

Harry looked at him bewildered. He supposed his mind must be wandering.

"With me? I came alone."

The other shook his head. "I hear 'em this moment on the stepping-stones across the strath. Don't tell me! A hare couldn't run in that mountain unknownst to me." The deadly doubt which convulsed his face, when he besought Father Phil to communicate with his young master, seemed to have taken possession of him again. "Whisper, Masther Harry," he gurgled out, drawing Harry's head down to him in an eager, feverish way. "The ould 'oman is deaf an' won't hear. It wasn't that you had any doubt of Quish? It wasn't to relieve your mind the boys put me out of the way?"

Harry started back as if a bullet had gone to his heart. "God of Heaven!" he cried, "my poor Quish, do you think I'm a murderer? do you think I'm the vilest brute that ever bit the hand of his best friend?"

"Because," continued the other, confidentially, "it isn't that 'twould matter a *traneen*; my child, I'd boil every drop of my blood for you—I'd grind every bone in my ould carcass, if 'twas plasin' to you to accept of it. But if I could make sure it wasn't you had any fear Quish would harm you dead or alive—if 'twas only a mistake of the boys—"

Harry could not answer a word. There seemed to be a boulder fixed in his throat. But his tears fell on the dying man's face, and Quish's burning flesh seemed to drink them up like an elixir, and to understand them better than if they were most musical eloquence.

"Thank God!" he muttered, huskily. "An," Masther Harry," with a glance in the direction of his mother, "you won't see the ould woman short of the sup of tay?"

Harry pressed his hand, and Quish reclined back with the comforted air of a man whose will had just been read over and signed. For a few moments nothing was heard but Quish's pained breathing, the old mother's woeful lullaby, and the uneasy voices of the night. A face pressed close outside the window (for Quish's instinct had not deceived him), was pressed closer, as if trying to hear the very silence. Once more the monstrous bullet-head shot upwards, shaking with a preternatural chuckle. "Well, begor, 'twas a fine sell on ould Harman, any way!" he coughed out, his distorted mouth, mangled cheek, and bulging eyes tossing as in a whirlpool of ghastly glee. "Sell Masther Harry for Hans Harman's goold! Heugh! heugh! heugh!" He clutched Harry Westropp's hand and licked it with parched kisses, like a powerful dog, only so hungrily it seemed as if he were about to bite the limb into his jaws.

At the same moment the door was thrown open, and two policemen burst into the cabin in a gush of icy wind.

"What's this? What the devil do you mean?" cried Harry passionately.

They were daunted by his words and by the glare, and started back; but one of them immediately recovered himself. "Very sorry, sir," he said hurriedly, "but some crime—perhaps a murder—has been committed. We must hear the statement of the dying man."

Quish had fallen back, still clutching Harry Westropp's left hand, and gluing it to his hungry lips. Harry suddenly felt the grasp relax and grow cold—a cold that bit into his marrow. He bent down. Quish's cold fingers still held the hand in a last effort to keep it pressed to the cold lips. The lips had pressed their last. A mysterious grey beauty glimmered over the face. "He is dead!" said Harry Westropp, falling on his knees on the cabin floor.

"How cursed awkwardly these things happen!" exclaimed Mr. Hans Harman when, some hours after his return from the abortive expedition to Drumshaughlin Castle, a police orderly disturbed him in his bedroom (where he was not in bed) with the intelligence that the bailiff had been fired at and mortally wounded on the public road outside his own house in the Bauherlin Mountains. "If this had only come last night, or if Lord Drumshaughlin had not left Euston to-night, a telegram to say the estate bailiff had been shot dead would have ended this trip which Deborah has brought upon us with her infernal virtuous starching and strait-lacing. Now I'm

afraid it's too late. He's on the road, and his blood will be up. He is quite capable of saying I got it up to frighten him. Well, well, who the devil cares what he says, if it comes to that?" muttered the agent, kicking the fire viciously for not having more heat in it. "Quish is one precious rascal gone, and Dawley is another still more precious rascal, who has obligingly knotted a rope around his neck and presented the other end to me. For, of course, it was Dawley—that is to say, it was so promptly and pluckily done, that, of course, it was somebody else he got to do it for him. Well, well, we mustn't neglect the agrarian bearing of this business on the value of landed property herabouts for the satisfaction of hanging Dawley—he'll wait, and can be turned to good account in the meantime. What a cub that young Rohan is! How I should have liked to lay the cat-o'-nine-tails across his insolent hide, while that madcap girl was girding at me! By George, there goes three o'clock! Heigho! it makes a man feel queer to think of his bailiff lying dead with a bullet in his lungs, and no blood—" He deliberated for a moment. "I think upon the whole Quish will be worth a wire to the Kingstown boat. Who knows?"

At daybreak that morning Meehul the tenant under sentence of eviction at Chocanacurraghcooish, and Owen his son, were arrested on a charge of wilful murder.

CHAPTER XXX.—LORD DRUMSHAUGHLIN'S BLOOD UP.

As Lord Drumshaughlin stepped off the gangway of the mail-boat at Kingstown Pier, a telegraph messenger put a yellow despatch into his hands. He read: "Quish, estate bailiff, fired at and murdered last night. Tenant, under notice of eviction, arrested.—Harman." The agent was right in anticipating that the news would not deter Lord Drumshaughlin from pursuing his journey. He was right, perhaps, too, in assuming that if the news had come sooner the journey would never have been begun. One of Lord Drumshaughlin's most industrious tasks in life was finding honorable causes of quarrel with his good resolutions. Coming across in the mail-boat, a hundred devils of indolence, selfishness, irresolution, and gout were prompting him to return to London. He examined the chalky deposits around his swollen knuckles with a certain affectionate interest as old friends, who might at any moment supply him with an adequate excuse for giving up his Drumshaughlin expedition: and I am not sure that he would not have had a bottle of port-wine opened with his supper, with a view to nursing his gout, only that he dreaded ship's port even more than the loss of his club cookery and tricorné notes. The murder of his bailiff was the one spur that could have roused him from his ignoble sluggardice. The pretended fear of a blunderbuss and the real irksomeness of going about with his hand on his revolver had often enough served him as excellent apologies for shirking duty in Ireland; but now that he was on the road, and that this news savored of an attempt to intimidate him, the note of danger was to him what the cry of horn and hounds is to an old foxhunter. If every ditch between Kingstown and Drumshaughlin was lined with blunderbusses, he would run the gauntlet all the more gaily. If every knuckle and toe-joint were to swell in rebellion, he would only push on the more doggedly to revenge this barbarous slaughter of his servant—this intolerable insult to his own courage and his pride.

Lord Drumshaughlin's virtue usually took the form of rage. He became possessed with a fearful fury towards his tenants.

"The curs!—the slaves!—the savages!—I let them alone all these years, and here is my reward! I'll show them! I'll pinch their cowardly bones for them! By God, I'll fire them out ilke a rabbit-warren!" he cried to himself, while hotel touts were in vain inquiring from him the destination of his luggage. He tramped over railway-porters and cabmen, as if they were so many tedious impediments to his vengeance; soothing them, nevertheless, with liberal plasters of half-crowns. He tore through Dublin as if his cab were a car of juggernaut crunching over a prostrate city of assassins. He threatened to withdraw his name from the directorate of the West Cork Railway Company because their time-table imposed upon him a delay of three hours in Cork. To a fat city knight, an apothecary, who sidled up to him in the coffee-room

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