

“LET THE ROOF FALL IN”

errand, nor did she show commiseration for the bitter look of disappointment and misery that clouded over his face. She was set apart for the service of the Church, she had no other service or sympathy to give. As for Father Prout, he, she believed, was in Rome. Father Maguire was now the confessor to the convent. She was in haste for Derry to leave, it was time for matins.

Father Maguire was portly, his tonsure had spread, until now only a little scant stubble of grey hair lay between it and the creases of fat at the back of the neck, between it and the benevolent forehead. He did not know who this gentleman was that came hot-foot to his house from the convent; but he saw that he was tired and eager, although prepared now for disappointment, and unhappy.

Father Maguire was standing at his garden gate when Derry came up. He would not hear nor answer any questions, until he had led the way into the parlour. Then his guest must have wine and cake, or a glass of milk, after his drive; but, when Father Maguire heard Derry's story, or an outline of it, he was full of comforting words.

Derry said that he was searching for his wife, who had left him under a misapprehension, and who, he thought, might perhaps have sought shelter under the roof that had nurtured her childhood. Father Maguire was sure she had not written to Father Prout, all Father Prout's letters came here first, and were forwarded by him, or kept, as their contents suggested. For Father Maguire was here temporarily, holding his office only as trustee for Father Prout. He knew positively there had been no letter, and no visit, but Lord Ranmore—for now he knew his visitor's name—must not be disheartened by that, for she was sure to be found soon, and quite safe. Derry had had a wild thought, when he heard Father Prout was in Rome,