result is before you. Of course I have used my discretion with the materials thus submitted to me; still, however, the leading incidents pretend to the authority of Doctor Butler, whom, by the way, you will meet as a principal actor in the scenes he has himself called into existence.

And now adieu. Shall we really see you at Easter? I am desired by all at home to ask that question, and to add that your old seat, at your old corner of the table, shall, with anxious expectation, be placed for you. The green spectacles you recommended me to get, during the slow progress of this tale, I found of considerable use: do you adopt them yourself? Farewell, my dear Barnes, and believe me, in true affection,

Your brother,

ABEL O'HARA.

## CHAPTER I.

KILKENNY College was the most famous as well as the most ancient preparatory school of Ireland. It commenced as an appendage to the magnificent cathedral of Saint Canice, for the preservation of which, after Cromwell's spoliation, we are indebted to the classic Pococke, and was then situated according to Stanihurst, "in the weste of the church-yard" of that edifice, and had for its founder Pierce or Peter Butler, Earl of Ormond and Ossory. And "out of this schoole," continued Stanihurst, "have sprouted such proper impes, through the painful diligence and laboursome industre of that famous lettered man, Mr. Peter White, as generally the whole weale publicke of Ireland, and especially the southern parts of that Island, are greatly thereby furthered." We have a sure clue to the date of its first erection, by the same writer mentioning that fact as "of late;" and also by his proceeding to inform us that (under Mr. Peter White, the original master) "it was my happie hap (God and my parents be thanked) to have been one of his crue; and I take it to stande with my dutie, sith I may not stretch mine abilitie in requiting his good turns, yet to manifest my good will in remembering his pains. And certes I will acknowledge myself so much bound and beholden to him and his, as for his sake I reverence the meanest stone cemented in the walls of that famous schoole."

In 1684, the first Duke of Ormond, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, granted a new charter to Kilkenny College, vesting in himself and his heirs male the appointment of masters, and the office and dignity of patrons and governors of the establishment. The statutes passed by him on this occasion, no less than twenty-five in number, are each of formidable length, regulating everything, from the master's morals, religion, and salary, to the punishment to be inflicted upon an urchin for "cutting or defacing the desks or forms, walls or windows of the school." Under this new arrangement the college also changed its situation from "the weste of the church-yard" of St. Canice, to a large building at the other extremity of the town of Kilkenny, which, together with a fine park, and the rectories and tithes of several parishes, near and distant, the patron granted in trust for its uses and advantage.

But during the short and inauspicious Irish reign of James II. that soon after ensued, this endowment was frustrated. The first master, appointed by the duke of Ormond, fled on account of his politics, and "King James," says Harris, "by a

charter dated the 21st of February, 1689, upon the ruins of this school, erected and endowed a royal college, consisting of a rector, eight professors, and two scholars in the name of more, to be called the Royal College of St. Canice, Kilkenny, of the foundation of King James;" and then followed "*Articles conclus du consentement unanime des regents des écoles de Kilkenny, sous la protection de l'illustrissime et reverendissime l'evêque d'Ossory,*" as curious, at least, as the state laws previously passed for the same establishment under hand and seal of the representative of majesty. William triumphed, however; James sought the retirement of Saint Germain's; Ireland once more rested beneath the reflux of Protestantism; and Kilkenny College, in common with every other public institution, re-assumed its Protestant charter and arrangement, and to this day continues to enjoy both, with, we should perhaps mention, only one difference from the whole economy proposed by the first Duke of Ormond; and that is, remarkably enough, a lapse of the right of presentation to the school by the Ormond family, in consequence of the attainder of the duke in 1715, and the vesture of said right in the provost and fellows of Trinity, Dublin.

It has been seen that Stanilhurst was a "proper imp" of the old establishment; Harris, by his own acknowledgement too, was also educated in Kilkenny College, under the first master nominated by the Duke of Ormond; as also were, subsequently, Thomas Prior, George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, and other celebrated characters, among whom, if our recollection does not fail us, we believe we may rank Swift. In fact, it was after its return to the hands of Protestant masters and governors that this seminary rose to the height of its fame, and that young Irish noblemen and gentlemen crowded its classes for the most approved preparation for university honours. It might be called the then Eton of the sister country.

We find it necessary to observe that the building to which the title "College of Kilkenny" now applies is not the same endowed by the Duke of Ormond. The Irish tourist is at present shown from an opposite bank of the Nore, a large, square, modern house, three stories high, dashed or plastered, and flaunting with gay and ample windows, and this, he is informed, is the college. Turning its back, in suitable abstraction, upon the hum and bustle of the small though populous city, it faces towards the green country, an extensive lawn spreading before it, and the placid river running hard-by, and is, altogether, appropriately and beautifully situated. But the original edifice, that existed at the time of our story, was pushed farther back, faced into the street of the town,

and was a grey reverend pile of irregular and rather straggling design, or, we should perhaps say, of no design at all; having partly a monastic physiognomy, and partly that of a dwelling-house, and bearing to its present gay successor about the same likeness that the levee skirts of Anne's time bear to the smart swallow-tail of the last summer but one. We surmise that at a more remote period it belonged to the old and beautiful Augustinian Abbey of St. John, of which the main building was not more than three hundred yards distant, and which was richly endowed "for the salvation of his soul, and those of his predecessors and successors" (as Ledwich abstracts its charter), by William Marshall the elder, Earl of Pembroke, in 1220. The entrance to the school-room was immediately from the street, through huge oak folding-doors, arching at top, to suit the arch stone doorway, and gained by two grand flights of steps at each side, that formed a spacious platform before the entrance, and allowed under them a passage by which visitors approached the college. To the left was another gateway where carriages had egress. The whole front of the building was of cut stone, with Gothic windows composed of numerous small panes of glass, separately leaded, and each of diamond form; giving the appearance of a side or back rather than of a front, on account of its grotesque gables, chimneys, and spouts, the last of which jetted into the street, to the no small annoyance in rainy weather of the neighbours and the passengers; while, from the platform before the school-room entrance, the lads of the college contrived, in all weathers, further annoyances of every description.

But in the past as well as the present time, the lawn of the college was devoted to the exercise and sports of the students, and had for its left-hand boundary "the dark wall," a shrubbery so called to this day, though its appearance, and indeed identity, are changed, and for its right the crystal Nore, of which the opposite banks were flanked by a wall some forty feet high; and over this wall—its foundations on a level with the top—towered in uncouth grandeur, amid throngs of luxuriant trees, the old family castle of the all but regal Ormonds. Close by the dark walk, at the left of the lawn, there ran, too, as there at present runs, an artificial, but deep, rapid, and sufficiently broad stream, conjectured to have been an aqueduct formed by the old monks of St. John's Abbey, that, while it discharged its immediate agency of setting in motion the water-wheels of more than one grist-mill on its course, served, at the same time, to cut off the college grounds from the adjacent gardens of the poorer class of people who inhabited the near outlet.



If local fame errs not, however, neither the broad Nore, nor the millstream, nor yet the high front wall that ran from the side of the college to the brink of the latter, completely succeeded in keeping within proper bounds, at improper hours, the mettlesome race of young students that in the old time frequented Kilkenny College. Stories are whispered on the spot of stolen orgies at midnight, in confidential taverns through the town; of ardent breathings at the windows of not the ugliest lasses in the suburbs; of desperate wars between the native youth and the fiery sojourners; and all the *et cetera* that springs from proximity to a small town of such an establishment and which Harrow at this day might illustrate.

Some time after the final re-establishment of this college, under the charter of the Duke of Ormond, a young gentleman of the name of Tresham, the descendant of an English family, settled in the South of Ireland, came to spend a few months at it, previous to his entrance into the Dublin University. His age was scarcely eighteen; yet, though so young, he had visited London, and some of the best parts of the Continent, acquiring, wherever he travelled, literary friends and information alone; for his mind had early taken a studious, or rather inquisitive bent, and imbibed with avidity all the novel scientific systems prevalent among the learned of the world.

Hitherto Tresham's education had been neglected, as perhaps is the case with most young persons of genius; he had read the classics a little; rudimental science a little; and, in this unprepared state, the crude metaphysics of the time most of all. But some grave and influential friends, having pointed out the necessity of regular acquirement, Tresham determined to amend his course, and posted to Kilkenny to recall his dead-letter Greek and Latin, and be for six months nothing but a classical student. The resolution was kept so far as related to his actual use of books, but his imagination still wandered through the regions in which it had long rioted; so that, while his bodily eye hypocritically dwelt with Homer or Tacitus, its mental brother shifted, in no definable investigation, through a wilderness of abstract reverie.

The winter came and went; Tresham's few months for preparatory study were over; yet he was still a devoted classical student at the college of Kilkenny. But winter came and went in the company of a fair and new friend, and Tresham was happier than Greek or Latin could make him. And now, and more than ever, his philosophic visions crowded upon him. The idleness produced by love was a favourable season for their influence, and they thronged in their power and fascinations. He had twice been refused admission into the

head-class of the college; but a beloved object had not refused him admission into her heart; and, the classics forgotten, he enjoyed the most delicious life that youth, fancy, love, and system-making can impart to an enthusiast. Universality of essence was Tresham's darling speculation. At times he became anxious to deny himself even unto himself, and would have preferred a demonstration of his "inherency" in a wild-flower or a weed to one clearly proving his distinct identity. So he loved and philosophized, sighed and mused; every blade of grass in the college park, every leaf on every tree in its shrubberies, and every smile and pout of his mistress, supplying endless subject.

During the long winter's evenings that had passed, and the long summer walks that were now in season, Tresham failed not to tincture, from the illusions of his own mind, all his conversations with his young mistress; and with such topics as we have glanced at he occasionally mixed up the still wilder phantasies of Rosicrucianism, which had not yet withdrawn its spell from the imaginations of even the accomplished portion of society. On this topic Tresham was intelligible to his fair pupil, whose almost childish thoughts, fretted with the common superstitions of her own country, were fearfully pleased to meet, under the borrowed name of philosophy, a downright system suited to her wildest day-dreams; and she listened in awe and terror that admitted everything. But of this young lady's state of mind, in consequence of her intercourse with Tresham, we may refer to the opinions of a close and affectionate observer.

At the time of his arrival in Kilkenny, the family of Ruth or Rothe was, throughout its various branches, one of the most considerable of the town or vicinity. A branch with which we are interested consisted of Mr. Ruth, a gentleman advanced in years, his lady, and three daughters, of whom the eldest was nineteen, the second fifteen, and the third a child of ten or eleven. They had many connexions of every age, who often visited them, and all formed a happy family circle round the fire of a winter's night, or while they watched the rising moon in the twilight of a soft summer evening.

For a year previous to Tresham's appearance at the college, the eldest girl, Maria, had been attached to a young military gentleman, who, however, was absent at that period and absent in peril, too, on service with his regiment in America. Months rolled away, and he was still in a foreign country; but Maria received letters from her lover, full of good spirits, that told her of good health, and exemption from all the ghastly visitations her fancy and affection had strewn in his

path: and at last came the news of peace, if not of victory, with another letter, giving promise of meeting on a certain day—nay, at a certain hour; which promise was, to the day and hour, kept.

The usual scene of lovers' welcome over, Mortimer inquired after the health of Mr. and Mrs. Ruth, and of—as he called her—"his dear little sighing sister, Anna."

"Father and mother well, and Anna better and worse than when you left us," Maria answered.

"Better and worse!"

"Yes; for, first, she has the useless thing she so long sighed for."

"A lover, I suppose?"

"Indeed; and therein is Anna better, is she not?"

"I am bound to believe so; but worse?"

"In the kind of lover."

"Is he unworthy? is he base? who is he?"

"Neither base nor unworthy; and for whom and what he is believe him a youth well-born, handsome (very handsome, Mortimer), affluent, honourable, and amiable. His father and ours were old friends, in the old times; here he came to study at our college, bringing letters to us from his father, was cordially received, and became a constant visitor."

"But, Maria, you describe a gentleman, and in words that give a strange sound to your first objection, if indeed you make any, against such a lover for our sister."

"I will go on my own way. The boy came, I say; Anna Ruth was young, beautiful, and romantic; Harry Tresham was also young, also handsome, and also romantic; and so—in short they did what you and I did."

"Fell in love with each other?"

"Yes."

"Well, Maria, Anna is little the worse for that, I suppose. Is the difficulty in your father's opinion?"

"No. Our father saw no difficulty if his old friend saw none; Tresham wrote home to ask: a favourable letter came, permitting everything, provided that Harry's love did not interfere with his classics; this our good and prudent sire took upon himself to regulate; and so, almost ever since you went away, the student has been received among us, saying and doing all you used to say and do, and, in fact, filling up your old place completely."

"And to the satisfaction of every party? Well, well, Maria, it has been fortunate for me, I see, that this pale student had eyes for the black tresses and pensive brow of one sister, rather than for the yellow ringlets and red-and-white commonplace

of the other. But still I am unable to see the harm to Anna."

"For the first, first; be assured we never missed you. Harm, did you say? I do not know what to call it; nor, seriously, can I tell you all I mean. But, before everything else, Tresham is a deep reader, and an exceeding visionary."

"Oh—a book-architect? a builder-up and puller-down of worlds?"

"Superstitious, moping, and melancholy—"

"What!— a Rosicrucian, in good earnest? a soothsayer and ghost-seeker?"

"Something of all that, I fear. Born in the wildest part of our wild country, and having spent a sickly and solitary boyhood among its horrid mountains and forests, and still more horrid peasantry, he travelled to the continent, ill prepared to resist the infatuations you speak of. Then his stolen studies here do not make him wiser; all his resolutions to hold to one course of reading have lately given way, and he plunges, deeper than ever, into the most approved metaphysics. You smile, sir—is it not the word? I am sure 'tis the one himself taught me—and he affects to gain from them much help in his wildest notions."

"I now understand your fears, Maria, and share them. I am very sorry for this. Your sister Anna was, of all creatures, most likely to be injured by society such as his, and topics such as they chatter on together; and if she indeed loves Tresham—"

"Oh! she dearly loves him—with all a pure girl's first love—and most, I believe, for the sake of his theories. I have seen them talk together of shades and shadows, and of the world of shadows, until their voices sank into mistrusting whispers, and you could hear their hearts beating in the echo of the fear they had made contagious to one another."

"Absurdity! we shall speak with this boy, and laugh him into manhood."

"Then you may soon begin—see!" Maria continued, leading Mortimer to a window, and pointing out—"yonder they walk together; and now they have been moping through that dark shrubbery I cannot tell how long, feeding on the deepest philosophy, or the most frightful and abominable nursery tales."

"And," said Mortimer, "are still absorbed; Tresham in narrating and expounding, and Anna in listening and wondering. At this first look he seems an interesting youth and something, I know not what, strangely fixes my attention to him."

"My poor Anny! how like a cheated child she looks!" Maria went on, smiling through sudden tears of sisterly affection.

"And this, I think," resumed Mortimer, "may be a lecture on universal essence, as the puzzlers call it, rather than a ghost story; for see, Maria, overcome by a confused notion of all he says, the little girl now looks as if she doubted the very presence of her lover, and ventures her blushing cheek to his, as if to reassure herself of his undiminished identity."

"Yes—and Tresham now disproves all her doubts."

"How?—I do not see how."

"Why, with—a kiss," Maria answered, laughing, and blushing too, as she glanced at her lover.

"The clever fellow! to teach me how to prove I am by your side!" said Mortimer, giving the same demonstration to his mistress; "but they disappear before I can view him closer, and now, I suppose, approach the house by that turning."

"Yes, thou practical philosopher; and, Mortimer, you shall love our Harry Tresham, who, with all his whims, is a boy of much promise."

## CHAPTER II.

ARM in arm, Tresham and Anna entered the room, a few minutes after. Without much of what is called the glow of health on the cheeks of either, this young couple awakened, at first sight, much interest; more, perhaps, or of a keener kind, than we feel at the view of voluptuous cheeks and laughing eyes, and all the picture of mountain health, youth, and beauty, though that, too, is so wonderful and delightful, and a sight to praise the God of nature for.

Early and habitual thought, and, for the whole theory of mind and existence, a reverential wonder of soul, had fixed in intense, though not disagreeable paleness, their naturally pale complexions; it was the nameless hue, rich without a tint of colour, of enthusiasm and genius. They were like each other. Their foreheads were marble white, high and broad, clear and calm, and unsullied by a line or curl of grief or bad passion: clouds of dark hair gathered round their brows, and those well-defined brows lay, on the snow of their foreheads, in the repose of power and character. So far were they like, but, while their eyes were also of one deep hazel colour, Tresham's had a more assured expression than his mistress's; his look evinced more satisfaction, more dependance on himself for all he thought and felt; hers darkled or flashed in the

reveries or efforts of a novel excitement, and as if in a seeking and asking way to her lover. His lips were usually closed, though not compressed; hers, of beautiful form, and richly red and moist, as usually remained apart, unfolding themselves in a continued question, as it were, or as if impatient of some anticipated or half-conceived idea.

Both handsome, and in their very spring of life, their features, figures, and mien, showed all that a statuary might seek for the chaste expression of that blent character; yet the girl, though nearly three years younger than her lover, approached nearer to perfect form; she wore her first firm roundness of womanly charms and fascination, while he was not, proportionately, so square and muscular—in fact, so manly.

Young in their blossom of youth, of mind and body, of heart and passion, good, pure, gifted, and loving, trusting and happy in each other, arm and arm, and their thoughts and eyes still glowing with the topic they had been engaged in, lovelily did they now enter the presence of Maria and her friend. In this first and happiest time of power to bless and to be blest, why does the backwardness of reason, or the frown of the world, forbid the interchange of such affection?—We plead not for ourselves; for, alas! we have passed out of the fairy circle of youth, even while it was drawn around us; enthusiasm, love, the shrined image of beauty, and the dream, so much better than the reality of happiness, have departed from us; with locks scarce silvered, we tread, by necessitous anticipation, the crisp paths of old age; all that youth was, or is, or may be, we think of as of a sound half forgotten and never fully distinguished. No, we plead not for ourselves but for the fair, the freshly young, and the joyous and generous of our species, may we not ask,—why should enjoyment entail bitterness, and yielding to their own pure hearts be a curse, and this beautiful earth be not enjoyed, but dreaded like the walls of a prison or the voice of a keeper? It is so, it must be so; but why should it be right?

Anna, entering suddenly, and without knowing that Mortimer had arrived, almost screamed out when she saw him, and with a—"Mortimer! our dear brother, welcome!"—ran to him and offered her cheek, now rapt in the warm blush that told of its having just come from the heart.

But Morimer, not content with the permitted favour, inflicted a soldier's salutation on the very lips of his fair sister: and—

"Are you quite as well and happy as when I left you, my sad philosopher?" he whispered, motioning his head, though without looking, towards Tresham;—"what!—this our Anna?

—and where is the shadow of a girl I left behind me? Why, child, you were then of no more meaning or consistency than a long drawn sigh; a thread-paper, stuffed with sighs, might have stood for you; and now comes out a divine and awful creature of flesh and blood—a little earthly divinity,—and gainsay it who dares!"—and he repeated his freedom, making it a case of necessity that Anna should now frown a little, as, by a rapid glance, such as women only know how to give, she saw Tresham's eye kindling. "Captain Mortimer, you shall bow, and apologize for this, to our new brother, Mr. Tresham," said Maria, advancing with Tresham by the hand.

"I shall be proud of your friendship, sir," Mortimer began, also advancing; but he had not taken many steps when he suddenly started back, and with a slight contraction of brow, and distention of eye, stared in silence on Tresham.

The student returned his stare in utter astonishment, that soon began to change into displeasure; Maria looked on in amazement too, Anna in terror; she grew deadly pale, and drawing Maria aside—"Good God, sister!" she whispered, "what is the matter with him? Why does he look so on Harry?—They never met before—it is impossible!"

Maria's answer was interrupted by Mortimer, who, recovering himself, walked fully up to Tresham, and holding out his hand said—"Excuse me, Mr. Tresham; but—I—I was struck with your likeness to a person I before saw—in fact an old friend—we should be brothers, sir."

"It shall be my study to merit the name, Captain Mortimer;" and Tresham gave his hand, but, to a nice observer, not perfectly satisfied with Mortimer's explanation. The gentlemen conversed, however, freely together.

"You have heard him account for it, my love," Maria now answered, still in an aside to Anna—"for Heaven's sake what could you think?—do not, dearest Anna, allow every common occurrence to fret and disturb you."

"You will charitably excuse, brother Tresham, my want of ceremony with our sweet sister, here," Mortimer went on;—"I know it is not to be learned from looks; but, after the camp and the march, and all the rest, you have no idea how a poor fellow's heart opens to his fellow-creatures; how it thirsts and hungers after any one that loves it; and I know I am a brother to Anna," he continued, now gently taking her hand like a brother indeed.

This speech brought him off well, and the young party passed some delightful time together, until Mortimer, with many regrets, mentioned a necessity for keeping an appointment on particular business, which, he said, must deprive him even of

the pleasure of returning to his friends that night. All heard this with expressions of sorrow, and, after he had taken leave of Tresham in a friendly manner, Mortimer retired, accompanied to the door by Maria.

Anna and Tresham stood for some time silent, both engaged, perhaps, with the same thought; but of the two Anna seemed most agitated. At last, as if starting from the inward touch of something very disagreeable, she laid her hand on Tresham's arm, and, looking down, pronounced his name.

"My love?" Tresham said, abruptly too, and in an anxious tone and gesture.

"You noticed Mortimer's start when he saw you?"—Anna asked.

"Why—scarcely—yet I noticed it," Tresham replied, willing to relieve the distress he saw his mistress feel, but from which he was not himself free.

"Could you have ever met before?"—she resumed, fixing her bright, mysterious eyes on his.

"To my mind no; excepting, perhaps, in the awful interchanges of dreams, which I believe I have satisfactorily unveiled to you.

"But he explained it," Anna continued, afraid of, rather than satisfied with, the entangling solution of her lover, and eagerly adopting a more homely one: "did he not?"

"He did," replied Tresham, but with little earnestness.

"Satisfactorily, you think?" urged Anna.

"Why, perhaps so;" another pause, again broken by Anna, ensued.

"Tresham, that superstition of the Fetch, about which we talked so much while approaching the house, interests me beyond expression. Let me hear more exactly the popular account you have received of it."

"Thus, Anna:—Of some persons appointed to die, a double or counterpart becomes visible, before his or her death, at a time and place where the original could not by possibility appear. Is this your Kilkenny creed?"

"Exactly; with the addition that the Fetch or double must, to insure the death of the reality, be seen in the night or evening."

"And now I remember that, also;" Tresham paused a moment, then with a deep sigh added—

"I have some melancholy authority for the truth of Fetches."

"You alarm me, Harry; let me hear what you mean; but see—your servant."

They had gained, purposing to walk in the garden till dinner, the bottom of the staircase, and in the corner of the hall now



saw a low round lump of a man, who with hat in hand, and his large heavy eyes bent on the ground, stood motionless, silent, and inexplicable.

"Well, Larry?" said Tresham to this person.

"Yes, sir," replied the man.

"Yes to what, you goose?"

"We *are* well, thank God an' you, sir."

"Pho, pho—do you seek me?"

"No then," answered the servant, gravely.

"And what, then?" his master asked, impatiently.

"Sure we find you, Masther Harry," was the reply, still without any appearance of jest, whatever might be the intention.

"And for what purpose do you find me?"

"None in the world afther all, I'm thinkin'."

"No!" repeated Tresham, smiling, as he recollected his man's unaccountable humour.

"No, in throth; I came here to bid *you* come home to your buke, an' that's to no purpose, God help me that lives to see id; if you did come, you wouldn't read it to any purpose; an' if you did, sure the class-hour is past an' gone, an' so it 'ud be read to no purpose."

"Idiot! did I not charge you, over and over, to warn me of the class-hour?"

"An' sure myself charged *her*, over and over."

"Her! what is the cause of your negligence, sirrah?"

"Mrs. Catty, sir. I comes, an hour ago, to Mrs. Catty, in the kitchen, 'an' Mrs. Catty, my darlin', says myself. 'warn my masther o' the hour;' 'will you taste a bit o' toasted cheese, Larry?' says she; 'warn him, for the love o' God,' says I; 'a dhrop o' the right kind,' says she; 'warn——'"

"Ass!" interrupted Tresham, seriously displeased; then turning to Anna—"My dearest love, we must part that I may look after this disagreeable blunder; you know him and what a life I live with him; faithful and attached indeed he is, and for that reason, as I believe I before told you, forced on me as my attendant and pest, wherever I go, by the anxious love of my dear mother. But look at him—is he like anything in creation?—and then I am quite at a loss how to treat him. Sometimes, if not always, he seems to be a hard-grown boy, and if I were sure of this, I could control the fellow; but in my conscience I suspect he is rather an elderly person, old enough to be my father; and under this apprehension one can't not—in fact, I do not know what to do in the matter. But farewell, my dear Anna. You, sir, follow me to college."

"The evening, Harry; you will certainly keep your evening's appointment," said Anna.

"True as the dial's hand"—and the lovers parted, Tresham going out at the door, and Anna returning up stairs. But Larry remained stationary, in the darkened corner of the hall, his hat still in his hand, and his eyes buried in the floor.

After a considerable pause, he muttered, however, taking up the last word his master had addressed to him, and which, notwithstanding some lapse of time, fretted his ear—

"Ass!—how so then! Because I toasted cheese wid a woman, an' missed the class-hour. Ay: who missed it at the same prisent time? One that called me ass; my own masther. Well a-vich, an' how did himself miss it, too? Troth, I could tell him, if he put me to id;" and his hat was now fixed on, and he moved heavily and awkwardly towards the door, when a female voice cautiously pronounced—"Larry! Larry!"—and Larry graciously turned with—

"Is id yourself, agin, Mrs. Catty?"

"That's a bitter salutation, only you're a bit too friendly to mane it, Larry," said Mrs. Catty, Kitty or Catherine, advancing to his side; "Mrs. — to a Kilkenny lass isn't the boighth o' good manners, Larry; you had that in Munsther."

"Ay, faith, then, an' my first wife along wid it, Catty," he said, in the words of an unmeasured lie, invented at the moment, to serve his crabbed humour.

"Plain Catty is betther, among friends," resumed his companion; "only Kitty, or Kate, or, for the matther o' that, Catherine, sounds my name a little genteeler. The poor woman! an' she died?"

"An' I was left a dissolute poor boy," said Larry, recollecting, only to misuse it, one of many words he had endeavoured to imitate during his attendance on his master.

"Och!" Mrs. Catherine exclaimed, putting her cross-larred check apron to her eyes.

"Don't take on, Catty; don't take on; it was a change for the good o' both of us; I'm resigned."

"Och, she was a blessed woman wid the likes o' you," still sobbed Mrs. Catherine.

"An' so I often tould her," said the valet.

"Musha, then, is id the happiest state, entirely, Larry?" altering her voice into a tone of simple interest.

"Why, faith, d'ye see me, Catherine, as I often said in regard o' that, a bachelor can only be well enough by himself, while two people may go wrong together."

"Avoch, an' a thrue sayin';—you'll be lookin' afther your heaven on earth again, Larry?"

"Just as a wise child afther his cake, Kitty—anywhere bud among the coals," he added, indistinctly.

"You're a vartuous boy, Larry; an,' though I say it, a patthern in these uncivil times. But we know you love your mather, too well to lave him:" this was half remark, half query.

"D'ye hear her now?" asked Larry of himself; then aloud, "I love my mather, Catty; but, if he doesn't mend, let God help him to another man."

"Lord save us! if ever I thought he was so bad."

"I said nothin' bad about him, Mrs. —; that is, Kitty, Miss Catherine, I mane; bud his visitors, Catty—look down on us an' keep us!—they're too much for the likes o' me; if—forgive us our sins!—he isn't one o' them, his own self, Catty, a-roon." During this speech Larry took off his hat and raised his eyes, his face and action expressing, or well affecting, much mysterious trepidation.

"Musha, then Larry, a-gra, don't go frighten us in sich a manner," said Mrs. Catherine, drawing nearer; "what do you mane, at all at all?"

"Why, then, I'll tell you," he resumed, imitating or sharing the earnestness of his friend: "gettin' wages, as far from me be id to say I do not get, to act the part of a Christhen sarvant-boy, by him, little 'ud myself care, Catty, how many fellow-creatures like me Mather Harry 'ud have about him; bud, d'ye see me, it's another thing when, aither sendin' me off for the night, he calls down—or up—bad end to me if I knows which—"

"Och, spake out, Larry, darlin', spake out, and look stout like a man, or I'll dhrop stone dead afore you!" interrupted Mrs. Catherine, pressing still closer, and stretching, perhaps, even her fears too far, as warrant for the familiarity of her manner:—"did ever you lay your eyes on 'em a-vich?"

"No, Catty, but I hard them, often and often."

"Who? what?"—an' she locked an arm in Larry's.

"—Outside iv his door, I hard him whisperin' wid 'em, an' callin' to 'em, at the dead hour o' the night, Catty; an' sometimes he unlocks it, Catty, an' creeps out to take an airin' wid 'em in the lawn; an'—what's that?"

The autumn evening had just begun to set in, and the ever-gloomy old hall in which they stood grew deeper with shadow, while Larry, thus interrupting himself, pointed to its extreme end. Mrs. Catherine screamed with terror, yet under her breath, and in an agony half feigned half real whispered—"Look yourself, Larry, honey!—look, and tell me if it's there!"

"Not now, I think; that is, I hope, an' pray God," he said, playing with the nervousness which, to say the truth, he had

groundlessly excited, purely for the purpose of freeing himself of Mrs. Catherine's close and unwelcome approaches; "and, as I was for tellin' you, Catty agra: there was one night I left him in bed, sick enough to stay there, an' to keep him from remainin' about, an' cullogin' wid' 'em, to his no great good, myself just locked his door, an' put the key in my pocket: well, a-roon, down I went, by myself, on the road to my own bed, down, down all the crooked staircases; when just at the bottom o' the very last flight—the Lord keep us an' save us!—what d'ye think I saw standin' afore me?"

"Your masher, Larry!" whispered Mrs. Catherine.

"Or somethin' very like him," answered Larry; "bud see, agin—just turn your head the laste bit round."

"Och! ah! I daar'nt!" hiding her head and mob-cap in Larry's bosom.

"Thonomon-diaoul!—my name isn't Larry, if his own white face—or one that the divil makes as near to it as an egg to an egg—may I die in sin, if I don't see it lookin' at us from behind the ould clock that ticks so dushmal. I know; I didn't follow him home in time, an' this is his other, cum to send me packin' to himself. Och, marther! I'll get my fairin' betuxt 'em!"—and Larry at last disengaged himself from Mrs. Catherine's embraces, and broke into the street, while she trundled down stairs to her kitchen.

### CHAPTER III.

IMMEDIATELY after dinner Anna retired, alone, to the drawing-room, and in about half an hour was followed by Maria, who, on entering the apartment, found her deeply engaged in the perusal of a manuscript essay she had got from Tresham, and of the nature of which the elder sister was aware.

Evening brought on her increased shadows, yet, by what light was still afforded, Anna with some difficulty continued to read. Maria proposed to have candles, but her sister rather earnestly objected. "I have much reliance," she said, "on the doctrine of coincidences and sympathies; and in this dim twilight I can, perhaps, better appreciate the subject of my present study: at least I feel I can." She resumed her reading, and Maria, taking up a volume that lay near her, sat down with her young sister in the recess of the old-fashioned window, and for some time also endeavoured to read.

But at last, smartly shutting the book, and laying it upon her knee, she protested against any further effort, and again

admonished Anna to call for lights, or else prepare for their intended evening walk with Tresham. The other, in rather an impatient tone, replied—

"We need not expect Harry this half hour, sister; and do let me get through this most interesting part without interruption."

"I suppose I must or should ask your pardon, Anna; but I thought an elder sister might have said so much without being accused of interruption; whether or no, I shall venture to say more, by expressing my entire dislike of your spending your time over such a subject as that now in your hands."

"Sister!" Anna replied, in a tone of surprise and chagrin,—  
"but I am sure if you thought of what you were then going to say, you would not have said it; this is an essay, Maria, written by Harry Tresham; I shall add nothing else; surely that is enough to show you the severity of your remark, and to warrant me in not quite recollecting it. Pray read your own volume, and, while delighted with its wonderful passages do, not envy me a higher pleasure."

"It is now too late to take advantage of your advice; so I will, instead, try to say a word in answer to your speech. Don't you think it sometimes happens, Anna, that where affection, and talent, and virtue, join to avoid giving pain or doing harm to a beloved object, weakness or infatuation of mind inflict the blow?—and let me say that, although Harry Tresham is the very last man I could suspect of intention to lead you astray, I am not so sure of his ability always to turn your young thoughts into a proper path, or, if they should wander, to guide them from an improper one. Pray, my dear sister, hear me out. I do not wish to hazard a word in defence of the poor volume I took up; it is only a popular novel, that does not even pretend to help our serious moments, or to form our principles, or wed us to theories; yet, God knows, I had rather have you make such books the only reading of your life, than see you for one hour disturbing your delicate mind with the strange visions contained in that manuscript."

"I will take it for granted, sister, it is not your meaning to be cruel, or—offensive with me—"

"Anna, Anna, you should be sure of that," interrupted Maria, tears, which her sister did not see, rolling down her cheeks, although her voice was but little affected.

"Well, sister, I am sure; yet, indeed, I must say your words are more—are less kind and good to me than ever they were. You call Harry weak and infatuated—excuse me in urn, for I will go on;—but the truth is, Maria, we ever try to bring down in others what we do not understand in them

nor possess in ourselves; and, therefore, why should I wonder to hear you speak hard of him, or of the studies he recommends to me? As to your own fine book, I say again, you are free to admire it, and as much for the giver's sake too as you like, if you will only let me read and value this essay for the same reason."

"Mortimer, who at his last parting gave me the poor novel you spoke of, it is not a school philosopher, Anna; but he is still an educated gentleman of mature taste and understanding."

"I have made no comparisons—I wish to make none, Maria; and perhaps you ought to be just as indifferent as I am to do so," interrupted Anna, her love, her vanity, and her enthusiasm taking fire at this turn in the conversation.

"Perhaps," Maria rejoined; "but be that as it may, Anna, let me now assist you to put up those braids which the last toss of your head has shaken about you; stoop forward a little, my love; for, after all, our Harry must not find his favourite style of hair neglected; come;"—and Maria was proceeding in her sisterly task, when Anna, with some ungente and indeed unusual briskness of manner, tossed back her head more violently than ever, and saying, "Thank you, thank you very much, sister, but I can use my hands, at least," began to twist and re-twist, and pile up her fine hair with great rapidity, and into most uncouth forms and coilings; continuing, after a moment's pause, to speak in a sharp and quick voice—

"But, Maria, since we have chanced on Captain Mortimer's name, may I inquire if, before he left the house to-day, he thought proper to explain to *you* his strange manner when he was presented to Harry Tresham?"

"We have never since spoken on the trifling matter," Maria replied, still calmly; "nor do I care to trouble him farther about it." This last assertion was, however, a little overstrained, as Maria really purposed to interrogate her lover on the subject.

"You might ask the gentleman, to oblige *me*, I think," said Anna, in increasing coldness.

"To oblige my sister in her slightest wish, I would anxiously do anything," resumed Maria; "but one word, dear Anna, on a charge you have just made. You say I am ignorant of the matter you hold in your hands, if not incapable of understanding it. Let me inform you that since you got the manuscript from Harry, and while it lay on the table in this drawing-room, I attentively read it; and not unwarrantably either, though you look at me so, for you may recollect you said as much as that I might take that freedom. I read it.

Anna, and perhaps understood it too; and it is from this knowledge of its nature and tendency I now speak."

"In the first place, then," rejoined Anna, with vehemence, "you think me the child that must not be allowed to share the strong food that is harmless to a more womanly appetite; else why forbid me the consideration of this very essay you have yourself perused?—and next let me ask you, sister, from what particular passage you judge the manuscript to be improper or dangerous?"

"Taking up your last word, in preference, I do not hesitate to say that the whole is dangerous."

"General assertions prove nothing, sister; you ought to be aware of that," said the young logician, playing off some airs of superiority; "and, since you have so attentively gone through the whole, you can surely afford to be more particular."

"I admit I am no casuist, Anna, and you will not therefore expect from me a very correct method, nor, indeed, the good words you use with such ease to yourself; yet I can point out a particular passage. The object of the entire paper is to prove the re-appearance on earth of the dead; and history, biography, and anecdote—nay, scripture itself—are all quoted to support the now childish belief. But the essayist, having to get over one unpalatable commonplace, namely, the rare occurrence at present of his supernatural visitations, has recourse to a theory of his own; he supposes—"

"That the visitation does not cease, although we are blind to it," interrupted Anna, in a deep whisper, suddenly bending forward and catching her sister's arm—"that they come and go, over and around us, and are with us and present to us in our blindness—that the air, and the shadows of the air, and the recesses, and the depths of space, teem with the busy and mysterious denizens of another world—while to the eyes, made dim by the gross mind of our latter days, there has ceased to be given the seeing power of the days that are gone; though, if the primitive spirit could be reinstated within—and there is a way, sister, to bring that to pass—it would see, and hear, and understand, in a total freedom from vulgar fear, and in the wonder of knowledge only, such signs and whispers of the to come as must redeem us out of the bondage of mere human speculation, and elevate man's soul, even while pent up in man's body, to the intelligence of angels."

Anna's enthusiasm had fully escaped during this piece of oratory, which, delivered as it was in a voice and manner of the strangest energy, while her jetty eyes flashed through the twilight, so much affected the rational calmness of the hearer as for a moment to surprise and make her silent; and in the

pause Anna triumphantly resumed, by asking—"And now, sister, show me the danger of this."

"It is easily done, answered Maria, successfully rallying her spirits; and she was about to continue, when their younger sister, Bessy, accompanied by three of her playmates and cousins, entered the apartment, all inquiring why Tresham was so long absent; for he had made himself a great favourite with the juniors of the family, by his gentleness of manners and the wondrous anecdotes he readily told for their amusement.

This interruption reminded Anna of the lateness of the hour; and, sending the children for their walking attire, the sisters agreed to suspend, till another opportunity, their unfinished argument, for they made no question but Tresham would be with them in a moment; and their difference of opinion, and any little bitterness it might have drawn forth, were now more than forgotten in the sweet kiss, and the sweeter tears, interchanged between them; Anna, after a moment's reflection, becoming the first to negotiate a penitent, loving, and unqualified peace. Of the immediate point at issue, indeed nothing was said; but it was acceded by the one that Harry Tresham was an amiable young person, of uncommon genius; and by the other, that Mortimer was a finished gentleman, a worthy soul, and a gallant captain.

The children returned with hats, scarfs, and shawls, and the sisters assisted each other, in the scanty light, to adjust their habiliments. Then all sat down, anxiously expecting to hear, at every moment, Tresham's knock below.

But some time escaped without his appearance; and, at first, Anna was surprised, and very much surprised; then she thought it unkind of Tresham, and very unkind; and at last, and when nearly an hour had elapsed, she grew angry and fidgety.

"It is now so much past the time that I am sure he will not come," said she, turning to Maria.

"He appointed to come?" asked her sister.

"It was his own particular appointment; and yet to leave me waiting for him, without a line, a word of apology, when he knows I wait for him and expect our evening walk—he never did so before—and is it kindly done, now, sister?"

"It is not well, indeed, if he cannot well explain it."

"Oh, Harry Tresham has got another lady to love, that's the whole of it," said Bessy.

"Fie, Bessy, my love," said Maria; "you should not let your good spirits teach you to say such strange things."

"But I'm sure of it," re-urged Bessy—"because sister Anna herself told me that gentlemen never stay away from the



lady they love first, until they begin to love another better; and, besides, I heard you say to her, when Harry first came to the house, that you feared he was too young and romancing to love long and in earnest. But I'll blab no more about it, if Anna finishes for me, and Mary, and Patty, and little Kate, here, the terrible story she began for us last night."

"Where did I stop, Bessy?" asked Anna, willing to forget her disappointment in a theme always fascinating to her.

"Just where the spirit of the woman's husband appeared to her, twenty years after he was murdered, and in the very bedroom, a hundred miles from their own home," answered Bessy, under her breath, and moving, with her young companions, nearer to the elder sisters.

"Well," Anna resumed; "the shade told her to have a certain part in the inn-yard dug up, and there she should find the skull, with the hole in the right temple, made by the hand that killed him; and to get a certain chest broken open in the very house where she then slept, and there she should find the purse she had herself given him on the unhappy morning of his departure."

"Oh, 'tis frightful!" whispered the child, whose merry laugh was now silenced, as with her playmates she cringed closer to the speaker. The room they sat in was unusually spacious, and unusually gloomy too, as from the whim or bad taste of its original proprietor the walls were divided into oblongs, covered with the raven-black marble for which the quarries adjacent to Kilkenny are celebrated. In the middle of the wall, at the remote end, a door led into an inner apartment; and this was now open, giving an uncomfortable feeling of desolate space, and admitting, through a window at the back of the house, the pale and visionary rays of the rising moon, which, intercepted and disturbed by the fluttering tops of trees that shot up to a level with the window, crept over the floor within, in a kind of self-animated motion. After the child's last words a general pause ensued, and, in a hush like death, all seemed to hearken to the conclusion of the tale; the sharp tick of the old clock on the landing-place, and the asthmatic breathings of a dog that slumbered on a mat at the near door, becoming, in the silence, painfully distinct: while by pressures of hand and foot, the terrified children directed each other's attention to remote parts of the room, where fancy had pictured some hideous chimera.

"Did she obey him, Anna?" at last resumed Bessy, in a voice that would have been inaudible but for the intense silence.

"She did, and the skull and purse were found," answered

Anna, now not able to exert her own voice beyond a murmur; "and the next night, as she sat alone and expecting him in her chamber—that very same chamber—and by the beams of a late moon, the woman thought she saw—

"Oh, stop, sister, stop, or come out of this large place!" interrupted Bessy.

"Do, Anna, forbear, and let us go down to the parlour—or I shall myself go for lights"—said Maria, who, in spite of herself, began to feel nervous, and was anxious to break the gathering illusion.

"No, Maria, let us be as we are," rejoined Anna; and then continued, not observing that Maria had gone out, through the near door—"I love this creeping gloom, though it chills me. The moon rises abroad in mist;—and see! almost the very effect I was describing:—look through that door into the other apartment;—accidental folds of drapery, and other common forms, seem to get horrid motion—cloudy masses curl through the corners—the darkness itself becomes instinct with life, as if the awful dead were there, listening, in gratified silence, to the tales of their own wondrous agency—as if one of them was this moment moving towards us!"

Another short pause of unmixed dread succeeded; and, while the little hearts of the hearers throbbed in their bosoms, the door through which Maria had passed again slowly opened—then there was shrieking and clinging to each other!—But Tresham quietly entered to give re-assurance to the agitated group.

Anna did not rise to bid him welcome, for she was pettish at his breach of appointment, and her pride expected an apology before it would allow her affection to speak out. Her lover had slowly walked towards her and sat down by her side, and she waited and panted for his explanation. But none was offered. Not a word was spoken. The offended girl grew doubly hurt, and turned her head to look out at the window. Still he spoke not, nay moved not, but there sat, wordless and motionless, like a stony image of himself.

The younger part of the company regarded this scene, first with interest, then with astonishment, then with superstitious misgivings, and at last with terror. The attachment of the lovers was no secret to them, and all stared in wonder to see such a meeting between two who had never so met before; and soon the recent frenzy of their minds began to invest the scene with, perhaps, not unappropriate horrors. They looked close into each other's eyes, pressed each other's hands, and, if they dared venture a whisper, it was only to remark how pale and paler he grew; how deeply his eye burned, and how

unusually dark was his drapery. At length, Bessy either more courageous or more terror-stricken than the rest, and snatching energy from her very terrors, exclaimed,—“Speak—speak. Harry Tresham!—My God! why do you not speak, sir?”

The words died away through the lofty apartments, but no answer was returned. Another pause followed; the children cringed in a knot together, and wrapped and wrung their hands and arms around each other; then, after a moment, and as if by mutual consent, though no words had preceded the action, they slid softly from their chairs, and, keeping their looks riveted on Tresham, crept by him, until they gained the door, and then rushed wildly through it.

Anna was left alone with her unaccountable lover, and still she would not speak, though something more than offended pride now kept her silent. She had participated the shocking fancy of the children—she feared it was not her lover who sat beside her. All their former discourses—all her cherished legends—the hour—the darkness—the predisposition of her mind—the tomb-like silence, only alive with the echoed pulsation of her own heart—everything added to the horrible conviction.

She controlled her own respiration; she stretched the very nerves of her ears to hear him breathe; but she could not detect even that faint indication of humanity; one flutter—one catch of his breath would have been rapture—would have flung her into his arms—but it came not!

Amid all the whirl of her feelings Anna was, however, able to ask herself if it could be a trick that Tresham was practising upon her. She recollected their conversation of the day, and for an instant thought it probable; and a recurrence, in the same breath, to her first cause of quarrel with her inattentive lover, came with still more effect to Anna's relief, who was yet sufficiently the woman to master even her consternation by her vanity; or, perhaps, she wished to assume an unconsciousness of real emotion, as the best means to escape the influence of the being who caused it.

“So, Mr. Tresham!” at last she cried out—“so, sir—you come here after your breach of appointment with me, to frighten the children of the family, and myself among the number!”—She paused for an answer: none came; and, slowly rising, she continued—“making me ridiculous to them, and ungraciously withholding the explanation you know to be due to my love and confidence.”

Again she stopped, and only heard the repetition of her own words by the echoes around her. She dared advance a step

—but she had to pass him; and her voice at least must bear her company—"Then, sir, if such silly and insulting silence is your humour, excuse me if—if I leave you to—enjoy it!"

During the pause we have indicated in the latter part of the sentence, Anna swept by him, like a breeze, towards the remote door; as she approached it, he moved!—and this, although a moment before it had been the assurance she gasped for, now made her delirious with terror;—she plunged into the inner room—looked behind her—he was at her back!—The door closed on them; and, in the outward apartment they had left, Maria, who had just then returned with a servant bearing lights, heard a heavy fall and a scream; and then all was silent.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE same night, Tresham's servant, Larry, was aroused, by a great knocking, from a deep sleep into which he had fallen on a sofa in his master's chamber. Upon the first appearance of this person, we could not say of him as much as he deserves; but while now asleep, and before the knocking has called him into active re-existence, we shall make him and the reader better acquainted.

It would wrong many species of what are called the lower animals of the earth to give Larry equally with them the instinctive cunning by which alone he walked his path of life; yet, if nature had not allowed him enough of this attribute to make him a rogue at once, she certainly had allowed him enough to make himself one at his leisure; and, perhaps, with the exception of pocket-picking and petty larceny, he was not the lazy steward to hide his talent underground. Even our exception may be disputed on the faith of certain anecdotes of Larry's conduct abroad, of which his master made no secret. Now and then, while sojourning in France and Italy, Tresham had given entertainments to some polite friends, and it was Larry's business, as well as his pride and glory, to see the table "furnished forth," for the honour of "ould Ireland and the young masther," as gaily as the tables of those at which they had been guests. Tresham's travelling plate-chest was not, however, equal to Larry's ambition; that is so far as he allowed himself to canvass the matter. Tresham was of the same opinion; and some surprise therefore crossed his mind to see, on banqueting occasions in his lodgings, and just when his friends were about to sit down, various fine pieces of table

equipage, of which he could not recollect he had before been master. On the first or second occasion of his surprise, Tresham, supposing he must have miscalculated the extent of his own riches, said nothing; when new provocations to wonder appeared, however, he ventured some inquiries that were only carelessly answered; till, at last, startled by the appearance of a still new and massive piece of plate, in which part of the dessert was served up, and which he was quite sure did not belong to him, he turned to Larry, who stood at one side, rubbing his hands, and gravely eyeing his master, and asked, "Where did you get this, Larry?" but the sole reply was, while the man gave a kind of soldier's salute, by turning out the palm of his hand over his forehead—"Up the counthry, your honour."

If any doubt existed, notwithstanding, of Larry's honesty, none could exist that he possessed, to a pitch of excellence, the inventive talent. Others might boast of having never told a lie; it was his peculiarity that, to the best of his knowledge, he had never told truth; certainly he had never yet told the whole truth; and from consistent use, since his infancy, of this wariness of disposition, it now arrived that, even if he had wished, he could not tell it. Cunning, and a liar, and perhaps a thief, it might seem to follow that he was an immoral character; but this would be rather an uncharitable deduction: Larry told lies, not from a vicious love of falsehood, but from the pleasure it gave, or the advantages he thought it might yield; he was cunning, because he had no other mental faculty to exercise, because of reason, in the true meaning of the word, he had not a jot: so that, when he was not cunning, he was nothing beyond a mis-shapen mass of inert clay; and when he filched, it was only as the fox throws a goose over his back, without ever breaking the commandments.

Some, indeed, conceived that he was an accountable agent, inasmuch as he possessed, above the regular quadruped, glimmering notions of another world; but these notions existed in one shape only in Larry's mind, namely, a jealousy and fear of that world's undue interference in the concerns of this; and here was the puzzle of his character—how he could be very cunning and very credulous appearing, at first sight, anomalous. To those who knew the history of his early life, and who had any experience of the inveteracy of early impressions, this seeming contradiction, however, soon vanished. Under the immediate tutelage of his mother, in whose cabin Tresham, when a sickly child, had also received the elements of his present absurdity, Larry, from his cradle, was a firm believer in supernatural agency; nor could the maturity of

his natural talent, nor yet his knowledge of the world, remove prejudices thus unconsciously formed and deeply stamped. The only way in which his cunning operated, in this case, was to enable him occasionally to assume an apparent indifference of the terrors that ruled him, or to enjoy the terrors of others, or even to increase them, by exaggerating his own, some proof of which we have already seen in his conversation with Mrs. Catherine. But for this he suffered well when he was alone. Like philosophers who sneer at misfortune in books, but who almost invariably cringe to it in their parlours or garrets, Larry before others strove to banter with his tyrants, but to himself and to his pillow admitted, in utter fear and trembling the very great chance of a visitation.

Such finesse was partly the result of his travels, that in other respects scarcely improved him. Laughed at for his folly, wherever he went, he had fortified himself against unnecessary humiliation ; and the world thus taught him to trifle with his mortal fears, in the same way that it teaches other ingenious young persons to trifle with the good principles they sometimes bring into it. And here we should mention lesser points of character that the wholesome ridicule of his fellows, particularly during his residence in England, had fixed in him. Larry began his travels the most broad-spoken and long-winded of Irishmen ; but, shouted at for his brogue and idiom, even more unmercifully than for his superstition, he admitted—from the shyness of anything national that invariably attaches to the vulgar of his country—the justice of the rebuke, and did all in his power to benefit by it ; assisted by his cunning, and his watchfulness of himself and others, he spoke less and listened more ; retrenched his rich expressions and roundabout ; aped the words of his betters ; tried pithiness and briskness now and then ; and grafting everything on his still predominant brogue, at last partially succeeded in proving to the world that there moves not on its surface so ridiculous a creature, when not of the first class, as a travelled and improved Irishman.

Strange, after all this, that he had a strange liking for his master : he would himself call it “ a hankering regard ; ” but he had. It did not, indeed, resemble the love that any other creature bore Tresham or could bear him ; it was uneven, capricious, arbitrary, and, in right of the patronage of the student's mother, bordering on the tyrannical. Perhaps their continued sympathy in the nonsense with which their brains (if one of them was blessed with any) had been stuffed might have helped to strengthen the bond between master and servant. Tresham, although his supernaturals were now

systematized so as to suit his intellect and education, while Larry's still lay huddled together in the primitiveness of raw material, liked to have some one to listen to his rhapsodies, and Larry, generally speaking, liked to listen, and felt, perhaps, a little vain, if not grateful, at being called to the office of listener; yet even this is uncertain, inasmuch as out of Tresham's new notions on such subjects, or his presenting an old notion in a new shape, which was all the same to the hearer, Larry drew cause for serious remonstrance and misgiving. He did not admire Tresham's venturing alone into dangerous ground, whither, as may be inferred, he was unable to follow him; he did not admire the student's muttered soliloquies and aspirations, and his lonesome walks in the park, which now became frequent; in fact, he had a bad opinion of his master's ways altogether, and began to imbibe an undefined awe of his secret practices, with vague bodings of indifferent results. Very lately, they had spoken a great deal of the supposed power of the Evil One to confer superior knowledge and riches on certain terms; and, to Larry's view, Tresham pressed the subject too far, and persevered too long and too earnestly in getting an account of all he knew of the advantages derivable in such a case; he had even proposed to his servant such startling questions as, "Did he think the individual had ever really appeared at the summons? was it easy to obtain an interview with him? might he be depended on in a fair bargain? and was it possible to overreach or outwit him?" Larry tried in vain to shift the subject when it came to this; gave evasive and temporising answers; drew a holy sign with his thumb on his forehead, and prayed aloud that his master and himself might be kept out of temptation and danger; and, when it was his duty to leave Tresham for the night, withdrew, in no very assured state of mind. He would say nothing; little said was soonest mended; but might he never see glory if himself liked to think about it.

On the evening of the adventure at Mr. Ruth's house, while ostensibly awaiting his master's hour for retiring to bed, Larry locked himself in, a prey to bodings of unusual force, and, out of a certain pocket extracting a certain flask, called on it to dispel the terrors of his solitude, and, as we have seen, afterwards fell asleep. The furious knocking before mentioned caused him to jump up quickly out of a slumber of he knew not how long; and then, after some staggering and scrambling, he shambled to the door, and, expecting to admit his young master, opened it—but drew back on the moment; for there, instead of the person his half-closed eyes anticipated, Larry beheld, in the depths of the twilight, a tall, black figure,

topped by a fiery-red face of severe and peculiar expression, with eyes that flashed, and a mouth that leered, he thought, maliciously at him. This personage also wore—a queue, the simple-witted had called it; but, notwithstanding its point of origin, Larry, to his grief and horror, thought it might pass well enough for a tail; and in his hand, as he slowly paced after the servant into the middle of the room, he carried a shining black wand.

"I don't like him at all," muttered Larry, as he heard, unanswered, some questions concerning his master put to him in a hard tone by the stranger.

"Mr. Tresham not here, then?" repeated the visitor.

"What hour o' the blessed night is id for the likes of him to walk in among us?" continued Larry, still in an under-tone discourse with himself.

"Tell me plainly, is he here, fellow?" resumed the object of his suspicions, in a high passion.

"Not in this room, as you persave, sir," at last answered Larry; then aside—"musha, he's as black as——"

"Do you know me?" suddenly asked the stranger.

"Why, then, not over an' above well," still edging off, and venturing a sly look at the visitor's lower extremities. The other caught his glance; and then, after a moment's pause, burst into a harsh and loud laugh, that, to Larry's increased consternation, lasted some time, gradually gaining a horrid climax, as the provocative, whatever it was, became keener, until at length it reached an explosion of shouts that rang through the old building.

"Turn away your head, a moment," resumed the visitor, in his own time; Larry complied, and this individual walked, with stamping feet, on the boards, behind an old leather-backed chair, that completely hid the lower half of his figure, and, resting his hands on it, continued:—

"Can you even throw a guess at me?"

"I was a bad hand at a guess from a child up; but myself thinks your honour looks like a civil gentleman."

"Do you believe that in your soul?" asked the stranger, eagerly; "answer me truly."

"I wouldn't like to cross your honour in anything, or to say anything wrong before man or my Maker; but sure it can be no harm for the likes of a poor boy like me to keep a civil word for his betthers."

"Am I your better?" still questioned the visitor, in a slow, emphatic tone; "tell truth, I warn you again; but that's no matter; I can easily know whether you do or not."

Under these circumstances Larry was silent. The question



was repeated, and, before it had been fully pronounced, he clapped his hands in the most natural way, looking out at the window, and said,—“Oh, the poor young master! its rainin’ on him! an’ sure enough I hard himsef say this very mornin’ we were to have a ginerall cessation of wet weather; does your honour think so? The Frenchmen are great judges o’ the weather; they say it *plews*, when we say its rainin’; an’ it *fais froid*, that is, it makes the frost, when we say its only freezin’; musha, I always thought that very droll. Was your honour ever among the parley-wows? they’re a quare set o’ sprissauns, every way: but where’s the masther, is what I wonder.”

“Ay, where is he?—not keep his appointment with me, and after calling me so often!—has he left the college, man?”

“Myself doesn’t know to a sartainty; but I’m thinkin’ your reverence ’ud maybe cum across him in the park, out there.”

“*My* reverence! what name is that you give me?” said the stranger, very angrily, and his eyes looking dangerous; “tell me, fellow, what is your private opinion of—the old gentleman himself?”

“Murther!” roared Larry, suddenly thrown off his guard; but, reining himself in, he continued—“we ax your honour’s ten thousand pardons—it was a cramp, or a thing o’ the kind, that I got abroad wid the masther, an’ it ketches a hould iv me, bad manners to id, an odd time, in the calf o’ the leg, here;” and to keep up *vraisemblance*, Larry stroked the part with his hand.

“Does it? suppose you were ketched, as you call it, by both legs together?”

“The Lord save me an’ keep me! long threatenin’ cums at last—I’m done for,” shaking, and chattering, and wringing his hands.

“Have a care what you mutter there,” continued his tormentor—“do you smell anything?”

“The nose o’ me is no great things, please your honour; bud, if I war to say it, myself thinks there’s as nice a scent as ever I got in my born days,” answered Larry, in a real effort to cheat the devil in the dark, for, from his fright and fancy, it seemed to his nostrils as if the room had an abominable stench of sulphur.

“Well for you you think so; it saves you some time in altering your likings; but answer my question, plainly: do you hate, and defy the individual I spoke of, or what? out with it!”

“Please your honour, we’re tould not to judge on no account, for fear of being judged in our turns; an’ hard words, upon people we know nothing of, isn’t a Christhen turn, the world over.”

“Christian!”

"Yes, sir—or a thing that-a-way; a good turn, or a kind turn, or whatever plaises your honour best; an' sure, myself knows little o' the good gintle—gintleman, I mane, in regard I never laid my two eyes on him."

"Look up!—are you sure of what you say?"

"Oh, my leg, my leg!"—stooping down, and rubbing hard with both hands—"Oh, the divil, sich a cramp—the Lord forgive us! an' no offence to any one—bud the likes o' this cramp never ailed a born crature besides myself."

"You have twice heard my question without answering, and silence gives consent: that will do; say your paternoster backwards."

"That's more nor I could do if ever so willin', in regard I never larnt it forwards, your honour; they had trouble enough wid me at home about id, but sorrow a farther nor 'daily bread' myself was able to get, from that day to this."

"All the better. Give me your hand."

"Bad end to me if I do then!"—muttered Larry, after another roar, and a plunge towards the wall, for to the door he could not get, as his visiter stood between him and it; then in a tone of simple humility, exquisitely feigned, he continued aloud—"Me give a hand to your honour? Me put my poor crooks under a gentleman's five fingers!—avoch, we thank you kindly, sir, for the honour an' glory you mane us, bud we hav'nt forgot our manners so mooch as that, anyhow; we didn't go among the Frinch for nothin'."

"Did you ever hear from the person we talk about?"

"Musha, never, never; an' I call God to witness, this blessed an' holy night."

"Are you so sure of that, either?" continued his catechist in a thundering voice—"who bid you steal the silver cup at Venice?"

"J—s presarve us! it's all over wid me!"—cried the discomfited man-servant; then, turning round—"Stale, your honour!—stale a cup!—musha, then, what cup?—or what 'ud your honour mane at all?"

"Or the candlestick you slid into your pocket at the saint's shrine in Paris—who whispered into your ear to do that?—or the large salver you buttoned into the breast of your coat off the cardinal's sideboard at Rome—who helped you then? Ungrateful scoundrel! is this the way you remember an old friend?—You! a fellow that, if the angel Gabriel came down, would have a grab at his silver trumpet!"

"Savin' your honour's favour," cried Larry, a little relieved that, after all, his companion did not know the true facts of the case, "an', under your honour's tindher mercy, I'll tell

you the rights of all that in a minute, an' as thrue as if it war my dyin' day; the little matther of a cup was bought out of my own lawful money, saved out of my lawful wages, an' it's now I remember that a little bare-legged gorçoon—garçon they say among the parley-wows, an' it's very like the Irish, isn't id, your honour?—he cum up to myself in the broad noon-day, an' in the open sthreets, offerin' to sell it for a song; sure the silversmith an' himself are alive an' to the fore this very day; an', as for that big ould silver dish—"

"Silence, man!—I know you, and you know me; so enough for the present; what is your master doing in the park yonder?—ghost-hunting?"

"Under favour to them, sir, myself has a kind of a notion that they're kind to him."

"I long suspected it; and even now, I suppose, he invokes them under the moon in some of the shrubberies?"

"Many's the word is thrue in guess, sir."

"Silly man, listen to me;" the stranger advanced.

"Anything in raison, sir;" and Larry drew back.

"Stand where you are, and listen to me. Your master and you shall give up all this ghost business, and attend to something better that I can teach you both; and if I detect you humouring him in such nonsense—nay, if you do not this instant renounce and laugh at them and it—"

"I was hired for a steady man, your honour, by his own mother, God help me,"—demurred Larry.

"You shall laugh with your whole heart and soul, I say!"

"I can't, your honour! myself doesn't know how."

"Or feel what I hold in my hand—come!—laugh out at all the ghosts in the world, or that ever visited it!"

"I can't, sir;—musha, I never could; 'twas a want wid me from my cradle!"

"Then am I to work a miracle—laugh!" and he gently belaboured him.

"An' wid my mother, sir—an' her mother afore her—it ran in the family!"—as in odd capers he expressed his dislike of the test.

"Did it? did it?" resumed the stranger, increasing his assault.

"Hi, hi, ho!"

"Louder—a hearty laugh!—a laugh in earnest!"

"Ho, ho—oh!"—and here he dropped on his knees.

"What do you kneel for, now, you precious fellow? But no matter; kneel still and listen to me further. Tell your master I am much displeased he should have left his chamber, to-night, after my express commands to the contrary. You mark me?"

"I do sir; we're aither markin' ach other.

"Say, too, I now go to seek him, and that if we should not meet I will certainly come back to-morrow early. Did he bleed at the mouth since morning?"

"Only a little, your honour."

"How long have you waited on him?"

"Och, musha, sence we war weenuchs o' that houghth, together," answered Larry, extending his hand, to illustrate his words, about five or six inches over the floor, for he was still in a kneeling position; "it was the will o' God that we war born for ach other; an' a bittther bargain he is to me from that day to this, for, betuxt himself an' his friends, mysel hasn't the life of a Christhen dog."

"Was he ever ill in this manner until to day?"

"Once, sir, afore we went among the parley-wows, an' once over agin, afore we came to this place."

"Well; deliver my words carefully; and, ha, ha!"—he continued, raising his black wand to the door as he went out.

"Hi, hi," responded Larry, and his visiter retired.

"What's the use o' my saying', the divil go wid him, sence every mother's son goes away along wid his ownself?"—he soliloquized, still on his knees. Then Larry brought to mind, with remorse and apprehension, the words he had been compelled to use, the hour of the night, and the place; for he recollected that, only a few steps from where he knelt, there was a villanous black closet, where Tresham kept unholy piles of skulls and loose bones, which the student consulted in his leisure hours of anatomical study; and, overcome with this knowledge, he asked pardon, in a mental inspiration, for his late transgressions, and was so zealously engaged that he did not perceive the entrance of his master, until, close at his back, he heard him say,—

"What, at your devotions, Larry?—This is right, but I did not think you so godly."

Taken by surprise, and under the influence of brandy half slept away, Larry asked—"Are you the masther?"

"Why, you and I say so, Larry; what's the matter?"

"Masther Harry, honey, is id yourself?"

"Fool, you rave out of sleep, or have been tippling—get away to bed—or, no; stay a moment."

Larry, convinced, arose and said, "I had one along wid me sence, Masther Harry."

"Indeed, Larry! may I believe you?"

The servant bared his arm, adding, "I can show you the naked truth, sir."

"What! an evil spirit?"

"The old father o' them all; an' more betoken, he left a message wid me for you; bud am I to keep promise wid the likes of him?"

"How did your visitant look? what kind of person?"—Larry minutely described the face, figure, and dress of the individual, and Tresham turned away with a "pshaw!"—disappointed and somewhat humiliated, that in the faithful portrait he could not avoid recognising his medical attendant and old friend, Doctor Butler. This discovery produced another train of thought: "The good doctor thinks too much of only slight symptoms, and would inconvenience me with his rules; yet I feel feverish and exhausted;" and the student flung himself on the sofa.

The moon, fully risen, streamed through a Gothic casement at his back, and flickered on the opposite wall. Tresham looked long at it with half-closed eyes; and he thought—fancy and fanaticism as usual on the wing—that spectral light most fit to afford a doubtful illumination to the troops of spirits he believed to be busy in its beam. Wishing to enjoy it unmixed with the struggling rays of a lamp his servant had just lighted, he desired Larry to remove the lamp into the closet. The valet did not answer nor stir; and, when the command was repeated, asked—"Which closet, Masther Harry?"

"Which, fool? there is but one; quick, remove it!"

Larry at last took the lamp, with little energy of action, and scarcely opening the closet door, thrust it in at arm's length; then hastily shuffled back to stand behind the sofa on which his master reclined.

"How intensely the hour and the situation affect me!" resumed Tresham; then, in a low yet enthusiastic tone, he continued—"Oh! if the shade of my dear departed brother could now unveil itself to us!"

"A merciful God forbid, sir!" said Larry.

"Appear, oh, appear, if you can, and if in zeal, and belief, and simplicity of heart, I am yet worthy; appear, beloved Michael, and fill and enlarge my soul with the eternal secret!"

Something agitated the darkness near the door, and, in a second after, a faint form shot close by the wall, intercepting and catching for itself the weak moonlight. A dim face turned towards him, and a clouded eye rested on his—it was Anna's!—changed in character and expression, as if countless time, and unimaginable events and existence had come between him and her since their last happy meeting—still it was Anna's!

As Larry fell with a groan behind the sofa, Tresham started up, and at first free from supernatural fears, approached the

figure, as for a moment it rested in the moonshine; and—"Good God, Anna!" he cried, "can it be you?—how generous to a poor invalid—I—" but he was here interrupted by the resumed motion of the figure, which, before he had advanced two steps, faded back into the mass of shade, that, like funeral drapery, surrounded the door; and then it was seen no more in the apartment.

Tresham hastened to follow, when Larry cried out from behind the sofa,—“Her Fetch! her Fetch! don’t dare to cross it, Masther Harry! don’t stir a foot!”

“Fetch! Fetch!” echoed Tresham, the dreadful idea now, for the first time, seizing his mind—“Her Fetch! you have not seen the figure,—you could not! It was not like her—or if it was—she has heard I am ill, and, though the hour is late comes to visit me. It is so!—but let us be sure—follow me!”—and he rushed through the door.

“Never an inch, if I could help it; an’ if it was good to stay here alone,” said Larry, standing up and looking round him. His first instinct was to arm himself with a light, and, forgetting, in the superior agony of the moment, his terrors of the closet, and only calling to mind that there was the help he wanted, he ran to the door and pushed it open. The violent shock disturbed the peaceful fragments of mortality that lay on shelves around, and some of them rolled down, while all moved, the lamp, which burned in the middle of the small nook, glaring upon and bringing out their ghastly whiteness. Utterly confounded, Larry emitted a cry, and snatched at the lamp, but in the unusual effort stumbled over a skull that kept a rolling position on the floor, and, not being able to recover or balance his ill-contrived figure, fell flat; this brought a horrid clatter on his head; he scrambled about, grasping something cold and loathsome at every turn; finally, he kicked down, broke, and extinguished the lamp, and soon after, gaining his legs, ran yelling after his master.

Tresham, returning from a vain pursuit, met him outside the door, when Larry flung himself at his knees, and clung round them. The student, excited and overwrought by other feelings, had no sympathy for his servant, but, hastily disengaging himself, passed him, and re-entered the chamber, and was in the act of shutting the door, when Larry, with continued cries, cast himself against it, pleading and straining hard for re-admission. Tresham resisted him, and it became a trial of strength between master and man.

“Let me in, for the love o’ the Mother o’ Saints! let me in, an’ may you have a long life, a good death, an’ a favourable judgment!—Murther-an-ouns, Masther Harry, let me in!”

he reiterated, growing furious, and redoubling his efforts—  
“Would you shove me out along wid her?—what is to become o’ me, or where am I to go?”

“To bed—or to the devil!” answered his master, at last successful in slapping the door in his face, and he instantly locked it, and flung himself once more on the sofa.

“You’ll suffer for this!” exclaimed Larry, outside, and now boisterous in despair—“You’ll suffer for it, if there’s one in heaven, or your own mother on earth, to judge betwixt us!—I renounce you for a brute-baste of a masher!—I’ll quit you and your ways, to-morrow mornin’ early, an’ tell, up to your mother’s face, how you’re goin’ on an’ how you trated me!—let me in, I advise you!”

“Begone!” cried Tresham, “or by heaven I’ll shoot you as dead as Julius Cæsar!” and he rose, as if to prepare for executing his threat. The desired effect was soon produced; Larry, suddenly decamping, but not until he had growled, in much bitterness, and from a safe position at the side of the door—“Och, never fear you!—it’s in you to do it!—what’s bred in the bone ’ill break out in the flesh! God forgive you, an’ the Redeemer look down on me this night!”—The last words were uttered as he descended the stairs, and Tresham, at length, had quiet and opportunity to think.

The damp overspread his forehead, the breath was pent up in his heart, his very life was chilled; yet Tresham felt more anguish than fear. Had he seen an unreal semblance of his mistress? This question, built upon his superstitious prejudices, was agony; he could not follow it. Was it herself, her real self, as he had supposed?—the probability was slight, yet he clung to it; affection and anxiety might have prompted her visit, and feminine delicacy might have caused her to shorten it, and act the silent and strange part she had acted. Then came another fancy. Although he had been at first convinced that the appearance bore a likeness to Anna, still he argued to assure himself that he might have been mistaken; and he strove to forget its relation to her, by investing it with the character of the apparition of a beloved sister, who, some years older than Tresham, had died long before his visit to the Continent. There was no time, he recollected, to form correct observations, nor ought he to pretend, in the imperfect light that the hasty moment had afforded, to have come to any different conclusion. He invoked the spirit of a brother, and the spirit of a sister attended him; the substitution in Tresham’s conceit, was plausible; as he dwelt upon it, the idea fully occupied his mind, and his bosom thrilled with a peculiar interest.

He had seen a supernatural being, and now first experienced the truth of a long-cherished theory. Tresham was brave, and even if he had not been an enthusiast, the recollection must not have unmanned him; but none save an enthusiast can tell with what ease, with what devotion, enthusiasm "commends the ingredients of her poisoned chalice to her own lips." Tresham had not power to admit the sentiment of fear while his soul revelled in the consciousness of direct communion with a spiritual essence.

In such a heated state of mind he thought it was impossible he could sleep, and therefore declined any preparation for bed; but he slept, notwithstanding; even where he was, out of place on the sofa. He slept, yet he had no rest nor refreshment. The toiling spirit still sweated within, and Tresham was not sufficiently aware that physical disease lent to mental anguish its treacherous aid to shake and convulse him. Nightmare, in hideous variety, and accompanied by the sense of real occurrence that so terribly heightens the visitation, came upon him. He had not distinguished his lapse into slumber, and, through the seemingly continued action, there was none of that rapid and mysterious self-relief that—by an agony of mind or soul too subtle and complex for walking recollection—gives, in the thick horrors of some hellish dream, the blessed assurance of our being only fettered in the "pains of sleep," which, after a time of tyranny, shall leave us free and unharmed.

To Tresham's apprehension he still lay awake on his sofa, and he could distinctly mark each old familiar object in the apartment. In this state he saw the corse of her he loved stretched lonely on the middle of the floor. He looked in stupefied dismay; and then came in a crowd of people, some known to him as her friends and relations, but the greater part strangers, and the voice of woe arose, tears blinding the faces of those who wept, till they blurred and grew indistinct under his gaze. He strove to start up, but a heavy weight held him; and now the corse hung with death-locked clasp around his neck, its icy cheek at one moment laid close to his, and in the next removed, as the helpless head slipped off and dangled over his shoulder. He tried to scream, but, as is usual, without effect; and from a succession of such miseries Tresham awoke, haggard and very ill, in the morning light, to a certainty of real existence that proposed no immediate balm to the sufferings he had undergone.



## CHAPTER V.

EARLY on this morning Mortimer called, by appointment with Maria, at Mr. Ruth's house. He found his mistress much agitated; she rose the moment he entered, and cast herself weeping into his arms.

"Tears, Maria! what has happened?"

"Oh, our poor Anna will go distracted, I think; such a scene as we had here last night, Mortimer!—Tresham—for who can assent to the childish superstition they would force upon me?—Tresham came late in the evening in such a shocking way to frighten us all; acting the part of his own Fetch—you know what the vulgar superstition is—sitting down in the drawing-room by Anna's side; there remaining motionless and speechless, and at last stalking away as he had entered, without a word of explanation."

"Did you see him?"

"No, I had just left Anna and the children together; returning to the drawing-room, I found it empty—the children were escaped in terror to the parlour; a servant attended me with lights, and as we stood a moment, wondering where all could have gone, a doleful scream reached us from the back drawing-room—the door was shut—I opened it—and discovered Anna lying senseless at the threshold."

"Alone?—was not Tresham with her?"

"No—nor in the house, nor have any of us seen him since; but Anna remains convinced it was his Fetch, and has passed a dreadful night; indeed, Mortimer, I fear for—for her reason, if not for her life;" and the sister relapsed into showers of tears.

"The silly boy carries this too far, and must be checked," said Mortimer, after a remarkable pause; "where can he be found?"

"In his college rooms. But this seems to affect you differently from anything I could anticipate, Mortimer. I knew that Anna's indisposition, or any prospect of harm to her, would have grieved you, for all our sakes; but now I think you appear, along with your regret, to be moved by a kind of wonder and mystery;—why did you pause so long, and look so absent, when I spoke of Tresham's rudeness?"

"It was nothing—nothing, indeed, Maria," he replied, with more endeavour to convince than the occasion required.

"And now I recollect," continued Maria, "I have another question, though I rather dislike to ask it—why did you start yesterday when you met him?"

"To speak very candidly, Maria, I had rather not answer you—not at present, at least; I know it is all folly—yet even folly grows dangerous by participation."

"You terrify me more than the story could; I entreat you to answer me."

"Then, to prevent worse, sit down with me and I shall. Previous to our breaking-up in America, we had an extensive encampment on the shores of one of those fine lakes that abound in the country. Almost the last night I spent in my tent, I remained up to a late hour. It was sultry weather, and I suffered the entrance to be open, in order to enjoy the fresh breeze from the lake. After some writing and reading I reclined on a sofa, or a substitute for one, which, without facing the entrance, still allowed me by turning a little round, to contemplate a glorious effect of the setting moon upon the water. In this situation I thought I caught, with my side-sight, the figure of some person passing at the back of my couch. I turned rapidly round. No one was there; but, when I resumed my first position, I distinctly saw a stranger—and, what made it then most remarkable, not in uniform—standing outside the entrance, and looking steadfastly upon me. The features were so peculiar, and their expression so unusual, that both sank deep in my memory—that is, I thought they did."

"And Tresham's features brought them to your recollection?"

"Yes, for an instant: but, as I before said, I have since felt convinced of the absurdity of the mistake, and I pledge my word I now regard the whole as a delusion."

"Did you ever see that stranger again?"

"Never."

"Did you speak to him at the time?"

"No; for on snatching my sword, and rising to challenge him for his name and purpose, he—it, I should rather say, or, in better words still, the whim of my own fancy—was no longer visible."

"And when did this occur?" asked Maria, now for the first time infected, in her turn, with a superstitious feeling.

"Perhaps three months ago, or more," he answered.

"I could heartily wish it had not happened," resumed his mistress, "'tis a most distressing coincidence."

Mortimer addressed himself to the task of assuaging Maria's fears, when Tresham rapidly entered, ghastly and wild in his face and manner, and out of breath with anxiety to see Anna once more before him.

"She is not here," he said, the moment he came in; "Good

day, Maria—good day, Captain Mortimer—can Anna be seen, Maria?"

"I shall seek her for you," said Maria, glad to have an opportunity of consoling her sister with the news of Tresham's appearance, although when he entered Maria felt more alarmed than pleased at the changed expression of his face:—"you may come with me to the garden, when I shall have got Anna down," she whispered to Mortimer, in passing him.

"I am sorry, Mr. Tresham," said Mortimer, as soon as they were alone, "that almost our first word must be one of formality; but I think you owe some explanation to the ladies of this house for your strange conduct last night."

"I know it, sir, and came prepared to offer it," said Tresham, "and, to the lady who might have been particularly inconvenienced, I shall readily and anxiously apologize."

"Excuse my zeal, sir, but it was necessary."

"Oh, Captain Mortimer, in your place I might have so acted," said Tresham, indifferently, his whole soul bent on another subject.

"And you can also, perhaps, excuse my standing here till I witness the explanation."

"Sir!—this is over-chivalrous, I think," said Tresham, more ruffled than at a less embarrassed moment he could have been. Mortimer was proceeding to speak when Maria re-entered, leading Anna by the hand.

The young lovers both started at the first sight of each other, their mutually disturbed and altered features, together with their mutual recollections of the past night, causing a common revulsion of feeling. But Maria whispering to Tresham, "She has been indisposed," he immediately recovered himself, and affectionately and gracefully advancing, said,—

"My dearest Anna, you are resolved to chide for my strange behaviour last night; but you will forgive me when you hear me. I, too, was ill in the early part of the evening, and afterwards too stupid to explain, as I know I should have done."

"Ill, Harry!—oh! I am sure you have been very ill?"—said Anna, fixing upon him her eyes, that, from an expression of wild agitation, had softened into tenderness, and now swam in tears; and she held out her hand, and both turned to converse at a window.

"You hear he has fully accounted for it, Maria," said Mortimer, also drawing his mistress aside.

"I think so—I am sure he has—and, I hope, to the entire satisfaction of Anna," Maria replied.

"Doubtless; her full confidence returns; see—she speaks to him without any restraint," continued Mortimer.

"It is quite enough, I am convinced, for the present fears and affections of my poor sister; and her natural anxiety about his health will serve to lull a crowd of smaller doubts and calculations of circumstances."

Here Tresham turned round, with—"Are you yet satisfied, Captain Mortimer?"

"Perfectly, brother, as you will permit a soldier again to call you."

"Now, my dear girl, are you not undeceived?" asked Maria, in a low tone, as the gentlemen discovered.

"I believe I should be—and yet——"

"Come, come, Anna, there is no truth so bright but a willing mind may blow a doubt upon it."

"I will pray to the good God to put it out of my mind—indeed I will," answered her sister. Mortimer now led Maria out, and Tresham and Anna remained together.

"How very poorly you do look, Harry," said Anna, after some indifferent conversation—"but come—the fine morning—if indeed you can attempt our old walk," she added, sorrowfully.

"I can now attempt anything," he interrupted, forcing a smile.

"Then let us be gone," she rejoined—"stay a moment, I will return equipped to accompany you."

She gained the door, turned to look at him—and—"terribly changed!" poor Anna added, as she left the apartment.

"How shall I make my all but certainty certain?" thought Tresham, now left alone; "I durst not ask herself if last night she ventured forth to the college—such a question must imply or reveal the circumstances—and *that*, to an over-sensitive mind like hers, were no less than destruction—if, indeed, she has not been with me; if, indeed, it was the dreadful omen I fear it was;" for Tresham's morning recollections did not permit him to call back, with any reliance, the notion of another agency, and his whole mind was at length divided between the appalling question of a real or supernatural visit from his mistress. Occasionally, perhaps, there stole in a doubt of the reality, in either shape, of the appearance; but as this implied a doubt of his own infallibility, or of his power to decide on the certain operations of his own senses, Tresham's vanity and fanaticism rejected it whenever it occurred, and he was willing to be supremely miserable, rather than suppose, in his own person, a delusion that many have experienced.

The idea of speaking in confidence to Maria presented itself;

but a fear that one sister might keep nothing from the other, a jealousy of Maria's incredulity of supernatural matters, of which he was well aware, together with a disinclination to give pain, joined to make him decline this course also. Tresham next thought of employing his servant; and perceiving, after a moment's reflection, no reasonable bar to such a course, he opened the parlour door, and called Larry, who stood in his old place in the hall, and who, forgetting all his extasies of the night, had, at an early hour, shown himself in his master's chamber, calm, if not penitent or sorrowful, and without uttering a word, began a general shaking of phials, in order to compound a morning draught for the invalid: "so Larry; you will speak with the housekeeper before you return?" asked Tresham.

"If Mrs. Catty is willin'," said the attendant.

"Do so—and—as you converse together, contrive to ask her, carelessly, if"—Tresham paused.

"I know sir; the—the lady," whispered Larry.

"Why, yes, discover at what hour the ladies generally retire for the night: in fact, at what hour they retired last night."

"Afore twelve, masther."

"Then you have already asked the question?"

"Not yet, sir; bud do we want a witch to tell us?"

"Peace, and obey me. I have already charged you, on your life, to conceal from every human being the circumstances you last night witnessed in my chambers."

"An' so you did, sir, God bless you."

"By heavens, if you dare divulge a sentence—a whisper—I will with my own hand—"

"Avoch, we all know that; an' we thank you."

"Sirrah?" Tresham looked angrily at him.

"An' for the same raison we'll take good care," continued Larry, moving towards the door.

"Stop a moment—you followed me out?"

"I think I remember it," replied the servant.

"Did you observe anything?"

"Not at that present time, sir, but afther."

"That is when you went down stairs?"

"I believe so."

"Well—what did you notice—and where?"

"When I got to the top o' the stairs, her ladyship's reverence standin' at the bottom."

"Did you descend that flight?"

"Ay, sir, God help me."

"And then?"

"An' then her grace was on the next landing-place, under

me still; an' then on the next; an' so on 'till she vanished round a pillar in the great hall, houldin' up her finger as much as to say—no further. I mean if you're not out of sorts with the little life I've left you: I didn't take her advice, but was fur goin' into my room, when just as I had my hand on the latch, an' the door open, I fell over her in the dark, where she lay stretched at last, a cold stiff corpse, across the threshold."

The student shuddered as this brought to his recollection the throes of his own wretched sleep.

"Were you tipsy, last night?" he asked in a moment after.

"Why then, not over an' above," was the answer.

Tresham remained silent. "I may go to Mrs. Catty, sir?"

"Ay, hang, or drown—or damn!" replied Tresham.

"Avoch, we thank you kindly;" and Larry withdrew.

"Mysterious power!" thus arose the aspirations of Tresham's heart, while he remained alone. "Great Cause and common Father, who sendest thy signs and revealings for preparation, make this untrue! Summon not yet—oh, not yet!—from thy beautiful world, the fairest and gentlest being thou hast sent to adorn it;—oh! it is thrice terrible to stand by a creature so fair—to hear her voice—touch her hand—and see her shining and breathing near us, yet know that, in the house of death, the dim dead await her, counting every pulsation of her heart, till that which shall complete the fated number." He wept and spread his hands over his face, and was thus surprised by the hasty entrance of Anna.

"Now, Harry—but why are you agitated?" she said.

"A passing pain, my love—'tis gone."

"Entirely gone?" she continued, advancing and taking his hand, her mind wrung with pangs of the very same nature of her lover's.

"Oh, yes!" he replied, smiling faintly, as with action that betokened a mixture of deep love, sorrow, and almost reverence, he breathed a kiss on her beautiful forehead.

"Let us have our walk, then," Anna resumed, "and for your sake we shall walk slowly, Harry:—but tell me," and she stopped at the door—"I think you yesterday said that you were, yourself, a melancholy authority for the truth of — Fetches."

"I spoke to that effect, indeed," said Tresham, scarcely able to conceal his emotion.

"Indeed!" resumed Anna, echoing his word with an alarmed tone—"there is a deep meaning in everything you—let me ask you how?"

"Some other time, my beloved—or after our walk—the morning wears away—some other time"—and offering his arm

he strove with poor smiles to disguise his own heart, and comfort hers.

"It must be now, Tresham," said Anna, disengaging herself, and sinking in the chair, while she earnestly motioned him to sit beside her. Influenced by the solemnity, if not command, of her tone and manner, Tresham, after a pause obeyed.

"I had an elder brother. He was, too, my only brother. He went with Wolfe to America, and I remained in my father's house. Many months lapsed after his departure before we received any letter from him, and our anxieties rose very high. One night I dreamt a dream—one night that, in tears and misery on his account—for I loved him as my own heart's blood—I had lain down in bed. I was in a street, in a strange town, and followed, I knew not how, in the mournful train of a soldier's funeral. The roll of the muffled drums, and the occasional thump of the great drum, together with the shrill, and always to me heart-rending, hymn or lament played by the fifes on such occasions, filled my ears, and I wept even before I had a more immediate cause for sorrow. After some time the dream changed. I was in a lofty church, also strange to me. I looked around; the mouth of a vault was open, and a coffin, that which I had followed, lay near to it. I advanced, and looked upon the coffin-lid, and the name of my brother, with his age, and the date of his death-day, now met my eyes, printed in black letters on a ground of white metal. I shrieked and awoke. It was past midnight. I arose, got a light, and, from the distinct and vivid perceptions of my dream, made in my commonplace-book, which I will show you, a sketch of the coffin and inscription. The date, by an inconsistent anticipation of the vision, was of the next day after the dream. But it was the true day," added Tresham in a sunk voice.

"He died on that day, then?" Anna asked, and her lover assented by a mournful inclination of the head.

"But Tresham," she resumed, "this is a dream, and not a Fetch story," and Anna felt and looked relieved.

"Listen. I have commenced with this, only for the purpose of leading to the matter in point. After the close of the next evening I sat alone in my study. I should indeed say it was night, though not far advanced into the night. A figure came before me. Wrecked and wretched as he stood, I knew my brother! The figure when for a moment it had shot its unearthly eyes into my soul, passed through a door to an inner chamber, from which there is no returning but back again into that it had left. Thither I followed, locking the door after me, that the vision and I might be alone together."

"Horrible!" said Anna, drawing in her breath. -

"Thither I followed—but saw nothing. And I never saw my brother more. That night and that hour he expired in America."

"That hour and that night!"

"Yes. As in the former case, I took a note of the day of the month and week, and the hour of the night, at which the Fetch had appeared to me; and our minute and authentic accounts afterwards pointed to the very moment."

"'Tis dreadful. Come—this morning is far advanced;" and Anna suppressing her feelings, and trying to hide them under the appearance of a bustling arrangement of her dress, rose up.

"Dreadful it is, Anna—but oh, too true! This has affected you—or you are more seriously indisposed than to my inquiries you will admit—or—or—have watched late last night;—oh, Anna!"—Tresham continued, as, overwrought and almost thrown off his guard by the increased conflict of his recollections and terrors, he was on the point of asking a solution of what he most feared and doubted. He grasped her hand—looked into her eyes—but in a moment checked himself, and extending his arm—"Come then our walk!" he said, and led his mistress out.

## CHAPTER VI.

MEANTIME, Larry, in obedience to his master's commands, obtained a tête-à-tête with Mrs. Catharine. It may have been observed, from this person's former style of conversation with Larry, that, either she thought he had a tender inclination for her, and saw no reason for discouraging it, or she wished to inspire him with one, and was therefore very sweet on honest Larry. What may have been his opinion on the point it is hard to say; but, on the whole, we rather predicate that he had a general apprehension of the state of Mrs. Catherine's heart, or of the drift of her politeness, and affected accordingly the utmost innocence and unconsciousness.

In truth, the housekeeper was arrived at, if she had not passed, the grand climacteric, under the influence of which, with reverence be it spoken, ladies of all ranks feel disposed to do strange and startling things, rather than any longer run the chance of a certain odium. Nature had not been as bountiful to Mrs. Catherine's face as to her undisputed talent for jellies, jams, pickled mushrooms, and preserves of every description; and, during her unlovely youth, the virgin, yet too green to stoop to a renouncement of her sex's privilege by originating any solicitation, remained unwooed, and of course



unwon. After the pure and peaceful lapse of nearly twenty years, she began, however, to look about her; and, despising the scruple of her teenish days, bluntly, or adroitly ventured many a "bold stroke for a husband." That she had hitherto failed, her present anxious situation made known—notwithstanding the matronly affixture to her familiar name, which, by-the-way, was of long standing, and a cruel anticipation, by the world at large, of a fate which Mrs. Catherine neither courted, nor indeed merited—and we record the fact, rather in astonishment of the blindness of man than with any triumph over the unwilling maiden.

At the time that is our purpose to become eaves-droppers on the conversation between her and Larry, we discover the valet evincing considerable uneasiness at a chance remark that fell from his admirer: "And—what? eh? last night, Kitty?—how, Kitty?"—he said.

"I told you once afore, Larry, as much as that I thought my name sounded bettther another way. But no matter for that, only as the hereafter may be; I say he cum here last night, stalkin' in and stalkin' out, like his own ghost, an' never sayin' a Christhen word, but lavin' my poor Miss Anny stone dead on the carpet."

"An' deliver us from all evil!" muttered Larry, concluding aloud a prayer he had in his consternation mentally begun. This rather discomposed his friend, and she inquired—"Didn't he come? didn't he? oh, Larry, honey, didn't he come? or, as Miss Anny said, was it his Fetch, indeed?"

I see my way in a vartuous lie," thought Larry, afraid, as much as he was cautious, of the black secret of which he thus thought himself possessed: to Mrs. Kitty he continued—"In troth an' he did; an' for why not?—an' what use of a man's ghost, when his own flesh an' blood is ready an' willin' to stand in his place, Catherine?"

"Then he *did* come?"

"He did to be sure; an' myself had to wait for him an hour at the college."

"Musha, good loock to your heart for that, Larry; I said it to Miss Anny all along, an' now I can make her so sure, entirely, poor thing!"

"Arrah, do now, Catherine, an' the Lord 'ill bless you."

"Faith, an' I will then, an' more an' more for your axin' it, Larry. But, Larry, agra, you're in grief, killin' grief. He's quite changed since yesterday, poor fellow," continued Mrs. Kate, in a reverie: "he thinks there's sich a differ' between us; but he's a cleaner boy nor that big rap, Paddy Kinshela, that passed me by in the chapel-yard, last Sunday se'nn't, after

last mass; a better boy, too, an' a gentleman's own man. Larry, a-vich, never let it break your heart, I say," she concluded, again addressing him.

"What does she mane at all?" queried Larry to his own breast—"did I tell her yet?—Musha, I'm a blind kitten aff I think I did."

"Take courage, man; 'a faint heart never won a fair lady;' out with it; what kills cures," continued the housekeeper.

"Does she want to pump me?—two words to that bargain," reasoned Larry.—"Catherine—"

"Well, honey?—he looks just as if he'd come down with it at once," added Catherine to herself—"only for his modesty, an' all that."

"Aff a simple boy might ax you, Catt—Catherine—what o'clock do you all go to bed at, in this house?"

"There's a round beginnin', tho', after all his modesty!" thought Mrs. Catherine, chuckling in her very heart—"Why, then, to tell the truth, Larry, one may say about eleven, tho', sence you must know all, myself sometimes stays up, at one matther or another, after the young ladies, good loock to them, an' a weary hour I have of it, Larry; for of all the hours from Monday mornin' to Saturday night that we poor sarving-women know, there isn't one so lonesome entirely, or one that gives us the heart-scald so well as that. It's then we think of all we have to do an' look after, an' all the odds an' ends we have to put together, an' divil a drop, God forgive me for swearin', to rise our hearts, for we never taste it alone. Och, musha, you know little about it: a noise frightens us, an' it's only the big red cat, an' no sweetheart, after all; instid of one like him to be talkin' to us, the window goes backwards and forwards with the wind; if a scratchin' comes to the doors, it's only a rat as big as a calf. An' thin the clock strikes twelve to warn us of going to bed an' gettin' up ever so early; an' so we say our prayers for nothin', an' lie down in our beds as could as any-thing."

"Musha, more's the pity; an' myself is long sorry for your lonesome hour—about eleven, isn't it, one time with another?—*they* never stir afther."

"Between ourselves, Larry, hardly ever; an' my saarvice to you, Larry," continued the housekeeper, sipping a glass of cordial, after she had filled and pushed another to the valet—"barrin' some odd nights; some out-o'-the-way nights, like last night, now—"

"Avoch, ay: sure I know you were all late up last night," said Larry, very simply, while he drank to Mrs. Catherine's health.

"Oh, the prowlin' dog! he saw the light at my windee!" surmised Mrs. Kate to herself—"yes, indeed, Larry; I wasn't in my bed till aftther twelve."

"An' the ladies afore you, by coorse?"

"Ay, faith, Larry, honey, more than half an hour."

"An' my saarvice to you, Catherine—'case a body axed if people that can love ever step out o'nights, when the family are snug asleep, to whisper a bit with their sweethearts."

"Oh, the impident thief! the plotter! the brazen-faced fellow!" she inwardly ejaculated—"Musha, Larry, agra, you have no shame in you, nor no fear o' God or me; an' yet, to be genteel with you, I may say—tho' I say it that shouldn't—that supposin' myself here loved so well entirely as to do the likes, faith I might step out for a start, into the garden, or a thing that-a-way."

"An' unknownst to any one?" asked Larry.

"Musha, yes, unknownst to the wide world, Larry; that is, 'case why, I liked a body; for likin', you know, goes a good way; tho', for that matter, it 'ud well become me to be on the look-out, as the ladies sleep so near me."

"Do they, faith? aha, Kitty! so *you* might, only if you liked, an' they couldn't if you didn't like it too? Isn't that the way it is?"

"Sure enough, Larry a-vich."

"So, Catherine, there's last night, now, you might if you liked, an' none of them might if they liked? An' I'll be bound you could give your oath, for every night in the year, that down to this blessed moment, they never tried any sich tling?"

"Ay, my book oath, you're a witch, Larry."

"I'm a conjuror's walley-the-shambles," answered Larry to himself, "or I saarve two masthers, or a limb o' the divil; an' when he's married," he went on, beginning, unknown to himself, to articulate his thoughts—"then I'm to saarve two mis-thresses, into the bargain;" and he groaned aloud.

The word married reached, above all that he had muttered, Mrs. Catherine's ear, and his groaning affected her with an ungovernable commiseration; so that now, assuming her softest tone, she said, "But Larry, jewel, I'm for rather givin' a spare hour here, at our own fire, snug an' warm—the best nights are couldish, Larry—than in the out-o'-the-door way you spake of."

Larry was silent. In fact, he heard her not.

"So that, Larry, if a body tapped, as low as anything, at this little windee, to-night, about half-after—Musha, what ails him?" she continued to herself—"if ever I saw sich a man in love, in my whole life afore!—but it's the truest love"—then aloud—"or, as for the matter o' that, an' sence you are for

spakin' so soon about comin' together in the houldfast way, Larry, sure there's Father O'Shaughnessy that we both know—"

"Bother!" interrupted Larry, on whose abstracted sense the last serious words had made some confused impression; and he rose up.

"Bother!" echoed Mrs. Catherine, "why, you good-for-nothin' thief, would you wrong me that-a-way? ~~Ask~~ ~~me~~ your questions, an' then say, bother!"

"Catty," said Larry, manning himself with gravity and dignity, "I'm a boy, d'ye see me, to cry bother whin, an' where, an' how, I like, sooner nor make away with my mother's son."

"Make away!" Mrs. Catherine repeated, also rising, after having first snatched back the second untasted glass she had filled for her imaginary lover; her face assuming, from its first furnace-glow, a livid paleness, and her lips sharing the angry convulsion that shook her whole body.

"Make away! och, I'll larn you to do that! Get out, you—you——" spasms of anger choked her further speech, or the epithets she thought worthy of Larry were not so easily found, or her mighty conceptions were too big for utterance; "you—you——" she repeated, clenching her hands by her side, stamping her foot, and gradually advancing on Larry, who, however, was not to be had in such a way; for, from the moment Mrs. Catherine snatched his glass of cordial, he foresaw the coming storm, and arranged to avoid it, taking, for every step she advanced on him, as good a step backward, till at last, and ere she had power to use tongue or claws, he was over the threshold, and the door banged in his face.

"Well, a-vich; glory, honour, an' praise for all," he afterwards soliloquised, in Christian patience, on his way to college; "an' yet here's one poor boy, like me, in the course of one night an' mornin', visited and bet to chaff by ould Nick; put on a ghost hunt; sent to hang, drown, or to blue blazes, by his jewel of a masther, an' now thrated in this manner by an ugly woman.

"Well. Any more o' the yarn? My name is Larry, an' I keeps with an evil deception, a divil's make-believe, a divil entirely, I think, that puts on my masther, that he may make sure o' my masther's man. But, if its not himself, where did I lose him? Did we lave him after us, abroad, or—thonomon diaoul!—was he never with me at all at all?—I'll make him say the Lord's prayer along wid myself, this holy an' blessed night, which no imp dares do—and I'll have none of his beginnin' at the wrong end, either. Ay, I'll do this, or ax my death for not knowin' my catechism."

## CHAPTER VII.

THE young lovers took their morning walk. Romantic minds will seek out romantic and lonesome scenery, and Tresham and Anna, declining the more frequented promenade that followed the windings of the Nore, at the side opposite the college, chose a wilder path, upon which they arrived after walking through a crowded and disagreeable suburb. It was locally called "the Lacken" (a term expressive, we believe, of precipitous ground, when it overhangs water), and also led along the banks of the Nore, fancying the public walk, but was sufficiently distant to escape intrusive observation and offer all the pleasures of free discourse.

In the helps that it gave for enjoying prospects of the beautiful and peculiar scenery of the distant town and accompaniments, this walk had another advantage over its fashionable rival. Sometimes ascending half way, and sometimes entirely to the tops of a chain of precipitate hills, that, for more than a mile attended its course, it alternately supplied picture and bird's-eye views; and at its various well-known points of sight Tresham and Anna often lingered, pleased to divert, though in silence, their mutual depression of spirits, by gratification in the least sensual way of perhaps the most sensual of our perceptive organs.

From a particular spot they dwelt long on a singularly fine view. To their left, in the middle distance, arose the old Ormond Castle, now displayed in its separate parts, that is to say, two circular towers connected by a comparatively low line of building, in the centre of which was a spacious archway, the entrance to the court-yard: from one of the towers, and at about right angles with the first-mentioned sweep, approached, in perspective, an imposing mass of the edifice, commonly regarded as the castle's front, shooting up, over the roof, a battalion of Gothic chimneys, and abounding, as did also the two towers and the roof, in square or angular-topped windows of various size, round each of which was an indented edging, painted white upon a cool grey ground, the pervading colour of the pile. It would be difficult to assign this building to any order of architecture, classic or Gothic: still some features of both, the gradual intermixture of different eras, appeared; much of the character of an old dwelling-house, independent of either, might also be traced, through it, but on so large a scale as not to take away the more important idea of a castle. It was, altogether, a noble and picturesque object; and t—

it sat upon its green lawn, and amid its rich trees, visible from the foundations over a flanking wall of forty feet high, at the base of which swept the public walk, still rising many feet from the bed of the river; and at last shone out the unruffled river, narrowing as it curved round the college park in the distance, but spreading as it came nearer, those stony barriers that cause a fulness of stream for manufacturing purposes checking it at two different stages, and forming alternately a placid lake or reservoir and shooting falls of foamy, roaring water; a different river from what it was when Spenser sung it,—

—“The stubburne Neure, whose waters grey  
By fair Kilkenny and Resposite bord.”

To the right of the castle came in—as a painter would say—bits of the town, caught through masses of foliage; in nearly the middle of the picture arose two spires, one of St. Mary's church, the other of the market-house; lower down in the same line was the old college, bounding its park, and half seen through trees still; yet further to the right appeared the grotesque steeple of the cathedral of St. Canice, and, by its side, one of the highest of those famous round towers, of which the purpose, era, and indeed entire history, remain a puzzle to antiquaries; and, as at the left hand the picture commenced with the Ormond Castle, it was balanced, at the right, by another old fabric, about equi-distant, but its ruins, and with a freedom of touch that even a master can only imitate, painted by the pencil of time into every variety of brown, grey, and yellow tint. We have said that, as they swept to the right from the castle, the houses of the town were only occasionally seen through intercepting foliage: this feature ran over the whole scene, so as scarcely to give the idea of a busy haunt of men, nearly two miles in extent; and thus the curious eye had a rare subject of city and landscape going hand in hand, of nature and art, of embowering solitude and hidden bustle, of the freshness of God's work and the pilings-up of man's labour. Behind the whole middle distance of spires, towers, glinting slate roofs, trees, and water, rose the more distant country, sloping and swelling, spotted with villas and plantations, and bathed in the blending mist and sunshine of the morning; and farther still appeared doubtful lines of blue mountain, brought out or mixed with the wreathed clouds, according to the changes of the dazzling light and swimming atmosphere. Notwithstanding that it was the hour for kindling fires in every town and city the world over, no foul interfusion of smoke dimmed the brilliance of this favoured view, Kilkenny being protected from such a nuisance by a

clause of the old proverb (quoted even by Ledwich) that blesses her with "water without mud, land without bog, fire without smoke, and streets paved with marble;" so that a summer-morning sun and air sparkled and wafted over the lightsome and unique beauty of the scene as freshly as it might have done over far and uninhabited solitudes.

The lovers pursued their walk along hill and river, narrow path and green sward, until they at last reached a plantation of old tress, known by the name of "the wilderness," where the near noise of waters came upon their ears, and all else was repose.

They sat on a shelving bank that had the boiling stream below and the gnarled oak overhead: both were unusually silent. Even the charms of the scenery, as they came along, had not had power, however they might have mutually enjoyed it, to provoke much observation from either; Tresham spoke not a word; while Anna's voice, when she ventured a remark, sounded tremulous and broken. They continued for some time watching the bubbles that, self-blown and self-burst, chased each other away and were no more—fit images of the troubled and vain thoughts which occupied the minds of both. At last after many catching efforts to begin, Anna abruptly broke silence:—

"Might not that appearance of your brother be a delusion, Harry? Might not a mind filled as yours was, by your fears and previous dream, with one object, paint it to the eye so vividly as to deceive the eye?"

"Perhaps," he inwardly shrank as he spoke; "yet, according to the consistency of things, certainly not. A mere delusion, such as you mean, would be more fleeting, more undefined, more general, more unreal, and, above all, less capable of the continued deceit of continued action, than a Fetch, such as it is decreed to us—and—indeed, such as I have—once—seen it."

"You told me the other day you had been considering a theory to prove, on consistent grounds, the reality of Fetches; I should like to hear it now, Tresham."

"It would be too long and complex for your attention," he said, painfully anxious to avoid the torment he had created for himself. But Anna seemed resolved that the childish scourge his own weak hands had prepared should visit his proper back; as to herself, her mind was in that battling state of suspense that urges to tempt the worst certainty rather than remain in doubt.

"I am not the mere girl your answer would seem to make me, Tresham: I can here mention the preparatory argument

which you told me should go before the direct proof. Did you not say it was necessary to begin by showing that the creatures and scenery of our dreams are not the imaginings of the mind, but real beings which occur to our waking souls, or through which our souls wander for the time?"

"That is the first step, indeed," he answered, somewhat beguiled by the flippancy of his mistress, "and it gives me inexpressible pleasure thus to witness the gradual arrangement of your naturally fine mind, Anna;" and Tresham kissed his pupil, "Then go on, at once, with your theory," she resumed; "first make me understand the system of dreams; I shall listen attentively."

Tresham's love and vanity balancing his more bitter feelings, he obeyed this command; and, in order to show the kind of boyish puzzle with which he was in the habit of tantalizing his own and his mistress's intellect, his theory is preserved.

If dreams happen in the mind, they are its acts. That is a simple proposition, and one easily understood."

"I understand it perfectly."

"There cannot be an act of the mind without the mind's own knowledge. You might as well suppose animal motion without life; for, in truth, consciousness is the life of the mind; without it you not only can have no mental act, but you destroy mind itself. I think—that is—I *know* I think—and therefore I am——was the brief but profound syllogism of a great philosopher, who spent years in an inquiry after his own possible existence. You follow me, Anna?"

"Every step. Proceed."

"Thus, then, the mind never acts but when it *knows* it acts. Recollect that. There is an after-operation by which it can assure itself it has acted, and another by which it perfectly remembers the knowledge it had of its own act while performing it; and both are as necessary as the first to stamp any act as its own, to satisfy it; for, unless it be thus satisfied, it has not acted at all. Can you show me, by an illustration, that you understand this?"

"Yes—I think I can. This morning, very early, I wished to see you before me. That wish was an act of my mind; first, because I knew I was wishing at the time; secondly, because I now remember that knowledge; and thirdly, because I can call up the wish as my own. Am I right?"

"Perfectly. Let us take another step. Belonging to these necessary tests for ascertaining its own act are smaller powers of the mind, which may be exercised whenever the great ones are exercised; and one of these is its assent to continued action, or its capability to break up continued action, at



pleasure; to change, or stop it altogether. For instance: if a man is thinking of a horse's head, he may, if he choose, change his thought to the spire of a steeple, before he has proceeded to consider any other part or limb of the animal; or, if his ideas range over the side of a mountain, he may rapidly transfer them to a crowded street, before they have extended themselves to the summit of the mountain. Is this plain?"

"Nothing can be more so."

"Now, then, we have to try a dream by these rules, and so decide whether or not it is an act of the mind, occurring in the mind. Has the mind any such attendant consciousness of dreams? any such after-recognition for them? Certainly not. I particularly speak of continuous dreams—not the snatchings of a second, not points of action, but such as are made up of the flowing of those points into connected lines of performance. And here we see the *human mind* admitting its non-consent to the action of a dream; its want of power to have accompanied it, to have broken it up, to have changed or stopped it. But all these privileges it should have necessarily possessed in order to stamp the dream as its own act. Possessing none of them, the dream cannot be its act, cannot have happened in it, and is consequently an occurrence distinct from the human mind. I appeal to your own recollections and experience, Anna."

"What you have said is very clear. I cannot deny it. Yet I have a difficulty. "Only one person can have one particular dream. If it is not the act of his own mind, it must be the act of some other—some—I am getting a little confused—of some other individual. So, here is another person dreaming my dreams, and—" continued the metaphysical girl, with a half smile and whole blush—"I do not understand this, Tresham."

"Nor is it natural you yet should: you have all the merit, however, of seeing the difficulty; and it remains for me, by my new system, to reconcile this obvious contradiction in the old one."

"Then, since we have seen that dreams are not the acts of the mind, you must show an impossibility, by still connecting them with the individual who dreams them."

"The thing is far from impossible. Attend."

"Every human individual is composed of three distinct parts; namely, body, mind, and soul: the soul as different from mind as mind is from body; the soul immortal; mind as well as body mortal, and to perish with it; the soul created before both, and to live after both, independent of everything."

but God; and here, in the better part of our present selves, is our future and better existence—an existence of full apprehension, unshackled by the mechanism of mind, by reasoning, recollecting, or combining."

"That gives me a new, and awful, and sublime idea," interrupted Anna.

"But, by a decree of God," continued Tresham, "we live on this earth, less by our soul than by our mind and body; that is, in the compound-machine, man, mind and body predominate over soul; and although it is the true intellectual prompter, the source of perception and power, we can only become conscious of its workings and nature at the pleasure of the mind, to which it is always bound to communicate itself, and which lamely and imperfectly remodels such communication. By an inscrutable decree, man is thus doomed to know and estimate himself for a time, by the predominance of an inferior portion of his mixed being only."

"It is wonderful and beautiful!" said Anna, her cheeks and eyes lit up.

"This thralldom of the soul must continue, during life, with the exception of snatches of freedom which it enjoys when the mind and body suffer the temporary death of sleep. But, then—as, after their final death it shall escape into everlasting liberty—the never-winking spirit sometimes eludes its vulgar and tyrannic keepers, being compelled by destiny to return home to its house of bondage, so soon as the mind and body recover their inertness—in other words, so soon as they are awake. And now, Anna, we approach our preparatory point.

"In this state of occasional freedom the soul wanders alone, and independently, over the universe. Other disenthralled souls meet it, and then we have the people of dreams; it visits other places, and then we have their scenery."

The pupil looked wise and puzzled in a breath, and paused too long for the vanity of the lecturer, but at last took heart to say,—

"If dreams happen apart from the mind, how does it afterwards know anything, even imperfectly, about them?"

"I have said that the soul is obliged to return to its union with the mind the instant it and the body resume life. I have also said that a like necessity urges the soul to hold continued converse with the mind, during which it must impart all its acts. Upon its return home, then, as it were, it recounts its adventures. The mind, along with a natural incapacity ever clearly to conceive the operations of soul, is now but half recovered from its lethargy, and admits the relation in an indistinct manner, and as indistinctly recollects it. Here I

may instance the vague and jumbled notion we always have of dreams. We call them back rather as the acts of another individual than of ourselves; we confound persons, places, time, and space, cause and effects. The soul only saw causes; the mind must drudge from cause to effect; the soul began where the mind ends; for causes are first to spirit and last to mind: with one, first is first; with the other last is first."

This happy conflict of terms completely bewildered Anna, and she admitted everything.

"But now," she resumed, "let me hear how, by the application of this theory, you are able as rationally to account for — Fetches;" and Anna's voice, and the expression of her countenance, changed, as this one talismanic word chased away all her scientific enthusiasm, and awakened her to human feelings. Tresham, also, in an altered tone, continued:—

"You are convinced that, after death, the soul parts the mind and body, and enjoys perfect freedom; you are further certain that, because sleep is a temporary death of mind, the soul has, during sleep also, opportunity for some hours of enfranchisement. Any other cause, then, which for a moment deadens the mind, must allow the soul a momentary liberty, during which it may leave the body, and become visible in another place, no matter how distant. Severe bodily pain or exhaustion will produce this benumbing effect on the mind; and thus, under a visitation of either, the soul may for an instant separate itself from the mind and body, and give the appearance called a Fetch. It is remarkable," concluded Tresham, shuddering as he uttered the sentence, while Anna partook of his horror, "that whenever a Fetch is seen it represents some person at that moment indisposed."

"Hoity-toity! riddle-me-ree! and long life to cosmogony and abracadabra!" now shouted a stentorian voice at their back; and, turning round, the lovers saw their old friend, Doctor Butler, who not finding Tresham in his chambers, when, according to appointment with Larry, he made an early visit, had pursued the student hither, in some honest, professional indignation that his commands should have been disobeyed.

"For Heaven's sake, my good young people, have you nothing to do with your precious time? Here have I stood for some minutes wondering if I heard two accomplished persons, come to years of discretion, or two great children broke out of the nursery, mutually imposing on each other's common-sense. My pretty Miss Anna, these are no topics for you. As for you, Harry Tresham, I have a crow to pluck

with you—but what's the matter now? What but a result of obstinacy and disobedience?" he continued, assisting Anna to support her lover, who, more ill than to himself he would allow, grew faint in the effort to rise.—"Lean on me, Harry—there—you are better: and now home to a late breakfast, the worst meal that ever entered a boy's stomach."

They retraced their steps to the town. At the entrance Butler whispered to Tresham—"I shall call on you to-day, at three; do not disappoint me—I breakfast near this place—" and parted. The lovers proceeded; and Tresham left his mistress at her father's door, solemnly engaging, at her request, to call early in the evening. "Be punctual," she continued, with a faint smile, "if you do not wish to see me lose all sense of shame, and invade your retirement."

## CHAPTER VIII.

In this matter, Harry, said Mr. Butler, when he had made the appointed visit, "you will permit me to use more than common authority; first, there is clearly my professional right to command obedience; then I am an old man and ought to command it; and lastly, I am your good father's old friend, and would serve, as I love him, your father's son; and in fact, I must predominate," he added, stamping, with a good-humoured air of dictation, his celebrated black cane against the carpet.

"I am grateful for your kindness, Mr. Butler."

"No, sir, you are not; for, if you were, my wishes and injunctions together would not have been despised. Last night you went a ghost-hunting, and this morning a philosophizing in their teeth; and you see the consequences—an increased attack, since you came home, with—for I shall speak out—symptoms very alarming."

"It is nothing, my dear doctor: I shall mind."

"Veritably, yes, if I can help it; but you know I have prescriptive right to be the more obstinate of the two, and it must be exactly in my own way and no other. Or, Mr. Harry Tresham, tell me at once you resolve to be your own physician, and, though with sorrow and regret on my part, we may soon cease to be troublesome to each other"

"God forbid I should be so wayward, Mr. Butler!"

"Well, then, God forbid I should be so malicious as to give you up to yourself! So, come. In the first place, no stirring out to-night, or until I shall have approved of locomotion: agreed!"

"Agreed," said Tresham, with a deep sigh—"I shall write a note of apology to Mr. Ruth's, and my servant shall deliver it."

"So far, so good. Next, then, no books, no stewing of any kind, and least of all, over the German fairy-tales: agreed also?"

"Also," repeated Tresham, "though I scarcely know, Doctor Butler, what books you honour with that name."

"No matter; we shan't stick at words; and now with respect to your regimen. I have taken my vegetable dinner with you here to-day, and indeed stayed too late from another appointment, in order to set you a good example in your hermit diet; and it must continue during my pleasure. Wine, strong liquors of all kinds, and even simple old whiskey-punch, also to disappear. And now, where is your servant to take the note?"

Tresham rung to command Larry's attendance.

"Apropos of this same Larry, as you call him. I do not know a more entertaining rascal; I think he fears ghosts, and all the *et ceteras*, as a mad dog, water; only the canine lunatic has, even in the shallowness of his bugbear, a better excuse for being nervous. You cannot imagine what a fine scene I had with him here in your unadvised absence, last night; 'twas the first time we met, and I saw by his looks and manner that he took me for the devil the moment I entered the room; and we afterwards discussed metaphysics to some purpose."

"Could he indeed have consented to such an illusion? Something of the kind I now recollect he mentioned to me; but I supposed he jested."

"Jested! never was certainty more certain. I see you have no notion how a weak and contemptible mind can impose on itself; but as I humoured the idiot's prepossession the instant I perceived it, and left him with it fully established in the space inside his skull, we can still, with your leave, follow up the scene; I hear his foot on the stairs, and there is twilight enough for our purpose. It is a good opportunity to lecture master and man," added Butler in his own mind.

"You have my full consent, doctor."

"Then I shall just step behind this screen; do you get him to stand away from the door, so that I may intercept his retreat, and then judge for yourself: he doesn't know I have come in."

As Larry entered the apartment, Butler had established himself in his position, and, according to arrangement, Tresham got the valet also favourably placed, and began to write a note. After a moment's pause, the doctor stole softly behind Larry, and laid his hand on his shoulder; a quick turn round, a spring towards the door a shout, and then a run close to the wall,

when he found his retreat cut off, were the immediate results. Tresham only looked up, recognised Butler with a slight nod, and resumed his writing, while the doctor closed on Larry.

"Spake to the masther, sir—spake to him, Masther Harry—ye know more of ache other nor what I do"—exclaimed the alarmed servant, with more courage, however, derived either from his doubts of his tormentor's identity or from his not now being alone, than had marked their former interview. Tresham took no notice.

"Lives your melancholy mother yet, Larry?" said Butler, very near him.

"In spite of all, yes—plaise your worship" answered the abhorring yet temporizing valet.

"I must see her, Larry, in common charity, for I can be charitable; indeed all your kith and kin of that branch; you'll be a merrier family after me."

"They may laugh that win, sir" replied Larry.

"Winners, then, you shall be, depend on it. To begin with yourself—how much do you think you should want?"

"I wants nothin' at all, your honour, while I have an honest masther, an' knows how to bless myself."

"That is to say you will take nothing from me?"

"Myself isn't for throublin' your rev—— worship I mane."

"So; how many keys between laugh major and laugh minor, Larry?" The black cane made a slight motion, and Larry emitted a strange "hi, hi," while Tresham again looked up, astonished at the novelty of the sound.

"Hi, hi!—and is this all?" said Butler, sternly.

"Hi, hi, ho!"

"Say these words after me. I, Larry,—what's your villainous name?"

"Larry O'Donohoo, sir."

"I, Larry O'Donohoo, hereby laugh at all the ghosts my master or myself ever talked of." Larry endeavoured to mince the matter, and Butler added—

"What, you lump of a rascal! say the words plain, or I'll make a hole in your head to let some brains in:" and the servant at last faithfully complied. "Very well; and with your permission, Mr. Tresham, we shall now send him on the errand we spoke of."

"How far might it be off, Masther Harry?" inquired Larry.

"What's that to you man?—do you dare dispute our united commands?" exclaimed Butler.

"Myself only wants to know where I'm for goin', first," observed Larry, in some horrible misgiving.

"Here, Larry," said Tresham, who, on account of the allusion

to himself during this scene, now wished from wounded vanity to end it—"here, sir—this note to Mr. Ruth's, for Miss Anna." Larry hastily took it, and by a roundabout manœuvre gained the door.

"And one note for me, before you go," resumed Butler; but the persecuted servant, conceiving himself beyond the limits of the charmed circle, only answered with a gruff "bother" and—"I don't care a blackberry for you, sowl or body, whoever you are; and then went down stairs as fast as possible.

Butler laughed heartily, and turning to Tresham—"Farewell, Harry: I leave you with my commands to get to bed immediately; nor need you—ay, your very self—defraud the nursery by conjuring the ghost from it this blessed night."

"Sir?" interrupted Tresham.

"Come, come, never mind me; we all know your insanity as well as yourself, and well enough to be entertained by it; only it is believed that your accomplished and respectable manservant carries the method of the disease to more perfection. Farewell, to-morrow morning early I shall revisit you," and the doctor retired, well pleased with the offence he had given to Tresham's prejudices, and resolved, though he would not intimate his purpose, to surprise the student with another call that night.

Of all the injunctions laid upon him by his medical friend, Tresham thought least of obeying that which would consign him to his pillow at such an early hour. Sleep, he concluded, was completely out of the question; so, till the return of his servant, he reclined on the sofa, pondering over again the mysteries of the former night.

From Larry's report of his conversation with the housekeeper Tresham had been able to extract nothing, as, in fact, that afflicted person did not think proper, from motives of affection, perhaps, as well as prudence, to be very communicative. He rather conveyed, on the whole, an impression that Anna might have really made the so-much-dreaded visit; and Tresham had now to comprehend why she should have done so, since in their various meetings his mistress had never spoken of it. In this view it was only to be accounted for by supposing that she wished, in consequence of their recent conversations, to playfully impose on her lover; and, though Anna's general character weighed against such a case, Tresham allowed himself to believe it might be probable, particularly when he recollected her parting allusion of the morning, which at the time gave him great relief.

In the midst of these reveries, Tresham was, contrary to his own calculations, again surprised into a slumber. It was, how-

ever, but a light and fitful one, of that kind which, while it crowds one half of our mind with rapid and vague chimeras, leaves the other half, if the terms may be so disposed, confusedly alive to a waking sense of place and surrounding objects. And in this state Tresham's eye—whether his waking or sleeping eye he could not himself determine—fixed on a pale figure that seemed to stand in the space of the open door of the chamber. Starting up, and now in the darkness of the night, which—only relieved by one struggling ray of the rising moon that obliquely shot across the apartment—thickly surrounded him—better awake, though not entirely so, Tresham riveted his eyes on the doorway. The single moonbeam struck through it, and, just as he turned his glance, lightened, he thought, over a flow of white drapery. He shrunk back; recovered himself; and looked again; but all was repose and blankness.

He issued through the door, and quickly descended to the exterior of the college. At an angle of the building that turned towards the park, Tresham again caught the indication of a receding figure, and still he pursued. In the open space of the park nothing appeared, however; and after some research he was about to regain his chambers, when, as if it had arisen from the earth, or come down from the heavens, or formed itself out of the column of the air that previous instant filled its place, Tresham beheld, straight before him, the figure of his mistress. The decayed trunk of an oak partly flung off the moonshine from her white drapery, and for one instant her altered eye communed with his: the next, and while he moved a step to greet her, she turned from him into the dark shrubbery, and became again invisible.

There could now be no further question as to the resemblance—but was it Anna in reality? Tresham once more and rapidly brought to mind her parting jest, and, wildly hoping to be blest with the truth, rushed into the shrubbery, determining also to hasten, if she still evaded him, to her father's house.

The shrubbery had two paths; his mistress did not appear in either, and Tresham hesitated to choose that by which he should seek her. At length he took one at random, which terminated in a small circular space, over which the trees matted and almost excluded the moonlight. In the centre, on a platform of fresh grass, was a monumental urn, erected to the memory of an esteemed professor of the college; and at the base of the urn he discovered a sitting, drooping figure, that seemed as if it had been designed and executed with the marble, but Tresham knew it was an intrusion there.

Still he approached, and at about ten yards recognised Anna. Again she looked on him, but it was a look of vacancy.



—a blind, stony gaze—as if she had indeed been the inanimate thing he at first supposed her to be.

“Now, certainty or the worst!” cried Tresham. “My beloved! my life’s blessing, Anna! speak, if it is you, and if you would not destroy me. Speak!—sickness and agony are together at my heart—feebleness is in my limbs—fear and horror are in the marrow of my bones!” he stood within almost touch—tears scalded his cheeks—his knees smote each other, and his hair stirred. “Speak!” he continued, “I implore you in the name of the great God! save your wretched Harry!” He advanced another step with intent to catch her in his arms, but his strength failed him, his eyes swam, a cold perspiration burst through his frame, and he fell, helpless and senseless, at the base of the urn.

## CHAPTER IX.

“NEVER, never, while I breathe the breath of this life,” said Mrs. Catherine to Larry, in reply to his humble solicitations for pardon, when, in consequence of Tresham’s commands, he had arrived at Mr. Ruth’s house with the note of apology.

“Never is a long day, Mrs. Catherine,” observed Larry.

“Never, if I died by it,” she persisted.

“Then, only carry this little bit of a letter from my young master to your young mistress.”

“Letter me no letter—don’t dare to open your mouth to me—an’ now, what’s the raison o’ your followin’ me?” she continued, as Larry prepared to accompany her out of the hall, down stairs. “Who gave you lave to thrapse through a decent house in this manner?—Who wanted you?—Who sent for you?—Who are you at all?”

“A friend o’ yours to the backbone, Kitty.”

“Friend, inagh!—go home to munsther, an’ tell the likes o’ that to your beef-to-the-heel draggie-tails; but we’ll larn you manners here.”

“Musha, what ’ud you make o’ me at all, Catty? Sure, this mornin’ afore, you riz a scrimmage on me, an’ scowlded me till the dogs wouldn’t pick my bones; an’ throth you’ll soon lave not as mooch flesh on my bones as ’ud bait a mouse-thrap; consider my case, Kitty.”

“What case, you poor omadhaun?”

“You ought sooner for to cheer up my dispondin’ hopes, Kitty, nor go on in sich a way, as my master often says to myself; the poor young master that has better speech nor

ever myself hard out of the mouth of a livin' sow! Och, if you war to hear him among the mounseers, botherin' them all wid their own words, that he took out o' their own chops; the poor crature, that's now for losin' his speech entirely; for he's goin' to die, Catty, an' myself 'ill have no new masther, at any rate, whatever we do in other predickymments. . An' so he can't creep out to coort your young misthress to-night, Kitty, agra, an' here's his come-off to take her. Take it, won't you?"

"An' is this all? Take id yourself, you dhaltheen; its work too good for the likes o' you, sich an ugly man an' a bad Cristhen." Mrs. Catherine turned to go away.

"Catty, chora-ma-chree you war, don't lave me by myself in this way; an' a burnin' shame it's for you, Kitty, to be spilin' your own purty face wid mindin' any foolish word I might say: the eyes o' you that are like the bluest-blue bell myself ever seen, an' your nose so long and so sthraight, an' wid your two cheeks like any roses, an' your mouth, as it's in the song, far an' wide, like the fresh strawberres smothered in crame; an' och, Kitty, when you stand quiet an' aren't for risin' your hand to a body, what two arms you have, so round an' so round! not forgettin' your——Do, Catty, honey," continued Larry, interrupting himself in his best suavity of tone—"just take id; myself is a shy boy, an' don't care to be goin' among the ladies in the night-fall, when one o' them is maybe by herself—do, Catherine, an' God bless you;—if you plaize, Katty—*si wow plait*. There, now, an' glory to you!"

"Bother, Larry!" answered Mrs. Catherine, looking full in his face, and then trotting down stairs.

"Musha, the death of a sour crab-apple soughed in a lough o' wather to you!" ejaculated Larry, alone; "och! there's no bearin' wid your likes, an' all becace an honest poor boy wants to keep himself out o' harm's way, an' have nothin' to do wid your pair o' cats' eyes, that are as green as a leek, and the image o' two burnt holes in a blanket; an' your nose as sharp as a hatchet, all a-one-side, like the handle of a can, only it's as red as the red-hot iron out o' the forge; an' your chops hangin' down like a sheep-skin; an' your mouth, that the sight of id 'ud turn a horse from his oats, or make a dog sthrike his father, to say nothin' o' your two arms, that are just the things for two rowlin'-pins, wid elbows that 'ud pick an' eye out of a snail. I must take it up my ownself, then, prayin' her ladyship mayin't be all alone, for, chorp-an-diaoul! what 'ud I do if I gave id to that ether?" And, re-assuming his station in the corner of the hall, Larry debated with himself, in recollection of the scene of the previous night, the propriety of at once venturing up stairs.

In the drawing-room above, Anna, Maria, and Mortimer, who now had apartments in Ruth's house, together with the old lady and gentleman, sat listening to a musical professor of some local eminence, who, accompanying himself on the now antiquated spinet, entertained them with the good old music of that day. Mr. and Mrs. Ruth had chairs towards the middle of the room; Mortimer stood with Maria over the instrument; and Anna, chafing to her own recollections and feelings, occupied a distant seat by herself: all the lights in the apartment were collected round the performer, so that its remoter parts were wrapped in shadow.

Anna had not for some time spoken a word, and it was evident to her anxious sister that Harry Tresham's second disappointment caused her great depression of spirits.

"The night has closed, Mortimer," Maria whispered: "he should have joined us an hour ago; he will not come to-night, and Anna is terribly afflicted."

"He shall come, or he shall stay away for ever; the peace and happiness of a being so amiable, and so dear to us, must not be sacrificed to the whim of a giddy boy," answered Mortimer. "But has she entirely recovered the fright and agitation of last night?" he continued.

"Anna *says* she has, but she does not *look* she has," resumed the elder sister.

"Why, there can surely be no doubt in the case, after the explanation we all witnessed, Maria; and—pshaw! how puerile in me to talk of it, or allude to it for a moment," said Mortimer.

A pause here occurred in the music, and Anna was heard requesting the performer to sing and play a small piece she had before named to him. The gentleman complied: it was a translation by Tresham from a German poet; and the music, also German, was of a very high character, and calculated to excite in the mind sentiments of a thrilling and supernatural cast. We subjoin the words:—

Shadowy dead! silent dead!  
 Dwellers in a land unknown  
 In awe-tamed hope and holy dread  
 Your viewless sway we own.  
 Around resound  
 Your voices though we cannot hear—  
 Above, below,  
 Ye come, ye go,  
 In throngs! though we are blind from fear!  
 A vision of the church-yard fell  
 On me, your midnight sentinel.

I looked about me and beneath,  
 And—while not a wind could breathe—  
 Whisperings stole through all the ground,  
 And then an undulation round ;  
     Every particle of earth,  
     Every rank blade of its birth,  
 Moved and crept ; a muttered sound—  
 A spreading stir—like that which crawls,  
     In summer, o'er the dank pool's brim,  
 When the sun's heat fiercely falls,  
     And insect-hosts are borne to him.  
 I looked, I looked, and glassy eyes  
 Thickly strewed as stars in skies,  
 O'er the cleaving surface gleamed ;  
 And in their own weak death-light beamed,  
 Faded cheeks and brows that seemed  
 Never born, but faintly dreamed !  
 And then a hurry passed along—  
 A rush without a sound—a throng  
 Voiceless, save that for revel song  
 The bloated beetles as they flit  
 Thro' the thick air, darkening it,  
 Or on their long legs stalk about,  
 Drone a drowsy measure out ;  
 Or that the frog hath waked to croak,  
 Or the distant cock hath spoke ,  
 From stars that fall, a ray ye have,  
 And glow-worms glinting round each grave :  
 Silent tumult ! dreamy light !  
 And so ye hurry thro' the night.

The air was yet unfinished when a low and shuddering scream  
 escaped from Anna. She had been sitting with her eyes upon  
 the far door that opened into the inner drawing-room ; while  
 she looked, it opened, and Tresham appeared standing beyond  
 the threshold, dimly shown by the moon's rays, that quivered  
 around him. The music suddenly stopped, and all turned to  
 Anna, and, when they saw the direction of her eyes, to the door ;  
 but, though she still gazed on it, the door was now shut, and  
 no one could solve or surmise the cause of her exclamation.  
 Maria approached her to ask a question, but, ere she had  
 moved two steps, was arrested and fixed in her place by a  
 piercing cry that sounded from the upper part of the spacious  
 old mansion ; and in an instant after, Mrs. Catherine broke  
 into the apartment, wild with terror, and crying out,—

"Oh, my misthresses, my misthresses!"

"What's the matter? What has happened? speak, speak!"  
 said all but Anna, who still sat motionless and dumb, her body  
 and neck bent forward, and her eyes unwinkingly fastened on  
 the remote door. "Oh, my misthresses an' my mather!—he's  
 comin'!—he's comin' down!"

"Who? Mr. Tresham? why should his coming frighten you in this manner?"

"Och, not him, not him; for Larry left him sick at home in the college."

"Who then—who then?"—pealed every voice.

"He—that is—not he—Masther Harry—that—not Masther Harry, but the other."

"Ridiculous old woman! peace, and begone this moment!" said Mortimer.

"Ould!—why, then, my bould captain that's not in the laste foul-mouthed, we only wish you met him where I did. I tell your mighty great worship he cum in without lave from the doors or the docthor. I was just for turnin' up stairs to shut the windees, when he walked plump agin me in the dark, stalin' out, I think, from Miss Anny's— Ah!"—she interrupted herself with another scream, and sank on her knees, as once more the distant door got motion, and to the eyes of Anna and Mortimer alone, the form re-appeared in the inner apartment, their situation, perhaps, allowing them a better view than any others in the drawing-room.

The action of Anna at this moment was in itself frightful. Continuing her set gaze while the housekeeper spoke, she evinced, by a hissing of breath and a creeping of the whole frame, her sense of the first motion of the door; as it slowly and silently unfolded, she as slowly and silently arose; nor when, to her apprehension, the figure became fully visible, did she start or speak, but with eyes, head, and neck, still set and protruded, her face tintless as the purest marble, and a moving of the mass of her beautiful black hair, stood, firmly grasping the back of the chair, in the spot where she had arisen.

Almost at the same instant Larry entered at the near door, and holding out Tresham's note—

"Here's a billy-do from my——" Larry began, but looking aside—"tundher-an'-ouns!—the ould boy an' his dam!—murther! murther!"—he vociferated; and, dropping the note, was rushing from the room, when Mrs. Catherine, still kneeling with her face hid in her hands, caught at his legs. This unseen and unexpected interruption made him delirious; and kicking and plunging, and with continued outcries, he dragged the dead weight of the housekeeper through the door, both thus escaping the scene of terror.

Mortimer had scarcely become conscious of the appearance, when advancing he said,—

"Mr. Tresham, I insist on knowing what you mean by this worse than silly conduct?"

"To whom does he talk?" cried Maria, who from surprise,

if not from fear, had shrunk with her back to the side-wall, still without perceiving anything—"is Mortimer, too, infatuated and lost?"

"Stay where you are!" said Anna, whom in his advance Mortimer had to pass, motioning at him with her hand behind her back, and speaking in that hoarse and emphatic whisper that amid the raging of a sea-fight is most used for command or exhortation, and, we are told, can be heard through the roar of a hundred cannons—"stay where you are,—and I have yet a moment's breath and self-possession. The note, Mortimer!—Tresham's note! quick! quick!"

Mortimer stooped and presented it: Anna tore open the seal, ran her eye over the contents, and, having staggered some paces to where he stood, fell with a heart-broken groan in her father's arms. Her mother and Maria hastily gathered round her; the performer left the house.

"Rash and ridiculous boy!" Mortimer continued, addressing the figure that now receded backward in the inner room—"what is your reason for this childish mummer? Explain, sir, without another word! stand and explain, or draw, sir, draw!"

He rapidly advanced with his naked sword—the door began to close—he dashed against it, and it shut. He drew back, hurled himself forward, and, bursting it open, gained the middle of the inside floor. In an instant it shut again, and Mortimer was alone in the dark chamber!

"By Heaven, I will find your ghostship!" he exclaimed, rushing through a small doorway that led by backstairs into the garden, when he had ascertained that Tresham was not with him in the apartment.

On the first landing-place, Mortimer again encountered the figure, still very indistinctly seen;—and—

"You shall, sir,—you shall answer me, and to all I ask of you, too!"—he continued, confronting, at some distance, the object of his pursuit. The moon, that had been clouded for a moment, broke through a small window over the pale features of Tresham, and Mortimer thought he perceived a frown on the otherwise passionless visage, while, with solemn and freezing motion, an arm pointed towards the garden.

Mortimer, conceiving he understood the hint, replied,—  
"Ay, let us decide it there. Pass on, sir, to the garden! You offer me a satisfaction without words?" A nod seemed to assent. "Agreed, then—on! You have no sword?—no matter—my pistols are at hand, I will meet you in a moment, pass on!"

He ran up stairs, back again by the dining-room, to his

own chamber, scarcely heeding the situation of Anna, who continued insensible, or the afflicted cries of the father and mother for their child, or the now wild questions and exclamations directed to him by his mistress, who in his rapid transit through the apartment could not disengage herself from her sister. Snatching a light he met in his way, Mortimer gained his chamber, and unlocked or pulled open several trunks and drawers before he could find his pistols; then the time spent in charging them was agony to his impatient mind; but at last all was ready, and now, avoiding the drawing-room, he ran by another way into the garden.

The garden was extensive, spreading from the back of the house to the edge of the Nore, which at this point was, although narrow, deep and glassy, "and scarcely seemed to stray." The moment he entered it, Mortimer looked around, but no one was visible. He hastened down the main walk, and still found himself alone. He crossed and re-crossed by the smaller paths, disturbing the night-dew on the flowers and shrubs that clustered along his way, but still to no purpose. Again he stood on the principal walk, and giving vent to the vexation and disappointment of his spirit, called out,—“Coward!—you are not here!—if you are, answer!—Tresham!—coward! are you here?”

“Here!” answered a distant and imperfect sound, rather than voice, which might have been the drowsy river-echo, half awakened among the sedges and hollows of the opposite bank. Mortimer ran, however, in the direction from which it reached his ear. On the edge of the garden that overhung the water he thought he observed a man’s form. He hastened his speed—it was gone. A movement of something on the opposite side challenged his eye. He looked across, through a slight fog, over an expanse of about thirty yards of water, and beheld, sufficiently distinguishable for general recognition in the strong moonlight, the persons of Tresham and Anna, standing hand in hand. Mortimer’s blood froze back to its source, and he suddenly retraced his steps to the house.

## CHAPTER X.

WHEN Dr. Butler, according to his previous intention, called, late at night, to revisit Tresham, the student was not in his chambers. He halloed for Larry, but the attendant did not appear. Then, accompanied by some class-fellows of Tresham, he went into the college grounds, and found the visionary lying senseless before the urn. Blood was all around him;

it had flowed from his lungs. This increased symptom of pulmonary disease Butler had not anticipated, or had expected to counteract, and its appearance, now attributable to Tresham's breach of his command, irritated whilst it shocked and agitated him.

They conveyed the invalid to his bed, somewhat restored to sensation, but still faint and apparently stupefied. But Tresham felt no physical pain, at least none equal to his moral agony. His distemper rarely bears the character of acute suffering, nor was he really so incapable of communication as he seemed to be: but for the present, feeling no impulse to yield his griefs with his confidence, he shut his soul on its terrible secret, and his eyes on everything and every person around him. This for a season was natural; for there are blights of mind which, in exception to the general rule of imparting, and by that means lessening grief, we will not exhibit—which we cannot bare to the happy, indifferent eye: as if misery grew avaricious of self-monopoly. An evidence of this may be traced in the dark smile that sometimes breaks around the thin, bloodless lips of disease, repelling with an unnatural pride and mockery the whispers of a heart-broken friend, who vainly breathes a hope of health and sunny days to come. So Tresham only uttered some feeble words that supplicated for silence and solitude.

He was therefore left alone on his midnight bed. The moon was rapidly collecting her loose beams from the chamber, like a lady in haste to depart, gathering her thin, white drapery around her. To say that Tresham thought, would be a misuse of words: his brain, as an alarm-bell, rung and thumped out its peal. Philosophy, and the artificial fanaticism it had supplied, were gone, and the foundations of his spirit shook with supernatural horror and natural dismay: he had been taken by surprise and prostrated.

To meet—almost to touch—a dim incomprehensible shade, when his living arms sought the embrace of the living form he loved, and the sudden repulsion and curdling of human sympathy that ensued—this wrought a sad change; and then the still recurring thought of the utter disconnexion between him and the blank eye that fell like a vacuum on his, and the whole mystery of which it was a feature—such recollections tamed him into feebleness, and, like a beaten dog, his soul cringed into itself.

In one instance only his late speculations remained uppermost, but it was to torture with human agony. He believed his mistress had been called to die—to die!—the being who loved him as he loved her! These are simple words, but



Tresnam felt them strong: the gifted and grateful pupil, the devoted friend, the betrothed wife—she was to die, and he to be left desolate! He wept aloud; and “O God!” he cried, “turn that one bitter cup away!” His tears were tears of anguish, but they relieved by exhausting him, and he at last slept.

The early morning saw his attentive and anxious physician by his bedside. Tresham felt better, and wished to rise, but Doctor Butler forbade it; and the student could only pray that a message might be sent by Larry to inquire after Anna’s health.

“First, then,” said Butler, “your valet is out of the question; after parting from you last night, I met him near the college, as mad a man as any in Christendom; stark mad, under the delusion that a ghost, or something of the kind, followed at his heels. He foamed at the mouth, and grew absolutely dangerous, so I was obliged to confine him secretly in a strong-barred dark room in my own house, where we shall take care of the creature for you.”

Tresham expressed the utmost surprise and sorrow at this intelligence. “You pronounce him, then, in a state of mental derangement, doctor?” he asked, with much anxiety.

“A *bonâ-fide* lunatic, and as lawful a subject for stripes and a straight-waistcoat as the most outrageous fellow in Bedlam: superstitious fear the provocative of the disease.”

“Poor fellow!” resumed Tresham with some conscientious self-reproach—“you will be gentle with him, doctor, for my sake, and I further request, for particular reasons, that his misfortune may be kept a profound secret.”

“I anticipated your wish. no one knows, and no one shall know, the wretch’s self-induced misery, which, by-the-way, is only a righteous judgment, after all. And now about your message to Miss Anna Ruth: I shall—should, rather—bear it myself, if there was any necessity to put you under the compliment; but why ask after her health? The girl is as robust as a mountaineer; I saw her after my first parting from you, last night, and thought she never looked, and chattered, and smiled, and moved so divinely tempting and handsome: only now and then she thought proper to whine about your slight illness, of which, however, I have given her a softened representation.”

All but the latter part of this statement was wilful untruth. Anna, far from enjoying good health, lay seriously indisposed in her bed. Nor, although the doctor had really deprived Larry of his liberty, did he believe him to be a madman. Both misrepresentations, however, were the beginning of a

system of treatment towards Tresham which his friendly anxiety, supported by his professional calculations, led him to adopt.

He had known Tresham long enough to become fully aware of his mystified habit of mind, and was not without suspicion that the patient's present illness partly arose from its over-indulgence. Late observations further induced him to fear that some mysterious irritation of a particular nature, and connected with Tresham's dreamy studies and his love for Anna, might be at the bottom of all. Under these views he removed Larry, of whose hag-ridden superstition he was so well aware, from his master's sight and presence, just as he would have separated the contagious and predisposed members of a family amongst whom of raging fever had gained entrance; and his false accounts of Anna's health arose from the second apprehension we have pointed out, although Butler had not yet distinct reason for his caution.

To supply himself with one, it became the doctor's policy and anxiety to win Tresham's confidence, and he engaged in the task with much of that delicate ingenuity which the true gentlemen of his high profession are known to possess; and he succeeded. Apart from Tresham's own esteem for Dr. Butler, he knew him to be the ancient and respected friend of his father, and also the close intimate of the Ruth family; his warmth of manner, and the almost condescension of his grey hairs in at all courting the attention of a boy, further operated on Tresham's feelings: so that the poor youth, relaxed from the frenzy of the preceding night, and now, tottering under the fardel of his dark secret, willingly cast it down at the feet of his venerable friend, and with pleading tears supplicated for advice and assistance.

When he had ended his recital, by a detail of his supposed encounters with the Fetch of Anna, Dr. Butler met his very first words, with a ready smile, and finally burst into a hearty fit of laughter. He treated the whole matter as a schoolboy's fancy, shaped out of the predisposition or imbecility of the theorist's mind. The other fondly denied the possibility of such mental deception, and in support of his scepticism entered into a critical analysis of the nature and power of the mind's agency. But here he met an opponent every way prepared to push on his own purpose. Dr. Butler, without being a German student, had received a good collegiate education, and knew how to wield, as skilfully as any metaphysical adept, the wrangling weapons of sophism; and as they were now necessary to his object, he used them artfully and unmercifully. He strengthened himself, too, with illustration drawn, or

vouched to be drawn, from his own professional practice—a mode of warfare that is very annoying to a mere theorist, particularly, as in the present case, when adopted by an eloquent old gentleman towards an ingenuous and modest, though enthusiastic, youth; and to all he added the weight of a manner which he knew to be imposing—a polite kind of swagger, and easiness of expostulation, that seemed manfully assured of success, making itself redoubtable out of the weakness of the opposite case.

I over and over again assert that there is no such ghost or Fetch-bringer as a diseased imagination. The whole world knows it, and every day's experience proves it. Nay, apparition-seekers, and seers, too, are part of our property in fund; 'tis a common disease, as common as any other; well known to the faculty and very money-making into the bargain, thousands have seen more frightful things than this veritable Fetch you speak of; and for a little hard cash some poor village apothecary, day after day, lays the hobgoblin in the Red Sea.

“What do you say of hypochondriac delusions, sir? what can you pretend to aver? All the varieties of this complaint—this positive physical complaint—flow from a debilitated imagination. And yet, how really does the patient feel! how self-clear are his apprehensions! how obstinate his prepossessions! The common and most laughable whim of a man believing his posteriors to be a glass window, on which he dare not sit lest he should break it, is known to you. I had myself a patient with this fancy, whom, after losing all Christian patience with, I manufactured into more solidity in his own opinion, by assaulting him, till I was weary, in the humbug part. Where was that creature's mind or his noble reasoning powers? Where were his eyes? Why cannot these miserable people see before them? Another demoniac came to me, with an imaginary lock-jaw, and this person I caused to open his mouth, in order to afford vent to a volume of screaming, brought on by a smart application of my knuckles to his lower maxillary. A third, who swore he was the man that ‘was hanged last Wednesday’—(an infamous murderer)—I restored to his good opinion by taking it for granted that he gave a true account of himself, and half strangling him accordingly. I refer you to authentic records—you shall see and read the books, which establish the fact of men having been haunted, to their own belief, by the ghosts of Alexander the Great, of Potiphar's wife, of Samson, and Saint Bridget. What do you say to that? Nay, here is as positive evidence that people have imagined themselves followed by a repetition of themselves—a regular fac-simile or double—in a word, a downright Fetch,

more attentive than yours, Tresham. In my own practice I met a case exactly similar; not to talk of a respectable person who assured me he was a triangle; or of another who declared his head to be the hypothenuse; or of a third—a musical professor—who upheld it was a bassoon."

"But, my good doctor, all these are cases of insanity, and unless you believe me as mad as poor Larry, or wish me to believe so, I cannot exactly see how—"

"My good God!" interrupted Butler—"who gave you leave to think a hypochondriac person a mad person? who told you so? No, sir; there is a wide distinction—there is every distinction; madness is a total derangement of mind, unfitting a man for any occupation of life; the other is a partial infatuation, that does not incapacitate the patient from making clear perceptions in any other case, and generally demeaning himself as a sane man. Don't interrupt me again now by asking me do I think you to be hypochondriac; to save your apprehensions and self-contempt, I make no such allusion, but the better way for you to consider this subject is to put yourself for the present out of the question, and weigh as a rational person the undeniable truths I submit to you.

"Assuredly there are other modes by which the imagination becomes diseased than by the physical action upon it of what we call the hypochondriac region of the viscera. From continued irritation of itself it can first disarrange, and then impose upon itself; and then a long-indulged apprehension terminates in visual phantasy, after having first worn down the mind to consent, without consciousness, to the delusion. I do not pretend, just now, to determine the exact way in which you have been imposed upon. I have said, I think, you are not hypochondriac, and most probably you are not: the state to which, by very nonsensical speculations, you may have reduced your nerves, however, is another question, and, good gods! what *monstrum horrendum* is not born of nerves!—spectres and visitations beyond the wonders of the hypochondriac, or the magic lantern itself; *chimeras dire*; airy tongues that syllable men's names; *disjecta membra*, in fact, out of the span of any quotation.

"But leaving the future to develop the particular source of your weakness, let me state a case rather in point with yours. In the course of my early practice in another place I had a young friend, a brother-brush too, who was attached to a very enchanting young lady. He was a man of regular education, of sound intellect, and well-balanced feelings. His mistress became ill, and he attended her. One day that he engaged to dine with me, she became much worse, and when he called at

my house, fatigued and worn out with watching and anxiety, my friend entertained little hope of her life. Before dinner I pressed him to a glass of wine, as he seemed to require some such stimulus; he took the glass in his fingers, and was raising it to his lips, when, to my utter astonishment, he started back on his chair, fixed his eyes on vacancy, and grew deadly pale. I spoke to him, and, after the fit passed away, ascertained that, just as he was about to taste the wine, the figure of his mistress entered the apartment."

"Heavens, sir!" Tresham cried, in painful attention to the sequel.

"Almost at the same time a rap came to the door with a message that the lady was dead."

"There, sir—whatever argument you may be inclined to build on your own story—there is a coincidence too strong for any subtilty, or any impression you may kindly wish to make on me!" resumed Tresham.

"The very vehemence of imagination," Butler continued, "which in the instance of your Fetch precipitated you upon the most rash as well as boyish conclusion, still urges you to an unwarranted anticipation of my anecdote. Pray, let me go on. We together, followed the messenger to the young lady's house, and found her—not dead—but in a state of suspended existence, from which our efforts soon called her back, and she is at present living, the wife of that Fetch-seer, and the mother of some dozen of his children. Now, say anything you like."

"It is all very extraordinary, Mr. Butler—all;—the conclusion as much if not more so than the commencement. I have nothing to say; I implicitly believe you, and I can say nothing: only I beg to ask you how you account for the prepossession of your friend."

"That he did not see the young lady's ghost, or, according to the trashy superstition, her Fetch, is pretty evident, inasmuch as, in the first case, there was no ghost of hers then to be seen; and, in the second, there could have been no true Fetch either, the lady being yet well to look at, in this world. He was imposed upon, then, purely by his imagination, exhausted and diseased by wretched spirits and a lover's anxiety, or else by a physical deception of the eye. That the first is an accident of every day's occurrence I have already shown, and you can no longer doubt, that the other, though less frequent, is also naturally incidental, I can prove by another anecdote, for which I myself am authority.

"Although a practising physician, much of my youthful study was devoted to anatomical pursuits, and in a large private apartment I constantly had a subject for my purposes. On a

particular evening I contrived to place upon his legs a fellow of good form, in order to remark the arrangement of the outward muscles, previous to taking any further liberties with him. While thus engaged, my eye wandered to the other end of the room, and was there startled with a repetition of my subject, standing bolt upright, exactly as I had contrived his counterpart. You may be sure I at once thought that this was the spiritual double, come to remonstrate against the indignity inflicted on his mortal brother; but I advanced to the intruder notwithstanding. After a few steps forward he was not to be seen. I returned close to my subject, from which I had before stood apart, and, again looking to the opposite end of the place, saw not the first apparition, but what do you think, instead?—My own self! Ay, you may stare at me, but I tell the blessed truth. There I was."

"Well, sir?" Tresham raised himself on his elbow, in bed.

"Well, sir. If I was not afraid of the ghost of a man towards whom I entertained some carving propensities, you need not suppose I grew shy of a second self; so I walked up to *him*, with all the curiosity of one Dromio, while taking a first survey of the other, both meeting for the first time in mature manhood. But, like the subject-spectre, this also disappeared as I approached. Coming back to my point of sight it re-appeared; when I again changed place it again vanished; and in fact the whole phenomenon was at last explained to me by observing that the quick vapours of the room, acted upon by a refraction of the rays of light, assumed the nature of a mirror, and then, as I stood at different points in both instances, reflected first my subject and next myself."

At the conclusion of this discourse, Tresham grew silent and thoughtful, and Butler saw that he evidently began to mistrust himself. Inwardly laughing at some of the arguments and illustrations that had wrought the student's scepticism, the good doctor then shook hands with him, bade him a hasty farewell, and bent his steps to his other patient at Mr. Ruth's house, of whom, from her random expressions the night before, Butler suspected an infatuation similar to that which tormented her lover, and first to assure himself on this point was now his greatest anxiety.

## CHAPTER XI.

ABOUT three weeks after the day that included the time of the last chapter, Mrs. Catherine sat, at midnight, in her snug apartment, alone, bewailing as usual her forlorn state.

"A weary, weary lot," she said, in soliloquy, sipping at the same time a rich cordial, before a good blazing fire. "A lone crature like me, up an' down, over-an'-hether, day afther day, night afther night; no rest, no pacc, no comfort, none," and she sipped again; "an' in an ould haunted house an' family where a body doesn't know a sperit from a Christhen sow! But what drives 'em into my head at sich an hour? The Lord presarve us! I'll think o' my prayers" (another sip). "Stop—whisht!—Is that my lady's bell goin' to ring? Musha, no; God send she wont want me agin this blessed an holy Saturday night, that I may lie down an' have an hour's right sleep at last. Bless us, how she raves like anything, as if she saw him every minute at the bedside! An' poor Larry, afther all!—myself wonders what's cum of him, an' if all they say is the truth."

She was about to taste once more, when, starting suddenly, she laid down the glass—"Arrah, what's that, at all? As I'm a sinner born, somethin' or another at the windee!—I daarn't screech out!—that 'ud frighten poor Miss Anny. It's there agin—musha, I'll faint!"

A low heart-broken voice named Mrs. Catherine's name at the window, and, in all manner of sweet words, admonished her to advance.

"It just wants to flatther me into the clutches of id—I'll not peg an inch!" she resolved.

"Catty, a-vourneen; Kitty, a-chorra-ma-chree, sure we knows you're there; I sees the light through the chinks of the shetter; I hard you stirrin', and your own darlin' voice spakin'; cum to us," continued the voice.

"If you're nothin' bad, ax me in God's name," at last, answered Mrs. Catherine.

"Fur God's sake, then, let us in."

"What are you at all at all?" asked the housekeeper, cautiously approaching.

"A lost crathure," answered the voice.

"No sperit, or a thing that a-way?"

"Flesh an' blood, Kitty, only very little iv either; but plenty o' the bones, howsomdever, Catherine."

"Who are you?"

"Larry, avoch."

"Larry! bud are you dead or alive, Larry? 'They say you made away wid yourself."

"Larry alive, Catherine, jewel; and its rainin' on us"

"Can you make me sure o' that?"

"Avoch, open the windee, an' we'll thry."

"It 'ud be a baste that refused you, then;" and the forgiving and humane housekeeper half advanced; "but myself is afeard o' you yet, Larrv," she added, stopping and hesitating

"Musha, what 'ud you fear iv a dyin' man, Catty, though his ghost might be another thing?" he expostulated. "Wurra! wurra! open the windee, if there's a Christhen heart in your body; it's rainin', I tell you, an' as pitch-dark as a black-hole; an' as I crossed the bridge it was blowin' too, sthrong enough to whip the horns aff a cow's head."

This appeal was decisive; Mrs. Catherine unbarred the window-shutter, and threw up the sash, but ran back in terror the moment after; for there, instead of the round, purple-faced Larry she had before known, appeared a woeful caricature of the original caricature itself, with the cheeks livid, hollow, and hanging down over the jaws in little bags of skin; the eyes, hitherto half hidden in flesh, staring, for the first time, wide open, and unprotected from their sockets; the pot paunch totally waned away; and, added to this, the apparition wore no coat or hat, but, in place of the latter, the fragment of an old red night-cap fluttering round its brows.

"Murther, murther!—it's the laste bit like you, Larry, agra," resumed Mrs. Catherine, "bud only as like as that other was like your unloocky masther; oeh, Larry alanna-machree! for the love o' marcy dale honest wid me, an' say at once if it's yourself or no—gi' me a sign!"

"Gi' me a dhrop o' that good liquor," said Larry, pointing from the window to the table, "if I'm to gi' you anything; just a taste, Kitty, or mvself 'ill never have the strength to creep in."

"Musha, here, then, Larry; an' it's now we may see you're yourself, or the remains, at laste, in regard that sperits knows nothin' o' the likes o' this;" and she poured out a bumper, which Larry swallowed while yet standing at the window. Then he put himself in motion to enter; and, assisted by Mrs. Catherine, who placed a table under the window, for his foot, Larry at last made a lodgment, with many groans and strange cries, before the fire. The window was again closed and cautiously barred, and the quondam friends resumed their discourse, face to face.



"A dyin' man's blessin', as I said afore, come down on you, Kitty."

"Dyin'! arrah, why so, Larry?"

"Gi' me a morsel to brake my fast, for the love of all the saints in heaven, Catherine."

"Musha, my poor fellow, lashin's and lavin's;"\* and she rose to provide refreshments: "bud you're so hungry—are you, Larry, & cuishla?"—Mrs. Catherine went on as she hurried herself about.

"I'm fastin' more nor three days," said Larry, deliberately lying, though, indeed, he was half starved.

"Och mille murthers! how did that come about? There, there!" She spread abundance of good cheer before him, and Larry encountered it with the grave dispatch and silence of a cormorant: plate after plate disappeared, and Mrs. Catherine had more than once to revisit the larder. During the process, she contrived, however, to persevere in her questions for drawing Larry out.

"What in the world cum across you, Larry? I knew you warn't wid your masther sence that sorrowful night, an' as I tould you, Larry, their was sich ugly stories about you."

"Wait a bit, Kitty," Larry half articulated, his mouth being full.

"One said you turned your own hangman."

"Wait a bit," he repeated.

"Another, that you jumped into the river; an' they said, when you were dragged out afther three days' soakin', an' laid on a bed, that your poor paunch that was, God bless us! touched the loft, an' the parish couldn't make aff a coffin big enough to put you in."

"Just wait a bit, honey."

"Another said that you cut your own pipes wid your own two hands. Musha, Larry, that was the worst story of all; could you ever think of such a wicked thing?"

Larry at length concluded his collation, and then, in a relapse of groans and lamentations, repeated a long-winded grace, of which the conclusion was—"An' keep us in our thrue mind, an' deliver us from the power o' the divil, an' give us patience an' resignation, for ever-an-ever, amin;" to which he added a still more lengthened draught of ale, and finally sank back, helpless and querulous, in Mrs. Catherine's good arm-chair.

"An' how is id all wid you now, Larry?" asked his entertainer, from the other side of the fire.

"In regard o' the atin' an' drinkin', an' of your friendship,

\* Plenty and some to spare.

Catherine, a little betther, we thank God an' you for id. You were always a soft sowl, Catherine, though I say id; bud my thrials are great, Kitty; I'll never be mooch the betther o' them, the longest day I live."

"Time cures all, Larry; time an' a kind friend."

"Och, Catherine!" he cried, his eyes squeezing out some tears as he fixed them on the blazing fire; he paused, squeezed again, shaking his head bitterly during the effort, and there he stopped.

"Larry, Larry, take heart, or the grief of id 'ill be the death o' you," said Mrs. Catherine, also trying for some tears, while her tones were fully miserable.

"Och, Kitty!" he repeated, and paused again.

"And och, a-vourneen!" Mrs. Catherine answered, rocking herself backward and forward as she stooped with her elbows on her knees; and so they went on till the tears came at last, and torrents were shed between them.

"Musha, bud what's the matther at all, Larry?" said the housekeeper in the midst of her speculative sorrow; "what came o' you? I only seen you run out o' the house, after we both left the Fetch."

"Sure enough, Catty, I ran; I ran till I fell; an' then I gets up an' sees him agin behind me."

"Murther, murther!" cried Mrs. Catherine, resuming her lamentations, "an' then, Larry?"

"An' then, Kitty, it's all thrue enough that I put the rope round my neck."

Mrs. Catherine started up with a scream; and, "It is your spirit then?" she asked.

"Wait a bit, Catherine—they cut me down over-soon; and then it's just as thrue I went to the river."

"But didn't drownnd yourself?" the housekeeper said, as Larry stopped, his eyes still fixed on the fire.

"Bud a surly dog of a sodger levels his piece at me, an'—I knows what you'd be at, says he, bud by Ja—s if you drownnd yourself on my post, I'll have your life, so I will."

"An' that sent you away, by coorse, Larry?"

"Id sent me here to yourself, Catherine."

"Avoch, my poor boy, sure 'twas an angel sent you."

"A hungry angel, Catherine; an' if it was the will o' God that it war an angel in earnest, sure it was another angel that met me when yourself came across me, an' gave me pace an' comfort, an' plenty to ate, an' enough to dhrink, an' a good fire fornent me;" and here Larry roused himself, and stretched out the palms of his hands to the heat, while his head was turned round, addressing his benefactress; "an' yourself is

the sort of angel I'd like to meet when I'd be cowl'd or hungry, wet or dhry," he continued, rubbing all over, with his now heated palms, his face and behind his ears.

"Bud, Catherine, tell me one thing—how is my ma—you know who I mane?"

"Given over ever sence, an' my young mistress as bad: it's a great favor come on the brain, the docthor says."

"The docthor, Kitty? is he in the house now?—bad loock to every bone in his skin!"—asked Larry, in some alarm and bitterness. In fact, from the different accounts given by Dr. Butler, and now by himself, of Larry's disposal of his time since the memorable evening to which he made allusion, it will be perceived that one or other departed from the facts, and we can no longer conceal that the valet was the embellisher. The doctor stated truly to Tresham the immediate cause of his servant's absence, and Larry had remained a prisoner in Mr. Butler's house till within a few minutes before his visit at Mrs. Catherine's window, when, taking advantage of the intentional negligence of his keeper, he had effected his escape in the shorn plight we have endeavoured to describe; but shrewdly guessing, from the house-keeper's questions, that the true reasons of his disappearance were not known, and thinking any account less humiliating than the real one, Larry did not hesitate to humour the very stories with which she supplied him, and for which their words are our sole authority.

Learning from Mrs. Catherine that Doctor Butler was not in the house he regain'd his self-possession and returned to the topic of his master's illness.

"Given over, you tell me, Kitty? Duv you think it's himself, Kitty, or that black deception that brought grief an' trouble on us all?"

"Himself, by coorse, Larry, in regard of his goin' to lave us; for spirits never dies, you know—'case why, they were never born of woman."

"You spake raison, Kitty; an' his rael self was ever an' always tindher-hearted, Kitty, only a little cranky betimes, maybe; bud no matther for that, in regard I'm not far frum the likes, myself. If I was sure entirely, I'd not think mooch o' goin' to see him dead, dacently."

"That's tindher-hearted in yourself, Larry, honey."

"Bud I'd go in the noonday, Kitty; wouldn't that be the counsel you'd gi' me?"

"Sure enough, Larry; an' fuith it'll soon be time, for there's the daylight comin' in through the windee-shutter;—an', whisht!—may I never die in sin bud I hear my lady's bell; no—wait—no—it's the captain's; musha, myself won-

dhers what makes him get up so mortal early. I must be stirrin' from you, Larry, agra; an' for fear Miss Maria, or the ould mistress, or any o' the maids, 'ud come down on you just step into this room—don't be shy, Larry—an' when it's your time, we'll get you out to your mather, unknownst to anybody."

Larry slowly complied, and as the housekeeper locked the door upon him, she could not help asking herself—"An' is this all he has to say to me, the could-hearted, ungrateful thief!" She paused a little with her hand on the key, hoping to hear Larry's voice—"Did you call me, Larry, a-vourneen?" An explosive snore seemed to answer in the negative—and—"foh! the baste!" resumed Mrs. Catherine, turning to attend Captain Mortimer's bell; "yet the poor sowl is so tired, an' worn down, an' in the lowness o' spirits wid his sufferin's," she added, somewhat forgivingly, "an' we'll wait wid patience till he comes back to his flesh agin."

Mortimer rang, for the purpose of sending the housekeeper into Anna's chamber, to inquire from Maria the state of the invalid's health, as very early upon this morning Doctor Butler had led him to expect a favourable change in Anna. After receiving his message and departing to communicate it, Mrs. Catherine returned with the happy intelligence, that, as far as Maria could judge, all feverish symptoms had apparently abated, and that poor Anna now lay tranquil, though, Mrs. Catherine added, nor yet in her right mind. This was gratifying to Mortimer, notwithstanding the clause added by the housekeeper, and he dismissed her with a notification that Doctor Butler had engaged to take an early breakfast with him in his own apartment.

It will at once be surmised why, independently of Mortimer's natural anxiety for the health of his mistress's sister the information gratified him. Although of a strong mind, and taught from his childhood to laugh at anything like supernatural agency, his adventure in the garden had confounded and distressed Mortimer at the time, and continued to haunt his imagination and harass his spirits afterwards. He compelled himself, over and over, to consider the vision merely as a creation of his excited fancy and irritated mood; but reason declined to support for any length of time this forced doctrine, and in spite of himself the contrary conviction remained; and now, too, the occurrence he had previously related to Maria found ready entrance into his reflections, and claimed a notice he had before successfully refused to extend to it.

Still, however, he was most anxious to believe that Tresham's appearance in the drawing-room to Anna and himself was a

real appearance, although he had never been able to propose to Doctor Butler, or to any other person, a question that might better lead to the truth, by acquainting him whether or not the student was on that evening absent from his college chambers. Tresham's illness the very next morning put it out of Mortimer's power to ask himself; nor is it likely that, with full opportunity to do so, he should have hazarded an inquiry, that under the circumstances might prove too delicate and dangerous to Tresham, and even too distressing to Mortimer, in the possible result.

With Maria, Mortimer had not dared to exchange a word of confidence on the subject. It will be recollected that, from her local situation, Maria remained unconscious of the presence of Tresham in the back drawing-room. Mortimer's words and manner assured her, however, either that he was infatuated or that Tresham really appeared for a moment where she could not see him, and in their subsequent conversations her lover endeavoured to confirm Maria in the latter opinion; nay, he went so far as to state, that after he had left the apartment he became assured of the fact, in consequence of a meeting and satisfactory explanation with the student. This gentle policy it is almost unnecessary to explain, further than by saying that Mortimer wished, whatever might be the truth of those mysterious appearances, to guard his own mistress at least from the affliction of supernatural notions concerning them.

Dr. Butler seemed to be the only individual to whom he might unbosom himself, and Mortimer often felt disposed to the confidence, but was checked by other considerations. Much of this gentleman's honest zeal depended, it was evident, on his incredulity towards such stories as Mortimer must impart; so that he could only expect to get laughed at, or, if he succeeded in making an impression, the doctor's professional energy would be distracted, and neither of these results was desirable. Mortimer, therefore, remained in exclusive possession of his own secret: one question, however, he resolved at last to ask of Dr. Butler in the course of the morning.

He rose to prepare for receiving his old friend at an early breakfast, and before the hour had struck Butler's voice was heard in the outward apartment. When the gentlemen met, Mortimer found that his guest had already been to Anna's bedside, and was now in good spirits at her promising symptoms.

"All danger is past," he continued, "and the only thing we have yet to regret, and I believe must for some time regret, is her continued wandering of brain."

"Mrs. Catherine's surmise was true, then." Mortimer asked what was the doctor's opinion of Tresham.

"Candidly, I grow alarmed about him. But thereby hangs a tale I shall at length relate, for your wonder or amusement. I did not care to talk of it, at first, as circumstances would have made it awkward—that is, while your lady's sister was in danger, I saw no time for it; but, now that her recovery is certain, we may enjoy a laugh at the conceit. You remember my vexation and mirth at ascertaining from you and Maria the immediate cause of Anna's illness. Well; what will you say when I inform you that her lover's fit—I mean his increased attack—comes from a source similar to Anna's strange infatuation."

"I scarcely understand you," said Mortimer, raising his eyes in some alarm.

"Then hear me out. On the night when he grew so seriously bad, I had left him at an early hour in his chambers with my imperative commands to retire early to rest.

"And that was the same night that Anna's prepossession caused her sudden fit also?"

"The very same," answered Butler.

"Did he afterwards leave his chambers?" asked Mortimer, thus getting in his long-contemplated question.

"I'll tell you. My mind misgave me, and so late as twelve o'clock I called back——"

"But pray, doctor, when did you part from him on that evening?" interrupted Mortimer.

"I said early, did I not?—About seven or eight o'clock, I think."

Mortimer felt relieved by this explanation; Tresham, then, by his absence after seven or eight o'clock from his chambers, had time to practise the deception Mortimer suspected him of.

"He was not in the college," continued Butler; "I turned into the grounds, and found him stretched on the damp grass in the shrubbery. When removed to his bed, I forbore, for that night, to reproach him with the breach of arrangement between us; next morning, however, I rated him soundly, and can you guess his justification?"

"No—not even remotely," answered Mortimer, while in fact, he only denied his own thought.

"It was—that the Fetch—as they call it—of his mistress had seduced him from his chambers."

"Heavens!—did he talk rationally, consistently?"

"About as much so as one could hope from a man not absolutely mad, yet bewitched to extremity. But how is this, gallant captain?—Are your nerves, too, that a twenty-pounder could not flutter, subdued by a nursery tale?"

"Pshaw! no, good doctor; I only wonder—ha! ha!—I only

am surprised at the boy's weakness—of course, you met his statement properly?"

"I flatter myself I did, captain."

"But you argued with him?"

"Why, ay, in our own overpowering professional way."

"And with what effect?"

"A preparatory one, during the first discussion: and I have since returned again and again to the attack, and at last fully convinced him that, in common with thousands before him, he has been an egregious ass. But we shall speak of Tresham by-and-bye. At present I wish to inform you of some of my views for Anna."

"I shall hear them with the greatest pleasure and interest."

"Particularly as you must assist me in them."

"Command me."

"In a word then, we have both to swear some white lies;—nothing better is left us for the perfect re-establishment of her mind and health."

"Oh, tempt me to what you will."

"Taking it for granted that the poor girl imposes on her own understanding, but still recollecting that we cannot convince her she does so, I strongly fear that, if the chimera be not effectually banished from her thoughts, Anna may not speedily recover a sound mind. But why should we not rout it out at once? Why not admit these very visitations she raves about, yet stoutly assert them to have been real visits? Will you uphold me?"

"By all means; I approve the finesse; but must not Tresham be made a party?"

"Certainly not. To make him one would be to let him know of Anna's sympathetic folly, and that were the devil with Tresham himself; fire to tow, or a spark to a gunpowder magazine."

"Then how do you propose to act? When the lovers meet, they will naturally understand each other."

"They shall not meet—shall not chatter together—shall not even see each other—till they are both perfectly re-established in health and common sense (if such is to be the case,) and their minds entirely new-modelled and sufficiently strong to laugh at the knowledge, seasonably obtained, of their mutual delusion. But more of this anon. Now let us go, hand in hand, to Anna's chamber, and your business is to vouch for the truth of whatever romance you hear me originate."

## CHAPTER XII.

BEFORE the entrance of the gentlemen, Anna awoke from an intense slumber, to the first consciousness of her situation that for weeks had blessed her mind. She found a hand—holding hers, a gentle, tender hand; and it was like the fading of a dream, that, a moment before, a soft kiss and breathing had visited her brow, and a warm tear fallen upon her eyelids. She slowly raised her eyes and recognised her sister. There, indeed, that devoted sister had sat, almost without intermission, since the first hour of her illness. It has been often remarked, that in sickness there is no hand like woman's hand, no heart like a woman's heart; and there is not. A man's breast may swell with unutterable sorrow, and apprehension may rend his mind; yet place him by the sick couch, and in the shadow, rather than the light, of the sad lamp that watches it; let him have to count over the long, dull hours of night, and wait, alone and sleepless, the struggle of the grey dawn into the chamber of suffering; let him be appointed to this ministry even for the sake of the brother of his heart, or the father of his being, and his grosser nature, even where it is most perfect, will tire; his eye will close, and his spirit grow impatient of the dreary task; and though love and anxiety remain undiminished, his mind will own to itself a creeping-in of irresistible selfishness, which indeed he may be ashamed of, and struggle to reject, but which, despite all his efforts, remains to characterize his nature, and prove, in one instance at least, his manly weakness.

But see a mother, a sister, or a wife, in his place. The woman feels no weariness, and owns no recollection of self. In silence, and in the depth of night, she dwells not only passively, but so far as the qualified term may express our meaning, joyously. Her ear acquires a blind man's instinct, as from time to time it catches the slightest stir, or whisper, or breath, of the now more than ever loved one, who lies under the hand of human affliction. Her step, as in obedience to an impulse or a signal she moves about, would not waken a mouse; if she speaks, her accents are a soft echo of natural harmony, most delicious to the sick man's ear, conveying all that sound can convey of pity, comfort, and devotion; and thus, night after night, she tends him like a creature sent from a higher world, when all earthly watchfulness has failed, her eye never winking, her mind never palled, her nature; that at all other times is weakness, now gaining a superhuman strength



and magnanimity, herself forgotten, and her sex alone predominant.

"Is it you, my dearest sister?" said Anna, when she saw who held her hand.

"Oh, my beloved Anna! will you not know me? Can you forget your Maria?"

"Forget you!—no, no, no—but one cannot now be so sure of a face one ought to know well:—how is Tresham, Maria?"

"Do not speak so much, Anna—we are desired to request you will not, but Tresham is very well; very well, my dear sister."

"I dreamt he was not well," resumed the invalid—"and oh, sister, I dreamt such other things! How long have I been thus?—how long a-bed and forgetful?"

"Hush, Anna—hush, my love;—only some days."

"Maria," Anna after a pause went on, and now rapidly speaking in a whisper—"Maria—I—I die to see him: one look—one sight of him as he used to be. But, harkye, sister—let him come at noon—or the middle of the day—or very early in the morning—that will be the best time—what time is it now?—after the nightfall?"

"No, my dear Anna; it is not yet ten o'clock in the forenoon, only the blinds are all down, and the room darkened, that you may be quiet, and get some rest and refreshing sleep."

"Hist! hist!—I hear a low step—whose is it?" said Anna, alarmed.

Maria rose and opened the door for Butler and Mortimer.

"If it was himself, Maria, he would smile on me," continued Anna, relapsing, as Butler approached, into her confusion of persons, and mixing this up with her broken recollections of the past; while her eye vacantly fixed on his, and she crushed herself against the opposite side of the bed, grasping the covering with spasmed hands, and her white lips moving without sound, till at last as Butler came nearer, and she continued aloud—

"I know you—but you are not he, though so like him—he is not so silent and wretched. Go, in God's name! Maria! where are you?—put your arms around me—hold me. Go, go—I saw you before, and I know you now—go, go!"

"What, my sweet patient! how have I offended?" said Butler, in an easy tone. Mortimer, who stood behind him, was more shocked at such an unusual scene, and whispered—

"Let us withdraw and choose a better time."

"No, no—permit me, stay where you are," answered Butler—"seem to understand what I shall say aloud to you. So; fair weather to our friend Tresham, captain."

The words instantly seemed to restore Anna to a perfect knowledge of those around her; she started, and whispered in Maria's ear—Listen!

"Is it not to Italy he travels?" said Mortimer, endeavouring thus to follow Butler's cue.

"Italy;—I have a love message from him to somebody; can it be told now, Maria?" asked Butler, still with seeming carelessness.

"Yes, sir,—now—this moment—for God's sake! To Italy, you tell me?" said Anna, before her sister could answer.

"Verily and indeed," resumed Butler: "his father arrived unexpectedly among us, giving him but an hour's preparation; yet, even in that time, the goose wished to write a sighing, sonnetceering farewell to a certain person——"

"And did he not?" interrupted Anna.

"I could not and would not permit him, as I feared something too ardent and startling for the nerves of a fair invalid we are all bound to care for." Butler looked towards Mortimer, as if to claim his support.

"So he was obliged to content himself with making us his apologists," said Mortimer, taking the hint.

"And how long is this ago?" asked Anna.

"Two days, exactly."

"He will soon have performed his journey, and in about a fortnight you may expect to hear from him, my dear sister," continued Mortimer.

"Yes—and in a few weeks after see him; and then, if you like, keep him entirely to yourself, my sweet patient," Butler went on. "By-the-way, Mortimer, you remember something, do you? I forget what—a trifle—some folly or other, however—that he requested us to mention?"

"Oh, yes—he charged us to bear to Anna his profound regrets and apology, for having—upon the occasion of his late visits——"

"Ay, pahaw! that was it," said Butler.

"Assumed a ridiculous mystery of manner," continued Mortimer, "that—that——"

Anna, raising herself in the bed, broke in with—"Does he mean two visits, one before, and the other after, our last morning walk by the Lacken?"

"To be sure he does—but I see you remember this child's play better than it deserves," said Butler.

She sank back exhausted, but more calm; then in a moment resumed:—

"What could have been his shocking motive? To kill me or drive me mad, I am sure, sir."

"Pohl—to ascertain, in his wisdom, whether a foolish girl could be well frightened or no; you must not expect downright wisdom in everything a boy does, even though that boy be clever, handsome, and a constant admirer into the bargain;" and Butler sat, and kindly took her hand.

"He is very penitent," said Mortimer; "contrite to the dust, and really miserable, lest you should not forgive him, dear Anna."

"Oh, we cannot long be very angry with only poor Tresham, you know." He rose and whispered to Maria—"Now let her have her own undisturbed reflections for half an hour, or about:" then concluded aloud—"So, good-day, my good, thriving patient, and thank the obliging stars that ordered away your lover just at the time you resolved upon looking so frightful;" and the two gentlemen left the chamber.

"This seems to do well, doctor, if you can brave it out—but what with Tresham?" asked Mortimer when they were alone.

"Get him out of Kilkenny as fast as we can; his very health requires it, even if appearances were not, in this case, to be saved."

"But in any case you cannot present him with the true reasons for such a step?"

"No, as either would *unnecessarily* shock him. Mark my emphasis—I must try different measures. He must believe that Anna is wroth against him, and for a time will not see him."

"Surely that will be as severe a shock as any?"

"Severe as I can contrive it, but antagonist to the other, or to any he has yet received; and there is my hope."

"I do not understand you; pray explain."

"It is my opinion that a mystified and wretched state of mind, acting on the nerves, and through them on the whole system, has strongly tended to lay one basis for Tresham's present illness; and, without wholly trusting to the arguments we have used together, I would try to shake that basis by another good agitation. His love and vanity shall take up arms against the German fathers. And, on the same principle that one poison is coursed out of the frame by another and stronger, I think I shall thus administer, to the progress of Tresham's disease, counteracting medicine."

"But are there not alarming physical symptoms?"

"Alarming, I admit, as I have already admitted; ay, very dangerous, yet not irremovable. A new mental action, and then peace, bodily repose, and proper treatment and pure air, may yet establish him. Come, let us see Tresham together. But stop a moment; one word first with Mr. Ruth."

They spoke with the old gentleman, and after assuring him

of the convalescence of his child, Butler went on to say that, however excellent Tresham in many respects might be, he was yet the slave of a gloomy mind, that in the doctor's opinion had caused the present indisposition of Anna; and Mr. Butler seriously added, he could undertake to attend the invalid only on the condition that Mr. Ruth discountenanced, for a given time, the student's visits to his house.

Parental solicitude yielded a ready assent to these terms, which Butler got the father to embody, in the shape of a letter to Tresham. He then informed him of the finesse practised on Anna by the report of her lover's journey to Italy, and engaged Mr. Ruth to countenance it, and take such precautions as should exclude from her ear all contrary information. These arrangements made, the doctor and his friend hastened to Tresham's chambers.

A favourable turn had, overnight, taken place in Tresham's disorder. He slept sounder than usual, and awoke and arose in a flow of spirits that surprised even himself. This moment of new enjoyment received some shock, however, in the abrupt appearance of Larry at his chamber door, the poor fellow habited as he had presented himself at Mrs. Catherine's window, and still exhibiting all the poetical character of his own ghost. After recovering his first surprise, Tresham recollected he should have been prepared for this vision, as Doctor Butler had, the day before, advised him of the re-establishment of Larry's sanity, and mentioned the likelihood of his speedy enfranchisement. So, after a cordial salutation and welcome, which Larry heard in silence, the student forbore in pity and delicacy all allusion to the past, and only informed him where he would find a befitting suit of clothes, and the necessaries for refreshment.

A gloom, however, suddenly fell on Tresham, induced by this re-appearance of his servant, which called up the dark and not yet banished recollections of the first mysterious scene they had witnessed together; and Tresham, irresistibly yielding to the influence of the mood, cast himself on the sofa.

Larry, on his part, also felt many of his old alarms returning. Catherine's portrait of the bad health of his master had led him to expect the apparition of a man lying in his bed, and reduced almost to the last gasp; and when, instead, he beheld Tresham not very much altered since their last interview, he could not help casting an eye towards the bed, in expectation of beholding there the true and real master he had come "to see dead, decently."

In these doubts, Larry brought to mind a resolution he had, previously to his late misfortune, formed, in order to quiet his

own notions of identity; and so, cautiously taking his stand at the back of the sofa,—

"Are you asleep or awake, sir?" he asked.

"I shall never sleep!" answered Tresham.

"Musha, that 'ud be very unnatural, Masther Harry."

"Then, be it so. What have I to do with anything natural?"

"Bad words, unless he raves," thought the valet. "Providence is over all, sir."

"Perhaps."

"Equivocation," again ruminated Larry: then aloud—"I didn't say my prayers last night, masther."

"And what then?"

"Nothin' at all; only I was for axin' your lave to say 'em, now, above my breath, after a manner, an' maybe you'd put in a word wid me, sir."

Tresham only laughed at this strange proposition, and Larry's doubts increased, when Dr. Butler's voice on the stairs gave a different current to his feelings, and abruptly stating that "he had a thing to look after," the servant escaped from the chamber ere his hated foe entered it, and also without the observation he so much dreaded.

Tresham was rather astonished to see his old friend walk into the room with a grave pace, a corrected brow, and an air altogether of much severity. As Mortimer slowly followed, the student's heart failed him, and he quickly asked of the health of his mistress. She was well in bodily health, Butler replied; but it grieved 'him to be the bearer of otherwise disagreeable news on her account.

Tresham stared, and inquired what was meant; and the doctor, taking a chair by his side and motioning Mortimer to another, proceeded,—

"It astonishes me, Harry, that a person of your fine mind and principles could incautiously abuse the openness of a young heart, by darkening and distracting it with such absurdities as you and I have discussed together. You ought to have been aware that the native weakness and delicacy of a girlish mind were at the mercy of any direction you chanced to give them; and to use your advantage and power only for the purpose of injuring was an act, if premeditated, unworthy of the scholar and the man of feeling."

Tresham's damp pale brow parched and reddened at this preface, and he again inquired, with spirit, what could possibly be meant.

"In a word, then, Anna has confessed to her parents all the chilling doubts with which you have crowded her mind, and brought them to forbid your visits to the house."

"Excuse me, Mr. Tresham, but this is yours," said Mortimer, handing him Ruth's letter.

Tresham rapidly perused it; and—"Gentlemen, you amaze, confound me!" he exclaimed.

"It is true, however," resumed Mortimer: "she avers, with streaming eyes, that your horrible though childish conceits—"

"To a child horrible," interrupted Butler.

"Her sleep is haunted by hideous dreams, her sense of right and wrong, real and imaginary, confounded"—

"Her conscience disturbed, her life embittered—in a word, that she is almost broken-hearted," added Butler.

"The curse of folly on my own credulous heart, that could expect anything but whim and change from a woman—a girl—a child!" Tresham said, vehemently mounting his climax in mingled feelings of mortification and passion.

"Not so trifling nor so childish either, perhaps," continued Butler—"Anna's present act does not deserve such an epithet; and it is only natural to expect—"

"Does she know I am so ill, sir?" the student abruptly asked.

"No, sir; I did not care, even on your account, to add misery to a heart that loves you, and—"

"Loves me!" Tresham repeated, scoffingly.

"I said it, because I know it? and when you thought fit twice to interrupt me, I was about to add that, by the exertion of a little patience and good sense on your side, Anna may still, and soon, be all you wish of her and from her."

"I can scarcely comprehend you, Mr. Butler; yet I thank you for this re-assurance, and am sorry for my warmth," said Tresham.

Butler, with his voice altered to a condescending kindness of accent, now proceeded—

"My very good young friend, I am almost treble your age, have known the world nearly three times as long, and women as a part of it; and believe me when I assure you that, weak as they appear to us sovereign lords, in the higher darings of mind, they possess, beyond us, great acuteness of view into character."

"And, knowing their superiority, they exercise it against us, too," said Mortimer.

"Precisely. A woman inclined to make choice of a partner for life, will weigh and study his character with more skill and perseverance than he can ever pretend to adopt towards her; nay, she will adroitly allow him scope to develop himself, by pretending for a moment to relish his wildest fancies. And now, Tresham, I have another proposition to lay down.

No matter how fervently a woman may love, in the first instance, she will, after due investigation, be very cautious of committing her fate and happiness into the hands of any man whom she deems likely to make her miserable. I have seen some extraordinary proofs of the strength of this quality. I knew a lady, young, generous, beautiful, and loving to devotion: fellow-student of mine, and yet, upon the discovery of what she thought an incurable weakness of mind, she gave him up for ever, though her own heart was the accompanying sacrifice, for it broke and went to ruin in the struggle."

"Gracious God, gentlemen! to what does all this mysterious discourse tend?" asked Tresham.

"Little—only that Anna may be such a woman," answered Butler, drily.

"But I disclaim any incurable weakness of mind that may interfere with her scruples or feelings," resumed the student. "You, Mr. Butler, should know from our late discussions that, right or wrong as I may have hitherto thought, I am not now—for some time have not been—deaf or obstinate to conviction."

"I know it, my dear Tresham, and give you all the merit of the reformation. But to the purpose. It is evident you have committed yourself to Anna on some topic that, for the present, shocks, and on reflection perhaps, disgusts her."

"I am a fool—a weak, cruel fool!"—exclaimed Tresham, love, generosity, and a fear of losing his mistress, jointly compelling the admission.

"What the nature of these topics may be, we know not," said Mortimer.

"And care not," resumed Butler; "but my experience of female discernment convinces me—and our silly arguments, too, Harry—that—pardon me when I bluntly say it—one must believe them incompatible with the rational happiness a wedded couple ought to enjoy."

"And brother Tresham will allow a sincere friend to add, that they are also incompatible with a strong, masculine mind like his, and unfit for his matured intercourse with serious and accomplished gentlemen."

"I believe it!—I will believe anything—promise anything—perform anything. Opinions—pursuits—habits—all will I give up—worlds I *would* give up; to restore Anna's peace of mind, and once more deserve her love and confidence."

"That's manly and honourable," said Mortimer.

"Come, then;—let me see;—yes—on one condition we can befriend you," rejoined Butler.

"Name it, gentlemen, name it!"

"You will promise that, till we can put Anna in good humour with you, you will not, directly or indirectly, by visit, message, or letter, seek to communicate with her."

"Are those terms absolutely indispensable?" Tresham asked in a doleful tone.

"God's mercy!" cried Butler, affecting to take fire. "are you not the most selfish as well as the most impolitic lover in the world, to ask such a question? Do you not see, in the first place, that your mistress's happiness and health depend on your keeping far away from her? and, next, would you ruin your own interests by a childish precipitancy?—would you take yourself out of our hands, and adopt your own course? If so, say it at once."

"The conditions are hard, yet I solemnly promise to observe them," resumed the student, sighing heavily.

"Very good. That's plain, and only what I expected from you, Harry. But hearken further. With her we must plead your absence, as an apology for your not visiting her; your illness we dare not mention."

Tresham was content, he said.

"And in a week or so, when you are, as I trust you will be, much stronger than at present, I invite you, in order to prevent mistakes, to accompany me on a short excursion to Woodstock, a beautiful country."

"I accept your invitation, Mr. Butler, and am properly sensible of your zeal and friendship."

"Tut, tut!—no speeches. And now we must part, as at this very hour," looking at his watch, "I am anxiously expected by an old woman of an alderman, who wishes me to cut off a saddle of mutton that he avers has dangled at his nose for the last fortnight. Besides I cannot permit you to talk any longer. So—give me your hand: good morning, and keep yourself quiet, and depend on our services in every way. Come, Captain Mortimer;" and they left Tresham to the wholesome conflict of new thoughts and feelings now sprung up in his mind.

## CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Butler, in some days after this interview, visited Tresham, he was afflicted to find in him a rapid change for the worse. With light spirits, and an unusually free and unravelled mind, the patient had, from long coughing cold perspirations, passed a sleepless night.



to the counteraction of these symptoms, and in a few days more it seemed he had succeeded. Tresham slept better and felt stronger. In the lapse of another fortnight, however, the mocking distemper again appeared on its treacherous march towards the citadel of life, and Butler grew seriously alarmed. In good earnest he began to think of the continental journey, upon which he had already sent his patient in idea only. He consulted with the head-master of the college, and it was arranged to write home to Tresham's family. One day was, however, allowed to decide the question; and through the whole of that day Tresham seemed again on the high-road to health. Another and another, and he was better and better. It is unnecessary here to remark that consumption sometimes baffles, even at present, the skill and experience of the most eminent physicians, and we must not, therefore, wonder that many years ago it was equally successful with our provincial practitioner.

In fact, for a fortnight longer, Butler more than hoped the complete re-establishment of the student's health. But in about two months altogether from the first serious appearances, an alarming crisis arrived: his person dwindled rapidly; his cough increased to convulsions; his sleep was entirely gone; and the victorious disease hung out its false colours on his cheek, and triumphantly sparkled through his eye. In haste and consternation, Butler despatched a letter to the south of Ireland, and, with the consent of the principal, hurried Tresham to the more open country residence he had before spoken of, and which Tresham's varying state of health caused him so long to forget, there to await, in feeble hope, the sad arrival of his friends.

Upon the very evening of their departure, poor Tresham felt and seemed a new man. A flow of artificial energy coursed through his veins. Butler met him ready dressed in his apartment, with a flaring eye, an erect mien, and an ostentatious and piteous firmness of step, and full of anticipated pleasure from their country drive and residence. The good doctor himself was startled and delighted when he first entered; but in a second he turned away to hide the stifling sigh and blinding tear that proclaimed a mournful change of conviction.

And now, and not for the first time during the last few weeks, he thought, with an irritating and stupefying feeling, of Anna's strange prophecies, and of her assertions with respect to the vision she declared she had seen. Rejecting from the first, with laughter and scorn, every thought of supernatural omen, and crushing it under a load of manly indifference, there now and then stirred, however, in the bottom of the

doctor's soul, and under all that philosophical pressure, a something that like an incipient earthquake at the base of a real mountain slightly disturbed the mass. But now, after feeling for an instant such an inward motion, Butler grew impatient to acknowledge or yield it place, and at once offering his arm to Tresham, routed the weakness from his mind, as he led the student to the vehicle that waited for them at the college gate.

While crossing the hall, Tresham recollected a favourite volume of light reading he had left behind him in his chamber, and desired Larry, who with Doctor Butler's consent had long since been reinstated in his office, to return and bring it to him.

"The windee-shetters are more nor half closed, Masther Harry, an' may be myself couldn't meet wid it," said Larry, much disinclined to visit the chamber alone.

"Begone, you scoundrell!" roared Butler, "or I'll put you where you shall never get a glimpse of the daylight—begone, and don't stay a moment!"

The servant complied, and Tresham and Butler awaited his return. He could scarcely have gained, they thought, the chamber-door, when a loud noise, as of a person tumbling headforemost down stairs, reached their ears; then rapid footsteps on every landing-place, and an alternate recurrence of the tumbling clatter; until at last Larry fell into the hall, and, gathering himself on his feet, strode across the space between him and the door, and at last rushed through it, never uttering a word, and his lips and brows compressed in the frightened resolve of self-preservation.

They called loudly on him as he passed, but got no answer. They waited for him, but Larry did not reappear. The truth is, a few moments saw him beyond the limit of the city of Kilkenny; and Larry held his speed, as well as he could, along the high-road to his native country, where, on the morning of about the fourth day, immediately following, he was seen, restored to his agricultural habiliments, silently directing the course of a plough through the stubborn earth.

After some moments' delay, the gentlemen resolved to proceed on their journey without Larry; and Mr. Butler, knowing Tresham's incapacity to hurry himself, returned with a light though old foot to get the volume his companion wished.

"The master has bit the man—which is most bewitched, I know not," he said to himself while entering the chamber. The shutters were, as Larry had premised, half closed; and, although no shadow of evening had yet fallen, that side of the apartment occupied by the bed was wrapped in considerable

darkness. The moment Butler entered, and as he rapidly walked towards a book-shelf, he fancied he caught, with his side vision, a form like that of Tresham's, standing motionless over the bed. He stared round, but saw nothing. Impatience, not fear, shook his frame; he stamped his foot on the floor, and rushing to the bed, pushed aside the curtains and examined all round it. Still he saw nothing, and at last concluding that the thought which had pre-occupied his mind thus tormented him, fashioning out of the folds of the drapery a form to deceive his unwary sight, Butler hastily secured the volume, and proceeded to rejoin his patient. Before he left the room, he could not, however, refuse one other look towards the bed; the delusion was not there. Butler stamped again, with a "Pshaw!" and—"yet, by heavens, it is strangely and provokingly coincident!"—he added, turning down stairs.

The country retreat selected by Butler was, as well as being the very climate of health, the most beautiful scene in the vicinity. It has been pointed out to us in connexion with this true history, and therefore, perhaps, we call back its features with some facility and pleasure. We are not, indeed, sufficiently masters of local topography to be assured that the name it now bears is the same it bore at the era we speak of; that present name is, however, Woodstock, and the domain is the property of an Irish gentleman of importance. It rises from the edge of the Nore, at about thirteen miles from Kilkenny, into curves and slopes, hills and dales, piles of rock, and extensive spreads of level though high ground; hills and dales are thickly or wildly planted; and mountain streams, made rough and interesting by the stony impediments in their course, seek their way through the bending and shivered banks and fantastic woods, sometimes leaping over an unusually steep barrier. The waterfalls send their chafings among the woods and hollows, which on all sides and at a distance reply; and these voices of nature, together with the nearly-similar noise of the rustling trees, or the crackling of their knotted arms in the blast, are the only or the overmastering sounds that disturb the solitude.

Extrinsic interest has lately attached to this fine scenery on account of its having been the last residence on earth of a lady not unknown in the literary world. In fact, the present proprietor is a Mr. Tighe; and here the gentle author of "*Psyche*," that gentleman's aunt by marriage, breathed the last notes of her femininely sweet song, and the last breath of a life she was almost too good and pure to have longer breathed in a bad and gross world. Here she sang, in sighings of the heart, her last melancholy farewell to the "*Odours of Spring*;"

and, alas! the flowers she addressed had not wasted their perfume till they were transplanted to her grave. A beautiful girl, long the humble protegee of the minstrel, culled them with her young hands, and, in recollection of notes that the silent tongue had once murmured, placed them on her bed of clay, and thus in the tears of beauty and of youthful sorrow they were there nurtured. The grave is one of many in the church-yard of the village that skirts the domain. The river runs smoothly by. The ruins of an ancient abbey, that have been partially converted into a church, reverently throw their mantle of tender shadow over it; simple primroses and daisies now blossom round; and near it, in some scathed old trees, the rooks caw her requiem. It is a place for the grave of a poetess.

But when Tresham visited this district, it had for him the single yet abundant interest of its own beauty. Even as he approached it, the introductory scenery grew fair and enchanting. The country outside of Kilkenny was uniform; but at last, from the highest point of a rough mountain road, his eye was at once flung over a semicircle extent of hill, dell, and mountain, broken in every desirable shape of the picturesque, and thrown and tossed about, as if in the awful sportiveness of the creating hand. Hill bestrode hill, the guardian giants of the race appearing pale and mysterious in the distance; while through the midst, in the depths of a spacious valley, the lady Nore curved on her graceful course.

It was the first approach of an unusually fine evening in September, and the red sun, setting over an extensive vista at Tresham's back, lackered all the opposite scene with gold, producing at the same time those stretching shadows that make evening the painter's best hour for the study of his *chiar'oscuro*. At every turn of this road the scene only changed into another mode of beauty. From a nearer point appeared the lowly village of Inistiogue, a few white cottages, glinting like white stones at the bases and in the mighty embrace of hills richly planted. Its light and not inelegant bridge spanned the crystal river, groups and groups of trees massing behind it, and over all the high grounds of Woodstock rising in continued and variegated foliage. Tears of pleasure filled Tresham's eyes. He felt it was happiness to live in so fair a world. Alas! he enjoyed the scene as if he had been doomed to enjoy it.

When the travellers had passed the bridge, and entered the noble solitude of Woodstock, twilight had just begun to steal in like a changing spirit, amid the glow of day. The carriage drove through a good part of the demesne. They got out and descended a path over the side of a sloping dell, and Butler

pointed out, on the opposite side, a neat thatched cottage which, he said, was to be Tresham's residence, the absent proprietor having invited Butler to make occasional use of it.

As they approached, an old woman of decent and primitive appearance stood at the door to welcome them. Butler, addressed her by the name of "nurse," said he had brought her patient, along with whom, himself would be her guest for the night. They entered and occupied two neat apartments, in which rustic plainness seemed rather a tasteful affectation than a necessity. Tresham enjoyed his situation in an impotent overflow of spirits; yet unaware of Butler's opinion of his health, and, by the miserable fatality that blinds the observation of almost all invalids in his case, not prepared himself to fear any danger, the poor victim declared laughingly that it was worth while to be ill for the sake of so delightful a change.

## CHAPTER XIV.

AT the time of Tresham's departure from Kilkenny, Anna's bodily health was almost completely restored, and her mind, too, after the last conversation with Butler and Mortimer, grew calmer and more settled; so that her affectionate family now detected but slight symptoms of wandering. She was, however, much changed in spirits; she spoke very little, even to Maria, and continually sought the silence and abstraction of her own chamber. When crossed in such purposes, Anna showed more wildness and irritability than on other occasions, and compelled, out of the fears and solicitude of her mother and sister, a submission to her waywardness.

The only person who succeeded in rallying her and soothing her temper was Butler. He visited her often, and by a repetition of his easy and yet kind manner and conversation often drew her from solitude, and won her to engage in refreshing discourses and speculations. He supplied her too with light and pleasing books, calculated to rival the impressions made by her late reading; and, in a word, used every judicious means of restoring her to a rational balance of mind and feeling.

But one cruel cause of uneasiness to Anna soon occurred. The time mentioned by Butler and all her friends, as fixed for Tresham's return from Italy, came and went without his appearance before her. Another week, and another still elapsed, and she did not see him; not even a letter arrived. She began to make inquiries, and the explanations attempted to be given seemed unsatisfactory and evasive. Her suscep-

tible heart whispered to her that there was no reality, no conviction, in the words that fell upon her ear. And still the time lapsed, and still she had no letter; nothing, in fact, like an assurance *from himself* that the accounts given her were true that Tresham was well—that he was alive.

So soon as these thoughts entered her mind, all the spectral fancies that for some time had lain hushed in it stirred and got life again, and it was peopled with them. Inward voices told her that her lover was dead—dead, in consequence of what she had seen!—and the stories of his sudden journey to Italy were, she now assured herself, only kind equivocations, to disguise from her in her weak state the shocking and destroying truth.

At first she indulged these thoughts in silence, and her friends could only perceive that a sudden and bad change had come over her mind, until towards the close of a day, about a week after Tresham's excursion to Woodstock, a decisive occurrence took place.

Maria had left Anna disposed to sleep on a couch in her chamber; and some time elapsed when she heard the invalid's voice calling aloud to her. Maria hastily entered, and saw Anna sitting up with a distracted air, pale as a corpse, and every limb shaking. Inquiring the cause, Anna said,—

"Oh, Maria! I have dreamt an appalling dream, if indeed it was a dream."

"It must have been—what else could it be? You slept; I left you sleeping, my dearest Anna,—forget it," interrupted the anxious sister.

"I cannot forget it, Maria; but I will think it *was* a dream. I may have slept; my poor mind grew quieter a moment before; and surely I could not have fancied it."

"Tis all weakness, Anna;—this confinement and this close air prey on your nerves; let us have a turn in the garden. Come, lean on me."

"No; listen to me, Maria. This I dreamt, if dream it must be:—I was sitting where I am, thinking of *him*; everything appeared as usual about me—the chairs, the books, the window, and all. The window darkened—I turned, and just caught the shadow of a pale face receding from the glass. Then I grew troubled, and the room filled with sound that deepened and deepened, and at last I heard—'He is *not* dead!'"

"Dead!" repeated Maria. "Why should you require that information in any shape? What cause was there to fear it? How could you ever suppose it, my dear Anna?"

"Yet!" resumed Anna, "the invisible voices added, 'Yet!—'He is not dead—yet!' they said; 'but go and seek him!—seek him in solitude, and in the darkness that is falling fast

upon his soul! All this I was told, Maria—what could it mean?" And she fixed her blazing eyes on her startled sister.

"Nothing, nothing, my love—it could mean nothing; we are warned by religion itself, as well as by reason, to place no thought on dreams."

"Why do you look so pale, and tremble so, Maria?" asked Anna, a stern spirit controlling her own agitation. "Look on me! Tell me—do not deceive me—do not dare to deceive me—where is he gone, indeed? What falsehoods have they told me?—he was *not* here!"

"O sister, sister, compose yourself! Did you not hear he was in Italy? Did they not bring you his own assurance that he travelled thither?"

"They!—they!—answer for yourself, sister!" cried Anna, her manner growing every moment wilder; "and, now I recollect, you never told me that—never from yourself! Tell it now, if you can—if you dare! on the peril of your soul, answer me—where is Tresham? Ha!" she continued in a scream, and starting up, "you grow paler, Maria!—you wince, and are silent."

Maria could only supplicate her to be patient.

"I see it now!—no, no, he is not in Italy!—he never was!—he never sent me that message!—he is somewhere near us, and I will find him?" She paused for a moment; then, struck by a sudden association, "Answer me again, sister. One day—I do not—cannot—recollect when, or where, or how—but one day I heard, while you thought I slept, you and Mortimer mention, in a whisper, first his name, and then you spoke of Woodstock, and Butler has often been absent from town, before and since, for days together. Tell me, is he not there, or was he not?—did he not die there?—did he not?"

"No, sister. I reply to your question on my word of truth, and in the presence of the Great Judge of truth—he did not die—he is not dead." Maria answered with some vehemence, glad to seize a point for plausible equivocation.

"But speak to my whole question. Is he at Woodstock now?—is he dying there now? You do not so readily answer that—you cannot! My own thought is true—true, and I will prove its truth!" and Anna, snatching a scarf and hat, rushed towards the door. Her sister flew between her and it.

"Let me pass! let me pass!" exclaimed Anna, in a climax of madness, while she stamped her small foot on the floor, and still moved to go out.

"For the sake of Heaven, dearest sister—for your own and *his* sake—for our father's and mother's sake—for your poor

sister's sake!"—cried Maria, kneeling with her back to the door.

"Let me pass, I say! I have no friends, no kin—all have deceived me. Stories, stories you have all told me. He may now be stiff in his shroud—earth and worms—now while I talk. Let me pass—or, do not—" the fair maniac continued, catching up a knife that unfortunately lay on the table—"do not; and by the blue vault over our heads I will bury this in my own heart!"—and, in an attitude of mingled grace and sternness, that in one so young was at once grand and terrible, she raised the blade high in her clenched hand.

Maria screamed aloud, and ran from the apartment, calling upon her father and Mortimer. As she turned down stairs an appalling laugh rang through Anna's chamber. Maria's cries instantly alarmed her mother and the servants; but Mr. Ruth and Mortimer were not in the house, nor could any for some time recollect where either of the gentlemen was to be found. When this was at last ascertained, and an attendant had been despatched to call them, Maria, with her mother, and all the servants, returned to Anna's room. It was empty, or apparently so. Maria, with a shuddering anticipation, glanced towards the corners of the chamber and to the bed, and then looked for the knife. Her foot moved it on the floor—the sister raised it—it was unstained. Maria's fears next directed her to examine the window, but this was shut down, and the blinds untouched, as she had left them. Where then could Anna be? She had not approached the hall-door, for Maria had not proceeded farther than the hall; there her mother and the servants met her. Every chamber and apartment in the house was searched, every nook, but no trace of Anna. At this moment Ruth and Mortimer came in. Having heard the terrifying story, a new search commenced, but as fruitlessly ended. At last, in a small closet at the back of the house, an open window challenged attention; after a look, one of Anna's gloves was found on the floor under it; Mortimer glanced down upon the soft mould of the garden which it overhung, and the print of her feet distinctly appeared.

All rushed, with dreadful cries and a common fear, into the garden. The foot-prints continued from the bed, under the window, to the principal walk, and there were lost on the hard and smooth gravel. The party separated to search in different quarters. Maria ran to the river's edge, and there again discovered the trace of Anna's feet, and at a second glance her scarf, caught and half sustained by a prickly shrub. She screamed, and Mortimer and her father were in an instant at her side. Maria could not speak, but she pointed to the foot-



prints and to the scarf. Their eyes turned on the water. It was smooth, and placidly unconscious of what they feared; but in a gentle eddy, which it made at some little distance, under a cluster of willows, Maria thought she saw the white hat and plume that her sister had taken up in the chamber. When she expressed her thought, however, this appearance was ascertained to be only a round mass of foam, which the concentric motion of the eddy had there formed.

By this time, her mother, accompanied by the servants, came up. They had found no further trace. Consternation kept all for a moment silent and inactive, when Mortimer, with a sudden cry, ran to a part of the garden, at some little distance, which edged the main path. Every one followed him, and there he showed fresh marks of Anna's foot, that obliquely shot across a large and newly-dug bed of mould, towards a small door in the side-wall of the garden. They gained the door; it was wide open; and it now seemed certain that, availing herself of the key which usually remained in the lock, Anna had by this door escaped into the street.

Acting on the conviction, Ruth, Mortimer, Maria, and a man-servant, gained the street; Mrs. Ruth, overcome by her terrors, could not follow; Maria and her father walked rapidly in one direction, the servant in another, and Mortimer in another, all making inquiries of every person they met. Ruth and Maria could hear nothing of the fugitive. They had compassed a good portion of the town, calling at the doors of different friends where they supposed she might be, when the servant appeared, breathless and earnest; but it was only with his haste and fears—he too had found no clue. The father and daughter wrung their hands, and could but pray to Heaven for help and guidance. A moment after, Mortimer darted round the corner of the street in which they stood, calling out to them the moment he appeared, and adding some words which the distance and usual noise of a town prevented them from catching.

But when the friends came closer to each other, the glad words of Mortimer sent comfort before him.

"I have heard of her—I have heard of her!" he exclaimed. "Come—come with me—quick!"

"Thank God! thank God!" cried Maria and her father in joyful tears—"Where?—where?"

"I spoke to some coachmen in the next street, and they say—with full knowledge of her face and person—that about half an hour ago she flung herself into a chariot, and was driven at a furious rate out of the town——"

"But whither?—what road?"

"To the country—to Woodstock. Come!—let us not lose a moment. Maria! had you not better remain here, Maria?"

"No!—do not leave me behind if you wish me to live through the interval. My dear father!—my dear Mortimer!—let me accompany you!" cried Maria, pleading with earnestness.

"Come, then. You, Robert, return and inform your mistress of our good chance—come; there is not a second to be lost!"

"If they meet!" said Maria—

"They shall not—must not—we will certainly overtake her. Come!"

## CHAPTER XV.

THE first evening of Tresham's residence in Woodstock passed away pleasantly: even Butler half forgot, in the gaiety, and once more treacherous appearance of Tresham, his own settled anticipations.

The anxious friend forgot, too, or waived, for a good portion of the next day, his press of professional engagements, and remained with Tresham till the approach of night, when, however, he was obliged to return to Kilkenny. He came back to see his patient in two days after; again left him, and again came back; and to his utter surprise Tresham seemed at every new visit steadily mending. While this baffled the doctor's skill, it also gave him a new hope. The salubrious air, the enchanting scene, and the reformed and more tranquil mind of Tresham, together with the natural joy with which he must look forward to a happy reconciliation with his mistress, all might tend—it was still possible in Mr. Butler's thought—to effect an extraordinary struggle and triumph of constitution, and conquer disease, even in the last stage of its progress. However true or false these late calculations might be, still Tresham looked and felt better. During the hours of Butler's visits, his social temper fully exerted itself; and in his absence, guided and sometimes assisted by a little flaxen-headed urchin, the grandson of the old woman of the cottage, he explored at leisure and with delight the fine scenery around him, sitting, or strolling, or stretching himself, in the sun or shade, and reading or thinking, or enjoying light, and now luxurious slumbers.

Upon a day after Butler had ended one of his repeated visits—and his last—Tresham informed his little guide that

he should endeavour to find his way back alone to a scene they had visited the preceding evening; and, as Butler had engaged to return in a few hours, he informed the boy where to find him. His old nurse, struck with what she thought a sudden and ominous change in Tresham, remonstrated against his going alone; but his smiles and earnestness persuaded her, and he went.

With some disagreeable exertion he gained a valley of considerable magnitude and sublime character. A sheet of water shot at the remote end over a bulwark of almost perpendicular rock that, as a wall, crossed the valley. One path to this crept along the immediate edge of steep banks that bridled the angry stream, which was a continuation of the fall, the path mounting higher and higher, until it nearly gained the torrent; and here a shelf of rock, apparently dangerous, but really safe, juttred over the abyss. It was purposely covered with sods, and, rich in moss, gave ample room for a small seat, from which might be had a full view of the waterfall.

Overhead, on both sides, the dell still towered, half faced with shivered rock, and half with dwarf oak and fantastic wreathings of wild herb and shrub, and at last sloping off in a junction with level grounds, from which, through thick plantations, was another approach to the scene, by means of a frail wooden bridge that linked the opposite brows of the valley. This bridge was nearly in a line with the seat on the shelf, but at some distance above it.

Tresham, gaining the shelf, sat in the rustic seat, and looked with an awed and tame delight around him. Firmly grasping the sides of the seat, he dared to look beneath. His height from the bottom was about thirty-feet: and the water discharged by the fall there foamed and roared, swollen with recent rains, and of the brown tint that Ruysdael sometimes so well imitates, amid a mystery of black and slimy rocks that pushed their sharp extremities out of the torrent. He gazed on the cascade. It rushed down in nearly one unbroken sheet, glancing some yards away from the base of the wall of rocks, and so thinly that he could catch, though indistinctly, forms of bank and shrub that found a kind of shelter in the space thus left behind.

Here Tresham sat for a considerable time, till the boy approached him from the cottage. The student thought he came to announce the speedy return of Butler; but when they spoke he learned that that gentleman had not yet arrived, and the little fellow was only sent with some refreshments. Of these Tresham slightly partook, and, feeling renovated, left his seat to gain, with the boy's assistance, the bird's-eye view of the scene afforded from the bridge above.

With much toil they won the bridge; and now Tresham dismissed his guide to return to his watch for Butler, whilst he enjoyed alone the view he had wished for.

Even in the spent state of his frame the invalid was not timid; yet the frailness and perilous isolation of his present stay sent a cringing through his nerves. He scarcely hazarded a look below. The depth was fearful. To the seat he had left, it was about thirty feet; and from that, again, he recollected, for he could not now perfectly see, another void to the craggy bed of the torrent. The faintest frown of evening began to come. As he listened to the noise of the fall, his ears dinned and fretted, and his susceptible fancy, interpreting its monotonous roar into strange, supernatural cadences, the scream of a human voice mingled abruptly with the hoarse chorus of the waters, piercing up, he thought, from some part under him. Forgetting his late nervousness, Tresham glanced quickly down, and on the ledge he had just quitted, and beheld a female form. Another look, and he knew Anna. She sat on the rustic chair, her hands clasped, and her face turned upwards to him,—her pale, worn, haggard face, so unlike that which he had known and loved, and belying, too, the continued representations made to him by Butler of her continued health. A recollection of his former superstitions darkened Tresham's mind, and he feared he again beheld the Fetch of his mistress.

As the figure with wild earnestness still looked at him, Tresham, after a moment of ruinous thought, precipitated himself, unfitted as his feeble body was for such a task, down the tortuous path by which he had ascended to the bridge, and, panting and gasping, pursued his way to the shelfy rock.

In a few moments a mocking and shadowy likeness of her lover appeared before Anna, at the side of the ledge inserted into the bank. Her hands were still clasped, her eyes still strained and fixed; and the instant she saw him, Anna in a loud cry half of supplication and half of horror, said—

"Speak!—let me hear the sound of your voice!" He had been rapidly moving towards her, when, in a manner to her unaccountable, he shrank back, and leaning against a tree that overhung the water, his lips seemed to move in answer to her question, but no words reached Anna.

"What mean you?" she continued—"what brings you here? how did you—how could you come here?—I knew you were in Italy!"

A gloom set on his face, and with a smile that might have been meant for her re-assurance, but which had the contrary effect on her, he said—

"I have *never* been in Italy."

"You! you!" she repeated, marking the emphasis he used, and confusedly pursuing the image of her old terrors, while she felt frantic at the idea of two identities of her lover—"In the name of the blessed God, answer me!—why do you look so pale and worn!—why are you only so dreadfully like yourself?—only as like as the corpse is like the living man. And now what mean that shocking smile, again? Tell me—when and where did you see me last? At my father's house it was, if you are Tresham!"

A prolonged and broken answer came—"Tresham did not see you last at your father's house."

"Heavens of heavens!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands, and passing them rapidly through her black, dishevelled hair, as with a kind of knotted resemblance she called back Butler's explanation and this refutation of it; and Anna was continuing to speak to the point, when he slowly advanced a step, stretching out his arms. She shrieked wildly, and cringed to the very edge of the shelf, crying—"Approach me not! approach me not till you hear me!—Convince me, first, you are he, or show at once your own horrible nature!—Convince me!" she pursued, dropping on her knees—"Speak comfort to me, my heart's own Tresham—or—fiend as you may be speak to me! By the power and for the mercy of that God whose face you hope to see, or whose dark agent you are!"—her flesh stirred—her eyes shot from her head—her teeth gnashed; he advanced another step in silence, and—

"I warn you!" she resumed, growing desperately courageous in her madness and terror—"I warn you!—The depths, and the torrent, the rocks, are beneath me!—my foot is on the blade of grass that keeps me from destruction!—come nearer to me, but by another step, without speaking, and I plunge!"

These words, of power to dart through his curdling marrow and warm it with a new life—these words only, of all she had last spoken—his fading sense heard, and Tresham gained a reluctant energy and gasped out,—

"Anna—my adored Anna!—stop!—forbear—turn to me—support me!—bless me!—I am your own—own Tresham!—I am indeed Tresham,—not long to be so—I—I am dying!"

He staggered, and fell at her feet.

Her splitting scream again mastered, for a moment, even the near torrent's roar; and, precipitately as the leap of the torrent, her thoughts now shot down from their former course but still on another as dark, as impeded, and as frantic, as the found by the channelled waters. In the first outbreak of despair, of insanity, she cast herself upon what she thought the last wreck of her idol; but she heard a heavy breathing, an

tearing open his bosom wiped the thick damp from his brow; then, kneeling under him, rested his head on her own bared and virgin breast. He caught a moment's consciousness, fixed fixed his eyes upon her, and pressed her hand.

"I see it all, at last!"—Anna went on—"you have been dying—dying inch by inch, and I knew nothing of it!—the murderers hid it from me!—they said you were well, and travelling on the Continent—and you were walking into your grave!"

"You have not been well yourself, Anna," he, with much difficulty, said.

"Oh, yes!—very well—I have been mad!—mad!" she repeated with a laugh;—"but though they thought to deceive me, my own heart knew it all—ay, I knew it—the Fetch does not come in vain."

The last words more effectually roused Tresham, and he asked—"What can you mean, Anna?"

"I know what I mean," she replied, "and you shall know it too. You never came to my father's house since our last morning's walk?"

"Never—"

"Nor did you come the evening before?"

"Certainly not."

"Your Fetch came twice, then!"

The little life in Tresham's veins proclaimed its last human sympathies by running chiller at this announcement: he strove to speak, but could barely say—

"You are calm now, Anna—you mark what you tell me."

"I mark it," she answered in a changed and subdued voice.

Tresham's power of mental combination grew for a moment imperfectly active; but forgetting all Butler's arguments and his own latest convictions, he could only recollect that he had seen a supernatural appearance of Anna in the college, and—

"Let us," he continued, in thickened utterance—"let us try to comprehend this appalling mystery;—you asked me, Anna, when and where I had last seen you?"

"Ay," she said with shocking indifference—"and now I can answer the question myself. It was down by the Lacken, during our last morning's walk."

"Omnipotent!" exclaimed Tresham, in the last desperate struggle—"it was *not*, Anna!"

"Not!" she repeated, in more than her former wildness—

"not!—speak, then!—I hope—speak! when! where!"

"At the urn in the college shrubbery," Tresham repeated, his voice finally sinking.



