

slow, and there, shure enough, he found *Maureen Bour* most suspiciously crouching near the door. The girl did not await complaint or interrogatory, but ran headlong downstairs, leaving Father Ned master of the field.

On his return he found Father Aylmer in whispering conversation endeavoring to allay the old man's fears and to tranquilize his conscience. But over and over the old man cried "Too late! too late! the cup of iniquity has flown over!"

"Well, I am astonished—astonished—"

"Father Aylmer, I am not despairing of God's mercy in eternity. I believe He will accept my deep contrition, and, when I offer my life for my hardness of heart, God will have pity! Oh, He will. But temporal reward I cannot expect, I do not expect—why should I? Amy I have lost; Henry I have lost, lost!" he said, bitterly, "and I have gained the curse of the people and a hundred thousand pounds! Nay, do not stop me, sir. I am to die."

"In God's holy name change this frame of mind. We shall immediately have our Amy, and maybe even Henry."

"That is not kind now, old friend! That is not kind—to speak of such hopes! Hush!" he said, "the most damning temporal judgment of all is that; hush—listen! The man who hired an assassin to murder me will possess all I have! May it—"

"The Inspector of police, sir!" said John, at the door.

"Show the gentleman up, John."

And there came a man of very sharp visage, dark hair, thin long nose, and small, dark eyes flanking the same. The Inspector made a stiff but not ungraceful bow.

"Welcome, Mr. Sibthorpe. I have expected you."

Mr. Sibthorpe looked at the two cler- gymen.

"Make yourself easy regarding my friends, the clergymen," continued old Giffard D'Alton. "They are deeply interested in all that concerns my family, and will give you all the assistance in their power."

Mr. Sibthorpe bowed again.

"You received the Coroner's summons, sir?"

"Yes, Mr. Sibthorpe."

"Are there any witnesses whom you would suggest as likely to give information?"

"Do you know James Feehan, called James the Pilgrim?"

"Certainly."

"Well, he knows everything and everyone, and he is an honest Irishman. Do you know Crichawn—I mean Thomas Hayes, Mr. Meldons' man?"

"Perfectly well."

"Summon him by all means. Have you not suspicions, Mr. Sibthorpe? Is it fair to ask you?"

"I am quite ready to reply that I have suspicions; but a police officer cannot at some stage of a case reveal his impressions even to worthy people like you and the clergy. You saw nothing, Mr. D'Alton. Of course, what you say to me is confidential, and you depend upon the clergymen, you say."

"I trust your professional zeal and honor, Mr. Inspector."

"Give him your impressions," said Father Aylmer. After all, they are only impressions, and have no use unless the single one of opening to the Inspector a possible road."

"Then Mr. Inspector Sibthorpe," answered old D'Alton, "I will suggest to you to find by every means whether the dead man had had any arms?"

"Arms, sir?"

"Arms. My impression is that he was on these promises prepared to commit murder—to murder me. I think I saw the form of a man and a gun on my window panes. I was asking myself whether I was dreaming, when the form disappeared, and immediately a report of a gun followed."

"Of a gun?"

"Certainly—not of a pistol."

"The man, according to your view, was on the ladder taking aim?"

"I think so."

"Then comes the mystery. Who fired the shot which in this supposition saved your life?"

"That I dare not say: though I feel certain—that to save my life the deed has been done."

"You have had some differences with the Hayeses."

"A long time ago. They have been more than amicably set aside."