

THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN SHUTTERS

Gourlay smiled, grimly, and a black gleam shot from his eye as he glanced round to the gate and caught the words. His men did not know he could hear them.

The clock across the Square struck the hour, eight soft slow strokes, that melted away in the beauty of the morning. Five minutes passed. Gourlay turned his head to listen, but no further sound came from the yard. He walked to the green gate, his slippers making no noise.

"Are ye sleeping, my pretty men?" he said, softly. . . . "*Eih?*"

The "*Eih*" leapt like a sword, with a slicing sharpness in its tone, that made it a sinister contrast to the first sweet question to his "pretty men." "*Eih?*" he said again, and stared with open mouth and fierce dark eyes.

"Hurry up, Peter," whispered the gaffer, "hurry up, for Godsake. He has the black glower in his c'en."

"Ready, sir; ready now!" cried Peter Riney, running out to open the other half of the gate. Peter was a wizened little man, with a sandy fringe of beard beneath his chin, a wart on the end of his long, slanting-out nose, light blue eyes, and bushy eyebrows of a reddish gray. The bearded red brows, close above the pale blueness of his eyes, made them more vivid by contrast; they were like pools of blue light amid the brownness of his face. Peter always ran about his work with eager alacrity. A simple and willing old man, he affected the quick readiness of youth to atone for his insignificance.

"Hup horse; hup then!" cried courageous Peter, walking backwards with curved body through the gate,