

sovereigns even, but for a night's rations of whisky. Stay, Dawley, I know you won't abuse my confidence any more than make my coat a misfit, though we are enemies—open, honorable enemies. There is one of these rascals below. Just step behind that screen, and you will hear for yourself."

Mr. Harman rang the bell, and Quish plantigraded into the room like an elephant that had playfully deprived one of the public of a hairy cap. "Well, fellow," said the agent, severely, "you've spent that last half-sovereign—gone into Moll Carty's till—poured down your own thirsty gullet, eh?"

The elephant intimated by a heavy double-shuffle of its kind hooves, and certain vague noises in the gullet in question, that the agent was impregnable in his facts.

"Precious bad value you gave the Government for its money—for you know well, sir, it's the money of the public and not mine that you are soaking yourself in whisky with. You'll have to look sharp, sir, and let us know more of this infernal conspiracy, or I'll hand you over to public justice and make an example of you—do you hear?"

"I'll do my best, zurr," said Quish, who essayed the smallest effort of eloquence with as painful a wrestling of the spirit as the orator Flood when he used to rise for one of his great efforts.

"Well, what have been the American Captain's movements since you last reported?"

"Twenty-three brace on Thursday, and two blackcock." This was the one topic in the world on which his tongue was not clogged with triple chains. "Friday, a parcel of boys scared the birds, drat 'em!—only a few brace and an odd snipe."

The agent frowned angrily. "Don't put me off with your infernal dogboy humbug," he said, menacingly. "You know very well what I mean—any drilling?—any strangers in square-toed boots?—any meeting of Centres at the Castle, eh?"

"Lots, zurr," said the monster, looking roguishly with one eye and truculently with the other. "Hid in the 'servathry an' hurd it all. Seems there's a change from the Bay—ships are to come round to Kenmare—some big fellow 'spected next week that'll settle it all. Quish will keep an eye. Half a sov, zurr," belched the animal, panting after so much violent word-vomiting.

"Vague and incoherent, as usual, I wish your ear was more serviceable than your mouth, or, better still, if you'd brush the mud out of whatever answers you for a noddle," said the agent contemptuously. "Well, there's the money, and mind you report the instant this stranger sets foot in the district; or—listen!—so sure as you'll never look your hangman straight in the face, you'll make that hangman's acquaintance—either that, or I'll denounce you to the venge of the men you are betraying—perhaps to Dawley, the tailor, who, I hear, is a desperate fellow with the revolver. Go!"

"Oyeh, the little *Keolawn*!" snorted Quish, with the contempt of an elephant for a gad-fly. "More power to your honor!" and burying the piece of gold in his paw, with the clutch of a fasting wild animal, the great slouching mass fumbled out of the room, hairy cap and all.

"Oh the villainy!" exclaimed little Dawley, stalking out of his ambush with a brow of darkness. "A little *Keolawn*" from dat cross-eyed abortion!—de bloody misbegotten caricature of ould Nick! "Keolawn" from Quish de bailiff! Oh den, oh den, wasn't I de Job of a man to listen dere foreninst him, an' not try whedder a bullet wouldn't be ashamed of lodgin' in his ugly carcase!"

"But you mustn't, you know—honor bright!—in justice to me," said Mr. Hans Harman, affably. "I hope the rascal hasn't ruffled your feelings—Quish is not altogether the worst of them. I was only just anxious to let you know, in a friendly sort of way, what mines are opening under honest fellows' feet—because after all, you know, it's not because men are political opponents that they may not give some credit for honesty where it's due. There now—I'll shoot you down like a dog all the same when you take the field, Dawley. Saturday, then, be it; and for your life none of your atrocious velvet collars on a shooting-coat." Whereupon Mr. Hans Harman's eyes opened the door for Dawley and—

Kicked him downstairs with such good grace, That D. thought he was kicking him up.

Perhaps it was the draughty, stony-faced staircase that did it, but the supplies of cheerful warmth the agent took in at the study-grate were exhausted before he had mounted to his wife's room; for it seemed to be a gust of cold air that entered the darkened sick-room with him and blew into the drawn, livid, peevish face fastened, as in some slow, torturing apparatus, upon the pillows of the vast gloomy bed. Hans Harman, however, regaled the invalid with a cheerful smile and a hand that, so to say, presented the smile on a silver salver, as he said: "And how are you to-day, my dear?"—looking then for an answer to Miss Deborah, as if the sufferer had nothing further to do with it, but had bequeathed her views on such matters to her sister-in-law, as sole depository and Authorised Version thereof. "No worse," was the laconic reply of Miss Deborah, who was standing sturdily over the pinched white face, with the open Bible on the one hand, and a bowl of some nauseous homoeopathic mess, which she prided herself on brewing herself, on the other—a sainted she-dragon flapping darkly around the dismal bed—a Holy Inquisitor demanding incessantly of a patient "put to the question" what further the most unreasonable of sufferers could desire than a dark chamber, a bed as pompous as a hearse, medicinal draughts of choicest colocynth, the Holy Scriptures, and a woman of inflexible virtue to administer these good things in their wholesome season. Mr. Harman was a dutiful husband; but, having cheered his wife with his customary dutiful visit, and, being a man who lived laborious days, public duty compelled him and the gust of cold air to take their departure, carrying with them Miss Deborah's consoling bulletin; they, in fact, as the French say, took note of the minister's assurance, and passed to the order of the day.

The next order of the day was the Mill at Greenane, where the indefatigable agent descended as from a chariot of the sun half an hour afterwards, having, in the meantime, accumulated stores of warmth that ordinary terrestrial grates are inadequate to account for, even if a bitter October blast had not been blowing all the way. "Only pulled up to see how you are, Rohan; glad to see you so sturdy on your pins again," he said. "This is bad news in the paper—suppression of this Fenian newspaper, and the rest of it; hope it isn't true that your son wrote some dreadful thing or other that got it suppressed." This last thrust was not so artistic but that the point of steel was visible, for the contemptuous disregard of his offer of the clerkship in the Pipe Roll Office rankled in the agent's recollection sorely.

He had made the one thrust that could stir the miller's slumbering independence. "Thank you, sahr! I suppose my son will be able to take care of himself," he said, with a touch of the iron virility before which the agent had so often quaked in the Board-room and at town's meetings.

"Faith I hope so for his sake, and for yours. Young gentlemen that turn up their noses at a snug berth in the Four Courts, and won't even be commonly civil to those that offer it, don't easily learn that when they dash their heads against stone walls it's not the stone walls that get hurt. But what the deuce has come over you, Rohan, that you should copy the boy's manner as well as his objections to a Government situation?"

The miller did not know in the least what he was driving at. But he supposed the reference was to something that might have happened about the time of his illness, and, as he did not choose to let the world know the gaps and fogs that still infested his memory of that period, he found it easier to resent the almost undisguised malice of the agent's observation. "Whatever I have to say to a man, I say it to his face aboveboard. You must excuse me if I'm too old to take lessons in your model-school, Mr. Harman," he said hotly. "And as for Government situations, 'tis nothing so wonderful if a boy of mine does not ambition blacking the boots of them that made Humphrey Dargan a magistrate. At which rough hug Myles chuckled like a lusty wrestler.

"Come, Rohan, confound it, you must not let Humphrey hear that," laughed the agent, jumping into the

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