

ed, and he rubbed his thin hands in ecstasy, and he thought on the happy day when Giffard D'Alton should have gone to his rest and the law of the land would hand The Crag to Mr. Cunneen in repayment of the money he had so honestly lent.

The day before the "long dance," or the day at which our history commenced, or is commencing, was a day of deep importance to Mr. Tim Cunneen and Mr. Charles Baring. On that very day Mr. Baring presented himself at the "office" of the money lender; and his countenance looked like large profit to the bank. His brow was bent and his lips tightly closed, and he coughed that half hard cough of passionate resolution that so often precedes an evil to two parties or to more.

Mr. Baring entered abruptly and sat down on a board-bottom chair which seemed to know him. His head fell down on his chest and his hand closed rigidly, and he gave a groan.

"Mr. Charles," said the money-lender, in as soft voice as ever he had—and that is not saying much indeed, "Mr. Charles you are sick?"

"You lie, I'm not! Don't dare to say I'm sick."

"Oh, I beg your pardon! You're not in good humor, I see."

"Why, again, I say you are a liar! How dare you speak to me in your d—ble hang-dog style; I'm not sick. I'm not out of humor. Ah, well Cunneen, don't mind! I am in a fix. I am worse off than ever I have been, and I want your help more than I have ever wanted help before."

"Ah!" answered Mr. Cunneen, with a slight shrug of the shoulders.

"I have lost all I had! I had diabolical luck at play. Lord Thinvawn emptied me out; and the bet won from me by Commerford must be met this week—the day after to-morrow. Confound that mare. I never crossed an animal that has so deceived and disgraced me. To be beaten in a steeplechase by a man like him! like Commerford! . . . But, look here, you must stand to me, and even in *more*—aye, in *more*!"

"Well, Mr. Charles, money is scarce, and I fear I may not be able to go much further. You owe nearly a thousand pounds!"

"A thousand pounds!"

"Why, yes. When prepared to pay, you can have all your vouchers in your own hands."

"My vouchers!"

"Yes, Mr. Charles, your vouchers!"

"I remember quite well the sums. They amount to six hundred."

"Quite true,—and the moderate interest which I charged you makes up the thousand."

"Moderate interest! Why—seventy-five per cent.—seventy-five!—Never call highway robbery dishonest again. Oh you—"

"Mr. Charles Baring," Cunneen answered very slowly, "If the dealing does not answer you, we can close our accounts whenever you please. I placed in your hands much of the fruit of my honest industry—and, I do not think you are very grateful."

"Honest industry! Gratitude to a Jew—a cheat!—a—"

"Well, well," Tim the Devil replied, "we needn't argufy and call names. You will find some one more honest and more able to lend you money. Good day, sir." The wicked thief said, "Good day," and he made a show of moving through a back door of the "office."

"Stop! stop, Cunneen! Oh! stop! Cunneen! Cunneen, I beg your pardon. You must forgive me! You must help me! or I'm undone!"

The time played for by Cunneen and expected had come.

"Well, sir," demanded the money-lender.

"Well, Cunneen, I must have a thousand pounds."

"A thousand pounds! a thousand pounds! Where is the security?"

"Why, you know the property to which I have sure claim is worth, ten, fifteen, twenty thousand pounds."

"But the times are so uncertain, and your uncle may change his mind."

"You know he can't. The property is entailed to male heirs."

"Ah, yes but—"

"Why, Cunneen, Cunneen!"

By sundown the bargain was settled, and Mr. Cunneen had a mortgage on the reversion of The Crag, and the sum he gained by his industry was only six thousand four hundred and sixteen pounds.