

SHEMUS DHU,

THE BLACK PEDDLER OF GALWAY.

A TALE OF THE PENAL TIMES.

CHAPTER XXIV.—(CONTINUED.)

This would be more fatal to Shemus than any encounter with them on the river, and he was resolved, at any hazard, to avoid it. With these feelings he entered the stream, at the same time directing his crew to pull towards the Terryland weir. As he expected, he was followed quickly in the same course by his pursuers. This was what Shemus designed. He threw his quick glance along the water—he saw the ripples breaking over the broken rocks a few yards ahead of him. "Pull quickly, but lightly, boys," he said, in a low voice. "We will glide over the rocks; if they follow us, they strike them."

and losing all control by the openness of the demand. "D'Arcy, I know you well—I know you when you entered; it wanted not your last words to prove you a designing villain. If you were a friend of mine or of my father, you could have assisted us, without inducing us to act dishonourably and break our faith; but you are still our enemy, and you pretend to be our friend to gain those papers for dark and wicked purposes. Your hopes are defeated. I now attach more importance to my father's commands, and thank heaven these papers are beyond your power, for they are in safer keeping than mine."

Murrough, the guide who has brought me here." "Shemus Dhu—Murrough, I mean—'hal ha'" exclaimed D'Arcy, with an effort at laughter, which ended in a fiendish howl. "By heaven! I am duped by one or other. Hold out there!" he cried, in a voice whose shrillness, for a moment, echoed through the entire prison. The door of the cell, quick as thought, opened, and disclosed two tall dark figures, with weapons of steel in their hands. "See to your charge," cried D'Arcy. "Oh! I treat him gently; he is kindly nurtured. He is mild of heart. Give him down from his pillow, and dainties for his supper." "Fergus of Portarah," he said, looking with a fiend's scowl upon the bewildered young man, "bid farewell to light—you have looked your last upon God's day. Away with him; fellows!"

CHAPTER XXVII. D'Arcy, after Fergus' departure, remained for a few moments in the cell, his eyes unconsciously riveted upon the light before him. He was changed from his appearance of ten minutes before. We have said, in the commencement of this story, that D'Arcy would be called handsome, only for the expression of his lips. It was on this occasion that he looked a very fiend through their agency. The muscles of his mouth were contracted, exposing his set teeth—the snarl of a wolf. He started as he heard the noise of an iron door closing upon some dungeon beneath.

and if there be suspicion of foul play, the Council are on my side, and we can quiet the qualms of the military governor's conscience with a golden draught; or else—for by the way, he is latterly a little too strict for Galway men on points of justice—we can represent the affair in many lights, to give it the character of necessity—at worst, of expediency." "Here, his countenance brightened; and he rubbed his hands, with the anticipated delight of being successful in his attempt to remove young O'Halloran out of the way of his ambition. But quickly his countenance fell, and he arose from the table, to walk the room with quick step—as if the excitement of his body could destroy or lessen the agitation of his soul. His thoughts took this form: "Darcy, there are too many against thee to succeed. This Connel O'Keane, whom nothing can bribe—persons here in town, who will run any risk to hasten my downfall—the testimony of the dead bag—(thanks to thee, Setter, thou hast put me upon the scent to hunt down this game)—Father Thomas, who knows all connected with O'Halloran and with me. Stop!—I have him safe in my power. But the 'Black Peddler'! Yet, why fear Shemus Dhu? I have trusted him more than I have trusted any living being. He has as yet kept the appearance of being my friend. Shemus Dhu—it cannot be. Still, when I think of him, a heaviness comes on my spirits, and darkness lowers upon the bright prospects of success before me. Ah! there is something about that fellow which I cannot understand. He makes me tremble when he looks upon me with his dark eyes, apparently so simple, and yet so expressive of deep design and mystery. I recollect now many words of suspicious meaning which he has uttered to me. Folly! Thou art but a child, D'Arcy, and unworthy of the character for knowledge, which the highest and wisest give thee, if thou art not able to meet the Peddler on the vantage ground of deceit, and be not victorious."

CHAPTER XXVI.

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