

and would carry to Ashenfield a cunning tale of Sir Albin Artslade's murder and his own hair-breadth escape, and would point to his empty pistols in proof that, if his master fell, it was for no lack of stout defense on his part.

And now the plot progressed gloriously, and in the very ecstasy of success the assassin hugged his bloody gains when, with the spring of a panther, the watcher behind the thicket was over the ditch, and grappling with the murderer.

"You mane thievin', villain!" he cried, with indignant passion. "Surrender this mifinut, av you don't want a brace o' slugs sint through yer divvil's-carcase!"

He, who a minute before would have imbrued his hands in Sir Albin Artslade's life blood, now revolted as impetuously against the crime of his murderous plunderer. The would-be murderer for revenge rose up to wreak justice on the murderer for gain, in the very purity of unselfish indignation!

With a cry of surprise, the wretch dropped on his knees in abject terror: trembling in every limb.

"Mercy! Mercy! Mercy!" he bawled, pitifully.

But when glancing timidly up, he saw it was Tade Ryan who represented justice, a new resource suggested itself.

"Tade Ryan, are you mad?" he asked as the other seized him violently by the collar. "You wouldn't play the traitor on wan that's done yer own work for you?"

"Not mine, you false-hearted villain. I'd cut my right hand off afore doin' sich a job as this."

"No lein! how tindler-hearted you are all o' a suddint! Which of us, I like to know, has the best rayson to hurroo over ould Orshlade's corpse? Corp on dhoul, man, 'tis a lucky murderer for you."

"Av I wanted to murder him," said Ryan, with contempt, "I'd do it myself like a man, an' not be dependin' on a thremblin' engichore like yerself. But you ate his bread, you double-dyed thraithor. You sowl body an' sowl to him to do his dirty work, an' pocket his dirty goold; an' now you turn about like the black reprobate you are, to murder him like a dog-when you should be the fusht to save him—an' all for robbery, Mистер Jur Murphy, for filthy skulkin' robbery!"

The assassin was white as a sheet.

"Don't be an otshuich, Tade Ryan," he urged, insinuatingly. "There's lashin's in this bag"—and he tapped the bulky treasure—"to make

min of both of us, av we only have the sinse to make a proper use of it. We have it all to ourselves. Nobody on earth can tell who done this job. We'll slip away to France as aisy as winkin', an' thin' our fortune's med for iver more."

"Why, thin, you limb o' the divvil, is it timptin' me you are wid yer plundherin' schemes?" cried Ryan, boiling with indignation and disgust. "Not another syllable out o' yer gob, or be the 'tarnal frosh! you want live to see a sighth o' Clonmel gaol itself, an' that you'll see soon an' suddint, av you've no fancy for jinin' yer masther be the side o' the ditch beyant."

Desperation was working miracles in the coward's face.

"Wan word more, Tade Ryan," he cried, with a hideous grin. "Av you're a maniac enough to give up riches that there's no countin', and betray me when no wan else on earth could betray either of us—remember this—there's only your word agin mine, *no bouchul*, an' I know purty well who'll be believed, the thrustured servant or the noted rebel!"

Tade Ryan relaxed his hold. It was the first time he thought of that.

The assassin saw his advantage, and followed it up.

"You'll have to confess too, my fine officer of justice," he went on. "You'll have to confess you wor here yerself—inside the ditch, too—waitin' for Sir Albin Orshlade, eh? *no bouchul*. An' may be you'd be after explainin' what little game you were after in the Pass of Cahá wid that innocent lookin' blunderbus o' yours? Eh? my par-tikler frind of law and ordher?"

Ryan saw the force of the threat—saw the probabilities weighed overwhelmingly against his bare assertion of the fact.

"New, praps you'd be thinkin' bether of your vertuous indignation? P'raps now you'd have no objection to pocketin' half the cash an' biddin' me a civil good evenin'? Eh?"

"Niver, be my sowl, niver!" cried Ryan, bursting with indignant rage. "Whatever this blunderbus *cen* here for, 'twill stay till it sees you in the body o' Clonmel gaol—that I promise you! They may hang me if they like—they'd hang me in any case, an' it don't make any matther how soon, now that *he's* out o' the cowl—but I'll spile *your* little game, you thievin' coward, if I wor to swing for it."

"We'll see!" shouted, the assassin, now nerved to desperation; and with the spring of a