



"I'm travelun' n' ognatho."

As they dashed out into the street the crowd broke and scattered. It was a light-hearted assembly, and its interest was the interest of pleasure, not correction. Laughingly it cheered the fugitives on, and saw them passing unobstructed into outer darkness at the edge of the city market, and was turning away when Kerrigan fell. He had been lumbering on behind his comrades, and had almost gained a refuge under the dark corridors of the market, when his foot slipped. For an instant he lay stunned; then, before he could rise, two policemen pounced upon him from out the shadow of the dark wall, and the crowd's interest had revived and was sending them hot-foot to view his downfall.

Kerrigan was still blinking from the shock when he was led back over the road he had come, the two policemen pertinaciously demanding an explanation of his haste.

"I was lookin' for yez," said Kerrigan.

"Ye found us," answered one of them, laconically. Kerrigan looked up sharply.

"Ye're an Irishman," he declared.

"Ye're no liar," replied the other—"for wance."

"I tak' shame for ye consortun' wid naygurs," said Kerrigan, sadly. "I came to tell ye so."

"I'm consortun' wid worse this minit," said his captor.

"Ye know yer mates," Kerrigan replied genially, looking at his other guard. "I've small likun' for Dutch-min meself. Do they call the foorce the mixed pickles?"

He received no answer, and, the pleasure of the social instinct gone, through half-closed eye he looked about him discontentedly. They were rapidly approaching the wrecked saloon, a tail of idlers at their heels. On their left, protected only by planks laid over barrels, yawned the dark abyss of the cellar under the unimpaired row of buildings. Kerrigan glanced down, saw nothing but black void, and felt anew the thrill of life.

"What's ut?" he asked, jerking his head toward the unfinished row, and was answered that his captors neither knew nor cared.

"Tis shameless ignorance," declared Kerrigan; "We'll investigate," and wheeling suddenly, freeing himself, he leaped into the black pit, carrying the barriers with him.

There was a crash below of falling barrels and timber, and then an awe-inspiring silence; but ten minutes later two sad guardians of the peace crawled out of the abyss, extinguished their lanterns, and went preyless back to their beat.

At the same time, in a narrow street on the other side of the market, his leaderless companions, making their way down to the water-front, came upon Kerrigan, sitting sadly on the curb, communing with the past. They hailed him with joy, but he only shook his head sadly at sight of them.

"Here's me wages unspint," he mourned, "an' ivery rasort av pleasure closed to us by the folly av min! 'Tis shameful!" Then he began to sing

in a most dolorous voice.

"The harp that wance through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
As if that soul were fled."

"Oh, the harps av the ould country," he murmured; "an' the eyes av sloe, an' the mists on the hills av a marnun'! Ut all comes back to me so swate, so swate! An' niver a drop to throw me sorrow!" From his lowly seat he waved his hands to his comrades in farewell. "Lave me wid me dead, b'yes! Lave me!"

The three looked at one another in doubt, then Frithjof growled:

"Ay tank you big dom fool!" Stooping suddenly, he seized Kerrigan by the shoulders and lifted him to his feet, adding: "Coom on, now!"

"All right, Swaden," said the sad Kerrigan; "I go, but me heart's bruk."

It was not so completely shattered as to leave him wholly oblivious of the shell, when, as they turned into a lighter street, two girls came laughing along the path. He twisted his moustache and gazed at them sadly.

"Eyes av sloe, eyes av sloe," he murmured—"ut all comes back to me so swate—so swate!"

He shook his head mournfully at the retort, discourteous that he received, but Sam and Nicolao giggled. He gazed at them reprovingly.

"Tis a hard worl'd," he declared, "whin me—" He stopped short, for they had come to the lighted front of a theater-like building, and from within there floated the sound of singing, and then the applause at its close.

"Heh!" cried Nicolao, excitedly. "Behol' de theayter! Coma 'long een!" Without a moment's hesitation, he entered the vestibule, followed by the others, and, opening an inner door, passed into a darkened room.

Out of the gloom by the entrance an usher stepped softly, and touching Nicolao on the arm, led the way up the aisle, followed by the sailormen. Into a side seat at the very front of the hall he swept them with an elaborate bow, and tiptoed away as an unseen orchestra played the opening strains and a full choir of voices broke softly into the hymn:

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around."

As the words of the last line swelled into a rich crescendo of sound, veiled lights began to glimmer above the stage, and with a creaking of a tackle and fall there slowly descended into view a white-clad figure with shining wings, holding a green palmetto-leaf aloft.

The living picture stepped lightly to the stage from the little platform on which she had stood, and, with a profound bow, lowered the palmetto-leaf as the lights of the hall blazed out, and the audience broke into wildly excited applause.

"Holy Mither!" cried Kerrigan, under his breath, "'tis a naygur!"

He glanced swiftly at the audience, now for the first time revealed; every

shining face of delight in the hall except their own was that of a negro.

In a sort of wonder, he turned to his companions. Nicolao was wildly applauding, Frithjof was staring stolidly at the stage, and Sam's face was down in his hands, his body shaking with a violent coughing fit.

He looked up at length with a grave face, and caught Kerrigan's eye.

"What is ut?" asked the Irishman.

His shipmate nodded toward a pine-tree at the back of the stage, decked with candles and gifts.

"Christmas eve and a Christmas tree," he replied. "It's a darky church."

"I was beginnun' to have me suspicions thot ut was a Dootch ball," said Kerrigan, with biting sarcasm. He looked about him. "I tak' ut," he went on, as the result of his observation, "thot we hold sates of honor."

"Yes," answered his mate.

"Then ut's a dacent lot of haythen they are," he declared emphatically. "barrun' the slight invidjusness av a coffee-colored angel. So let the prosadun's prosade." He began to applaud with all the vigor of his mighty hands.

Kerrigan grew more and more enthusiastic as the exercises went on, and his loudly spoken comments, if frank, were for the most part satisfactorily laudatory. Not till near the close did a momentary cloud appear.

They were lighting the tree, and a file of small children had lined up in front of it to repeat Bible verses.

They stood, a twisting line, looking over their shoulders at the gathering glory behind them, impatient for their gifts, and repeating parrot-like the rapid words that were to set them free. Near the middle of the line one stumbled over a long quotation, but came smoothly to a close with the words, "but the scriptures must be 'fied." The speaker's small finger went swiftly to her mouth, and she dropped demure eyes. The next child was cannier.

"Now we see th'oo er glass dark'y," he lisped, and looked triumphantly at his next neighbor, who said in a high voice:

"An' Ab'am said, I wull sw'ar."

An audible stir ran through the audience, and a wrinkled little man near the stage rose quickly to his feet and held up a warning hand.

"Mistah Sup'inten'ent," he cried excitedly, "Ah rise fo ter appoint an ordeh."

The superintendent bowed affably, after a momentary hesitation.

"Scuse me," said the interrupter, "but Ah 'm 'bleeged fo ter ask whar yo' go'n' fin' dem wuds. Dey don' soun' lak da wuds of ouah Lohd and Mahsteh—er lak da Bible."

The superintendent turned to the young woman who had marshaled the children upon the stage.

"Miss Pickney," he said, "are dem wuds f'om de Holy Book? Dey soun' famillious, but Ah cayn't say right offhan' whar dey come f'om. Are dey?"

"Yessah," she snapped; "dey's co'ect. Ab'aham said 'em, lak he said he said 'em." She glanced scornfully at the doubter. He was not to be crushed so easily, however.

"Den all Ah kin say," he went on excitedly, "is dat den dat chile ain' said enough. He ain' 'splain da 'casion. An' dat ain't all; an' heah 's da p'int."—he held up a polemic finger, and faced the audience,— "Ab'am he done lib unner da ol' dispensations, an' some of ol' man Adam was een 'im yit."

He paused so long in his triumph that the next child in line, thinking the incident closed, began to repeat:

"Consider the lilies—"

Unheeding, the voice of the man went on:

"So A'bam say he w'u'd sw'ar. Mebbe some things done gone wrong with 'im, er he had some er Job's troubles; but he ain' done right, an' lit' chillen, dem ain' no advices for yo'—no, ma Lohd!"

He was in full swing now, his voice



"Come back, yez! Ain't yez goun' to give the childer their prisints?"