

His head bowed down, he was advancing slowly, while thinking of the future, when the idea which had smouldered in his brain took a horrible firmness.

What! his three sisters, his little brother! are they, then, the insignificant obstacles to his happiness?

Well, thought he, since they are in my way, they must die.

It is then that, turning back upon the road, he regained the house, determined to accomplish the awful deed.

As a matter of fact, only the sudden disappearance of his three sisters and his little brother could make place for him and his future wife at his father's hearth.

No doubt, he loved the beings whom he had thus doomed to die in his cold, heartless calculations, but he loved much better the idle life he had led until this hour, and above all things he wanted to continue this life and at the same time enjoy all the gross pleasures of which he had always been so fond.

In order to lead this existence, and to perpetuate this life of a spoiled child, when he would have taken unto himself a wife, he must needs always have, not only an assured shelter, but a table always served for him, without having to procure the supplies by honest work.

It was evident that strangers would not furnish him these things. Only his father and mother, although poor themselves, would be weak enough and ignorant enough of their duty towards society to facilitate for him so smiling a future.

Notwithstanding his little intelligence, Tom was shrewd enough to understand that his laziness, together with his other faults, would not find outside of his father's house the asylum he sought for his love and his animal appetite.

It was after these reflections that he took the wicked resolution to clear the way by killing the four innocent victims that fate had placed in his way.

And this is why Tom Nulty was going towards his home about noon on Thursday, the 4th of November. He knew the house had been left in the care of the four children, Elizabeth, Annie, Helen and Patriek. On arriving, Tom was struck by the unusual quiet of the place.

What! said he to himself, uneasy for the accomplishment of his horrible purpose, is there no one at home?

No sooner had he thought this than he saw Elizabeth, the eldest of the children, whose duties had called to the barn.

Tom grimed in a fiendish manner. For an instant, owing to the great quietness of the place, he had thought that the four innocents doomed by him to a horrible death, in order to accomplish his projects, had foiled him by going away for some purpose or other. This absence would have imperilled his purpose.

The sight of Elizabeth, showing that his fears were unfounded, had thrown a gleam of ferocious joy in his brutish brain, and he