

"I am older than I look—but I have attended a great many death-beds."

"Did you ever attend any one—" he paused, partly from weakness, partly from extreme exhaustion—"any one who had committed a dreadful crime?"

It was not a very easy question to answer, as she saw he wished—nay, she might also say, *hoped*—she would answer it.

"Not exactly as you mean; but I have been with many prisoners in jail, and heard their sad, sad stories. But, oh, sir! what does all this matter now? If there is anything on your mind that you do not wish to tell, oh! do, do tell it to the good God, and ask him to forgive you before you die, and if there is any wrong that you can repair now, pray do it at once—or it may soon be too late!"

"Did you ever hear of Lord Elmsdale?"

"Yes—I know about his murder. I know Ned Rusheen, who was accused of it—I saw him in prison."

"He was not guilty!"

"I never thought he was."

"Call some one—don't leave me—call some one outside."

She did not go out of his sight. A soldier was passing: she told him to run at once for any officer he could find, and if he could not find one in five minutes to return himself.

He accomplished his errand in less than the time named. An officer returned with him.

"I am Captain Hammersley. What can I do for you?"

The nun pointed to the bed.

"Dying?"

"Yes."

Lord Elmsdale signed to them both to come nearer.

"Tell him," he articulated, faintly.

Sister Vincent told in a low voice all she knew.

"Nearer."

They both came quite close to him. It was evident he had not many minutes to live.

"It was I—shot—my—my—" The nun looked at him as an angel would look, pleading with him for the truth—"father!—it was not murder—I—oh God! I cannot—I—I—it was from a distance—it was partly an accident—I

put the woollen stuff on the hedge. I——"

The nun gave him a cordial.

Captain Hammersley covered his face with his hands. Men do not like to show emotion, and he could have sobbed aloud.

"Please say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' and then tell the rest."

"God be merciful to me a sinner!"—ah, how earnestly the words were said. "God be merciful, be merciful! I will be merciful to poor Ned—where was I—tell him I did love him with all." His mind was wandering now. "Say it caught in the window—God be——" HE WAS DEAD!

LAST WORDS.

I SHALL not call this a chapter, because it is not one, but I suppose you will want to know what "became of every one." It would be quite impossible to tell, unless I wrote another book, which perhaps, I may do. I can only say that Ned and Ellie McCauly were married, and are living now in Boston, United States; and that Ned has been the happiest of men since the murder question was cleared up and it was known for certain

—WHO FIRED THE FIRST SHOT.

—THE END.—

SHADOWS.—Not a hearthstone shall you find on which some shadow has not fallen, or is about to fall. You will probably find that there are few households which do not cherish some sorrow not known to the world; who have some trial which is their peculiar messenger, and which they do not talk about except among themselves; some hope that has been blasted; some expectation dashed down; some wrong, real or supposed, which some member of the household has suffered; trembling anxieties lest that other member will not succeed; trials from the peculiar temperament of somebody in the house, or some environment that touches it sharply from without; some thorn in the flesh; some physical disability that cripples our energies when we want to use them the most; some spot in the house where death has left his track, or painful listenings to hear his stealthy footsteps coming on.