

onets here and there against the shifting black background. The foremost of the great-coats pushed unceremoniously forward. Ken Rohan put him quietly but resolutely back.

"Let me pass," said the man, gruffly, thrusting forward a rifle.

"Not until you've explained your business," said Rohan, grasping the rifle with both hands by the barrel.

"You have no right to see the warrant—it is a felony—the 11th and 12th Victoria will tell you that—we've a right to enter, arrest, and search," said Head-Constable Muldudden, whose pride in the legal reference had checked for the moment his rude onset. "I bear a warrant for the arrest of Michael MacCarthy, commonly called Captain MacCarthy, on a charge of Trayson-felony—resist me at your perr'li!"

"Captain MacCarthy is not in this house—upon my word!" came the answer, in Miss Westropp's calm, clear tones. She stood forward, facing the lurid circle of arms and rough figures like some statue of a Madonna suddenly gleaming into life.

The policemen on the steps involuntarily stepped back a pace. Muldudden's hand went perforce to his hat as in the old exorcisms the Evil Spirit is compelled to make the sign of the Cross at departing. "Very sorry, Miss," he said, with a certain cowed insistence, "but orders is orders. We'll have to search the Castle."

"Miss Westropp has pledged her honor that Captain MacCarthy is not here," said Rohan. "Do you persist in breaking into the house at this time of night, when you know there is nobody but a helpless lady and her servants on the premises?"

"You are there," said the other, with insolent meaning. "Stand aside, if you don't want to commit a misdemeanour yourself, my fine fellow, as you've escaped trayson-felony this time."

The head-constable made a lunge forward again with the muzzle of his rifle. Quick as thought the young man had wrenched it out of his hands, and held the clubbed musket fixed menacingly over his head in the doorway.

"Stop!" cried an authoritative voice, its owner advancing out of the darkness. "There are express orders not to give Miss Westropp any unnecessary annoyance. If Miss Westropp assures you that the man named in the warrant is not in the house it is sufficient. Head Constable Muldudden, you can fall back."

"Mr. Hans Harman!" exclaimed Miss Westropp, as the agent, wrapped in a heavy cloak, pushed the policeman on the steps back into the darkness, and doffed his low-crowned hat. "Pray, am I to count myself indebted to you for terminating or for initiating this visit?"

"An accident—a mere accident—my being here, I assure you, my dear young lady. A dreadful duty—but these are dreadful times. The officer of police, Mr. Flibbert, was away on his honeymoon—it was a very pressing matter—and as there was no other magistrate immediately available, Muldudden called upon me—pressed me into the service by my allegiance, so to say."

"I have no doubt he called upon the proper person, sir," she replied, in a tone that somehow prompted him to put up his hand to see if anything had cut him across the cheek. "Am I to consider myself free to treat this scene as closed, or does your duty to your Sovereign press you any further?"

"Young ladies, of course, cannot be expected to understand the stern duties that times like these impose upon men; but I assure you that the instructions were that you should be treated with every possible consideration."

"And doubtless, sir, so I have been. Is there anything more?" she asked, holding the great door half open. His sleek self-command forsook him under the lash of that girlish voice. "Nothing more," he said, as he turned into the darkness, "except that your father will be here to-morrow night, and will, no doubt, take care that there shall be no repetition of the proceedings which caused this visit to Drumshaughlin Castle, and no continuance of the acquaintances which pain his daughter's best friends." The hoarse order—"Fall in—march!" and the heavy tramping on the gravel were the last sounds that came through as the great iron-clamped door swung back into its chains.

"My father returning, and not a word to give me notice—not a message or a hint to me?" mused Miss West-

ropp, as she faced back through the echoing corridor. "Oh! I dare say he has been teased to death with that ill-natured gossip of Harman's, and is coming back to give me a terrible blazing-up for my iniquities, dear old pappy! Only wait till we see whether it's Mr. Hans Harman or I that will have the worst of his agent's exploits to-night from him! Oh! but Captain MacCarthy—my poor, poor Captain!"

"Captain Mike's old luck—but 'twas a close thing this time," said Ken Rohan. "Somebody must have passed the word."

"Oh! but if not—if he does not know—go and find him! go and warn him! go!" she cried, vehemently. "I will not feel lonesome now—and—what a selfish creature I am!—how they must be waiting and trembling for you all this time at the Mill, while I have been keeping you here to nurse me! And my own poor Harry—God of Sorrows! what a country is this!—what a tangle of hopeless chains around young lives! Where can Harry be? How is the Captain to be warned? What is to be done?"

"Here is somebody who will, perhaps, answer the question for us," said Rohan, as the hall-bell again sounded.

"Heavens! if it should be the Captain!—He is lost!" she cried, white as death.

"It is Harry—I hear his voice in the corridor," he answered; and the next moment Harry Westropp staggered into the room, like one drunk or insane, and tumbled into a chair, crying: "Whisky—for God's sake, Mabel, whisky!" His eyes were staring wildly, his light hair tossing in anarchy, his throat, as Ken Rohan placed the tumbler in his hands, burning like the funnel of a ship's boiler. "The police were here?" he ejaculated, after a greedy gulp. "I passed two of them this moment in the avenue. They are outside still. Have they told you?"

"In Heaven's name, what?" cried Miss Westropp, who had sunk on her knees at his feet, with her hands clasped.

The strain appeared to have been too much for his mental faculties. His head fell heavily between his hands, and tears broke from his eyes; and all that was distinguishable from his sobs was "Quish! poor Quish!"

#### CHAPTER XXIX.—QUISH GOES HOME.

Earlier on that night of uneasy moaning winds a man glided into the darkened chapel. Only one half of the door remained open, the chapel-woman having already bolted the other half for the night, as a signal to stray worshippers that the hour of total closing was at hand. Inside all was getting dark, except where a feeble red glow from the lamp before the altar trembled in the deep gloom like the heart of a mystery. The man stumbled against a pillar and fell on his knees. A fugitive gleam of moonlight burst on him as through a bull's-eye, deepening every furrow on his haggard face, and making the statue of a past parish priest fixed against the wall beside him horrible with the bluish-white tinge of a dead man's face. He shrank back blinded. The patch of troubled moonlight disappeared, and seemed to have deprived him of the light of his eyes. There was not a sound in the chapel. The pillars and confessionals loomed darkly like monstrous dead forms. It seemed to him that his own breathing must be heard in the most distant corners, so loud it sounded and so fiercely it tore its way through his chest. He staggered back towards the doorway, and had one hand on the handle of the inner swing-door when the low groan-like cadence of a Latin prayer somewhere in the darkness first startled, and then reassured him. He let go the door-handle and crept again along the wall, groping his way stealthily till he started back again with trembling limbs. His hand had touched the cold white face of the dead parish priest. He gently resumed his way on tip-toe towards the altar-lamp, and presently, just as the red glow died off into deep unnumbered shadows, he stood beside a prostrate form with something that shone like a silver crown on its head. "Father Phil," muttered the man in a hoarse whisper which, nevertheless, he thought sounded like the alarm of a great bell. The silver crown continued to be bent low before the tabernacle, and no sign of life came until again there came that low wailing Latin heart-cry: "*Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine, Domine, quis sustinebit?*"—that sad-sweet hymn of human weakness in which saint and sinner, great and lowly, have for thou-