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RODY ROGAN TO THE FRONT

OR
SAVING AN UNJUSTLY CONVICTED MAN.

BY BERNARD WAYDE



Sam Morris now gave way to his feelings and wept like a little child.

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Rody Rogan to the Front;

OR,

SAVING AN UNJUSTLY CONVICTED MAN.

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CHAPTER I.

SAM MORRIS, "GOLD-BRICK" SWINDLER.

"Do you know, I think that man Morris is innocent, though appearances seem to point dead against him. If you take up his case, as I ask, you will find he's unjustly convicted, if ever man was."

"That may be, for I've not thought av the case at all, at all, until you towld me.

"Ha! Here's the first note av the story: 'An ould story—conviction an' sintince av a goold-brick swindler!' That's the man, Morris, av coorse—an' he's proved to be a mimber av a goold-brick swindlin' consarn?"

"My! but what omadhawns there are in the woruld!"

"Now, if sich has been written up wance it's been done a thousan' toimes—an' yit there's as many gudgeons as ever in the woruld, an' most av thim from Jarsey.

"Same in the green-goods line, or any other swindlin' operation—whin people wants somethin' for nothin' you can't tayche thim common sinse or ram innu prudence into their shalla pates.

"It's been so sence the woruld began, Isaac, an' it'll be so long affther we've left it—for that matther, till the ind of toime.

"But let me read this about Morris, Isicc—by pardin, Is-aac, I meant to say, but this Irish tongue av moine gits me into all soorts av blunders.

"Hum! ha! hum! I see, fate goes hard agin Morris—be me sowkins, it does.

"But—er—what's this? He's convicted, but not sintined! 'The maximum punishment,' goes on the article, 'is fifteen years, but anticipated sintince either eight or tin years.'

"Now, be the hokey, that's a croyin' shame, if the man's innocent, Isaac. What's to be done?"

"That's for you to say, Mr. Rogan," replied Isaac Bickerstaff, a somewhat ill-favored citizen, whose age might be forty or thereabouts.

"If you promise to take up the case I'll see you get a retainer of five hundred dollars.

"You understand what such a sentence means to an innocent man? Utter, irreparable ruin!"

"I'll not say but he has been somewhat in fault, but if he has offended it's been through lack of prudence—introducing comparative strangers to a wealthy business man such as Amos Clarke is known to be.

"There's where poor Morris erred—introducing these men to Clarke and vouching for their honesty and respectability.

"Well, they say 'when the drink's in the wit's out,' and of course you know he had a little in at the time he took Clamp and Reynard at their word, that they were miners, just after arriving from the Klondike, and had the genuine article—the real and honest gold brick, and not a substance called brass filings, as was afterward proved."

"I see be the article here that Clarke paid fourteen thousand dollars?" said Rody tentatively.

"Yes, the sum he gave the swindlers, Clamp and Reynard, for less than a dollar's worth of brass filings."

"The evidence looks bad for Morris," said Rody, shaking his head.

"I don't know how we're going to get over it.

"It looks bad, bad—very bad—tarnationally bad, if I may be pardoned for the use av the exprission.

"Morris, accordin' to this account is, to all intints and purposes, an' accomplice.

"He was indicted wid the other two min, Clamp and Reynard, as an accomplice.

"Now, the quistion is—where is fox—that is, Reynard—an' where is Clamp?"

"It's a foine name to rhyme wid, so it is—Clamp, stamp, thramp—an' it's a thramp he'll be givin' some av us afore we catch him, I do be affther thinkin'.

"Well, now, let me say this, Isic," pursued Rody, finding trouble again in pronouncing Bickerstaff's Christian name; "let me say this, me frind—if you've seen fit to take up Morris' case, wid a sinsare belief in his innicence, I don't see why a bosthoon loike meself should have enny doubts at all about it—especially whin there's a foive hunthred dollar retainin' fee starin' me in the face.

"I stands to raison an honist man loike you, Isic," again mispronouncing the name, "wouldn't go an' make a molly-coddle av yerself if you warn't cocksure av what ye war about."

"You are certainly right there, Mr. Rogan; I should let the law take its course, and that in spite of my friendship for Morris."

"Well, thin, before we can do anything for Morris we must foind Clamp an' Reynard, an', as these gentlemen are in clover for the present, it may not be sich a hard task affther all.

"Is thim their roight names—Fox Clamp and Ned Reynard?"

"So far as is known those are their names," replied Bickerstaff quietly.

"Now, do you know, something crops up in me moind at toimes that makes me laugh almost outright?" said Rody.

"Now, why in the name av all that's bad couldn't these two swindlers swap Christian names? For instance, Fox would come in well wid Reynard, an' it doesn't suit Clamp for sour apples."

"I am very serious about this matter, I assure you, Mr. Rogan," interrupted Isaac, frowning.

"The less time wasted in trifling, in my opinion, the better.

"It matters little what these men's names are. What is wanted is to discover where they are and arrest them.

"Once they're in custody, Mr. Morris will be vindicated."

"But what if he won't?" said Rody dubiously.

"Well," shortly from Bickerstaff, "we mustn't chance all that.

"If those men, Clam and Reynard, perceiving no

means of escape, see themselves absolutely cornered, they'll out with the truth, and save an innocent man.

"No criminal could be so vile as to act otherwise, under the circumstances—the more especially when he can't benefit his own case by implicating another man."

"I have no fear for the outcome, Mr. Rogan."

"Take the matter in hand and push it for all it's worth, and here's my check for a cool five hundred."

Bickerstaff, as he spoke, took from his waistcoat pocket a slip of paper and held it out to the detective.

"Bedad, you took it for granted, thin, Isic," he was beginning.

"What?"

"That I would ingage in the case—widout ever bein' even asked."

"However, Ike, I'll take your check an' do me level best to overhaul Clamp an' Reynard."

"Can you describe what these gintlemin look loike?"

"I can do more," Bickerstaff answered. "I can give you pictures of the men—two excellent cabinet photos, taken in San Francisco two years ago."

"Where did you get them?"

Rody glanced at the photographs which Bickerstaff handed to him.

"Where did I get them?" repeated Ike.

"Yes."

"Well, that is something which I'm not at liberty to tell you just at present."

"I got them, you have them, and, so far, that ends all discussion."

"I suppose I might tell you now where and how I obtained those pictures, but, as it would be a breach of confidence, I must very firmly decline."

"I'll give the reasons hereafter, which will satisfy you that all is done in good faith and for the best."

"Very good," from the Irishman, "and this very day I will set about my search for Clamp an' Reynard."

"Whin is Misther Morris to be brought up for sintince?"

"His counsel have succeeded in getting a week's grace—and by then something may turn up to alter the complexion of affairs."

"Yes, sure enough. A man's not worth his salt if he can't do something in six or seven days."

"Well, Isic," pursued Rody, "I'll do what I can to collar the goold-brick swindlers, Camp an' Reynard—an', as I said before, I'll set about the case this very day."

"When shall I hear from you?"

"You may hear from me widin twenty-four hours, an' you may not for the nixt three or four days."

"Anyhow, I can safely promise this—that Clamp an' the fox—I mane Reynard—'ll be found if they're widin forty-eight hours' thravel av New York."

"An' now, Isic, I must put out for Mulberry street an' have a confab wid the chief, an' whoile I'm there a look at the picther gallery, as I moight recognize some ould frinds I'm intherested in jest now—Messrs. Clamp an' Reynard, to-wit."

The foregoing conversation took place in Rody Rogan's lodgings on Oliver street.

The detective had retired late and had not risen early.

He had delayed his breakfast until ten.

A "confab" with his good landlady, Mrs. Murphy, was interrupted by the announcement that one Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff wished to see Mr. Rogan on business.

"It's that droied-up ould pawnbroker, Ike Bickerstaff," the widow emphasized.

"What can he want wid you, I dunno?"

"Well, I'm shure I don't know aither, Missis Murphy, ma'am. Maybe he's come here to sell me a bargain in di'mon's, or perhaps a shuit av clothes or a silk hat."

"It's jokin' yez are, Misther Rogan?" said Mrs. Murphy, looking dubiously at her lodger.

"Sorra joke, ma'am."

"Jake has heard belooke I'm tunderin' stuck on di'mon's an' he wants to sell me some."

"Howaiver, show him in, Missis Murphy, an' let's hear what he's to say."

The good woman hesitated.

Isaac Bickerstaff, pawnbroker, was evidently not a favorite of hers, and when she was on the point of passing from the dining-room she turned back with:

"Misther Rogan, aroon?"

The words were uttered interrogatively.

"Yis, ma'am?"

"Couldn't I say yez was out, avick?"

"Whoy?"

"So he wouldn't bother yez."

"No, ma'am; don't say that."

"Whin I'm in, I'm in; whin I'm out, I'm out."

"Besoides, I've lots av money in me insoide pocket to speculate on di'mon's, or any other ould thing."

"Show Misther Bickerstaff in, Missis Murphy—show him in at wanet."

"I'll be countin' the porice av a di'mon' ring while you're away."

With a profound sigh and with much apparent reluctance the worthy soul withdrew, finally ushering in Isaac Bickerstaff, pawnbroker, whom she regarded with no little aversion, engaging in pantomime behind Isaac's back to emphasize her dislike and warning Rody to look out for himself, and not be gulled into paying an exorbitant price for diamonds he didn't want and wouldn't wear.

CHAPTER II.

A RECEIVER OF STOLEN GOODS.

"Now, Isic, me b'y, make your mind aisy. If you don't hear from me in twenty-four hours, thin you'll hear from me in forty-eight—but we'll say three or four days at the most."

"I wish you success, Mr. Rogan."

"Well, if there's any av that commodity flyin' round, I'm goin' to get it, Isic—an' thank you for your good wishes, not forgettin' the check, me b'y."

"Oh, that's all right," replied Bickerstaff cheerily.

"Succeed, and there will be more checks, so you perceive it's not a matter of limiting you."

"Faith, Ikey, you're a foine paymaster; divil a better! But now I must love an' lave you, for I ought to have been at headquarters before this."

"Well, good-morning then, Mr. Rogan."

"Good-mornin', Isic."

"Why do you call me Isic when my name is Isaac?"

"Oh, faith, that's only a slip av me ould Irish tongue. But how'll Misther Bickerstaff do for a change?"

And away went Rody laughing.

Bickerstaff looked after him, a frown settling on his face.

"I don't quite know what to make of that Irishman," he muttered.

"He will insist on addressing me as Isic, while on my part I'm particular in addressing him as Mr. Rogan."

"It sometimes strikes me that the clod-hopping rascal is poking fun at me, and what makes it worse is that I have to grin and bear it."

"If I could do better I would, but I can't. Something must be done for Morris, or—well, that ends it."

With these words on his lips Isaac Bickerstaff crossed the Bowery into one of the side streets, while Rody pursued his way to headquarters.

What were the thoughts that were passing through Rody's mind?

Some of them were as follows:

"Well, Mr. Bickerstaff, it's moighty liberal you are, me foine fella—a foive hunthred dollar retainer!"

"Now who'd a thought the ould skinflint wd be so extravagant?"

"Wonther did he throy any wan else?—shure he did!"

"But he foun' I was the on'y illigible man for the work—an' av coorse he comes to me."

"Clamp an' Thramp—no, I mane Clamp an' Reynard. Two good names to go to bed wid, 'pon me sawkins!"

"Thin there's that poor divil Morris—an' a long sintince hangin' over him."

"Now, for what raison does the jaynia Ikey intherest himself in him?"

"Is it through frindship, koindness, humanity? Not much, I don't think; begob, Ikey ud hang a man—his own father—for half a foive hunthred, if all I hear av him is thrue."

"Well, well, it's little use av speculatin' till I have a look over thim picthers an' a confab wid the chief, who'll no doubt inlightin me as to Isic's peculiar bent in this case, an' what he's goin' to make out av it."

It was close on the noon hour when Rody made his appearance at police headquarters.

"Rather late, ain't you?" said the chief as he entered the office.

"Well, yis, I am a little behoind time," answered Rody, carelessly seating himself.

"But it's not much rist I'm gettin' these days, chief, let me asshure you."

"No? What's the matter?"

"Well, I was up on that case av Finney's till afther twelve o'clock; an' thin afore I could get home it was noigh two."

"Thin Missis Murphy, good sowl, would insist on me takin' some grule (gruel), Irish oatmale, an' that kep' me up another hour. Thin, this mornin', who should come along but ould Ike Bickerstaff—"

"You mean the pawnbroker?"

"That same."

"What was his trouble?"

"He was in no throuble at all, faith; it was over somebody ilse—a man named Sam Morris, convicted av 'gooldbrick' swindlin'—an' he's ingaged me to work up evidence for him—that is, for Morris, who he says is an innocent man."

"Knowin' a thrife about Misther Isile's character, you my better believe I was surprisid."

"'Is the divil turned saint?' sed I to meself, 'or what has taken possession av him—to plidge himself to the extint av a folve hunthred dollar retainin' fee for a convicted swindler?"

"Well, sir, I didn't foind out any more than that he was cock-shure Morris was innicint and that the two guilty min was Thramp—no, I mane Clamp—an' Reynard—Fox Clamp an' Ned Reynard."

"Fancy two sich names, chief—the names alone are enough to thransport a man for loife."

"Howandever, he handed me the check and I took charge av the case, an' am goin' to work on it at once."

"What are your clews?"

"Dickins a much more thin these picthers, avick."

"These are the cabinet photographs av Clamp an' Reynard, chief; did you iver see the gentilemin afore?" His superior took the photos and glanced at them.

"Hum—um!" he said after looking at them for a moment. "They're by no means strangers; think you'll find these same fellows in our art gallery—numbers—numbers—well, we'll soon know their numbers; let's go and inspect."

Rody followed his chief into another room, where the "rogues' gallery" was on view.

"Here you are! Here are the men!" cried the chief. "Compare your photographs with these pictures, Nos. 1244 and 1245."

"Do you think they look alike?"

"Begob, sir, they're a dead resemblance; they're the dead spit av aich other."

"Now, by your lave, chief, let us turn to their histhory."

"Very good. Here is their record," said the chief.

"And their names are—"

"Clamp and Reynard?"

"Nothing of the sort. No such common names, you can bet your life."

"Count Gabriel De Montmorency—"

"Which av thim—Clamp?"

"No; Reynard. Count Gabriel De Montmorency, alias the Fox, alias the Magsman."

"Oho!" exclaimed Rody.

"That satisfies me to the loife; so it's Fox! Good enough—good enough, chief!"

"Now for the other fella—Thramp—Clamp."

"Clamp was known here eight years ago as Adolphus Punnickin Beetroot."

"The d—I you say! Beg pardon, chief, but do you mane Clamp called himself on that interesting occasion Adolphus Pumpkin Beetroot?"

The chief glanced at Rody for a moment to see if he was in earnest.

"No, not quite that," he dryly replied; "but Adolphus Punnikin Beetroot—and that, I believe, is his right name."

"Well it's better thin Fox Clamp, anyhow. But it's Gabriel Montmorency that takes the cake, not to mention the toitle av Count that he pinned onto it."

"So Reynard is Montmorency, an' Clamp's Beetroot—Adolphus Punnikin Beetroot—rooth instid av root."

"Well, that's down, anyway. Now, what else?"

"Convicted of grand larceny."

"Oh, the thieves av the world! Grand larceny, is it? Well, that's not so bad that it moightn't be worse. An' their sintince, chief?"

"Sentence light; recommended to mercy by the jury; three years."

"Did they sarve their time—their term?"

"Yes, they did. Pretended to have reformed while in prison, and were to turn a new leaf and pursue an honest career on their liberation. Next heard of them they went West—Denver—and opened a gambling hell."

"That was the extint of their reform! Faith, that was a foine way to start in. It's no wonther they wint into the goold-brick industry. Any more about thim?"

"No; that ends the record. But why has the pawnbroker interested himself in Morris?" asked the chief.

"Because av his honisty, he said."

"Bah! His honesty, eh? Just the very thing to damn him, I should think, in Bickerstaff's mind."

"Do you really know who Isaac Bickerstaff is?"

"A man as hangs three balls over his door," replied Rody, with much naiveness of expression; "me uncle—otherwise a receiver av other people's property for a consitheration."

"Er—um! That's all you know about him, eh? Well, I'll tell you something you maybe don't know. Isaac Bickerstaff is a fence—a well-known receiver of stolen goods that is well-known to the crooked fraternity of the metropolis."

"The police have tried hard to trap him, but through some occult means have failed so far."

"Now, Rogan," pursued the chief gravely, "but for one thing I would dissuade you from having any part in the case. But, as he has been so munificent as to give you a five-hundred-dollar retainer, I would say go ahead and find out all you can."

"Depend upon it, Mr. Bickerstaff has some important axe of his own to grind, and this may be the means of unravelling much of what has been mysterious in his career."

"As to Morris being an innocent man, I won't, nor can I, venture an opinion."

"It is possible, however, he is, and still more probable he is not."

"But this you can assure yourself of—Clamp and Reynard have made Bickerstaff a relentless and bitter enemy."

"Be careful, however, how you conduct your investigations, for Master Isaac is a fox of very large calibre, and may get you into a hole by his almost superhuman craft."

"Watch him—don't let a move escape you. That's all I have to say for the present."

"Now my course is clear, Misther Chief, an' if meould Ike is playin' any game on me I fancy he'll be the first to feel it."

"Anyway, I don't, thrust him farther thin I can see him."

"But I'll take all the precautions necessary to keep out av harum's way."

"Do so," replied the chief.

"If you discover what induces this man to give you so big a retaining fee you will have accomplished much."

"You will find that Bickerstaff has some tremendously weighty purpose in engaging you."

"He's a man who gives nothing for nothing—and, as for helping an innocent man, why, you may guage yourself by what I've already said."

"In the first place, this feeling business is not to be known to other members of the department, so let me advise you to keep your own counsel and say nothing about it."

"Five hundred dollars is not to be picked up every day."

"Just one more word."

"Well, chief?"

"Where is Morris?"

"In the Tombs."

"Then call on him ere you do anything further."

CHAPTER III.

A TOMB'S LAWYER.

It was one o'clock p. m.

Rody had left police headquarters and was making for Centre street.

The Tombs city prison was his destination; Sam Morris, an inmate thereof, was the man he was going to see.

Turning into Centre street, he met his visitor of the morning, Isaac Bickerstaff.

It looked as though Bickerstaff had been to the Tombs before him.

In turning the corner they fell almost into each other's arms.

"Hello, Mr. Rogan! I didn't expect to meet you so soon," greeted Ike when he had somewhat recovered from his confusion.

"Nor I you, Isic, me b'y," smiled Rody, with a wink.

"But it would seem we're bound to meet aich other, in spoite av what I said.

"Where have ye been now, if it's a fair question to ask?"

"Oh, up at the tax office.

"I was in arrears, and it occurred to me the best thing I could do was to call and settle without giving trouble.

"Where are you going, yourself?"

"Jest as far as the City Hall, Isic—to see a frind.

"The frind is going to be married, an' he wants me to be on hand to give the fair wan away.

"Av coorse I've to be a witness as well—an' maybe to have the first kiss, who knows?"

"Well," said Bickerstaff, "I wish you luck, but don't lose sight of the Morris matter, whatever you do. The case of an unjustly convicted man is of more importance than ten thousand marriages," added he, significantly.

"Yis—to Morris, divil a doubt," laughed Rody.

"But never fear, Ike, me b'y, I'll 'tind to thim swindlin' villains Clamp an' Reynard.

"Keep your moind aisy, avick—the clouds 'll roll by purty soon an' your frind, Sammy, 'll be breathin' the sweet air av freedom."

"I hope so with all my heart."

And Isaac Bickerstaff hurried away.

"So it's the taxes you want to pay, eh, Ike, my b'y?"

"Oh, yis, I know you couldn't rist till ye paid thim same taxes—the divil take you for a lolier!"

"No, but it's to the Tombs ye went, aroon, to have a chin wid Misther Morris an' tell him you've ingaged me to clear his skirts.

"Well, sure, I'm in for it now, an' I'm goin' to do the best I can."

As Rody was about to pass into the Tombs he was halted by a lawyer acquaintance.

"Anything up, Mr. Rogan?"

"Not a great dale, Misther Mullins.

"What do you know about the case of Sam Morris?"

"Sam Morris? Why, that's the chap who was convicted of gold-brick swindling."

"I guess it's the same.

"There's no two Sam Morris in yonder just now," replied Rody with a backward jerk of his thumb.

"He was convicted yisterday, I believe."

"Yes; yesterday afternoon. But what have you to do with him?"

"Not much, on'y I'm goin' to prove he's innocent," said Rody.

"Aha! That's a good joke, too.

"Going to prove him innocent, are you?" said the lawyer, a young man with close-cropped red hair and clean-shaven face and with the crafty look of a fox in his long, narrow eyes.

"That's what I'm goin' to do, Misther Mullins," returned Rody with great decision.

"My client's an unjustly convicted man, an' I'm goin' to have the conviction sit asoide.

"Have you anything agin it?"

"No, only that you'll find you've bitten off more than you can chew.

"Morris has been proven guilty beyond the peradventure of a doubt, and there is not a man who believes him innocent except yourself.

"Hold on, though!" pursued the lawyer, interrupting himself. "I'm wrong there. There is one—Isaac Bickerstaff, the pawnbroker."

"How do you know that?"

"How do I know it?" exclaimed Mullins. "Why, man alive, I've just a few minutes ago been talking to him.

"He was in to see Morris, and if one would believe Ikey, Sam Morris is a veritable saint on stilts—and if he hasn't wings he ought to have."

"Why?"

"So he could fly away to the realms of bliss—up in

that blue ethereal space—where never a green-goods man, gold-brick swindler, or even—"

"A lawyer iver entered," Rody filled in drily.

"Oh, yis, we know all about that, Misther Mullins; but ye say Ike has been visitin' the poor fella?"

"Faith, aye; and I believe has taken considerable interest in the case.

"So depend, where Ikey takes interest in a man's well-being, it isn't—"

"Pure an' unadulterated frindship that urges him, or—"

"Any such poppycock rot as a belief in his honesty.

"You're a man of the world and detective enough to know that.

"There's something behind Mr. Bickerstaff's action, depend upon it, Rogan.

"I've known Ike Bickerstaff close onto a dozen years, and, in my opinion, a more unconscionable villain doesn't live in Gotham to-day.

"He is one who never loses sight of his own interests—not if the life of his own brother were at stake—and when he vows by all the saints in the calendar that Morris is innocent, then I know there are dollars and cents in it for Ikey.

"Either that or he is mightily afraid of the conviction and sentence of a man who could, if he willed it, send him to Sing Sing.

"So, having told you what I think of the matter, I must bid you good day, for I've an engagement with a friend at—"

"The tax office," smiled Rody drily.

"Well, good luck to you, avick—go an' clear the arrears off an', loike another frind av moine, rist aisy in your moind for the rist av the saison.

"Misther Bickerstaff's been at it, too, an' I don't see why you should take a back sate."

The foxey attorney looked at Rody for a second or two quizzically, then, with a few droll winks of both eyes, left the spot.

"Och, but you're a knowin' wan, Misther Mullins!"

"Be me sowl, but you an' Isic would make a beautiful talm; ye'd both chait the angel Gabriel, take his flamin' soord an' stale the eyes out av his head, so ye would."

And with this adjuration Rody passed through the wicket into the city prison.

"Well, Mr. Rogan, what can I do for you, sir?"

Thus was Rogan addressed by a deputy keeper whom he knew.

"Do for me, is it?" smiled Rody. "Troth, you can do wan good sarvice for me, Thomaseen (Thomas)—you can send me direct to Sam Morris' cell—that is, if he's not otherwise ingaged."

"I don't think he is at present," answered the deputy, laughing.

"But he's had several visitors this morning already."

"He had, thin? Oh, the thief of the world—I mane, the honist man—to go an' disturb his moind wid visitors, whin he ought to be thinkin' av the sintince for-ninst him."

"Yes, Mr. Rogan; Sam is in pretty tough straits, with a sentence of maybe fifteen years staring him in the face."

"Nonsinse, man! It's his first offence. They can't give him twelve years, at the most, even if he is guilty, an' I know he isn't."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the keeper ironically. "You're another of them, eh? The third who has said he's innocent."

"An' who are the other two, might I ask?"

"Isaac Bickerstaff, the pawnbroker, for one."

"I heard all about him. Who's the third?"

"A stranger who calls himself Abram Welsher; says he's from Chicago, and knew Morris for over twenty years, and appears to think he's the honestest man he's ever met since he's been in the country.

"To be candid with you, I believe Welsher to be a blankety-blank liar."

"Why?"

"Because he's no more from the West than I am.

"I fancy, with a little trouble, one could locate him as a resident of West street, and a fence at that.

"You see, when he was going, after his interview with Morris, a prisoner was being brought in—a green-goods man named Whately—and a sign passed between them which told me they were well known to each other.

"Now, Whately, I know for a fact, has never been

farther from New York than Jersey, so I at once decided they were pretty much of the same kidney, and that Welsher was a West street crook and receiver of stolen goods.

"Two nice men they are to vow Morris is an unjustly convicted man!"

"Bickerstaff and Welsher?"

"Aye, Bickerstaff and Welsher.

"It's my belief they all belong to the same gang—and that Ike Bickerstaff is the one who profits most by their rascalities.

"Morris? Well, there's not much known about Morris—used to keep a saloon, I think, on Canal street, within a block of where Abe Coakley used to be, and—there's that lawyer again, Bart Mullins!

"He tried hard to get a retainer to defend Morris; said he candidly believed Morris was innocent.

"But when he found it was no go he mighty soon changed his tune—and now Morris can't be painted in colors too black to suit his fastidious tastes.

"The whole box and dice of these men make me weary.

"Now you have 'em and now you haven't—just as their interests are served.

"Here, Andy!" addressing another keeper, "take Mr. Rogan to Sam Morris' cell, number twenty, first tier."

Rody hastened after Andy.

But before they had reached Morris' cell one of the under-keepers got to asking Andy some questions, which occasioned a delay of nearly ten minutes.

While Rody stood impatiently watching them Bart Mullins, the lawyer, slipped past, and when the detective got to Morris' cell he was not a little surprised to see Mullins before him.

"I thought you was in a t'underin' hurry," he said, "to go—"

"Yes, just so, Mr. Rogan—just so. I was in a hurry to go to—but never mind that now.

"I've a proposition to make to Morris which may probably quash the conviction."

"You have, eh?" echoed Rody, eyeing the lawyer with a quizzical expression.

CHAPTER IV.

SAM MORRIS BREAKS DOWN.

"YES, Mr. Rogan, I've a proposition," repeated Mullins, with a melodramatic flourish of his hand, "which will be acceptable to Morris."

"Certainly—most certainly. Anything that will save a man from fifteen years in State's prison must be acceptable—ahem!—you understand me?"

The lawyer was interrupted by a voice from cell twenty.

"Say, Mullins, it's no use going any further with your proposition. I decline your services."

"What's that you say, Morris?" cried Mullins, like unto a man who had not heard aright.

"I repeat—I decline your services. In other words, I don't want you—I wouldn't have you for a gold mine.

"Now, I guess you have your answer," from Morris decisively.

"Do you mean that?" cried the astonished lawyer. "Five hundred dollars will save you—man alive! don't you hear?"

"I decline your services," came again the firm, quiet voice of Morris.

"Eh—eh! Maybe you won't live to repent your decision. Five hundred dollars is all I ask—do you hear me?"

"Not five hundred cents—not as much as would pay your way into a dime museum. I want none of you. Be off!"

"Fine treatment for a genuine legal luminary!" exclaimed the lawyer, aghast.

"Do you hear that, Andy? A regular uncalled-for, unprovoked insult!"

"Good day, Morris—good day, sir. You shall hear from me again—and not in the dim future.

"I hope not—with all my heart, I hope not. Go hang yourself, Mullins!"

"You dog, if you weren't a prisoner I'd mash your face. I would, by the eternal—"

"Never mind, I'll have it out with you yet—by jove, I will!"

And the baffled attorney, with a black frown on his

face, turned on his heel and beat a precipitate retreat.

"Good riddance to bad rubbish," quoted Andy, laughing.

Morris did not think it worth while to reply to Mullins' parting shot.

He now turned his attention to the new-comer.

"Sam, here's a gent who wants to see you," said Andy.

"Another lawyer?" from the prisoner querulously.

"I guess not," said Andy.

"A reporter? I don't want to see him. I've said all I have to say.

"Besides, so far, the press has treated me shabbily. I'm not for publication—that's final," rattled off Sam in one breath.

"You will see me, Misther Morris, I know," interposed Rody. "I come from Misther Isic Bickerstaff."

Morris grunted:

"Well, I'm here. Now, what do you want?"

"My name is Rogan," rejoined Rody.

"I presume you're a detective?"

"I am."

"Well, Andy, I suppose you may as well unlock the cell door and admit him.

"I fancy I know what the gentleman wants," said Sam resignedly.

"Av coorse you do," chimed in Rody.

"Isic must have told you about it."

"No; he did not. I didn't expect you."

"You never towid a bigger loie in your life, me b'y," muttered Rody to himself.

"But you haven't a bad voice. I'd like to take a square look at your phiz, anyhow."

Andy unlocked the cell door, admitting Rody to the presence of the prisoner.

"Now, Andrew," said Sam, "you may leave us together for a quarter of an hour or so—understand?"

"There's a 'V,' old man, and there will be some more before I leave here.

"You've been very good, Andy, and I'm not the man to forget a kindness."

"All right, Sam; I'll not return for half an hour.

"Anything I can do for you meanwhile?"

"Yes; don't let any more of them blanked lawyers bother me.

"I have no use for them now—the more especially for such fellows as Mullins."

"None of them shall trouble you, Sam. Leave that to me," said Andy as he went away.

Rody, when they were left alone, set about studying Sam's features.

He found himself confronting a well-preserved man of about forty years of age, with black hair and a prematurely gray mustache.

He was of medium height, rather muscular in build, and of features prepossessing and regular.

The brows were black and thick and arched, and the eyes, which in that light appeared to be hazel, were well apart.

Judging by Morris' face, one would be favorably impressed; the entire personnel of the man was good, and so, indeed, Rody judged.

"I will dale wid Morris frankly," decided the detective.

"He has loied, but it isn't natheral to him; it's been some av me frind Ikey's thricks.

"But now we'll foind out the throuble."

"Well, Mr. Rogan?" from the convicted man as he looked curiously at his visitor.

"Well, Misther Morris, I thought it as well to come an' see you in respect to your case, which I've undertaken to work up, at the request of Misther Bickerstaff."

"He's so impressed wid your innocence that he couldn't rist till he kem to see what I could do for you.

"He med one grave error, however."

"What was that?"

"It was an underhanded soort av mistake."

"Eh?"

"An error in which he throled to desave me.

"Whin I was on me way here I met him as I turned from Canal into Centher. I asked him where he had been—I knew well he'd been to see you, to warn you that I was comin' perhaps—but, instead av comin' out loike a man an' tellin' me, he gev me a ghost story, which wouldn't go for sour apples, as he must know

if he had enny sinse in his head that I would foind it out sooner or lather.

"Now, wan thing I warn you, Sam, me b'y, not to loie to me, or keep anything back.

"In plain English, I want you to look upon me as your father confessor—an' your frind.

"Moind what I say, now—your frind."

For several seconds Sam regarded Rody with the broadest kind of a smile.

Then, seemingly concluding it was all right, he said:

"It's no use denying it, Mr. Rogan—Bickerstaff did call, and we had some conversation about you respecting my unfortunate predicament.

"He told me that you had taken my case in hand, and that you were to set to work this very day to clear my name from an unjust accusation.

"I don't know how you're to succeed. You'll find it uphill work I am afraid.

"The question arose in my mind whether you could ever reach the guilty parties—I mean Clamp and Reynard, who are now—"

"You were goin' to say out av the counthry?" Rody interrupted, smiling.

"Yes, most probably they are," replied Sam.

"However, one cannot be sure of anything.

"I have thought the matter over for hours and weighed it carefully, but all my conclusions are indefinite and worthless.

"I so said to Bickerstaff when he called this morning, but in this he did not agree with me."

"Took a more hopeful view of the case?"

"Yes."

"He was roight," from Rody, with decision.

"The ship is niver quoite lost till it goes down, avick.

"Now, lis'en to me, Morris, an' take heart av grace for a whole.

"I've undertaken worse cases nor yours an' emarged on the top av the heap.

"These fellas are still in the States, an' widin' forty-eight hours we'll either have thim or have somethin' definite to work on.

"But you can help me a good dale yourself, Morris."

"In which way?" asked Sam.

"In this way: How long did you know the min afore they sowld the spurious goold brick to Amos Clarke?"

"Two or three days."

"A purty short acquaintance to go rollin' 'round wid min who made a p'int of sellin' brass foillin's for rale, Simon pure goold," exploded Rody.

"Didn't you even suspect?"

"Let me explain," interrupted Sam.

"I was drinkin' when I met these men—in fact, I was so far gone that I didn't know what I was doing?"

"I imagined all sorts of things—that I was acquainted with Clamp and Reynard for years.

"You see, I wasn't myself; I fancy I must have been hypnotized, and I believe my present unlucky predicament is due more to hypnotism than to overstepping the bounds of sobriety.

"Of course, you could get no judge or jury to believe it—so on this point I kept silent."

"For the raison no wan'd believe you?"

"Exactly."

"It may be you was roight there, too.

"But which av thim do you think hypnotized you?"

"Clamp."

"Otherwise, Adolphus Pumpkin Beetroot."

"Adolphus — Pumpkin — Beetroot?" repeated Sam slowly and puzzledly.

"Well," corrected Rody, perceiving his mistake, "it's not Beetroot, aither.

"I'm wrong—intoirely wrong.

"This is the name—now, pay attention—Adolphus Punnikin Beetroot. I've no doubt it's the Garman for pumpkin an' beetroot—two very wholesome an' useful vegetables.

"But, no matter whether it's Punnikin or Pumpkin, the fact remains that he passed a spurious goold brick on Amos Clarke, received foorteen thousand dollars good kine (coin) for it, an' that you have to suffer for his wrong-doin'."

Sam nodded gravely.

"Well, now," pursued Rody, "havin' disposed av that p'int at last, let us take the nixt."

"Well, Mr. Rogan?"

"How did it occur to you to recommend Clarke?"

"As a possible purchaser?"

"Yis."

"Because I knew him."

"How long?"

"Several years—fully twelve or thirteen."

"Hum," said Rody thoughtfully. "Had you any dealin's wid Clarke before?"

"Yes; about half a dozen business transactions in all."

"Were they satisfactory?"

"All except one."

"What was that?"

"Well," stammered Sam, "it would be too long to enter into particulars—besides, the story is not a pleasant one to tell.

"He lost on that occasion five thousand dollars."

"Av coorse it couldn't be helped, could it?"

"No, of coorse not. But I see now where his persecution comes in," cried Morris as with a sudden inspiration.

"He said on the occasion of the loss that I had profited by it—that the money was as good as taken out of his pocket.

"He said, too—I distinctly remember—that he would see I was paid in full for the part I had taken in the transaction.

"It was a devilish, cruel revenge—to ruin an innocent man!"

"Oh, I see it all now! It is as clear as day.

"Amos Clarke was bent on my degradation and ruin, and he has succeeded but too well!"

For the first time Sam Morris was overcome—gave wholly and utterly away to his feelings, and cried like a child as he sank back on his cot.

CHAPTER V.

MICKEY THOMPSON, OF "THE TRUMPET."

"BEGOB, if that's not ividence av innocince tell me what is," murmured Rody to himself. "It's aither innocine or splendid, foine actin'!"

"No, no," after a while, "it's genuine; the man is cryin' fit to break his heart.

"Well, well, let the tears run; they will do him good.

"Faith, it's foine he thought av the little thransaction that cost owld Clarke foive thousan' dollars.

"Oh, the dhirty, revengeful scut! It's moighty well ashamed av himself he ought to be.

"But sich min niver has shame; it 'ud be on'y a useless incumberance to thim, an' they wouldn't pay the freightage."

Presently Morris recovered himself, finally rising from the cot with almost all evidences of his recent emotion gone.

"You will excuse my giving way like that," said Sam feelingly.

"It was more the nature of a woman to go on as I did. It's not often I do those things. I have always flattered myself that I am pretty self-contained, but I give you my word this affected me like a puling girl.

"Why? Well, I will tell you.

"I didn't see anything out of the ordinary in my arrest up to now.

"Suddenly your questioning awoke a whole host of conjectures, then I got the first intimation of how and from whence my danger sprang.

"It was all a put-up job, Mr. Rogan."

"A put-up job? What do you mane?" said Rody.

"This: Clarke knew I was drinking, and, not forgetting the loss of his five thousand dollars, he got those two men to ensnare me into this spurious gold-brick transaction."

"Is such a thing possible?"

"Possible?" exclaimed Sam excitedly.

"My dear Mr. Rogan, you don't know to what lengths some men will go to have revenge.

"They will sacrifice honor, mercy, justice—every thing to gratify their resentment.

"Do you know this Clarke?"

"Do I know him? No, the dhirty, mane spalpeen, I don't."

"But if what you say is thrue, I won't be long widout makin' his acquaintance, an' foindin' out for mesilf what soort av a beauty he is.

"So you rally an' thruly think he put up the job, do you?" said Rody.

"Yes, positive of it!"

"An' the goold-brick swindle was no swindle at all, at all?"

"Precisely. But to prove that you must find Clamp and Reynard."

"Run them to earth, bring them face to face with Amos Clarke and in a short time after I'll be a free man."

"Do you hear, Mr. Rogan? A free man!" more excitedly exclaimed Sam.

He began to walk up and down his cell with impatient steps.

"Poor divil! he sees a ray av sunloight at last," murmured the detective pityingly.

"All his indifference as to what would become av him is gone—an' that's the way hope inters the human bosom!"

Between two and three minutes were passed in silence.

"Have you anything more to say?" inquired Rody at last.

"Yes," suddenly from Sam, who stopped in his walk and, turning, faced the detective; "I have this to say: I can now see why Mr. Bickerstaff is so anxious to save me."

"Aren't your friends?"

"We have been—yes, and still are."

"But that's not the motive which impelled him to give you a retainer of five hundred dollars to push my case."

"No?"

"No. Nor has my innocence to do with it, so far as I can see."

"I can well believe it," smiled Rody.

"I don't suppose Mither Bickerstaff cares a thraneen's cap whither you're the wan thing or the other."

"You're roight there, avick; he has some other motive—"

"And what would you fancy it was?"

"Divil a thing in loife other thin to offsit Mither Amos Clarke," replied Rody.

"You are right; they're unfriendly. It's an affair of revenge on both sides."

"Bickerstaff will go to great lengths to save me."

"An' the other fella 'll go aiqually far to have you sintinced," said Rody.

"But keep a stout heart, avick, an' if you don't come out at the big ind av the shtick it'll be no fault av Rody Rogan's."

"An' now for ould Clarke, the t'underin' thief av the world."

Rody pressed the convicted man's hand as Andy, the keeper, appeared at the cell door, and a few moments later the detective was walking briskly up Centre street to Park row.

"Now," said he to himself, "I must go an' interview Amos Clarke."

"It appears to be a downroight, wicked conspiracy."

"Morris looks an innocent man—an' I believe he is wan."

"It'll be hard enough, no doubt, to get a hold av those two bosthoons, Clamp and Reynard; but, wance they're laid be the heels, we'll get at the truth, be hook or be crook."

At the corner of Chambers street Rody was accosted by a stalwart-looking young fellow named Thompson.

"Jest the very b'y I wanted to see!" cried Rody in great glee.

"How are ye, Mickey, avick?"

"Bully! How's yourself?"

"From fair to middlin'."

"By the way, Mickey, you're a reporter, aren't you?"

"Why do you ask that? Don't you know well I am—the sporting reporter of 'The Trumpet'!"

"Yis, yis, I'd almost forgot—an' you was on the 'Aige' afore you was on the 'Trumpet'?"

"Certainly."

"Well, thin, look here, Mickey—what war you befor you was a sportin' editor?"

"I don't care about bein' reminded of that," sulkily from Thompson.

"Let bygones be bygones."

"Where's the good of throwing the past into a man's face?"

"Thru enough for you, me b'y," smiled Rody, putting his hand in a friendly way on the reporter's shoulder.

"But wan sometimes has an objct in askin' a quistion; an' you know you'd niver have dhrawn an honest breath but for me; I looked after you loike a father,

so I did, whin ivery wan was dead set agin you—an' it doesn't look well now for you to be so thin-skinned, me hayro—bekase whoy, your reformation mayn't be as lastin' as you think."

"Maybe not. But as I feel now, you bet there'll be no backsliding—not if I have to go and make a hole in the water and be done with it."

"You know as well as I do, Rody, that it was drink that impelled me to go wrong."

"I was always all right but for the drink; you know that. Under its influence I did many things which I afterward bitterly regretted—that you also know, as well as I can tell you—"

"Roight ye are, me b'y," Rody interrupted cheerily. "I'll bear you out in that."

"Maybe I hurt your feelin's by referin' to the past. If so, I'm sorry."

"But listen here, Mickey. I'm in a divil av a quantity, an' it may be you can help me out."

"That is the raison I referred to the past—"

"What's the trouble?"

"How many crooked houses do you know in New York? Think, now."

"Ah—um!" returned Thompson. "I see what you're after."

"You want information?"

"That's what I'm seekin', me b'y."

"Well, in answer to your question," replied the young man, "I know every dive and fence and thieves' rendezvous in the city."

"That's the hammer an' tongs, me b'y!"

"Now we're comin' at it, avick—half a dozen steps at a tolme!"

"Well, what is it you actually want to know?" from the sporting reporter.

"Did you iver run across two min by the name av Clamp and Reynard, alias Adolphus Punnikin Beet-rooth, an' alias the Count Gabriel de Montmorency?"

"Not by those names."

"Can you describe them?" asked the reporter.

"I can do better."

"Take a squint at their photos an' tell me if you have iver seen them."

Rody produced the photographs given to him by Isaac Bickerstaff and handed them to Thompson.

"Phew! Philalaloo!" cried Mickey as he glanced at the pictures. "And so these fellows call themselves Adolphus Punnikin Beetrooth and the Count Gabriel de Montmorency?"

"By Juvenal, that's a go, sure enough! High life below stairs, eh?"

"Why, I know them as well almost as I know myself."

"Punnikin Beetrooth, I suppose, is Clamp, and Montmorency, Reynard?"

"You've struck it, aroon."

"Well, I didn't know them by these names."

"No?"

"Clamp is Bob Fish, a chap I often donned the gloves with when a mere lad at O'wney Geoghegan's, on the Bowery."

"O'wney is dead many years now," Thompson went on to explain, "but he was a man who took no back seat from any of 'em—big or little."

"He was a holy terror with his dukes, he was, and was as smart as a steel trap."

"But let's come to Reynard, alias the Count."

"His name was Jerry Dudley when I knew him; but I'm not surprised, for he always did have a hanker-in' for high-sounding names, prefixed by a title of some sort."

"Bob Fish, you say, an' Jerry Dudley?"

"Yes, those are the names," replied Thompson.

"What have they been up to?"

"Where could wan have an interview wid them?"

"Do you want to see them badly?"

"Faith, you're roight, I do."

CHAPTER VI.

RODY MEETS AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

"Look a-here, Mickey," proceed Rody. "There's an innocent man in the Tombs awaitin' sintince—awaitin' sintince for a croime he niver done, an' which manes to him twelve years at laste in Sing Sing."

"Do you discern the drift av that, Mickey Thompson?"

"Moind what I say—the man is convicted an' await-

in' sintince, an' if we don't get ividence to prove him innocent, away they'll pack him off, bag and baggage, be the ind av the week."

"Well, what do you want me to do?" asked Thompson.

"I helped to save you wance, an' I want you help save an innocent man now. One good turn deserves another, d'ye moind?"

"But tell me how I am to help you. Anything you say I will do. I'd be a cur if I forgot the fix I was in myself," replied the reporter with feeling.

"So you would, avick. But I know you're not made av that soort av stuff."

"Well, I jest want you to go 'round to ivery place you know an' thry an' get some thrace av these fellas; an' I want you to do it at wance, an' make as quick work of it as you can."

"Will twinty dollars pay you for a day an' noight's work?" asked Rody.

"I don't want pay!" from Thompson decisively.

"Man aloive, don't you know I'm a bizniss man?" cried Rogan, flashing a big wad of crisp, new bank bills before the reporter's eyes.

"Whin I ingage a man to work I pay him."

"I folla the Goolden Rule—'Do unto others as you'd be done by.'"

"If I do anything I expect paymint, on the principle that the laborer is worthy av his hoire—an' I don't see whoy that principle shouldn't suit you as well as me."

"So here's your money in advance, Mickey—an' now go an' get lave from your paper for the day."

"Not necessary; no fights coming off to-night," replied Thompson as he took the twenty-dollar bill which was forced on him.

"The fact is, I was going to loaf till to-morrow."

"It's graft, this to turn up, though one-fourth of it would be ample compensation."

"Do you know where to call?" from Rody.

"Headquarters."

"Well, you moight call there in case I wasn't at me lodgings; but, to make sure, I'll wroit me address on a slip av paper."

This he did with a lead pencil handed to him by Thompson.

"Now, aroon, take care av yourself, an' do what you can."

"But, above all, beware av your old inemy, John Barleycorn."

"Don't let him get a houlit av you, or your name is Dinnis."

"You needn't fear for that, Rody."

"I'm off the booze for good."

"I've gone through a course of Richardson, and now I can't drink intoxicants if you were to pay me."

"I'm more thin glad to hear you say so, Mickey."

"It may be that I will take a coorse av Richardson meself," grinned Rody.

"When do you expect to hear from me?"

"As soon as iver you can—to-night or to-morrow mornin'."

"But don't forgit wan thing," pursued the detective with emphasis, "that you will be careful av ascertainin' ivery particular—whin they were last seen, where, an', if they're out av the city, where they've gone."

"My opinion is they're still in New York—about wan av the best places a man can hide if he's done anything wrong."

"Anyway, whatever your luck, let me hear from you."

"Very good. Au revoir!"

"That's Frinch," said Rody as he watched the reporter walk briskly down Centre street, "jist as Frinch as thim Malmaisons that had the brother wid the yalla shtick who did all thim mysterious murthers long ago, the first toime I decided to become a detective." [See OLD CAP COLLIER LIBRARY No. 688.]

Rody Rogan's eyes followed the reporter's receding form till he disappeared from sight.

"Be the Hookey Walker, luck seems to come my way beautifully," chuckled the detective to himself.

"I no sooner make wan discovery thin I make another in meetin' Mickey Thompson."

"Was there iver such good forchune!"

"Mickey, so far, is the best card in the pack. He knows ivery crook an' gambler in New York, an' there's not a haunt they go to but he's conversant wid."

"Better thin all, he can be depinded on, an' if thim

two scalawags are in New York or widin foive hundred moiles av it, Mickey'll foind thim out—an' thin, me b'ys, you can lave the rist to me."

"Arrah, blazes! where's the use av foindin' fault wid Fate whin there's so many illigant spokes turnin' in her wheel!"

Rody now called at Amos Clarke's office, which was on Nassau street, between Fulton and Ann.

On inquiry he found Mr. Clarke would not return till between three and four o'clock in the afternoon.

This was over two hours of a wait, which didn't suit Rody at all.

"Do you know here he's gone?" asked he.

"No. Will you leave your name?" said the clerk.

"No; it's not necessary," replied the detective.

And Rody descended two flights of narrow stairs and emerged into the street again.

"Now, whoile I'm waitin', I moight as well take somethin' to ate," decided the detective.

A sudden turning brought him into a gentleman's arms.

"I wish you'd look where you're going?" grumbled the voice of the stranger.

"I beg pardon, sir," apologized Rody. "I didn't mane to—"

"Well, just be more careful in future, that's all," replied the man grumpily.

Something in the man's manner and voice struck Rody as being somewhat familiar.

"You're not very polite!" exploded Rody.

"What more can a man do than excuse himself?"

He wanted to get a good look at the stranger's face.

"Oh, you go to blazes!" cried the uncivil gentleman.

He was about moving away when the detective sprang forward and caught him by the arm.

In those few seconds Rody had placed the man, notwithstanding an evident disguise of both voice and face.

"What's the matter? Are you mad?" growled the fellow, who, though well dressed, had every appearance of a rough.

"Jest a little bit, Burton Tanner! How is it wid yourself?"

Rody gripped the man firmly.

"Let go my arm," exclaimed the fellow with an oath, "or I'll brain you!"

"Indeed, thin, you won't, Misther Tanner, for the first move to do it an' I'd wolpe the soidewalk wid you—d'ye moind that, now?"

"What do you want of me?"

"In the first place, I don't want you to attract a crowd, for that 'ud ruin your prospects intoirely!"

"Let's walk like gintlemin into Fulton street an' discuss the burnin' quistions av the day."

"Whin did you escape from up the river, Burton? An' how long have you been in the city, if it's a fair quistion to ask?"

"Curse it! I don't know you!"

"I'm mortal sorry for that," replied Rody quietly.

"But it so happens my memory is better than yours, Burton, me b'y."

"It 'ud be impolite to take yer wig an' whiskers off in the open street—but it's aisy done, you know—jest a twirl of the fingers an' away they'd come."

"But, as I hinted before, I'm a gintleman—wan av the ould stock from Ballyhack, which, in plain English, manes dhirty butther."

"Now, me ould frind, let us walk noice an' quoitely into Fulton street."

"Divil a wan av me 'll give you away unless for good raison."

"Come, avick—discuss the weather, or any other ould subject, so's the people won't obsarve we're anything but frinds."

"You don't mean, then, sindin' me back?" said Tanner in a low voice, which was shaking with suppressed excitement.

"Not me, man aloive! I on'y want to make you useful."

"In what way?" asked Burton, looking squarely into the detective's eyes.

"I'll tell you all that as we go on."

"How long have you been in the methropolis, Misther Tanner?"

"Two weeks."

"You gave thim the slip, clane an' dacent, so you did?"

"Yes."
 "An' you've been two weeks in New York?"
 "Yes—ever since my escape."
 "Um—that's good. It on'y proves what I said a while ago to an ould frind: 'If a man does anything wrong,' says I, 'an' wants to conceal himself, the best place for him to do it is in a large city, where no wan 'll think a lookin' for him.'"
 "You're right."
 "I know I'm right. I've had the expairiance, me hayro. An' so you've been two long weeks in New York?"
 Tanner nodded.
 "An' made no attmpt to hoide yourself?"
 "Only for the first three days. During that time I kept pretty shady," answered Burton.
 "Where are you going?"
 "Would you loike a dhrink at a quoeit wine shop?"
 "Why do you ask?"
 "Because there we can hould a confab widout attractin' attintion."
 "Well, let's go there," agreed Tanner, resigning himself to the inevitable.
 "But I don't understand what you want to talk about?"
 "Well, I do—an' that's enough for you, me b'y."
 "Put you arum well under moine, so we don't part company, for, as a rule, I don't loike to lose a frind whin I meet him."
 "So! That'll do noicely, me foine fella."

CHAPTER VII. A NOBLE ACT.

DOWN Fulton street the detective and Tanner went. Rody pulled up before a basement where they sold California wines by wholesale and retail.
 "This is the crib," said he.
 "Now, I'm goin' to give you a good glass av woine, Tanner—native grown and native distilled."
 They descended the steps of the wine cellar, which was far more commodious than it looked from the sidewalk.
 As it happened, there were no customers present, so, as Rody observed, they had the field to themselves.
 "We'll go back here," said he, indicating a part of the store which led under William street, "an' we can talk all we want, widout bein' overheard."
 "Now, let me order the woine, an' I'll get a good dhrop that'll warum the cockles av your heart."
 "There's nothin' loike knowin' the measure of those dhrinkin' places, me b'y."
 "To thim they know they can give good stuff—to thim they don't they can give any ould thing they please."
 The wine was called for and served.
 "Hould a bit, waither," said Rody. "Me frind may take a shmoke."
 "What koin'd av a segar 'ud you loike, Misther Jacksin?"
 "I won't smoke now, thank you," from Tanner.
 "Another toile av the roof! Well, we'll dhrink, thin. That'll do, waither; you can go," said Rody.
 The man who had served the wine departed.
 "Now, Tanner, avick," went on Rody. "The on'y man you've to be afear'd av now is Jacksin, the State detective—an' let me advise you to give him as woide a berth as you can."
 "It sounds precious queer such advice coming from you," said Burton, sipping his wine and gazing furtively at his companion.
 "Well, me b'y, it's on'y for your good," replied Rody.
 "I don't want to be a bar in the way av your liberty."
 "It's strange, too," he continued, "whin wan av your koin'd's in quad you're breakin' your necks to git out—an' whin you're out you're breakin' your necks to git in."
 "It doesn't sound very consistint, but it's thrue, an' you must admit it."
 "Be jabers, you're a lucky man, Tanner—a very lucky man!"
 "What the t'under induced you to give me sich sauce—you—you, who ought to be the last man to roise a ruction, consitherin' your condition?"
 "I didn't at first recognize you," from Burton apologetically.
 "Besides, I was in Queer street—I didn't know which way to turn."

"Be me sowl, for wance you turned into the roight man's arums, me hayro," said Rody, laughing.
 "An' if it was into Jacksin's, after your sauce, you war a dead-gone coon."
 "It behooves a man to be modist an' keep a civil tongue in his head."
 "The soft word turneth away a whole multitude av troubles," paraphrased Rody.
 "But that's not what I'm afther, aither, bekase you must see that yourself, as a sensible man."
 "Now, let's come down to bizniss."
 "Well?"
 "You've been here two weeks?"
 "Yes."
 "You've knocked about some av the ould resorts?"
 A nod from Burton.
 "Well?" said he.
 "That's what I'm comin' to. I'll be there in a minnit if you'll on'y have patience."
 "Here are two particular frinds of moine I'm goin' to show you—two piethers—photographs, commonly called."
 "Maybe you moight know thim. If you do it's a feather in your hat, Burton, me b'y."
 Rody produced the photographs which he had a little while before shown to Mickey Thompson and gave them into the hands of the crook.
 "Now let me see what soort av a jedge you are av character."
 "But jest lis'en to me before you begin. Tell the truth whatever you do. 'It'll pay in the long run,'" Rody added.
 A broad smile overspread Burton's face.
 "Well," said Rody, "do you recognize thim?"
 "Yes."
 "Who are they? We'll dispinse wid the readin' av their characters till later."
 "Who are they? Why, this is Bob Fish, an' this is Jerry Dudley."
 "Good man! You hit the nail on the head. Whin did you see thim last?"
 "I wouldn't tell you if I liked the beggars; no, honestly, I wouldn't, but they played me dirt and I want to be even."
 "I saw them two days ago."
 "Where?"
 "At Barney Moss's, on Stanton street," unhesitatingly answered Burton.
 "I saw them the day before that at Budd Rickard's, on the Bowery."
 "You're sure?"
 "I've no reason to tell you a lie," answered Burton tartly.
 "I don't like a bone in the cusses' bodies; they played me dirt, I tell you again," with emphasis and a darkening of his visage.
 "What was the throuble betune you?"
 "I'd rather not say, but I hate 'em like poison. That's good enough for me."
 "They're a team that — itself wouldn't beat for pure malice an' downright cussedness."
 "No doubt but they're a lovely, healthy pair," smiled Rody.
 "But don't they appear to be afear'd to move about jest now?" questioned he.
 "Not that I could see. What have they been doin'?"
 "You don't know, me b'y, eh?" from Rody, quizzically closing an eye.
 "I take my solemn oath I don't."
 "An' so they're movin' about openly?"
 "That's how it appeared to me."
 "I didn't know anybody was after them. Are you interested?"
 "I moight be. But, look here, Burton, how much money have you?"
 "Not a stiver."
 "The truth?"
 "The God's truth! That was the very fact that made me so uncivil to you."
 "I don't know which way to turn; I don't know where to sleep to-night or get a meal."
 "This is the first glass I've had in a couple of days, and, by —! I wouldn't care if it was the last."
 "I'm sick of the whole blamed thing; I'm sick of the city; I'm sick of everything!"
 "You're down on your luck, shurely?"
 "I am."

"Do you know what I heard wance, Burton?"

"No—what?" said Burton.

"There was a poor divil who wint to a big police official for help. It was in a Western city. What do you think he said?"

"Who—the official?"

"Yis. He said, 'If you don't clear out av this, an' do some funny bizniss to-night, I'll lock you up.'

"That was givin' a pramium to croime wid a vingince.

"Now, I don't want that to be the case wid you, Burton, me b'y, so I'll help you."

"What's the good? The only way you could help me is to help me leave New York City forever!"

"I should like to go as far West as I can get—into the wilds, anywhere where I could work, earn an honest dollar and go in for genuine reform.

"I'm not without education, and I've enough honesty left in me to work and forget a past fraught with nothing but bitterness.

"If some good soul helped me to do this, I might some day return the favor tenfold.

"That's just how I'm fixed, Mr. Rogan. I want to leave, and I can't get away. In a word, I want to be honest. I'd rather die than go back to that prison again."

Rody watched the man as he spoke, and had to caution him several times to speak in a lower tone, lest even the waiter of the wine-cellar might catch the drift of his words.

There was no doubt but that Burton was deeply in earnest, and that he did not want to go back to his old ways was equally plain.

"I'll tell you what I'll do wid you, Burton," said Rody.

"I'm in wan av me pathetic an' charitable moods to-day.

"I'll do this for you—I'll go parsonally an' see you on the thrain for Chicago—"

"What good would that be? Burton interrupted.

"Where's the money? Where is that to come from?"

"Never you moind. Would you loike to go to Chicago?"

"I'd like to go out to Colorado if I could get there. I've a brother in Silverton doing well, and once I was there I could put my shoulder to the wheel like a Trojan and earn my own living."

"That's right. Then I'll see you get there," said Rody, pleasantly.

"Dhrink your woine, an' let's go over the Courtlandt street ferry."

"I see we've just toime, an' a few minnits to spare to catch a train for the far West."

"Do you mean it, Mr. Rogan?" cried Burton, shaking with excitement, while tears of gratitude welled up in his eyes.

"I never was so earnist in me loife," Rody answered.

"Didn't I tell you this was wan av me tinder days?"

"Come along, me b'y. It's not advolsin' you loike the other official I'll be afther doin', but give you prompt and ready aid to redeem yourself."

"Won't you be running some risk?" hesitated Burton, almost ready to burst into tears.

"No, avick. On'y be thrue to yourself, an' divil a bit av risk I'll run at all, at all.

"Whin you get good an' ready, an' have lashins av money, you can pay me an' say: 'There was wan official who had a small smatter av the milk av human koindniss left in him, an' he saved me from meself!'"

"God bless you, Mr. Rogan! God bless you!"

"Tare-an-ouns, but I need all that, and more, too.

"Don't mention it, avick."

CHAPTER VIII.

RODY ASTONISHES AMOS CLARKE.

"BY DAD! I niver felt bether in me loife!"

"I feel as if I was walkin' on clouds, an' me heart is that loight it could floy away up through the roof av me head!"

"Who'll dare say a koind act hasn't its own reward?"

"Well, it's a little money gone, but it's kine (coin) well spent.

"The poor fella fair blubbered as he wint away be the thrain; an' it was as much as meself could do to keep a dhry eye.

"Silverton, Colorado! I wish you joy, Misther Jack-

sin, av your s'arch; for you won't catch him now, be me faith you won't.

"Well, you won't be sorry for it, if all I hear av you is thrue.

"Burton has gone in as much for reform as Mickey Thompson, so he has.

"There's two that the recordin' angel has to thank me for."

These were the thoughts that passed through Rody's mind as he walked briskly and airily up Courtlandt street to Broadway.

After purchasing everything necessary for Burton's comfort on the long trip and securing his tickets to Denver, Colorado, he forced some more bills into the convict's hand, and bidding him God-speed, saw the train steam out of the station ere he left the platform.

Then, with an easy conscience and a light heart, he recrossed the ferry to New York.

Not till he drew near Broadway did he think of himself; then he decided to turn into some restaurant and satisfy his appetite.

"I've half an hour yet," thought he; "an' it's the divil an' 'all if I can't stow a comfortable male away in that toime.

"Faith, me groinders could go through cast iron this minnit, so they could."

Such a thing as indigestion was unknown to him, so eating a little more rapidly than usual had no ill effects.

"Now for that shoneen av the woruld, Clarke.

"If I don't make him cry for mercy afore I'm done wid him, thin I'll go an' put me head in a sack an' fast for twinty days in a doime museum."

By the time he got back to Nassau street he found that the two hours and more had elapsed.

Mounting the two flights of narrow stairs which led to the office, Rody encountered a man who was just coming down.

He recognized Amos Clarke's secretary.

"Is he in now?" asked he.

"Yes; you will find him in his private office. Go right in and announce yourself. He's very democratic," smiled the secretary in a way that Rody did not like.

"Thank the Lord for that," ejaculated Rody. "It's a pity he wouldn't ate a man's head off.

"Democratic, eh?"

And he looked after the descending man and shook his fist at him.

"Be the hokey, there is more av thim," said he. "That raskil has a bad face, so he has.

"Loike masther, loike man; an, Amos, I'll be boun' to say, is a taiger.

"Howindever, here goes to beard the loin in his din."

So saying, he turned the knob of the office door and entered.

He found two clerks in the outer office.

"This fella must do a big bizniss," muttered Rody, surveying the place.

Then his attention was turned to the young man who looked up from the ledgers on which they were engaged and favored him with a languid stare.

"Noice, polite, broight young min, I don't think," murmured Rody.

"I suppose if I don't spake they won't—so here goes:

"Misther Amos Clarke in?" said Rody.

"Who shall I say wants to see him, sir?" questioned one of the clerks, rising.

"Tell him a gintleman on important businiss, me b'y," smiled Rody.

"It's a rale estate office, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Do you rint facthories?"

"Yes."

"Thin I may want to rint a facthory av four shtories, more or liss."

The clerks tittered like two schoolgirls.

"Very good, sir," said the one who had spoken before. "Please step inside and take a chair. I will see whether Mr. Clarke's engaged."

"Do so, me hayro; but tell him I'm in a hurry, as I've to lave town be the nixt thrain."

"Very good, sir."

Again the two young men snickered, while the one who had spoken went into the inner office.

"Will you please step this way?" said he.

"Whoy not? Anything to oblige a daycint young fella loike you."

"This way, sir."

"I'm follain'. What do you want me to do—jump over the disks?" grinned Rody.

A moment later found him face to face with the boss of the establishment, Mr. Amos Clarke, broker and real estate agent.

"Now, me folne fella," cogitated Rody. "I'll have an opportunity av studyin' you."

Amos Clarke was a man of heavy build, between fifty and sixty years of age, with a deep-set, piercing eye and a clean-shaven face, the flesh of which had a tallowy tint.

"Whoite-livered, corners av mouth drawn down, thin lips, bad soigns," rattled off the detective to himself as he gazed at the man confronting him, who on his entrance had risen to his feet.

"Well, sir," said Clarke in a deep bass, "won't you be seated?"

"What can I do for you, sir?"

"A factory, I believe, you want to rent?"

"Be the powers, Misther Clarke, you've jest taken it out av me mouth," replied Rody carelessly, plumping himself into a chair.

"But, be your lave, Misther Clarke, we'll talk on another subject first," added he; "a subject that'll be av vital intherest to you."

"Eh, sir? I don't know what you mean. Will you—"

"Be a little more explicit? Sartintly—anything to oblige a gintleman."

"It happens, Misther Clarke, that I'm a detective—"

"Heh! heh!"

The real estate agent almost bounded from his chair.

"What do you mean? What have I to do with detectives?"

"I will very soon explain," imperturbably from Rody as he crossed his left leg over his right. "You had a case over in the coort, there—"

"Well, sir, that is disposed of," from Clarke, with a frown.

"By no manes, Misther Clarke."

"It isn't disposed av, nor is it loikely to be disposed av jest yet."

"Sam Morris hasn't been sintined, an' won't be this week."

"His lawyer has got a stay."

"The devil he has," flashed Clarke. "When?"

"Jest a short while ago."

"To-day?" snapped the real estate man. "I'd like to know who's been doing this; I'd give a thousand dollars to find who's been interesting himself in that rascal!"

"Well, I have, for wan, Misther Clarke," coolly from Rody, "because—I—believe—Morris is—innocent!" finished the detective very deliberately between the pauses; "an' unjustly convicted on perjured ividence."

Clarke was breathless from rage, but the color of his face never changed, except it was to a shade yellower.

Rody went on most aggravatingly and imperturbably:

"You see, Misther Clarke, two av the min in the schame—two av the conspirators, I mane—are already located, and we can clap our hands on thim at any minnit."

"Whom do you mean?" Clarke managed to gasp.

"The two daicint b'ys, Fox Clamp an' Ned Reynard, otherwise known as Adolphus Punnikin Beetrooth an' Count Gabriel de Montmorency—otherwise known, agin, as Bob Fish an' Jerry Dudley, skins an' crooks from way back. An', what is more, they niver sowld no goold b—"

"Not another word, sir—not another word. Leave my office, or I'll call a policeman."

"That's all I wanted to know, Misther Amos Clarke," said Rody coolly.

"I have the honor av wishin' you a pleasant atthernoon—an' much obleeged for the information."

Clarke was worked up to such a fury that he couldn't speak, and Rody, grinning all over his good-humored face, passed into the outer office.

"Whin rogues falls out honist min 'll git their own—it'll soon come to that, I'm thinkin'."

"Good day, b'ys—good day, me sons! The facthory is shtill in the markit."

The clerks were speechless, too.

Both ran into the inner office as Rody left the outer one.

"I knew the man was innocent, an' he is," communed Rody as he went down the two flights of narrow stairs into Nassau street.

"Oh, the rogue av the woruld!"

"A man wid a falla face is niver any good; he's like a fish widout any blood."

CHAPTER IX.

AN IRISH SCHOOLMASTER.

THAT night Rody was making the rounds of the principal dives in New York in his search for the supposed gold-brick swindlers.

"I'll soon prove it was a put-up job," said he, "the minnit I lay eyes on thim vagabonds, the raskilly tools av ould Clarke—bad luck to him!"

As a rule it was not the detective's habit to disguise himself on such occasions, but for once he made it an exception.

It had occurred to him earlier that Amos Clarke, or some emissary, would be going the same rounds to warn Clamp and Reynard to keep out of the way for a time—or, at any rate, to leave the city till after sentence had been passed on Morris, after which the detective might not think it worth while to proceed further in the matter.

"I'll fool the ould villain at his own game," decided Rody. "I'll go the rounds so the best friend I've in the woruld 'll not know me."

In one of the side streets off the Bowery resided a man with whom Rody had had some dealings before—a man noted for his cleverness in "make-ups," a veritable artist in his line.

"Let me see," said the detective when he called on his acquaintance, "the make-up of a slick, out-an'-out Irish prig 'll suit this tolme, Mannix—wan av thim Dublin fellas who sarve their country for their country's good occasionally on Spoike Island, d'ye moind?"

Spoike Island was a well-known penal institution.

"Um! I had another here to-day before you," replied his acquaintance. "He also wanted the make-up of one of those Irish gentlemen you allude to."

"Was he in the profession?" Rody asked naively.

"I can answer he wasn't a detective."

"What was he, thin?"

"A clerk of some sort."

"Did he give his raisons for asshumin' sich a disguise?" Rody asked.

"Yes—partly. He said he wanted to make the rounds of the crooked resorts of New York."

"As an Irish crook?"

"He so intimated. But said I this to him:

"Young man, you'd better choose some other make-up."

"Why?" asked he, smiling like.

"For this reason," replied I; "you're unlucky enough to have no brogue."

"What did he say to that?"

"Simply laughed, then put on as beautiful a brogue as you ever heard—an actor on the stage couldn't do better. He was the perfect Dublin jackeen from head to heel."

"How will that suit you?" asked he.

"I was obliged to admit nothing could be better, and that if he didn't forget himself he would pull through all right."

Rody reflected for a moment.

"Suddenly Clarke's secretary loomed up."

"Can you describe this man's appearance?" asked he.

"Yes; I paid particular attention to him, the more so as I considered he had a great gall."

"Well, thin, tell me how he looked?"

Mannix vividly and minutely described his recent customer.

"Um!" said Rody quietly. "I thought so. I know the gintleman very well—an' I partly expected it."

"It's a bit of infarmation which doesn't come amiss, anyhow," added he significantly.

"Will it change your plans?"

"It will, more or less. Let me have the make-up av an old country schoolmaster that's come to New York to see the soights, wan who wants to get into the ways av the people for the raison that he can't go back to his own land, from which he's expatriated an' exoiled for takin' liberties wid a bit av paper."

"Forgery, you mean?"

"Well, that'll do as well as anything," answered Rody, with a droll smile.

"But first let me descroibe the charachter av the costoom I want."

"Very good, Mr. Rogan—to look like somebody you have seen, I suppose?"

"Yis, exactly. I met sich an ould schoolmaster a few days ago, an' he looked so forlorn an' in throuble that I gev him a few dhrinks, an' his breakfast, an' something to take him to Philadelphia, where he sed he'd friends that 'ud hilt him."

"That was very kind of you!"

"Troth Mannix, you don't know the half av it whin I'm that way inclined."

"Thim as says detictives have no hearts don't know what they're talkin' av."

"An' now let me give you the nature av the make-up, for toime is passin', an' I must be moighty sproxy to get roun' the doives."

"Very good, Mr. Rogan; tell me what you require, and I'll fix you up so that——"

"The tailor u'dn't know me. Ay, troth, I know you can—for that are ye in the bizniss, Mannix."

"To be sure; to be sure," said Mannix, laughing.

"It's not the first time I've made you up, Mr. Rogan, and I hope it won't be the last."

When Rody left Mannix's rooms later it would have taken even a sharper eye than State Detective Jackson's to penetrate his disguise.

His age was increased by at least ten years, and the cut of his freize coat would leave no doubt as to which country could claim him.

He was a veritable Irish country schoolmaster, and to this extent unlike that class—the look of a rogue in his face, eyes and whiskers.

"I think I'll do now," reflected he, as he got once more into the Bowery.

"I'm not a bit more respecttable thin I mane to be, an' this foine sprig av blackthorn tops the whole thing off to perfection."

"It's good I called on Mannix. I moight have gone over to ould Timmony; an' if I did I'd lose me valuable information about that shalla-pated scoundril av Amos Clarke's."

"As I sed before, loike master loike man."

"Two av a koind, an' a divilish bad koind to have dailins wid."

"Now, as to name an' what I had to lave the counthry for."

"Let me think."

"Oh, yis; I have it now, cut an' dhry in me top story."

"Dinnis Mulcahy, Mullinavak, not a cannon-shot from the River Shuir, County Kilkinny, Nashunal schoolmaster; croime, forgery."

"That used to be a hangin' matther in the ould days, but now it's foive to tin years' penal sarvitute. For what? Doin' a bit av fake wroitin'."

"An, there, faith's where the punishment fits the croime."

Rody's first place of call was at Barney Moss's, Stanton street, less than half a dozen blocks from the Bowery.

It was more than likely he would hear of Clamp and Reynard at this point, or, at any rate, he might meet the sporting reporter, Thompson, or even Clarke's secretary at the resort.

"Ole, the ould villain," Rhody muttered; "it's well I knew he'd take action ather my little chat wid him; an' fearin' to be seen about those places himself, he's sint that scalawag av a secretary av his."

"How noice and aisy everything is turnin' my way."

"At this rate I'll win hands down, in spite av everything they can do."

"Hello, countryman! What the deuce are you wondering about here for?" called out a familiar voice, which at this moment broke in on Rody's reflections.

In the voice Rogan at once recognized his old friend, Pat Riordan.

The latter's hand was on Rody's shoulder, too, as he turned around to face him.

"What's wrong wid you? Are you dhrunk?" demanded Rody, in a gruff, assumed voice.

"Go your way, man, an' let me pass. I'm on bizniss!"

"So am I, an' have little time at my disposal to waste civilities on you, but I did think of warning you as to where you are, especially as I knew you to be my countryman and a stranger, but——"

"Howld you whisht! Don't let me hear any mere av your gab. I know well what you are—a bunco-steerer."

This was disdainfully and angrily uttered by Rody.

But it had the opposite effect to what he expected.

Riordan burst into a roar of laughter.

"Come, come, old fellow," he said, with great good-humor; "you gave yourself dead away that time."

"You're no green Irishman to New York. You're an old hand. I perceive that clearly."

"Bunco-steerer! Well, that's rich! You gave yourself dead away, as I said before."

"There's something about you I don't like, and I'll trouble you to come along with me, my civil friend, till I prove you're not the gentleman I'm after."

"Don't use that stick on me, or I'll break your head with a club, if but to show you that you're a little too previous."

"I'm a detective; so come along quietly."

Here was a quandary.

A few seconds more and there would be a crowd around them.

There was only one thing to do—Rody to make himself known to his friend and so avoid the unpleasant consequences of an altercation.

"Sthop your foolin', Pat! Don't you see you're attractin' attintion?"

"There'll be a crowd round us prisintly."

"Well, well, well!" from the too-officious Pat, with a burst of genuine surprise.

"I'll be banged, ranged and danged if it isn't Rody Rogan!"

CHAPTER X.

FOLLOWED.

"WHISHT, yer sowl! Do you want the whole Bowery to know who I am?" said Rody in lowered voice.

"Well, what's the meaning of this masquerade?" asked Pat.

"Come, let's get into Stanton street, an' I'll tell you."

There was one slim-built man passing at the time who happened to hear Rody's name.

He went on a few paces and stopped.

"Rody Rogan," muttered he. "Um, um; I've got on to a good graft, have I?"

"I'll just follow those two gentlemen up."

"There may be a few hundred plunks in the game for me."

When Rody and Pat turned into Stanton street they were not aware that they were being shadowed by the slim gentleman, who took care not to lose sight of them.

"I'm sorry an' not sorry I met you, Pat, me b'y," began Rody, smiling broadly.

"An' yit, maybe I can make use av you."

"In what way?" asked the other.

"Just lis'en a minnit, an' I'll tell you me story; an' thin if you've not anything particular to do you moight keep me in soight for the rist av the noight, fer I may need your sarvices."

"Good!" said Pat. "I'm at your disposal, Rody, for the next twenty-four hours, as I've two days' leave from the agency."

"So you are not on duty?"

"No."

"Thin whoy did you sthop me?" curiously.

"Well, I'll soon tell you that."

"I've a warrant for a certain bogus Irish schoolmaster—a Kilkenny man—the biggest rascal who ever left Ireland, if all accounts be true; a forger, black-mailer, spy and murderer. And your get-up was so much like his, from the description sent to our firm, that I thought I had him sure."

"It was only when you used the word 'bunco-steerer,' that and a few other words, that I concluded I might be mistaken."

"But I resolved to run you in any way on general principles, for your uncivil tongue."

"The fella you was ather was a schoolmaster, eh?" from Rody, interrupting him.

"Yes, that's what he was, and from the description, which was very minute, I thought you were he."

"How the deuce did you come to put on such a guise?"

"Because I saw an' helped the very same chap you was ather," smiled Rody.

"You did? Where?"

"New York."

"Is he still in New York?"

"He would be, no doubt, if I hadn't helped him away," grinned the detective.

"Helped him away! Where did you send him?"

"Philadelphia, where he can go in for the practice av law," chuckled Rody.

"But was the fella raily an' thruly a schoolmaster?"

"No, no more thin you are a schoolmaster," answered Pat with a shrug of disgust.

"He simply posed as a schoolmaster—cheated people, buncoed them, forged, spied, and finally ended in a murder.

"He was about the slickest crook in Ireland, and I can't understand yet how it was he was broke.

"He played you for a fool, Rody; you may depend on it."

"For what object?"

"Now you have me. I don't know. I understand from the cipher dispatch that the man has been over here before, and that he was connected with two men named Fish and Dudley, well-known crooks here and in Boston."

"Fish an' Dudley?" from Rody, pricking up his ears at the mention of the names.

"Yes; but, bless your soul, these fellows have any number of names.

"You may call them Fish and Dudley to-day and something else to-morrow, and probably a week later they will have still other names."

"What do you know about Fish an' Dudley?"

"Nary a thing at all," replied Pat, "excepting that they are crooks."

"An' this spurious Irish schoolmaster has been a pal av their's?"

"Yes; but this of course will have been a few years back.

"I'd like to bet that fellow never went to Philadelphia," said Riordan.

"How did you come across him?"

Rody told him.

"And he pretended he was starving?"

"That did he."

"Did he look like a starving man?"

"He looked as forlorn as an ould cow that 'ud be in the consumption.

"The man shtruck me at first as havin' a very bad face, but, as he said he was hungry an' he looked so pitifully forlorn, I couldn't help feelin' compassion for him.

"I tuck him into a restaurant an' gev him a good breakfast an' thin his tickit to Philadelphia, where he said he had frinds.

"I thought I was on'y doin' me duty an' helpin' an unfortunit counthryman.

"But if the raskil is all you say, I've been preciously sowld."

"There is no doubting that, Rody. But the same boy would sell old Harry himself, for they say that, so good an actor is he, he can cry on one side of his face and laugh on the other, simultaneously."

"He can, eh? Thin I was sowld an' bamboozled wid a vingince!

"Niver moind him further till I tell you my story, an' see what you think av it."

Thereupon Rody told Pat of the case which he had undertaken at the request of the pawnbroker.

Then he described his visit to Amos Clarke's office, together with his interview with the broker and real estate agent respecting Morris.

"It's a very interesting case, no doubt," replied Riordan, after patiently listening to Rogan's story; "and from what you say I have no hesitation to express my belief that Morris is the victim of a conspiracy, and entirely innocent of the crime.

"But do you think it is well to continue your present guise, after what I've told you?"

"About the bogus schoolmaster?"

"Yes."

"Why, sartinly. What difference 'll it make?" said Rody.

"You may meet your prototype, don't you see?"

"What, thin?"

"It would be awkward."

"Ain't there more Irish schoolmasters thin one in the country? Do you think that rapsallion av the world is the on'y man wearin' a frieze coat an' a caubeen in New York?"

"I guess not," sez Con.

"The quistion now is—are you yourself known at Barney Moss's?"

"No, I've never been there—in short, I don't know where it is."

"An' so you call yourself a detective an' don't know where Barney Moss's is?" said Rody ironically.

"No, for I've had no occasion to go there."

"Well, it's jest as well, for now you may be av some use to me.

"You're sure you've nothin' in the way of business to-noight?"

"It's just as I've said—I have two days' leave," replied Pat.

"So you go on ahead now and I'll follow.

"Wherever you go, I'll go; and it's not improbable but you'll need me—in the long run," added he.

"Begob, it's jest loikely. You've niver said a thruer word."

"When a man's goin' to these places he's takin' his loife most of the toime in his hand.

"Well, keep me in soight, an' whin I turn into Moss's you can turn in afther me.

"Do you see the p'int, avick?"

"Certainly. Go on ahead. I'll cross to the other side of the street."

Rody, without further delay, proceeded along Stanton street, Pat Riordan crossing the thoroughfare diagonally, then staying just far enough in the rear of his friend to keep him in sight.

The slim watcher had taken note of this, following in his turn.

Moss's resort was at last reached.

Rody drew up and glanced over his shoulder across the street.

He caught a glimpse of the figure of the private detective in the shadows.

But he didn't see the man who was following like a sleuth hound behind, though.

Then Rody turned into the drinking dive and was presently followed by Riordan.

"Now," said the slim man, chuckling to himself, "I have a clear field, and if I don't make hay before sunrise it will be no fault of mine. Aha!

"Luckily, they didn't see me, which makes it all the easier and better.

"Clarke, by the purest accident, has another friend to the fore."

CHAPTER XI.

A DEN OF THIEVES.

WHEN Rody entered Moss's he could see that the resort was tolerably well filled with a miscellaneous crowd, many of whom he recognized as pickpockets, burglars, hotel sneak-thieves and all-around crooks—the latter not particular whether they cracked a bank, garrotted a man or picked a pocket.

For that matter, all jobs were alike to them, provided the "dust" materialized and the operations panned out well.

Rody's attention was drawn to one young fellow in particular whom he recognized as a second and third-story sneak-thief.

He sat away from the rest at a little square table, alone.

He had a pint pewter measure before him, from which he occasionally took light sips.

"I see Johnny Merkle is to the fore," cogitated Rody as his eye lit on this man, "an' his frinds are lettin' him go it alone.

"There's none av thim comin' near him. He must ha' been doin' somethin' out av the way, an' now they're showin' their disapproval be cowl'd shoultherin' him.

"As a rule, I loike the unther dog—an' for that very reason I'll go an' jine him."

As these thoughts passed through his mind Rody was leaning against the bar and taking stock of the frequenters of the dive.

If the pictures which Rody had received from Bick-erstaff were anything like Clamp and Reynard, one thing was pretty certain—they weren't present.

Nor was the secretary whom Mannix had fixed up at an earlier hour.

"I must find out something about Clamp and Reynard," decided Rody, "and I suppose that infarmation can be best derolved from Johnny Merkle.

"I'll go an' sit near him, anyway—besoides, it'll give me a good view av the dure, an' whoever goes in an' comes out I'll see thim.

"Good evenin', neighbor!"

This was the greeting that interrupted Merkle's thoughts as Rody plumped himself into a chair at the small square table.

The young man, not a bad-looking fellow, glanced curiously at the new-comer.

"Good evening," replied Merkle pleasantly, having satisfied himself that the stranger was all right.

"Business looks kind a booming to-night."

"But pardon me," he quickly added, "I am perhaps a little previous. You cannot know much about the crib."

"Whoy do you think that?"

"Because I've never seen you here before," replied Merkle.

"An' yit I moight come here whin you were not prisint," smiled Rody.

"That is true. Still, I should have heard something of you."

"You're an Irishman, if I mistake not?" the crook half questioned.

"I am that—a rale Paddy from Cork—an' I've sarved my country, too."

"In what capacity?" ambiguously from the young man.

"Not as a dhrawer av wather an' a hewer av wood, you may be sure," laughed Rody. "Did you iver hear av Spolke Island?"

"Spolke Island?"

"Yis. I was there for wan little stritch av foive years, an' they put me to brakein' stoness an' pickin' oakum."

"I didn't care much about the work, you may be shure, though the stone-brakein' was clane enough in its way, but thin the oakum was the divil on two sticks, so it was, an' spoiled the jintility av me hands, until they looked for all the woruld loike two sugar-cured hams."

"Bein' of jintle birth, this me proud sperrits wouldn't permit me to stand, so I throid to git out on a habius corpsis (habeas corpus), which failed for want av the proper laygil tarmes an' knowledge. Thin"—

"And then you had to put in your term," interrupted Merkle quizzically.

"I understand. Spare yourself the trouble of explainin'."

"I suppose you were innocent like the rest of us?" added he drily.

"Well, no, thin, I wasn't. I put a jintleman's name to a bit av paper, an' they called it foorgery."

"What was the amount?"

"Twenty-sivin pounds six an' ninepince," answered Rody, without a smile on his face.

"A mere bagatelle. We don't do things that way in this country."

"We go in for something solid and comfortable—up in the thousands—and then it's ten to one but we get off when we're caught, through some legal point, invariably in favor of the offender."

"Is there many laygil p'intes av that koind?" asked Rody, with much innocence of manner.

"Yes, my friend, the statutes of the country is full of them."

"O'Connell, your great countryman, said on one occasion, I believe, that he could drive a carriage and four through any parliamentary act that ever was passed."

"In my candid opinion we Americans could beat that hollow—not only drive a carriage and four, but steer the Miantonoma through it."

"Miantonoma? What's that?" from Rody, naively.

"A big monitor—war vessel—we have."

"Knock London town down in no time, and double up your Irish capital like scroll-work."

"So, you see, we beat you even in State and Congressional acts."

Rody kept his eye on the door of the thieves' joint.

He saw it open, and his friend Riordan pass in.

Pat's quick eye flashed over the assemblage.

It lit on Rody and Merkle.

Then he partly turned and leaned carelessly against the bar.

"It's a great country, to be shure," murmured Rody loud enough for Merkle to hear.

"It has a vast amount av territory—"

"More millions of square miles than you'd imagine in your wildest dreams," interrupted Merkle, with some enthusiasm.

"When did you land, for I can see well you're a new-comer here?"

"Two days ago."

"May I give you a few words of advice?" said the young man.

"Yis; whoy not?"

"Then I'd advise you as soon as you can to get rid of that style of dress."

"You look like an Irish schoolmaster out of a job. Ah, ha, ha!"

"Do I, thin?"

"Really and truly," declared Merkle.

"Thin I am wan—that is, I've been wan," declared Rody, correcting himself a trifle.

"You see, before I took liberties wid the bit av paper I mitioned I was an Irish nashunal schoolmaster, an' it seems that made me croime worse in the eyes av the jedge, for sez he to me, afore he passed sintince:

"'Dinnis Mulcahy,' sez he, 'it's betther you ought to have knowed thin go foorgin' a jintleman's name for twinty-sivin pounds six an' ninepince,' sed he."

"'I'm moighty sorry, your lordship,' sed I, thinkin', av coorse, it was the smallness av the sum that roiled him."

"'What do ye mane, prisoner at the bar?' sed he, angry loike. 'Is it joibin' the coort yez are?'"

"'Not be no manner av manes, yez lordship,' replied I."

"'But if it plaze your lordship, I'd loike to git another chance—just another chance to show that I'm not on-grateful.'"

"'Another chance?' repeated he. 'What'd ye be afther doin' wid another chance?'"

"'I'd throy hard to make a change in the numerals, sir,' returned I."

"'Instid av goin' into the tins, I'd go into the thousinds.'"

"Faix, that sittled it wid me bowld jedge, an' in very short orther he sint me to Spolke Island for foive yers."

Merkle looked at Rody, but said nothing.

He evidently had some difficulty in understanding him.

The door of the saloon opened again, and enter the slim watcher who followed Rody and Pat down Stanton street.

His eyes roved round the room and lighted first on Pat, who still stood leaning against the bar, and then on Rogan, who sat with Merkle at the small, square table.

Rody caught a glimpse of the slim man, but apparently took no notice of him.

"Well, as I was sayin', I put in me foive years an' came out here."

"What I didn't know whin I wint to Spolke Island I knew whin I came out."

"Well, what do you intend doing in this free country?"

"The same as the rist av yez—goin' into hoigh art."

"Painting?"

"No; wroittin'."

"Forgery?"

"That same! I'm an expart pinman, an' whin I loike to I can make skin an' hair floy. But it's dhroy talkin'. Let's have a sup av dhrink. Is that beer you're dhrinkin'?"

"No, it's ale—Bass ale—from your side of the pond," Merkle answered.

"Well, I'm goin' to have a smather av John Jamieson."

"Pr'aps you wouldn't moind jinin' me in a little av the pure, unadultherated mountain dew, wid loife enough in it to make your whiskers grow?"

"You'll get Jamieson's here all right, all right."

"That's the one good article they do keep, though I say it myself."

"You see," explained Merkle, "I've been in the business, and I know whereof I speak."

"A bartender?"

"A bartender?" exclaimed Merkle, with every evidence of disgust in his face.

"No, not anything so low—the owner of a joint that did a wholesale trade with these people all over the city."

"I was making money hand over fist."

"Nothing would do but I must neglect my business and devote my time to horse-racing."

"What was the result? In two years I was on my uppers and took up—what I'm at now, with varying success," laughing harshly.

"Horse-racing, my Irish friend, has put many a prosperous man on his uppers."

"I look very young, don't I?"

"Well, I've gone through more than many men of sixty, and here's where it finds me five nights out of

six, with the chance of an occasional trip up the river. "I've been lucky so far in my present occupation, for they haven't collared me.

"But I'm not sure of one hour from the other.

"Oh, but it's a bleeding, blessed life, I tell you, especially when one can see no way out of it.

"I'll take a nip of Jamieson.

"My name is Johnny Merkle."

"An', as I've towld you afore, mine is Dinnis Mulcahy."

There were three bartenders in the place, and Merkle, nodding to one, he came over and took Rody's order.

The colloquy was presently resumed in this way:

"Whin I lift Spolke I was tould to hunt up two min, Clamp an' Reynard, wid aliases Fish an' Dudley.

"I was towld, moreover, that this was wan av the places they frequented, an' another in the Bowery—Budd Rickard's. I believe that was the name.

"The frind sed: 'Dinnis, the momint you land beyant there in New York, be shure you look up Fox Clamp an' Ned Reynard. They're also known be the aliases av Bob Fish an' Jerry Dudley.

"Be shure you see thim first, if you want to get on well in the new woruld, for if any wan in New York knows eviry sthrand in the ropes they are the min.

"Go to thim an' tell thim I sint you, an' your fortune is med in Amerikey.

"Now, moind what I say, you're to hunt thim up first an' foremost, afore you do another thing."

"An', troth, that's whoy I am here to-noight," went on Rody.

"It's Fox Clamp an' Ned Reynard I'm afther, an' if I could on'y see thim I'd be happy enough to give you a bit av a breakdown on this table—"

"Which would be better than a show, in your present garb," laughed Johnny Merkle.

"However, here's to you, Mulcahy. You're a queer-looking duck, but you're a good fellow and one of the boys.

"I don't think I'll have any trouble in running across Fisk and Dudley.

"I often see them here."

"Are they here now?"

"No, but they'll be here to-night, I'm certain.

"Just have a little patience, and I will point them out to you when they come."

CHAPTER XII.

MAXWELL'S FRIEND, BENNY.

"SEND Maxwell in the moment he comes."

This was the order Amos Clarke gave to one of his employes ten minutes after Rody had left the office. Clarke was fuming with rage.

His first impulse was to rush after Rody into the street, cause a scene and provoke the detective into assaulting him.

If he did this Amos would have some grounds to give Rody into custody, which might occasion the detective some trouble and delay before he could extricate himself.

A second thought, however, convinced the broker that this would not be the proper course to pursue, and that it could only end to his own disadvantage.

Therefore he waited with considerable impatience till Maxwell came in.

Maxwell was the private secretary alluded to in a previous chapter.

After fuming up and down his private office for nearly twenty minutes enter Maxwell.

"You want to see me, I believe, Mr. Clarke?" said he, respectfully.

"Yes. Sit down."

Maxwell was no sooner seated than Clarke went on:

"You recollect that affair of Morris', Maxwell?"

"Yes, sir; very well. The gold-brick swindler who's awaiting sentence in the Tombs?"

"Precisely. Now, Maxwell," in a wheedling tone, "you've found me a pretty liberal employer so far, have you not?"

"Yes, the best I've ever had, or desire to have," from the secretary earnestly.

"Under those circumstances we're not going to make two bites of a cherry, are we? My words may be a little figurative, you understand, but the Morris case

stands just like this: Sam Morris, in some unheard of manner, has had a stay, and may not be sentenced this week.

"Meanwhile a detective has been interested in his case through that infernal rascal Bickerstaff. This detective has called on me—a cursed bog-trotting Irishman, whom it will be impossible to bribe—"

"That was the fellow I saw coming up the stairs when I went to lunch," Maxwell interrupted.

"And he called on you, sir?"

"He called on me? Well, I should think he did, the villain! Got me into such a fury that I could have thrown him neck and crop out of the window, which, of course, I didn't, for obvious reasons unnecessary here to specify."

"He looked an ugly customer, sir!"

"He was, Maxwell—he certainly was, and might object to going by that means of exit.

"My first impulse was to run after him and collar him in the street and roll him into assaulting me. Second thoughts proved that about the worst thing I could do, so I decided to wait till you came in, knowing that you would help me out of a difficulty."

"I follow you, sir."

"Well, the question now is," said Clarke, "how are you to help me?"

"I'll have some charge trumped up against the detective?"

"You're a simpleton," gritted Clarke. "No, you'll do nothing of the kind; you'll do just what I tell you.

"You've seen the two men, Clamp and Reynard?"

Maxwell nodded.

"Well, I want you to hunt them up and warn them that Morris has had a stay and that if they are caught the case is likely to be reopened.

"They must get away, you understand—and get away quick!"

"Where are they to be found?"

"I thought you knew," from his employer impatiently. "Barney Moss', on Stanton street—"

"Yes, certainly, Mr. Clarke—or Budd Rickard's, on the Bowery. Very good, sir; I'll see they get word."

"But you may not find them at those joints," said Clarke, "in which case you must—"

"Keep up my search of the various resorts till I do find them."

"Does this detective know you?"

"Well, I'm sure he would recognize me again if he should meet me," replied Maxwell.

"Well, then, that must be prevented.

"What are you going to do?"

"Disguise myself."

"Capital!"

"I know an old chap on the East Side, not far from the Bowery, who makes it a business—a specialty.

"He's quite an artist at it; and, as at one time I was a comedian, I think I can manage to pass off for a very good Irishman, lately landed.

"That class of character would commend itself even to the detective, who may go the round of the dives in a somewhat similar guise."

"Very well, then—that I leave to yourself.

"It doesn't matter about the means you take to warn those men, so you warn them," pursued Clarke with emphasis.

"They must leave New York to-night, if possible, and for the time they must get as far west as they can—even to the Pacific slope—till Morris is safely landed in Sing Sing.

"Tell them from me that their safety, as well as my own, is in jeopardy so long as they remain East.

"Tell them, also, that money will not be spared to make them comfortable, so long as they carry out my instructions.

"Should they run short at any time they know where to communicate with me.

"It's late to cash a check now, and as I have sufficient ready money by me to meet present expenses, I will let you have a sum of three hundred dollars, which you will hand them—also money to effect your disguises and expenses for the night.

"Do you follow me clearly in this matter, Maxwell?"

"I understand the drift of your instructions perfectly, sir."

"Then nothing remains but to give you the cash."

This was done and Maxwell was soon on his way to the Bowery.

The secretary was so jubilant at the prospects of making money out of the deal that he decided to call on a friend and crack a bottle of wine for the occasion.

It was the least he could do, as Amos Clarke had been quite liberal with him, monetarily.

"He knows how to appreciate a man who's of use to him," chuckled Maxwell.

"Besides, he's now to a certain degree in my power, and some day I may use him for all there's in him.

"When one gets a fat cow—"

At this stage of the secretary's cogitations a skinny hand was laid on his shoulder and a familiar voice pronounced his name.

"Just the man I wanted to see," exclaimed Maxwell. "How-do, Benny?"

"Not as well as I might, Max," answered a slim-looking young man in a seedy suit.

"Have you got the price of a drink, old man?"

"Been on the booze?"

"Took a drop too much last night and feel in need of a bracer."

"Oh, that's how the wind blows?" laughed Maxwell.

"Well, you shan't be long in need of a drink, Benny, old boy.

"We'll have a cold bottle all to ourselves."

"Discovered a Klondike, and flush, eh?"

"You can better bet. I've money to burn, old fel. Come into Sherrard's and let's make ourselves comfortable for half an hour.

"How are you on the grub racket?"

"Don't talk of grub!" retorted Benny with a shrug of disgust.

"When one's stomach's gone into bankruptcy with regard to the solids, why, nothing stands to him like a swallow or two of fizz—any kind, from Moet down to Cluquot.

"So you were looking for me, eh?"

"Not quite that, but, as a good friend and true, I thought of you. Here's Sherrard's at last! Entrez vous, mon ami."

"Eh, eh, eh!" laughed Benny. "Is that the extent of your French?"

"By Jupiter! who's been your teacher?"

"A right royal French scholar, my friend!"

"Never mind, Benny, old man. Come along and let's enjoy ourselves, for the gods have been propitious, and I've money to burn."

CHAPTER XIII.

SHERRARD'S.

HALF an hour later found Maxwell and his friend Benny still at Sherrard's.

They were on their third small bottle, and as the wine got in its fine work Maxwell grew gradually more communicative.

"See here, Benny," said he, "how would you like to earn a ten-dollar bill to-night?"

"That would depend on the sort of work and the risk run," replied the slim man reflectively.

"It so happens," Benny went on to explain, "that I'm more or less in the black boots just now, and have to keep pretty shady.

"Got a call from Mulberry street t'other day, and the chief, said he to me:

"Look here, Brindlestone, I hear you are up to your old games again. I thought you'd reformed," said he to me, 'and on your earnest word I gave you a chance to make a man of yourself. Now, what do you mean by striking from the narrow path and associating with such characters as Leery Mike, Tom the Tod and Jerry the Fiddler? If you're bent on going to the devil, go—and no one will stop you till you land high and dry in State's prison. It's no earthly use in your denying what has come to my ears,' said he, 'for if you do I shall take no further interest, and if they send you up they shall send you up, that's all there's to it.

"I knew your father, and he was a good man," he went on, 'and it's for your dead father's sake I give you this warning. If you can't stop going around with such people you'd better clean out of New York and go as far West as you can—the farther the better—so we'll not hear of your misdeeds. What do you say?"

"Well, I told him that I'd be only too glad to leave, but I didn't have the money and I was fairly on my uppers.

"With that he gave me ten dollars and told me to

come back at the end of the week and see what could be done.

"I pretended to be greatly affected by his generosity and cried like a child.

"Then I left, and, like a blamed fool, I blew the ten dollars in with such pals as Leery Mike, Tom the Tod and Jerry the Fiddler—and now I haven't a stiver the beggars won't look at me.

"They have no use for a man as is dead broke, bet your life."

"In that respect they resemble a good many others—chiefly politicians," smiled Maxwell.

"I had a taste of them myself last election.

"I was away up in 'G' long as I was working for them, but when they were elected I wasn't good for sour apples.

"But it taught me a lesson; it opened my eyes to the ingratitude of the world, especially politicians, as I before said.

"But now, Benny, we'll have a good smoke; then I'll tell you a story. It will be worth a good deal more than a ten dollar bill to you—five of them, maybe."

"That's good lush, old man. If you've no objection I'll take my smoke in drink," said Benny.

"I'm afraid we've taken too much already," protested Maxwell.

"Not a bit. Never mind the cigars; let's have another bottle. My brain was never clearer. Besides, I feel now as if I could do something."

"Very good; then let it be a small bottle. After. I will go on with my tale of woe. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You appear to be in great good humor?" observed Brindlestone, not quite knowing what to make of his acquaintance, who seemed to be unduly exhilarated.

"Is old Clarke dead? Remembered you in his will, maybe?"

"Dead? The old Turk's in better health than ever he was.

"No; but, Benny, my boy, I think I've him under my thumb, and that's why I want you to help me out, the more so as you know every crooked resort in the city."

"You bet, and every crook in New York."

"I decided as much. Well, here goes for the story."

Then Maxwell gave Benny Brindlestone the details of the Morris case, and the broker's desire to hunt up the two crooks, Clamp and Reynard.

"And I want you to help find them," added he.

"Now just you make out a list of the dives and we'll each take so many, so's not to run counter, understand?"

"I have that part pat," said Benny.

"It may take us some time to find them fellows, but find them we shall.

"I'll make out the list at once, and we'll divide evenly."

"Good! That will do capital."

Furnished with ink, pen and paper, a list of the prominent rendezvous of the city was made out by Benny Brindlestone.

"Select," said Benny tentatively, "and I'll mark off."

This was soon done, each man taking the places chosen.

"By the way," began Benny, "who should I meet to-day but Mickey Thompson, the sporting reporter.

"Quite a reformation, and, so far as I could see, an honest one, too.

"I had almost lost sight of the circumstance, and but for your recalling the matter with that account of yours I should never have thought any more about it.

"What do you imagine Mickey was engaged to do?"

"To write up some fight, maybe?" ventured Maxwell.

"Wrong. He was engaged by a detective named Rogan to go round the dives and hunt up the very men you were talking of."

"Do you mean Clamp and Reynard?" asked the secretary.

"Exactly; them's the men."

"Why didn't you tell me of this before?" blurted Maxwell, angrily.

"Pooh! pooh! don't lose your temper, Maxey. I didn't tell you before because I wanted to spring a surprise on you; that's so.

"Now, this fellow knows you, Maxey, and it's ten to one but Rogan has given him the tip to be on the lookout for either you or Clarke.

"So, you see, it will never do for you to go round the joints looking as you do.

"I was about to suggest—"
 "What?"
 "That you fix up in some way—disguise yourself, you know. Where you would attract notice—"
 "You wouldn't?"
 "That's what I meant to convey."
 "Disguise yourself before setting out."
 "Yes, yes, yes," Maxwell interrupted with impatience; "you need have no fear; that's just what I'm arranging for."
 "Let's go and have a snack of some kind."
 "You told me you felt like eating."
 "So I do. The wine's got my stomach up in G, and now I can digest like an ostrich."
 It was dark before these two gentlemen separated. Maxwell described to Benny what would be the nature of his disguise, and arranged otherwise all the preliminaries of their meeting later.
 "If you should come across Clamp and Reynard before me, you will take them to Redland's, — Sixth avenue, and there await my coming. Redland will give you a private room upstairs; just mention my name."
 "And if you should be there before me?" from Benny.
 "What then?"
 "I'll go direct to Redland's and await your coming."
 "You'll want the change?"
 "Yes; I haven't a blooming cent to save me from perdition, and you I'll have to be hail-fellow-well-met, too, with such duffers as Leery Mike, Tom the Tod and Jerry the Fiddler?"
 "They aren't worth as much powder as would blow them sky high, but they may be of help in my quest."
 Having received what cash he required, Maxwell imposed him to caution as they parted.
 We have in part witnessed the result of this interview—the disguising of Maxwell and the shadowing of Rody and Pat Riordan to Barney Moss'.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE UNEXPECTED.

Now to return to Rody Rogan and Johnny Merkle, whom we had left in a previous chapter at Moss', on Stanton street.
 "The moment they come in I'll point them out to you," repeated Merkle.
 "I am not on speaking terms with them at present," pursued he, "so that is about the best I can do."
 "I only hope they'll treat you decently."
 "But it would be too much to expect, as they have never treated anybody decently, so far as I know."
 "But coming from their friend in Spike Island, it may be different, you know," the young fellow added, encouragingly.
 "Oh, they'll trate me all roight, or I'll know whoy," smiled Rody.
 "Well, I hope so," said Johnny.
 Rody had an eye on his friend, Pat Riordan. Pat was still leaning against the bar, with a glass of spirits at his elbow, smoking a cigar.
 He was not noticing anybody, apparently, but in reality he was paying considerable attention to everybody and everything around him.
 Not much passed him which he did not see and make a mental note of.
 Rody and Merkle carried on a desultory conversation, having more drinks in the meantime.
 Nobody seemed to pay any attention to them, as all were too busily engaged on their own affairs to take any notice of their neighbors.
 The hum of conversation fairly buzzed through the room.
 At times two or three of the customers would get into an altercation, which gave fair promise to end in a fight.
 Nothing of the sort.
 Almost while one was expecting blows to be struck, the angry disputants would settle down to a conversation carried on in even tones, as though nothing had disturbed the general harmony that existed a little while before.
 "By my song, I thought that would ind in a foight," remarked Rody to his companion.
 "But somehow they've thrown ile on the throubled wathers av contintion, an' there they go now as if they'd fain kiss an' hug aich other."

"That part av leife is moighty strange to me—"
 "Strange, eh?" laughed Merkle.
 "Why, here it's the usual order of things, and so well used am I to these little outbursts that I take not the least notice of them."
 "Let them alone, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they square themselves, with temper none the worse."
 "Hello! Who have we here?"
 "Another Irish schoolmaster, and his name is not Mulcahy!"
 "Do you mane the fella in the freize coat who jest came in?" asked Rody.
 "Yes, and he doesn't look unlike yourself, Mul."
 "Bedad, he moight be me brother," smiled the Irishman.
 "The woods is full of thim to-night," said Merkle, using a slang phrase.
 "So it seems," from Rody, quite seriously. "I don't think he's my brother, though," he went on; "for his nose is too short."
 "Has your brother a short nose?"
 "Jest about one inch in length, an' as he's a devout Christian, it turns up skoyward."
 "It's what they calls an aristhocratic, tip-tilted proboscis."
 "Faix, the schoolmaster isn't abroad yet, Misther Merkle."
 "So it appears. I'm interested in that fellow."
 "So am I, faith."
 "I'm interested in him because I think he's not what he seems."
 "No?"
 "No; I'd like to bet a V if I had it that he's in disguise."
 "But, my friend, it's a capital make-up."
 "What do you mane be a make-up, Misther Merkle?" questioned Rody, with great innocence.
 "I told you—a disguise, my boy. And that leads to another supposition."
 "Eh?"
 "I say it leads to another supposition."
 "What?"
 "That he's a detective."
 "Murther in Irish!"
 "Does American detectives go about in that way?" naively from Rody.
 "Yes—why not? But if he's a detective he's come to a bad place."
 "Just you keep quiet and you'll see the fun presently."
 "There will be skin and hair flying."
 "Skin an' hair floyin'?" repeated Rody in pretended alarm.
 "In that case, Misther Merkle, I think we'd better get out."
 "No, no; stay where you are," replied the young man calmly.
 "No harm will come to you, anyhow."
 "But I shouldn't like to be in his boots, if he is what I suspect."
 The detective knew very well that the man in the freize coat was none other than Amos Clarke's private secretary, from the description given of Maxwell by his friend Mannix.
 "Things are beginnin' to come my way at last," communed he to himself.
 "By an' bye I'll nab the whole three av thim."
 "Whin that secretary is here it's on'y a matter av toime whin the other two foxes 'll turn up."
 The man in the freize coat—Maxwell—approached the bar timidly and gave an order for something.
 Rody concluded it was a drink.
 But his conclusion was wrong.
 Maxwell had called for a cigar.
 He didn't stand two yards from Riordan, who also had his eyes on him.
 Benny Brindlestone, too, quizzically glanced at the new-comer.
 After a while their eyes met and a quick, almost imperceptible nod of recognition passed between them.
 But otherwise they stood relatively in the same position, separated by a distance of at least some yards.
 After bestowing a quick, nervous look about the room on the motley company at the different tables, Maxwell struck a match and lighted his cigar.
 Every instant convinced Rody that the secretary was far from being at ease.

He was nervous and flustered; his hand shook like that of one who was recovering from a prolonged debauch—in the very worst stages of nervousness.

"Divil a much grit is in you, me bowld hayro," commented Rody.

"Ould Clarke moight have dayputed the task av warnin' his accomplices to a man of more narve.

"You're goin' to spile the whole shootin' gallery afore you're done, or I'm much mistaken.

"An' here, bedad, is another arroival, an', be the holy shmoke, no wan liss thin Mickey Thompson, the spoortin' reporter.

"He's lookin' foine, so he is. Wonther if he's got any news?"

"I know that chap who came in just now," remarked Merkle casually.

"Do you, now? He looks a foine, husky fella. What moight he be?"

"He used to be a crook, but he's reformed," replied Merkle; "and, what is more, I fancy his reformation is genuine.

"He's quite a scrapper."

"A phat?"

"A scrapper, a fighter, a boxer," answered Merkle, shrugging his shoulders with impatience.

"Mulcahy, you have much to learn, now you're in this free country," added he, looking queerly at Rody.

"Troth, I believe you there.

"But, though I'm an aristocrat, I ain't too proud to larn; that's the raison I do be axin' quistions.

"So that young fella's a foighter?"

"Well, bedad, I used to be a foighter mesilf wan toime.

"The b'ys used to say round my part that I could whip me weight in woild-cats, an' there wasn't a gate on the barony I couldn't go over on the floy widout as much as touchin' the top bar.

"But I was a younger man thin than I am now, d'ye see?"

"I used to be aichin' for a batein' in thim days, an', be me sowl, wan day a thravellin' tinker that used to be goin' round the country noigh larruped the loife out av me—an' afther that I took a tumble to mesilf an' was careful who I tackled.

"The same son av a say-cook larruped ivery young fella in the county, so he did, hands up an' tails down.

"But he, too, got his match in turn, for an ould chap from New Ross whom he insulted whin unther the infloince av dhrink gev him sich a whalin' he niver recovered from it, doyin' in the Waterford hospital av a dislocated spleen."

"A dislocated what?" said Johnny incredulously.

"A dislocated spleen. Resave the loie I'm tellin'—he had a dislocated spleen an' four av his short ribs bruck and his heart twisted from his lift soide to his roight from the fair dinth av the hammerin' that he got.

"Hello! Who's that foighter makin' motions to? It must be you, Merkle."

"Yes. Will you wait here while I see him?"

"We are good friends, you know, and he may have something important to tell me."

"Take you own toime, Misther Merkle, an', if the gintleman has no objections, whoy, bring him along an' let's inj'y oursilves.

"I've money enough and to spare, especially as you tell me he's a foighter."

Merkle arose from the table and went over to Thompson.

The later nodded to Benny, but otherwise did not notice him.

Rody was made aware now of one fact—that Brindlestone was edging nearer to Maxwell, so as to speak to him doubtless.

"That slim jacksnip has something onaisy on his moind, too," reflected Rody.

"I must ask Merkle who he is.

"He pretinds to be indifferent, an' could as oice-water, but a man who's half an oye in his head can see he's as narvis as a kitten.

"He's wan av the gang, I'd loike to wager a cint.

"Howiver, here comes Mickey. Now, I must get some chance to revale mesilf an' tell him who I am.

"He'd niver recognize me in this git-up, for it 'ud puzzle the ould boy himself, so it would.

"I'll foind a way av gittin' rid av Merkle for a few minnits, an' whoile he's away buyin' the article I'll sind him for I can get all the news from Mickey.

"As it won't do to startle him wid me v'ice, I must disguise that loikewise."

Pat, so far, did not change his position the fraction of an inch.

He still leaned carelessly on the bar. Any one to look at him would think he was in a deep reverie, so buried in his thoughts that he noticed nothing that transpired.

But Rody knew this was not so—that Pat did not let a solitary move escape his keen vision, even to the movements of Maxwell and Brindlestone.

The latter, edging nearer Maxwell, was almost imperceptible to the ordinary eye, but both Rody and Pat had observed it plainly.

Thompson was led up to the small square table, now by Merkle.

Rody knew, of course, the twain had been talking about him, for ne detected a queer-looking smile on Mickey's face.

What did it mean?

Had Thompson seen through his disguise?

The detective was to find that out later.

"My friend, Mr. Thompson—Mr. Mulcahy.

"Mr. Mulcahy, Mickey, is a new arrival in this country, and, as he is waiting for Messrs. Clamp and Reynard, he wants us to take pot-luck with him—that is, till they come, you know."

A queerer look still came into Thompson's face.

"Bedad, he knows me, sure," reflected Rody.

"That about Clamp and Reynard was enough to make him catch on, if nothing ilse.

"An' now, faith, I must give him a look that'll keep him quioiet till this ganther Merkle is gone."

A look as quick as lightning passed between the men.

Then Rody knew, all was right.

He arose from the table and extended his hand.

"Moighty glad to see you, Misther Thompson," said he.

"Me frind, Misther Merkle, tells me you're a foighter an' a spoortin' reporter.

"Well, man aloive, as I've been a foighter mesilf, in a small way, we'll dhrink an' shmoke to our bether acquaintance."

"With all my heart, Mr. Mulcahy," declared Thompson.

"But Mr. Merkle has been too kind by miles."

"How, pray?" from Johnny.

"You said I was a boxer, I believe?"

"No, you're wrong there; I said you were a fighter. There's a difference between a boxer and a fighter," hastened to correct Merkle.

"I, for instance, am a fair boxer, but no fighter.

"A man can learn boxing, but not fighting; that must be born in him, just as poetry is born in a poet."

"Jericho! what a distinction!" laughed Thompson amusedly.

"Well, Johnny, like the old woman, I suppose we must give you your way—for you will have it, whether or no.

"It's the usual thing to ask a stranger, Mr. Mulcahy," pursued Mickey, changing the subject and turning to Rody, "how he likes the country.

"But I should judge you haven't been here long enough to venture an opinion."

"Troth, in that you're roight, Misther Thompson.

"An' even though I was, sir, I'd think it bad manners and bad policy, too, to answer in any way but a favorable wan."

"Good for you!" cried Thompson, hilariously.

"Guess that puts the round on me.

"There's nothing like an Irishman's wit——"

"An' good sinse," added Rody, with marked intonation.

What was coming?

"Let's have a smatter av John Jamieson, b'ys," went on Rody.

"For it will make things a little shurer."

It was a cue for Thompson.

And he well understood it.

There was no longer any doubt in his mind as to who the recently-landed Irishman Mulcahy was.

And now came the unexpected.

The man in the freize coat and Brindlestone passed them to the rear of the saloon, and in a few moments disappeared.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FIELD TO THEMSELVES.

WE repeat that Maxwell and Brindlestone had passed to the rear of the saloon.

This was noticed by Rody and Pat simultaneously, and a quick exchange of glances passed between them.

Rody's eyes spoke to the following effect:

"Look after those chaps, will you, Pat? and see they don't give us the slip!"

From Pat:

"I understand. I'll look to them all right."

Riordan, from where he was at the bar, had seen Maxwell and Brindlestone pass through a door, which led doubtless to some apartment in the rear of the saloon.

And while Rody was giving instructions to Merkle to get him a prescription made up at the nearest drug store, Pat passed them on his way to the farther end of the joint.

Rody had observed the movement, his face fairly beaming with satisfaction.

Then he went on:

"You see, it's almost too much to ask av you, Misther Merkle, but not knowin' me way about, an' waitin' for these gints to come, I thought I moight requist you to do me the favor.

"Misther Thompson, here, will p'int out Clamp an' Reynard whin they come."

Turning to Mickey:

"Iver sence I left Spoike Island I do be havin' wake-niss av the larynx, an' thin I begin a-coughin' till you'd think I'd fair sifficate.

"You persave, I med a bout into the say an' got me death av cowlid, so the coughin' comes on at pariodical toimes an' noigh chokes me, so it does.

"A doother who was a tinth cousin to me father's—rest his sowl—made a prognosis av me case—"

"Hold on there," interrupted Thompson, laughing. "You're getting your English mixed, Mulcahy. You mean diagnosis, don't you?"

"Av coorse I do! Didn't I say prognosis?"

"Yes, you said prognosis, but diagnosis is the word, and—"

"To be shure, to be shure," corrected Rody quickly.

"Whativer put prognosis into me mouth? Ah, yis! I was thinkin' av me brother's nose, d'ye moind?"

"All right," from the grinning Mickey.

"But let Merkle go fill your prescription.

"If those men come in in the meantime I can point them out."

Merkle was willing to do anything he could to serve his friend Mulcahy, especially as the Irishman had tipped him with a two-dollar bill, so without further ado away he went to have the prescription filled.

Merkle's exit left the field clear.

"What news?" said Rody to Thompson when they were alone.

"Your men are in the city."

"Did you see them?"

"I did, and talked to them.

"Suspecting no danger, they move about openly.

"But the devil's father wouldn't know you in that disguise, Rody," Thompson added quizzically.

"And you've changed your voice so, man alive, that I wouldn't even have recognized you myself.

"You'd be no slouch of an actor if you took to the stage, Rogan!"

"Niver moind about play-actin' now," Rody impatiently interrupted. "What had the raskils to say for thimselves?"

"As to what?"

"The Morris case."

"They hadn't a word."

"Did you broach them on it?"

"No."

"Whoy didn't you, thin?"

"Where would be the good? It would only have put them on their guard, and both my work and yours would be worth nothing, as they'd skip.

"Once away there would be no rounding them up.

"Did you see Clarke?"

"Yis."

"What had he to say, the old scoundrel?"

"Jest what I thought he would.

"If he'd dar'd he would have fioled at me throat.

"But he thought betther av it, an' allowed me to

lave widout an assault an' batthery case bein' put on the calendar agin him.

"Did you notice the fella wid the freize coat at the bar?"

"Yes; he was dressed almost like yourself. Who was he?"

"A chap named Maxwell; ould Clarke's secretary.

"Did you see the man as follered him to the rare?"

"You mean below?" with a jerk of his thumb, to indicate the direction taken.

"Yis. Who was he?"

"A chap I know very well—a sort of small-fry thief—sometimes employed, it is said, by a certain police captain."

"As what?"

"Stool pigeon. But, mind, I don't say this from certain knowledge," Thompson proceeded. "There may be nothing in it save baseless rumor.

"But I know he's a weak sort of character, whose father was a former friend of the chief of police."

"What is his name?"

"Benny Brindlestone.

"But why do you interest yourself in him?" asked Mickey, rather surprised.

"Because, me b'y, he's in some way connected wid the gang av which that thief av the woruld, Clarke, is the head an' shoulthers av.

"I've bin watchin' his antics iver sence he kem in here, and I'm convinced we've another 'Richard' to dale wid, though a milk-an'-wather soort av a wan, as can't do much harum.

"But now let's get back to the p'int where we left."

"Cut along."

"Where did you meet Clamp and Reynard—otherwise Fish and Dudley?"

"At Rickard's."

"Full—dhrunk?"

"No; lushing soft stuff."

"Och, the livid-headed villains av the univarse!

"It may save their bacon yit to lit the hard stuff alone.

"An' so they were at Rickard's?"

"That's where I met them, and that's where I left them," replied Thompson.

"You did wrong—very wrong," exploded Rody, with some energy.

"By leaving them?"

"Sartinly, be lavin' thim, an'—"

"Stop just where you are, Rogan; don't leap at conclusions so fast."

"Well?"

"Though I left Rickard's I was leery enough to deputize an assistant to watch and follow them wherever they went.

"First, however, I found that this would be their next house of call.

"So, you see, things are a trifle brighter than they look."

"Now, I've been askin' meself what I had best do whin they come.

"It's puzzlin' me consitherable, now that Maxwell and Brindlestone are here.

"If the atmosphere was clear av thim devils I could manage me buckoes widout much difficulty."

"It would be a dangerous proceeding to lug the men out from among this mob," remarked Thompson, glancing around at the formidable company.

"That's what I was thinkin', meself.

"But I'm a janius at schamein', so I am, an' if I don't hit on some plan afore the two conspirators come it is because I haven't a head on me shoulthers, but a cabbage.

"They're a moighty desperate set, it sthroikes me."

"They are. They'd think nothing of using knife or pistol if one of their number was cornered; and it would be done so quick you wouldn't know who'd struck you."

"Faix, that's where the danger loies!

"A welt on the head would be nothin'.

"An' man to man I wouldn't care a rap for the best av thim.

"But the paceable way is the aiseist, an' if those two bosthoons don't come runnin'-in, I can manage foinely."

"Hasn't your friend gone back to look after them?" asked Mickey.

"Yis; but I'm afeared two av thim'll be too many.

"Mickey, I don't want you to be runnin' your head into a hornet's nest, but—"

"But what?"

"Maybe you could hit on a plan to even matters."

"You an' Pat could manage noicely; but, as I sed before, I don't want you to be runnin' your head into a hornit's nist."

"An', perhaps your purshuit in loife would prevent your takin' hand or part in the affair."

"Don't let that trouble you, Rody," said Thompson, good-naturedly.

"I can plan to get rid of those fellows, if you think it will be of service to you."

"Sarvice to me?" repeated Rody, unctuously.

"Man aloive, it'll be av the utmost sarvice to me—the makin' av me, for that matther."

"If you can on'y see your way clear——"

"There's not a cloud in the sky," from Thompson, facetiously.

"Take this pencil and pad and just give your friend a few lines that I am in the racket."

"Leave the rest to me; I've a plan already in my mind, and it will work to perfection."

Rody quickly saw the point.

Two minutes later he had half a dozen lines scrawled off, without having attracted the notice of the frequenters of the dive.

"Take that," said he.

"Thin you can tell him your plan."

Thompson put his pad back in his pocket, but before rising from the table he said:

"How long will it take Merkle to get back?"

"Half an hour."

"Then how are you to know the men?"

"Do you mean Clamp and Reynard?"

"Yes."

"Man, dear, I've pictures av thim—good cabinet photographs."

"Now, go away wid you an' lave the rist to me."

"Do your part well an' there'll be no danger av failure, or even undoo excoitement."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ESCAPE.

THOMPSON arose from the table and deliberately walked to the rear of the saloon.

That part of the joint was to a great extent in the dark, as there were no gas jets flaring up there.

Mickey knew his way about Moss', as was but natural to an old habitue of the joint.

His getting up from the table did not call forth the slightest remark from those who had observed the act, so much were they intent on their own affairs that they had neither the time nor the inclination to trouble themselves about him.

So, as we have said, Thompson walked deliberately to the extreme end of the saloon, not caring who saw him.

In the rear of the dive were a number of rooms, some of which were used by the drunken frequenters of Moss' to sleep off debauches, others where crooks often met to plan their various methods of plunder and other crimes.

Passing through a door, Thompson entered the first room, where he found Riordan, with the gas turned on. Pat was in nowise surprised to see the reporter.

"I expected him"—alluding to Rody—"to send some one," said he, after reading the hurriedly-scrawled note, "and so have been waiting, so to speak."

"Where are they?"

"Come along; I'll show you. Make as little noise as possible; the least thing will alarm them, doubtless."

"You understand the purport of those lines?" Thompson queried, referring to Rody's note.

"Perfectly."

"Well, now, without going further, what is your plan of action?"

"I have hardly thought of one."

"Well, then, I have. Those fellows can't hear us, can they?" asked he circumspectively.

"No; they're in a room at the end of the passage."

"Very well. Listen to my plan and see how it meets your views."

Thompson set to work and described his plan of action.

It was as follows:

Pat Riordan, as a detective, was to enter the room where Maxwell and Brindlestone were, and, producing

a paper which looked like a warrant, was to arrest them on a feigned charge of conspiring with Amos Clarke to ruin Sam Morris, a prisoner in the Tombs, awaiting sentence for gold-brick swindling.

He was then to call in the sporting reporter as a witness and to request his aid in case they resisted.

"There will be no need at all of arresting them," went on Thompson.

"What we want is to frighten and, if possible, get them away from here, so's to give Rogan a chance to deal with Clamp and Reynard, without their interference."

"Three-quarters of an hour will do the whole thing, and then you may let them go where they think fit."

"I don't see why it shouldn't work," said Pat. "It's simple."

"Yes, and won't be hard to execute," replied Thompson.

"But it will depend on yourself, in a measure," added he after a moment's reflection.

"If you're systematic and cool-headed you will have no trouble."

"From what I saw of Maxwell, you can scare the life out of him easily."

"As for Brindlestone, there are many reasons why he shouldn't care to be arrested."

"He'd be in much the same predicament as the other fellow."

"I'll give you one point, and the chief one—he's in mortal terror of the superintendent of police."

"Just mention his name he'll wilt like a wet rag."

"Well, I'll act on the suggestion, anyhow," replied Pat. "Anyway out of here in the rear?"

"Yes, a back yard; from there we can go down a court into the street."

"Better believe they'll be glad to get the chance to cut, and, once they're away, it's a hundred to one they'll not venture back again."

"Now, let's go along, and when the time comes you can call me in, see?"

"How will it affect your standing?" asked Pat as he turned to go.

"Oh, never fear. I'll take care of myself, and, if needs be, make black and white no color—just to suit the pressing emergency of the occasion."

Then Pat turned to the right and went down the passage—the passage alluded to before.

He was followed stealthily by the reporter.

The hum of voices fell on their ears.

"The number of the room is six," Pat whispered.

"Now I'll make a bolt in. You stay at the door, ready to follow when I call."

"All right. Go ahead."

Pat paused before the door from where the voices issued. Deftly turning the knob, he presented himself suddenly before the astonished gaze of Maxwell and Brindlestone.

Seeing a stranger pop in so unceremoniously, Maxwell looked for an instant as if he could have dropped in his tracks.

He was wholly unnerved, shaking like a leaf.

Finally he managed to stammer, and in a passable brogue:

"Moight I ax, sor, the nature av your bizniss that you come unannounced, disturbin' two gintlemin who are havin' a proivate conversation betune thimselves?" demanded he in a quavering voice, in which fear was the predominant feature.

Both were on their feet in an instant.

Brindlestone was undecided how to act, seemingly, though he appeared to divine what was coming.

"Sit down, gentlemen, and don't be in the least uneasy, for my business can be explained in few words."

The men flopped into their chairs like automatons.

"In the first place, you, Mr. Maxwell, in your disguise as an Irishman, could not impose on the veriest stage tyro."

"So that disposes of your claims to histrionic art—and you, sir"—pointing with finger to Brindlestone—

"I know you, too, and am sincerely sorry to see you in such company——"

"Company!" gaspingly from Maxwell, on the verge of collapse.

"What do you mean, so-r?"

"Come, Maxwell, you're wasting your time to no purpose," replied Riordan sarcastically.

"I know you; I know, also, you are Mr. Amos

Clarke's private secretary, and that you assumed your present guise at my friend Mannix's, off the Bowery.

"I likewise know the object—and, in brief, I have warrants for you and Brindlestone's arrest—"

"What for?" gasped the men, limp, almost to speechlessness.

"Well, for conspiring with Mr. Clarke to degrade an innocent man, Mr. Samuel Morris, now awaiting sentence in the Tombs for gold-brick swindling."

This appeared to let both men out a little.

They sprang to their feet.

Brindlestone looked sternly determined.

"It's false!" flashed he. "And before I submit to arrest I must see your warrant."

"And so must I," quaveringly from Maxwell. He was the color of ashes.

"Well, reseal yourselves," coolly from Pat.

"Mr. Thompson, will you come this way, please?" partly facing the door.

The door opens.

Enter Thompson.

Mickey fairly beamed on Benny Brindlestone.

"It's all in proper legal form, Benny," said he, smiling.

"I saw 'em myself, and if you'll take my advice you'll try to square his nobs and make no scene."

"You see," he went on sweetly, "I'm a sort of go-between between you—and I strongly advised my friend, whom I've known for many years, to let up."

"Can't the matter be compromised?"

"Where's the good o' going to prison and run the risk of bein' sent away—for a very long term?"

"Don't you catch on, Benny, my boy? It's all as plain as pie-crust."

"If you leave here, as I understand it, with this gent and myself, you're as safe as houses."

"Make a scene, or give trouble, and you're dead-gone ducks; understand me, now?"

"But this charge is trumped up?" retorted Brindlestone, trying hard to suppress his fears.

"I've had nothing to do with the Morris case; not the first thing."

"Well, suppose you haven't, what then? If you refuse to do what his nobs asks, his warrants leave him no option but to lug you to the nearest precinct police station, and then to-morrow morning before a police magistrate."

"What do you suppose your good friend, the chief, will say?"

"Why, he'd get simply disgusted, and let you go to the devil, that is even if you were liberated by the magistrate, which to my mind is doubtful."

"As for Mr. Maxwell, nothing on earth would save him from taking a trip to Sing Sing."

"His assuming a character entirely foreign would condemn him, and there would be no mercy shown."

"Don't you see how easy it is to ruin both of you ducks?" argued Mickey, speciously.

"But then we're innocent," insisted Barney, who had fallen back again into his chair, the very picture of uneasiness and terror.

"Don't speak rot!" cried Thompson impatiently.

"You both do what I say, and I'll warrant you'll not see the inside of a police station this night of Anno Domini—that's Latin, and good stuff."

"Go according to your dictates, and I won't answer for the consequences."

"Now choose—one way or the other, as it suits your convenience."

Maxwell and Benny were too frightened to think clearly, so became easy prey for the designing Mickey and Pat.

They did not ask even to see the warrants—taking Thompson's word for granted that they existed.

"Now, gentlemen," said Mickey, "I fail to see anything to detain us here any longer."

"You agree to leave with my friend, which I think ought to suffice."

"Do we go out by the saloon door?" asked Brindlestone.

"A strange question, Benny, for you," replied Mickey, with emphasis.

"You know well the saloon would be the very worst means of egress we could select."

"Yes, we'd attract the notice of every man in the place," chimed in Riordan.

"We don't want to do that, nor you either, if you're wise."

"There's a back way, I believe?"

"Sure," filled in Mickey, "and well Benny knows it, the villain."

"Come, gentlemen, let's make ourselves scarce. No one in the shebang need be the wiser."

"You remember the old saw, 'What the eye never sees the heart never grieves,' or words to that effect."

"Now, if you're ready, we'll start; and take a fool's advice, keep this matter under lock and key in the meshes of your memory net. None need be the wiser of the adventure. See? And an innocent man will be served likewise."

"The indictment will be quashed without any trouble, and all will end as merry as a marriage bell."

Maxwell and Brindlestone were but too well pleased that the ugly affair was to end thus.

They had been quaking in their shoes ever since Riordan had come into the room, so they were ready to agree to anything.

Maxwell did not surrender hope, however, to give timely warning to Clamp and Reynard.

The moment he could rid himself of the detective he devised means to warn the conspirators of what to expect—to, at least, put them on their guard against the Central Office man, anyway.

Brindlestone had in part guessed that the prototype of Maxwell was Rody, but so far he had not mentioned his suspicions to the secretary.

He was on the point of so doing when Riordan marched into the room.

The unexpected entrance of the private detective had upset his plans.

The two men were led out of Moss's joint by Thompson.

Mickey in front.

Behind Brindlestone and Maxwell came Pat.

In this order they got to the street.

"Where now?" queried Thompson.

"The Bowery," answered Pat.

"And then?"

"Uptown. We'll give these gentlemen a ride as far as Seventy-sixth street, and there leave them."

"This will give our friend ample time to get in his fine work."

Of course Pat alluded to Rody, and so Mickey understood.

"I must send word to Rody," whispered Pat to Thompson.

"Yes, if but a few lines. But who are you going to send as messenger?"

"Just keep an eye on our friends, while I drop into this drug store," from Pat.

The pharmacy indicated was not more than half a dozen yards away, and Riordan was off in a jiffy to write his note.

While he was gone the not-unexpected occurred—a street fight not uncommon to that locality.

A policeman got into a rough-and-tumble argument with three toughs.

A crowd gathered.

A night club was making fierce and swift gyrations, and clearing a space for the ill-beset patrolman.

Fists were shooting out like piston-rods, seemingly every way at once, and though the officer had his formidable club, giving a clip here and a clip there, he was getting the worst of the battle, the crowd closing in on him, sadly impeding the free play of his weapon.

Suddenly the officer went down from a blow.

Then Thompson's fighting blood was up in the nineties.

Forgetting entirely the two men, Maxwell and Brindlestone, whom he had been left to care for, Mickey, with blood in his eye, squared off and struck one of the toughs a powerful blow on the point of the jaw.

Down the fellow went like a log.

Then he flew at the second man as if he had been propelled from a catapult.

By this time the officer had succeeded in regaining his feet, and as he thus succeeded several other officers came up.

The mob was soon dispersed, scattering in all directions, and while Mickey was receiving the thanks of the policeman whom he had defended, he suddenly be-thought him of Maxwell and Brindlestone.

He looked around.

But not a sight of them could be seen.

They had vanished as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed them.

Thompson was furious.

But what availed it?

None!

When Pat came out of the pharmacy his face was a study.

"Where are they—Maxwell and Brindlestone?" he cried.

"Gone!" was all poor Mickey could say.

The explanation came later—that Maxwell and Brindlestone had taken advantage of the disturbance and made their escape.

CHAPTER XVII.

DENOUNCED.

Now let us return to Rody, whom we left alone in the den of thieves, awaiting the appearance of Clamp and Reynard.

Their arrival, according to Thompson's statement, would not possibly be delayed much longer, so the detective settled back in his chair and lighting a cigar kept an eye for the rest of the time on the door.

Ten minutes elapsed, then the two men he expected entered.

Rody knew them at once from the portraits which he had in his possession; even if he didn't have these, he could have recognized the men from their pictures in the "gallery" at headquarters.

"Good," continued our hero, this is goin' to be a soft schnap, an' no brakes at all, at all.

"The trouble now'll be to make their acquaintance.

"I'm Mulcahy, the Irish schoolmaster, from Dhirty Butther, otherwise Ballyhack, County Wexford, the Lord help us!

"Soul to it, if I don't spin thim a yarn that'll open their eyes, me name is Dinis."

Several men in the barroom nodded familiarly to the newcomers, but otherwise showed no interest in them, being too much engrossed with their own affairs to mind those of others.

One of the new arrivals (Reynard) stepped up to the bar, engaging the bartender in conversation.

What its nature was was soon made apparent.

The barkeeper pointed to Rody's table, the only available one in the room, as the rest were already occupied.

"As I surmised," muttered the detective. "I'm goin' to have company—an' here they come, bag, baggage an' baggage wagins."

"Wilcome, gentle strangers; thrice wilcome are ye.

"Come into me parlor sed the spoider to the floy," oh, moy! etcethera, etcethera.

"Now to make an impression on thim."

Clamp and Reynard a few seconds later came to Rody's table.

Are those chairs engaged, my friend?" addressed Reynard, with a smile and a quizzical look at Rody's get-up.

"Indeed, thin, they're not, sir.

"I'm mighty glad you axed the quistion, for I was beginnin' to feel as onaisy as a hin on hot cinthers.

"Sit down, both av yez, an' make yersilves comfortable.

"What'll ye dhrink, gints?"

The two men glanced at each other and laughed outright.

"It's very kind of you, sir," said Clamp.

"But, you see, you're a stranger, and I don't think it would be quite right to impose on good nature—"

"Not at all, not at all, gintlemin," said Rody.

"Do you sit down an' take a smatther av John Jamieson wid a b'y from across the wather."

"Lately landed, eh?" from Clamp, a man passed middle age, of very ordinary appearance.

"Yis, sor—landed yisterday, from Erin go bragh."

"From where?"

"Ould Ireland, sir, where the apple praties grow, an' out av which they do be makin' proime ould shuff for the English markit, to get the Saxins in foightin' humor."

"Do you mean whiskey?" chimed in Reynard, a man whose age might be on a par with Clamp's, and of an appearance equally ordinary.

"Sure I do! Sometimes they call it potheen, sometimes they call it ould hat, an' agin mountin doo, jest as the notion suits thim, d'ye moind?"

"And so they make the whiskey out of potatoes in your country?" grinned Reynard. He sat down, followed by his friend Clamp.

"Troth, an' they do, sir—all ixcept wan brand.

"Are you drinking John Jamieson, my friend?" and he pointed to Rody's glass.

"Faith, I am that. I wouldn't dhrink anything ilse if you was to pay me for it."

"Very sensible, indeed, Mr.—"

"Mulcahy, at your sarvice, sir.

"But it's dhrty talkin' so it is. Let's dhrink.

"They's the genuine stuff here, I untherstand. It 'ud make your hair grow if you was bald-headed, an' curl it if it was as straight as an Injin's."

"Well, I suppose you're the best judge of that," said Clamp.

"I vote, Mr. Mulcahy, that we drink with you—to our better acquaintance—for I do like you Irishmen; you're so droll and so full of humor that it's as good as a show to meet and hear you."

"Is it, thin?" thought Rody.

"Beloiike, you'll have raison to alther your opinion prisintly, me gintlemin."

But aloud he added:

"Yis, sir, I must say me counthrymin are very funny, ispecially whin they're handled roight soide wid care an' you don't rub the hair the wrong ways."

"Then they're all fight?"

"That's on'y natheral, sir—for the worum 'il turn if he's throdden on."

"Yes, the worm of the still does so very often," chimed in the other rogue, deciding to have some fun at "Mr. Mulcahy's" expense.

But the next instant he rather regretted he had opened his mouth, for Rody, in a semi-humorous way, sent home some hot shot he didn't seem to relish and which produced a sneering allusion from his friend—to the effect that he was knocked completely out in the first round.

The drinks were called.

After that matters went more smoothly.

"I heard you say something about Spike," began Reynard.

"What Spike do you mean, Mr. Mulcahy?"

"Spoike Island, Sir—where the English Government do be givin' a man a livin' for a limited number av years."

"Very charitable on the part of the English Government," grinned Clamp, nudging his friend.

"Well, thin, I shouldn't say it was so very charitable, sir," from Rody, with not as much as a smile.

"You see opinions differ, jintlemin."

"No doubt they do. I suppose you had to hump yourself for the provender you put under your belt?"

"Will, to a sartin extent, yis.

"I didn't moind the breakin' av stones as that was a noice clane job an' kipt your blood in cirkilation.

"But whin it came to pickin' oakum, whoy the case was different—iespecially to a man av jintle tastes an' aristocratic looks loike meself.

"It has a dhirty dickinish way av colorin' the fingers, an' spatulatin' the hands, an' it's not noice at all, at all, no-way you take it."

"I believe it's a convict establishment in Ireland?" said Reynard.

"Yis—oh yis—a paynil institootion where you sarve an apprenticeship av four or foive years as the case moight be."

"What was your offense?"

"Well, me dear man, I happened to be a nashinal Irish schoolmaster—"

"And you joined the Fenians?"

"No, you're wrong there. It jest happened this way: I had a passion for writin', an' wan day, as bad luck would have it, I wint an' put a jint's name to a bit av paper—"

"Oh yes, I see, forgery!"

"Ixactly. So the jedge who throied me was plazed to call it, although it was for a sum liss thin eighteen pounds; an', havin the case av a frind forninst me oyes at the toime, I didn't loike to say he loied, an' so he gev me foive years."

"But about your friend—what did he get?"

"Foive years, too."

"For what?"

"Nothin' in loife, avick. It was jest this—a difference av opinion betume thim."

"The jedge said he was guilty, an' me frind said he was not. An' for this little difference av opinion the jedge said 'foive years,' an' foive years he got."

"Are you a good penman?" asked Reynard casually.

"Divil a betther. Copperplate an' the floight av

aigles an' scrool woruk isn't in it whin I've a pin in me hand.

"Tare an' ages, I can wrote to bate the band!"

Then came the interruption which Rody might have expected, but which he didn't—at least, so soon.

The return of Johnny Merkle.

Merkle, espying the three men at the table, came forward, grinning.

"Hello, Johnny!" from Clamp and Reynard conjointly.

"Hello, yourselves, my hearties! Have you got over your ill-humor?"

"Forgot it almost as soon as it occurred," from Clamp.

"Come, plant yourself down and take what the gods send.

"Know our friend here? It appears you do."

"Yes," from Johnny. "Glad you've met, gentlemen.

"This is the—" Merkle lowered his voice and whispered the rest in Clamp's ear.

"Mr. Mulcahy," went on Johnny aloud, "I now have the honor to introduce you to your friend's friends, Messrs. Clamp and Reynard, sometimes known as Fish and Dudley."

Rody was about to rise to his feet and make a suitable response when the door of the saloon flew open and in rushed Maxwell and Brindlestone.

"That man's an impostor—a detective!" yelled Brindlestone; "here to arrest Clamp and Reynard on some trumped-up charge in the Sam Morris case."

Like the lightning's flash every crook in the saloon was on his feet, and before Rody could even prepare himself for what was coming every light in the saloon went out, leaving the joint in complete darkness.

Rody found himself grasped by several pairs of hands and hurled violently on his back.

His head came crash against a leg of one of the tables, and he rolled over once and was still.

The fall had deprived the Irishman of his senses.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RODY DISCOVERED.

"WHERE do you think the rascals have gone?"

"I wish I knew. Then I would be easier in mind. But I'm afraid they have gone back to Stanton street."

"If so it will be all up with Rody's capture of Clamp and Reynard."

"Once they get the tip there'll be no saying where they'll be."

"They may be out of the jurisdiction of this State."

"It's probable."

"But confound it, I couldn't help getting into the fight."

"It seems to be my nature somehow to take part in rows I've no right to."

"But it's the old story—the under dog, Pat—and I piled in for all I was worth."

"During the scrimmage they cut out, and blanked fools they would be if they didn't."

"There's nothing left but to go back."

"The quicker we are there the better, for Rody will have a hard time of it with that crowd."

The foregoing passed between Mickey and Pat when they found their quarry had escaped.

There was no use fuming over it.

They put on their best face and turned back into Stanton street.

When they got to Moss' they found things rather lively.

A crowd had collected.

The saloon was in darkness.

Half a dozen policemen were doing their best to disperse the mob of noisy citizens, who were hooting and yelling like madmen.

At last Thompson and Pat got the ear of an officer.

"What's up?"

"There's been a free fight in Moss'. Guess a man's been killed."

"Just a moment since we came up, and had a precious time in getting to the door even."

The policemen broke into the saloon.

Pat and Mickey crowded in along with them.

Somebody struck a match and tried one of the gas jets.

No go.

The gas was turned off at the meter.

In less than a minute a lamp was brought and lighted.

Then everything could be seen with tolerable distinctness.

But the saloon seemed deserted.

No, not wholly so, for a little away from the bar the light of the lamp fell on the body of a man—stretched at full length on his face.

"Dead as a flounder," observed an officer, sententiously.

"It's Rogan," chimed in Mickey.

In a moment he was bending over the prostrate man.

They turned the disguised detective over till the light flashed in his face.

The skin of his forehead and cheeks was slightly abraded. A tiny trickle of blood was oozing from the scratches, for they were not much more.

"He's only stunned," exclaimed Thompson.

"Here's a big lump on the side of his head, as though he'd been hit with a club."

Matters weren't so bad.

Some brandy was brought from the bar, and a few drops of the spirit forced down Rody's throat.

"Don't give him too much," warned one of the officers.

"Stand back, some of you, and let the man have breathing space."

Outside was a perfect pandemonium.

It proceeded from the excited, yelling mob.

This was put an end to summarily by the arrival of a strong body of police.

By the time peace and quiet reigned Rody was recovering from the stunning effects of the blow he had apparently received.

A swallow more of brandy, and our hero was able to get on his feet.

His brain was still benumbed, and it seemed as though he had lost the use of his speech.

"Take him into the air; take him into the air," was the cry from more than one of the police.

Rody was helped into the street by his friend Pat and the sporting reporter.

"Let him have another gulp of the liquor," prompted a sergeant.

"The man's only regaining his wits."

"He'll be right enough in a few minutes."

"Here comes an ambulance," called out one of the policemen.

Almost with his words an ambulance dashed up.

A young fellow with an official cap sprang out.

"Let the doctor see him."

"Maybe his skull's fractured."

"Fractured nawthin'; the man'll be as right as a trivet when the doctor tends to him."

These and other cries.

The young surgeon examined Rody's head and shrugged his shoulders energetically.

"I'd like to know the idiot who rung us up," were his disgruntled words.

"The fellow's drunk. That's his trouble."

"Take him to the police station till he sobers up."

"Oh, go bag your head, you bloody sawbones," growled Mickey.

"You only save funeral expenses by walking around, eh? Cut, skeedaddle, vamoose; hear me?"

But the ambulance surgeon was by this time moving away in his official conveyance, so didn't hear.

If he did he pretended not to.

This was prudent on his part, for Thompson's fighting blood had not cooled down, and a word from this apology for a doctor would have fired it to fever heat.

The cool night air and several swallows of the spirits had a reviving effect on our hero.

He finally got the use of his tongue.

"Where are they?" he asked brokenly.

"Who?" from Pat.

"Who, Clamp and Reynard. Have the police arrested them?"

Pat shook his head.

"How do you feel?" from Thompson.

"I'm still quare in the upper sthory. I'm murdered, so I am wid the stroke I got," Rody managed to gasp.

"Who struck you?"

"Divil a wan av me knows."

"I wint over loike a tin-pin, an' kem crash agin' the leg av a table."

"That's what knocked me out, I suppose."

"But ain't there any av thim vagabones here at all, at all?"

"Not a soul.

"They've all got away.

"The place was dark when we got here.

"But don't bother your head about them just now.

"Thompson'll go and get a hack, and we can drive you home.

"A few hours' rest and you'll be all right, and then, when your brain's clear you can decide what to do."

But this advice was scouted by Rody.

He averred he was in good condition, bar a slight numbness of his faculties. This fact made his thinking not so clear as it might be.

"Well, if you'll not go home and rest, what do you propose to do?" asked Pat, with some impatience.

"You're no longer in a condition to be wandering about the city."

"I'm all roight, I tell you ag'in'; jest give me a chance.

"In the first place we must prevint them fellas from lavein' New York.

"The sooner I set about it the sooner it will be done.

"Niver moind bouldin' me up. I'm able to walk wid-out bein' bouldered up loike an ould cow."

This provoked a laugh from the officers.

But Rody was in no laughing mood.

He was mad right through.

"Well, I don't know but what he's right," interjected Mickey.

"Let's start for the nearest station, and telephone the facts to headquarters.

"After that all ferries and modes of egress from New York can be watched, and if Clamp and his pal decide on leaving the city they can be rounded up.

"There'll be no loophole left 'em."

"Didn't you say you'd somebody shadowing these men?" Pat questioned.

"Yes. Jove, I almost lost sight of that.

"To be sure, and if Tim Pippin isn't after them like their own shadows I'm the fifth cousin to a jackass.

"He's on their track right now, or he'd be here.

"He's like a bull-terrier—once he gets a hold he never lets go."

By this time the street was cleared of the noisy, howling, hooting element which at first almost jammed the block on both sides, rendering the street for the moment absolutely impassable.

The police reserves having used their night sticks to good effect, the mob had gradually dispersed and sought safety in flight.

Now was Rody, Mickey and Pat's opportunity to get away, and, as all the officers had left, it was risky for them to remain, so they bent their steps to the nearest precinct police station.

Then the 'phone was put in use, with the effect that within twenty minutes every ferry house and railway station in New York was watched.

Police and detectives had a first-class description of the men wanted.

Before our three friends had left the police station there came a message from Mulberry street.

"Pippin," went on the 'phone, "rung us up a few seconds ago. His message was to the effect that he was on the track of men named, and would keep shadowing them wherever they went. First chance he'll wire again and let us know the outcome."

"Didn't I tell you," from Mickey, jubilantly; "didn't I tell you that Tom would do the trick? He's like a bulldog, joined with the cunning of a fox.

"Just you mark what I say—Clamp and Reynard have no more a chance to get away than I have to loot the Sub-Treasury."

"Hadh't we better make a call at headquarters and wait there?" ventured Pat.

"Pippin says the first chance he gets he'll wire and let us know where they've gone.

"Then what's to hinder us from starting out and col-laring them?"

"Yes, and, by the Lord Harry, there may be an eye-opener when we get there that'll surprise us."

Off they set out for Mulberry street.

It was getting late—within a few minutes of midnight.

"How is your head, Rody, my boy?"

"Betther—but still it feels loike a bushil measure, an' there's a bump on it as big as a hin's egg.

"But I don't moind that, so long as there's a chance av cornerin' thim vagabones av the woruld.

"I think if I'd a dhrop av John Jamieson or Ould Kin-sale I'd be loike a foightin' cock, an' wouldn't call the Imperor av Choina me uncle."

"Here's a flask," said Thompson. "Take a good pull—it's the real Mackaye."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HOUSE BY THE RIVER.

THE following morning.

Scene, Amos Clarke's office on Nassau street.

There were two persons in Clarke's office—to-wit, Clarke and Maxwell.

As it was not yet nine, the other clerks had not arrived, so the two men had a clear field, so to speak.

"Well," said Clarke, "do you think there will be any trouble in their getting away from New York?"

"Not the least. I don't see why there should be. They're amply supplied with funds.

"But if you will pardon me, Mr. Clarke, I should like to get under cover for some time.

"My task was a risky one, but I accomplished all I said I would.

"I hear the detective was not very seriously injured in last night's affray."

"But did you not say he was taken away in a hospital ambulance?" said the broker.

"Yes, I heard so, but I also heard that he would be out in less than a week."

"Well, that will give our friends enough time to get to their destination in Colorado.

"Besides, by then Morris will be in Sing Sing, and—"

"I may follow him," interrupted Maxwell, drily.

"You see, by some deuced means, the Irishman got on to my disguise—the work of that rascal Thompson, the reporter, doubtless.

"So, the moment Rogan leaves the hospital, what is more natural than to look me up?"

"And I'm afraid, too," Maxwell went on, "that Brindlestone—should they take the trouble to arrest him—will tell of the part I took in the attack on the detective.

"As for you, Mr. Clarke, you have nothing to fear, for nobody can prove anything against you.

"In my conversation with Benny I was careful not to mention your name—good, bad or indifferent."

"Well, where do you want to go?" peevishly from the old broker.

"Do you want to go west, like the other two?"

"No, sir! Bermuda is the point I have in mind. In two or three months, you know, Mr. Clarke, I could return, when the thing had blown over."

"I can hardly spare you, Maxwell," said Clarke, drumming his fingers on his desk nervously.

"But if the case is as bad as you say, I suppose there is nothing for it but to slip you away for a few months.

"But before you quite New York I should like you to ascertain whether Clamp and Reynard are gone, or, at least, when they are likely to depart on their journey westward.

"Do you think the men will be beset by any difficulties?"

"How, sir?"

"Do you suppose they have in any manner been shadowed?"

"Oh, I'm sure not, sir."

"Still, it's right to act very circumspectively in a matter attended by so many dangers. Hunt them up, anyway; take a close carriage when you've corralled them and drive to the ferry—Cortlandt street, as I fancy that will be the nearest and safest.

"Once you get them on the train return to me, and I will fix it so you can go to Bermuda and stay for a few months.

"Do this at once. Don't let them lose time in New York or it may be a bad break for you as well as for me.

"Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly, sir."

"Then go and see them before another hour passes, and, if you can do nothing else, frighten them into leaving at once."

"Very good, Mr. Clarke; I shall do so—before I take even a bite of breakfast."

"Have you not breakfasted?" asked Clarke, surprised.

"No, sir; I've not had the time.
 "I've passed a fearful night, Mr. Clarke—fearful!
 "I shouldn't like to go through another such experience.
 "And, worse than all, I'm penniless."
 "Penniless!" exclaimed Clarke aghast. "After all the money I let you have yesterday?"
 "Yes, sir; I haven't a cent. All my own spare cash went, as well as yours."
 "Why, how was that?"
 "You know what you told me to give your friends, Clamp and Reynard?"
 "Yes. Well?"
 "Well, sir," said the lying fellow, "I gave them more than you told me, and then, what with my make-up and money to Brindlestone and some more to bribe an officer who was about to arrest me, I am fairly stumped.
 "You know I must have cash or I can do nothing, Mr. Clarke."
 "How much?" growled Clarke. "Don't make it too steep; I'm short myself just now."
 Maxwell named a hundred dollars.
 After much grumbling and fidgeting, the broker handed the secretary two fifty-dollar banknotes.
 "Now, get away," he said curtly, "and see that those fellows take the next train, if possible, for the West.
 "Then return and let me know results."
 Maxwell promised to perform faithfully everything he had been asked, finally departing in great spirits.
 "I can pluck old Clarke easily," he commented.
 "Fancy the old rascal saying he was squeezed, when I know him to be worth at least a couple of millions.
 "I only hope Brindlestone was not lying when he said Rogan was in the hospital; if not, I'll have to flet the coop, P. D. Q.
 "I want no Irishman after me, if I can help it; and that Rody, they tell me, is the very devil."
 Corner of Frankfort street and Park row he met Brindlestone.
 Benny looked miserable, as though he had been up all night and taken considerable drink, which were both matters of fact.
 A shave, his breakfast and his boots shined would have been a considerable improvement in his personal appearance.
 "Come along," said Maxwell bruskiy: "you look as if you'd been pulled through a sewer.
 "But a shave, a clean-up and a substantial meal will fix you all right."
 "Did you see the old man?"
 "Yes."
 "What luck?"
 "Why, good luck—what do you think?"
 "But let's go and have something to eat and I will tell you all about it," from Maxwell.
 "We have no need to loiter around here, anyhow, with a chance of being run in.
 "I'm going to shake my boots of the dust of this sweet city as soon as ever I can."
 "You are? Where are you going?"
 "I'll tell you that when we get under cover.
 "Park row is too public; we must get into one of the side streets, where we're not liable to run up against any one who knows us.
 "Come—let's get along."
 Five minutes later they were in a restaurant near the East River, not before, however, Benny had a cocktail as an appetizer.
 Both sat down to a good breakfast, the best such a place could afford.
 "And so you're going to leave the dear city?" began Benny, lachrymosely.
 "Just my luck, to be left alone to face the brunt of last night's work," added he wearily.
 "Is there no provision made?"
 "You know what'll be the result if they nab me, Maxey—and old Clarke will know it too, I'm afraid.
 "But tell me where you are going? Is it all arranged between you?"
 "Let me see," answered Maxwell, without replying to the exact sense of the question put; "I—I don't see why I shouldn't have a fellow voyager.
 "Clarke will likely kick if I make such a proposition.
 "But when I prove to him how necessary it is to his well-being he won't make any bones about it, but shell out.
 "How would you like a few months in Bermuda?"

"It's an A1 winter resort, isn't it?"
 "Nothing like it for consumptives and invalids," answered the secretary, grinning.
 "The scenery is both salubrious and enchanting.
 "If I had a poetic vein now I'd go in for writing poetry, and you could turn your fist to prose—"
 "Do you mean it?" cried Benny, with sudden elation.
 "Yes, certainly, if old Clarke will."
 "And why can't you make him?"
 "I think I can.
 "I've but to tell him the danger he runs by leaving you here.
 "In fact, I'll spin him a yarn that'll give him a premonition of apoplexy.
 "I question if that's the correct way to put it, but it will do well enough for the occasion, and if I give it to him good and strong I think I'll have no trouble of working him.
 "Money was made to circulate, my boy, and I can't for my life see why this old hunk should have two cool millions and I nothing.
 "Let's have justice done, and go in for distribution."
 "Right you are. That's within the spirit of equity, but the distribution should be general.
 "The moneyed element of the world would kick, ah ha! but then where would be the difference a century from now.
 "Would the under dogs be on top? I don't think!
 "But speaking of Bermuda. St. Thomas is a nice quiet city in the season.
 "Say St. Thomas, by all means, and I'm with you till death doth us part.
 "I believe that's one of the marital obligations in the marriage ritual, but never having been there, can't say.
 Thus they rattled on during the meal, both in the highest spirits, for naturally the prospect was bright, even at a distance.
 "By the way," resumed the secretary, changing the subject, "from whom did you get your information that Rogan was in the hospital?"
 "Well, now you ask, I might as well answer frankly: I guessed it," replied Benny, unabashed at this voluntary information.
 "Guessed it? What do you mean?" Maxwell demanded, for it was clear he didn't expect this reply.
 "Well, I knew the detective got one on the nob, for I saw Dirty Dick slug him with a club, and he struck him as I've seen butchers strike oxen in the shambles, a terrific blow that must at least have cracked his skull, if it wasn't an inch thick, and I don't think it was that, judging by the man's—"
 "So that's all you know about it?" was the disgusted and impatient interruption of Maxwell.
 "You only go by what you saw, or at most by hearsay?"
 "I'll soon find out, if that's troubling you," replied Benny, perfectly composed.
 "But you ought to have made sure of this before you said anything.
 "As it is, I've told Clarke he's in the hospital, and further, told him you were my informant.
 "Pretty how-do if the Irishman is searching the city for Clamp and Reynard.
 "It would place us all in such a devilish awkward predicament, from which I fear we could not very well extricate ourselves."
 "Well, it's done and can't be helped," indifferently from Brindlestone.
 "When you go back to the old man don't tell him any different; see?
 "Let him find out just as other people.
 "I wouldn't worry myself if I were you, not a pin's point, but fly the coop soon's you can; and of course I'll be one of the party."
 "I'm sorry you're so flippant," from the secretary, with poorly suppressed anger.
 "So am not I. Flippancy, as you call it, is bread and butter, lodging and washing to me these times.
 "What would you have me do—shed tears by the bucketful?
 "No, my friend, henceforth I'm going to take things philosophically. 'Laugh and grow fat,' that's my motto.
 "But what about the shave and the boots shined?
 "A clean collar and tie will go well, too. Then we can pursue the thread of our investigations and come right side up with care."

Having disposed of their meal, they next struck a barber's shop and got shaved and cleaned up, with the addition of artistic shines for their mud and dust encrusted footwear.

Then a hanger-on at the barber's was dispatched post haste to buy a collar and tie for Brindlestone.

These came in due course, and the friends left the shaving saloon in a much better condition than when they entered.

"Where to now?" asked Benny.

"The belt line for uptown.

"Then catch the Second avenue 'L' at the nearest point.

"Come, we've none too much time to spare."

"It is Clamp and Reynard?"

"Yes; and we must get them over to Jersey as soon as possible, and from there ship them West."

"They go West, eh?"

"That is Clarke's programme.

"But no more questions; let us start; I must think a way out of this hole, but I'm afraid it will be foul sailing.

"If Rogan's not in the hospital the ferries will be closely watched, in which case the chances are against us."

"Well, do your thinking, and I'll do mine," from Benny carelessly.

Since he had breakfast, a couple of drinks and a fix up, he felt on Easy street, so to speak.

They boarded the first Belt line car passing, and thus in due course they got to an "L" station, which took them to Harlem.

Their destination was One Hundred and Seventeenth street, near the river, on the east side of the town.

They got off at the nearest station, finally emerging into First avenue.

"How far?" asked Brindlestone.

"Two or three blocks."

"Any time for a drink?"

"Haven't you had enough?" grumbled Maxwell, bitterly.

"You'll be drunk before you know if you go on that way.

"What, with your loss of sleep and being up all night, I see it telling on you even now.

"Never mind the drink; let's get business through with, and once we're aboard ship you can soak in it if you will."

"Then you take it for granted I'm going?" said Benny, grinning.

"I'll fix it if you only behave yourself.

"The deuce take the man," as Brindlestone went on urging the necessity of another cocktail to steady his nerves. "Get your drink, an' be done.

"If you continue as you've begun I won't answer for you."

The cocktail allayed Benny's thirst, and enlivened him very much.

But as he was now in the humor to talk too much, Maxwell saw nothing for it but to get the upper hand and stop him.

Which he did very promptly.

Finally they arrived at the rendezvous—a queer, ramshackle structure by the river.

Maxwell knew his bearings apparently.

He ascended the steps of the decayed stoop and gave a tug at the bell, without any fear of being seen by any prying eye other than those in the house.

There was not a wait of more than a few seconds when the blistered and worm-eaten door was opened.

An elderly man appeared.

One glance at the newcomers was enough.

"All right," said the man. "Come in; they're waiting for you."

The secretary and Brindlestone went into the house as requested.

They were shown to a room to the right of the hallway, and as they entered two men rose up from their chairs.

The men were Clamp and Reynard.

"You've got here sooner than we expected," Clamp began.

"Don't believe there's a chance of finding us here, though Reynard did think for a time we'd been traced.

"But this I ascribed to an over-heated imagination," lightly laughing.

"I'm not so sure of that," spoke up Reynard.

"I suspected more than once that a young fellow—like a newspaper reporter—was shadowing us.

"Clamp, when I mentioned it, said it was due to the natural suspicions of an overtaxed brain, and as he insisted I said no more.

"The confounded Irishman rises up like a spectre before me, nevertheless.

"He got it hot, and did he possess an ordinary skull it must have been fractured.

"But I'm still inclined to think we've not seen the last of him, for the infernal cuss still haunts my vision light a nightmare.

"I'm much easier now you've got back"—to Maxwell—"but last night has told upon you, too, I see.

"And Benny, too, looks all broke up."

"The deuce I do," from Brindlestone airily. "Let me tell you you never made a bigger mistake.

"I never felt better in my life, though two hours' quiet snooze would only be natural under the circumstances.

"However, I don't crave it and don't want it.

"It's you gents who's overburdening our minds now.

"There are three words—you must skip—light out lively—three more.

"But Maxey'll tell you all about it.

"As for me, I'm going to think how we're going to smuggle you over to Jersey, for no doubt all the ferries'll be watched. See the point?"

"Has anybody found out about Rogan?" questioned Reynard.

"He's in the hospital, I guess," from Benny.

"And only a guess at that," retorted the secretary sarcastically.

"If we go by Brindlestone I'm afraid we'll be led a good way out of both latitude and longitude.

"His is mere surmise.

"But we can't stop to argue the question. We must get you gentlemen over the Courtlandt street ferry.

"Now how are we going to do it? That is the question to weigh and answer.

"First, a disguise will be necessary," here chimed in Benny.

"How about a couple of female rigs?"

"I'm an artist in that line, and could fix you up to a 'T' if we can only get the women's toggery.

"And we can disguise as a fashionable coachman and footman. The latter will come as natural to me as life—and his nobs, the secretary, having been a bum actor, can transform himself into as respectable a coachman as can be found.

"Well, we're not to be licked at that. I said I'd think a scheme out, and this moment comes to my mind an old pal on First avenue, not far from here, who'd be glad to undertake the whole racket—for a consideration, you understand?"

"He'd get everything needed from the disguises to a carriage and pair, with a bang-up coat-of-arms on the panels."

Brindlestone arose from his chair and took up his hat.

But he had no more than done so when there came several loud peals at the door bell.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

To return to Rody and his two friends—Pat and Mickey.

They waited all night long at headquarters, and several times received such messages as these:

"Followed them to North Side. Maxwell and Benny with them. They've just entered a house on Twenty-third street, and while I'm waiting I send Ike to 'phone message. Stay where you are. I'll keep track of them. "PIPPIN."

The Ike referred to was a newsboy, an acquaintance of Tim Pippin, whom he had picked up while tracking the four men.

Several messages of an almost similar character were received, telephoned from point to point—at times on the West Side, at times on the East Side.

But all were encouraging.

And so on, till the morning grew well advanced.

In the meantime the party had separated.

Maxwell and Brindlestone had gone down town—Clamp and Reynard up to Harlem.

Pippin's instructions were not to lose sight of the latter.

And he didn't.

Wherever they went he followed, but with a prudence that was most commendable, always holding aloof in the background, away out of sight, so the two men would not even suspect they were being shadowed.

We know already that one did—Reynard, the Fox, as Rody called him.

His sharp, suspicious eyes caught sight of Pippin more than once. But when he alluded to it Clamp pooh-poohed the matter, ascribing it all to a loss of rest and an overheated fancy.

At ten-thirty A. M. the following message was received at headquarters:

"The four men have joined forces. They are together again, at an old house on — street, East River. Come on when you get this. Don't delay, or they may move to some other place. PIPPIN."

Rody was now fully recovered from the rough usage he had received at the hands of the desperate gang of thieves at Barney Moss'.

Except for the lump on his head, where he had either been clubbed or struck the leg of the table in his fall, Rody was in as good condition as could have been expected after his rough and exciting experience.

"This case 'll ind all roight," commented he, after hearing the last message from Harlem.

"B'ys, we must get to Tim widout any delay, now."

"He's done his work loike a Throjan, an', troth, it's an' illigant detective that same Pippin 'ud make. He's a paich, so he is, not forgettin' Ikey, which reminds me av the other Ikey, whose foive-hunthrid-dollar retainer I've got in me insoide pocket, an' which I've ivery chance now av earnin' honistly."

"Then all we've to do is to start for Harlem," said Pat in response, "so's not to give them an opportunity to get away."

"Besoides, I want this job off my hands, so I can have a few hours' sleep."

"I feel utterly done up for want of rest and food."

"I prided myself on being an athlete, and that I could stand it out with any man, but I confess I'm but a tyro compared with you and Mickey there."

"That's soft sawther you're givin' us, Pat," smiled Rody; "you're by moiles the frishist man av the three, so you are."

"Mickey's eyes are goin' together from the fair dintn av sleep. As for me, I'm loike an ould wilted rag—ready to drop any moment."

"But let's get out av this, anyway—an' thtravel to the illivated wid dispatch."

"It won't do now to let thim vagabones get away."

Twenty minutes after this colloquy they boarded a train at one of the "L" stations and were presently hurrying up town as fast as steam could take them.

When they alighted at their destination a sharp-eyed urchin met them as they were descending the stairs which led to the street.

Thompson recognized him.

"I see you're on hand, Ikey," greeted he.

"Are they still housed?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, "and it's not likely they'll ever leave it except as prisoners," he added.

"Tim's keepin' a watch on the house from a clump of bushes, within fifty yards of the building."

"Let's get there quick an' nab the rascals."

"After chasin' round all night we've cornered 'em at last."

"You're a jool (jewel), Ikey, me b'y!" exclaimed Rody, "an' it'll be the best noight's woruk you've iver done in your loife, or I don't know what I'm a-talkin' about."

"I hope so, sir," replied Ikey, with quiet enthusiasm. "I don't think I'd ever make much out of sellin' papers, an' if I could only be a detective, why, then—"

"Aha!" interrupted the Irishman, laughing. "So you floigh the koite high, young fella!"

"Well, well, we'll see what can be done for you, though I think the age limit is not quite reached in your case, me b'y—at laste, not jest yet awhoile."

"But, cheer up, Ikey—cheer up; the possibilities in your case are great, so they are."

"It's a foine man you'll make, God bless you!"

"Now, lade the way an' we'll see what soort av a guide you'll be in an emargency."

Five minutes later and the little party stole into the clump of bushes where Tim Pippin was awaiting them.

"How is the graft, Tim?" from Thompson, after shaking hands with his assistant.

"As well as can be expected," replied Tim.

"They've gone into the house and haven't come out."

"Well, in that case, it's no use waiting," from Mickey.

"Let's pay them a visit, just to let them know we're alive and kicking."

"How are you armed, boys? The beggars, cornered like rats, may turn like rats, so it's well to know what we're running up against."

The armament of the party numbered three revolvers and a policeman's billy, the latter in the possession of Tim Pippin.

"All chambers charged?"

"Yes."

"Do you know how many are in the house?" from Riordan. He was for taking no chances.

"Five—maybe six," answered Tim, calculatingly.

"But if there are a dozen we'll get the best of them."

"Not expecting such a coup, they'll be unprepared, and we can swoop down on them and bunch them up in fine style, almost before they know what's struck 'em."

They now approached the house with as much caution as possible.

The peal of the bell, described in the closing line of the last chapter, was produced by Rody violently jerking the doorbell.

The exits from the ramshackle building, both front and rear, were guarded, so the party were sure of their quarry.

The bell not being answered promptly enough to suit Rody, he kicked the old, worm-eaten door in, and before the inmates could recover from their consternation he and his companions had burst into the room.

Three ominous tubes of steel pointed at them did the rest.

"The jig's up!" said Brindlestone quietly.

"You see, we can't resist, so we'd better give in peaceably."

"We've done nothing we need be afraid of—only that racket in old Moss' and they can't give us more than six months for that, do their darndest."

"Whoy, Benny, me b'y, you're quite a philosopher," laughed Rody.

"It's a chunk av since you are, mavrone—an', as I know you don't relish powther an' shot, I'll put me gun away."

"There! What do you think av that for motheration?"

Then, turning to his friends:

"Don't ye folla my example—but keep your guns in your phists, riddy for action, at the laste move these gintlemin make."

"What's the matther wid you, Ikey?" to the boy.

"Is the house goin' to fall?"

"No, but there's an old chap in the passage trying to slip out," replied Ikey.

"There is, eh?" from the Irishman. "Jest wait a minnit, gints, an' I'll continue my oration—loike a Demosthenes—later."

"No man must lave till I give him full permission to do so. That's the orther av the day, my hayroes."

And out Rody darted into the passage, soon returning with the escaping owner of the house, whom he yanked in the room by the coat collar.

"Now, ould graybeard," addressed he, "do you jest behave yourself for a whoile loike a dascent man."

"I won't detain you long, an' if I foind nothin' agin you, whoy, you're at parfict liberty to go."

"Sit down there, roight forninst me, so I can continue me catechism—I mane catechizin'—widout havin' to expand me chist in floights av Circeronian iloquence; an' if you've a dhudeen about you, loight up an' shmoke, an' be at p'ace till I'm through."

The old fellow plumped into a chair, with a dark scowl on his wrinkled and seamed face.

It was clear he didn't much relish the situation.

"Now, me buckoes, I'm goin' to open me oration," proceeded Rody, "which will principally be athressed to you two gints," indicating Clamp and Reynard.

"Clamp, stand up! Reynard, stand up!"

Both men arose automatically.

"Fish, take a sate—an' do you the same, Dudley.

"That is four av ye, do you moind?"

"Four—an' Adolphus Punnikin Beetroot an' Count (no account) Gabriel de Montmorency makes six.

"Where can ye get betther 'rithmetic?"

"But that's not the marra av me oration, me b'ys.

"Don't frit, it'll come in the coorse av me narrative, to the chune av 'Ould Brown's Cows.'

"Are ye listenoin'? 'Tis well. To proceed:

"No lather thin a few weeks ago, two gintlemin enthered into a conspiracy wid a third gentleman be the name av Clarke—Amos bein' his first name.

"They inthered into a conspiracy, I say, to ruin an' degrade wan Misther Samuel Morris.

"Morris was chrinkin' at the toime, an' these gintlemin found it an aisy task to thrump up a charge agin him av goold-brick swindlin', through manes av sellin' an' conveyin' to the aforesaid Amos Clarke several pounds of A1 brass foilin's, declarin' thim to be goold, pure an' unadultherated.

"Widout intherin' into particulars, the plot woruked, and Misther Sam Morris was arristed an' lodged in the Tombs.

"The poor divil was dhrunk at the toime; he didn't know what shtruck him.

"To dhrav me oration to a close, he was hauled afore the jedge, thried and convicted, an' is now awaitin' sintince in the city prison.

"The gintlemin wid the hoigh-soundin' aliases—Fish an' Dudley, to-wit—have been livin' on the fat av the land iver since.

"But mark me, gintlemin—are ye all listenin'?—the last act av the thragedy is about come, an' Messrs. Fish an' Dudley, alias Clamp an' Reynard, alias, agin, Adolphus Punnikin Beetroot an' Count (no account)

Gabriel de Montmorency, will now make a clane breast av the parts they took in this innocent man's conviction, or, I swear be the sowl an' holy toe-nails av Fin McCool, the Irish goiant, that I'll sind thim to Sing Sing for twinty years, whereas, if they tell the truth, an' nothin' but the truth, it's tin to one but I can get them off wid a twelve-month on the Oisland.

"Ye've heard an' listened to the oration. What say ye, gintlemin?"

The oration, as Rody called it, proved itself of the most effective character. Within four-and-twenty hours of making it the two rascally accomplices of Amos Clarke made a most thorough and complete confession, on the strength of which the wealthy broker was arrested and committed to the Tombs.

A month later he and his accomplices were tried and convicted before a judge and jury of their countrymen and severally convicted and sentenced to ten, two and one year apiece in the various penal institutions of the State.

Amos Clarke was the recipient of the protracted term, the others receiving sentences according to their degrees of guilt; and thus was the innocence of Sam Morris established beyond doubt and the law of the State vindicated.

The pawnbroker, Isaac Bickerstaff, besides revenging himself on the unscrupulous Clarke, who had been his life-long enemy, had the satisfaction, through Rody and his friends' efforts, of rescuing an innocent man from a terrible and degrading term of many years in Sing Sing.

It is sufficient to say that Rody Rogan and his friends were amply rewarded by Bickerstaff for their successful efforts, and he did not forget even the woman who most despised him, the good Widow Murphy, of the Oliver street boarding house.

[THE END.]

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