

and hangings and clothes have laid for years amidst dampness and ill-ventilation. She took me into a rather large room with a floor slanting away in all directions into the black darkness, which a wretched fluttering candle served to shew rather than to illuminate. By the side of one of the beds, the old-fashioned four-posters I had expected, on a clumsy stool, sat the old woman who had let me in, with her gaunt elbows on her shaking knees, and her wretched old head trembling with palsy, and her mouth mumbling in a manner horrible to see. On the opposite side was a similar bed, but with its legs all bent and distorted out of the perpendicular by the weight of the body, and its dreary hangings drooping from it and clinging about it like a cloak on the limbs of a skeleton. There was a grim tall old cabinet, or press, on the side opposite to the window, which latter was carefully curtained, and this gruesome thing stood up like a menacing monster ready to fall and overwhelm the whole. Whether it may have ever been polished, this awful piece of furniture, I am unable to say, it bore no traces of anything of the kind, but was entirely dead, black, and gloomy, with the exception of two brass handles by which the doors were opened, (ugh! I wouldn't have opened them for a hundred pounds) and which were just caught by the faint light, so that they glittered like two dull eyes from out the darkness.

I turned thankfully into the old bed, rolled myself in the damp and mouldy sheets as though they had been of the most luxurious lawn, and prepared for slumber. But sleep would not come so readily in that weird chamber. It was a fearful night; the wind whistled in mighty gusts down the street, and over the house tops, and round the corners, and the rattle of broken glass and of falling chimneys was almost incessant. The crazy lattice of the room I was in gave and cracked as the wind rushed wildly at it and the rain beat in unsteady sheets against it; and the dark curtain, close pinned down, flapped and belled like a sail as the cracks of the fittings admitted the air. The light of the old woman's candle threw a ghastly ray of light through each hole in the moth-devoured curtains, and I could hear her rock and nod as she mumbled herself into an imbecile slumber. I tried all sorts of methods to induce the sleep I needed so much. I thought of the lovely lady in the bed opposite, who was so closely guarded. Bah! some red-cheeked bouncing country wench, whom the two old women thought a paragon of beauty because she resembled what they themselves had been in their girlhood. I laughed at their precautions. Then I reflected about my journey, and wondered how little Alice was preparing to keep her Christmas. Perhaps, after all, Murphy was not so black as he was painted, and besides, I might easily have been deceived at Havre in the personality of a man I had not seen for seven or eight years, and whom I scarcely knew to bow to even then. Very likely they were making great preparations for an old Irish jollification the next day,—no, that same day,—and wouldn't at all care to see my forgotten face appearing among them unexpectedly, like a ghost or a —

And at that moment came just under the window the most awful thrilling, unearthly low shriek or wail I have ever heard. It was like what I had heard faintly at Dublin, but near, distinct, and pronounced. I never knew till that moment what was meant by the expression that the blood runs cold. I learnt then. I started up in bed with a cry, and had made a step to leap out of bed. The old woman on the stool woke up with a start.

"Ah, would ye, thin," she cried, under her breath, "remember yer promise."

"But did you hear —?" I commenced.

"Whisht, silence," she said, with a gesture of command.

I lay down again, and heard her moaning, in her feeble way, "Och, wirrasthree, wirrasthree."

By Jove, I felt uncommonly uncomfortable, and I envied the car driver, Terry O'Rourke, lying on a bundle of peat in his frieze coat opposite the turf embers. All sorts of fancies and horrors crowded through my brain in thick succession, like the figures in a delirium, and it was not till sheer and utter weariness compelled me that I sank into a sleep, uneasy and broken at first, but afterwards deep, sound, and dreamless.

When I woke the next morning it was nearly mid-day; the wind had gone down, and the bright sun was shining into the old room through one corner of the window from which the curtain had been torn. The old black press was not nearly so grim in the morning light, and the horrible old woman had gone, though her bottle with the marks of the flaring candle still remained to shew her to have been a thing of reality.

I know nothing so pleasant as the refreshing languor of enjoyment which succeeds a long sleep after much weariness. I washed and dressed very leisurely, and was just about going down stairs to get my clothes which had been left to dry, when, as I reached the door, I suddenly remembered my companion of the night before.

"I don't believe there was anyone in the bed at all," I said half aloud. "The old women sleep there themselves, and only stood

out for more money. Nicely I've been bitten."

Something, I don't know what to call it, whether merely ordinary curiosity, or some extraneous force, prompted me to go gently to the side of the bed, and cautiously draw the curtains open a little way. I felt inexpressibly shocked when I saw that the tenant of the companion couch to my own was a Coffin! black and ghastly in the centre of the patchwork bed-furniture. I dropped my hand a moment. It would be a species of sacrilege to pry any farther into the mysteries of death, but — who was to say what awful crime that black box might not conceal? It was curiosity that urged me, though I named it duty. I softly raised the lid. By the dim light which penetrated the narrow aperture of the curtains I could see that the occupant was a girl, but faint as the light upon the poor dead face was, there was something in the look of it that sent a dreadful thrill of nameless terror to my heart. Hastily I lifted the cover entirely away, and stripped the curtains back to the pole. I tore down the hangings from the window, and let the full flood of the glorious sunshine into the chamber.

Fair hair, a pale sweet face, eyes decorously closed, and a jewel in each delicate ear. But — a forehead disfigured with a terrible cut, from which the soft hair had been clipped, and which told too plainly the cause of death. And, on the waxen cheek the livid mark of a heavy bruise. But as I gazed, more and more the horrible conviction grew upon me that I was looking upon the corpse of my dear sister. The beautiful, almost childish face was terribly disfigured, and I had not seen the girl for years, but so surely she had grown to be a woman, no other face in God's world could so have resembled Alice's as this poor dead child's did. I sat me down by the coffin, a faint sickness coming over me for the moment. It was over directly, and I roused to the necessity for action.

As I entered the kitchen, the two old women, who were at some meal or other, huddled together with terrified looks.

"Oh, see his white face, and his blazing eyes," they whispered. "Oh, Sir, you have seen it."

"Who was that lady, women?" I demanded.

Groaning and weeping, after the manner of their kind, they told me how the poor thing had come to the door, a week before, on a bitter and howling night, with the bleeding cut on her forehead, fainting and dying. She said she had fallen on her way into a little stream in the darkness, and struck her head against a stone. They put her to bed, and she became speedily delirious. The village doctor had been called in, but from the first pronounced the case hopeless, and recommended that her friends should be found and communicated with. In her incoherent language she called repeatedly "Arthur, Arthur, Arthur," and "Oh! don't strike me." The doctor had first thought of examining her letters and linen, the latter of which was quite new and very fine. It was marked (I knew what it would be, and dropped my head into my hands as they came to the name) "Alice Murphy," and the letters were directed to "Miss Alice Hackett." Poor child! poor little child! She had died about half-past twelve o'clock on the night of the 22nd at the time when I had heard the cry of the Banshee under my window in Dublin.

Her little pitiful story is soon told. There was deception both on the side of her uncle and on that of the villain Murphy. The latter, whose reputation was principally confined to Dublin, had appeared in Ennisecorby as a gentleman of property, which indeed he was, only the property was encumbered to the last acre. Alice's uncle met him at a run of the Island hounds, and brought him home. The girl was represented as an heiress, and in less than two months they were married. How a man like Murphy could have been so blind and so careless I know not; it is probable that each party, knowing the deception they were practising on the other, did not care to make too close enquiries. Of course, when the ceremony was concluded, the whole story came out with regard to Alice's portion. Murphy, keeping a good face before his wife's relations, took her to his own place, and in two days the bailiffs were in the house, and his person in imminent peril. After a violent scene he struck her with his brutal hand, and turned her out of doors to go to her friends—forty miles away! He himself, the next morning, had but time to escape with what articles he could contrive to lay hands on in a little valise. He was arrested at the gate of his own park, and tearing himself from the hands of the officer, had struck him down with a loaded stick which he carried, from the effects of which blow the man afterwards died.

In company with an English detective I landed in New York three weeks afterwards. The double murderer, for though in law he was not guilty of Alice's death, I hold him to have more cruelly, more violently, more wickedly compassed her end, than that of him for whose homicide he was to answer,—had taken no care to conceal himself. On the little portion, £2,000, which he had received with his victim, he was gambling and living lavishly, according to his custom. His dark

face was lighted up with the flush of wine when we entered his room in one of the hotels, and he was telling some story of successful rascality to his companions.

His evil countenance changed slightly when he was arrested, and he evidently heard for the first time of the two deaths he had occasioned. The story being concluded, he turned towards me, of whom I think he must have had an intuitive perception.

"And who's the person in black?" he asked the American police officer; "the devil himself come for me?" His manner and tone were most offensive.

I am not of a very cool temper, though I can command my feelings while there's anything to be done.

"By the Lord!" I said, for I couldn't bear to hear that scoundrel's voice addressing me, "I'll tell you soon enough who I am. I'm the brother of your wife, you murdering ruffian, and I'm going to thrash you within an inch of your life." I caught him by the collar, and had struck him once over the shoulders when he fired. The ball hit me in the shoulder, and I dropped. As consciousness left me, and amidst a confused rush of feet and clamour of voices, I heard him shout "that's mine," with a shout of drunken laughter, and as the room with its overturned table and bottles and glasses scattered all around, faded from my eyes in the smoke which filled it, I saw him turn his pistol to his own head, and felt his blood splash on my face as he fell heavily to the floor.

I could not go back to Europe, the horrors of those four weeks had overcome me too much. I sent in my papers, and came to Canada to settle with my little capital. I am doing well though I could do better, but I am very lonely,—mine is an aimless existence. I miss the sound of a woman's voice, and long for a fair child's head to press against my shoulder, and not to take arch Alice's place in my heart, but to fill the void there. I could marry, I suppose, but I have gone on in my rough bachelor way so long, that I suppose I shall never break the chain of custom, and shall sit by a solitary hearth until the end.

Whose is the beautiful pale face with the dark hair, and the grave clear eyes, that I, rough farmer, go to Notre Dame to look at, and to find rest and peace in the contemplation of that I have never found before under the two great towers? "Tis so long since I have been "in love" that I am slow to recognise the feeling. Let me leave the city. What is this that makes me turn again ere half the journey home be accomplished? Home! I have no home. I am getting old with none but my dogs and my guns for friends.

Educated at Villa Maria, was she? And Irish, like myself? She is very beautiful. Who is she?

A sort of cousin of mine, her name is Steele—Agnes Steele. She is much admired, and justly, for she is as good and gentle as she is handsome.

Agnes Steele loves me, and I her, and we shall be married in a fortnight more.

"You have had some great sorrow in your life, Denis. Were you ever married before, or did you love her first?"

"You too, my darling; that face was not always as sober as now."

"Shall we exchange confidences," (in a low voice and with the beautiful head a little drooped, sure the sweetest woman in the world.)

"Yes."

"I knew I ought to tell you, before our wedding, (looking up for a moment with the frank, trustful, tender eyes), it is a kind of confession. It is about a half-brother of mine."

"And mine, my dearest, about a half-sister."

"Oh, but she was good, wasn't she," (quickly).

"Poor child, yes, she had little time to be anything else; she died in a very sad manner."

"My brother was a very bad man. He married a young lady for money, and killed her, and afterwards committed suicide."

"I scarcely needed to ask the name. It was little use to enquire in that frightened manner the cause of an altered face. I knew with terrible certainty that I, Denis Hackett, had fixed my hopes in life on the sister of my own sister's murderer."

A year has past, she waited for me, in spite of my cruel insult, and the estrangement of my making; she knew I would come back, she said; did I not love her?

And indeed I do, truly. And at last, on this blessed Christmas day, for the sweet sake of my wife Agnes, do I forgive her brother, Arthur Murphy, and may God mercifully receive my prayers for the ultimate rest of his blood-stained soul.

A RELISH.

First the necessities, then the luxuries of life, and let them be various; they should be those that touch the royal epicurean palate in its most delicate spot. In all ages the palate has been studied, and even the most warlike races, the moment the battle cry has ceased, have entered into the study of luxury in all its details. The Romans, stern as they were in war and enduring without complaint the severest privations in their campaigns, in their ease loved to astonish each other by the splendour and luxuriousness of their repasts. Reclining (we read) on couches, they commenced by stimulating appetizers brought by slaves. Then they had dinner, which consisted of two divisions, called *Mensa Prima*, the first course, and *Mensa Secunda vel Altera*, the second course: two thousand years since. Here was the Bill of Fare:—*Oysters*, eggs, asparagus, lettuce, onions, figs, and a mulsum of wine mingled with water and sweetened with honey. Then came fish, mullet, lamprey, sturgeon, pike, and turbot; and for meat, a peacock, a pheasant, a kid, a guinea hen, ducks, geese, nightingales, thrushes, and perhaps a whole boar stuffed with the flesh of other animals.

To wash down this abundant banquet wines were served up, either mixed with water or with spices, and drank either hot or cold. Then came the second course—apples, pears, nuts, figs, olives, grapes, pistachio nuts, dried figs, dried grapes or raisins, dates, mushrooms, pine-nut kernels, and then sweetmeats and confections. Happy old gourmands, Lucullus was a gentlemanly old diner in and diner out, and his friends knew it; he used to have a different room or *triclinium* for each style of banquet. He once gave a supper in the hall he called *Apollo* to Pompey and Cicero, and incurred the expense of 50,000 denarii (equal to \$10,000). That beats Delmonico in New York, or the *Maison Doré* in Paris. The fact is people must eat, and it is only a question of taste, the ability to obtain the article we desire, and the power of digestion that causes so much variety in our repasts. The Chinese like bull-pup pie, bird's-nests and snails, a curious medley of dishes certainly. The Canadians enjoy boiled babies, roast young lady, fricassée of old woman, and stewed antique man. The French have always shown a strong partiality for frogs' hind legs, (very nice), and Strasburg (poor Strasburg) is famous for *Pâté de foie gras*, or goose livers, and lately they have indulged in Paris in horse-flesh, ass's-flesh, cats and rats. The Englishman and the American have a decided penchant for oysters. The English spend millions in the cultivation of their native beds, and consider the puny thing a dish for the gods. For our part they always seemed to taste like a minute piece of fat soaked in copers. Americans are the oyster-loving people. They are the only people who understand how to eat them or how to cook them. Knowing the finest oysters in the world are on their coasts, in their estuaries and in their bays, they have learned to roast, to broil, to fry, to grill, to bake, to stew, to pickle, to can, and, above all, they have learnt how sumptuous, how regal, how delicious, how exquisitely nice, how aromatically grand, how everlastingly tasty is the crude, legitimate raw on the half shell. Americans always want oysters in the coldness of winter or the heat of summer; they must have them. We Canadians are the same, and we only seek where we can find the best. The York River oyster was a godsend to the Union troops when on the Peninsula in the late war; they have never forgotten the taste. Well, if our readers want to enjoy this delicious bivalve in all its freshness, take the advice of the writer, try the Barnegate, Manoken River, Chesapeake Bay; try James' River and York River. You can have them by the barrel, or you can have them fresh as when opened, by just sending to No. 17, Place d'Armes. There you will find them fresh every morning, shipped in large barrels with great lumps of ice to keep them cool, and just as fresh as if the knife had just opened them out. But you buy them in the shell, in the bulk, in cans, or in kegs. To those who love an evening snapper at home they have