

shocked every one extremely—as well it might; but there seemed no possible way of accounting for it. It was generally believed that it could not have been an accident; but he was not known to have a single enemy. He was a just landlord, though certainly not a generous one. The county was singularly exempt from agrarian outrages, either on the part of landlord or tenant, for the name has been curiously enough—by mere force of prejudice—limited to one side. No landlord had committed an agrarian outrage on his tenant—legally or otherwise—by throwing him out of house and home, to starve by the wayside; no tenant had taken into his hand the vengeance which belongs only to God, or brought on himself or his family the curse of the murderer. But if Lord Elmsdale's death was not an agrarian outrage, what was it?

"We will not ask you to tell us the name of the person whom you suspect, but if you will tell us some of the grounds of suspicion," and O'Sullivan looked round, as if to include the whole party in the "we."

The Judge made a sign to the servants to retire. They dare not disobey, but they left the room with manifest reluctance. Five minutes afterwards, the butler found the incorrigible page with his ear to the keyhole of the door. He was again boxed and kicked, but, with that wonderful facility for enduring ill-usage which seems inherent in the boy-kind of a certain class, he was up again at the post of vantage the very moment the butler disappeared to discuss events in the house-keeper's room.

"My suspicions," replied the Colonel, "are, I believe, founded on fact. I had a lengthened interview with Lord Elmsdale in connection with some magisterial business, and he informed me there had been some difficulties with his servants, and with some of the people on the property."

"But I presume he did not mention any particular individual, or any particular circumstances?"

"Well, not exactly, but I could quite gather who the person was, and what the circumstances were."

"You have your *suspicions*, in fact," observed the lawyer, with an emphasis on the leading word.

A gentleman remarked that he thought it very unlikely any tenant or dependent of Lord Elmsdale's would have murdered him in cold blood by the wayside, and suggested there was probably some mystery about the affair which time would elucidate. But Colonel Everard had a fixed, and, as we said, educational creed, that every Irishman of the lower classes was an embryo-murderer, and that it only needed some slight provocation to develop his propensity into crime. He only regretted that law, as administered in India, could not be put into execution in Ireland under present circumstances. "There, sir," he continued, "the matter would soon have been settled. I have my suspicions; I would have made them public at once, as a matter of duty; several men would have been arrested, and two or three shot as an example."

"Law, but not justice; and it is a question if it promotes the ends which it is intended to effect."

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

"Good evening, Miss Callan. I hope I am not too late. I am anxious to employ your good taste in the selection of a Christmas present for my wife. Now, what do you think she would like?"

Miss Callan looked very much gratified. The Head Constable was not wont to be complimentary to women-kind, or to pay complimentary visits.

"I have a sweet thing in bonnet ribbons; and there's them new shawls, I'm sure nothing could be more illegant, and just fit for a lady like Mrs. Egan, sir."

Egan had been taking a general inspection of Miss Callan's shop. He could not see even the ghost of a comforter, or woollen scarf. He was considerably annoyed to find that it would probably take him a very much longer time than he could spare to extract the information he wished from the woman, without exciting her curiosity, or giving rise to even the faintest suspicion.

He just wished to ascertain two facts: had Miss Callan sold any comforters, with a gold thread at the bottom where the fringe depended, and to whom had she sold them? Moreover, he got the