

probably, the very spot where the remains of this maiden bride have long since mingled with their native dust. But while it was fresh and fair, and spotless as the virgin purity of her whose lovely form lay mouldering beneath, strange sounds were heard to issue from that portion of the building, and dim lights were seen, even from the village, to flicker and dance in variegated hues, from the painted oriel, through some narrow vista which chance had formed in the wild and dark foliage of the majestic sycamores that surrounded it.

These sights and sounds, appalling as they were to the villagers generally, were treated by one of them with a reckless levity, bordering upon something little short of blasphemy. Such at least was the opinion of these simple worshippers in that holy temple. And they cared as little to meet this heedless and daring youth, for youth he was, in the dim twilight of the glimmering eve, as to pass, in the fearful hours of darkness, along the narrow winding footpath, which led to that haunted spot, if alone, even when the sun was up.

On the night we are particularly speaking of he was however rather courted than feared. He had spent his Christmas eve, with some distant relatives, in louder and more boisterous revelry than could have been witnessed in any other cottage in the village, although slighted, as he erroneously supposed himself to be, by his 'Ladye love,' the daughter of the most substantial yeoman in the place, the owner of one of 'the houses' before adverted to, who had consented to accompany his more successful rival to the Midnight Mass. But perhaps his merry-making was little in accordance with the real state of his over-wrought feelings. Be this as it may, the party to which he had attached himself continued their gambols, though his instrumentality, till sometime after every brightly illumined lattice had been darkened, and until the bell, which called to such late Vespers, had ceased to toll; and they were the last to bend their unwilling way, along the edge of that lovely and silent Holme, which extended, even at this season of the year, its soft verdure, like a rich carpet, far and wide around their venerated little church.

Late in starting, as they hurried along, apprehensive of pastoral rebuke, the distant sound of many voices burst upon their ears. At first they imagined it to be the full and swelling chorus of the pealing anthem, and were thereby only admonished to greater haste. But anon, the discordant scream of fear mingled with the shrieks of despair, broke, in dreadful distinctness upon their terror-stricken senses, and they began now

to be met by group after group of the villagers, who flew past them as on the wings of the wind.

Our hero, for he is the hero of my little tale, although deserted by his friends, who turned and fled with the flyers, nothing daunted, courageously pressed onward still, demanding, but in vain, of every one he met, the cause of their terror and their flight. In the runaways, he encountered his recalcitrant rival, the last, and alone. But where was his companion? Was it—could it be that some sudden and dire misfortune had befallen his once loved Phoebe Morton? and all his former and kindlier feelings of affection towards her, returned at once, and with redoubled fervour, that he supposed her in some danger. At first, however, it must be owned, that he was influenced by far other feelings. This was fully evinced by the opprobrious epithets with which he accosted him, the mildest of which were—"dastard—coward—murderer."

"Stop, and tell me," he continued, "I adjure thee, as thy worthless life thou prizest—tell me where my Phoebe is, and why she's not with thee?"

But he heard him not, or if he did, the fearful adjuration only added wings if possible to his speed.

The noise and tumult all rolled by, and Edward stood there in some bewilderment as to the course he should pursue. After a moment's hesitation, he determined to push on; and, in silence and darkness, he approached the little wicket gate which opened into that lone church-yard. Ere he opened it, he paused a moment with his hand upon the latch; it was but an instant, and on he went.

The lights, which a few minutes before had gleamed so brightly through every dusky pane, were all extinguished, and a fluttering rustling noise was heard within the building. Edward stopped again, either to listen to the sounds he'd heard, or else he cared not to proceed. The tombs of the mouldering dead were dimly shadowed forth in the surrounding darkness, and assumed the semblance of almost every form, however fantastic and grotesque, and even horrible, with which a prolific imagination could invest them. A newly opened grave yawned at his feet into which he turned his eye, but it looked like a bottomless abyss.

Few brave spirits would blame the terror that he felt to thrill through every fibre of his frame at that moment, whether it owed its birth to fear or to cold. He must have been more than human, who, in those dark ages of superstition, could have made a firm and decided stand, unaided and alone, and in the dark too, against all that was