

The man hesitated. "I'll, toll you what, Mr. Stinton, I'm in the height o' needessity for it, in respect o' my mother being dead wid me; it's a dirty action, I know, but poverty has no law, they say. Come, sir, put another guinea to it—let me feel them in my palm—and, do or die, I'll love you at the door."

This was complied with instantly. "Come," said Stinton. "ere it is, and now lead on in silence."

"Ouv," said the man, "that when we got down near the place, you must go foremost, sir; for in case they happened to get a glimpse of me, I'd soon be in my poor old mother's condition."

They then proceeded down the intricacies of the glen, under the direction of their new guide, who declared that, in consequence of the natural furrows and ruts that ran in different lines across each other, it was exceedingly difficult, even for one well acquainted with the right path, to distinguish it accurately in such darkness, from those which resembled it so much. In the meantime, they advanced with toil and difficulty through a track that was surrounded by imminent peril, till they were impeded by a rock, which projected from the side of the glen, and opposed to the descent. On reaching this, their guide paused. "Sir, we must cross this pass, one by one, and I'll go first; now, sir, wait a little; the step here is narrow, sir, as you saw, maybe, when the light came—I wish it would come another start, so I do. Any—steady—hold—your stand where you are till I direct you; in the meantime, I'll catch this tree, for I must hand the sogers all over, an' I'll want something to hold by—why, then, this branch comes handy, so it does—wait, captain dear—wait till I give the word o' command—now put your foot here—ay! that's the thing—now give a brave step, as far as you can across—it's only a little weesly cleft, about a yard wide—and you'll be on firm ground—here; now—off you go—and may all your sort soon go to the same place!" said he, with a most diabolical laugh; and immediately a shrill whistle from him rose over the confused noise of the cataract, piercing and significant.

In the meantime, a short but dreadful shriek or groan from the guager, such as is produced by unexpected danger, uttered as he gave the step across, after which the heavy crashes of his mangled body, thus precipitated from crag to crag, down to an immeasurable depth, gave to the soldiers, who remained behind, a fearful intimation of his fate. They stood silent with horror, but a sense of their guide's treachery immediately turned every musket towards him. At that moment a flash of light shone about the spot, and showed them to their astonishment that he had disappeared.

About fifty perches to the left of the spot from which Stinton was hurled, a large rock jutted out near the bottom of the glen, upwards of thirty feet. From a small circuitous channel, worn away by a stream that fell silently from the head of the valley, just as much water tumbled down, when at its lowest, as afforded the necessary supply to those who had conducted the work of distillation under the rock. A rude wall of stones, flanked by a breastwork of the same description, was raised on the opposite side, from which logs of timber were laid up against the rock, constituting the roof of the still-house. Under this, which was thatched by green sods, at a large fire, that glowed within a circle of stones more than a foot high, surrounded by sacks of malt, kishes of turf, and barrels of wash and wort in every state of preparation, were seated about a dozen of those hardened beings who usually frequent such places, from a hatred of honest industry, and a love of ardent spirits.

"Well," said a red-browed fellow, as he tossed a pile of turf on the fire, "if there be a man livin' who will lead Stinton a dance, it is Alick Hagan. Alick has a grudge against him ever since his brother Dan was fined; and he's so droll, an' can act so well, that he's a fittin' man to lead them astray than any in the county." Much of the same sort of talk followed, and one of the distillers observed, "I'll finish this ruinin' wid a blessin', and have all cleared off, and clane empty walls for them in the mornin', when they'll be welcome to whatever they can get."

As the last speaker concluded, the guager's treacherous guide and another man entered the still-house. The latter carried several torches made of fir faggots dried and bound togeather, one of which had been recently extinguished; the former wore a tight frieze jacket without skirke, and a hareskin cap strapped about his jaws. On entering the still-house, which they did by a private passage known only to those in the secrets of the place, both took seats at the fire. Hagan's face was pale, with the exception a slight tinge of red, the symptom of inward agitation; his eye was disturbed, and as he put a glass of liquor to his lips, his hand appeared unsteady.

"Hagan," said the distiller, "is it thure that Stinton an' the sogers are out aither us?"

"Stinton!" said Hagan; "Stinton!—ay, true"

enough; but Finnerty's light blazed out fornest St. Patrick's Chair, and I met them when I entered the glen; they mistook the upper rock for the one that's above there—and its I that didn't sing the purtiest *horo theig* over my poor mother, that's well and in good health an' many a hearty curse, Brian, you got, for refusin' me the liquor to put over her. At all events, the plan took, an' I led them to the Chair, where I wouldn't be surprisid if half a dozen o' them war to be found still in the mornin', aither bein' tumbled—hem—after tumbin' in the dark down the rocks—Ogh! ogh! it's enough to make one's blood run cold to think of it."

"What do you throbble for, Hagan?" inquired the man who had already given such a character of the family; you usen't to be so easily frightened at thrilles. Why, one would think you had coals in your mouth, your lips are so dirty."

"The best way, then, is to wet them," replied Hagan, gulping down another glass of burning spirits. "Myself, boys, had a great escap' entirely, sine—was near missin' my foot on the edge of one of them thure rocks above, an' I'm not the better of it sartinty."

"Why, if you had killed a man," observed the other, "you couldn't look worse. You're all of a throbble, an' your eyes are spread in your head;" and, as he spoke, a keen, suspicious glance accompanied the observation.

Hagan's cheek turned pale as death when his eyes met those of the last speaker; but he changed the subject altogether, and in a few minutes left the still-house and went home. The next morning parties of military, headed by the civil authorities, were in close pursuit of the person who had led Stinton to so dreadful a death. The body of the latter was found at the bottom of the rock, in a state which, were it not for his clothes, would have made recognition difficult, if not impossible. The accursed still-house was searched, but, by the activity of the gaw who resorted to it, nothing valuable could be discovered; its rude walls however, were levelled to the ground, and a spirit of greater vigilance excited among the officers of excise, who in that district suppressed the practice of private distillation altogether.

The inquest was a close and tedious one, for the materials on which to find a verdict were very scanty. Brian and his gang were secured, and ultimately admitted as evidence; the former deposed, that no man came to ask spirits from him on credit during the night of the murder. The death, it is true, might in so wild and rocky a place, on so dark a night, have been the result of mere accident; but the imposing tale told by the guide, and the imprecation uttered by him when Stinton fell from the crag, were sufficient proofs that the destruction of life was maliciously intended; the jury, accordingly, found a verdict of wilful murder against some person unknown. A large reward was immediately offered for the discovery of the murderer; but however cruel Irishmen may be in their modes of murder, it is an established fact that they are less mercenary, and more the slaves of a mistaken principle of honour, than the inhabitants of any other country. It is not likely, even had any of them actually been able to convict Hagan, that he would have been betrayed; at all events, their knowledge went no farther than suspicion, so that he was solely cognisant of his own crime.

Hagan, about a year after the murder, married, and attempted, by an unceasing application to industry, and every species of employment that could occupy his mind, to stifle the outcry of conscience, but without success. The blood would not out. He wrought at his small farm day after day, went to dances, fairs and markets, but never was seen at a wake or funeral, for he fled from the contemplation of death and judgment. Whatever ingenuity could suggest as a temporary solace for the first few years after the murder, was eagerly grasped at. One thing, however, was observed of him—he drank not; for a terrible fear that the pent-up guilt might burst forth from his heart if he surrendered his conscience to the babbling extravagance of intoxication, kept him sober. The whole tenor of his life was dark, but his mirth, when he ventured for a moment to indulge in it—

"Like lightning from the gloomy cloud Was the mirth of his misery"

In fact, all the marks of secret crime were upon him; his laugh was deep and empty; his affected lightness of heart, like the melancholy gaiety of despair; his face thoughtful and indicative of suffering; his steps were measured, and his habits repulsive, and in general solitary.

We cannot detail the losses and crosses to which this wretched man was subjected. His inward misery arising from an evil conscience, produced the result of outward inattention to correct modes of management. All his faculties were merged in fear; and every pursuit he followed found him unhappy. His children sprung up around him, but they died one af-

ter another in youth, and this misfortune, which may be in the lot of any one, the agonized father considered to be a punishment for his hidden guilt. His wife and mother likewise died, worn out by the swirling temper and wayward conduct of the being whom they ought, but could not love.

We now present him to our readers in the last scene of his life. On finding himself solitary, his shattered energies utterly failed him, the neglected appearance of his person, his unshaven and haggard face, and sunk eyes, marked him as a man whom either extraordinary calamities or crimes had degraded. He gave up his house and little farm when the last of his children died, and wandered about with something wild and grimy in his aspect—the creature of common charity and compassion.

One night in the middle of autumn, when sleep and silence brooded over the earth, he was abroad, in the disturbance of an unsettled mind. He was led by chance or some other cause to the neighbourhood of the place where, twenty years before, he had destroyed the wretched Stinton. Our dwelling was near the glen, and there it was destined that the murderer should breathe his last. About two o'clock in the morning, we heard a voice at the door, breathing out in accents of horror, "Let me in, as you hope for mercy; let me in, or the life will leave me." In pity to entreaties so urgently made, the door was opened, the light held forward, and the body of Hagan fell senseless into the house. From every pore of his face the streams of perspiration issued as profusely as if warm water had been poured upon his head. The hue of death was not so bloodless as that of his countenance, which displayed a wildness which those who have not seen it cannot comprehend. His beard was long, his hair matted, his bones prominent, his eyebrows raised, and his nostrils distended; his teeth too, were closely locked together, and his hands clasped. Before this occurrence he was a frightful picture of famine, ragged poverty and remorse; but now his appearance indicated the very extremity of horror. The syncope in which he lay lasted nearly an hour; when he drew his breath, and opened his eyes sluggishly, he stared about him with an air of insanity, then shuddered, and was closing them again. We raised him, however, and used every expression we could think of to cheer and bring him to a conviction that he was among acquaintances: his teeth were unlocked with a knife, and a little water poured down his throat; he then revived sufficiently to give a detail of the cause of his sudden illness. But madness was in his brain; he believed he had been pursued by the spirit of the murdered Stinton; although from the shining of the moon and stars he had most likely been thrown into a quail of horror by the continued presence of his own strangely marked shadow.

Whether the effort of talking, or the shock of the terror produced by the imaginary spectre, weakened him, I cannot say; after giving us the account as it happened, he fainted again, and continued to revive and relapse until two o'clock the next day, when he passed into eternity, to stand before the countenance of his God.

Such, reader, was one of the many evils attendant upon the practice of illicit distillation in this country. Such is the imperfect picture of a secret murderer, sinking under the weight of a crime which oppressed his soul during the greater part of an unhappy life.

C A R D .
MARCUS GUNN,

RECENTLY arrived from Miramichi, begs respectfully to acquaint the public of Pictou and vicinity, that upon Thursday 12 November, instant, he will open classes at his residence in A. Patterson's house opposite to J. Geddie, watchmaker, for imparting instruction in the following branches of Literature, viz:—Writing, Mathematics, (including Arithmetic,) Universal Geography, (including knowledge of Astronomy,) and the elements of Chemistry. Hours of attendance—From half past 8 to 10 P. M. He will wait upon young Ladies for the above with instructions in the French Language, from 11 A. M. to 2 P. M. Terms to be moderate, and adapted to the circumstances of the country. With respect to reference, Mr. G. feels confidence in mentioning the Rev. Principal of the College.
Pictou, 6th Nov., 1835. uw

DR. KIRKWOOD

Has removed to the Royal Oak Hotel, where he may be consulted as usual. (Nov. 4.)

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