

declining hill, or rather hillock. In fact, hillocks abound in the locality we are writing of, and give much of a varied and interesting character to its scenery.

It was in a halo of rosy light that Mr. Meldon first beheld one who was destined to become his faithful servant and constant companion for a lifetime—for "Crichawn" it was who stood upon the hill-top, and "Crichawn" it was who, walking leisurely along, gave full time for the amazement his curious combination of face, figure and costume afforded. Mr. Meldon looked at his short, block-like neck, immense width of shoulder and waist contrasted with his stunted height—hardly five feet—unnaturally long arms, slender as a woman's, yet firm and flexible in every motion, and even graceful, to the small white hands, beautiful in shape and color. His thin, twisted-looking legs, well-set foot, and whole outline reminded Mr. Meldon of one of the grotesque figures he had once seen in the curiously-wrought devices of a rood-screen, in a Belgian cathedral.

Mr. Meldon looked at "Crichawn's" face, and in its grave, ascetic features, small mouth, broad brow, delicate chin, and large, dark eyes, earnest and sad, he seemed to see, once again, the head of a medieval saint which had haunted him long after he had admired it in the glorious stained glass of a little chapel in Venice. "Crichawn" had the same olive tints of complexion; his dark hair curled closely round the temple curves, and his head was slightly bent, and, what was unusual for country folks in the days we write of, he wore his beard, dark brown, with the red light through it, just as the painter monk had put in his storied pane. To make the illusion more perfect, "Crichawn" at that time wore a long, freize coat, and this morning, for some reason or another, he had a coarse piece of whipcord tied tightly round his waist. His hat was off; his beads in his hands, and he had no shoes. Poor fellow! they had been pawned long since, to buy tea and sugar for little Ally and her mother. And so, for that first meeting, if for no other, "Crichawn" seemed to Mr. Meldon's artistic eye a very marvel—a living, moving piece of rare old art, wandering out of its frame, astray on a lonely Irish road. As it was, he

determined on satisfying his curiosity, and, at the same time, securing, if possible, the services of the strange figure who held the beads and who told them as solemnly as ever "Monk of Old." For this he employed the little salutation, at once a prayer and a greeting—"God save you." At the familiar words, uttered in what seemed to "Crichawn" an English accent, he raised his head, and replied in a quite, though astonished tone, "God save you kindly, sir;" and, then, recognizing who had spoken to him, added, "God bless you, Mr. Meldon."

Mr. Meldon felt much surprised, for he forgot—or it never had occurred to him—that he was well known to all the neighborhood for his many deeds of great benevolence, while to himself, as a new-comer, few comparatively were acquaintances.

"Oh! so you know me, then?" he replied. "I am glad of that. It makes what I want you to do much easier."

"Anything you want, Mr. Meldon, I am ready to do my best," was "Crichawn's" reply, in the same quiet, earnest tone, which had at once prepossessed Mr. Meldon in his favor.

"It is a case of life and death," he said. "Can you run?" as he instinctively directed his eyes from the misshapen limb, half-sorry for the question.

"Run, sir!" said "Crichawn;" 'tis easy to know you're a stranger. Not a man in Tipperary would ask 'Crichawn' that question."

"Are you 'Crichawn'?" cried Mr. Meldon at once glad and aghast at the messenger he had so strangely found.

"Yes, sir."

"Then there is little need to hasten you by words of mine. Go as fast as you can from this to Dr. Murphy's. He will take you with him back to"—Mr. Meldon cleared his throat as if from sudden hoarseness—"Paddy Hayes's, who has got a sudden fit. I am going straight to Father Aylmer, and will meet you directly at the cottage."

"Great God!" gasped "Crichawn;" and bounding over the hedge, he sprang down the declivity, and in a few deer like bounds was out of sight, before Mr. Meldon could gather up the reins lying loose on the neck of the now weary Rois, or could realize that "Crichawn"