

the great gentleman, and what good would it do him then if he had all the money in the world. Then he remembered, that to give alms was one of the greatest acts of charity he could perform, and so he gave the old woman his half-penny, saying to himself—"For the love of God, in honor of the Blessed Mary, and for the poor gentleman's soul." And he went on his way with his mail bags, feeling as if the world could not contain his happiness. And he felt truly—for the world could not contain it: it came from God, and God only can fill the soul with true and perfect joy.

CHAPTER X.

NED RUSHEEN IS ACCUSED OF FIRING THE FIRST SHOT.

EGAN had a consultation with the Inspector of Police, who arrived at the station early in the morning. The question was, whether Ned Rusheen should be arrested at once, on suspicion, or whether they should wait for further disclosures.

The Inspector suggested that Egan should call at Ned's place, and try to see him, and bring about a conversation, by which he might ascertain the truth regarding the comforter. He also thought he ought to make further inquiries about Ellie McCarthy's disappearance.

They went together up the road to the scene of the murder, and found a few people there; not tearing up bits of earth as mementoes of the crime, or stealing bits of stick, or anything else that could be got, to show their friends, when they discoursed upon the horrors. Ah, no! after all, they were only "poor, ignorant Irish." The fate of the dead man's soul, cut off so suddenly, weighed upon the religious minds too deeply for much idle curiosity, and the few who were on the spot were saying their beads, or uttering ejaculations of prayer, in the pauses of a very subdued conversation.

Even the Inspector was very much moved by what he saw. He had been in England some time—in a somewhat similar capacity—and he had seen strong men fight, and nearly murder

each other, in their anxiety to get a piece of a door, or a fragment of a tree, where a deadly deed of crime had been done. He certainly pitied these misguided people; but, on the whole, he thought, if he were in Lord Elmsdale's place, he would rather be prayed over than fought over.

The place had been guarded now for twenty-four hours. The footmarks had not been trampled on; the frost was so severe they were, if possible, more distinct than on the previous day. The twig in the hedge was still bent down, but white with rime—whiter than the unhappy soul of the criminal who had done the deed.

The Inspector made a discovery. His wits had been sharpened by years of contact with criminal cases.

"Look here, Egan; I think I have found out something that may be important. The footmarks are confused—there are marks of several feet here." He pointed to the spot in the field at the side of the hedge, just opposite the place where Lord Elmsdale had been found. "And, look here," he continued, eagerly, "there is a footmark coming and a footmark going from the very spot where you have bent the twig. What *does* this mean? Could the murderer have come to the place to reconnoitre, and then returned and gone lower down? I really don't understand it. 'Pon my word, Egan, it's just the most mysterious affair I ever had to do with."

And so it was—very mysterious. Egan was peering about him eagerly, as if he expected every minute to see something which he had not seen before, and to be placed on the pinnacle of professional fame by his discovery.

"Where does Rusheen live?"

"Down the road, a little to the right, sir."

"Then he did not go home after the murder, if he *was* the murderer. Look, the footsteps all go up in the direction of the castle."

Egan admitted that they did.

"Egan!"

"Sir!"

"Do you think you could fix that piece of woollen stuff on the hedge *exactly* the way you found it? or, stay! can you tell me if it was caught loosely,