

that's curious, too—green and olive; and very pretty, tasty things. I wish I'd bought more of them, for they were soon picked up. Ned Rusheen bought the last of them. You know him, Mr. Egan?"

"Lord Elmsdale's under keeper? Oh, yes; I know him—a fine young fellow; and you say he bought the last. How long might it be since? Perhaps they are not all sold in the shop where you bought them."

"I dare say there are some left," she replied, answering the business question first. "How long since he bought it?—well, it might be two or three days, I could not be quite certain."

"Was it this week, Miss Callan?" Egan spoke rather eagerly, and the woman wondered why he should care to know.

"It was this week for sure, for it was only last Saturday, late at night, I came home with them."

"And you will try to get me one. I really cannot disappoint the young man. Could you get a messenger—a safe messenger? I would give sixpence, or even a shilling, if you could."

"I'm your man, sir," screamed a diminutive urchin, known as the greatest runner, the greatest liar, and the greatest mischief in the barony.

Egan looked doubtful. Anxious as he was to get the article, he was not sure of this youth who had just appeared on the scene was safe to trust. He would not have minded the loss of the shilling, but now that he had the clue in his possession—now that he felt a step further might enable him to put his hand on the murderer, and startle him from his dream of security with a stern "Wanted!"—he would have given anything, done anything to secure further evidence.

"You may trust him, sir," said Miss Callan, who had noticed Egan's hesitation and anxiety, and wondered at it, as much as it was in her to wonder at anything which did not concern her own business. "He will do your message safe. He knows his own interest too well. Don't you, Jack?"

Jack made a grimace of assent, which did not add to the general respectability of his appearance.

"I'm gone, sir! What's the message, and where's the shop?"

Miss Callan told him. She always gave out that she got her goods "from Dublin;" it sounded genteel and fashionable. She saved her conscience by an occasional purchase in the city, and her purse by going no farther than Kingstown—which, for the benefit of my American and Australian readers, I may mention is a flourishing town not many miles from the Irish metropolis.

Jack got his directions, with many explanations from Miss Callan; that she only purchased on that occasion in Kingstown because she happened to see the goods in a window; she thought they were better than what she could get in Dublin, for the same money.

Egan did not care where she got them, and took very little notice of her remark. He was more occupied in studying Jack, and calculating the probability of his return.

"A shilling, if you are back in three hours. It is just five o'clock now. If you run as fast for business, as I have seen you for pleasure, you can be at the police barrack by eight o'clock; and remember you keep your message and your parcel to yourself, and hold your tongue, or——"

Jack gave a war-whoop of exultation, and, before Egan could finish his sentence, he was out of sight.

Precisely as the church clock struck seven, as Egan was returning from Elmsdale Castle—of which visit more hereafter—he saw the renowned Jack slouching (no word expresses it so well) about the door of the police barrack.

Incensed at being made a fool of by the boy, and at his apparent indifference, Egan seized him by the collar, and administered a smart correction. "There, you young rascal, I'll teach you to promise to go errands again!"

"And now that your honor's finished batin' me, sir," replied the boy, without the slightest concern for the rough treatment he had received; "now that your honor's finished batin' me, maybe it would be plazin' to you to tell a poor boy what you were batin' him for? for sorrah know I know."

Was the boy a knave or a fool. Egan felt inclined to the latter opinion.

"Well, go home now, and don't let me see your face this six months, or maybe