

message which Lord Elmsdale had desired Burns to send, and he was determined not to go up to the Castle without having some information. As to Lord Elmsdale's knowing anything of the matter, the idea never crossed his mind: if it had, he would simply have thought it too absurd for a second consideration.

"I think you were in Dublin last week," he observed, suggestively, as he looked over the various articles which Miss Callan exhibited. "I suppose all these are new goods? Where did you buy them?"

The good woman little suspected what the Constable wished to know. She thought only of her merchandize, and that he was anxious to present his wife with the newest fashion.

"All new, sir," she replied; "and all bought in Dublin last week, sir."

Egan was by no means a violent man, but he felt it would have been a considerable relief to his feelings if he could have knocked Miss Callan down—gently, quite gently, of course; he would not have hurt her for the world.

It was getting dark, too, in the close of a snowy winter's evening; and even if she had the comforters, in a few minutes later it would be impossible to examine them properly.

"I think, Miss Callan, ma'am,"—he was profoundly deferential,—*"I think I will bring my good lady to see these things. Perhaps she will be best pleased to choose for herself."*

Miss Callan looked disappointed. She expected a one-pound note would have made its way to her till, after the Constable's visit, and she had had some experience of the results when people promised to call again.

Egan read the look. With a little early training, and a little experience of London life, he would have made a first-rate detective. In Ireland, his talents in that department were simply thrown away. There were no mysterious robberies of plate, garrotting was quite unknown, and child-murder unheard of—the Irish were too far behind the age for that kind of thing.

He stood still at the counter.

"The price of that shawl, Miss Callan?"

"A pound, sir, to you. It would be

twenty-five shillings to any one else. Clearly Miss Callan was not behind-hand in the art of selling her goods.

"You may lay it by, ma'am, and here's the money for it. If my wife does not choose that when she sees it, she shall have some other article of equal value. Good evening to you, Miss Callan—good evening."

The shopwoman was highly gratified, and poured forth a profusion of thanks.

Egan went to the door, and just as he was turning into the street he looked back.

"There now!—if I have not forgotten one of the very particular things I wanted to inquire about! Have you any scarfs or comforters—any kind of warm woollen affairs for the throat, you know?"

"Well, sir, I had——"

"Unfortunate—very!" And Egan got quite warm about it. "My wife's nephew. You know my wife's nephew, Miss Callan? Fine lad—but exposed to all kinds of weather. And I promised her faithfully I would get him a woollen necktie, and that I would have it for him to-morrow, early in the morning. It's really very unfortunate. Would you mind looking through your stock—you might find something that would do?" and he took out his purse to give further zest to the search.

"I'm afraid it's no use," observed the shopwoman, after a cursory and rapid survey, made merely to please Mr. Egan. "I had some last week—a particular make too,—but they were all bought up."

Egan looked very much interested—more so than was quite prudent; but he had no very skilled observer.

"I dare say they were just what I wanted. Could you give me any idea of the color and the size? My nephew must have green—very national, you know, and all that,—and, as he's not in the force, he can please himself. Hope I shan't have to put the bracelets on him some day for his disloyalty," he added with a grim attempt at pleasantry, and then he looked round cautiously. Men and women are not hung now for the "wearing of the green," but an official might lose his place for expressing an undue admiration of the national color!

"Well, sir, they were green—and