

on the earthen floor offered up a prayer for the repose of the souls of the departed. Brian entered first, and kneeling by his mother's corpse prayed, with the hot tears trickling down his cheeks. Then kneeling by the priest he repeated a prayer, and, hastily rising, rose and left the cabin. This was necessary, as the cabin was small and barely able to contain the women and old men who accompanied the band. Hugh O'Reilly entered next; after him came Fergus and Turlough, and so on until all had performed the same ceremony. They seemed deeply affected, and many a bronzed and rugged cheek was bedewed with tears of sympathy and love.

Old Michael having brought with him some candles from the cave, which the priest kept for the service of the altar, lighted them as soon as night came down, and placed them around the cabin and at the heads of the dead. Mabel was forced, by the kind solicitations of her brother and Hugh, seconded by the women, to retire, and, as she did so, all, with uncovered heads, their faces turned toward the cabin door, knelt down in the moonlight and recited the Rosary and Litany for the dead.

While they were engaged in this pious exercise two or three neighbors, who had heard of the occurrence of the morning, arrived, and, kneeling, joined in prayer with the rest.

But there was one among them who did not kneel. He was a tall raw-boned fellow, six feet in height, with huge and ample proportions. His hair was unkempt and his face was ornamented with little tufts of scraggy beard, the longest of which appeared on the end of his chin, for it was entirely guileless of a razor since his birth. He wore on his head an old Scotch bonnet, through which the lank hair protruded, and a dragoon's faded red jacket with only one sleeve. He was barefoot, and his legs, naked to the knees, were covered with mud and scratches, showing that he had travelled a considerable distance since morning. This singular individual stood perfectly motionless, with his eyes fixed on the dead, which he could plainly see through the open door from where he stood, until the religious exercises were concluded and the company

had resumed the rude seats which they had erected in front of the cabin. Then casting his eye around until it alighted on Brian, he unceremoniously elbowed his way through the crowd until he stood beside him.

"Brian," he said, laying his hand on the youth's shoulder, and his voice was singularly sweet and plaintive, "Brian, how is this? Is my owld friend dead?"

Brian became choked with emotion and felt the tears glistening in his eyes, for the deceased was a great favorite of Cormick, the fool.

"Ay, Cormick, she is dead."

"I have traveled twenty miles to-day to see her bekaise I heard she was sick. But I'm too late, too late." He repeated the last words three or four times, a habit of his when becoming excited.

"But what happened the priest?" he continued. "I see him in there with a white handkerchief on his head an' a dhrop of blood on it, an his face as white as snow. Did the blood-hounds murthor him?"

Hugh O'Reilly, seeing the agony which Brian was suffering, approached Cormick, and, taking him by the hand, led him away.

"Come with me, Cormick; I'll tell you all about it; but don't grieve poor Brian by asking him."

"Ay, I'll go with you, Hugh. You are a brave boy, an' so is Brian, too; but none of you is as good as Fergus. Fergus is a bully boy. Shure he wouldn't hurt the poor priest; oh, no! But, Hugh, who killed him? Was it owld Crosby?" And the maniac's eyes literally blazed at the mention of the name.

"Yes, Cormick, Crosby murdered him this morning; shot him with his own hand in the most cowardly manner when he was on his way with Brian to the deathbed of the widow. He spurred his horse into the river after Brian, and would have murdered him only for Fergus."

"Ha! ha! an' what did Fergus do?"

"He shot him dead before he could discharge his pistol at Brian."

"He! he! he!" laughed Cormick, "he had *Bride Bawn* with him then. Bride doesn't talk much, Hugh, but when Fergus bids her spake, troth, there's very few will dispute her words. But, did the owld Major die?"