

# The Mystery of Killard.

PART III.—ORDEAL BY GOLD.

## CHAPTER IV. Continued.

All hope had quitted the frigate, and when within twenty miles of the western coast of Kerry, the captain wrote a despatch detailing the disasters, and saying that the vessel might go down any moment, as she was half-full of water, and that, at all events, she would be ashore in two hours. This despatch he placed with other documents in a cask bearing the name of the frigate, and then threw the cask overboard.

So thick was the rain, and so dark the day with clouds, it was impossible to see a mile any way. At half-past twelve, without any abatement of the gale, the wind veered round a little more to the east. The frigate rolled and wallowed, and those on board expected her to sink beneath them every moment. Now she presented starboard side to the tempest, and over it the monstrous waves clambered, to fall in a roaring torrent across her decks. Anon, she lay with her port side to the wind, and the yellow green masses of water bounded over her decks, and flew into wavering catenae under her lee. Again she lay before the storm, and furrowed the billows with her shattered stem. The few survivors, lashed to posts and stanchions, were stunned by shocks and numbed with cold.

At one o'clock the wind shifted still further into the east, and the vessel took a more westerly direction. At half past two she rounded Cape Clear, and was torn by the blasts into the open Atlantic. She then had no crew, but Death.

From that time forward the storm moderated. At four the wind crept back once more towards the south. At five it blew due south. At six a moderate gale from the westward of south. Then it fell quickly away, almost to a dead calm, and, until midnight, an open light might have burned in the air.

Meanwhile the frigate still swam, though much deeper in the water, and with an increased list to port. The calm was succeeded by a breeze from the west, which held two days.

On the night of the second day the frigate drifted bottom up, close under the coast of county Clare. At midnight she drove stem foremost into the southern passage between the mainland and the Bishop's Island. Here, for a while, she beat heavily against the cliffs, for it was deep water, six fathoms, up to the very wall of the island.

The surf was tremendous, although the breeze was a moderate one, for the tumult raised by the storm had not yet subsided. The sound of her beating against the cliffs roused old Lane. He came out, and saw a thing which he, in the darkness at first, took for some huge sea monster. But in time, he made out what it really was. Before morning the frigate had settled down and in two days no portion of her appeared above water; she had been battered into atoms by the surf, and her planks and beams had either sunk where she struck, or floated away.

It was in the spring of the next year old Lane married his wife, and bought the Bishop's Island, with all rights to his hawking, hunting, fishing, mines, wood, water and foreshore.

## CHAPTER V.

LONDON.

The sun had set on the day John Lane left Killard, before he reached Limerick. He had only a small black carpet-bag with him. He took the night-mail to Dublin, and arrived there a little after day-break.

"Dublin," he thought, "is big enough for me. If I tried to have the gold as they say here every one would know of it in no time. Few people come to Dublin with unworn gold. If I was only in my old wilderness down south I could manage the matter much better. But London will do nearly as well. There will be no commotion there because I ask a man to tell me what this yellow metal is. According to all accounts my father never showed any gold but coins. Can it be they were counterfeit? But there were no moulds or dies about the place, and I looked closely."

He wandered about the city in the neighborhood of Westland Row, and waited until the ticket office was open.

"There's no good in my taking a return ticket," he thought. "I cannot tell when I may be back, and I must finally arrange about this affair, and decide what is to be done before I set foot again in Killard."

He booked for Exeter, and arrived in London, worn-out and jaded, that evening.

Although in great haste to get his business forward, he felt a still greater necessity for caution.

"I'm some judge of good gold by this time, but not infallible. This Bishop's metal is redder than what I have been used to, but it feels much the same weight. If it is gold I cannot be too cautious; if it is not gold there is no use in adding the accusation of forgery to my name. Should it turn out to be real, what shall I do? But there it is no use to dispose of the future in that way. Let me find out what the metal is."

The first stage of his proceedings was simple enough. He had brought with him a few ounces of the metal. The form of those pieces were irregular, but most of them were flat, and very few had more depth than a third of their superficial diameter.

He put a few pieces in his pocket the day after his arrival, and strolled along the Strand and Fleet Street.

He entered a jeweller's and produced a piece of the metal about the size of a six-penny piece.

"Could you make this into a scarf-pin for me?" he asked the man behind the counter.

The man took the piece of metal, weighed it on the end of one of his fingers, examined it through a glass, and said:

"Certainly. What pattern will you have it?"

"An anchor. But is there enough?"

"Yes; there is enough for a small head

and pin. If you wish, we could add a little. Suppose we make the head of this, and the pin of some we add."

"That will do very well, thank you. You will try to match the color?"

"We shall match the color exactly, so that it will seem all of one piece."

"Do you think that a piece of good gold?"

"Yes, it seems a good piece."

"Of course, you know gold by the look and weight."

"Well I ought; I've been twenty-five years passing it through my hands."

"That's a long experience. But could you tell virgin gold from gold with an alloy?"

"I'd make a good guess where the alloy is considerable, but a small portion might escape me."

"And what do you think of that little piece?"

"There's alloy in this, beyond doubt; both silver and copper, I should think. The copper gives the red and purple sparks in the fractures, and the silver the hardness. Not much alloy. Can we do anything else for you to-day?"

"No, thank you. Good-morning."

When he found himself in the street he began thinking once more.

"There were silver mines in Killaloe, and I've heard that gold has been discovered there too; but I do not remember ever reading, or being told, gold had been found so far west in Clare as Killard. Then what brings the copper in the gold? And most of all, what brings that enormous quantity of gold where it is? Why, in all Clare there isn't as much as there's on that one island. Where did it come from?"

He paused a moment, staggered by the certainty which had come slowly upon him that the metal was real gold, with a slight alloy.

"Gold!" he thought, giddily, "and all mine. Now I see why my grandfather bought the island, and had the clause about the 'hawking, hunting, fishing, mines, wood, water, and foreshore rights' inserted. It was this gold. He found it or knew of it, and married a dumb wife that he might secure children who could not tell. If he found the gold in any ordinary way, why need he keep it secret? But I'm forgetting that there's copper in it, and that it can't be native. How did he get it? There isn't as much in all the rest of Clare. He never could have stolen it, for no one has such a vast store. Even banks, except the very largest, don't keep such sums; and until my grandfather bought the island and went inland for a while, I have heard he never was beyond Clonmore, in which place there was then no bank. How did he come by it? That's what I want to know."

These were the thoughts he expressed boldly to his own mind, but under them, waged a fierce struggle. Should he inquire no further, but take the gold away and sell it, and become a rich man all at once, with everything in the world he could desire, or should he first up some clue to this gold and let the honest part of it?

He kept the struggle out of his view as much as possible, and endeavored to deal with objective matters as much as possible. The strife went on all the same, stunning and shaking him, and, above all, keeping his mind away from the blue-eyed white girl of Killard. At an irregular voice declared to him that the girl and the gold were inconsistencies. He could never hope she would be content to share wealth of the same of which she knew nothing, and even if she had been disposed to such a thing, he could not have borne her as to the gross reality of his visits to Australia, for the day he and her drove home from Killard he had gathered in possession of all the land rights. From the period he emerged upon the great world, through the gateway of the great road in London, he had seemed to be in the midst of the nation, and the tumult. He had the right that his name had previously merely meant death on the island he would have felt a thousand times, but would go into the great world and live. Putting the discovery of the last few days out of his mind, he was now a rich man according to the canons of the world. But he was no longer a boy; he had been in the world and had seen life and tasted the power of gold, and he was no more than a poor man according to the present standard. He was a young man—riches came suddenly upon him, as few could; for he was young, full of health, spirits, imagination. And now here was positive wealth before him. Wealth which—his goodness knew how long—had lain where it now lay, which his grandfather and father had possessed before him, and yet because of something, some warning finger, some principle of right, some unappreciated influence of that girl which he wished so to keep out of his mind just now—he did not like to stretch forth his hand and grasp—What? Everything, it seemed. Everything, but peace.

And so the strife went on, on and on, over again. He tried to quiet it, but in vain. He exercised the whole force of his will to suppress it, to keep his mind fixed on the absolute business in hand; but as often as he fancied he had cast out the torment, it came back again to rack and waste him with redoubled force.

"I now know," he thought, driving his mind into the channel of his immediate action. "I now know that there is an alloy in the gold. Let me find out how much."

Accordingly he sought an analytical chemist, gave him a specimen, told him what he wanted, and was requested to call in three days. He returned at the time appointed.

"I am exceedingly sorry," said the chemist, "that I have not been able to commence the analysis. I may tell you, however, that I have made a discovery which will simplify matters a good deal. In looking at the largest piece of metal I saw a fissure, and enlarging this fissure I found two of the pieces had been imperfectly fused, they came asunder readily, and here is the larger of the two. The specific gravity of the piece of metal corresponds with the discovery."

John Lane took the piece in his hand and saw a little blurred by fusion, the head of George III., and the legend, "Georgius III. Rex." There could be no further reason to doubt. Here was the face of a guinea before him.

With a great effort he controlled himself so as to show no surprise, and having thanked the chemist, and said that his discovery answered as well, or better

than an analysis, he went away, taking with him the guinea face.

The jeweller had told him the metal was gold, and here was a guinea embedded in a partly-fused mass. It was now quite plain to him that all the metal in the Bishop's had at one time been coined gold. He remembered how there was no talk of sovereigns in connection with his father's or grandfather's mysterious money. He had heard of those fires which helped the people to the idea that his grandfather and father had had dealings with evil spirits. Now he had leaped into two secrets at once. The gold had all been guineas, or, at least, coined gold at one time; and the fires had been kindled to reduce it to its present form, with a view, no doubt, to make it appear as though it had been an ordinary native product of the island, and had never before passed through the hands of man.

Now he knew why his father had expelled him, when he found out he could hear. He feared this secret might be discovered by him, and upon his learning to speak, at some time before he had arrived at the age of discretion, he might tell of the gold, and so lead to a forcible withdrawal of it from the island, where it did not rightfully lie.

Again the fierce conflict between temptation and conscience arose, and John Lane strode through the crowded streets of London with an overwhelming secret on his mind and a distracting tumult in his breast. Towards night he became calmer, and he put the question repeatedly to himself, "What am I to do next?"

For days he remained in a state of the greatest excitement and perplexity. He could not go back and live on the island watching that treasure. No portion of his scheme of life admitted of such an idea. He wanted to live until he died, not to sit down and await the falling of the shadow. He was not ignorant like his grandfather, or dumb like his father. He was in the very heyday of life, and live he would. What should he do? The gold could not be left in its present hiding place any longer. Whatever was to be done with it, the best thing was to remove it. It brought good to no one where it lay, and might be discovered at any moment. What should he do? Remove it! Yes; that was very easy to say, but how to accomplish it? He calculated that if it were all put together it would nearly fill an ordinary corn sack, but such a sack, supposing one could be made to bear such prodigious strain, would weigh at least a ton. Yes; there was about a ton weight of the metal on that island. How was it to be got away, and where could it be brought to?

It was not until a week had passed that he hit upon a plan. He put an advertisement in the Shipping Gazette, to the effect that L. Lane thought it best to reverse his initials, wished to hire a forty-ton packet for the summer months. Others were to be sent to the Mexican Hotel, Cornhill, London.

In a few days he decided upon trying one of the boats tendered. He saw the proprietor, a man who made his living by letting jacks. The Water Lily was letting for the season at Cowes. He got a description of her from the owner, and having agreed to pay a deposit of fifty pounds, he sent the packet for seven hundred pounds, and pay twenty-five guineas a month for the two months, a bargain was concluded.

Next, about a captain and crew. Yes; but the captain and crew were to be French. Could a French captain and crew be got to a certain time, and a boy, a girl, and a dog.

Yes; he had quite so quickly as an Englishman.

Never mind. Use all ingenuity, and when you want and when you want, ready as you can be known.

So he pulled from the rack, and came back with a French captain, crew, and a dog, and a girl, and a boy.

A MODEL RAILWAY.

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## THE HANGING OF MRS. SURRATT.

"The judicial murder of Mrs. Surrott has so many counterparts in the history of Ireland, that the following poem will, I am sure, be read with sympathy by your readers. It was written at the time."—*Correspondent of the TRUE WITNESS.*

### INNOCENT.

"I die innocent, but God's holy will be done."—*Last words of Mary E. Surrott.*

Yes, thou diest innocent. The human laws That found thee guilty, were not laws of ruth.

The men who sat in judgment on thy cause Cared not for justice, did not seek for truth.

Thou wert prejudged; thy death-writ but the seal To what they long in secret had decreed;

And vainly child's most agonized appeal, With hearts like theirs, how could her prayer succeed?

III.

Al! Little recked thy judges, if the ties Of home, and tender love, were sundered wide;

While base informers, slavish tools and spies, Their low and fendish calling busily pieced.

But God is Judge Supreme; within His court No liar comes, but blessed mercy's there;

And judgment swift and sure for those who sport With human life and helpless ones enmeshed.

IV.

There is a sentence, that in after years, On many a heart will strike a knell profound;

Which neither pomp, nor power, nor rain of tears Can make less vivid in its fearful sound;

When "I die innocent" in words of flame Will dance and scintillate before each eye

That looked approval on this deed of shame, And calmly saw a guiltless woman die.

V.

"God's holy will be done!" Are words like these, The utterance of lips all steeped in crime?

In that dread moment when the spirit sees The gift that bears Eternity from Time,

Oh, fitting words! "God's holy will be done!"

Words breathed in anguished hour by lips most pure,

Of Him who died for all the sinful One, Whose sorrows well might teach thee to endure.

VI.

Thy Saviour trod the weariest way to death, Up Calvary's steep, 'mid life and stab and spear;

Blood-stained and weary, gasping for His breath, He struggled on, till Golgotha drew near.

His falling limbs no longer could sustain The heavy cross wherein his frame once more He bore.

His falling limbs no longer could sustain The heavy cross wherein his frame once more He bore.

Till brutal men, again and yet again, Were forced to aid, or see Him prostrate lie.

VII.

But thou, not think of this, as thou wert bound,

All unceasingly, toward thy doom, The guinea face I viewed, and then for-

Helped on to meet thy undesigned doom, Didst thou not think of Him—thou say'st my way.

The heavy cross, the aid and the stranger's aid, And help down thy sufferings might be given.

If joined to His, the soul He died to save.

VIII.

His sacred brow the dreadful thorn-crown pressed— Oh, mockery and bitter, bitter pain! Didst thou not think of this, thine own head dressed?

And shrouded in the cap, so meant to stain?

And when at last the awful moment came, And round thy neck was placed the fatal chain,

Didst thou not join with His, thy guinea-less chain?

And gazed, at raised aloft, like Him didst die.

MARY LORRAINE RAY, Chesham, July, 1891.

Goldwin Smith.

Goldwin Smith is opposed to Sir Charles Tupper in many ways, but doubtless both would agree that no better remedy for dyspepsia, constipation, biliousness, headache, kidney troubles, skin diseases, etc., exists than Burdock Blood Bitters, the best family medicine known.

Common sense is the gift of heaven; enough of it is genius.

The Australian Commonwealth.

The Australian Commonwealth will have grand results, but the results of using