

ground—looking very serious for a moment, and then smiling and blushing with a sheepishly guilty expression of countenance.

"I'll run up for the winkers. There's a buckle loose in them," said Joe, glancing irresolutely towards his master, as if he feared Mr. O'Keeffe might offer some objection to the delay. Instead of returning through the avenue, Joe Cooney went to the trouble of climbing over the wall at the corner of the garden, with the harness winkers hanging upon his arm, and a magnificent bunch of lilac in his left hand, which he held while passing by the gate, so that the gentlemen in the avenue might not see it. It may as well be confessed at once, that the harness winkers was a mere pretence, and the bunch of lilac the real cause of his turning back, when he got the order to go for Rody Flynn, as the best substitute for Mr. Ambrose Armstrong.

Joe walked hurriedly, till he came within a few yards of the cooper's cottage-like thatched house, but dropped into a slow, careless lounge, as he passed the little red wooden gate of the yard, in which Mr. Cormack's car (covered on the outside according to the weather), was put up on Sunday during the Mass, and turned, as if something at the opposite side of the street had suddenly attracted his attention, on coming to the window with the white curtain and the scarlet geranium.

"God save all here!" said Joe Cooney, laying his hand on the half-door, and looking like a young man who was weary of a world in which he could find nothing to interest him.

"God save you kindly, Joe!" was the cheery response, accompanied by a look suggestive of complete unconsciousness of care or trouble. "Have you any news?"

"Not a word," Joe replied, "except that Mr. Robert wants you in a great hurry. Sammy Sloane. Oh! be the hokey," he broke off, "spake av the ould boy an' he'll appear." And Joe turned round and stared at the podgy little bailiff, who was hurrying up the street, trying to walk as fast as his short, stumpy legs would allow, but breaking into intermittent trots, in spite of himself, cocking up the toes of his thick half-boots, as if he wanted to exhibit the nails in the soles, and looking very flushed and excited. On catching a glimpse of the bunch of lilac, Mr. Sloane stopped suddenly, and approaching Joe Cooney, took the liberty of laying his hand upon Joe's arm, and stopping down, inhaled the odor of the blossoms, as if he found the temptation quite irresistible.

"They're charming," said Mr. Sloane. "I wish I had a bunch like that to bring home to my wife. Where did you get them, Joe?" And Sammy Sloane looked coaxingly, but at the same time suspiciously, into the, at that moment, rather glum and surprised face of the "priest's boy."

"I noticed that fine lilac tree in Father Feehan's shrubbery. Was it from that you pulled them, Joe?" And Sammy Sloane put his nose to the lilacs again, keeping his left eye fixed upon Joe Cooney's face, who replied gruffly enough that it was from the tree in the shrubbery he got them.

"Good morning," said the little bailiff,

looking reassured, but still suspicious, into Joe Cooney's freckled countenance, and resuming his alternating trotting and walking up the street, taking off his hat and wiping the perspiration from his forehead as he approached the priest's gate, and muttering to himself, "Joe has not found them, I think."

"He's after puttin' Mr. Roberts horse into the Pound," said Joe, resuming the conversation with the cooper.

Rody Flynn raised his eyebrows and shrugged his shoulders; but, from the twinkle of his black eye and the smile that lit up his chubby face, it was plain that Rody was rather amused than otherwise by the intelligence.

"He's takin' after the father and the grandfather," said Rody laughing. "The bailiffs were always huntin' 'em. But I thought young Robert was too 'cute to let himself be exposed. Times are different now from what they used to be. I remember when 'tis proud a man 'ud be to have a writ or a decree out against him. But that's all changed; I'm surprised at young Robert."

"That reminds me," Joe Cooney remarked, putting his hand into his coat-pocket, "that I picked up these papers when I was pullin' the laylac. Be the hokey!" he continued, as he unfolded them, "as sure as you're born they're Whereases. Yes, they're to-wits, and no mistake," Joe went on, "an' Mr. Robert's name wud five round O's to the two uv 'em."

Rody Flynn laughed till he could scarcely find breath to call out, "Julia, bring me my hat an' coat."

"Good morrow, Joe," said pretty Julia Flynn, with a laugh in the corner of her eye as she glanced at the flowers, while handing the coat and hat to her father.

Joe's only reply to the salutation was presenting the bunch of lilac as if he were taking aim at her with a pistol.

"Oh, thank you, Joe; they are beautiful. I'll put them in water and they'll keep fresh for ever so long."

"Give me the decrees," said Rody Flynn, "an' let us go down to the Pound first. 'Tis a capital joke if Sammy is caught." And Rody, thrusting his hands into the side pockets of his coat, walked down the street and over the bridge with a lightness in step and a roll in his gait which made Julia remark that her father was getting young again.

The horse was not in the Pound. Jacky, the cobbler, was holding him in the lane, for which service Jacky had got one penny from Sammy Sloane, and was promised another.

"Take him away," said Rody Flynn.

"Might I bring him to the forge?" Joe Cooney asked.

"Yes," Rody answered, "an' I'll go up and see what's to be done. If there be any talk at the forge say it was all a mistake, an' don't give them any more information."

"You forgot to put in the horse," said Rody Flynn laughing, on meeting Mr. Sloane in the priest's avenue, smelling a bunch of lilac, and seemingly lost in admiration of its beauty, and fragrance. The bailiff started and let the blossoms fall from his hand.

"Come up to the house," Rody continued, "and let us see what can be done."

The matter was settled more satisfactorily than Mr. Sloane expected; for Father Feehan, almost to the chagrin of his nephew, who wished to have revenge, insisted on paying the two debts in full.

But Sammy Sloane was very sad for all that. He said to his wife as he sat gloomily by his well-swept hearth that night, that he was afraid he'd soon die. "It was the first real mistake I have ever made in my business," continued Mr. Sloane, gloomily. "I hope Murty Magrath won't hear of it. I was never able to do the clever things that Murty did; but I was always correct. I deserved it, though; for I was influenced by personal feeling. I blamed Father Feehan for having the Liberal candidate resign; and that's what made me think of seizing his nephew's horse."

"Never allow personal feeling to influence you, William," Mr. Sloane went on, addressing his young son who was polishing the grilled mutton bone his father had had for supper. "Always do your duty without being influenced by personal feeling. I'd be dead when you were nine months old, with a bullet through my eyebrow, if I allowed myself to be carried away by personal feelings."

"How was that?" young William asked, taking the bone from across his mouth, and looking earnestly at his respected parent.

"I'll tell you another time," Mr. Sloane replied. "Poor Paddy Fitzsimons got the bullet through the eyebrow instead of me—and all because he allowed himself to be influenced by personal feeling. The mistake of this morning—losing them decrees—will be a warning to me all the days of my life."

"And won't you get anything for the election, Samuel?" his wife asked.

"Yes, I have a claim," Mr. Sloane replied. "I got information for them that may be useful another time. The Carlton Club always acts liberally, and I know Mr. Perrington won't forget me."

"And didn't you employ Jim Dhew to make the fence round the garden?" said Mrs. Sloane.

"Yes, I wanted to have him in my hands; though I knew he wouldn't do anything against the priest."

"And what good would he be for you, then?" Mrs. Sloane asked in surprise.

"Oh, he might be useful up to a certain point, and it would be something to keep him quiet. 'Tis a great disappointment altogether," continued Sammy Sloane mournfully. "We'll have to go back to England. This country is getting wus and wus, and unless there's a stir soon in the ejection business 'twill be difficult to make both ends meet. God be with the time when Cloonavrona was fifty pounds a year to me, sure money." And Mr. Sloane sighed and dropped his chin upon his chest.

"Here, take your beer," said his wife. "Where's the use in fretting?"

"That's true," he replied, blowing the froth from his mug. "But," he added, after taking a draught, "I hope Murty Magrath won't hear what a fool I made of myself. He'd turn me into ridicule at the Sessions. But I'm not such a dull fellow as Murty thinks."

(To be continued.)

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