

strange dresses, and the long, flowing hair: 'tis wonderful entirely. I wonder, now, what'll Norah say when I tell her all about it! Will she laugh at me?"

It was better than half an hour after midnight when a lonely wayfarer, wending his way down the steep road which led in the direction of old Michael O'Brien's cottage, was startled by a sound like the groan of some one in great agony, proceeding from the left hand side. The man knew there was a large sand-pit there, and he hurried across to peer down into the deep hollow. Below he could see a confused mass of something, he knew not what; for the shadow of the high bank came between it and the moon. But again that groan of agony rose to his ears, more faint and pitiful than before.

"In the name of Heaven!" exclaimed the man, crossing himself, "is there any poor suffering Christian lying down there?"

"Oh, yes, neighbor," said an eager voice in accents indicative of much pain. "Our horse took fright, and the car fell over into the sand-pit; and I'm afraid both my companions are killed."

"And who are you at all, a-drahar?" asked the man.

"I'm Dan Barry o' the mill," was the reply. "And 'tis poor Jack Halligan and Condy Rourke that's lying here—stone dead, I'm thinking."

"Oh, murder! murder! what is to be done?"

"Neighbor," said the wounded man, "if you've no help with you, run off at once to Michael O'Brien's house below—run for the love of heaven—and tell 'em what's happened. They'll send help soon. I can't move; for my leg is broken and the wheel is on it."

The man started on his message instantly, and was soon thundering at O'Brien's door. The family were all up still; for they had only just returned from the Midnight Mass in the parish chapel. They speedily learned from the man's lips a story that filled them with horror and dismay. Norah, O'Brien uttered a loud scream and grasped the stranger's arm. She was as pale as death and trembling in every limb.

"Did ye hear the name o' Connor

M'Dermott?" she asked almost inarticulately, and in a hoarse whisper.

"Divil a bit," was the reply. "He said there were only two others, Rourke and Halligan; and never a Connor M'Dermott was mentioned."

Norah clasped her hands, and raised her eyes in thankfulness to Heaven.

"Oh God be thanked, he is safe then," she murmured. But where can he be? why did he not come on with the others?"

In a short time Michael O'Brien and his daughter, accompanied by some stout fellows, reached the sand-pit. And piteous was the spectacle which there met their eyes. The car was almost smashed to pieces, and the mare lay dead; she had rolled over on her head and broken her neck. Barry lay groaning with the heavy weight which lay on his shattered limb. A little further away, as if he had been flung forward when the vehicle was overturned, lay Rourke, insensible, but still living. He had received concussion on the brain. But under the debris of the car, lay poor wild merry Jack Halligan, doubled up, with his left hand still clutching the useless reins; cold and still he lay, past all human power of cure. Norah drew back with a shudder. "Poor, foolish, unhappy Jack! May the Lord be merciful to his poor soul!"

One of the party had taken the precaution to bring with him some stimulant, and he held it to poor Dan Barry's palid lips.

"But how about Connor McDermott?" he asked. "What of him?"

"Yes, Dan, dear," cried Norah eagerly. "What's become of Connor?"

"Och," groaned the wounded man. "I wish I was where he is now, no matter for all the ghosts in the world."

"Ghosts! is the man raving? What on earth d'ye mean, Dan?"

"Why, you see, we were talking about the ghosts of the ancient monks that, they say, haunts the old abbey, and marches about in procession there every Christmas Eve night. Nothing would do Connor, who is always a risky daring fellow, but he must go and see if there was any truth in the story; and the more poor Jack laughed and reasoned against him, the more obstinate he became, you see."