

gerald's change of aspect at her thoughtless speech, but she banished the incredible suspicion from her mind. Miles was careful not to mention his talk with Bastien at Vespucci's.

"Let us say that appearances are against Mr. Fitzgerald," she said, after Miles had finished. Why should you want to ruin him?"

"I don't want to ruin him," replied Miles, watching Esther's changing face closely. "I want him—well—to make it worth my while to drop the matter,—or I want the reward for having found John Longworthy's murderer."

Esther's face grew whiter than ever; she covered her face with the hand toward Miles.

"A-ha," he said to himself, "she *does* like him! Now let her buy him off. I'll be reasonable, though he has always been very selfish to me."

"And you want money so badly as that?" she asked, with her hand still shading her face.

"I want money more than anything else on earth. My future depends on it, and I am bound to have it."

There was silence, only broken by the sound of the wick sucking the oil in the lamp.

"Well," Esther said, in a changed, strained voice "you will get yourself into trouble if you try to connect Mr. Fitzgerald with John Longworthy's murder. Depend upon it, the handkerchief and envelope episodes can be explained. That man never committed a crime. Trust a woman's intuition for that. It sickens me to think that you—my brother, Mary's brother—could have had the thoughts you have insulted me by expressing. How have you become so degraded? O Miles, when I think of the old times, and of mother, and of her hopes, and of you and me playing together—" Esther broke off, and the hand which she persistently held between her face and Miles trembled.

"Cut sentiment!" he said, doggedly. "I've been a pretty fair brother to you when I have been in luck. When a man wants money he can't bother about fine-cut distinction."

"Mary and I have some money in the bank. It isn't a great amount; for the taxes and all the repairs the tenants insisted on have not left much. There's about three hundred dollars. It is in Mary's name. I'll ask her to draw it out for you to-morrow. She'll be glad to do it without asking questions; or if she does," added Esther, with a touch of scorn, "you can satisfy her curiosity in the usual way. We intended the money for the trip, but I'd rather never see Europe than have you begin blackmailing—yes, blackmailing—an old schoolmate."

"And is that all you offer?" demanded Miles, his jaw falling. "You can't care so much for Fitzgerald, after all. I thought you'd do more than that to save him," he added, in an aggrieved voice.

A flood of red overspread Esther's face. She looked straight at her brother, her heart sinking within her. Miles puffed away at his pipe, with his eyelids closed, trying to conceal his nervousness. It was a bitter moment for the girl. She had said cutting things to and of Miles, but she had only half believed them. She drew the fur of her cloak more closely to her. She felt cold,—her hands were icy. She could not reproach him now: he had fallen too low. Suddenly she understood that he wanted to blackmail her, not Arthur Fitzgerald. Again the blush of offended pride and modesty overspread her face. She dared not trust herself to speak. She could no longer hold the paper-knife; she dropped it from her fingers.

Miles was entirely callous. He was bent on his own object. He had no conception that he had thrust a dagger in Esther's breast. Perhaps earlier in his life he might have understood it, but he had drifted past all comprehension of it now. Esther realized for the first time how far she was from him.

"I said," he repeated, "that I thought you'd do more than that to save a man whom you evidently like so much. Love at first sight, hey?"

"I want to save you," she answered, in a low voice.

"Three hundred dollars won't do it," he said. "But you needn't worry about me. I haven't killed anybody."

The girl rose. Good-night, Miles. Mary will get you the money to-morrow. It is all we have."

She opened the door without looking of him. He took his pipe from his mouth, opened his lips and muttered to himself:

"I am a fool! I've only made things worse." Then he said aloud: "Just close the door."

Esther obeyed.

"I may as well tell you, as you are bound to find it out anyhow, that I have already borrowed that money. In fact, I wrote Mary's name. I knew she wouldn't mind, and I didn't want to bother her. And, as they knew me at the bank—I just took the loan—you see—"

He stammered and pretended to stoop for a match.

Esther did not think of him; one thought drove all disgust and scorn from her mind: it was of Mary. She sunk down near the table and began to cry.

"O Miles," she sobbed, "when Mary finds out that you are a—a—she will die!"

To be continued.

THE SHAMROCK'S HISTORY.

WHEN King Lorry, surrounded by his lords, vassals, and Druids, was celebrating his birthday at Tara, the ancient capital of Ireland, it happened to be on the eve of Easter. The time had come when all the fires were to be extinguished, that, after a while, they might be relighted by the sacred torch consecrated to the heathen gods. In the interval of hallowed darkness, suddenly there appeared a brilliant light at the top of the Slope of Chariots. The sparks and flames rose from the mysterious camp of profanation of the ancient faith of Tara. Who had dared to profane the sacred darkness by unholy fires? What bold blasphemer ventured to light the torch until the flame had been brought from the altar of the gods? The warriors grasped their arms and rushed up the hill to tear the infidel to pieces. They seized him and dragged him down to the hall of judgment; but all the while he kept reciting prayers to the unknown God; and when brought before the assembly of enraged idolaters, St. Patrick, who for seven years had been Mileho's herdsman slave, stood forth, like the heroic Paul, and answered for himself.

In his lonesome captivity St. Patrick had learned to love the Irish people, and with the burden of salvation he had traversed the great plains from the mouth of the Boyne to the Slope of the Chariots. He stood and preached to them all night—from the birth of the stars to the grand ascension of the sun. He spoke as never man had spoken in Tara. He told them the story of the Nazarene, of the Blessed Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—of Baptism, of the Eucharist, of all the sublime faith of the Church of Rome. Towards daylight the people began to believe, and fell into debate, one with another. The arch-Druid, the king, and two beautiful maidens were converted and baptized. The tumult increased; the true fires of heaven were blazing in the dark valley of paganism, and St. Patrick preached on until the day-dawn began to reveal the course of the Black-water, the Boyne, and the hills of Cavan and the heights of Slane.

But the people could not understand the strange doctrine of the Trinity—how three persons should constitute one God—and with daylight their hearts began to return to their idols. Suddenly the apostle caught up a sprig of shamrock, which had been holding up his triple-palms in the adoration of the one true God, and holding it forth, he showed the people that three leaves growing from a single stock constitute but one. Instantly the quick-witted people understood the mystery; they rushed upon the apostle, and would have carried him on their shoulders, and from that hour the faith of Patrick was planted in the Irish heart, and that faith since has never failed.

A short time ago Mr. Flannagan, one of the editors of the London *Times*, and the writer of that paper's "Parnellism and Crime" articles, was proposed for membership in the Athenæum Club, in Pall Mall, an organization devoted to literature, science and art, and in no sense political. He has just been balloted for, with the result that he was black-balled to such an extent that his proposers have felt compelled to apologize for having presented his name.

