

is upon the kitchen," he said, hastily; "it is our weakest point; this way, Captain," and we both entered it together.

There was a bright fire burning on the hearth. The large window was shattered to pieces; and the idiot I had noticed on the lawn was standing beside the ruined casement, armed with a spit, making momentary passes at the breach, and swearing and bellowing frightfully. I leaped upon a table to seize two muskets which were suspended in the place Miss Morden had described. I handed one to Henry, when the fire blazed out suddenly, and discovered me to the handitti without. Instantly three or four shots were discharged. I heard a bullet whistle past my head, and felt something strike my shoulders like a sharp cut from a whip; but having secured the gun, I jumped from the table uninjured. We heard Mr. Morden in the passage; his manner was calm and collected, as he ordered the servant men to the front of the house, and despatched his daughter for ammunition.

Meanwhile, a dropping fire continued from without; from within no shot had been returned, as the robbers sheltered themselves effectually behind the angles of the offices, and the piers of the gates. From some hurried words we overheard, they were arranging a determined attack.

"They will make a rush immediately," said the elder Morden, coolly; "and here comes Emily in good time; don't come in, love!" and he took some forty or fifty cartridges, which she had brought in the skirt of her dressing-gown. Notwithstanding the peril of our situation, I could not but gaze a moment on this brave and beautiful girl. Go, love, tell John to bring the captain's gun-case from his chamber; and do you, Emily, watch from the end window, and if you perceive any movement on that side surprise us of it here. Now, my boys, be cool: I'll give my best horse to him who shoots the first man. You have a good supply of ammunition, if we could but coax the scoundrels from their shelter, and I'll try a ruse." The old gentleman took the idiot's spit, placed a coat upon it, while Henry and I chose a position at either side of the broken window. Mr. Morden raised the garment to the breach; it was instantly seen from without; three bullets perforated it, and it fell. "He's down," roared a robber, exultingly. "Now, Murphy, now's your time; smash in the door with a sledge!" Instantly a huge ruffian sprang from behind a gable; his rush was so sudden that he struck twice with shattering force. We heard the hinges give—we saw the door yielding—and, at that critical moment, young Morden's gun mused fire! He then caught up an axe, and placed himself determinately before the door, which we expected to be momentarily driven in. Murphy, perceiving the tremendous effects of his blows, called to his comrades to "be ready." He stood about five yards from me; the sledge was raised above his head—that blow would have shivered the door to atoms. I drew the trigger—the charge, a heavy one of duck shot, passed like a six pound bullet, through the ruffian's body, and he dropped a dead man upon the threshold. "Captain Dwyer," said Mr. Morden, calmly, "the horse is yours."

I had now received my own double gun, and gave the musket I had used so successfully to Henry Morden. The death of the ruffian with the sledge brought on a heavy fire from his comrades. Between the volleys, they summoned us to surrender, with fearful denunciations of vengeance, if we resisted longer. We were within a few yards of each other, and during the intervals of the firing, they poured out threats, and we sent back defiance. "Morden, you old scoundrel!" exclaimed the captain of the gang, "in five minutes, we'll have your heart's blood." "No," was the calm reply; "I'll live to see you arrayed in cap and halter." "Surrender, or we'll give no quarter." "Cowardly scoundrel! come and try your hand at the sledge!" said the old gentleman, with a cold and sarcastic smile, as he turned his eye on me, where I was watching the door, with the confidence a man feels who has his own trustworthy weapon to depend upon.

"Morden! we'll burn the house about you." "Will you put the coal in the thrutch, O'Brien?" "Morden, you have a daughter," and the ruffian pronounced a horrid threat. The old man shuddered, and in a low voice, tremulous with rage, he muttered, "O'Brien, I'll spare five hundred pounds to hang you, and travel five hundred miles to see the sight!"

"The coal! the coal!" shouted several voices, and unfortunately, the scoundrels had procured one in the laundry. "Oh! they will burn us out," said Henry, in alarm. "Never fear," replied his confidant; "the firing must have been heard across the lake, and we'll soon have aid sufficient." But a circumstance occurred almost miraculously, that averted the threatening danger. The moon became suddenly overcast, heavy rain drops fell, and in an instant an overwhelming torrent burst from the clouds, rendering every attempt the robbers made to ignite the thatch abortive. "Who

dare doubt an over-ruling Providence?" said the old gentleman, with enthusiasm; surely God is with us!"

The storm which came to our relief appeared to dissipate our assailants, and their parley recommenced. "Morden, said the captain of the banditti, "you have Lord —'s rent in the house; give us a thousand pounds, and we'll go off and leave you."

"All I promise, I'll perform," said the old gentleman. "O'Brien, for this night's work you have earned a halter, and I'll attend and see you hanged." "Dash in the door," exclaimed the robber, in a fury, "we'll have the old rogue's heart out!" A volley of stones rattled against the door, but produced no effect, and again the robber parleyed. "Will you give us a hundred, Morden?" "Not a sixpence," was the laconic answer. Once more, stones were thrown, shots discharged, and threats of vengeance fulminated by the exasperated villains. At last the demand was reduced to "twelve guineas, a guinea for each man." "They'll be off immediately," said the old gentleman: "they know assistance is at hand; would that we could amuse them for a little longer!" But the ruffians were already moving, and Miss Morden presently announced that they were embarking, twelve in number, in a boat. "Now, for a parting shot or two," said Henry Morden. We picked up a dozen cartridges, and sallied from the house as the banditti were pulling hard across the lake. We opened a quick and well directed fire, which they feebly, and without effect, replied to. While a musket-ball would reach them, we plied them liberally with shot; and, as we learned afterwards, mortally wounded one man, and slightly injured two others. As we returned to the house, we met some fifty countrymen, armed with all sorts of rustic weapons, coming to our relief. Without a moment's delay, we launched boats, and set off to scour the country; and at noon, so prompt and vigorous had been the pursuit, that six of the gang, including the wounded robbers, were secured.

We reached the house completely exhausted by the exertions of the morning, and the fatigue of the preceding night. We refreshed ourselves, and went to bed; but previous to returning to my room, I visited the scene of action. Another blow, even a very slight one, must have driven in the door; and in the rush of twelve desperate ruffians, the chances would have been fearfully against us. Murphy lay upon his back; he was a disgusting object. The charge of heavy shot made as large a wound as a cannon bullet would occasion. He was the strongest man I ever saw; not more than five feet eight inches in height, but his limbs, body, and arms, were a giant's; he was a blacksmith—a man of infamous character, and most sanguinary disposition.

Our escape from robbery was fortunate indeed; Mr. Morden had seven thousand pounds that night in the lodge; for he had just received the rents of two estates. It was almost entirely paid in specie. This was of course known, and two desperate bands, who had kept the adjoining counties in alarm since the rebellion was suppressed, united, for the purpose of robbing Morden's house, and securing this immense booty.

The body of the smith was sent away—and having brought the battle to a close, I shall explain some matters connected with this daring outrage.

A man named Mitchell originated the intended robbery, and arranged the method of attack. He was a slight, low-sized person, but his activity was amazing, and no attempt was too hazardous for his desperate courage to undertake. On the morning of his execution, (he with three others, was hanged at the subsequent assizes,) he gave us a cool detail of his plans.

The dogs were to be destroyed, and the premises reconnoitered. In the disguise of a beggar he effected both; laid meat, prepared with arsenic, for the poor animals; then made his way into the kitchen, and ascertained that the fastenings of the back door were defective. He purposed surprising the family at supper, or forcing an entrance when they were asleep. The first attempt he made was at the drawing room, but quickly perceiving that he had been observed by Miss Morden, he retired hastily. A council was held by the robbers, and it was fortunately determined to postpone the attack until the family had gone to rest.

Nothing could be bolder or more likely to succeed, than Mitchell's desperate resolution. It was to leap feet foremost through the window, armed with a dagger, and open the back door for his associates. He made the attempt, and fortuitous circumstances alone prevented its being successful. That very morning, a small iron bar had been placed across the window, it caught the robber in his leap, threw him back with violence, and the noise, attended with the outcry of the idiot, alarmed the family instantly.

Circumstances, they say, will often make men courageous. In this case it had the same effect on two beings of a very different description—a lovely girl and

an idiot boy. Miss Morden, throughout the trying scene, displayed the coolest courage—and the poor simpleton, who commonly would avoid the appearance of a gun, armed with his spit, defended the breach like a hero.

We met at dinner. Julia, Miss Morden's cousin, would hardly venture to join us, for her brother rated her timidly, severely. When the alarm was heard, the fearful girl buried her face beneath the bed coverings, and remained in pitiable agitation until the contest ended. Mr. Morden took her from his daughter's arm, kissed her, and congratulated her on their delivery from the last night's danger.

"You little coward," said the old man, jocularly, "you must give your deliverer a kiss, for your preservation;" the blushing girl received my salute. Miss Morden took my hand. "You, too, Emily, will you not reward your protector?" Without coquetry, she laid her lips to mine, and that kiss was a sufficient reward for twice the peril I had encountered.

For me no praise seemed sufficient; the successful defence was attributed to my exertions; and the fortunate shot that killed the villain smith, was never to be sufficiently commended.

My visit ended—I was in love with Emily; but then I had little chance of succeeding to the property which afterwards, by a chapter of accidents, fell to me; and a company of foot was all my earthly riches. She was an heiress: would it be generous to take advantage of a casual service, and press a suit that would be as painful to refuse as unlikely to be granted? I mean, (so says vanity,) by Mr. Morden. No: I overcame the temptation of risking a trial, and returned to Waterford, possessing the esteem and good wishes of every inmate of Mr. Morden's mansion.

I was on parade some mornings after I rejoined the regiment, when a horse, splendidly accoutred, with a superb tiger skin, holsters, saddle, and every housing fit for a field officer, was led into the barrack-yard, by a groom. The animal was a perfect picture of symmetry and strength; a dark chesnut, sixteen hands high, and worth at least two hundred guineas. The groom presented me a letter—it was from Mr. Morden—the horse was a present.

Emily and her cousin married most happily, and we have often met since. They treat me as sisters would a brother, and we frequently talk of the night attack upon the lodge.

Three years passed away; the gang had been incessantly followed by Mr. Morden, and were extirpated, with the solitary exception of O'Brien. Dreading the sleepless vengeance of that determined old man, this ruffian fled the country, and established himself in a disaffected district in the south.

In the interim I got a majority in the seventieth, then quartered in Cork. Soon after I joined, I happened to be field officer of the day on which a notorious criminal was doomed to suffer. The regiment had given a guard, and curiosity induced me to attend the execution.

I entered the press room. In a few minutes the malefactor appeared in white grave-clothes, attended by two priests. It was "mine ancient enemy," O'Brien! Suddenly, the Sheriff was called out, and after a short absence, returned, accompanied by a plain, vigorous country gentleman, enveloped in a huge driving coat, and apparently like one who had travelled a considerable distance.

I looked at the criminal; he was the ruin of a powerful man, and the worst visaged scoundrel imaginable. He was perfectly unmoved, and as the priests hurried over their Latin prayers, made a careless response whenever they directed him. The door leading to the drop was open; the felon looked out upon the crowd most earnestly. "He is not there," he murmured; *he caused my apprehension, but he will not see me die!* and added with a grim smile, "Morden you neither kept your word, nor proved your prophecy!" The muffled stranger stood suddenly forward—"I am here! O'Brien, I paid for your apprehension, and have come some hundred miles to witness your execution."

"Morden!" said the dying felon, solemnly, if a ghost can come back again, I'll visit you!"

The person addressed smiled coldly. "I found you unable to execute your threats while living, and, believe me, I apprehend nothing from you when dead."

The clock struck—the sheriff gave the signal—O'Brien advanced to the scaffold—he drop fell—and in two minutes he was a corpse.

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