

few minutes he stood irresolute; but like to a cooling breeze in the sun-dried desert, so came unto his soul the words of the white-robed youth whom he had seen, in body or in spirit he knew not—"By one good deed of surpassing merit, thou mayst gain eternal bliss." Grace had won the victory. The banker turned from the window to address the young man; but as he did so Helen entered. "And now, papa," she asked smilingly, "what do you think of him?"

"Think of him?" cried her father. "Ah! Helen, he can never know what he has done for me. Freely, gladly do I consent to your marriage, bless you! my children; and for a dowry I give you, Ernest Fitz Stephen, with Helen the mortgage on the estate of Moghlin-Ardas. You are now Earl in title and estates."

Regretfully we draw the curtain on the scene of that outburst of happiness and explanation which then and there occurred. And when another Christmas had come, the young Earl looking around him in his ancestral hall, and seeing what good had been done, what happiness made by his devoted wife, he turned from where he stood, as the sound of the Christmas Bells came floating to his ear, and kissed and doubly-blessed his "Helen."

Boston, Nov. 20, 1877.

NED RUSHEEN;

OR,

Who Fired The First Shot?

Author of the "Illustrated Life of St. Patrick," "Illustrated History of Ireland," "History of the Kingdom of Kerry," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

THE boys had come down very early in wild spirits. It was the first time they had been allowed to go out shooting with Ned, without their father or elder brother—the first act of independence, and they prized it accordingly. The proud mother had waved her hand to them as they passed the door, with a pardonable exultation and the exclamation, "My noble boys!"

Freddy came down first. What a contrast between the going out and the coming in: he had bounded down the stairs with just two leaps—he went up

it now ghastly pale, tottering at every step, and sobbing wildly. He was looking for his mother. Lady Elmsdale was in her morning-room; all the elegancies and pleasures of fashionable life surrounded her. I will not describe them, for I leave descriptions to those who are obliged to fill up their volumes with unnecessary pages; here we need every page, every line, to tell of events. She sat at the window, with her back half-turned to the door; a splendid greyhound—her only pet besides her boys—lay at her feet. She knew Freddy's step, and thought there might be some bad news, as he came in so slowly, so contrary to his usual custom; still, it never occurred to her that anything was seriously wrong.

"Well, Freddy?"

She did not turn her head; she expected every moment he would come close and throw his arm round her neck.

But he did not come. A groan of anguish that he could not suppress broke from his lips, and he sank, almost insensible, on the nearest chair.

Lady Elmsdale turned round quickly enough now. "Oh, Freddy what has happened?" Still he made no answer; in truth, he was incapable of speech—how could he tell her—how could he ever break it to her.

Boys have not much taste in delicate cases, but they have, unless cruelly spoiled by education, kind, warm hearts, and their hearts lead them, in moments of great trial, to do just the wisest thing. But the lad was so absolutely stunned with pain now, he could not reflect. It was best, too, that there should be a pause—that Lady Elmsdale should get some idea that there had been a terrible calamity, before she was told she was a widow.

For a moment it seemed to her that one of those accidents which she had always been foreboding had occurred; that a gun had gone off at the wrong time, in the wrong way; that perhaps—but it seemed too terrible!—that perhaps one brother had killed the other. If so, her poor Freddy had been the survivor, and had fled to her for comfort, and Rusheen was, perhaps, bringing home the other. She rang the bell hurriedly to make preparations for receiving him, and to get some stimu-