

I don't know what possessed me. I said "No." Oh! how I would have liked to recall the word, but it was spoken, and he rose with a clouded and disappointed face. He lingered a little, and asked to know why it was No and not Yes? I said we could not be happy together. He bowed gravely and left me. I suppose he was hurt, for he did not add a word. No assurance of friendship, of good will, no hope that I would relent or change my mind, passed his lips. The door closed upon him. I heard the garden gate fall to, and I felt in a sort of stupor. It was over. What madness had made me banish him? Every step took him away further from me—never—never again—should we meet. Perhaps he would not have left me then, if I could have spoken the truth. Ah! if I could have said to him, "I cannot be happy with you because I love, and you do not; because my love and my pride would suffer all day long if I were your wife; because it is easier to do without you than to have you on these terms." If I could have said all this, would our meeting have ended thus? It was too late to think of that now, but I was not too late to suffer. I buried my face in the pillow of the couch on which I was sitting, and cried and sobbed as if my heart would break.

Poor Carlo's cold nose thrust in the hand which hung down by my side in the folds of my dress, roused me. I looked up and saw Mr. Thompson. He was very red, and seemed flurried.

"I have forgotten my umbrella," he said, a little nervously.

Yes; there it was, in the corner, that horrible umbrella of his! But, instead of going to look for it, he suddenly came and sat down on the couch by me. I do not know how I looked, but I felt ready to die with shame. He took my hand and kissed it.

"My dear Miss Raymond," he said, persuasively, "why should we not be happy together? I cannot bear to give you up, indeed I cannot."

I looked at him in doubt.

"Then do you really like me?" I asked.

"Do I really like you? Why, what else have I been saying all along?"

"You said you wanted to take care of me."

"Oh, if we are to go back to that—" he began, resignedly. But we did not go back to that; we went back to nothing, for a miserable girl suddenly became the happiest of women. Still I was not quite satisfied.

"You would not have come back, if it had not been for that horrible umbrella of yours," I said, with a little jealousy.

"Very true," he replied, with his peculiar smile; "but I did come back, and I glanced in through the window first, and saw you hiding your face on that cushion, and Carlo looking at you as if he thought it strange you should be so forlorn; and so I came in for my umbrella; and to tell you the truth, I had forgotten it on purpose."

Perhaps he only said it to please me; but as I looked in his face I did not think so then; and, though years have passed over us both I do not think so now.

THE DANGERS OF SANITY.

THE Irish town of Poplin (I dare not give the place its real name) was never very deficient in blackguards; but, a few years ago, it boasted a very black sheep who was called Shaun Magee. The crimes attributed to Shaun were simply innumerable. If he had hitherto escaped the gallows, it was through no particular watchfulness on his own part; for Shaun took no pains to conceal his misdeeds, but rather that he was a true gregarious Irishman, and that all his evil escapades took place when he was associated with a dozen or two of congenial spirits. It is to be feared, however, that much of the evil notoriety acquired by Shaun was due to one special failing he had, a leaning towards heresy; and that the good people of Poplin, horrified at the notion, immediately came to the con-

clusion that if Shaun had not been hanged for a dozen capital offences, it was not his fault, but the fault of the English government.

Suddenly, however, Shaun was attacked by his conscience. He repented him of his crimes; and privately repaired to a worthy priest, called Father Mahoney, at whose confessional Shaun revealed the numerous errors he had committed. The good father rejoiced over the returning sinner, and welcomed to the bosom of the church one who had gone very far astray. Shaun grew in the fervour of piety, until he became one of the Father's pet pupils; though all this time he had spoken to no one of his conversion. Perhaps he was afraid he should draw disfavour upon the character of the good old priest who had received him, and may have resolved to postpone the disclosures of his repentance until the flavour of his past offences should have somewhat disappeared.

Now, it happened that Father Mahoney, amongst his other duties, was accustomed to conduct mass in the chapel attached to the lunatic asylum of Poplin; and, one forenoon, as he was rapidly on his way towards this chapel, he met Shaun Magee.

Shaun humbly took off his cap, as in duty bound, and was about to pass the Father, when the latter stopped him.

"I'm in great perplexity, Shaun," said the Father.

"Indade, your rivrence," said Shaun, with manifest concern, "and axing your pardon, your rivrence, is't anything now I could do for yiz?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, Shaun, I've got no one to serve mass at the chapel. There's Mr. O'Halloran has taken suddenly unwell, and I'm clean bothered to get some one in his place. Do you think you could serve mass, Shaun?"

"Sure I could, your rivrence; weren't we all tached to serve mass? And if I went wrong, sure it's your rivrence could give me a bit of a hint."

"Come along, then, Shaun; I'm glad I've met ye, for indeed it's a great favour you're doing me."

"And saving your presence, it's no favour at all!" cried Shaun. "Ah, your rivrence, isn't it glad a poor boy is to do you a good turn for what yiz do to every won?"

So, Father Mahoney and his pupil were speedily in the chapel; and though Shaun did at first feel somewhat embarrassed in the white surplice, he soon forgot his bashfulness in his anxiety to help the Father. The service proceeded in the usual way; and, if Shaun did make one or two little mistakes, he said to himself, "Sure it's not a bit of harm it'll do the poor crayturs; there's norra one o' them knows the difference."

"I'm obliged to ye, Shaun," said the Father, when it was all over, "and I will say you remembered the service well. But what made ye grin like a sucking-pig?"

"Well, your rivrence, I was just thinking that some of the poor crayturs might have seen me face before, and wouldn't it be the divvle's own wonder—I ax pardon, your rivrence—for them to see Shaun Magee serving mass?"

"Why, Shaun?"

"Well, you see, your rivrence, they've told some daycent stories about me in my time, and—"

"Never mind, Shaun. It's a hard thing if a poor boy is always to be brow-bated about what he's done years before."

"Thank ye, your rivrence."

"Good day to ye, Shaun."

"Good day, your rivrence," said Shaun, with an humble obeisance; and they parted.

Now it further happened that in this lunatic asylum there had been confined for many years a gentleman of some consequence in Poplin. He had never been very insane; but his friends had come to the conclusion that the best thing to cure him of his gentle hallucinations was to place him under the care of the doctors in the asylum. Recently reports had been daily growing in his favour; until came the final intelligence that the doctors considered him perfectly sane.

His relatives (whether rejoicing at the intelligence or not, history is not in a position to

chronicle,) resolved to meet in the lunatic asylum, and there judge for themselves as to the certainty of their friend's recovery. The day appointed for this meeting was that succeeding the day on which Shaun Magee had served mass.

The relatives of the hitherto insane man, therefore, were assembled in a room within the asylum; and to this commission of inquiry came the gentleman himself. He was affectionately received by his friends, and sat down to converse with him, they narrowly watching for any symptom of his previous ailment. Everything progressed satisfactorily. His remarks were quite up to the intelligence of the auditors; and in no respect were bizarre or ludicrous.

"By the" said he, "do you know who was at mass yesterday?"

"Father Mahoney, was it not?"

"And who served him, do ye think?"

They protested their ignorance.

"Shaun Magee," said he.

"Who?"

"Shaun Magee."

"Shaun Magee serving mass?"

"Yes."

The friends of the unhappy man looked towards each other, with apparent horror, perhaps with inward satisfaction.

"Sure you're mistaken, Mr. Jewry," said one; "don't yiz know that Shaun Magee, begging your pardon, is one of the biggest blackguards in Poplin, an idle, dhrunken, swearing vagabond?"

"He served mass here yesterday," said Mr. Jewry, firmly.

"The divvle's as mad as a March hare," said one, in a whisper; "be me sowl, it's not a safe thing to be nare him."

"Oh, it's joking ye are, Mr. Jewry," said another; "ye're making fun av us, ye divvle!"

"Dade, I'm not then," said Mr. Jewry, "for I saw him with me own eyes."

The friends withdrew; and Mr. Jewry was ignominiously ordered back to his ordinary duties and restrictions. Protesting, vowing, swearing, was of no avail; nay, they rather the more convinced every one of the poor man's hopeless madness.

"Shaun Magee!" cries one of the relatives as they went their way homeward.

"He'll never be a sancman in this world, except be the blessing of God and the Holy Virgin."

And so it was that poor Mr. Jewry was thrust back into his confinement. Several weeks passed by, and no one thought any more of the matter. Every one knew that Mr. Jewry was still a lunatic, and pitied him, and envied his relatives. But one day one of these relations, passing down the street, met Shaun Magee.

"Good day to ye, Shaun."

"The top o' the morning to ye, Phelim."

"By the holy piper, Shaun, I've got sumthin to tell yiz. Sure yiz must know Pat Jewry, that made a rare bag o' goold wi' his owld rags and bones?"

"Av coorse I know the gentleman."

"He's a fair straight lunatic, Shaun."

"And what av that, Phelim?"

"We thought the poor boy had been cured and all of us thought of taking him out; and sure it's not for a year ye would be guessing to tell what he said to us. He said that Shaun Magee had been serving holy mass in the chapel."

"Faith, then, Phelim, he made no big blunder."

"What do yiz mane, Shaun?"

"I mane that meself, Shaun Magee, did, by the grace of God and the help of his rivrence, serve mass in that same chapel. That's what I mane, Phelim Jewry."

"Och, Mother of Moses! it's ruined we are, every mother's son of us! Jump up, Shaun on this kyar, and let's fly with the blessed news."

And they did fly. Round to the houses of all poor Tom's relatives they went with this true narrative; and speedily a fresh commission of inquiry was instituted, and the unhappy victim set at liberty. The historian has further but to chronicle that there was a grand dinner to celebrate the liberation, at which the former lunatic generously proposed the health and continued happiness of Mr. Shaun Magee.

WILLIAM BLACK.