

THE PHOENIX PARK MURDERS

floor, while he stood, half turned, staring at the picture as it lay among the splintered glass.

Willie laughed, and, coming to help the parlourmaid to pick up the picture, exclaimed: "There goes Home Rule, Parnell!" But he also had in him a slight dash of the superstition that was so highly developed in Parnell's fatalistic nature, and his smile turned to gravity as he glanced at Parnell's tense expression and listened to my hasty explanation of the fall: "Perhaps the wire was rotten, or the maid had shaken the picture as she passed!" Parnell took the loose end of the wire in both hands and tried to break it. He could not. Willie said: "Mary (the parlourmaid) was the other side of the room, so she could not have shaken it." Parnell said nothing, and we began to speak of other things.

Afterwards I said to him: "You did not really mind about that picture, did you? It was only a rotten wire!" and he answered: "It was an omen, I think, darling, but for whom? Willie or me?" and when I told him I wished he would not talk such nonsense, and that I did not believe in omens or want any falling pictures to be "omens" for either of them, he smiled and said no more.

The immediate consequence of the Phoenix Park murders was the introduction of a Crimes Bill by Sir William Harcourt on May 11th. Parnell was not approached on the subject. He was given no opportunity of criticising the proposals and of suggesting any more moderate measure which might have appealed to that great body of Irish Nationalists who viewed the murders with horror. The new Bill went