

"No, I'm not a devil, but I'm a devilish good shot," said the agent, swiftly covering his visitor with a revolver, and advancing a pace nearer to him to be surer of his aim. "Put down whatever you've in your breast there—put it out on that table—one—two!"

The trembling wretch was fascinated as by the eye of a snake-charmer; he dropped a pinfire revolver on the table, so precipitately that a shot went off, and the bullet passed through a skirt of the agent's coat.

"I never would depend upon those pinfire things if I were you," said the agent. "You see? Here is the bullet-hole, there is your empty revolver—I have only to ring, and you're convicted of an attempt to murder me in my own house, after murdering my bailiff." He saw Dawley stagger up against a book-case to find support against the drab topsy-turvy mist that was dancing before his eyes and the cold sweats that were sapping his limbs. "Now, Dawley," resumed Mr. Hans Harman, putting up his revolver, and speaking in an almost genial tone, "I've always warned you that I am an enemy; but I've told you also that you might find me no worse at a pinch than some of the so-called friends who are duping you into putting your neck where they will never put their own:—now, I don't mean to ring for the policeman. I don't mean to hand you over to the hangman"—he noticed the startled, half-doubting expression of relief that crossed the wretched face—"not if you enable me to let you off with an easy conscience. I cannot be a party to condoning a horrible murder; but I can and will secure you immunity if you will aid me and justice to bring home guilt to those who are behind you—to those who have egged you on to murder and to more important crimes of treason. For instance"—his keen meaningful eyes penetrating him through and through—"if that young Rohan was in any way responsible—I'm not saying that he was, mind!"

"Do you know what Quish was shot for?" said the other, with a snort like a caged beast. "Shoot me at once and be done wid it—hell to you!"

"I will not shoot you at once, because I can hang you at leisure," said the agent, coldly—"that is, if you're so ungrateful and so idiotic as to drive me to it. I should think it is not curses I have earned by not only saving you from the gallows, but opening your way to a handsome reward—for you have only to aid me to hunt down treason and murder to be a richer fellow than a century in Blackamoor Lane would make you; and you must know as well as I do that it's only a question whether your accomplices will hang you, or whether you'll be too quick for them. I don't know that I have anything else to say, and you look as if you thought this interview had lasted sufficiently long. Think it over, and make up your mind. I don't want to take any unfair advantage of you. But beware of attempting to obtain any unfair advantage over me. Though my revolver won't follow you, my eye will; and, if you try it, you're a rat in a trap, and—I'll let in the bulldogs. Turn the handle of the door the other way—that's it. Yes, you may go," Hans Harman nodded, as the wretched creature paused humbly for the signal. "I think," he said, looking at himself in the somewhat dark steely mirror, "this hasn't been a bad afternoon's work."

In the meantime all was getting ready for the sheriff at the Mill at Greendale. There was a cargo of Californian wheat on its way, in which Myles Rohan held a third with some Cork merchants, and on which he had relied to satisfy the writ, and, at all events, stave off the evil hour; but his partners, Messrs. Waffles and Greany, were unwilling to sell at the depressed prices that ruled the market, and he quietly bowed his head before the gathering storm, and said it might as well come soon as late. In Ireland neighbors aid one another against the Sheriff, as while settlers in the western backwoods used to draw together on the first signal of the scalpers. Myles Rohan had only to pass the word to have assembled a trusty garrison with their pitchforks at the Millhouse; but, Myles being a stern law-and-order man, they did the next best offices of good neighborhood by helping to remove the furniture and proffering their own houses as an asylum either for the household effects or for their owners. Men who had not spoken to the sturdy miller for years arrived silently with their carts and bore away chairs, tables, and bedsteads with the solemn tenderness of Sisters of Charity binding up a cruel wound. Mrs. Harold, who was one of the most awful of human beings at bewailing her own imagin-

ary woes, was the most helpful and devoted in assuaging the real ones of others. Father Phil used to say with a smile that the happiest moments of his life were when some killed or wounded neighbor needed the sleepless energies of Maria. At this moment she was director-general of operations at the Mill, her wailful voice sounding crisp and clear as a bell, and the bitter eyes behind the spectacles quiet and decisive as those of a general in the thick of a battle. "Of course, Kate," she remarked to Mrs. Rohan, "Myles and the children will not think of going anywhere but to us. You know Jack is away, and there's plenty of room—Ken will have to stow himself away upon the sofa in Father Phil's room—but it does a youngster good to have to rough it." The only time Maria lost her temper was when Mrs. Rohan timidly broke to her the intelligence that this was impossible—that quiet lodgings had been already secured which they were furnishing from the Mill and striving to make as like the mill-parlor as possible in Myles' eyes. Mrs. Rohan herself bore the blow with a cheerful heroism which never deserted her, unless when her eyes fell upon the miller. Then indeed these eyes filled with tears which she dared not let fall, and the first desolate pang the eviction brought her was to find that the little Oratory of the Blessed Virgin, at which she had so often found her tears turn to golden treasure, had been dismantled of its statue and tapers in the process of removal, and that she had no longer whereto to bring her lacerated soul for balm. Still her great terror for Myles caused her to aid busily and even smilingly, while the massive old mahogany tables and sideboards—the pride of the family for generations—were borne out like so many coffins with ancient friends inside; and while the old silver, and the old cut-glass, and all the old sacred vessels of her housekeeping were being ransacked, and pawed and scattered.

The young people (as is young people's way) found a certain assuagement of the sorrow of quitting their old home in the mere movement, variety, and change of the removal operations—in the flitting to and fro of so many friendly faces, in the unusually hearty grip of friendly hands, in the bustle of carts coming and going, and heavy furniture bumping funnily downstairs. Katie, without at all knowing she was making the effort, was shining over the desolate house with softer lustre than ever—as the sun lights the bare mountain side with tenderer colors than ever he expends upon the best pastures. It was only one or two very slight circumstances that unnerved her—as, for instance, when she found a carter lighting his pipe in her now vacant little room amidst the white and blue forget-me-nots; and when Georgey O'Meagher and she, making a last visit to see that there was nothing forgotten in the garret (a region which, in their youthful play-hours, had been the dark home of all sorts of mysterious bogies, and which it had been one of Ken's earliest triumphs of manhood to have explored alone in the dark), and saw its timber ribs and mysterious corners now exposed and naked in the rude light which rushed in where a wooden shutter had been torn from the skylight—as if all the romance and wonder of their young lives were being carted away with the furniture.

Ken was escaping most of the worries of the removal by having the more instant terrors of Mat Murrin's printer's devil at his heels; for, although Mat confidentially posed as the principal thunderer in the secret sheet, it was in reality written from opening poem to closing paragraph by his young catechumen. Ken had become absorbed to his heart's core in his work. The mere feeling that every sentence was written with a sword hanging by a hair over his head brought out the best that was in him, and imparted a strange charm to those hot secret hours in which he seemed to be giving out the best blood chambered in his bosom in thoughts that shone and burned. He wrote with his feet in the polar circle and his brain in the tropics. The strange thing was that he so little knew why or where in the mysterious recesses of his being these springs suddenly bubbled forth. He felt only that their bright waters were a-flowing, and that forth they must gush amidst all sorts of enchanted scenery—red battle-fields, or whispering woodland nooks, or the sunlit corn-fielde future. Another source of endless wonder to him was to find that his thoughts affected others as they affected himself—to feel that they made young pulses throb and young veins run fire, and to thrill with the sense of

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