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THE SEARCH PARTY

BY

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AUTHOR OF "SPANISH GOLD"

James Owen Hannay

FOURTH EDITION

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THE SEARCH PARTY

CHAPTER I

DR. O'GRADY, Dr. Lucius O'Grady, was the medical officer of the Poor Law Union of Clonmore, which is in Western Connacht. The office is not like that of resident magistrate or bank manager. It does not necessarily confer on its holder the right of entry to the highest society. Therefore, Dr. O'Grady was not invited to dinner, luncheon, or even afternoon tea by Lord Manton at that season of the year when Clonmore Castle was full of visitors. Lady Flavia Canning, Lord Manton's daughter, who was married to a London barrister of some distinction, and moved in smart society, did not appreciate Dr. O'Grady. Nor did those nephews and nieces of the deceased Lady Manton who found it convenient to spend a part of each summer at Clonmore Castle. They were not the sort of people who would associate with a dispensary doctor, unless, indeed, he had possessed a motor car. And Dr. O'Grady, for reasons which became obvious later on, did not keep a motor car.

twice, or even three times a week at Clonmore Castle. The old earl liked him because he found him amusing; and Dr. O'Grady had a feeling for his host as nearly approaching respect as it was in his nature to entertain for any man. This respect was not of the kind which every elderly earl would have appreciated. The doctor was constitutionally incapable of understanding the innate majesty of a peerage, and had not the smallest veneration for grey hairs in man or woman. Nor was he inclined to bow before any moral superiority in Lord Manton. In fact, Lord Manton, though grown too old for the lavish wildness of his earlier years, made no pretence at morality or dignity of any kind. What Dr. O'Grady respected and liked in him was a certain cynical frankness, a hinted contempt for all ordinary standards of respectability. This suited well enough the doctor's own volatile indifference to anything which threatened to bore him.

When Lord Manton returned to Clonmore in May, 1905, after his usual visit to his daughter in Grosvenor Street, he at once asked Dr. O'Grady to dinner. There was on this occasion a special reason for the invitation, though doubtless it would have been given and accepted without any reason. Lord Manton wanted to know all that

lit by small ineffective windows. There was no shooting connected with it nor any fishing of the kind appreciated by a sportsman. There were, it was believed, small flat fish to be caught in the bay, but no one thought it worth while to pursue these creatures earnestly. Occasionally an adventurous Englishman, cherishing some romantic idea of the west of Ireland, rented the house for August and September. Occasionally a wealthy Dublin doctor brought his family there for six weeks. None of these tenants ever came a second time. The place was too solitary for the social, too ugly for the amateurs of the picturesque, utterly dull for the sportsman, and had not even the saving grace of an appeal to the romantic. The mother and grandmother of Lord Manton had died there, but in the odour of moderate sanctity. Their ghosts wandered down no corridors. Indeed, no ghosts could have haunted, no tradition attached itself to a house with the shape and appearance of Rosivera.

There was, therefore, something interesting and curious in the fact that a tenant had taken the place for six months and had settled down there early in March, a time of year at which even a hermit, vowed to a life entirely devoid of incident, might have hesitated to fix his cell at Rosivera.

"The first thing that struck me as queer about the man," said Lord Manton, after dinner, was his

"Guy Theodore Red is this man's name. Guy and Theodore are all right, of course, but Red——!"

"Is he safe for the rent, do you think?"

"He has paid the whole six months in advance," said Lord Manton, "and he never asked a question about the drains. He's the only tenant I ever heard of who didn't make himself ridiculous about drains."

"He hasn't got typhoid yet," said Dr. O'Grady. "If he's the kind of man who pays six months' rent in advance and asks no questions, I hope he soon will."

"Unfortunately for you he seems to have neither wife nor children."

"No, nor as much as a maid-servant," said Dr. O'Grady. "And from the look of him, I'd say he was a tough old cock himself, the sort of man a microbe would hesitate about attacking."

"You've seen him, then?"

"I happened to be standing at Jimmy O'Loughlin's door the day he drove through in his motor car."

"You would be, of course."

"But I've never seen him since. Nobody has. He has a servant, an Englishman, I'm told, who comes into the village every second day in the motor, and buys what's wanted for the house at Jimmy O'Loughlin's."

"Jimmy makes a good thing out of that, I expect," said Lord Manton.

"He has, foreigners, both of them. Jimmy O'Loughlin says they can't either of them speak English. It was Jimmy who carted their things down to Rosivera from the station, so of course he'd know."

"Byrne told me that," said Lord Manton, chuckling as he spoke. "There seems to have been some queer things to be carted."

The conversation turned on Mr. Red's belongings, the personal luggage which the English servant had brought in the train, the packing-cases which had followed the next day and on many subsequent days. Byrne, it appeared, had also met Mr. Red and his party on their arrival; but, then, Byrne had a legitimate excuse wherewith to cover his curiosity. He was Lord Manton's steward, and it was his business to put the new tenant in possession of Rosivera. He had given a full report of Mr. Red, the foreign friends and the English servant, to Lord Manton. He had described the packing-cases which, day after day, were carted from the railway station by Jimmy O'Loughlin. They were, according to Byrne, of unusual size and great weight. There were altogether twenty-five of them. It was Byrne's opinion that they contained pianos. The station-master, who had to drag them out of the train, agreed with him. Jimmy O'Loughlin and his man, who had ample opportunities of examining them on the way to Rosivera, thought they were full of machinery, possibly steam engines, or as they expressed it,

Red, can possibly want twenty-five grand pianos in Rosivera."

"Unless he came down here with the intention of composing an opera," said Dr. O'Grady.

"Even then—three, four, anything up to six I could understand, but twenty-five! No opera could require that. As for those cases containing steam engines or bits of motor cars, what on earth could a manufacturer of such things be doing at Rosivera?"

"My own belief," said Dr. O'Grady, "is that the man is an artist—a sculptor, engaged in the production of a statue of unusual size."

"With blocks of marble in the packing cases?"

"Yes, and the two foreigners for models. They look like models. One of them had a long black beard, and the other was a big man, well over six foot, blond, seemed to be a Norwegian; not that I ever saw a Norwegian to my knowledge, but this fellow looked like the kind of man a Norwegian ought to be."

"It will be a pretty big statue," said Lord Manton, "if it absorbs twenty-five blocks of marble, each the size of a grand piano."

"He looked like an artist," said Dr. O'Grady; "he had a pointed beard, and a wild expression in his eyes."

of Rosivera since, and, as I said before, I haven't been sent for to attend him for anything."

"The queerest thing about him was the message he sent me," said Lord Manton. "By way of doing the civil thing, I told Byrne to say that I should make a point of calling on him as soon as I got home."

"And he sent you word that he'd be thankful if you'd stay away and not bother him. I heard all about that. Byrne was furious. That is just one of the things which makes me feel sure he's a genius. Nobody except a genius or a socialist would have sent a message of that kind to you; and he clearly isn't a socialist. If he was, he couldn't afford to pay six months' rent in advance for Rosivera."

Dr. O'Grady spoke confidently. He was not personally acquainted with any of the numerous men of genius in Ireland, but he had read about them in newspapers and was aware that they differed in many respects from other men. No ordinary man, that is to say, no one who is perfectly sane, would refuse to receive a visit from an earl. Mr. Red had refused, and so, since he was not a socialist, he must be a genius. The reasoning was perfectly convincing.

"I expect," said Lord Manton, "that his statue, in spite of its immense size, will be a melancholy object to look at. Rosivera is the most depressing place I know. It was built to serve as a dowry

try to die at once so that she should have as long a time as possible to live at Rosivera."

"I wouldn't care to spend a winter alone there," said Dr. O'Grady, "and I'm a man of fairly cheerful disposition."

"I suppose there's a lot of talk about Red in the village?"

"There was at first; but the people are getting a bit sick of him now. It's a long time since he's done anything the least exciting. About a fortnight after he came he sent a telegram which had the whole place fizzing for awhile."

Telegrams in the west of Ireland, are, of course, public property. So are postcards and the contents of the parcels carried by his Majesty's mails. Lord Manton, whose taste for the details of local gossip was strongly developed, asked what Mr. Red's telegram was about.

"That's what nobody could tell," said Dr. O'Grady. "It began with four letters, A.M.B.A., and then came a lot of figures. Father Moroney worked at it for the best part of two hours, with the help of a Latin dictionary, but he could make no more out of it than I could myself."

"Cipher," said Lord Manton; "probably quite a simple cipher if you'd known how to go about reading it."

"At the end of the week, another packing-case arrived, carriage paid from London. It was as big as any of the first lot. Burns and I went

have pretty well given over talking about the man."

Lord Manton yawned. Like the other inhabitants of Clonmore he was beginning to get tired of Mr. Red and his affairs. A stranger is only interesting when there are things about him which can be found out. If his affairs are public property he becomes commonplace and dull. If, on the other hand, it is manifestly impossible to discover anything about him, if he sends his telegrams in cipher, employs a remarkably taciturn servant to do his marketing, and never appears in public himself, he becomes in time quite as tiresome as the man who has no secrets at all.

"Any other news about the place?" asked Lord Manton. "You needn't mention Jimmy O'Loughlin's wife's baby. Byrne told me about it."

"It's the tenth," said Dr. O'Grady, "the tenth boy."

"So I believe."

"Well, there's nothing else, except the election of the inspector of sheep dipping. I needn't tell you that there's been plenty of talk about that."

"So I gathered," said Lord Manton, "from the number of candidates for the post who wrote to me asking me to back them up. I think there were eleven of them."

"I hear that you supported Patsy Devlin, the smith. He's a drunken blackguard."

"That's why I wrote him the letter of recom-

knew how to use it. All I have to do if I want a particular man not to be appointed to anything is to write a strong letter in his favour to the Board of Guardians or the County Council, or whatever body is doing the particular job that happens to be on hand at the time. The League comes down on my man at once and he hasn't the ghost of a chance. That's the beauty of being thoroughly unpopular. Three years ago you were made dispensary doctor here chiefly because I used all my influence on behalf of the other two candidates. They were both men with bad records. It was just the same in this sheep-dipping business. I didn't care who was appointed so long as it wasn't Patsy Devlin. I managed the labourers' cottages on the same principle. There were two different pieces of land where I particularly objected to their building cottages. I offered them those two without waiting to be asked. Of course, they wouldn't have them, insisted in fact on getting another bit of land altogether, thinking they were annoying me. I was delighted. That's the way to manage things nowadays."

"Do you suppose," said Dr. O'Grady, "that if I wrote to Mr. Red saying I sincerely hoped he wouldn't get typhoid for a fortnight, because I wanted to go away for a holiday—do you suppose he'd get it to spite me?"

"That's the worst of men in your profession. You're always wanting everybody to be ill. It's most unchristian."

CHAPTER II

DR. O'GRADY spoke the simple truth when he said that the people of Clonmore had ceased to take any interest in Mr. Red and his household. The election of an inspector of sheep dipping, a man from their own midst to a post with a salary attached to it, was a far more exciting thing than the eccentricity of a chance stranger. When the election was over a new and more thrilling matter engaged their attention. Mr. Red was entirely forgotten. The monotonous regularity of the visits of the silent English servant to Jimmy O'Loughlin's shop no longer attracted attention. The equally monotonous regularity of his cash payments for the goods he took away with him was extremely satisfactory to Jimmy O'Loughlin, but gave absolutely no occasion for gossip. The man who makes debts and does not pay them is vastly more interesting to his neighbours than the morbidly honest individual who will not owe a penny.

Dr. O'Grady owed a good deal and just at the

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Dr. O'Grady owed a good deal, and just at the time of Lord Manton's return to Clonmore, his money difficulties reached the point at which they

a salary of £120 a year. He received from Lord Manton an additional £30 for looking after the health of the gardeners, grooms, indoor servants and others employed about Clonmore Castle. He would have been paid extra guineas for attending Lord Manton himself if the old gentleman had ever been ill. He could count with tolerable certainty on two pounds a year for ushering into the world young O'Loughlins. Nobody else in his district ever paid him anything.

It is unquestionably possible to live on £152 a year. Many men, curates for instance, live on less ; face the world in tolerably clean collars and succeed in looking as if they generally had enough to eat. But Dr. O'Grady was not the kind of man who enjoys small economies, and he had certain expensive tastes. He liked to have a good horse between the shafts of a smart trap when he went his rounds. He liked to see the animal's coat glossy and the harness shining. He preferred good whisky to bad, and smoked tobacco at 10s. 6d. a pound. He was particular about the cut of his clothes and had a fine taste in striped and spotted waistcoats. He also—quite privately, for in the west of Ireland no one would admit that he threw away his money wantonly—bought a few books every year. The consequence was inevitable. Dr. O'Grady got into debt. At first, indeed for more than two years, his debts, though they increased rapidly, did not cause any uneasiness to his creditors. Then a

Dublin gentleman of large fortune and philanthropic tastes, a Mr. Lorraine Vavasour, having somehow heard of these embarrassments, offered to lend Dr. O'Grady any sum from £10 to £1000 privately, without security, and on the understanding that repayment should be made quite at the borrower's convenience.

There was an agreeable settlement with the tailor who lost Dr. O'Grady's custom for ever, and with several others. Life for a time was pleasant and untroubled. Then Mr. Lorraine Vavasour began to act unreasonably. His ideas of the payment of instalments turned out to be anything but suitable to Dr. O'Grady's convenience. The good horse was sold at a loss. The competent groom was replaced by an inferior and cheaper man. Mr. Lorraine Vavasour showed no signs of being propitiated by these sacrifices. He continued to harass his victim with a persistency which would have made most men miserable and driven some men to excessive drinking. Dr. O'Grady remained perfectly cheerful. He had the temperament of an unconquerable optimist. He used even to show Mr. Vavasour's worst letters to Jimmy O'Loughlin, and make jokes about them. This, as it turned out afterwards, was an unwise thing to do. Jimmy himself had a long account against the doctor standing in his books.

After awhile the miserable screw which succeeded the good horse in Dr. O'Grady's stable was

bicycle. It was generally known that his affairs had reached a crisis. His housekeeper left him and engaged a solicitor to write letters in the hope of obtaining the wages due to her. It seemed very unlikely that she would get them. Mr. Lorraine Vavasour was before her with a claim which the furniture of Dr. O'Grady's house would certainly not satisfy. Jimmy O'Loughlin was before her too. He would have been willing enough to wait for years, and if left to himself would not have driven a friend to extremities for the sake of a few pounds. But when he saw that Mr. Vavasour meant to use all the resources of the law against Dr. O'Grady he thought it a pity to let a complete stranger get the little there was to get. He apologized to Dr. O'Grady and summoned him before the County Court judge. The usual things happened. The end appeared to be at hand, and the Board of Guardians began to discuss the appointment of a new dispensary doctor.

It is very much to the credit of Dr. O'Grady that, under these circumstances, he slept soundly at night in his solitary house ; rose cheerful in the morning and met his fellow-men with a smile on his face. He continued to dine frequently at Clonmore Castle, and Lord Manton noticed that his appetite improved instead of failing as his troubles increased. In fact, Dr. O'Grady frequently went hungry at this time, and Lord Manton's dinners were almost the only solid meals he got. Then

pan-genesis, determinates, and other interesting things connected with the study of heredity. He was obliged to go to bed early because his lamp went out at ten o'clock and he had no oil with which to refill it. Once in bed he went comfortably to sleep. At two o'clock in the morning he was roused by a ponderous, measured knocking at his door. He used the sort of language commonly employed by doctors who are roused at unseemly hours. The knocking continued, a series of heavy detached blows, struck slowly at regular intervals. Dr. O'Grady got up, put his head out of the window, and made the usual inquiry—

“Who the devil's that? And what do you want?”

“It is I. Guy Theodore Red.”

Even then, freshly roused from sleep, Dr. O'Grady was struck by the answer he received. Very few men, in search of a doctor at two o'clock in the morning, are so particular about grammar as to say, “It is I!” And the words were spoken in a solemn tone which seemed quite congruous with the measured and stately manner in which the door had been hammered. Dr. O'Grady put on a pair of trousers and a shirt, ran downstairs and opened the door. Mr. Red stood rigid like a soldier at attention on the doorstep. In the middle of the road was the motor car in which the English servant used to drive into Clonmore to do his

"No."

"You're very uncommunicative," said Dr. O'Grady. "What is it?"

"A gun accident."

"Very well. Why couldn't you have said so before? Wait a minute."

Dr. O'Grady hurried into his surgery, collected a few instruments likely to be useful, some lint, iodoform, and other things. He stuffed these into a bag, slipped on a few more clothes and an overcoat. Then he left the house. He found Mr. Red sitting bolt upright in the motor car with his hands on the steering wheel. Dr. O'Grady got in beside him. During the drive Mr. Red did not speak a single word. He did not even answer questions. Dr. O'Grady was left entirely to his own thoughts. The fresh air had thoroughly awakened him, and, being naturally a man of active mind, he thought a good deal. It occurred to him at once that though gun accidents are common enough in the daytime they very rarely occur in the middle of the night. Good men go to bed before twelve o'clock, and no men, either good or bad, habitually clean guns or go out shooting between midnight and two a.m. Dr. O'Grady began to wonder how the accident had happened. It also struck him that Mr. Red's manners were peculiar. The man showed no sign of excitement. He was not exactly rude. He was not, so far as Dr. O'Grady could judge, in a bad temper. He was simply pompous, more pompous

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drew up at Rosivera. Mr. Red blew three slow blasts on the horn, stepped out of the car, stalked up to the door, and then stood, as he had stood in front of Dr. O'Grady's house, upright, rigid, his arms stretched stiffly along his sides. The door was opened by the foreigner with the long black beard. No word was spoken. Mr. Red raised his left hand and made some passes in the air. His bearded friend raised his left hand and imitated the passes with perfect solemnity. Mr. Red crossed the threshold, turned, and solemnly beckoned to Dr. O'Grady to follow him.

"I see," said the doctor, in a cheerful, conversational tone, "that you are all Freemasons here. It's an interesting profession. Or should I call it a religion? I'm not one myself. I always heard it involved a man in a lot of subscriptions to charities."

Mr. Red made no reply. He crossed the hall, flung open a door with a magnificent gesture, and motioned Dr. O'Grady to enter the dining-room. The doctor hesitated for a moment. He was not a nervous man, but he was startled by what he saw. The room was brightly lit with four large lamps. The walls were hung with crimson cloth on which were embroidered curious beasts, something like crocodiles, but with much longer legs than crocodiles have, and with forked tongues. They were all bright yellow, and stood out vividly from their crimson background.

been haunted by them unpleasantly ; but his own conscience was clear. He was strictly temperate, and he knew that the pictures on the walls in front of him could not be a symptom of delirium. Mr. Red followed him into the room and shut the door. It was painted crimson on the inside, and a large yellow crocodile crawled across it.

"I suppose," said Dr. O'Grady, "that you got leave from Lord Manton to paper and paint the house. I dare say this sort of thing"—he waved his hand towards the crocodile on the door, which was surrounded with a litter of repulsive young ones—"is the latest thing in art ; but you'll excuse my saying that it's not precisely comfortable or soothing. I hope you don't intend to include one of those beasts in your new statue."

Mr. Red made no reply. He crossed the room, opened a cupboard, and took out of it a bottle and some glasses. He set them on the table and poured out some wine. Dr. O'Grady, watching his movements, was inclined to revise the opinion that he had formed during the drive. Mr. Red was not merely pompous. He was majestic.

"Drink," said Mr. Red.

Dr. O'Grady looked at the wine dubiously. It was bright green. He was accustomed to purple, yellow, and even white beverages. He did not like the look of the stuff in the glass in front of him.

"If," he said, "that is the liqueur which the French drink, absinthe, or whatever they call it, I think I won't venture on a whole glass of it."

"Drink," said Mr. Red again.

Dr. O'Grady felt that it was time to assert himself. He was a friendly and good-tempered man, but he did not like being ordered about in monosyllables.

"Look here," he said, "I'm not a Freemason, or a Rosicrucian, or an Esoteric Buddhist, or the Grand Llama of Thibet, or anything of that kind. I don't deny that your manner may be all right with other sculptors, or with those who are initiated into your secrets, and I dare say you have to live up to this thing in order to produce really first-rate statues. But I'm only an ordinary doctor and I'm not accustomed to it. If you have whisky or any other civilized drink, I don't mind taking a drop before I see the patient; but I'm not going to run the risk of intoxicating myself with some strange spirit. And what's more, I'm not going to be talked to as if you were a newly invented kind of automatic machine that can only utter one word at a time and won't say that unless a penny has been dropped into the slot."

"Your fee," said Mr. Red, laying an envelope on the table.

Dr. O'Grady took it up and opened it. It contained a ten pound Bank of England note. His slight irritation passed away at once. Never before in the course of his career as a doctor had he received so large a fee. Then a sharp suspicion crossed his mind. A fee of such extravagant

house decoration, do not pay ten pounds to a country doctor for dressing a wound. Dr. O'Grady began to wonder whether he might not be called upon to deal with the victim of some kind of foul play, whether he were being paid to keep his mouth shut.

"Follow me," said Mr. Red.

Dr. O'Grady followed him out of the dining-room and up two flights of stairs. He made up his mind that his silence, supposing silence to be possible, was worth more than ten pounds. He determined to keep Mr. Red's secret if it did not turn out to be a very gruesome one, but to make Mr. Red pay handsomely. One hundred pounds was the amount he fixed on. That sum, divided between Mr. Lorraine Vavasour and Jimmy O'Loughlin, would pacify them both for a time.

Mr. Red stopped outside a bedroom door, and Dr. O'Grady saw on it four large white letters, A.M.B.A. Mr. Red opened the door. On a bed at the far end of the room lay the servant who used to drive into Clonmore and buy things at Jimmy O'Loughlin's shop. He was lying face downwards and groaning.

"Exert your skill as a physician," said Mr. Red, waving his hand in the direction of the bed.

"Don't you be a damner ass than you can

backs of both his own legs with a gun. The thing simply couldn't be done."

"Exert your skill as a physician, and be silent," said Mr. Red.

"You may fancy yourself to be the Cham of Tartary," said Dr. O'Grady, "or Augustus Cæsar, or Napoleon Bonaparte, or a Field Marshal in the army of the Emperor of Abyssinia, but you've got to give some account of how that man flayed the backs of his legs or else I'll have the police in here to-morrow."

Mr. Red smiled, waved his hand loftily, and left the room.

Dr. O'Grady, his professional instinct aroused, proceeded to dress the man's wounds. They were not dangerous, but they were extremely painful, and at first the doctor asked no questions. At length his curiosity became too strong for him.

"How did you get yourself into such a devil of a state?" he asked.

The man groaned.

"It looks to me," said Dr. O'Grady, "as if you'd sat down in a bath of paraffin oil and then struck a match on the seat of your breeches. Was that how it happened?"

The man groaned again.

"If it wasn't that," said Dr. O'Grady, "you must have tied a string round your ankles, stuffed the
legs of your trousers with boxes of matches, and

"In the what?"

"It's what 'e calls it," said the man. "I don't know no other name for it."

"Perhaps the floor of the Chamber of Research was covered with gunpowder behind where you were standing, and you dropped a lighted match into it."

"'Ow was I to know the stuff would go off?"

"If you knew it was gunpowder," said Dr. O'Grady, "you might have guessed it would go off if you dropped a match into it."

"It weren't gunpowder, not likely. It were some bloomin' stuff 'e made. 'E's always messing about making stuff, and none of it ever went off before."

"If you mean Mr. Red," said Dr. O'Grady, "I can quite imagine that the stuff he made wouldn't go off. Unless, of course, it was intended not to. From what I've seen of him so far, I should say that his notion of manufacturing dynamite would be to take a hundredweight or so of toothpowder, and say to it, 'Powder, explode.' Still, you ought to have been more careful."

"'E's a damned ass," said the man.

"He is," said Dr. O'Grady. "Still, even an ass, if he goes on experimenting for four months in a chamber specially set apart for research, is sure to hit upon something that will explode by the end of the time. By the way, do you happen to know where he got that dining-room wall-paper with the

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CHAPTER III

DR. O'GRADY left the room and closed the door behind him. His spirits, owing to the ten-pound note which lay in his breast pocket, were cheerful. He whistled "The Minstrel Boy" as he walked along the passage. Just as he reached that part of the tune which goes with the discovery of the boy in the ranks of death he stopped abruptly and swore. He was seized from behind by two men, flung to the ground with some violence, and held there flat on his back. A few useless struggles convinced him that he could not make good his escape. He lay still and looked at his captors. The foreign gentleman with the long black beard was one of them. The other was the man whom Dr. O'Grady had declared to be a Norwegian. He was a powerful man, adorned with a mass of fair hair which fell down over his forehead and gave him a look of unkempt ferocity. Behind these two who knelt beside and on Dr. O'Grady stood Mr. Red.

"You have learned too much," said Mr. Red, with fierce intensity. "It is necessary in the interests of the Brotherhood to secure your silence."

"Right," said Dr. O'Grady. "You shall secure it. One hundred and fifty pounds down and the secrets of the Brotherhood are safe. Or if prompt cash inconveniences you in any way, I'll be quite content with your name on the back of a bill. Jimmy O'Loughlin would cash it."

"I have passed judgment on you," said Mr. Red, "and the scales are depressed on the side of mercy. Your life is spared. You remain a captive until the plans of the Brotherhood are matured and discovery can be set at defiance. Then you will be released."

"If that's all," said Dr. O'Grady, "you needn't have knocked me down and set these two brigands to kneel on my chest and legs. I haven't the slightest objection to remaining a captive. I shall enjoy it. Of course, I shall expect to be paid a reasonable fee for my time. I'm a professional man."

"Number 2 and Number 3," said Mr. Red, "will bind you and convey you to the place of confinement."

He spoke a few words to his assistants in a language which Dr. O'Grady did not understand. Two ropes were produced.

"If I could see you," said Dr. O'Grady.

it isn't an insanitary, underground dungeon, I shall step into it with the greatest pleasure, and stay there without making the least attempt at escape as long as you choose to go on paying me my fees."

"Give your parole," said Mr. Red.

"Parole? Oh yes, of course; I know the thing you mean now. I'll give it, certainly—swear it if you like. And now, like a good man, tell your fair-haired pirate to get off my legs. He's hurting my left ankle abominably."

Mr. Red gave an order, and Dr. O'Grady was allowed to stand up.

"Now for the cell," he said. "I know this house pretty well, and I should suggest that you give me the two rooms on the top floor which open into each other. And look here, Emperor, I'm a first-class political prisoner, of course. I'm not going to do any hard labour, or get out of bed before I want to in the morning. I must be decently fed, and supplied with tobacco. You agree to all that I suppose?"

"Lead the prisoner upstairs," said Mr. Red.

"One minute," said Dr. O'Grady. "We haven't settled yet about my fee. Let me see, what would you say—my time is valuable, you know. I have a very extensive practice, including the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood: Lord Manton

"I'm going all right," said Dr. O'Grady. "But, like a good man, put down that pistol. I dare say it's not loaded, and I'm sure you don't mean to pull the trigger; but it makes me feel nervous. If you injure me you will be in a frightful fix. There isn't another doctor nearer than Ballymoy, and he's no good of a surgeon. Do be careful."

Mr. Red took no notice of this remonstrance. He held the revolver at arm's length, pointed straight at Dr. O'Grady's head. The doctor turned quickly and walked upstairs. He was ushered into a large empty room, and bidden to stand in a corner of it. Still covered by the threatening revolver he watched various preparations made, first for his security, then for his comfort. There were two windows in the room. The black-bearded foreigner nailed barbed wire across them in such a way as to make an entanglement through which it was impossible to thrust even a hand.

"That's quite unnecessary," said Dr. O'Grady. "I'm familiar with this house, have been over it half a dozen times with Lord Manton, and I know that there's a sheer drop of thirty feet out of those windows on to the paved yard at the back of the house. I shouldn't dream of trying to jump out."

Mr. Red stood with the revolver in his hand glaring at Dr. O'Grady. His two assistants left the room.

"I do wish," said the doctor plaintively, "that you'd put that gun down."

He kept the revolver levelled at Dr. O'Grady's head. The bearded man, Number 2, returned, dragging a small iron bedstead after him. Number 3 followed him with a mattress, pillows, and some blankets.

"For me?" said Dr. O'Grady. "Thanks. Now fetch a washhand-stand, a jug and basin, a table, a couple of chairs, some food, tobacco, and a few books. Then I'll be able to manage along all right."

One thing after another was added to the furniture of the room until it began to look fairly comfortable. Dr. O'Grady observed with satisfaction that a substantial meal was spread on the table, and a box of cigars laid on the washhand-stand.

"Would it be any harm my asking," he said, "how long you intend to keep me here? I have some rather pressing engagements just at present, and I should like to have an idea when I'll get home. Of course, I don't press the question if it inconveniences the Brotherhood to answer it before the plans are matured."

"You shall be paid at the rate of £4 a day during the time that you are detained," said Mr. Red.

"Make it £5," said Dr. O'Grady, "and I'll stay a year with you and settle my own washing bills."

"In four weeks," said Mr. Red, "the plans of the Brotherhood will be matured, and you can be released."

consideration that I shall be missed? Before four weeks are out they'll be certain to start out looking for me. Search parties will go out with lanterns and bloodhounds. You know the kind of thing I mean. They won't come straight here, of course; nobody has any reason to suppose that I'm in this house; but sooner or later they certainly will come. I don't mind telling you that there are a couple of men—Jimmy O'Loughlin for one, and Lorraine Vavasour for another—who will be particularly keen on finding me. What will you do when they turn up?"

"The waters of the bay are deep," said Mr. Red grimly. "Your body will not be found."

"I catch your meaning all right," said Dr. O'Grady, "but I think you'll make a mistake if you push things to extremes in that way. You've got the usual idea into your head that Ireland is a country in which every one kills any one they don't like, and no questions are ever asked. I don't in the least blame you for thinking so. Any intelligent man, reading the newspapers, would be forced to that conclusion; but, as a matter of fact, Ireland isn't that sort of country at all. We have our little differences with each other, of course; all high-spirited people quarrel now and then, but we really hardly ever drown anybody. We don't want to: but even if we were ever so keen we

Mr. Red snarled again.

"If you object to my mentioning them by name," said Dr. O'Grady, "I won't do it. All I wanted to say was that in Ireland they live extremely dull lives, and any little excitement—a cattle drive, or an escaped lunatic—is a positive godsend to them. A murder—perhaps I ought to say an informal execution, such as you contemplate—would bring them down to this neighbourhood in thousands. There'd be so many of them that they simply wouldn't be able to help tripping over my body wherever you hid it. Don't imagine that I'm saying all this with a view to preventing your cutting my throat. What I'm really thinking about, what you ought to be thinking about, is the Brotherhood. How will its plans ever be matured if you get yourself hanged? And they will hang you, you know."

"I am prepared to die," said Mr. Red majestically, "in the cause of the Anti-Militarist Brotherhood of Anarchists."

"Of course you are. Anybody who knows anything about military anarchists knows that. My point is that your life is too valuable to be thrown away. How would poor Long Beard get on? And the other fair-haired highwayman? Neither of them knows a word of English."

"If the accursed minions of an effete tyranny seize me——!"

"Quite so, I see your point. Death before dishonour, and all that kind of thing. But why let

anxious as you are to keep the accursed minions of the what-do-you-call-it away from Rosivera. I don't mind telling you in confidence that I have reasons of my own for avoiding any contact with the law at present. In my particular case it isn't nearly so effete as you appear to think it ought to be. But I needn't go into all that. It wouldn't interest you, and it's no pleasure to me to talk about that beast Lorraine Vavasour. What I want to suggest is a simple and practicable way of avoiding all fuss, and keeping the accursed minions quiet in their barracks."

"Speak," said Mr. Red.

"I am speaking. For a man who hasn't had any breakfast this morning, I flatter myself that I'm speaking pretty fluently. Don't be captious, Field Marshal. I don't mind your manner a bit, now that I'm getting used to it. I know that it's quite the right kind of manner for a military anarchist, but there's no use over-doing it."

"Your plan?" said Mr. Red, fingering the revolver.

"I wish you'd lay that weapon down, Emperor. I've told you half a dozen times that I haven't the least intention of trying to escape, and it will be a horrid nuisance if the thing goes off and injures me. My suggestion is simply this. I'll write a letter blotted all over with tears, saying that driven to desperation by Lorraine Vavasour and Jimmy

will be taken in the matter. All you will have to do is to drop the letter into the pillar-box which is only half a mile from your gate. I happen to know that that box is cleared at eight p.m., so any time to-day will do. I'll address it to the police sergeant."

Mr. Red gave an order to one of the two foreigners. The man left the room and returned in a few minutes with a supply of note-paper, a pen, and a bottle of ink. He laid them beside the food on the table in the middle of the room.

"Write," said Mr. Red.

"I forgot to mention," said Dr. O'Grady, "that I'm engaged to be married to a young lady in Leeds. Miss Blow is her name—Adeline Maud Blow. I dare say you've heard of her father in connection with cigars. He's a tobacconist and advertises a good deal. 'Blow's beauties, twopence each.' You must have heard of them. They're beastly things as a matter of fact, and I don't recommend them to friends, but they're amazingly popular."

"Write," said Mr. Red.

"I am going to write. Don't hustle me, like a good man. What I want to say to you is this, that I must send a line to Adeline Maud as well as to the police sergeant. I want to tell her that I'm not really dead, only bluffing."

"That," said Mr. Red, "is impossible."

"Nonsense. There's nothing impossible about it. It's just as easy to write two letters as one.

"I trust no woman."

"That," said Dr. O'Grady, "is a most illiberal sentiment, and I'm surprised to hear you utter it. If you'd been an old-fashioned Tory now, or an Irish landlord, or a Liberal Cabinet Minister, I could have understood your position; but in a military——"

"Anti-militarist," said Mr. Red.

"That's what I meant. In an anti-militarist, that sort of prejudice against women is most inconsistent. Who was it that hammered a nail into Sisera's head? A woman, and an anti-military woman. Who was it that stuck a knife into that horrid beast Marat, when he was sitting in his bath? A woman again. Who was it that shot that Russian governor the other day? I've forgotten his name for the minute, but you know who I mean. It was a woman. She did for him on a railway platform. And yet you stand up there calling yourself an advanced kind of anarchist, and say that you can't trust a woman. Emperor, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Just think the matter out and you'll see that when it comes to thorough-going, out-and-out revolutions women are quite the most trustworthy kind of people there are."

Mr. Red gave another brief order in his foreign language. The fair-haired anarchist stepped forward and took away the note-paper, pen and ink.

"What are you at now?" said Dr. O'Grady.
"Surely to goodness you're not going back on the

"I have spoken," said Mr. Red.

"You have not. You've growled occasionally, but nobody could call your remarks speaking."

"I leave you," said Mr. Red. "Remember."

"Remember what? Oh, you're going, are you? Just wait one instant. You refuse to let me write to Adeline Maud. Very well. You don't know Adeline Maud, but I do. Even supposing the police can't find me, or my body after you've cut my throat, and supposing that Jimmy O'Loughlin and Lorraine Vavasour give up the pursuit—from what I know of Lorraine I think it most unlikely that he will—you'll still have to reckon with Adeline Maud. She's a most determined young woman. All the perseverance which has gone to making 'Blow's beauties' the popular smokes they are at twopence each has descended from her father to her. When she finds out that I've disappeared she'll go on searching till she finds me. The ordinary sleuth-hound is absolutely nothing to her for persistence in the chase. It will be far wiser for you—in the interests of the Brotherhood I mean—to let me head her off, by telling her that I'll turn up again all right."

"Farewell," said Mr. Red.

"I ought to mention before you go," said Dr. O'Grady, "that Adeline Maud may be in Clonmore to-morrow. I'm expecting a visit— Damn it!

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CHAPTER IV

PATSY DEVLIN strolled into the Imperial Hotel at noon. He found Jimmy O'Loughlin, the proprietor, behind the bar, and was served at once with a pint of porter.

"It's fine weather for the hay, thanks be to God," he observed.

In Connacht the hay harvest is gathered during the month of August, and Patsy's comment on the weather was seasonable.

"I've seen worse," said Jimmy O'Loughlin. "But what's on you at all, Patsy, that you haven't been next or nigh the place this two months or more?"

"Be damn! but after the way you behaved over the election of the inspector of sheep dipping, the wonder is that I'd ever enter your door again. What would hinder you giving me the job as soon as another?"

Jimmy O'Loughlin did not wish to discuss the subject. He was, as a trader ought to be, a peaceable individual, anxious to live on good terms with

"I'll not take it from you," said Jimmy O'Loughlin heartily. "It would be a queer thing if I wouldn't give you a sup at my own expense now that you are here after all this length of time. How's herself?"

Patsy Devlin took a pull at the second pint of porter.

"She's only middling. She was complaining these two days of an impression on the chest and a sort of rumbling within in herself that wouldn't let her rest easy in her bed."

"Do you tell me that? And did you fetch the doctor to her?"

"I did not then."

"And why not?"

Patsy Devlin finished the porter and winked across the bar at Jimmy O'Loughlin. Jimmy failed to catch the meaning of the wink.

"If it was a red ticket you wanted," he said, "you know very well that you've nothing to do but ask me for it. But Dr. O'Grady, the poor man, would go to you without that."

"If I did be wanting a red ticket," said Patsy, "it wouldn't be you I'd ask for it. There's them would give it to me and maybe something along with it, and what's more, did give it to me no later than this morning."

"Well," said Jimmy, who guessed at the identity of the unnamed benefactor "and if so be that his

"He wasn't within when I went for him."

The explanation was perfectly simple and natural ; but Jimmy O'Loughlin, noting the manner in which it was given, realized there was something behind it.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

Patsy Devlin winked again. Jimmy, vaguely anxious, but not knowing what to fear, handed his visitor a third pint of porter.

"I'm thinking," said Patsy, "that it's about time for us to be making a move in the matter of collecting funds for the horse races and athletic sports. The season's going on and if we don't have them before the end of the month the days will be getting short on us. I suppose now I may put you down for a pound the same as last year?"

"You may," said Jimmy. "But what was it you were after telling me about Dr. O'Grady?"

"Does he owe you any money?"

"He does, a power."

"Then you'll not see it. Devil the penny of it ever you'll handle, no matter how you try."

Patsy chuckled. He had nourished a grudge against Jimmy O'Loughlin ever since the election of the inspector of sheep dipping.

"And why will I not?"

"Because the doctor's gone, that's why. He's off to America, and every stick of furniture he owns is gone along with him."

"He is not," said Jimmy. "He couldn't. It was only last night he passed this door, looking the

"It was last night he went."

"He couldn't. Sure you know as well as I do there's no train."

"There's the goods that passes at one o'clock. What would hinder him getting into one of them cattle trucks? Who'd see him? Anyway, whether it was that way he went or another, he's gone. And you may be looking for your money from New York. Be damn! but I'd take half a crown for all of it you'll ever get."

"I don't believe you," said Jimmy; but it was evident that he was fighting desperately against conviction.

"Go round to the house then yourself and you'll see. He's not in it, and what's more he didn't leave it this morning, for old Bidy Halloran was watching out for him along the road the way he'd renew the bottle he gave her for the rheumatism, and if he'd gone out she'd have seen him."

"It might be," said Jimmy, "that he was called out in the night and didn't get back yet."

"It might; but it wasn't. I'm after spending the morning since ten o'clock making inquiries here and there, and devil the one there is in the parish sick enough to be fetching the doctor out in the middle of the night. If there was I'd have heard of it. And Father Moroney would have heard of it, but he didn't, for I asked him this minute."

"And what did he say?"

"He said I was much what I'm saying myself

trifle of money he owes.' It's the truth I'm telling you."

It was not the truth, but it could scarcely be called a lie, for the essence of a lie is the desire to deceive, and Patsy Devlin invented the speech he put into the priest's mouth without the least hope of its being believed. The best he expected was to exasperate Jimmy O'Loughlin. Even in this he failed.

"If so be he's gone," said Jimmy, "and I wouldn't say but he might, I'd as soon he got clear off out of this as not. I'll lose upwards of thirty pounds by him, but I'd sooner lose it than see the doctor tormented by that bloodsucker of a fellow from Dublin that has a bill of his. I've a great liking for the doctor, and always had. He was an innocent poor man that wouldn't harm a child, besides being pleasant and agreeable as e'er a one you'd meet."

Patsy Devlin felt aggrieved. He had sprung his mine on Jimmy O'Loughlin, and the wretched thing had somehow failed to explode. He had looked forward to enjoying a torrent of oaths and bitter speeches directed against the absconding debtor. He had hoped to see Jimmy writhe in impotent rage at the loss of his money.

"Be damn!" he said helplessly.

"And anyway," said Jimmy O'Loughlin, "there's the furniture of the house left, and it'll be a queer thing if I don't get a hold of the best of it before ever the Dublin man—Vavasour or some such they call him—hears that the doctor's gone."

furniture away with him in the middle of the night.

"The train's in," he said, changing the subject abruptly, "for I hear the cars coming down from the station. If so be now that there should be a traveller in belonging to one of them drapery firms, or Campbell's traveller with the flour, you might give me the word so as I can get a subscription out of him for the sports. The most use those fellows are is to subscribe to one thing or another where subscriptions is needed."

Jimmy O'Loughlin nodded. He realized the importance of the commercial traveller as a contributor to local funds of every kind. He left the door and reached the bar of the hotel just as his bus, a ramshackle, dilapidated vehicle drawn by a sickly horse, drew up. It contained a lady. Jimmy O'Loughlin appraised her at a glance as she stepped out of the bus. She was dressed in a grey tweed coat and skirt of good cut and expensive appearance. She wore gloves which looked almost new, and she had an umbrella with a silver handle. She was tall and carried herself with the air of one who was accustomed to command service from those around her. Her way of walking reminded Jimmy O'Loughlin of Lady Flavia Canning, Lord Manton's daughter; but this lady was a great deal younger and better looking than Lady Flavia. Jimmy O'Loughlin allowed his eyes to leave her for an instant and seek the roof of the bus. On it was a large travelling trunk, a handsome bag, and a

She made no protest against the title.

"Can I get a room in this hotel?" she asked.

"Certainly, my lady. Why not? Thomas, will you bring the lady's luggage in at once and take it up to number two, that's the front room on the first floor. Your ladyship will be wanting a private sitting-room?"

"If I do," she said, "I shall ask for it."

Jimmy O'Loughlin was snubbed, but he bore no malice. A lady of title has a right to snub hotel-keepers. He stole a glance at the label on her luggage as Thomas, the driver of the bus, passed him with the trunk on his shoulders. He discovered that she was not a lady of title. "Miss A. M. Blow," he read. "Passenger to Clonmore." The name struck him as being familiar, but for a moment he could not recollect where he had heard it. Then he remembered. Miss Blow passed upstairs guided by Bridgy, the maid. Patsy Devlin emerged from the bar.

"It's the doctor's young lady," whispered Jimmy O'Loughlin.

"Is it, be damn? How do you know that?"

"Didn't he often tell me," said Jimmy, "that he was to be married to a young lady out of Leeds or one of them towns beyond in England, and that her name was Miss Blow? And didn't I see it on her trunk, 'Miss A. M. Blow'? Would there be two in the world of the name?"

"And what would bring her down to Clonmore?"

paper when the judgment was gave against him."

"She might; but if she did wouldn't she keep away from him as far as ever she could?"

"She would not," said Jimmy O'Loughlin. "That's not the sort she is. I seen her and you didn't."

"I did."

"Well, and if you did you might have known that she'd be the sort that would come down after him the minute she got word of the trouble that was on him. Believe you me, Patsy Devlin, that's a fine girl."

"She's a good-looking one anyway," said Patsy, "but mighty proud, I'd say."

"You may say that. I'd sooner she married the doctor than me, and that's the truth."

"What'll she do now," said Patsy, "when she finds that the doctor's gone and left her?"

"It'll be best," said Jimmy, "if we keep it from her."

"How can you keep it from her when the man's gone? Won't she be asking to see him?"

"There's ways of doing things. What would you say now if I was to tell her that the doctor had gone off on a holiday for six weeks with the permission of the Board of Guardians and that there'd have to be a substitute appointed in his place? Would she be contented with that, do you

"You haven't got it to give, and so you can't give it," said Patsy.

Miss Blow came downstairs as he spoke and walked up to Jimmy O'Loughlin.

"Will you kindly have some luncheon ready for me," she said, "at two o'clock?"

"Certainly, miss, why not? Is there any particular thing that your ladyship would fancy, such as a chop or the like?"

He reverted to the "ladyship" again, although he knew her name and degree. The girl's manner seemed to force him to. She deserved something better than a mere "miss."

"In the meanwhile will you be so good as to tell me where Dr. O'Grady lives?"

"Is it Dr. O'Grady? Well now, never a nicer gentleman there is about the place, nor one that's more thought of, or better liked than Dr. O'Grady. It's him that does be taking his dinner up at the Castle with the old lord and attending to his duties to the poor the same as if he was one of themselves. Many's the time I've said to him: 'Dr. O'Grady,' says I, 'if anything was to take you away out of Clonmore, and I don't deny but what you ought to be in a less backward place, but if ever——'"

"Will you be so good as to tell me where he lives?" said Miss Blow.

Patsy Deylin interposed at this point of the conversation with an air of contempt for Jimmy O'Loughlin.

"I will tell your ladyship to be sure. Why not? But it will be of no use for you to go to call on him to-day. Patsy Devlin here is after telling me this minute that he's not at home."

Miss Blow turned to Patsy.

"Do you know," she asked, "when he's likely to be back?"

"I do not, my lady. But I'd say it wouldn't be for a couple of days anyway."

"A couple of days! Where has he gone to?"

"It's what Mr. O'Loughlin there was just after telling me, your ladyship, and he's the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, that the doctor did ask for leave to go on a holiday. But I wouldn't say that he'd be away for very long."

"When did he ask for a holiday?" said Miss Blow to Jimmy O'Loughlin.

"It was Patsy Devlin told me," said Jimmy; "and six weeks was the time that he mentioned."

Miss Blow turned again to Patsy Devlin; but he had vanished. Having committed Jimmy O'Loughlin, as Chairman of the Board of Guardians, to the fact of the doctor's holiday, he slipped quietly into the bar.

"I don't believe," said Miss Blow, "that you're telling me the truth."

"He was not" said Jimmy, sacrificing his friend

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CHAPTER V

MISS BLOW came back for her luncheon, and then, asking no more help or advice from Jimmy O'Loughlin, went out and made her way to Dr. O'Grady's house. It stood a few hundred yards from the village in the middle of a small field. Miss Blow knocked and rang at the door, though she had no real expectation of its being opened to her. She walked round the house and peered in at the windows. The rooms on the ground floor showed every sign of having been recently occupied by a person of untidy habits. She reached the yard, surveyed the coach house and the stable which had once sheltered a good horse. She tried the kitchen door and found it bolted against her. The kitchen had a disused and neglected appearance which puzzled her. She returned to the front of the house and sat down on a stone to think out the position in which she found herself.

Patsy Devlin, who had followed her from the hotel, watched her proceedings from a distance with great interest. He afterwards made a report to Jimmy O'Loughlin, a masterly report which interpreted her actions, and added a picturesque

"You'd have been sorry for the creature," he said, "if you'd seen her sitting there on a lump of a stone with the tears running down the two cheeks of her the same as if you were after beating her with a stick."

"I am sorry for her," said Jimmy. "It's herself has her own share of trouble before her when she finds out that the doctor's off to America without so much as leaving word for her to go after him."

It did not seem likely that Miss Blow would easily arrive at a knowledge of the full extent of her misery. Bidy Halloran, the rheumatic old lady who had waited long on the roadside for the doctor in the morning, was still lurking near the house when Miss Blow reached it. She, like Patsy Devlin, watched the examination of the premises with deep interest. When Miss Blow sat down on the stone, Bidy Halloran hobbled up to her.

"Is it the doctor you're looking for?" she said. "For if it is, it's hardly ever you'll see him again."

Miss Blow was startled, and demanded an explanation of the words. Bidy, who was slightly deaf, pretended to be very deaf indeed. Miss Blow's clear voice and determination of manner subdued her in the end. She professed to be the only person in Clonmore who really knew what had happened to the doctor.

"Holidays, is it?" she said, recollecting what

"There was a lump in the inside of him," said Biddy, "a gathering like; and many's the time he told me of that same. It was the size of a young pullet's egg, and you'd feel it lepping when you put your hand on it, the same as it might be a trout. 'Biddy, agra,' he says, speaking to me, as it might be to yourself or to some other young lady that would be in it, instead of an old woman like myself, 'medicine's no good,' says he, 'but the knife is what's wanted.' 'Would you not be afeared,' I said, 'to be trusting yourself to them murdering doctors up in Dublin, and maybe a young lady somewhere that would be crying her eyes out after you, and you dead?' 'I would not be afeared,' says he—och, but he was a fine man!—'only I wouldn't like the girl that's to be married to me to know,' says he; 'I'd be obliged to you if you'd keep it from her,' says he; 'and what'smore, I'll go to-morrow.'"

Miss Blow did not believe a word of it, but old Biddy Halloran reaped her reward. Jimmy O'Loughlin, when the conversation was reported to him, sent her a present of a bottle of patent medicine which had been a long time in the shop and appeared to be unsaleable. It professed to cure indigestion, and to free the system from uric acid if taken in teaspoonfuls after meals. Biddy Halloran rubbed it into her knees and felt her rheumatic pains greatly relieved.

Miss Blow sought and, after many inquiries, found the woman who had acted as Dr. O'Grady's

and lodging when her solicitor succeeded in recovering the wages due to her. The news of the doctor's flight had depressed her. She felt that she was greatly wronged; but even when smarting from her loss, she was not so heartless as to revenge herself by telling the terrible truth to an innocent and beautiful creature like Miss Blow. She gave it as her opinion that the doctor, driven to desperation, perhaps almost starved, had poisoned himself. He had, she asserted, bottles enough in his surgery to poison the whole county. His body, she believed, was lying in the house behind the locked doors.

"If so be," she added, "that the rats haven't him ate; for the like of that house with rats, I never seen. Many's the time, when the doctor would be out, I've sat the whole evening on the kitchen table, with my legs tucked up under me, and them running across the floor the same as hens would come to you when you'd be calling them. You couldn't put down a dish out of your hand, but they'd whip the bit off of it before your eyes, without you'd have some sort of a cover to put over it."

No one who was even slightly acquainted with Dr. O'Grady could suppose him capable of suicide under any conceivable circumstances. Miss Blow, who of course knew him well, was quite unim-

the people of Clonmore for the concealment of the truth. Miss Blow had a logical mind. It seemed plain to her that if everybody agreed to tell lies the truth must be something of a dangerous or uncomfortable kind. She had some knowledge of Ireland, gleaned from the leading articles of English newspapers. She knew, for instance, that it was a country of secret societies, of midnight murders, of defeated justice, of lawlessness which scorned the cloak of hypocrisy. She had heard of reigns of terror, emphasized by the epithet "veritable." She was firmly convinced that the lives of respectable people were not safe on the west side of the Shannon. Her father, Mr. Blow of the cigars, was an earnest politician, and at election times his house was full of literature about Ireland which his daughter read. Her experience of the people of Clonmore went far beyond her worst expectations. She made up her mind that Dr. O'Grady had been murdered; that everybody in the place knew the fact; and that, either through fear or an innate fondness for crime, no one would help to bring the murderers to justice.

It is very much to her credit that she did not take the next train home; for she must have thought that her own life was in great danger. But she was a young woman of determination and

to the hotel after her interview with the house-keeper, "kindly tell me who is the nearest magistrate."

"You haven't far to go to look for a magistrate, miss, if that's all you want. I'm one myself."

"I don't believe you," said Miss Blow, rudely.

"Maybe not," said Jimmy; "but I'm telling you the truth for all that. Let you go into the Petty Sessions Court to-morrow, and see if I'm not sitting there on the bench; with the police and Mr. Goddard himself, that's the officer, if he happens to be over from Ballymoy, doing what I bid them, be that same agreeable to them or not; and oftener it's not, for them police think a lot of themselves. When you see me there administering the law you'll be sorry for what you're after saying. It's the Chairman of the Urban District Council I am, and an ex-officio magistrate, thanks be to God."

"Is there any other magistrate in the neighbourhood?"

"There is not; for the R. M. lives away off at Ballymoy, and that's better than twelve miles from this. There's ne'er another, only myself and Lord Manton up at the Castle, and he never sits on the bench from one year's end to another, unless maybe there's a job on that he'd like to have his finger in."

The title produced its effect on Miss Blow. Earls are much less common in the industrial districts of England than they are in Ireland. The

than in any other part of the three kingdoms. This is not because governments are more generous to the Irish in the matter of titles. The explanation is to be found in the fact that untitled people in Ireland tend to disappear, thinned out by famine, emigration, and various diseases, while the earls survive. In England it is the noblemen who die away, being, as every reader of popular English novels knows, a degraded set of men, addicted to frightful vices, whereas the working men and the great middle class increase rapidly, their morality being of a very superior kind. Curiously enough, the English, though perfectly aware of the facts, respect their debauched earls greatly, on account, it may be supposed, of their rarity. The Irish, on the other hand, think very little of an earl, regard him as in many respects similar to an ordinary man; earls being, as has been said, comparatively common in Ireland. Miss Blow, who had never to her knowledge seen an earl, brightened up at the mention of Lord Manton.

"I'll go up to the Castle," she said, "and see him to-morrow morning."

Jimmy O'Loughlin sent a message to Patsy Devlin, asking him to call at the hotel that evening. The fact that he had not been elected inspector of sheep dipping still rankled in Patsy's mind. He blamed Jimmy O'Loughlin more than any one else for his rejection. He made up his mind to obey the summons, but not to be seduced from the path of righteous wrath by porter or whisky. He would

office, a small room at the back of the hotel, which looked out on the yard. The walls were adorned with two pictures, enlarged photographs of eminent ecclesiastics with small eyes and puffy cheeks. The table was mahogany and was covered with circular stains of various sizes. There was a side-board with a very dilapidated cruet-stand and two teapots on it. The chairs were all rickety. A writing-desk, which stood under the window, was littered with a number of exceedingly dirty papers. On the table in the middle of the room, by way of preparation for Patsy's visit, were arranged a jug of porter, a bottle of whisky, a water croft, and several tumblers.

"Fill your glass," said Jimmy hospitably, "and light your pipe. You can start on the porter, and finish up with the spirits."

Patsy poured out the porter suspiciously, and drank a tumbler full without any sign of appreciation.

"There isn't one about the place," said Jimmy, "that's better acquainted with the old earl up at the Castle than yourself. He thinks a deal of you, and well he may."

"He gave me a letter," said Patsy, "at the time of the election. But it's little heed you or the rest of them paid to it."

he had of me by the letter he wrote. And why wouldn't he when either my father or myself put the shoes on every horse that's come and gone from the Castle this fifty years."

"I could tell what he thought of you," said Jimmy. "Sure anybody could."

"You could tell it, if so be you read the letter."

"The doctor's young lady," said Jimmy, "is going up to see the earl to-morrow. The Lord save her! but she's half distracted with grief this minute."

"And what good will going to the Castle do her? Sure he doesn't know where the doctor is no more than another."

"He might tell her the truth," said Jimmy.

"Be damn! but he might, not knowing."

"And if he did, the girl's heart would be broke."

"It would surely."

"We've kept it from her," said Jimmy, "and may the Lord forgive us for the lies we're after telling, fresh ones every hour of the day. And if so be that now, at the latter end, she hears how the doctor has gone and left her it'll go through her terrible, worse than the influenza."

"And what would you consider would be best to be done?" asked Patsy.

"I was thinking that maybe if you was to see

"And will you do it, Patsy Devlin? Will you do it for the sake of the fine young girl that's upstairs, this minute, heart scalded with the sorrow that's on her?"

"It's little you deserve the like from me," said Patsy, "you nor the rest of the Guardians. But I'll do it for the sake of the girl."

"I knew you would," said Jimmy. "It's a good heart you have in you, Patsy Devlin, and a feeling for them that's in distress. But the porter's finished. Will I draw you another jug of the same, or will you try the whisky for a change?"

Patsy indicated the whisky bottle with his thumb. He remained lost in deep thought while the cork was drawn and a considerable quantity of the spirit poured into the tumbler before him. Indeed, so complete was his abstraction that the glass might have been absolutely filled with undiluted whisky if Jimmy had not, of his own accord, stayed the flow of it.

"I'm collecting the town and the neighbourhood," said Patsy, "for the sports, and there's no reason that I can see why I shouldn't call on his lordship to-morrow and ask for a subscription."

"You might."

"And in the course of conversation I could draw down about the doctor and the young lady

"Be damn!" said Patsy, "but however you manage you'll have to stop her. The old earl doesn't have his breakfast took till near ten o'clock, and if I was to try and see him before half-past ten, he'd eat the face off me."

"I'll do the best I can," said Jimmy. "I'll tell Bridgy to have the breakfast late on her. She does be wanting it at half-past eight."

"Let her want. If she gets it by half-past nine itself oughtn't she to be content? There's many a house where she wouldn't get it then."

"Content or not," said Jimmy heroically, "it's at half-past nine she'll have it to-morrow anyway."

"And after that," said Patsy, "it could be that the horse might be lame the way she'd have to walk."

"It could."

"And if you sent her round by the big gate," said Patsy, "it would put a couple of miles on her beyond what she'd have to walk if she was to go up through the deer park."

"It would," said Jimmy; "but the talk she'll give after will be terrible to listen to."

"Don't tell me. A young lady like her wouldn't know how to curse."

"It's not cursing," said Jimmy, "but it's a way she has of speaking that would make you feel as if the rats beyond in the haggard was Christians compared to you."

"Let her talk."

"And she looks at you straight in the face."

wasn't much in it, beyond the sweepings of the street."

"It's for her own good you're doing it," said Patsy.

There was some consolation in the thought. But Patsy, even while making the suggestion, felt that a good conscience is not always a sufficient support in well-doing.

"You might," he added, "be out about the place and let herself talk to her till the worst of it was over."

This plan, which perhaps would not have suited Mrs. O'Loughlin, commended itself to Jimmy; but it did not make him altogether comfortable about the future.

"I might," he said, "and I will, but she'll get me for sure at the latter end."

If he had done as his conscience suggested, Patsy Devlin would have gone home at once after settling Miss Blow's business for her. But the whisky bottle was still more than half full, and it seemed to him a pity to break up a pleasant party at an early hour. He started a fresh subject of conversation, one that he hoped would be interesting to his host.

"Tell me this now," he said. "Do you think that fellow down at Rosivera, the same that brought the pianos along with him, would give a subscription to the sports?"

"I don't know," said Jimmy. "He's queer. I

"I wouldn't say he left so much at all," said Jimmy cautiously. "And anyway it's a servant that did be coming every day till to-day, and then it was some sort of a foreigner with a written order, him not being able to speak English."

"Would you see your way to asking him for a subscription?"

"How would I do it, when he can't know a word I say to him, nor him to me? Why won't you talk sense?"

"And where's the man himself, and the fellow that did speak English?"

"How would I know? If it's a subscription you want from him, you'd better go over to Rosivera and ask for it."

"They say," said Patsy thoughtfully, "that he has plenty to give. A man like that with a motor car running on the road every day, and two foreign gentlemen, let alone an Englishman, to wait on him, must have a power of money. I wouldn't wonder now, if I took him the right way, but he'd give five pounds. I might drop him a hint that five pounds is the least that any of the gentry would give to the sports."

"Let you see what you can get out of him," said Jimmy, "and the more the better."

Jimmy had got all he wanted out of Patsy Devlin. He did not care very much whether Mr. Red subscribed to the sports or not. He took the whisky bottle and drove the cork home into its neck with a blow of his fist. Patsy looked regretfully at it, but he was a man of self-respect. He

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CHAPTER VI

"IS there any news of the doctor?" asked Lord Manton.

He was standing on the steps outside the door of Clonmore Castle. He had just given Patsy Devlin a sovereign for the Horse Races and Athletic Sports, and was endeavouring to cut short the thanks with which the subscription was received.

"There is not, your lordship, devil the word; and why would there? It could be that he's on the sea by this time, and, anyway, why would he be wanting to tell us where he is? Isn't it enough of their persecuting he had without going out of his way to ask for more?"

Lord Manton, like everybody else, regarded Dr. O'Grady's flight to America as the natural result of his financial embarrassment. He was sorry; but he recognized that the doctor had taken the wisest course.

"Might I be speaking a word to your lordship about the doctor?"

"Certainly, Patsy."

word. She has trouble enough, the creature, without that."

"What young lady?"

"Be damn!" said Patsy hurriedly, "if there isn't herself coming up the avenue. It wouldn't do for her to see me talking to your lordship. I'd better be going before she's on top of us."

Patsy Devlin slipped round the corner of the Castle, and dodging through a plantation of laurels, made his way to the stable-yard. Lord Manton was left to watch the approach of Miss Blow, without any very clear idea of what she was likely to want of him; or how Jimmy O'Loughlin and Patsy Devlin expected to keep the doctor's flight a secret from her. He observed with pleasure that she was more than commonly good-looking, that she carried herself well, and wore clothes which set off a fine figure. He had heard from Dr. O'Grady of the daughter of the Leeds tobacconist, and had formed a mental picture of her which in no way corresponded to the young lady who approached him. He reflected that she was probably in deep distress, and he looked forward with some pleasure to an interview in the course of which she was almost certain to cry. He had no objection to playing the part of comforter to a charming girl. His face expressed fatherly benignity when Miss Blow reached him.

"Am I addressing Lord Manton?" she asked.

"Certainly. Is there anything I can do for

come in more appropriately after she began to cry.

"I am Miss Blow," she said.

"Come in," said Lord Manton, "come in. You must be tired after your walk. Let me lead the way into the library. I have often heard of you from my friend Dr. O'Grady, and if there is anything I can do to help you I shall be most happy to do it."

He set Miss Blow in a deep chair near the window, pulled over another chair for himself, and sat down beside her.

"I am entirely at your service," he said. "It will be a pleasure to me to give any help in my power to a charming young lady. I——"

Miss Blow's eyes warned him again. There was a hard glitter in them very little suggestive of tears. He stopped abruptly.

"I understand that you are a magistrate," she said.

Lord Manton bowed. Then he sat up straight in his chair and tried to express in his attitude a proper judicial solemnity.

"I want," said Miss Blow, "to have Dr. O'Grady found at once."

"A very natural and a very proper wish," said Lord Manton. "I am in entire sympathy with you. I should like very much to find Dr. O'Grady. But——"

"Dead or alive," said Miss Blow firmly.

"My dear Miss Blow!" The "my dear" came

"Dead or alive," said Miss Blow again.

"Don't make such horrible suggestions, Miss Blow. I assure you there's not the slightest reason for supposing that Dr. O'Grady is anything but alive and well."

"Then where is he?" Miss Blow spoke sharply, incisively. Lord Manton began to think that she must be some new kind of girl, quite outside of his experience, one who felt more indignation than sorrow at the loss of her lover.

"I understand," he said, "that he is absent from home, temporarily absent. I have no doubt——"

Miss Blow rose from her chair and took up her umbrella.

"You're like all the rest," she said. "You are as bad as the hotel-keeper and his friend. You are simply trying to put me off with lies. Good morning."

"Wait a moment. Please do not hurry away. I am not like all the rest, really. I assure you I'm,—compared to Patsy Devlin, for instance,—I'm a miserably inefficient liar. Please sit down again."

Miss Blow allowed herself to be persuaded.

"Tell me the truth," she said; "and then find his body."

"The truth," said Lord Manton, "is painful—very painful. But it's not so bad as that. Dr. O'Grady has been for some time past in a position

she spoke the last words. Lord Manton thought that tears were at last imminent. He felt more at his ease, and ventured to take her hand in his and to stroke it gently. She snatched it from him.

"You're worse than the others," she said. "How dare you?"

For a moment Lord Manton thought that she was going to box his ears. He drew away from her hurriedly and attempted an apology.

"I am sincerely sorry," he said. "For the moment I forgot that you were not my daughter. She always came to me with her troubles ever since she was quite a child. I got into the way of taking her hand——"

"Never mind about my hand. Tell me the truth about Dr. O'Grady."

Lord Manton saw that she was mollified. To be mistaken for the daughter of an earl is a soothing thing under any circumstances. He thought for an instant of trying to repossess himself of her hand; but Miss Blow's eyes, though no longer passionate, were steely. He felt himself aggrieved, and spoke with brutal directness.

"To put the matter plainly," he said, "Dr. O'Grady has run away from his creditors."

"I don't believe a word of it," said Miss Blow.

"I have no doubt that he intended to let you know where he was going. I expect he wants you to go after him and join him there—make a fresh

the middle of the night. But don't be despondent, Miss Blow; you'll get a letter from him soon."

"That's all nonsense," said Miss Blow. "He's done nothing of the sort."

"But, my dear young lady, how can you possibly speak so confidently? He's not the first man who has run away under such circumstances. Plenty of people do it, I assure you. It's not even considered disgraceful."

"I know he didn't."

"But how do you know?"

"Because I wrote to him a week ago, when I first heard he was in trouble, and told him I was coming over here to see him. I said that father would help him out of his difficulties, whatever they were. Do you think that, after that, he'd run away and not so much as tell me he was going?"

Lord Manton did not know what to think. Dr. O'Grady had disappeared. There was no getting out of that. It was a patent fact. On the other hand, if Mr. Blow had really offered to pay the doctor's debts, there seemed to be no reason why he should disappear. No doubt the wealthy proprietor of the well-known twopenny Beauties could afford to pay Mr. Lorraine Vavasour's bill twenty times over if necessary. Still, Dr. O'Grady had disappeared.

"You are all," said Miss Blow passionately, "a lot of slanderous busy-bodies, telling lies and meddling with everybody's business because you have no business of your own to attend to. My

handsome; handsomer than ever now that she was in a rage. It occurred to him suddenly that Dr. O'Grady might have a reason for disappearing, quite unconnected with the money he owed. He was engaged to be married to Miss Blow. It was possible that the idea of home life with this masterful and passionate young woman for a partner might be rather terrifying. Besides, the wife who pays her husband's debts for him has a hold over him ever afterwards; and Miss Blow seemed exactly the kind of lady who would take advantage of such a position. She would certainly make him aware of the fact. Lord Manton thought he understood at last why Dr. O'Grady had run away. Miss Blow's face was buried in her handkerchief. She was not crying, but she was flushed after her outburst, and preferred to keep her face covered. Lord Manton ventured on a smile and a gentle chuckle.

"I assure you," he said soothingly, "that he hasn't been murdered. Who would murder him? Everybody in the neighbourhood was fond of him. I don't think there was a man, woman, or child but loved him. I did myself."

"If you loved him," said Miss Blow, "show it now."

"I will, with pleasure; but how?"

"Give me a search warrant."

"A search warrant! But——"

"Yes, a search warrant; and I shall insist upon the police executing it."

"I haven't the least doubt you will; but—but

"But he isn't in a house. Do try to be reasonable, Miss Blow. Even if he's murdered—and I'm quite sure he's not—he wouldn't be in a house. His body would be hidden in a wood or a bog-hole or a river, or wherever it is that murderers usually do hide bodies."

"You admit then that he has been murdered."

"No, I don't. You mustn't catch up my words like that. All I said was that, if he had been murdered, he wouldn't be living in a house, and so a search warrant wouldn't be any use to you. You don't really want a warrant at all. You don't even want the police. All you have to do is to go prowling round the country, poking into any shadowy-looking hole you see with the point of your umbrella until you come across his body."

The interview was beginning to tire Lord Manton. He was not accustomed to being bullied by handsome girls, and he did not like it.

"Perhaps you'd like to start at once," he said politely.

"It's impossible," she said, "for me to search the country by myself."

"Not at all. Nothing is impossible for a young lady of your energy. Start with the wood behind this house; it's very thick in parts, quite a likely spot for a corpse; and come in here for lunch when you've finished."

"Give me a written order to the police," said Miss Blow, "commanding them to aid me in my search."

their backs up and make them determined not to help you."

"Give me the order, and I'll see that they execute it."

"My dear Miss Blow, I can't, I really can't. Try the Chief Secretary. You'll find him in his office at Dublin Castle. He's a most agreeable man. You needn't be the least bit afraid of him. Not that it's likely you would be. He's much more likely to be afraid of you. It won't take you long. You can run up by the night mail and——"

"Give me the order."

Lord Manton surrendered. He crossed the room, sat down at his desk, and wrote—

"Sergeant Farrelly, R.I.C. Kindly give all the assistance in your power to Miss Blow, the bearer of this note, who wishes to search the country for a dead body.—MANTON."

"If that is any use to you," he said, "you're welcome to it. Let me know how you get on. Any time you happen to find yourself near this house, drop in for luncheon or tea. Good-bye."

Miss Blow rose, bowed, and left the room. Lord Manton rang the bell.

"Wilkins," he said to his butler.

"Yes, my lord."

"You saw that young lady who left the house just now? Very well, if she calls again and I happen to be out, you are to give her breakfast

"She doesn't require a chaperone, but I do. I don't feel safe when I'm alone with her. And Wilkins, if she brings a corpse along with her, either Dr. O'Grady's corpse or any other, you will provide proper accommodation for it. Put it on the table in the servants' hall with a sheet over it, and send out to the garden for flowers—white flowers."

"Yes, my lord."

"One thing more, Wilkins; if Sergeant Farrelly or any policeman comes up here from the barracks either to-day or to-morrow and asks to see me, tell him I'm out, and that it won't be the least use his waiting because I won't be in before midnight and probably not then."

"Yes, my lord."

Wilkins left the room, and Lord Manton, taking the chair in which Miss Blow had been sitting, lit a cigarette. There was a stealthy step on the gravel outside. He looked up and saw Patsy Devlin's face pressed against the window. He rose, opened the window, and asked Patsy what he wanted.

"Might I be so bold as to put a question to your lordship?"

"Is it about Miss Blow or Dr. O'Grady?"

"It is," said Patsy. "It's about the both of them."

"Out with it then. That young man and

"It's what Jimmy O'Loughlin was saying to me last night," he said, "that if so be she heard that the doctor had left her, the creature's heart would be broke, and her as handsome a young girl as any you'd see."

"At the present moment," said Lord Manton, "she believes that you and Jimmy O'Loughlin have murdered the doctor and concealed his body in a bog hole."

"The Lord save us and deliver us! Was there ne'er another story you could tell her only that? Sure the police will be out after us."

"She went straight from this house to the barracks," said Lord Manton, "and I shouldn't wonder if you were arrested before night."

"Be damn!" said Patsy, "saving your lordship's presence; but they couldn't take me for the like of that. There isn't one in the country but knows that I wouldn't lay a hand on the doctor, drunk or sober, not if it was to save my soul."

"Don't you be too sure," said Lord Manton. "My own belief is that if Miss Blow doesn't come across the doctor in the course of the next twenty-four hours, she'll have you hanged for murdering him."

"It's joking you are. She couldn't do it."

"I am not joking. I defy any man to joke after spending half an hour with Miss Blow. She is the most determined young woman I ever met. She could do anything, absolutely anything. There isn't a judge or a jury could stand out against her

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CHAPTER VII

A POET, writing, as some of them will, a parody on the work of another poet, has these words—

“To every Irishman on earth
Arrest comes soon or late.”

Patsy Devlin did not read much poetry, and had never come across the lines. If he had met them, he would have recognized at once that they express a great truth. His experience of life convinced him that the law in Ireland, though erratic in its methods, may be relied on in the end to get the upper hand of either daring or innocence. The proceedings of the police, depending as they do on the view which some complete stranger has promised his constituents in England to take of Irish affairs, are quite incalculable. Patsy himself had been praised by political orators, had been favourably mentioned by eminent statesmen in the House of Commons itself, for actions which he would have kept concealed if he could. What

the Government, that remote deity from which there is no appeal, had decreed his arrest, trial, and execution for the murder of Dr. O'Grady. Patsy reasoned the matter out with himself. If, he thought, a man is not punished for the crimes he does commit, it is probable that he will be punished for those he has avoided committing. This consideration, coming on top of Lord Manton's friendly warning, made him uneasy. He determined to keep clear of the police barrack when he left Clonmore Castle.

Rosivera is a remote and lonely spot. It was extremely improbable that there would be any police lurking near it. It was not the sort of place to which a police sergeant would think of going if he were bent on the arrest of a murderous blacksmith. Patsy felt that he might, without running any undue risk, venture on a visit to Mr. Red. He was not willing to forego the chance of getting an additional subscription to the sports fund. He had in his pocket money enough to take him to America, but another pound, two pounds, perhaps even five pounds, would be very welcome to him. He was a good man, with a tender heart and a strong sense of his duty to those dependent on him. He wanted to be in a position to make some provision for the support of his wife and family when he left them. Mr. Red's subscription, if Mr. Red turned out to be a generous man, would

When he came in sight of the house, he reconnoitred it carefully, and approached it very much as a skilful scout might advance on an enemy's camp, availing himself of all the cover which the country afforded. Satisfied at last that there was no police patrol in the neighbourhood, he made a circuit of the house, and finally reached the yard gate by way of the kitchen garden. He entered the yard and made sure that there was no one in it. He peeped into the stable and the cow-house and found that they were both empty. He opened the door of the coach-house and took a long look at the motor car which stood there. It was well cleaned; its lamps and other metalwork shone brilliantly; it was a very handsome vehicle. Patsy felt reassured. Mr. Red might be eccentric, as Jimmy O'Loughlin hinted, might even be vicious, but he was unquestionably opulent. No one but a rich man could keep such a motor car. Patsy closed the coach-house door quietly and took a long look at the back windows of the house. They were all shut and veiled with drawn blinds; all of them, except one small window in the top storey. It was wide open. Patsy stared at it.

Suddenly, something flew from the window and dropped at Patsy's feet. It was a pellet of paper. Patsy looked round him cautiously and then stooped down and picked it up. He unwrapped

"Come back into the yard in twenty minutes. Don't wait now.—O'GRADY."

"Be damn," said Patsy softly, "it's the doctor himself!"

Being a man of high intelligence, with a natural taste for conspiracy, he acted in the wisest possible way. Without the smallest display of emotion, or a single glance at the window from which the communication had come, he turned and slouched carelessly towards the yard gate. It was flung open before he reached it, and Mr. Red, a revolver in his hand, strode forward. Patsy displayed great presence of mind and resource.

"I'm just after knocking at the back door, your honour," he said, "thinking that it might be more agreeable if I didn't go round to the front, where maybe you'd be entertaining company. It was that I was collecting a trifle from the gentry round about for the grand annual horseraces and athletic sports that does be held every year up beyond in Jimmy O'Loughlin's big field. And the committee would feel pleased, your honour, if you'd act as a vice-president or a starter, or the like, along with Lord Manton from the Castle."

Mr. Red raised the revolver and pointed it at Patsy's head.

"Hand me that note," he said.

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"Sure your honour's joking. What would a

that Patsy had every opportunity of looking into the barrel of the revolver.

"Right about turn," he said; "march!"

"I was in the militia one time," said Patsy, "and I know well what you're saying. If it's into the house you want me to go through the back door, I'm willing. But there's no need for you to be looking at me that way or to be reaching out at me with your pistol. If you think I'm here trying to steal a motor car on you, you're making a big mistake. Anybody can tell you that I wouldn't do the like. If I wanted to itself I wouldn't be able. I couldn't drive one of them things no more than fly."

"March!" said Mr. Red.

He held the revolver within a couple of inches of Patsy's head.

"A gentleman like yourself," said Patsy, "likes his bit of a joke. I know well it's only funning you are and that it's not loaded; but I'd be obliged to you if you'd point it the other way. Them things goes off sometimes when you're not expecting them."

By way of demonstrating that it was loaded, and that he was not "funning," Mr. Red fired a shot. The bullet went quite close to Patsy's head and buried itself in the kitchen door. Patsy, convinced that he had to do with a dangerous lunatic, turned quickly and walked into the kitchen. From

"Enter," he said.

"Be damn! but I will, and I'll be all the better pleased if you'll stay outside yourself."

This was exactly what Mr. Red did. The door was locked again, and Patsy found himself face to face with Dr. O'Grady.

"I'm sorry," said the doctor; "I'm infernally sorry. I was an ass to throw you out that note. I might have known that the Field Marshal would be spying round somewhere. It's just the kind of absolutely idiotic thing he does rather well."

"You needn't be sorry at all. Now that I know I'm not shot, I'd as soon be here as anywhere else."

"Would you? I'm glad you're satisfied. All the same I wish you were out of it. Now that there are two of us here, the police are bound to come after us and find us."

"They're out after me, anyway," said Patsy. "That's why I say I'd as soon be here as anywhere else."

"And what do they want you for? Is it any of your League work?"

"It is not. It's nothing to do with the League, good or bad. It's for murdering you and concealing your body after."

"Can't you talk sense, Patsy Devlin?"

"It's the truth I'm telling you, and I couldn't say different if I was put on my oath this minute."

"But, damn it all, I'm not murdered; I'm alive."

"That may be," said Patsy. "All I know is

"Tell me the truth now, Patsy. Is Miss Blow in Clonmore?"

"She is."

"You're sure of that?"

"I am sure. She came the day after you went to America. Why wouldn't I be sure when she has the whole of us riz ever since with the questions she did be asking about you; and not one in the place but told her lies, be the same more or less, for fear the creature would break her heart if she heard what you were after doing. And at the latter end his lordship told her we had murdered you, to quiet her like, for fear she might hear that you had gone to America, leaving her behind you, without ever a word to her, good nor bad."

"Good God, man! But I haven't gone to America."

"I see that well enough now. But tell me this, doctor, why didn't you send us word, so as we'd know what to say to her?"

"I couldn't. The first chance I got was when I dropped that note out of the window to you. If you'd come back to the yard the way I told you, I'd have had a letter written to Jimmy O'Loughlin that you could have taken back with you. I'd have explained the whole situation."

"I was meaning to come back just as you bid me. Wasn't I walking out of the yard quiet and easy, so as I'd be able to come back at the end of

difficulty about escaping. The Field Marshal think's he's a tremendous swell at conspiracies of all sorts; but as a matter of fact he's a perfect fool, and I have the lock loosened on the door this minute. You can walk out any time you like; and the best time in my opinion will be to-night."

"And why wouldn't you go yourself, doctor, if it's as easy as all that?"

"I don't want to go," said the doctor. "I'm very well contented where I am. It's much better for you to go."

"How would it do if the both of us went?"

"It wouldn't do at all. I tell you I want to stay. I don't want to escape. But you must. I don't want the police here searching for me."

"Be damn, then, but I won't go either! As sure as ever I went they'd have me hanged for murdering you, and that wouldn't suit me at all."

"Don't be a fool, Patsy. How can they hang you for murdering me when I'm alive?"

"But—but—without I'd bring them here to see you they'd never believe that you weren't dead. What with the young lady going round the country cursing like mad at them that killed you, and the old lord telling the police it was me and Jimmy O'Loughlin done it. what chance would a poor man

"Will you give me a writing to the young lady herself?"

"I will not. I know very well what she'd do if she heard I was here. She'd come straight down after me."

"I'm not saying but what she might. From what I seen of her I'd say she's just the sort of a young lady that would."

"Well, then, can't you understand that the last thing in the world I want is for her to know where I am? If I could have got a note to her at the first go off, before she came to Clonmore, it would have been all right. I'd have told her that I was detained here in attendance on an important case, and that she was to stay at home and not come near Clonmore till I sent her word. But that silly old ass of a Field Marshal thought he knew better than I did how to deal with a girl, and he wouldn't let me send the note. Then you and Jimmy O'Loughlin and Lord Manton, and I suppose every soul about the place, go stuffing her up with a pack of lies until——"

"Be damn, doctor! but that's a hard word. What we did was for the best. You wouldn't have us tell the creature the truth, and her thinking all the time that you'd rather die than desert her?"

"Tell her the truth! What truth?"

"That——"

mark on your ugly face with my fist to prove to you that I'm not in America?"

"It was all the truth we had for her, anyway. But we wouldn't tell her. And why not? Because she was a fine girl, and we didn't want to see her going off into a decline before our eyes and maybe dying on us. And because we had a respect for your memory; and that's more than you had for yourself, hiding away here from a girl that any man might be proud to own. And it's more than you have for us, putting the hard word on us, and we doing the best we could from the start."

Dr. O'Grady was a reasonable man. His anger cooled. He came to see that his friends had acted with the best intentions. He apologized handsomely to Patsy Devlin.

"All the same," he added, "you will have to go. I tell you what it is, if the police do come here, the Field Marshal will shoot the two of us. He told me himself that that's what he'd do. And, whatever else he may be, he's a man of his word."

"He dursn't, not with the police in the house. He'd be hanged."

"He doesn't care a pin whether he's hanged or not. As a matter of fact, I expect he'd rather like to be hanged. He's an anti-militarist."

"I was just thinking," said Patsy, "when he gave the word of command to me there in the yard,

"Be damn, and is he that?"

"He is. And I can tell you an anarchist isn't what you'd call a playboy. Anarchism isn't a bit like your futile old League. It doesn't go about the country making speeches and pretending it's going to boycott people that it hasn't the least notion of doing any harm to. A genuine anarchist, a man like the Field Marshal, for instance, doesn't say a word to anybody, but just goes quietly and blows up a town."

"I'll not have you speaking against the League, doctor. I've been a member of it since ever there was a branch started in Clonmore. I'd be a member of it still, if it wasn't that they went against me the time of the election of the inspector of sheep dipping. I can tell you there's them in it would think very little of making the country hot for the man that went against the will of the people in the matter of grazing ranches or the like."

"I don't want to argue about the League either on one side or another. What I'm trying to get you to understand is simply this. You've got to go, and to go to-night, as soon as ever the Field Marshal is tucked up in his little bed and the house quiet. Listen to me now, and I'll make the position plain to you. As long as I was here by myself I was more or less safe. The disappearance of one man doesn't make much difference in a neighbourhood like ours, but when it comes to two men vanishing in the inside of one week there's bound

He looked at Patsy as he spoke, and noticed with regret that he was producing little or no impression.

"And what's more, I'll lose well over a hundred pounds; a hundred pounds that I want badly."

"Why didn't you tell me that before?" said Patsy. "Is it likely now that I'd want to stand between you and a lump of money like that? I wouldn't do it to any man, much less one like yourself, that I have a respect for. Give me the writings now that we were speaking of, and I'll start at once."

"You can't start till night; but I'll write the notes at once if you like."

"And the one to the young lady along with the other two."

"I told you before," said Dr. O'Grady, "that I won't give you a note to her."

"Then I'll stay where I am. It's more than I dare to go back without a line of some sort to quiet her. Don't I tell you she'd have me hanged? And when that's done she'll be down here after you with the police, and you'll be as badly off as you were before."

"She'll not be able to do that. Lord Manton would stop the police."

"She'll come without them, then. That sort of a young lady would do anything."

you know that she and I are engaged to be married?"

"Well, aren't you the queer man? Anybody'd think you were trying to hide yourself from her for fear she'd marry you against your will."

"Is that one of the lies you and Jimmy O'Loughlin have been telling Miss Blow?"

"It is not, of course."

"Well, don't let me catch you saying anything of the sort, or it'll be the worse for you. Now, leave me in peace till I write the notes."

"I'm not going with them," said Patsy; "so you needn't trouble yourself to be writing."

"All right. If you prefer to stay here and be shot, you can. You'll be sorry afterwards, that's all. I tell you the Emperor is not a man to be trifled with. There's a fellow downstairs here that's sick, and I go twice every day to attend him. I give you my word, Patsy, all the time I'm dressing his wounds I have the muzzle of that revolver stuck up against the back of my neck. I'd be uncommonly nervous if I didn't know that the poor old Emperor is a good sort and reliable, in spite of his fondness for yellow crocodiles."

"Is there crocodiles in this house?"

"There are; large yellow ones. The dining-room is crawling with them."

"That settles it, then," said Patsy. "If I was ever so keen to get out of this, I wouldn't do it after that. I'd be in dread of them beasts; and I

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CHAPTER VIII

MISS BLOW went straight from Clonmore Castle to the police barrack. She was received at the door by Constable Moriarty, who happened to be on duty at the time. He was a young man who had only recently joined the force. Miss Blow, after a glance at his smooth boyish face, asked to see the sergeant. She was shown into a small room, known as the office, and kept waiting while Sergeant Farrelly, who was digging potatoes in the garden, "cleaned himself." Her manner, when he joined her, was peremptory. She demanded that a search party should start at once and scour the country for Dr. O'Grady's body. Sergeant Farrelly was puzzled, and scratched his head. Miss Blow handed him Lord Manton's note. He read it, was very perplexed, and scratched his head again. Miss Blow pressed her demand.

"It will be better," said the sergeant at last, "if I go up to the Castle, and speak to his lordship myself. If you'll have the kindness miss to leave

Sergeant Farrelly looked at her helplessly. He did not want a handsome young lady in the barrack; he thought his office an unsuitable place for Miss Blow; but he saw no way of altering her determination. He left her and summoned Constable Moriarty.

"The young lady within," he said, "will wait in the office until such time as I come back from the Castle, where I'll be speaking on business to his lordship. I leave it to you, Constable Moriarty, to see that she's treated with proper respect."

"Is it me?" said Moriarty.

"It is you. You can take her in yesterday's paper, and if it happens that she's read it already, you can talk to her, making yourself as pleasant and agreeable as you know how."

Wilkins, Lord Manton's butler, was a good servant. He opened the door to Sergeant Farrelly at about twelve o'clock, and blandly gave the message with which he had been charged.

"His lordship is out, and it is uncertain at what hour he will return."

Sergeant Farrelly was baffled. He went back to the barrack. He found that Miss Blow had moved from the office, which was small and incommodious, and had settled herself in the men's day room. Constable Moriarty, embarrassed and very pink

and over six feet in height. On patrol duty, on guard over a public-house on Sunday, or giving evidence in court as to the amount of drink taken by a prisoner, he was an impressive man. He did not impress Miss Blow. Being an English woman, she held the curious theory that the police exist for the protection of the public, and that they ought to engage willingly in the investigation of crime. Sergeant Farrelly knew, of course, that this was not true; but he was unable to explain his position to Miss Blow, because she would not listen to what he said.

At two o'clock, Miss Blow being still immovable in the day room of the barrack, Sergeant Farrelly started again for Clonmore Castle. This time he was accompanied by Constable Moriarty, who, reckless of the consequences of not obeying orders, refused to be left to entertain Miss Blow. Constable Cole slipped quietly out into the garden and took a turn at the potatoes which the sergeant had been obliged to leave undug.

Wilkins said politely what he had said before. Sergeant Farrelly and Moriarty sat down in the hall to wait. They waited till four o'clock. Then they returned to the barrack, hoping that Miss Blow would have gone home. They found that she had not gone and showed no signs of going. She was sitting in the men's room, eating biscuits out of a paper bag. It appeared afterwards that Constable Cole had gone out and bought the biscuits for her, fearing that she might be hungry.

opinion of the Royal Irish Constabulary. She used plain and forcible language, repeating such words as incapacity, inefficiency, and cowardice at frequent intervals. She spoke for nearly half an hour, and then demanded again that the whole force should set out at once and search for Dr. O'Grady's body. Constable Cole grinned, and was caught in the act. The sergeant snubbed him promptly. Miss Blow took off her hat and jacket, and said she intended to stay where she was until a search party went out.

Sergeant Farrelly and his men withdrew and held a counsel in the kitchen. Constable Moriarty suggested that Miss Blow should be arrested on a charge of drunkenness, and locked up for the night.

"If she isn't drunk," he argued, "she wouldn't be behaving the way she is."

His advice was not taken. In the first place, she was a well-dressed and good-looking young woman; and Sergeant Farrelly, being unmarried, was a courteous man. In the second place, she had come to the barrack bearing a note from Lord Manton, and however unintelligible the note might be, it had unquestionably been written by a peer of the realm. In the third place, as Constable Cole pointed out, their object was not to keep Miss Blow in the barrack, but to get her out. Pressed by Moriarty and the sergeant for an alternative

would be spoiled if she kept it waiting. The plan received no support. Sergeant Farrelly pointed out that it would be most unwise to confess their difficulty to Jimmy O'Loughlin.

"That fellow," he said, "would take a delight in turning the police into ridicule, and setting the whole country laughing at us. And besides," he said, with a look of withering contempt at Constable Cole, "it's not likely she'd be caring about her dinner after you giving her sixpennyworth of biscuits and more. Believe you me, she wouldn't mind this minute if she never saw dinner again."

Half an hour later Sergeant Farrelly himself offered Miss Blow a cup of tea. He was a kindly man, as most police sergeants are, and it grieved him to think that the young lady who had established herself in his barrack was spending a whole day with nothing to eat except dry biscuits. She took the tea without thanks, and again demanded that the search for Dr. O'Grady should begin. Sergeant Farrelly became desperate. He set out once again for Clonmore Castle. This time he was accompanied by both constables, and Miss Blow was left in sole possession of the barrack. He learned that Lord Manton was still out. After a short consultation, he and the two constables sat down in the hall to wait. They waited till ten o'clock, and would have waited longer still had not Wilkins informed them that it was his duty at that hour to lock up the house for

At nine o'clock next morning she walked into the barrack again and took her seat in the men's day room. This time she had with her a brown paper parcel. Constable Cole gave it as his opinion that it contained provisions for the day.

"I shall stay here," she said firmly, "until you choose to do your duty."

Sergeant Farrelly, who was refreshed and invigorated by his night's sleep, began to argue with her. The two constables stood near the door of the room and admired him. Miss Blow, adopting a particularly irritating kind of tactics, refused to pay any attention to his remarks. Whenever he paused to give her an opportunity of stating her case, she said—

"I shall sit here until you choose to do your duty."

She had just repeated her formula for the ninth time when a groom rode up to the door of the barrack. He brought a note from Lord Manton.

"Sergeant Farrelly, R.I.C. Lord Manton is seriously annoyed to hear that the police spent the greater part of yesterday afternoon and evening in the hall of Clonmore Castle. Lord Manton has not asked for police protection, and knows no reason why it should be forced on him. Lord Manton will not be at home to-day, and he requests that any communication by way of apology or explanation be made to him in writing."

dejected. Then the sergeant, assuming an air of confident authority, gave his order.

"Constable Moriarty," he said, "you will take that note over to Ballymoy and hand it to the District Inspector. You will kindly explain at the same time the way we find ourselves fixed here."

"Maybe," said Moriarty, "it would be as well if I was to take the other note along with it—the one his lordship was after sending with the young lady about the corpse of Dr. O'Grady."

"It would be as well," said the sergeant; "I'd be glad he'd see that note too. But it's the young lady has it and not me. Did you happen to think now of e'er a way that it could be got from her?"

"Would you ask her for it?" said Constable Moriarty.

"I might ask her for it, and I might ask the King if he'd lend me the loan of his crown to go courting in. I'd be as likely to get the one as the other by asking. If you can think of no better way of getting it than that, Constable Moriarty, you may go and ask for it yourself; and you can come back here and let us have a look at you, when she smacks your face."

"We might try a stratagem with her," said Constable Cole, who had made a similar suggestion the day before. "I was reading a book one time about a man that was great on stratagems. There wasn't a thing would happen but he'd—I'm sorry now I haven't the book by me."

"Stratagems be damned," said Sergeant

that his wife was wanting the note the way she could use it for lighting the kitchen fire to boil the kettle for tea. Is that your stratagem? Tell me now."

"It is not," said Constable Cole, with dignity, "nor it isn't like it. If I was the sergeant here, I'd go to the young lady and I'd tell her, speaking civil and pleasant, that the District Inspector beyond in Ballymoy had sent a man over for the note, so as he could set the police all over the country looking for Dr. O'Grady, and that he wouldn't be able to do that same without he got the note, on account of the way the law does be at the present time."

"Is that what you call a stratagem?" said the sergeant. "It's a lie I'd call it myself, a whole pack of lies, and it's just what they might take the stripes off me for saying, if so be I was fool enough to say it. Is it looking to be sergeant yourself in the place of me you are, that you'd suggest the like of that?"

"All stratagems is lies," said Constable Cole soothingly. "The one I'm suggesting is no worse than another."

"Go and try her with it yourself, then," said the sergeant, "and see what you'll get out of it."

Constable Cole, pursued by the sniggering laugh of Moriarty, left the kitchen and went into the day room. Miss Blow had made herself quite at home.

found it. Constable Cole drew himself up stiffly to attention and addressed her—

"I beg your pardon, miss, but Sergeant Farrelly will be obliged to you if you'll lend him the loan of the note that Lord Manton gave you. He's thinking of sending a man over to Ballymoy to the D. I."

"What's a D. I.?" asked Miss Blow.

"He's an officer, miss, a gentleman by the name of Mr. Goddard."

"Is he your superior officer?"

"He is, miss."

"Then I'll go and see him myself, and take the note with me."

The reply was quite unexpected. Constable Cole hesitated.

"It's better than twelve miles of a drive," he said, "and the road's none too good. And it could be, miss, that the D.I. might be off somewhere, shooting or the like, when you got there, and then you wouldn't find him."

"If he is out, I shall wait for him."

"I wouldn't doubt you, miss; but it could be——"

"No, it couldn't," said Miss Blow. "At all events, it won't. Kindly go and get the car at once."

Constable Cole returned to the kitchen grinning broadly.

"It's yourself that's in luck this day, Moriarty," he said. "It's not every man that gets the chance

stick if he has to come all the way back from America for the purpose."

"What do you mean?" said Moriarty.

"She said she'd go with you to Ballymoy, as soon as ever she heard it was you that was going. But if I hear tell of any impropriety of conduct, I'll send word to the red-haired girl that you used to be walking out with on Sundays when you were up in the depôt learning your drill. I heard of you."

Moriarty was young, very young. He blushed hotly.

"I'd be ashamed of my life to be seen with her," he said. "I'd never hear the last of it."

"Off with you at once and get the car," said the sergeant. "In the name of God, if the girl's willing to go out of this, will you take her along with you before she changes her mind? Haven't we had enough of her this two days?"

In less than half an hour the car—Jimmy O'Loughlin's car—was at the door of the barrack. Constable Moriarty, in full panoply, his grey cape rolled round his chest, his carbine between his knees, sat on one side. Miss Blow, looking very handsome, got up on the other. Sergeant Farrelly wrapped a rug round her knees and tucked the end of it under her feet. Then he presented her with a sixpenny box of chocolates. He had gone round to Jimmy O'Loughlin's shop and bought this offering while the horse was being harnessed.

"It's a long drive you have before you," he said,

is a backward place, and it's the most thing of the kind there was in Jimmy O'Loughlin's shop."

Constable Cole rushed from the barrack bare-headed, just as the car was starting. He had Miss Blow's brown paper parcel in his hand.

"You've forgotten your lunch, miss," he shouted. "You'll be wanting it before you're back."

He stowed the parcel in the well of the car, and was able as he did so to still further embarrass the unfortunate Constable Moriarty.

"By rights," he whispered, "you ought to be sitting on the same side with her. It's what she'd expect of you; and if you don't do it when you get off to walk up Ballyglunin Hill, she'll be in a mighty bad temper against you have her safe with the D. I. If you're half a man, Moriarty, you'll do it."

There was a good deal of excitement in the town when Miss Blow drove off under the escort of Constable Moriarty. The news that Jimmy O'Loughlin's car had been ordered for her and the constable spread so rapidly that by the time the start was actually made a small crowd had gathered in the street to see it. Afterwards, for more than an hour, men stopped casually at the barrack door, chatted on indifferent subjects with Sergeant Farrelly or Constable Cole, and then asked one or two leading questions about Miss Blow and her business. The police were very reticent. Sergeant Farrelly was an impressive man with a great deal of personal