

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

creditors a' owre the country. I was aye bringing the big blue envelopes from different airts. Don't mention this, now," he added, his finger up, bis eye significant. "It shouldn't be known at a-all." He was unwilling that Toddle should get an unfair start, and spoil his own market for the news.

"*Nut me!*" Toddle assured him grandly, shaking his head as who should conduct of that kind a thousand miles off. "*Nut me, post!* I'll no breathe it to a living soul."

The post clattered in to Mrs. Gourlay's back-door. He had a heavy under-stamped letter on which there was threepence to pay. He might pick up an item or two while she was getting him the bawbees.

He knocked, but there was no answer.

"The sluts!" said he, with a humph of disgust; "they're still on their backs, it seems."

He knocked again. The sound of his knuckles on the door rang out hollowly, as if there was nothing but emptiness within. While he waited he turned on the step, and looked idly at the courtyard. The enwalled little place was curiously still.

At last in his impatience he turned the handle, when to his surprise the door opened, and let him enter.

The leaves of a Bible fluttered in the fresh wind from the door. A large lamp was burning on the table. Its big yellow flame was unnatural in the sunshine.

"H'mph!" said Postie, tossing his chin in disgust, "little wonder everything gaed to wreck and ruin in this house! The slovens have left the lamp burning the whole nicht lang. But less licht'll serve them now, I'm thinking!"