

AILEY MOORE

TALE OF THE TIMES SHOWING HOW EVICTIONS, MURDER AND SUCH-LIKE PARTISAN ARE MANAGED AND JUSTICE ADMINISTERED IN IRELAND TOGETHER WITH MANY STIRRING INCIDENTS IN OTHER LANDS

BY RICHARD W. O'BRIEN, D. D., DEAN OF NEWCASTLE WEST CHAPTER VI—CONTINUED HOW MR. SNAPPER WENT A WOOLING, AND WHAT CAME THEREFROM

The servant knocked. Reginald started as from a dream. He opened the door. He was calm, self-possessed as usual.

"Mr. Snapper, sir, the agent," said John.

"Have you asked him to walk into the drawing-room?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is my father at home?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you announced Mr. Snapper?"

"Yes."

"I will be down in a few moments." And Reginald turned again into his sanctum.

He calculated with great truth his relations with Snapper. They were anything but satisfactory: the whole family were more or less in Snapper's power; supporting him to be a rascal—and charity demanded little beyond such a supposition: hence the course of proceeding was sufficiently clear—to listen to the agent, and expect what his interest would determine.

Reginald found Snapper and old Mr. Moore in the drawing room.

Everything around spoke of Ailey's home: the firecreens, from Reginald's designs, the ottomans, the hangings, the sofa and chair-covers, the ornaments,—they were all in the luxury of taste, without the gorgeousness of fashion.

Snapper rose at Reginald's entrance. He approached with great warmth, which was a little abated by the young man's habitual reserve.

Old Mr. Moore was as gentle as a child. He had never been much of a man of business, but Providence always surrounded him with honest and competent servants, until his son was able to exercise a surveillance over affairs.

"Miss Moore is, I hope, quite well?" said Snapper.

"Quite so," answered Reginald.

"A frightful business this death of Skerin. Murdered, too in the Queen's highway—and in close proximity to a magisterial residence."

"Oh, very awful!" said Old Mr. Moore; "very awful, indeed. Mr. Snapper—very awful. And has there been no discovery—no discovery—none whatever?"

"None of any importance to the ends of justice: but I augur we shall be able to net the assassin, as the saying is; we know how to pursue a malefactor," Mr. Moore, and he looked knowing; he also made his nearest approach to a smile—in fact, he might have even succeeded only for the eyes—the eyes were "the rub."

"We there have lost the last life in our lease," said Reginald; "but, of course, you remember we have a written promise and engagement of renewal."

"Oh, my dear sir," answered the agent, "I need not say that anything involving or concerning the domestic or other interests of your most respectable family have always been dear to me, Mr. Moore." Snapper spoke very sentimentally—unless with his eyes, like a Parson Salmer's were very unsteady. "I am an agent, as the saying is; I have the honor to possess the confidence, regard and intentions of my Lord of Kinnacarra. Make yourself quite, quite easy; and if there be anything that his lordship can be advised to do, as the saying is, I have the honor, you know—you understand, Mr. Moore." And the eyes were like anything on the earth that means mischief—these eyes of Snapper.

"We are really obliged, Mr. Snapper, but I hope we shall not find it necessary to trouble his lordship."

"But," said Snapper, "and he coughed,—but," said Snapper, "and he looked around the drawing-room, thinking to himself how happy he would be there,—but, Mr. Moore and Mr. Reginald Moore, I suppose—as the saying is—you guess my most happy business here to-day. I am here; you both know the reason why I have given up important trusts, engagements, and so forth, to come over to Moorefield."

"There was no reply."

"The fact is, Mr. Moore, that I have large means—as the saying is—some thousands of pounds which I have saved and economized like the bee, determined to settle in life at the proper time. I am naturally—as the saying is—affectionate and all that; and I think the time is come to settle myself in life."

And again Mr. Snapper looked around the drawing room.

"And," concluded Mr. Snapper, "as I have made up my mind—and so on—to settle in life, I have come to—ahem!—to ask your daughter, Miss Moore, to be my wedded wife, Mr. Moore, and to give her my hand and my means, and so forth."

"My daughter!" said the old man.

"Ailey!" cried Reginald. "My good friend, you are not serious?"

"Serious, gentlemen; serious as a man deeply in love—and so on—can be. My happiness—"

"Ah, well, Mr. Snapper," said Reginald, "my father, I am sure, will settle the matter briefly."

"Oh, it can't be; it can't be, Mr. Snapper; oh, it can't be."

"And why not, Mr. Moore? I have means, you know, and power, and—"

"But, Mr. Snapper," remarked Reginald, who was determined to develop his visitor, "you must remember you are double my sister's age, of a different religion, and I hardly think your tastes are very similar."

"Oh, as for age, so much the better as you know; no imprudence—and all that—no hunting and drinking—and so forth—and as for taste, I like all her ways very well—as the saying is. I'll not interfere with her religion—only going among the common people, and so on—just a little prudence."

"She would never consent," said Reginald.

"Oh, you can manage that," said Snapper, laughing. He imagined he was gaining ground. "She'll obey you, now, and"—he laughed again—"she'll obey me—as the saying is—by-and-by. Many a lady would be glad, you know, to take her place," continued the little land agent.

"Well, Mr. Snapper," said Reginald slowly and solemnly, "it can never be."

"Never!" said the father.

"Eh! never!" echoed Snapper; "never, ah!—as the saying is—ah! well. And you remember my means?"

"Yes."

"And my power?"

"Certainly."

"And you think you can afford to refuse me your daughter—and so on."

"Afford!" said Reginald.

"Ah! well, don't mind—as the saying is, and the ruffian leered most frightfully.

"There was a very long pause.

"By the by, Mr. Moore, senior, and Mr. Reginald Moore, I believe the last life of this property fell two nights ago."

"Well?" answered father and son together.

"I was just thinking—as the saying is—that his lordship might need this mansion," said the villain, with a bitter smile.

"My house?" cried the old man.

Reginald said not a word.

"Oh, you will pardon me—as the saying is," slowly croaked the land agent, "the lease is out, and the land takes the estate—as the saying is—the tail follows the hide, you know, Mr. Moore, senior."

Bitterly—bitterly he spoke; and very slowly, too, to make every syllable tell.

"I have the signed and sealed promise of a renewal, you know, Snapper; on the faith of that instrument I built this house."

"Ah, if the old gentleman—a very good old gentleman, as the saying is,—if the old gentleman had the power; but he hadn't—and so on—Mr. Moore, senior; and, besides there is no witness to the document."

"The old man's wrath was rising.

"I say there is, sir."

"He's dead, and no man knows his handwriting," said Snapper, with a chuckle; "and you know, in all fairness, you know, his lordship cannot—not be bound. I am very sorry, I assure you, you, but—"

"I think you had better spare that language, friend," quietly remarked Reginald. "You may wrong us,—for that it is not necessary to mock us. I think this conversation may as well end."

"You will be good enough, Mr. Reginald Moore, just in kindness, to allow me to settle a little business on the part of my noble patron, the Lord of Kinnacarra, and so on. I would not, as the saying is, vex you, or put you in a passion, and so on; indeed, it would not be safe, some say."

Reginald returned to the hair roots, but remained silent.

"However," the fellow continued, "I am on business."

"Well then?" said the old man.

"There are ten years, during which you have been £200, a year back in arrears of the farms."

"Yes, the abatement!" cried old Mr. Moore.

"A, sir, Mr. Moore, as to that, the receipt shows that the money remains due—the old gentleman, you see, Mr. Moore, so provident, and so on; and the heir, as the saying is, wants the money."

Reginald looked the demon full in the face, but said not a syllable.

"Heaven, man!" exclaimed the old man, "does not all the world know that he held under an abatement, and that leaving the surplus on the face of the receipt is only matter of form?"

"Wisely so settled as the saying is," answered Snapper, "in order to punish delinquents when one likes and spare the deserving."

"Come we see now!" cried Reginald.

"Just only one word more, as the saying is; and the vagabond spoke in tones of great humility. "I did not come over in my gig to offend you, and so on—not I, indeed. But allow me to and, that, as you know, Mr. Moore, senior, holds under joint lease in the small farm of Gort-na-Coppul, there is a year's rent due."

"I have my receipt from your own hand. You're—"

"Stay, father," interrupted Reginald.

"Oh, indeed, you paid your rent honestly, no doubt, as the saying is, but he did not, and so on, sir. So you see, sir, we shall be obliged to call upon you; and—"

"Now, Snapper, have you done?" asked Reginald. "You have shown us the last thread of the web," he added. "Have you done?"

"I end as I began, that I have much power, and, as the saying is, some means."

"That all?" again asked Reginald.

"All," said the devil, smiling. "Then leave this house forthwith," said Reginald, with frightful calmness.

"Have I got your last word, and so on?" rejoined Snapper.

"Leave this house at once!" more emphatically said Reginald.

"But—"

"Leave this house this moment!" said the young man, laying his hand on the wretch's arm; "from this moment I shall consider you as a trespasser—leave this house!"

Pale as death, Snapper rose from his chair—took his white kid gloves out of his hat—shook a little—and walked precipitately to the door. A servant held his horse by the head while he entered the gig, and as he took the reins, the fellow ground his teeth, muttering—

"I'll bring down the pride of Moorefield and the Moores—my blow shan't merely stagger them, and so on. The devil will have them, or I'll have their doll, and the green acres, too. Very good, and so forth—to take all from them is good—they're Papists. And get all myself would be better—I'm a sound Protestant when I—"

And in this benevolent frame of mind, Mr. Snapper, the land agent, went towards home.

At a turn in the road, not far from the holy well, a poor man was sitting on the hedge. His hair was long and lank, and dark; his brows were gray. He leant his chin upon a long staff, and looked into the middle of the way.

"Dherk!" he said, "Dherk in anim a Veidin Vuire!—Alms, in the name of the Virgin Mary."

"Oh, you, Shaun, eh?"

"Yes, yer oner. Poor Shaun is growin'ould, sir."

Snapper looked into Shaun's face, and Shaun looked as innocent as a child.

"Shaun," he said, "did you hear of the murder?"

"Oh, the Lord betune us an' all harm, sure I did! These devils 'ill ruin the country—no gentleman will stay in it."

Snapper again examined those full, strong eyes, but they never changed expression.

"Shaun said Snapper, "walk on the gig for a start."

"Shaun rose up slowly—as one of his age and infirmities should rise—very slowly, and coughing a great deal. He stood by the gig."

"Shaun," said the agent, "did you hear anything about the murderer?"

"Och, yer oner, what 'ud I care? Sure, people is always talkin' you know, sir."

"Well, now, what did you hear, Shaun—come?"

"Faith, strange things, Mr. Snapper. Shaun got a bright half crown."

"Well, now, Shaun?"

"Oh, gorry, sir; I wouldn't like to say it."

"Don't be in your own light, Shaun, and so on; who do they say?"

Shaun put his finger on his lips, and looked towards Moorefield.

"Oh, oh!" cried Snapper.

"Iss, faith!" answered the beggar. "They had a quarrel about a girl Skerin wringed; and then there was an old grudge an' they owed Sherin money."

"Pshaw! Skerin's life was in their lease, and so on."

"So much the better cover," said the beggarman, winking; "an' they had promise of renewal."

"Right!" said Snapper; and, after a pause, "Was he out that night?"

"He was," answered Shaun; "an' his arm in a sling—his left arm."

"Who saw him?"

"Mr. James Boran; a decent young man."

"Daddy Boran's scape-grace son, is it?"

"His son, Mr. James," said the cautious mendicant.

"Capital, here's another half-crown."

Snapper drove off, while the beggarman's eye followed him.

"God's curse will fall on you," said Shaun a Dherk, "as it fell upon Skerin!"

Snapper arrived in due time at the place from which he had set out. Everything was wrong—Jude was a "trollope." The man of all-work was a "robber," and a boy who came to take the horse and gig to the stable was knocked down—a feat which obtained for Mr. Snapper the benefit of some special, but not very desirable, prayers and wishes.

But all things have an end; and the bad temper of Mr. Snapper evaporated after he had flung his boots at a male servant, torn his kid gloves, and upset a bottle of Cologne water, in pure contempt of such frippery.

In fact, Mr. Snapper said, "D-n Cologne water, and all such stuff," which proved that Mr. Snapper was sometimes a man above the littleness of employing it, as many others are above employing what will not serve them.

Mr. Snapper rang his bell—he did not ring in a passion, and therefore he was sooner answered. John—John is always the name of a servant-man—John appeared. He looked very straight and very mild.

"John," said Snapper, just as mildly.

"Sir," said John.

"Send up Forde, and I'll thank you."

"Yes, sir," said John.

two inches—one inch of which was given to his forehead. His ears were very long, and his nose very short. He had a very thick head behind the ears, and thick lips before them. Forde was not considered prepossessing.

"Forde," said the land-agent.

"Yes."

"You know, as the saying is justice must be done."

"Sartinly," said Mr. Forde, "sartinly."

"You have a stranger below at your cabin, and so on, you know."

"Well!" said Forde.

"And he will not, as the saying is, have peace or quietness till he has seen a particular gentleman in this neighborhood, you know."

"And Mr. Forde did not seem to know this time."

"Young Mr. Moore," continued the devil in man shape, "is very good, and as the saying is, he's very well known, and this poor man wants to speak to him particularly to speak to him."

"And you know, Forde, as you come down, and so on, you pass by where the murder was committed the other night."

Forde shook a little—an excess of feeling, it may have been—but he made no remark.

"And you and Mr. Moore stop there, just at dark—"

"An' God Almighty—"

"Forde, here are four half crowns—"

"But, sir—"

"A, Forde, listen. Don't touch the hair of Mr. Moore's head. You'll lose something there—'twill be the dusk of the evening—and you know, as this amiable young gentleman is suspected of this murder, it is very natural he should go to see the place, and be very much agitated, and all that, and—"

"And then?"

"And then, Forde, we must do justice, you know."

Forde's eyes began to fill with light; his features relaxed, and in a full state of illumination, he said, "Young Mr. Moore is to be put in jail."

"Justice must be done, you know, as the saying is, Forde."

"There 'll be witnesses to see him comin' back, would 'is heart full, to the spot?"

"Witnesses, and so on, are always necessary for the ends of justice, you know."

"Yes," said Forde, "I understand, and his brow darkened. "Is that all?" he added.

"You may go now," said Snapper.

And Mr. Forde was preparing to depart. He had rolled up the four half-crowns in a "rag," and taken his hat, or what remained of that useful article of costume, in his hands.

"Forde," said the land agent.

"Yes, sir," said Forde.

"When you are at that nice gentleman's house, and so forth, you might find a glove going astray, or an old pocket-handkerchief, or even a pistol."

"Murder an' agers, sir."

"Don't go fast, Forde. You might find some little article or another; any trifle at all, as the saying is, which, being found on the spot, would serve the ends of justice," you know."

"I understand. Anythin' else?"

"You may go now, Forde, my good fellow."

Mr. Forde went leisurely enough down the stairs, and philosophized as he passed through the hall, "Gan dhooth air dhoun she an' diall fein e, ach bolun she an' diall fein," which means that he was convinced Mr. Snapper was the devil himself, only that Mr. Snapper "beat the devil."

And Mr. Forde went forth to forward the "ends of justice."

TO BE CONTINUED

GOD'S WAY SURPASSES OUR UNDERSTANDING

A TRUE STORY By Rev. Richard W. Alexander in the Missionary

In the little boarding-house parlor sat the man and the maid. She was a girl of nineteen; a beautiful, dark-eyed, slender, vivacious creature with soft waving brown hair, and a smile full of sweetness. Just now, a tingling rose-red was on her cheek, and her downcast eyes told that she was listening to the "old, old story." He was but a boy of twenty-one, with eager, earnest, strong face, and an expression of happy possession on the clean-cut lips, and in the lines of his fine features. They were a betrothed pair, and were happy in their mutual affection. The boy had lately graduated with high honors from one of the noted Colleges. He had entered a law-office, and was progressing in his studies. He was not a Catholic, and although his parents were dead, and he had no brothers or sisters, he had the affection and the open purse of a maternal uncle who had seen to his college career, and now made easy his entrance into the Law. The girl was an orphan, a Southerner, reduced in circumstances, obliged to earn her living as a copyist, and with but a slender purse besides, to aid her progress. She had chosen this quiet boarding-house because the landlady herself was a Southerner. She knew the family of this girl in its best days, and having learned of her position, had offered her a pleasant room on reasonable terms. Cornelia was a Catholic—a convert, which the landlady found out to her surprise, when she and her daughter, Maude, who were faithful attendants at the Episcopal church in the neighborhood, invited Cornelia to go with them to "worship."

"Forde" presented himself. He was a man in height about five feet

body belonging to you that I know ever was a Roman Catholic."

Cornelia said nothing, but she faithfully attended Mass at St. James' Church. She edified many by her sweet, modest countenance, and by her regular appearance at the Holy Table. Nearly every evening she found time to make a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament, on her way home from the office, and the wonderful peace, and rare spiritual beauty that prayer left on her features attracted Herbert X., who met her several times on his way home after his law-work. He found means by which to be introduced to her, and having obtained permission to call, by degrees won her from her shyness. At last he gained her promise to be his wife. Herbert was not a Catholic, but when Cornelia brought him to an understanding of the rules of the Church, and the promises he must make when a dispensation was to be obtained, he declared he saw the wisdom of it all, and was willing to do all things squarely and honestly to obtain his bride.

Months had passed while all these matters were happening, but it must not be supposed all things had run smoothly. From time to time Mrs. Lestrangle, assuming a sort of motherhood over Cornelia, had invited Herbert to dine with them, and, sad to say, her daughter, Maude, had become infatuated with the handsome suitor of Cornelia. It was not long before her mother noticed Maude's state of mind, and at first tried to reason with her, pointing out the folly of it. Being a good-hearted, though narrow minded woman, she was glad Cornelia would be settled with a good husband, although she said once rather mysteriously that she hoped they would go elsewhere when they were married.

At last Maude's unhappiness preyed upon her mother's mind. She saw her daughter grow pale and pensive, and although she continued to make efforts to break this unworthy infatuation, she began to feel resentful towards Cornelia, who was the innocent cause of it. Neither Herbert nor Cornelia ever noticed how Maude was affected, but once when Cornelia made a sympathetic remark about her pale, suffering face, Maude flew into a passion, and made some unkind, bitter remarks, which deeply hurt the kindly heart of Cornelia. And from that day on, there was a concealed hostility on the part of Maude. Though concealed, her hostility was not less painful to Cornelia. It was evidenced in a hundred small ways on the poor girl, who tried in vain to find a cause for it. Before Herbert, Maude assumed a gentle pensiveness that quite puzzled the matter-of-fact, straightforward young man; but always being courteous to ladies, he was more kindly and gentlemanly towards the deluded Maude, who began to imagine that he might fall in love with her if Cornelia were out of the way. She said this to her mother, and it made an impression on the shallow-minded woman. It led to a sequel of events which no one could foresee.

The time for Cornelia's marriage drew near, and Maude became bitter. Her mother was miserable, also; torn with love for her daughter, and with an intense desire to make her happy at all costs. She was sorely tempted to reveal a piece of family history that she happened to possess, but for a long time resisted the unworthy desire. At last she reasoned with herself that it was not only the proper thing to do, but it would be absolutely criminal if she refused to do it. Herbert should be protected.

So Cornelia was disposed of Maude would be happy; for she had been led to believe her daughter's delusion that Herbert had become doubtful for whom he cared the most. This was absolutely without foundation. Herbert's affections were absorbed in Cornelia, and all else was courtesy—simple politeness.

One evening Mrs. Lestrangle found Maude weeping hysterically. She had flung herself across her bed, and her whole frame was trembling with her passionate feelings. Mrs. Lestrangle soothed her foolish daughter, but said with a bitter emphasis:

"Herbert shall never marry her, dear, so be consoled!" Maude begged to know why, but Mrs. Lestrangle said no more. She had yielded to the tempter.

The night when Cornelia retired to her room, Mrs. Lestrangle knocked at the door. Cornelia opened it, and when she saw her visitor, smiling led her to the most comfortable chair in the room. Mrs. Lestrangle's face was set in hard lines, and she began without any preface:

"Cornelia, there has been something on my mind for a good while. You know I was acquainted with your family in its best days in the South, and am aware of many things you know nothing about. You are about to get married to a very good young man, and in justice to him I mean to tell you something, unpleasant though it be."

Cornelia paled, but tried to say bravely:

"I know you are my friend, Mrs. Lestrangle, and you are aware of my deep affection for Herbert, who is, as you say, everything that is good. What in this world can you know that would be unpleasant, and that you should say, 'in justice to him.'"

Mrs. Lestrangle, with the same hard look on her face, said abruptly:

"Why this, Cornelia, you should not marry him. You have colored blood in your veins; your grandmother was a mulatto!"

Cornelia sprang to her feet.

"What authority have you to say such a thing? How can you expect me to believe it?"

The girl flushed, and, then grew white as death, as she sank back on her chair. She had heard of such things in the South, but never had she dreamed it in her own case.

Mrs. Lestrangle proceeded to unfold a chapter of family history that sounded only too plausible; and bits of broken stories Cornelia heard in childhood came back, and corroborated the woman's tale. White and cold as death, the girl listened; and when the woman referred her to an old attorney whom she knew had been her mother's friend, she could only point to the door, and cover her face with her hands.

"Of course," said Mrs. Lestrangle, rising, "no harm might come in the marriage of the third generation, but it has happened that a colored child has been born in such a case, and in justice to Herbert I thought I would tell you."

She left, and closed the door; Cornelia was alone. Only the great God Who watched through the silent night knew the agony of grief and love and duty that wrestled in the girl's heart. She could not undress. She lay, sobbing, with her face in the pillows, until they were wet with her tears. When the rose of dawn came softly in her window, she lifted her head. Her resolution was taken. She bathed her swollen face and eyes, and made ready for early Mass. There, before God's altar, she made her resolve. She would leave no stone unturned to