

## NO SIGN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

## CHAPTER IV.

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No such intense public excitement had stirred Portmurrrough for years, as that which was aroused by the trial of Dominick Daly for the murder of his wife. It spread far and wide through all the northern province, and more people poured in from the towns than the Court-house could have accommodated had its dimensions been tenfold their extent. The deepest interest was shown in all the arrangements and rumoured arrangements, and the smallest particulars of the prisoner's bearing were received and detailed with avidity. The counsel for the Crown was an eminent barrister in large criminal practice; the counsel for the prisoner was almost as famous a member of the legal profession. It was understood that witnesses to character would not be wanting. Mr. Bellew had worked unremittingly and generously for the accused man, in whose guilt "it went against his instinct," as he said, to believe. It went against other people's instinct, as well, to believe that Dominick Daly was a murderer; but the case was a strong one—the facts were stubborn. It was said that the prisoner's communications to his attorney, Mr. Cormac, had been of the briefest and most meagre kind; and that the only defence to be set up—the "system" of the accused, as it would be called in French legal phraseology—would be the suggestion of certain modes by which the poison which had caused Mrs. Daly's death might have been mixed with the bicarbonate of soda, which, according to the prisoner's declaration, was the sole contents of the packet enclosed in Daly's letter to his wife. A letter, written strongly in the prisoner's interests, and more ingenious than judicious, in which a number of theories and possibilities on this point were set forth and discussed, had been published in one of the local journals, and had excited universal attention and comment. "Forewarned, forearmed," was said to have been the comment of the counsel for the Crown on this zealous indiscretion; "if we had been met, unprepared, with some of these theories, it might have been very difficult to upset them. As it is, there's time to smash them all at our leisure." The story—that is, the popular version of it—of Daly's relations with Katharine Farrell, and the supposed motive for the crime, had spread from Narraghmore in all directions, and had almost assumed the dimensions of a party question. There were those who upheld the woman, maintained her innocence, and declared that it was infamous to charge a girl who had so good a character as Miss Farrell's with being aught but the victim of a designing villain. There were those who maintained that if Daly was guilty, she had tempted him to the deed; who were ready to accept the oldest version of the oldest sin—"the woman beguiled" him. There was even a third party, who held a middle course, and said it was all a mistake: Daly was nothing to Miss Farrell, nor she to him; she had nothing to do with the matter. All parties alike were ignorant of the whereabouts of Miss Farrell. She had given up her school; and it was supposed, but not known, that she had gone back to her friends, Dr. and Mrs. Mangan; about whom, also, there was not a little public curiosity, for the dispensary doctor's assistant, a young man named Sullivan, was to be called by the Crown in the case, and his evidence would bring the possession of arsenic, which had been the fatal agent, home to the prisoner as closely as the prosecution had the power of bringing it. This was, it was said, the one comparatively weak link in the chain; the evidence on the point being strongly presumptive only. Concerning Daly's demeanour, public rumour was agreed. He had borne the long, slow weeks of his imprisonment with a silent composure, in which those who believed him guilty discerned the hardihood of a criminal, and those who did not so believe found the calm of conscious innocence. In this case, as in every other case in which the hearts of human beings are shut from human ken, people judging from externals judged at random, and saw no symptoms but those they were predisposed to see.

No fairer ever dawned over sea and land than the summer morning which ushered in the last hours of Dominick Daly's long anguish of patient waiting. The beauty of the earth was in its full, exquisite prime, and the deep buzz, the indescribable stir of midsummer life was abroad in the air everywhere. Even the brief journey in a close and guarded vehicle, from the prison to the Court-house, gave Daly a glimpse of the fulness of life and beauty which had come to the earth and the sky since he had last looked upon them, a free man. It was only a glimpse, however, he was soon in his place—that dreadful place into which he stepped, a strong man in his prime, with years of lusty life in clear brain, throbbing veins, and muscular limbs, and with all the natural yearning love of life which no sorrow can crush while health is unimpaired, which springs up into agonizing strength and vitality at the least menace to its treasure, and thrills with terrible anguish in the presence of such danger as his;—that dreadful place, which he might leave, young and strong still, but going down more surely to his grave than any fever-stricken wretch, whose hours of existence were only to be guessed—not counted—like his. The murmur and swaying of the crowd, the sound like the sea in a shell, the movement like the surging of a wave, came distantly to him, not hurtfully, for a moment, and he was in a dizzy dream where there were faces, where the solitude of the past weeks was not, and there were light and movement. The next, it faded, and all the hideous reality was before, and around, and with, and in him. He stood in a felon's dock, a turnkey behind him, to be tried for his life, for the murder of his wife. This was the court, these were the jurors on whose words his life would soon depend. He saw it all now, the face of the judge, the array of the lawyers, the men who would presently call the witnesses, those witnesses who would all tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, with the full assurance of their convictions, and assent of their conscience, and yet it would be the deadliest of all falsehoods that ever a grinning devil inspired men withal,—the crowd of spectators, whose faces wore every kind of expression from mere brutish apathy to keen curiosity, and from critical observation to compassionate interest. Yes, there were faces on which he read compassion, in his long look at the place of his agony, before he addressed all the powers of his mind and body to the process of it,—and they did him good. Yes, "good" actually came to the prisoner, whose dark, wasted face, thinned hair, and clothing hanging loose upon the frame it had fitted closely, told a tale which not one interpreted aright in that dismal hour. From first to last Dominick Daly bore his awful ordeal with quiet and manly courage.

The trial proceeded, amid the breathless attention of the spectators who were fortunate enough to have secured places, and was reported with tolerable fidelity to the crowd assembled outside—a crowd which conducted itself with exemplary order and decency. The solemnity, and something which there was of secretly-felt romance in the prisoner's position, appealed to the imaginative side of the Irish people, and nowhere among them would there have been heard the ribaldry and the brutal jests which a similar scene would have provoked among an English mob composed of similar elements. The trial proceeded with fatal smoothness, from the prisoner's plea of "Not guilty," to the examination of the witnesses, few but terribly sufficient. There was only one departure from the course which rumour had marked out to be followed by the counsel for the Crown; it was in the imputation and pressing of motive on the accused. Only a very keen observer could have detected the prisoner's anxiety on this point, or recognized his relief when the learned gentleman contented himself with generalities about the encumbrance on a young man's liberty of an elderly and invalid wife, a sufferer from a repulsive disease, necessarily separated from him, and a burden on his slender means. A modification of the latter argument was procured by the proving that the remnant of the murdered woman's own portion had sufficed to maintain her, but the favourable inference was balanced by the suggestion that the remnant would have reverted to her husband. The strong evidence of Daly's kindness to his suffering wife was easily disposed of by the plea of motive. A man who had such a crime in his mind would naturally seek to establish such a plea, by winning the intended victim's confidence; and was it not exactly this which the prisoner had done? To him, the only living being to whom her death would be an advantage, to whom her continued existence was an evil, the poor woman trustingly, unsuspectingly applied for advice and cure. There came over Daly's mind while he was listening to this a curious, impersonal sense, as of curiosity and question in some matter remote from himself. How easily, how readily, how much as a matter of course, the great criminal lawyer, habituated to the dark shades of human character and life, took for granted a situation abhorrent to the imagination of the man he was depicting, and impossibly unnatural to his character and his daily life! Could anything be too hard or too terrible for him to believe, knowing what

he knew, Daly dimly wondered, as he listened to the argument, as though it concerned somebody else? Perhaps not; and yet such a hell upon earth as the human soul given over to the devices which the glib, polished tongue, on whose accents the crowd hung, was describing, almost outdid his powers. His fancy travelled back to what had been the peaceful, prosaic, well-behaved truth of his former life, and for a moment amazement filled him—a feeling as though himself and all around him were utter unrealities, that nothing could be true, or have tangible existence, where so wildly false a theory was gravely put forward with any chance of ledge of the truth. This gentleman's grave picture of a state of things which never had any existence, his building up of a drama which had no scene, no actors, no life at all, was a trifling accessory to the general illusion of which Daly was the centre. Every few minutes as they passed by added a fresh link to the quickly-forming, soon-to-be-closed-up chain of evidence which should prove—a lie. And there stood the one who knew, the helpless prisoner, in the iron grip of the irresistible and dreadful law, the man by whose will all this was going on, whose word could tumble the whole card edifice into ruins.

(To be continued.)

## CURRENT LITERATURE.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA, by Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Boston: James R. Osgood &amp; Company.

It is difficult to conceive why anyone should have written such a book as this, and still more, why one should be at the trouble of reading it. Artificial in style and sentiment, and without the slightest good taste in design or execution, it adds one more to the third or fourth-rate fictions with which we are inundated. The hero, "Ed. Lyne," falls in love, at the outset of the story, with a beautiful but insane young lady, whom he accidentally sees for a few moments in a lunatic asylum. After this cheerful commencement, it is not surprising that the rest of the book should be largely devoted to the lamentations of our hero over his unhappy fate. He loves "not wisely, but too well." However, as in fictions such as these, all things are possible, it is not surprising that when Lyne meets the lady of his dreams again she is not only a perfect cure, but far more self-possessed and intelligent than the average of young ladies. Her recovery appears to have been miraculous. But as the doctor, who "considered her case hopeless," remarks, "The human body is still a mystery, after science has said its last word. The human mind is a deeper mystery. While I doubted of her recovery, she recovered." After this conclusive and satisfactory statement, of course nothing more need be said, and Lyne is free to marry his "Queen of Sheba," who proves almost as wealthy, if not quite so wise as her Eastern namesake.

Being Americans, it is perhaps needless to state that all the characters are rolling in riches,—indeed the fortune of one individual is said to be "Vanderbiltish,"—and that they pass their time in Geneva, Lucerne, the Schweizerhof hotel, and the Alps generally.

SHAKESPEARE'S KING HENRY THE FIFTH.—Edited with notes by William J. Rolfe, A.M. With engravings. New York: Harper &amp; Brothers, 1878. Montreal: Dawson Brothers.

Mr. Rolfe is editing a very good and convenient series of Shakesperian plays, and has managed to present *variorum* editions, which in small compass and readiness of reference, furnish the general reader and the young student with nearly everything they need to read Shakespear intelligently and critically. The notes are numerous, well arranged and sufficiently full, and the present volume forms no exception to the excellence of the standard adsources from which it is derived, the critical comments being very good, fully bringing out the development of the careless Prince Hal into the heroic king. The text is of much use. The general get up of these handy volumes is good, and the engravings, which are very fair, add to their value to the student. Mr. Rolfe is doing excellent service in a good cause, and his edition will be appreciated, not only by students, but by all who care for the great dramatist, and wish to know him well.

BEING A BOY.—By Charles Dudley Warner. Boston: James R. Osgood &amp; Company.

This book, with its spirited and graceful illustrations, is one of the most refreshing volumes we have seen for some time. We recommend it to all *excess* boys, for it is necessary in order to its perfect enjoyment that one should have passed beyond the enchanted land of which it speaks. Dudley Warner's boy is an American, a New England boy to his finger tips; but he rings true to the boy nature all the world over. The author is recalling his own boyhood, glance half humorous, half pathetic, at the far away joys and sorrows which were so keen, and takes us with him in sympathy and interest. Somehow, we feel that the edge has been rubbed off both pain and pleasure since then, by the friction of time. Can anything equal the "glorious feeling" when a boy is for the first time permitted to drive the oxen, walking by their side, all the rest of that remarkable language, until he is red in the face, and all the neighbours for to say what is best, but the chapters entitled "No Farming Without a Boy," "Riding to Church," "The Season of Pumpkin Pie," "The Heart of New England," and "The Advent of Sentiment" are all in the author's happiest vein. We quite agree with him in wondering if certainly everything in the heart of the New England hills to feed the imagination of the boy, and excite his longing for strange countries. We, of the city, lay down this book with a sigh. What with over-civilization, heated rooms, late hours, and luxurious fare, we fear lest the "old block are to be found amongst us even yet.

MARMORNE. The No Name Series. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1878. Montreal: Dawson Brothers.

The Messrs. Roberts some months ago commenced the publication of a series of novels, the authorship of which is to remain a secret, whence the designation of "No Name Series." The success of each work depends entirely upon the ability of the writer and is not helped by the prestige of a name on the title page; but so far the volumes published, of which there have been some dozen of various degrees of literary merit, have met with a good deal of favour, the ambitious conception having been, on the whole, well carried out. There is, of course, a good deal of inequality in execution, and much difference in style in the different numbers, but they are, as a rule, superior to most of the light literature now current, some deserving high praise and ranking with the best of fiction. The present volume is not, we think, up to the same standard. It is a tale, French in scene and treatment, slightly sensa-country life in France, and the end is not brought to a startling climax, as does way in which the dominant placidity of key is preserved throughout. Some scenes with the franc tirailleurs in the war of 1870 relieve the sameness, and there are here and there some and slowness. The carefulness of construction and attention to detail show study, and the whole tone of the story is graceful and refined. Though, as we have said, not equal to some of its predecessors, it is by no means to be condemned.

There is no being eloquent for Atheism. In that exhausted receiver the mind can not use its wings.—*Hare*.

A man may be a heretic in truth; and if he believes things only because his pastor says so, or the assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy. There is not any burden that some would gladlier put off to another, than the charge and care of their religion.—*John Milton*.