

all the ould monks and Abbott McDermott said and did."

"He's very bould and daring entirely," said Dan Barry, looking after the retreating figure with superstitious awe."

"He's a scol," replied Halligan, with a frown of contempt. "Hand over the bottle, Condry, my son. Hip! hip! old girl—you'll soon be home."

Connor stood in the nave of the ruined abbey church, and gazed silently upon the desecrated and desolated chancel. The moon, high up in the heavens, filled the enclosure with a pale, ghostly light, except where the ruined pillars and niches were black in shadow.

"Here," he murmured, "the McDermotts worshipped God in the old days passed away, when the land was ours, and the grasp of the stranger was not at our throats. I might almost fancy that the ancient monks did really rise from their graves and gather here every Christmas Eve to sing God's praise in the old, consecrated spot. I'll be nothing the worse for saying a prayer or two, at any rate."

As he spoke he uncovered his head and knelt down before a sculptured tomb, on the broad slab of which the outlines of a knightly form had long been defaced. As he murmured the words of supplication, a strange, soothing feeling crept over him; and the soft silvery tones of the beautiful and solemn city chimes were borne faintly to his ears. Even as the sound of the bells, sinking and swelling, floated over the still silence of the night, the ruined building was suddenly lit up with a golden radiance.

Connor McDermott looked around him in wonder and awe. The chancel was no longer deserted and squalid with rank weeds. An altar stood there, covered with fine white cloth and lace, and with the sacred vessels in the centre. A thousand waxen tapers burned there, and lit up a large golden crucifix that rose almost to the roof. That arched roof was a deep dark blue in color, and studded with golden stars. The clustering pillars rose gracefully on either side, and the niches were filled with statues of sainted virgin, shorn priest, and mitred abbot, whilst banners with the cross floated over every bay.

The living watcher heard no steps ap-

proaching, no rustle of garments round him; but suddenly the sacred edifice was filled with silent worshippers. They were quaintly dressed in tight-fitting raiment, and some wore loose flowing cloaks of saffron color on their shoulders. Many of them, men tall and stalwart, wore sword or dagger on their hip; and their brown hair fell long and waving down their backs, whilst the thick marshal *glib* ornamented the lip of each. The women knelt in devout and reverent attitude, but though their lips moved and they dropped the rounded beads, one after the other, not a sound disturbed the solemn silence that reigned through nave and aisles.

In a place of honor, near the choir, knelt a tall and stately man, clad in rich robes, and with a circlet on his head. He had the royal bearing of a monarch, a proud, handsome face, and an eye with the glance of an eagle. Beside him was a queenly matron, who bowed her beautiful swan-like neck in humble adoration before the altar; and behind this noble pair there were gallant youths and lovely maidens not a few. But still from all that crowded congregation no sound of murmuring voice, no rustle of cloth or linen robe was heard, and all was still as death.

But presently the faint sigh of distant music was borne on the midnight air. It came nearer, and Connor McDermott could hear the trill and clang of harps, and the harmony of many voices mingled in song of praise and adoration.

Then through the porch came the gleam of more light, and white-robed acolytes approached, bearing tapers in their hands. One bore aloft the golden memento of Christ's last hour on the hill of Calvary, and another held a swinging censor that filled the consecrated shrine with a subtle perfume. After these came an aged man in vestments of cloth and gold. His snowy beard flowed downward to his waist. He held a jeweled crozier in his right hand, and his head was covered by an abbot's mitre. As he lifted his face to the altar, Connor thought his great dark eyes had a strange far-off look; but still there was an expression on that face which reminded him of his own father.

"'Tis the Abbot Lorean McDermott,"