

to realise the amount of the Hugg mortgages. I would further suggest to you the advisability, from your own point of view as well as from mine, of observing silence as to the circumstances under which this letter is written and the advances now in question have been negotiated. If within one month from date I do not learn that you have honorably fulfilled the conditions herein specified, I shall burn the deed which gives you your sole title to claim under the Hugg mortgages, and I shall take such steps as may seem most advisable either to inflict chastisement upon you myself, or to denounce you to the criminal law as the principal in the conspiracy for the confiscation of the Drumshaughlin estates."

He folded the letter neatly and addressed it.

"That, I should say, completes our business together for the present, Humphrey," said Hans Harman, with a grin and a mock bow towards the motionless body of the money-lender. Something suggested by the rigidity of the body seemed to strike him, and he tore away the handkerchief from the face. It exhaled the cold grey mystery of a corpse—the features tightly drawn, the teeth set, the nostrils still. "By Jove, it looks as if it had been overmuch," Harman cried, bending down with his ear close to the money-lender's heart. "Pooh! I don't think so—action not too bad. In any case, that is a detail. Upon the whole better he than I!—at least, perhaps"—added the broken criminal, with a weary sigh as he buttoned up his great-coat.

CHAPTER XXXX.—IS THE BANSHEE TO HAVE HER BRIDEGROOM?

As Ken Rohan was passing through the dark stone passage from the cells to the dock of the Green Street Court-house, he stumbled against a figure coming the other way, with a turnkey's heavy shoulders looming up close behind him. A smoky gas-jet was sputtering against one of the clammy walls. He immediately recognised Mahon's old-fashioned cloak and long grey-black locks, and knew that the poet's trial for high treason must have finished.—"What luck?" Ken whispered, as they clasped hands.—The poet's large, melancholy eyes filled with a luminous glow, and the sweetest smile came over the deep-dug lines that curved from his nostrils around the corners of his mouth. "The best of all luck—death for Ireland!" he whispered, softly; then laying his delicate white hand tenderly on the other's shoulder, "but you—at your age —" "Mustn't talk," muttered the turnkey, hustling the old cloak and the silvery locks into the gloom; an iron door opened in front of Ken Rohan, and he found the mid-day sun and a thousand human eyes beating blindingly down upon him.

In Ireland, gaols are popular shrines, like the ruined Abbeys and the Holy Wells. The only really venerated part of a court of justice is the dock. The judge's ermine inspires respect to the same extent, and for the same reason, as the loaded guns of the policemen in all the passages. Let me not scare those who may have been wiled thus far by recalling the woeful explanation why Ken Rohan's first sensation in the dock was that of being in a sacred place—some such delicate *frissonnement* of the nervous and spiritual apparatus as he used to experience in strewing the flowers and lighting the tapers on the altar of the Blessed Sacrament on Corpus Christi Day, so long, long dreamy ages ago. The dock in Green Street is a curious sunken well in the centre of the court, through which prisoners seem to rise out of the bowels of the earth and disappear again into the pit as suddenly. High overhead in front, with only the witness-table between, looms the canopied tribunal on which the two Special Commission judges, in blood-red gowns, looked threateningly down upon the prisoner; at the side, in a high-pitched gallery, which seemed to be in danger of falling from the roof, the jury sat like beings hopelessly removed from fellowship with the unhappy wretch below, and menaced him every hour of the day with falling on him and crushing him under the ruins of gallery, verdict, and all; the seats for the public rose in steep semicircles behind the dock up to the roof, so that the prisoner seemed to have left all worldly friends and hopes behind him, and to see nothing in front of him but wood-carved lawyers' visages, a jury-gallery as darkly threatening as a rapiers' sword, and blood-red judges, whose slightly frowning faces seemed to be waiting for the fresh young blood to be spilt in the

dock to restore them to their pristine dye. The dock was, in fact, for all the world like a cockpit, in which the prisoner had to make his forlorn fight for life against desperate odds, sinking down when all was over into the Tophet which yawned for him amidst the cells below. And yet Ken Rohan was not thinking of cockpits, wigs, verdicts, nor black caps at this moment. He was thinking that it was from this very dock, from this very spot, Robert Emmet gave up his young life two generations before in words over which Irish maidens still weep, and Irish youths wring their weaponless hands. From this very dock, and from this very spot, a generation later, John Mitchel uttered his fierce hymn of scorn while the irresistible Juggernaut car thundered down upon him to break him limb by limb. An heir examining his Crusading ancestors in some baronial hall—a novice treading the cloisters of Monte Cassino or Clairvaux on the very stones pressed by a St. Benedict or a St. Bernard—could not have felt more reverential pride than Ken Rohan in finding himself heir to that sad, sad royal house of Irish Patriotism, of which the gallows is the genealogical tree. Underneath was the vault by which Emmet passed from the dock to die at break of day. Cause, scene, actors, issue, always the same throughout the rolling generations—the only change wrought by a dreary century being that, for the work of draining the most gallant young hearts in the land of their life-blood, Catholic Emancipation had substituted two spiteful Catholic judges for one stern Protestant one. Just such another audience, long ago dead and gone, must have hedged Emmet in with pitiless eyes. Ah! but the hapless, happy love which irradiated young Emmet's life—which made it at once so easy and so hard to die! How easy to bear the stare of all those callous faces if one could only know that among them all there was one crystal-pure heart where one's shrine would glow for ever and for ever! How sweet to die in the soft break of day, if one could only be sure that the love of one adored being would be buried with him in his unknown prison grave! A dreadful chill of loneliness shot through Ken Rohan's limbs while the wood-carved lawyers were going through their preliminary abracadabra. The fashionable ladies, who, as the reporters would say, "were accommodated with seats on the Bench near their lordships," and repaid their lordships with nosegays of flowers, thought they could, through their lorgnettes, see the prisoner trembling. And yet some instinct more powerful than their lorgnettes softened the fashionable ladies in spite of themselves towards the prisoner, with his fresh tint of youth and frankness—possibly some subtle touch of that magnetism that always betrays a man in love to women and always ranges them on his side. He could not himself exactly tell what this sense of forsakenness meant. He was an unknown stripling in Dublin, and could scarcely have expected friendly faces among the audience, even if the audiences who would have looked friendly were not kept far from the precincts of the court by pickets of cavalry and battalions of police. His mother and Katie, who had seen him in turn in prison, had been mercifully summoned back to Drumshaughlin by news of the miller's growing worse. Father Phil had burst upon him also like a sudden gush of sunshine through a stormy December sky.

"The boy can get in Christian's food till the trial," the Coadjutor-Bishop remarked to him before he set out, and something as closely resembling a tear as anything ever seen trembling in that stern eye trembled there as he added: "I don't suppose food or any other of this world's cares will trouble him for very long after it. There's my blank cheque. Arrange for everything, Father Phil—tell him I will never say Mass without remembering him—and tell him—oh, bother!—tell him first of all, and last of all, God bless him!"

Nor was the Coadjutor-Bishop's message the only shaft of brightness Father Phil's sunny old face projected into the cell. Father Phil had been to visit his scapegrace nephew. There was no substantial evidence against Jack Harold. He had been transferred to Mountjoy Prison in the category of "suspects" detained under the Habeas Corpus Suspension, and had to his disgust received an intimation that he would be released on his consenting to be conveyed on board an American-bound steamer at Queenstown.