

THE DWARF'S SECRET.

"But when to-morrow you will be famous?" "Famous! Ah, you, too, with that word on your lips! What is this fame to me? To whom can I offer it? Will any face grow joyful because of my triumph? No; I have failed, and they tell me I have succeeded; but I worked with pain and a sort of rage. I wanted fame to avenge me, and I sought it no matter where. Do you think I absolve myself, Xavier? No. To-morrow this statue will stand in its place; in six months' time it will stand in open daylight, attracting crowds of sight-seers; this evil work will make me rich, but it cannot make me happy. Oh, for the pure fame that I once sought for Sabine's sake! Oh for the crown I once offered, not to pagan deities, but to the Madonna! All is over. I chose this, and I cannot now draw back."

Benedict rose and unveiled the rough cast of the St. Cecilia.

"Look at that clay figure," he said; "it would have been worthy of Sabine and myself. I saw Sabine as beautiful as that the evening she sang the O Jesu of Haydn, which she will never, never sing again for me."

Emotion choked his voice. He made a desperate struggle for composure, failed, sobbed aloud, and threw himself into Xavier's arms, saying:

"Oh my brother, my brother!" "I can understand," said he. "I have been too weak myself to blame you. On the one hand the saint, on the other the idol, and you prostrated yourself before the latter."

"Xavier," cried Benedict, with the vehemence of deep grief, "can nothing soften Sabine—prayer, promise, repentance?" "She could not come here," said Xavier, pointing to the various groups and statues which adorned the room.

"No, no, I know," said Benedict. "But if I purified the sanctuary where she once promised to dwell, if I drove the idol from its temple and broke it with the same hammer that brought it out of nothing, would Sabine come?"

"What are you going to do?" said Xavier, terrified to see that his friend had seized a heavy mallet.

"I am waiting for your answer," said Benedict. "Shall my false glory and to-morrow's success be annihilated? Better so, if I must purchase them at the price of remorse and suffering."

"But this is a work of genius," said Xavier. "You will regret what you did in a moment of excitement, and you will never forgive me or Sabine."

"Would she come back?" cried Benedict again.

"Yes," answered Xavier.

A terrible noise was heard in the studio. Benedict's hammer had destroyed the group from which an hour before he expected so much fame and happiness. "Hias and the Nymphs" flew into bits, and Xavier stood by in consternation, wondering whether Benedict had gone mad or whether he was merely obeying the imperious voice of his conscience. In a few moments he remained on the fountain but the shapeless remnants strewn the studio floor. And beside them fell Benedict senseless. Xavier hastily called Beppo, laid Benedict on the sofa in the smoking-room, lowered the curtains separating it from the studio, threw the green branches offered to the nymphs at the feet of St. Cecilia, and rushed out of the house. He jumped into a cab, gave an address, and said to the driver:

"Take me there as quick as you can. I will pay you well."

The carriage fairly flew. Xavier rushed up to his sister's room, threw a Spanish lace veil over her head, and taking her arm in his, said, "Come."

"Where are you taking me?" said she. "Come," he said in a voice of once tender and impetuous.

Sabine obeyed mechanically.

When the coach stopped at the Boulevard des Capucines, and Sabine, entering the court, saw from the appearance of the house that it was specially used by artists, she was disturbed. She timidly pressed Xavier's hand.

"Where are you taking me?" she asked. He did not answer, but drew her more quickly along.

The door of the studio was ajar. Xavier opened it gently, and Sabine saw at once that it was Benedict's. She would have run away but Xavier said:

"Stay; if you go now it will not be pride, but treason; no longer virtue, but inconsistency."

Picking up a fragment of the fountain, a charming head of a child, modelled with exquisite art, and which alone would have added to Fougere's fame, he said:

"This was part of the great work which was not fit for your eyes."

"Oh," said Sabine, her face brightening.

"Now," said the young man, opening the organ in the studio, "sit down and sing."

"I sing?" she said.

"Yes, the O Jesu of Haydn."

"Brother," she said, throwing her arms around his neck, "I understand."

She took her place upon the stool, and, in a voice to which suppressed emotion lent a new power, she began that song, the memory of which had so haunted Benedict.

Whilst Sabine's voice rang out through the room, Benedict, under the intelligent and affectionate care of Beppo, was slowly recovering consciousness. The strain of music seemed to exert a strange influence upon him, as if he wondered from what heavenly sphere came those sounds. Great tears rolled down his cheeks, but they were peaceful and painless tears; and he clasped his hands, murmuring, "St. Cecilia."

Feeble and tottering, he arose and advanced to the curtain, and from behind Beppo drew aside the picture. Pale as Lazarus arisen from the dead, he leaned forward, looked, stood motionless, and at last cried out, "Sabine!"

"See," cried Xavier, "your idol broken, the saint has returned."

Sabine did not finish the hymn. The sculptor, still weak, seemed utterly overcome by conflicting emotions. But joy at length triumphed, and when he held Sabine's hand he seemed to revive.

"Will you give it to me?" he said. She blushed and turned away her head. "You must ask Sulrice," said she. "Though I have nothing now," said Benedict, "and moreover those fragments of marble have ruined me."

Sabine looked at him and smiled.

"Xavier," said she, turning to her brother, "when are you to marry Louise?"

"Why do you ask?" said Xavier.

"Because I thought it seemed to me," said she, "that Sulrice might marry us both the same day."

Three months later, in the chapel of the factory at Charenton, a young priest, whose forehead was marked by a scar, celebrated a nuptial Mass, and blessed the union of two young couples. The workmen, in Sunday clothes and with joyful faces, crowded the place, and when the newly married came out of the chapel, two young

girls offered them beautiful bouquets of white flowers. There was a general shaking of hands and many a moistened eye. Sulrice's discourse on the occasion drew tears from most of his auditors, though few of them understood why he chose a Scripture text concerning idols, to whom men often sacrifice their souls. So well did the noble-hearted priest portray the sweet joys of sacrifice, the power of repentance offered at the foot of the cross, and the mysteries of persecution, martyrdom endured for justice's sake, that all hearts were thrilled with emotion.

Just as the wedding party came out of the chapel, the nasal voice of Pomme d'Api reached their ears. He carried under his arm a bundle of illustrated papers, and cried out: "Buy the Dying Speech of Pierre d'Eschaut, and the account of his last moments! Only ten centimes, two sons."

THE END.

LETTER FROM MEMBER OF CONGRESS HOUSES OF REPRESENTATIVES, Washington, D. C., Feb. 19th, 1883.

Gentlemen—Enclosed find one dollar, and will you send me some of N. H. Down's Vegetable Balsamic Elixir, by express. I have a bad cold, as has almost everyone else here, but cannot find the Elixir, which I use frequently at home, and consider a most valuable medicine; in fact, the very best remedy for a cough that I ever used.

Very truly yours, WILLIAM W. GROUT. To HENRY JOHNSON & LOBB, Burlington, Vt. Down's Elixir is sold by all Druggists throughout Canada.

During the past three years Ivory has risen at least 100 per cent. in value, and pearl, which is also largely used in making cutlery and other goods has advanced very materially in the same period.

CATARH OF THE BLADDER. Stinging irritation, inflammation, all kidney and urinary complaints cured by "Bucapaba." \$1.

"I won't be whipped by any man except my husband," said a Boston woman, and she shot the fellow who was breaking that rule.

A ROOM OF WONDERS! And well the visitors may say so, for the room was dark, so dark you could not see a hand before your face. Yet plain and distinct, shedding a beautiful soft radiant light, emitting neither heat, electricity, phosphorus nor odor, were a number of crucifixes, statues of the Blessed Virgin, our Saviour, St. Joseph, the Apostles, and numerous other religious objects, prepared by Messrs. J. B. Maxwell, whose advertisement on page three is worth reading.

Eleven drunkards froze to death in Iowa last winter, under a prohibitory law.

CONSUMPTION CURED. An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for consumption, Bronchitis, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellow human beings. I will send free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. Novas 149 Power's Block, Rochester, N. Y. A. Novas 149 Power's Block, 15-13 row

Portraits of "professional beauties" have ceased to be in demand in London; only the portraits of actresses and notorious women have large trade in London, which only the sage brush, cactus, and glasswork grow, but which become productive when streams are turned on a public expense, and Reclamation Commissioners have been appointed to investigate.

Sydney Smith being ill, his physician advised him to take a walk upon an empty stomach. "Upon whose?" asked Sydney. "Shall he step to take upon the pith of Dr. J. V. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery?" "Pleasant Purgative Pills," which are especially valuable to those who are obliged to lead sedentary lives, or are afflicted with any chronic disease of the stomach or bowels. By druggists.

The woman who seeks relief from pain by the free use of alcoholic stimulants and narcotic drugs, finds what she seeks only so far as sensibility is destroyed or temporarily suspended. No cure was ever wrought by such means, and the longer they are employed the more hopeless the case becomes. Leave chloral, morphia and belladonna alone and use Mrs. Finkham's Vegetable Compound.

Joseph Cook's Boston audiences are so good that when he asked who were Christians, the entire company of probably three thousand persons stood up. Then he asked those who were not converted at a time of special religious awakening and effort to sit down. Those who remained standing were estimated at four-sevenths of the whole number.

John Hays, Credit P. O., says: "His shoulder was so lame for nine months that he could not raise his hand to his head, but by the use of Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil the pain and lameness disappeared, and although three months has elapsed he has not had an attack of it since."

Although Kansas has for eleven years had a capital punishment law, nobody has been hanged except by mistake. Under the statute a person sentenced to death is first imprisoned a year in the penitentiary, and if, at the expiration of that time, the death warrant is signed by the Governor, the execution takes place; but otherwise the imprisonment continues.

"Twenty-four years' experience," says an eminent Physician, convinces me that the only cure for "Nervous Exhaustion" and weakness of the generative organs is to repair the waste by giving Brain and Nerve Foods, and of all the remedies I have used Mack's Magneto-Medicine is the best. This remedy is now sold by all our Druggists at 50 cts. per box, or 6 for \$2.50, and on receipt of an order for 12 boxes, accompanied with \$5.00, addressed to Mack's Magneto-Medicine Co., Windsor, Ont., they will forward the goods free by mail, and send their "written guarantee" to refund the money, if the treatment does not effect a cure. See advt. in another column. Sold in Montreal by Laviolette & Nelson.

THE CURSE OF BALLY-CREGGAN.

By KERRY.

A group of ill-looked, ill-fed, shivering villagers, I dare say, look the entire population of Ballycraggan, look regardless of the cold and wet of this dreary December day, at the faded house with pitting eyes, and at the representatives of the law (when McGrennigan's back was turned to them) with ill-suppressed hate and indignation.

The sheriff, as if the task were no pleasure to him, steps over the torn-down gate, approaches the house, knocks at the door, and is admitted as soon as the creaky, rattling thing can be swung open by the tired efforts of himself outside, and an aged, lonely-looking woman within, who evidently has seen better days and who to-day is the only occupant of the house, which must have been, judging from its present appearance even, far superior to the best in the village. The agent, with a long melancholy face, remains outside the gate; but a close observer can detect in his cunning, restless eyes, a something not altogether consistent with his oft-repeated unwillingness and distress at doing his duty in such cases as that which occupied his attention to-day and notice, furthermore, in those treacherous eyes of his a gleam of ill-disguised triumph playing alternately with an abstracted, far away expression, as if he were trying to associate two ideas, very far apart, and bring them home to his mind to-day. As the sheriff stands at the slowly opening door, and old man as he is, and accustomed to such scenes, explains with an unsteady voice the object of his visit, namely, that she, widow Kavanagh, of Ballycraggan, County Galway, is, in pursuance of a "notice to quit," served for non-payment of an overdue gale of rent, to give up possession of the house and farm, held in her name, to her landlord, Peter Bodkin, Esq., of Ballycraggan House, in said county, and of Portman Square, London. The object, indeed, of his mission is already explained to her by the many days of previous forebodings and now by the presence of the officers of the law. She knows, of course, it is but his duty, and that others would do the same if he refused; but, she adds, she made use of every effort to meet the debt, and what she could—a childless, friendless widow, with no means—do but give up the struggle between keeping the roof over her head and going to the poorhouse? Her surviving son, John, to better his fortunes and withdraw from the hopeless prospect of making himself or his poor mother tolerably comfortable, even after years of hard work and self-denial, had, a few years before his mother's eviction, gone to America with the laudable purpose of making her lonely life unobscured by absolute want at least; but, after a few letters written in a cheery, hopeful tone, and containing almost as many generous remittances to his mother, the olive was breaking out and John joining the Federal ranks, a deeper having a list of the killed and wounded of a certain battle somehow reached his mother, and, by that fatal list she read the name of JOHN KAVANAGH, and found that "he was now, indeed, a childless widow—an old broken hearted woman to whom Death could come as a most welcome release.

So when the grey-haired, sad, patient woman looked at the Sheriff as he finished reading the decree of eviction, he knew she was one of those over whom the darkest afflictions had passed without destroying their sublime trust in Heaven. "Ah, well," she said, "God forgive the unmerciful of this blessed day!" and then quietly told the Sheriff he might proceed at once to take possession. Only a few minutes were necessary to remove the few little articles of furniture that had remained from the happier and more prosperous past, outside—and the kindly forgiving soul found herself without a roof or a home! Many a heart in the shivering group yonder goes out to the lonely, evicted widow as she stood over the few broken chairs, the shattered bedstead, the three-legged table and the other little articles which pressing necessarily had left her; and not one among them who would not share his last bite with her who, in brighter days, helped with no stinted hand many a struggling neighbor and brought solace to many a cheerless home around her. But she knows that these willing benevolent people are almost as miserably circumstanced as herself; that they are, in fact, threatened with eviction themselves; so she will, in her bitter want, only accept one offer from her sympathetic neighbors, and that is the use of a horse and cart for the following day to take her to Loughrea, some fifteen miles from Ballycraggan, where she has a sister living who, though the wife of a laborer and with nothing to spare herself, will yet, she feels, be glad to share her humble roof with her and save her from the cruel humiliation of living on a stranger's bounty, or from the scarcely less cruel humiliation of the dread "poor-house."

So, on the following morning, very early and while Ballycraggan slept in blissful unconsciousness of its misery and cares—its "notice to quit" and the ruin which seemed to hold it in its firm clutch—Marty Kearns, whose offer of the previous day had been accepted and who now was considered the best circumstanced of his neighbors—though that is saying but very little for poor Marty's resources—put his only horse to his rickety cart and set out with Widow Kavanagh as passenger and with what scanty effects the rigorous laws of eviction had allowed her to take, as luggage, for the town of Loughrea through the drizzling, dismal rain.

And thus in the wet raw December morning did Widow Kavanagh bid "good-bye" to Ballycraggan—the village which, as a young, fair bride, thirty-five years before, she had first seen, under far different circumstances, being then the wife of a man who was considered to have the best farm, best house, and altogether the brightest prospects of any of his neighbors. How heavy the poor woman's heart must have felt the quit the home of her wedded life—the home of happiness and prosperity for many years; later, the home through which she had struggled quietly and patiently borne, and later still, the home of loneliness and weary waiting! And how gloomy and cold looked to her her tear-filled eyes and aching heart those old walls with their ivy covering and their spectral outlines in the rain and darkness of the early morning, which held within their precincts the dust of nearly all her children and her faithful husband as well!

By the entrance to Ballycraggan House, Marty hurries "ould Moll" (as he calls his lean, scraggy mare), so that his passenger may not have long to ponder on the act of him whose demise they are now travelling through, and at whose command the eviction of yesterday was carried out. Marty said afterwards that, when they had come so far as the Ballycraggan Church, he noticed that his passenger, whom he had tried to keep in conversation so as to divert her mind from the sad associations belonging to

it and its neighborhood, had not answered the few questions he had been uncomfortably asked, as he had asked from time to time; but, thinking her reluctance, the result of her manifold troubles, he thought it better not to press the sorrow-laden woman into speech, and so continued on his way in silence, occasionally urging his sorry beast to a brisker jog, and relapsing into reminiscences of the place through which he was passing, and which, it must be confessed, did not awaken very pleasant ones. Now, even in those comparatively recent days, clocks and watches were not by any means common in such a remote and obscure village as Ballycraggan; and it will not, therefore, be inexplicable when I say that there was only one time-piece which the Ballycraggites could boast of, and that this belonged to the Kavanagh family up to the day of the eviction, when, owing to the rough handling it received, it ceased its "tick-tock" forever. So Marty Kearns had altogether to depend on a "guess-work" for the time at which he was to start for Loughrea. Now it may be put down as an axiom that where such a process is applied to time—particularly during the night when heavy clouds of mist and rain hide the moon from one's view—there is, I say, a wide margin between the estimate and the reality. Hence, Marty who, at the desire of his passenger, had intended to start at four o'clock that morning so as to leave the village walls at getting within two or three hours of the mark, and so, having gone to bed early, had formed the poor widow (whose cares banished sleep from her troubled mind) at midnight that he was ready, as soon as he got his horse to the car, to set out upon his journey. And thus it happened that, instead of starting at four, Marty had actually commenced his trip at the "unhappy hour" of half-past twelve, when it is very well known that the spirit world is in the midst of its weird business.

Marty, as I have said, continued his way in silence and fell to ruminating, in which he "ould make both ends meet" and pay the next gale of rent on his wretched holding were, it need hardly be said, the chief and absorbing subjects. However, by-and-by less prosaic thoughts came, and, although he scouted the idea of ghosts, it was said by his neighbors that passing the old church of Ballycraggan alone at midnight was something which his nerves strongly protested against. And, it must be confessed, that this weakness of his, mingled with a desire to mitigate her grief and loneliness by conversation, was the cause of his futile efforts to make his passenger speak on some subject best calculated to turn her mind from troubles over which she was brooding. A more unlucky time or a more trying locality a man like Marty could not find than the hour of one in the morning and the very places through which they were then passing. Why, it had been told again and again that scarcely a Christmas eve ever came in Ballycraggan that some of its veracious people did not, on the night preceding—that is, on the night of the 23d of December—see with their own eyes the black spectre which had so terrified them and wrought them so much evil, that it had become known as the "Curse of Ballycraggan;" and it was, furthermore, said that who, dire and bitter woe, followed the unfortunate wight whose misfortune it was to see on this particular night, the dread spirit whose shadow haunted the old church, and whose malign influence was felt and feared, more or less, by every household of that village and neighborhood. Indeed, only last year did "not Marty himself have to spur the very nag he was now driving to its utmost speed to subvert the priest and doctor to the dying bed of a neighbor's daughter who had seen the unearthly visitant of the old church? This girl had been aroused during the night by her mother, whose only child she was, to see what noise was that in the ruins hard by; and, sure enough, when she looked out she saw, peering at her through the window, an object which froze her blood, and the next instant, with a piercing cry, fell back unconscious. For weeks they tried to rally her; but in vain—the little case they could give her was lovingly tendered to a ditching life which a few days' struggle brought to a close!

How Marty's knees knocked together from the cold, it was not fair, gentle reader, as you may readily suppose, oh, no—as he thought of that sad occurrence of a year before! He attributed his shivering to the circumstance that he had failed to don all his available clothes previous to starting, which he considered were certainly needed for such a wet, cold night. But, with all due respect for Marty's courage and veracity, we must ask, why did he not jump off the car and walk briskly and thus get his blood into warm circulation; and why did he think of ill-fated Mary Tierney, for whom twelve months before he had summoned priest and doctor, and of her sudden melancholy death? Did not the poor girl die of a rush of blood to the brain, as the doctor, who ought to know, declared?—although the old women shook their heads, sympathized with the innocent doctor entertaining so ridiculous an opinion, and would have it that it was the "Black Spirit" of the ruins, and nothing else, that exercised its fatal influence over her.

"Ugh, hotheration! old Nancy Carroll's pink-royce and the other ould hags that has nothing better to do than talk the people into giving them a male's victrials or a basket of turf," soliloquized Marty with a laudable, but by no means successful, attempt at indifference. "Yerra, my goodness! gracious, man," he continued in a voice from which it must be said, every tone of aggressiveness and of even cessation was absent, "yerra, arn't they at that nonense as long as I can—"

But here, as if he had been shot, he abruptly stopped, for at that instant, to his utter dismay, he saw a dog—a huge, strange-looking jet-black dog—spring out over an old stile on the road-side from a direction which led him to believe it came from the churchyard, where the grass had scarcely yet covered the grave of Mary Tierney! His bravery, his hostility to the old woman who, at a wack or some cosy fireside when the blasts of winter added a weirdness to their tales, related stories which made even young men shudder and children silent through sheer horror, vanished, and he could only wonder how he could ever have had the hardihood to question so ancient and so grimly solemn a fact as that of visitors to this earth of ours from the spirit-land. He could see now that this canine apparition was an evil one, for who ever heard of a good spectre coming in the shape of a dog? Why, good Heavens!—the Curse of Ballycraggan—generally assumed according to popular description, said, as if to confirm his worst fears—a dog that closer observation disclosed to him sparks of fire issuing from the dog's mouth. He is literally paralyzed—mentally and physically—he cannot utter a word; cannot move; cannot tell the horse to stop or urge it on: his eyes are fastened, without any effort of his own, on that terrible, strange, unearthly dog with the blazing mouth; and he could not say "hook" if it made him lord of Ballycraggan castle.

Of all things is our poor Marty oblivious

in this the most appalling ordeal of his life; he cannot tell or realize that he has a human being within arm's length of him; he knows not where he is going or where he has come from; he cannot say, if he were asked, whether he is Marty Kearns, who professed the most disdainful incredulity of phoek to the old woman who "dinned into his ears" stories of the "good people," or the King of Dahomey, whose countenance should be deemed "white with fear" if he were subjected to our friend's woeful predicament. Through the awful charm that dogs' eyes have, wrought nothing but human breaks; and Marty the dog and what it looked were the only objects that seemed to have any identity. But, horror of horrors!—the spectre appears to have only two legs now, and stands up and walks and runs like a man—like a stupendously tall, rugged, ungainly man, but still with a dog's head and blazing mouth. How powerless must the two occupants of the cart be, as this indescribable monstrosity stalks along by their side and, mirabile dictu, takes its seat "cheek by jowl" with them, without saying as much as "by your leave."

The spectre's eyes, from the first moment it had become a passenger, were fixed with a steady, frightful glare on the widow: Marty could notice this—no more; but, now that the ghost's attention was entirely directed elsewhere, he could remember that he had often heard that the "Black Spirit" of Ballycraggan had in a special way followed the Kavanagh family; and that it was often said in the village that John Kavanagh, the head of the family, was a healthy, robust man that December day, ten years ago, when he started for home from Galway, after transacting the business of the day in the city, but that for some reason or other when he got to his house he was weak and looked haggard with a strange look in his eyes—the premonitions of death to him, for in a month's time he was in his grave! Then his sons—strong, healthy and comely; and their sisters—equally promising, plied away from some mysterious cause and, one by one, were carried to the churchyard hard by—all except one, out of a family of eight—him who, as we have seen, sought in the great republic of the West that means of sustenance denied him at home. It dawned upon Marty that it was the last and only member of that family—the bereaved and afflicted mother—whom the horrid and relentless spirit wanted, for its appearance and acts plainly indicated that it only needed to have its victim's eyes once directed to its terrible face in order to complete that fatal spell which it had so long and so cruelly exercised over the Kavanaghs. How fervently Marty prays that the widow will not open her eyes (for happy circumstance, she is sleeping soundly); he can tell that they are closed in deep slumber, and, moreover, remember that the homeless woman has not had a good night's rest for a week, and he takes comfort from the thought that this want of repose from work and worry and trouble will keep those sad, tired eyes shut till some blessed means will interpose and ward off the dire calamity that sits so ominously near them. On slowly goes the car; "ould Moll" having her own way, walks and jogs as she pleases, but knowing well that she is bound to go to Loughrea, keeps the right road. Boherue is reached and soon the cart and the mare's hoofs are awakening the echoes of Kilkerran. Every inch of the road almost has its story of ghostly occurrences; and it seems to him, now that he has become accustomed somewhat to the spectre's presence, that the tales he has heard of the shadowy beings who haunted, during the night every bend of the way, every hill on it, and every bend that here and there stands out clear, sentinel-like, and painfully suggestive of the supernatural visitors with whom it is to be nightly frequented, rush upon him with the fearful vividness and rapidity of lightning; while the numbing dread of that terrible object in his cart, comes upon him ever and anon, leaving the intervals moments of the keenest suspense and bewildering conjecture!

After passing the "Cross Roads" their course lies through a succession of small hills, upon which one comes abruptly and each of which, as may be gathered, has its own coteries of evil folk. And Marty knows well—no one knows better, he now thinks, to his bitter cost—that the very first hill after you pass a barren leading off the road direct to a churchyard is none other than Crochraun's Pooks (hill of the fairies) where, it is a notorious "quill" things have been seen. Why he has often been told that Peter Mooney on an All Hallows' Eve met, as he was coming home from a dance at which he played, a dapper little fellow dressed in a red uniform with horizontal bars of blue and a jaunty green cap, just as he jumped over the low ditched fence that separates the hill from the road. Yes; and he can remember every particular of the strange experiences, as related by the piper time and again, that characterized that singular meeting: how Mooney was introduced to a subterranean hall—a sign of which cannot be seen anywhere on or around the hill in question—and to a gay and brilliant company, all not an inch bigger than his conductor who, the piper averred, could not be over three feet in height or weigh more than as many stones, and all attired somewhat alike; how a cheer which rang, he thought, through miles of underground chambers, was given by this gathering of wonderful little people at seeing the piper with his pipes under his arm, just as if such a sight were the only thing needed to complete their happiness; how they clustered round him and coaxed him to play for them; how, nothing loath to grant them such a request, he unstrung his pipes and gave them one of his best tunes, which, however, did not seem to please them; how the leader of these merry elves—a dazzling, vivacious fairy with a crown of sparkling diamonds, whose gleams shot, like rays of the setting sun, a rich glow across the faces of her happy subjects and sent a thrill of fresh pleasure and buoyant zest through them as, in their movements and gambols, they reflected the light, the gayety and beauty of their queen—how this enchanting little fairy, I say, sent a number of her attendants to the bygone musician with the request that his pipes be brought to her; how, when these were handed to her, she ran her pretty mouth over the "chanter" and blew into it; how Mooney, when the pipes were returned to him, played music that fairly transported him into a wild rapture and sent, as if one impulse actuated all, the whole company whirling around in waltz, jig, reel, hornpipe, and in dancing sets, the movements of which and the tunes they required, he knew as much about as he did of the "man in the moon;" and how in the early morning he awoke from his bed on the damp hillside with a raging headache and sore bones, the pipes covered with dew, lying voiceless by his side! And was it not perfectly known for miles around, that ever after that eventful night Mooney, who previously could not "hold a candle" to Tim Grady—his successful rival—played the finest music ever heard in Connaught, and would not sell his pipes for the best estate in Ireland? Of

course, it was; and Marty knew all about it, and, if he ever had been inclined to laugh at the story, he had reason to regret it now, for just as the old mare slowly wriggled up the same locality crossed his mind, and made him think of the worse dilemma he was in himself; a frightful phantom by his side and the prospect of the haunted hill opening at any moment and engulfing him and his passenger, horse, cart and all! As he was grasping slowly but surely the notion of so terrible a fate in store for him, what on earth did he hear but the enraptured notes of the "Fox Hunt," a tune he had heard old Mooney play many a time! And whom, of all men living, and dead, did he see for myriads of tiny fairies scattered over the hill—and encircling it in dance, but Mooney himself whose funeral he had attended scarce two years before! Why, as he looks a little closer and allows his eye to roam over the other hills between him and Kilkerran, not one of them is not dotted with those pleasant, frolicsome elves; the men arrayed in scarlet uniform striped with blue and wearing green caps; the women in blue dresses and bright colored head-gear, whose brilliant tints contrasted beautifully with those of their partners as they met and mingled in the evolutions of the dance. There were hurling and other sports; in one field active little men buried and jumped and raced as if their existence was long holiday; each seeming to be so intent on winning that he never looked at the side going on around him on the adjoining hills or even once raised his head to cast a glance at Marty Kearns passing by. The whole neighborhood appeared to be full of the wild creatures and their gambols; and, by the time our party reached Kilkerran and got on the Loughrea road, which, as every body knows, runs at right angles to the highway, between Limerick and Galway, and takes an easterly direction, Marty had become so accustomed to the supernatural that he began to regard his ghostly passenger with a certain degree of calmness; at any rate, he was enabled to devote some attention to the mysterious and awful watch which the phantom still kept over the sleeping woman, although he could not speak a word or change his position, or had he been offered the wealth of the world, could he have said "go on" or "who's to 'ould Moll," as she moved along at the same jog—half walk, half trot—and turned on to the Loughrea road as if guided by an irresistible hand. He fancied he could see, and by this the moon which was late in rising and obscured by thick rain clouds during the greater part of the night, glows bright and clear on the peaceful pale face of the unconscious woman, that she smiled occasionally; that then the face would get composed and settle down into a passive, said expression; that again a shade of pain would pass over it;—she was surely dreaming, he said to himself,—the smiles were given her by the angels who watched her; the shadows, by the evil spirit who watched her too. What if she should awake and find, instead of the sweet faces of her children, who were many long dismal years dead, and of him—the true and large-hearted, the loving partner of her wedded life (with whom, it was apparent to Marty, she was now united in dream-land)—what, her old neighbor shudderingly thinks, if, in place of the dear dead of her affections, she awoke to find the hideous spectre that was keeping a vigil over her slumbers! "God, in Heaven, forbid it!"—fervently prayed Marty Kearns; and as the thought of some release from the "ghoul" (for demon, by this time, he felt sure his ghostly passenger to be) who had so unceremoniously elected himself to a seat in the cart, and had become so distressingly attached to it, he urged "ould Moll" to fresh exertions, so as to reach, in the least possible time, the little village of Dunkerrin, only two or three miles away, where a tiny stream of water crossed the road, and where, he knew, he was sure of getting clear of that most unwelcome and terrible of passengers. But, as if the latter could read what was passing in its driver's mind, it looked at the woman in such a fearful, sinister, ominous way that had Marty had the courage of a Napoleon, such a withering, demoralizing glance would have deprived him of every thought, not to speak of power, to act. Oh, could he but get to that running water, only two miles away! Heavy beads of perspiration stood on his forehead, although his teeth chattered and his body was chilled to almost death's coldness by the cutting wind and by the vain which fell during the first mile or two of the journey, as well as by utter dread and protracted suspense. He could not lift a finger; he could not do it though he were promised such a slight effort would instantly drive away the horrid phantom that sat so near and exercised such an ascendancy over him.

It seemed, too, that the spectre was conscious of its time to remain in the company of mortals had almost terminated and that something—some benign influence—to put an end to its power for evil was not far away. But it still looked, kept the same unbroken stare since first it joined them through several miles of weary road, up hill and down glade; the shaking did not as much as produce the effect of making it even once wink those glaring, fiery eyes; and so that dread threatening gaze was concentrated on the poor widow, who still slept, happily oblivious of the ghastly watcher of her slumbers. Now, at every yard nearer to the running water that crossed the road, a more malicious snowl, if that indeed was possible, passed over this man-dog, and added fresh terror and dire significance to the glaring, rapidly-moving eyes, which were lighted by frequent flashes passing out of and across them; the mouth opened wide enough to display teeth which looked like those described in Dante's "Inferno," fully the length, honest Marty said, of his own longest finger, and pointed and strong enough to eat up cart and passenger, had it taken so gastronomical a notion; veritable horns appeared to grow from behind its dog's ears,—horns which Marty did not perceive as first sight; and the fire—the red and blue sparks and flashes issuing from the mouth and smelling appallingly like brimstone—bespoke the demon that was in the cart with them. Marty remembered that a wonderful power the sign of the cross or a prayer was known to have over all things evil and put his hand up to bless himself; but he could not utter the first word of the sacred invocation and the fend (for such we must now call him) grinned so horribly that he thought his last moment had come. There is one consolation, however, and Marty hugs it as the last resource in his hour of bitter need,—the little stream; and as if good luck, so long in coming to him, should have it so, this running water flowed from a well within the walls of an old and roofless abbey; was looked upon as holy, and, although it was a very shallow stream—scarcely two inches deep where it crossed the middle of the road—Marty yet would not exchange it for the wide Atlantic, as he knew that neither ghost nor demon could pass it.

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