

# The Truce of the Bishop

By Harold Frederic

## I

**A** PALLID and starved sunlight looked upon the shore-land, and mocked it, because, now, in the fall of the harvest, there was no yield of any kind for the blade, or any reaper to seek it. On all the four fair ploughlands of the lords of Dunbeekin, stretching along the smooth valley of the bay, and pushing inward over gently lifting slopes to the furze-lined granite barrier of Gabriel, no ditch stood unbroken: the fields lay naked and blackened by fire. The tall keep watched the deserted water with sightless eyes, through which the daylight shone from wall across to wall, and at its feet the crouching huts of its people were thatchless. It was the desolation of conquest. The conquered were dead, or in hiding among the hills. The spoilers, their havoc wrought, had turned and gone away, with famine spreading wave-like at their heels.

Far up on the flank of the mountain there fell the distant lowing boom of a bittern. Some cattle, lost in the waste of thicket at a further height, answered this call as if it came from their kind.

Three men, sprawled on their bellies in a grassy crevice between the

the boulders, had been peering downward upon the picture of ruin below. They glanced at one another now, with a flash of comprehension. A little wiser than their kine, they knew that the bittern cried only in the breeding spring-time, and this was the tenth month of the year. One of them echoed the sound, and when it was repeated, coming nearer, the three dragged themselves to their feet, and, stealing upward, stood forth on a ledge of rock in plain view. There climbed towards them presently another, a lean and agile man, whose bare legs brushed through the spikes of furze and heather as if they were cased in hide, and whose naked soles missed no footing on the stones as he bounded from boulder to crag.

He stood panting before them, and without speech turned to survey the prospect spread beneath, till his breath could be overtaken. Looking thus, his rover eye caught something the others had already seen—a small barque, with full sails limply hanging on the still air, down in the misty distance where the great sea ends and Dunmanus begins. He pointed to it, and nodded his head.

“It is to Turlogh, son of Fineen, I will be hastening now,” he said, with abruptness. “Show me the way.”

As the group turned, the foremost of them lifted his head and halted.

“It is Turlogh who comes to you,” he said.

A few paces away, on the crown of the cliff, stood a man to whom all four bent their heads. He regarded them with an eye which asked them questions, yet shrank from hearing these if they were to be not to his mind; and they, knowing this well, held their peace, and looked about them at their ease.

The Lord of Dunbeekin was an old man now, tall and slender of frame, with much grey hair flowing upon his rounded shoulders. His apparel of quilted jacket and cloak and tunic falling to the  
The Yellow Book—Vol. VII. F mid-thigh,

mid-thigh, were of fine cloth, but stained and torn by exposure in these rude times that had befallen him. The face he bent upon his tribesmen was long and thin, and marked with many lines. They were skilled from years of use to see in this wrinkled countenance sometimes the cunning of a fox, sometimes the wistful enquiry of a puzzled child ; and they never feared him, and would always die for him, and understood when they heard men call him Turlogh of the Two Minds.

“I heard the bull of the bog,” he said, giving the bittern its old name among the people. “It was good to the ears.” His voice was grave and lingering.

Goron the messenger nodded again. He saw that Turlogh had noted the strange craft entering the bay, and waited for a little more to be questioned. Then he motioned to the others to leave him alone with his chief, and as they moved away he clambered up on the rock.

“O’Mahony, there will be no help coming at all,” he said. “Young Donogh, son of Murtogh, will not stir from Dunlogher, for the reason that he is watching the O’Driscolls of the island, to take a prey of cattle from them at the change of the moon. The strong houses of Dunmanus and Ballydivlin and Leamcon are like Dunbeekin there, with the sunlight shining through their windows, and their people are dispersed and have no footing in their country.”

“And Conogher of the Cross, in Ardintenant, the head of our sept, the venerable and holy man ?” asked Turlogh, with a bitter little jest in his tone. “And Teige of Rosbrin, whom I saved from the MacCarthy, and from his own brother ?”

Goron shook his head.

“The English lie between you and them. They will not be lifting their short finger for us.”

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"They will be making peace with the English?" the chief demanded.

"They will be keeping their tongues behind their teeth," said the other briefly.

It was Turlogh's turn to nod comprehension.

"So it will be the end, then!" he said, musing aloud. "We have been true to God, and He will not restrain the hand of our heretic enemies. I have been all my days loyal to my family; I have withheld nothing in their service; I have made my Dunbeekin a tower of refuge for all my kinsmen when troubles assailed them, and when their own fathers and brothers sought their lives—and now you do be seeing their gratitude. You have it from me, Goron, son of Tiarnan, there is not in Heaven nor on earth any thankfulness for good deeds rendered."

Goron looked into his lord's sad old face and smiled. In stature and girth he might have been Turlogh's twin, but his garments were of the coarsest, and his skin was burnt and tanned by the life of a low-born man. His face, lean and pointed like the other's, was shrewd and bluntly single-minded. He stood well enough with his chief, these many years, to speak in freedom.

"I know only what I am told about Heaven," he replied, "but the earth I observe with my own eyes. Men will get nothing here but what they can take with their right arm. You have made no one afraid of you, Turlogh, son of Fineen. You have belonged to no man's party, and marched with him to spoil and waste all others. You speak the truth that your cousins found refuge in Dunbeekin from the wrath of their fathers. But it was true as well that these fathers would be coming next year to be protected from the fury of their sons. Your walls were a strong shelter for them both, in their day of need, but they left when it was safe to do so without thanks to you in their hearts. They have

have their own troubles now to weigh them down, but if they had not—then all the same you would not be seeing the colour of their blood. And, moreover—there are the books.”

The old chief laughed—a mirthless and melancholy laugh.

“They have the right of it,” he said, sighing. “They speak the true word—my father should have made a monk of me. I am not a fit master of my people. I have never desolated any man’s country, or put out his eyes, or held him sleepless for a single night with terror of me. That is very bad for me. My cousins have only contempt for one who reads in books, and does not be riding out to sack some neighbour’s castle, and drive his herds away. Their bards do well to make verses about my bloodless hands.” He held out these hands, still unwithered by years, and white and shapely, and viewed them with a gloomy smile. “If they were stained red, my kinsmen would know me for a true O’Mahony—a true son of the People of the Bridge. What will you be thinking, Goron? It will be too late for me to begin now?”

Goron’s eyes sparkled.

“If my counsel is asked,” he said, promptly, “your people would leap for joy to have one good fight before they die.”

Turlogh’s face clouded with doubt.

“Poor souls. What would they be doing in a battle? I have made them a mock and a byword in Carbery, Goron. I have taught them to till the land, and take fish from the sea, and make nets and build ditches; and these things they do very well. And if there were some of a warlike nature, with weapons to guard the bawns, all these my brother Donal has drawn with him to the army of the Earl. You yourself were of those who advised to quit Dunbeekin before the English came in sight, and bring hither the women and children and cattle into a place of safety. You spoke

no word of resistance when we lay here that night, and looked down, and saw the thatches flame up like torches, and the fire roll through the fields of corn. It was not in your mind to fight then. We saw the black forms of these English against the furnace they made of our corn and our roofs, and we were glad to be at this distance. And why should we be talking otherwise now?"

If his companion had some answer ready, Turlogh did not wait for it. A lifting breath of air had filled the sails of the strange vessel, and brought it along up the bay until now it hung in view close to the opposite shore of Muintervoir. The sight raised new thoughts in the chief's mind.

"Will that be English, too?" he wondered, aloud.

Goron had forgotten this part of his tidings.

"It is a ship from some unknown land," he explained. "I hailed it from the rocks beyond Dunlogher at daybreak. It is a sort of holy miracle, O'Mahony. Our Lord Bishop is in that ship, coming all the way from his pilgrimage to the True Cross. Two years gone he is, and we not knowing if he was alive, and be returning to us with grand relics and a train of priests. 'Twas with one of them I spoke—a young man walking the deck and reading his prayers. I cried to the blackamoor at the helm to beware the sunken rocks at the headland, and waved my arms to force my meaning on him; but the priest had the Irish, and called out to me that it was God's ship, with a Bishop in it, and holy relics beside, and no harm could come to it or them. But he told the helmsman, none the less, and the ship's course was laid off."

Turlogh stared at him.

"Is it your meaning that *our* Bishop, Laurence Malmoon (*Luirint Maol-Mughain*), son of Ivar, will be in that ship?" he demanded.

"No

"No other," answered Goron.

"But what land will he be making?" pursued the chief, knitting his brows in perplexity as he watched the craft drifting inland. "There is no foothold for him in all Muinteravoira."

"Tis not Muinteravoira, or any land of the Dalys or Sullivans, he will be touching. His Lordship will be coming to you. The priest gave me that word."

The Lord of Dunbeekin bent a stern, searching gaze upon his man.

"I will not think you have a trap laid for me, Goron *shuileach*," he said, gravely.

"You will not think it, O'Mahony," responded the other, with proud candour. "It would put too much shame upon you, and upon me also, to think that evil thought."

"I will ask your forgiveness," said Turlogh, hastily. "There is no sleep for me, here in the rocks, and I am very tired. Come with me now, to the place where my people are gathered."

The pale sunlight had lost itself before this in the veil of misty haze drawn over the sky above the line of the distant western peaks. The mountain-side lay in the shadowless, tranquil approaches of twilight; silent for a long time, save that from point to point, along its vast terraced expanse of cliffs and moorland, there rose at intervals the trumpeting of an ox-horn—flat, yet sonorous. Sounds of rustling through the heather and scrub-furze began to make themselves heard. Then came louder and more confident noises, the shouting of men above the rest.

The first stars, twinkling forth through the smoky residue of sunset, saw a long cavalcade descending by a tortuous broken path the rough face of Gabriel. They came on down through the growing darkness—bareheaded men, wild-faced and savage of attire, leading horses laden with household goods; boys and youths,  
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of unkempt, barbarous aspect, herding droves of swift-footed little black cattle along the narrow defiles ; tall women, wholly muffled from view in huge hooded cloaks of black or scarlet, bearing burdens upon their heads, and dragging forward children by the hands ; then more horses and cattle, moving under high bundles of mountain grass and bracken freshly cut, and, at the tail, a score or more of straggling men, with quilted jackets, and pikes upon their shoulders.

In front of all walked Turlogh, with his doctor and his chaplain at his side. The last vague glimmer of daylight in the evening air fell upon these three, as they felt the burnt stubble of the nearest field under their sandalled feet, and saw the black bulk of Dunbeekin loom close before them. There was doubt on the faces of the priest and the leech, but old Turlogh threw his head back, and looked into the dusky finish of the day with a smile at his lips and a resolute eye.

## II

Hours later, in the shine of the harvest moon, the Lord of Dunbeekin stood upon the strand with a moiety of his people, and saw others of his men, wading waist-deep in the whitened waters, bear towards him in their arms his great guest, the Bishop.

Already there had come to land, by means of the little boat, some dozen priests and servants. These latter, subtle-faced and proud like all menials of the tonsured folk, held aloof in silence. Two of the younger priests, with the tails of their drenched gowns under their arms, stood at Turlogh's side, and spoke to him in whispers of strange matters. The Bishop, they said, was in the grasp of a mortal sickness. Nothing but the holy relics he brought



brought with him from Syria had availed to serve his iron will, and keep him alive to touch Irish land under his feet one more. These priests had learned something in Spain, and more here along their native coast in the past day, of the grievous burden of woe and spoliation which had been laid upon Munster. They gathered new knowledge now from Turlogh's saddened answers to their queries. All things westward from Cork had been put to the torch and sword. The English had passed over the land like a pestilence. The shadow they cast was death. Where were the English now? Ah, who should say? Somewhere across the hills. No one from Dunbeekin had followed them. It was not credible that they should return to the desert they had made.

"We moved away to the mountain-side," explained Turlogh. "They plundered and burned what we left behind. They are distant many miles now, and we have come to our own place again, to welcome our Lord Bishop. It is a sad thing that he would not be visiting me in the days of my strength and well-being. Now, when at last he comes, we are in ruins, and scarcely the poorest honours can be paid him. No man of our race was a bishop before him. Here in Dunbeekin we would have lighted his path with fires, and drained the sea for an offering of its treasures to him. But he would never come to me. He turned always instead to my cousin Conogher, the great man in the White Castle, the head of our tribe, the Chief of the Pilgrimage. We took grief to us because of that. And here now, at the end, he comes to my gate, and I am in a hard plight, and cannot receive him according to his high merits, and he, you say, is sick unto death. I crave of his charity that he will think no evil of our poverty and belittled powers." The chief gave a rueful little laugh. "For the matter of that," he added, "we have each had

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our day. We are both poor men together. If my castle has been broken, his abbey has no two stones resting one upon another. He does well to come to me. We stood a long league apart in our good days. We can sleep back to belly now, under the common cloak of calamity. They would hang us together, on one limb of a tree, those heretic English wolves."

The more forward of the two priests held up a finger. "He knows nothing of it all," he murmured. "We have held it from him. No man of us dared to utter the smallest word of it to him. It is you who must tell him. You are his kinsman, and he will take it from you. He is a cold man with his priests, but he is warm to his own blood."

Turlogh laughed, then stared with round eyes at the speaker, and laughed again.

"He has no knowledge of it all, you say?"

"Since we set sail with the Genoese captain in Rogation week, from Cyprus, he has heard no word about Ireland. He has too proud a stomach for bad tidings, and no other came to us at any halting-place."

Four men, dripping out of the salt water, stood before Turlogh now, as he would have spoken further. They bent and drew short breaths under the stress of what they bore in their arms—a swollen, black-swathed bulk, shapeless as a sack of corn. Turlogh gazed at it in the deep shadows thrown by the men on the moon-side, and was in doubt. Then outlines shaped themselves, and he saw the gross, unwieldy figure of a short man grown unduly fat, with cowed head tipped forward to hide the face. In its hands this shrouded form held a small casket, laid with gold and precious stones. The faint glimmer of these in the moonlight led his eye to a blaze, as of a planet in the obscurity, emitted by a jewel at the side of the box.

The Lord of Dunbeekin crossed himself, and, kneeling on the wet sand, kissed the ring of his Bishop.

Slowly, as he rose to his feet, the sunken head was lifted, and he saw in the frame of the hood a mask of pallid, lifeless flesh, bloated beyond human semblance. He shuddered as he gazed, and found two strenuous eyes peering into his out of this monstrous visage.

“Such as my poor Dunbeekin is, my lord,” he said, wonderingly, “it puts itself with pride under your feet.”

“Its name shall be exalted above all others,” said the Bishop. The voice came steady and clear-toned, as if informed by a spirit which carnal decay could not shake. “It is privileged to hold for a night the most priceless and inestimable of earth’s treasures—the piece of the True Cross which I bear in my unworthy hands.” He pushed the casket forward into the moonlight.

Turlogh knelt again, and with him every man on the strand.

The priests in the Bishop’s train gave the signal for rising. They looked up toward the keep, where passing lights in the windows bespoke a flutter of preparation. They yawned and moved their feet, like weary men impatient for food and sleep. Turlogh placed himself by the side of the litter-men, still bearing the Bishop in their arms, and with them led the way.

“Some small affection of the blood,” said the Bishop, as he was borne along up the path, “distorts and enfeebles my members for the moment. When I have placed this holy relic fittingly upon my high altar in Rosscarbery, and given orders for a shrine for it to my chief builders and artificers, I will make a penitential journey to St. Declan’s, in sainted Ardmore, and drink from his well, and with his blessed intercession I shall come forth cleansed and whole.”

Turlogh

Turlogh looked sidewise across his guest to the faces of the priests behind. Their glances answered his with significance.

“A fire has wrought some mischief in my house,” he replied, haltingly; “I fear it is not all repaired as yet. It is the dry season of the year, and the flames had their will. But I will be hoping and praying that things are not so bad with me that your lordship will be put to discomfort. And after the long voyage in the ship, will you not be resting here two days, or three? We are kinsmen, my lord, and have grown to gray hairs without coming upon each other, till this night, which I account the chief hour of my life. And I will implore you to stay longer with me, Laurence, son of Ivar.”

“At a future time, Turlogh, son of Fineen,” returned the other. “But I will be pressing forward to-morrow, with no delay. I have been two years away from my See, and that is very long. The affairs of the diocese rest anxiously upon me. I will ask you to send a trusted man onward to-night, on your swiftest hobbie, to find my Vicar-General at Rosscarbery, and bring him to meet me to-morrow on the way, and render account of his stewardship. And, moreover, I have with me day and night the great responsibility of this peerless relic, this miracle of heavenly favour to us of Ross. I cannot be idling on the road till that is suitably bestowed in my cathedral. I will have you bear me company, Turlogh, son of Fineen. You are by repute well known to me, and you are of my blood. We O’Mahonys of Muskerry are better sons of the Church, I fear, than you men here on the wild coast. Many evil tales reach men’s ears of deeds ill done here, in this rude Iveagh. But you yourself have borne always a name for piety and docility and some little layman’s learning. It was for this that I chose to make my landing here, and let Dunbeekin shelter the blessed relic first of all in Ireland. Besides, there were strange ships to be seen  
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off Crookhaven and the Cape, which in those lawless waters might signify nothing friendly. Has the country been more quiet and better ordered in these later times ? ”

“ It has never been more undisturbed than at this moment,” replied Turlogh, stealing another furtive glance backward at the priests. They smiled grimly at him, and nodded their heads.

The Bishop had closed his eyes, and his head drooped again upon his breast. Thus he passed unheeding through the broken postern, and saw nothing of the blackened havoc inside, where once the pleasant grassy bawn had been.

In the castle urgent shift had been made to render certain lower rooms once more habitable. The Bishop, when the tired men placed him upon the chair drawn forth with cushions by his servants, lacked the will to look about him. Turlogh, standing behind those who bore the lights, gazed, marvelling, at the huge girth of the man, whose trunk strained to bursting the black robe with purple buttons in which it was encased. The swollen face, hanging in the shadow, was more a death's head than ever. Still he held the casket upon his knees. The priest signed to Turlogh to go out, and he did so. When he sent his physician to them, they more curtly bade him also to leave them.

When the morrow came, no one in Dunbeekin found it strange that the Bishop did not set forth on his journey. The most simple had seen death writ large upon him. The story that he knew nothing of the terrible devastation that had swept the land bare, passed vaguely from mouth to mouth. It was not easy to understand that so lofty and pious an ecclesiastic, standing at the head of all men in the South for learning, should be in darkness in this matter, which was known to the very horse-boys. They dwelt curiously upon the thought of him—the high prelate with the marvellous relic, coming to shattered and spoilt Dunbeekin to die,

die, and never seeing the ruin about him, never learning that his cathedral was destroyed, his palace in ashes, his Vicar-General hanged in the Bandon forest, his priests and people dispersed. It was all very strange and troubling to the mind.

After mid-day Turlogh went again, and the priests brought him into the presence of the Bishop. Their faces had taken on a new fright, and they spoke in scared whispers as they moved along beside him.

"We know not how to tell him," they said. "He does be dying, and he will not listen. His confessor strove to speak to him of his end, but he drove him out with harsh words. At any hour the change may fall like a stroke upon him, and he not prepared! The crime of it would be resting like a mountain on our souls."

Turlogh would not promise to speak, but when he stood alone before Laurence, son of Ivar, who still sat bolstered in his chair, still with the jewelled casket on his shapeless knees, the courage came to him.

"My lord," he said, "you are not better. My physician has no more than laid an eye on you, yet shakes his head and speaks gravely. Will you not be having your chaplain come to you?"

The Bishop lifted his eyes, and they gazed sharply forth from the dulled, misshapen visage at his host. Minutes of silence passed thus.

"These frocked cowards of mine," he said at last, "they will have prompted you to this."

"They see what all see," replied the other. "It is high time for you to take thought of your peace with God, and gain your victory for the example of lesser people."

The Bishop's scrutiny of his kinsman's face was not relaxed, but the little eyes seemed to twinkle now, and a fugitive smile passed over the shaven, bloated jowl.

"I will

“I will not suffer my priests to be dictating to me,” he said. “They have never dared give the law to me, living ; it is not for them to be appointing a time for my death. I will choose my own season and the hour that pleases me best. St. Kieran’s bones ! Am I less a Bishop than I was ? ”

Turlogh smiled a little in turn. “I would not be saying you are less in any respect whatever,” he replied. He stole a glance over the other’s unwieldy bulk to point his meaning, and the Bishop laughed painfully.

“You are more after my heart than the others,” he sighed, “and I come to you at the end, only for burial at your hands. That is the way of life, Turlogh, son of Fineen, and the way of death too. They speak a true word enough, these young men of mine. I cannot be going any further. I know it well enough that I shall die here in Dunbeekin. But it is not for them to tell me so. I was Vicar-General for twenty years, and Lord Bishop for eight, and no priest yet wagged his head before me, or gave me the word what I was to do. They are not much, these striplings of mine. They stand in good subjection to me, but they have no invention in their minds. They would not be fit to bury a bishop. It should be a great spectacle, with armed men and fires and a blaze of jewels among the funeral hangings, and the keening of trained women in companies, so that children would remember it when they were palsied with old age. These trivial boys I have with me are not capable of it. They would not lay out the worth of ten cows on me. They have pure hearts, but no proper sense of pageantry. Would *you* have been seeing any great prelate buried ? ”

Turlogh shook his head.

“But you have some learning,” pursued the other. “It is known to you from books what princes and chieftains have done before

before our time to honour Holy Church. All they did I will be having done for me, and more too. Some bishops there were who, in their last days, laid down their croziers and put on the monk's habit, and died on the ashes in what they called humility. I am not one to crawl into Heaven that way. I will be borne across my diocese with pomp, and the clashing of spears and shields about me; and I will be entering Rosscarbery with my bells tolling and my priests chanting as they walk two by two, and all the people wailing at the sides of the path—and kneeling, mind you, as I pass on my way, with this great relic still in my hands. And this is what you will do for me—and you will provide entertainment and good places for the bards, and those who write chronicles in the abbeys, so that my fame may not suffer for the want of a supper or a stool by the fire, and you will administer my will and my estate as I devise. I ask you to promise me these things, Turlogh, son of Fineen, and you will swear it with your hand on this casket.”

The old chief's eyes shone with a prompt and welcome resolve. He laid his hand, above the Bishop's, on the casing of the relic, and, kneeling to kiss the ring again, swore his oath.

“Send to me now my people,” the prelate said, closing his eyes in weariness.

To the priests who came when his host had departed he gave commands. His *ordo* should be brought to him, and parchment or paper for writing, and pens and ink, and thereafter no one of them, nor anybody save his oldest body-servant, should enter the room for the space of three days. When they told him, perforce, that the fire in the castle had swept away all writing materials, he fell into a rage, until they made shift with quills fresh cut from a fowl dead in the bawn, and with a violet dye of wild-cress compounded by the herb-doctor. Then they left him alone with his *ordo*.

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For three days he sat in solitude, and all were forbidden his presence. The old servant knew naught save that he wrote for ever on the margins of his book, slowly and with sorry travail. He touched no food or drink in that time, and at night, still stretched half-seated in his chair, with the casket upon his knees, he slumbered fitfully, eager always for the daylight and his writing again.

All Dunbeekin heard of these things, and dwelt in thought on nothing else. It was in no man's mind to set one stone on another in repair of the ruin the English had wrought. No net was put into the bay, and the women lifted not a finger to the task of making curds and white meats. Cattle were killed, and their flesh seethed in new milk, for food; but no cake was baked. The strong meat put a stormy heart into the men. They ground their spear-heads and javelins upon the stones, and cut from the green hides of the slain cattle new covers, soaked and stretched in sea-brine, for their round shields. When they looked one into another's face, a flash of expectant eyes passed, like a beam of sunlight on a skene. Their words were few, though, for the Bishop had a great name in all Carbery, and the shadow of his passing laid a spell upon their tongues.

On the third day, a little after sunrise, a commotion stirred among the priests and the strangers of the prelate's household. The chaplain had been summoned to the room of death, and the Bishop was making his confession. Then doors were opened, and Turlogh with those nearest him went in, until the chamber was filled, and the passage thronged with men lifting themselves on their toes to know what was to happen.

The Bishop, still in his chair, stared out of his eyes helplessly, and drew breaths which fought their way in and out of his vast girth of trunk. The mask which was his face was ashen-gray.

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The casket had been lifted from his knees, and a priest held it beside him, so that his ringed hand might lie upon it. The physician, bending on the other side, offered to loosen the robe drawn with oppressive tightness across his breast.

The Bishop snarled an inarticulate dissent, and strove to lift his free hand.

“Not any button!” he murmured, thickly. “I abate no atom of my dignity. I will be dying with my robe seemingly disposed.”

His eyes mounted above the pain to look at Turlogh.

“In my *ordo*,” he gasped out, laboriously “all directions are there. You will observe the least of them!”

The Lord of Dunbeekin bowed, and made to take the book from the hand of the priest who held it. The Bishop interposed with a hoarse call, and strove to shake his head. Those closest round about gazed wonderingly into his troubled frowning face to catch a hint of his meaning. The chaplain, bearing the viaticum, stooped forward to listen for some whispered words.

“Open the book!” the slow, difficult command came. “Search the rubric. Read aloud to me in what manner a Bishop receives the viaticum!”

The priest with the book fumbled at its pages. He turned pale as he did so, and cast a confused, appealing glance at the chaplain. He went on, moving the leaves aimlessly, with a hanging lip.

“Read, read!” insisted the Bishop in stern monition.

The priest had the passage before him. He was a young man, soft-faced and gentle of mien. The tears started in his eyes, and his mouth quivered as he remained speechless.

The Bishop sought to rise in his chair. His lifeless face drew itself into lines of wrath; his eyes gleamed, and his voice gurgled turbulently in his throat for a moment, then burst forth in loud, unnatural tones.

“Shrine of Fachnan! Will you not be reading? Read aloud the words! In precisely what manner will a Bishop, in the hour of death, receive the body of our Lord? I command you to read it!”

In terror-stricken lisps the priest mumbled from the book shaking under his eyes that the Bishop should kneel to receive the Host.

Laurence, son of Ivar, raised his arms a little.

“Lift me then to my knees,” he ordered them, with authority.

They cried out at him in frightened entreaty:

“For Christ’s sake!” the chaplain, foremost among them, pleaded. “You cannot kneel, my lord! I implore you! I have the power—I omit the kneeling.”

The Bishop bent his brows angrily upon his confessor, and shook his arms upward again with an imperious gesture.

“You have power, have you!” he called out in truculent scorn. “You will be giving the law to me, will you? Am I your Bishop? Tell me that, you cropped clown! And will you stand between God’s anointed and the rubric? Here you, Gilcreest! you, Duarcán! Lift me to my knees! I command it! I will be dying as befits my rank and my station!”

Tremblingly the two servants moved to his side, and with shoulders under his arms, raised the Bishop to his full height. Then they bent to lower him forward. The clerics had turned their brimming eyes away. Turlogh, and the armed men of his sept behind him, who were unafraid yet looked to see a countenance desolated by an anguish too great to gaze upon, beheld instead a strange luminous softness spread over the Bishop’s swollen lineaments, and bring them back to human likeness, and stamp upon them the aspect of triumphant martyrdom. The face of the Bishop was white as death now, and as he sank slowly to his knees,

knees, drops of water stood upon his brow. But a light of peace subdued all torment in his calm eyes.

Thus Laurence, son of Ivar, gained the victory of pilgrimage and devotion and penance. He seemed to the kneeling throng that filled the room to draw no breath, as the tremulous chaplain, bending down, anointed him for his entrance into the company of the Saints. While the words of absolution quivered upon the lips of the ministrant, the Bishop fell forward upon his face.

"A spirit of pure chastity has departed from among us," said Turlogh, solemnly blessing himself as he rose to his feet.

"A tower of magnanimity and a treasury of wisdom in these parts," responded the confessor.

"A bestower of rich presents and a chief conservator of the canons of the Church," added one of the priests.

The sound of the women's lamentations without came into the chamber of death. Turlogh put his hand upon his sword, and drew it forth, and kissed the cross upon its hilt.

"His lightest wish for his burial will be a law to me and to the people of my house." He spoke the words slowly, and his armed men, hearing them, lifted their heads in the air.

### III

In the noon hour Dunbeekin stood again under the grey sky, deserted and soundless.

Old Turlogh, girt as no man had seen him before, with iron upon his breast and a cap of shining steel drawn over his whitened locks, had gathered all who belonged to him in the bawn, and spoken to them from where he stood on the stone of the broken well.

"I will

“I will be going hence,” he said, “to bury the holy man, my kinsman, my Lord Bishop. His commands rest upon me, and they are welcome. No other such honour has fallen to me in all my years. But honours that have no substance to the touch are not alike in all eyes. Moreover, this transparent gem of pure piety whom I will be laying in his appointed grave was not close in blood to us. His people have our name, and they are Kian’s sons as well as we, but their birthplace is strange to us. In Muskerry of the Rushes they do not be giving us of the coast much praise or affection. It is their custom to speak of us as pirates and heathen, and even he who lies dead within was not slow to utter that same word. The saint of his vows, too, the holy maiden of the O’Driscolls—*Mughain*—is no friend to us of Iveagh. Our sea-forts are spattered with the blood of the O’Driscolls, and my great father, Fineen, son of Conogher of the Steeds, broke down their shrine of *Mughain* at Dunashad. Therefore you are not bound by any near tie to give your lives for this burial. I will not be laying it on any man for his duty that he should come with me. Those with minds to the contrary will be freely returning now to the hills, for their greater safety, or holding this place till my brother comes back from the army of the Earl. I will be taking with me none but willing people, and I will have it known to them that they are not like to see Dunbeekin again with any mortal vision.”

When Turlogh in another hour led forth from his gates the funeral train of the Bishop, no breathing creature remained behind. There went with him, to the last one, the robed men of his household, and his galloglasses and kernes, and the hooded women of years, who struck their hands together and screamed the death-wail as they walked; and the younger maidens with short veils, and

and even to the smallest of the children, clinging at their mothers' skirts. And the spade-men and the horse-boys drove forward the herds and led the horses not bearing riders, and on these were fastened all the chattels and light possessions of Dunbeekin. In the centre of the armed men walked the priests, and before them proceeded eight servants, bearing upon sticks the pall of the Bishop; and all could see him lying there, under a seemly cover of black cloth, with the casket of the holy relic rising sharp-cornered above his breast.

There was no heat in the air, and they moved on over the wasted country at a good speed. As twilight gathered, they passed from the defiles of the hills into greener vales, where the streams ran eastward, and no marks of ruin met the eye. Here the beasts fed upon the harvest grass, while a heifer was slain and seethed for human eating; and here the fighting men looked a last time to their blades and spear-heads and their yew bows. Darkness fell, and they went forward again, with Goron the Quick-Eyed in front of all, calling the way, and the keening of the weary elder women rising no higher than the moan of the sea-wind they had left behind for ever.

In the night, further inland, lights began to gleam upon their course, as if on beacon hills beyond. Then a small flame, borne swiftly, crossed the path nearer at hand. The pale overcast moonlight made visible only the dim rolling shape of the slope down which they were making their way.

Goron ran back, and then, after hasty whispers of counsel, went forth again into the darkness, with his hand on Turlogh's bridle rein. They were well in advance of their train when the light they had seen and then lost flashed again suddenly in their very faces; and they, halting, beheld crowded black shadows of men straight in their path.

“What

"What is this all? Who are you?" was sharply demanded out of the obscurity, in a tongue strange to Goron.

Turlogh, the learned man, had the English.

"I am the Lord of Dunbeekin," he made answer, in a cool voice, "and I will be proceeding with my people to Rosscarbery to bury our Lord Bishop, as befits his station and great fame in these parts."

The voice of the unseen captain laughed, amid a sinister rattle of steel on steel.

"There is no Rosscarbery left on the face of the earth. There is no Bishop, alive or dead. There is no Lord of Dunbeekin, but only an old thief of a rebel hiding in the mountains, who called himself such among his native savages. Him we will hang when found, as we hung his kinsman, the barbarian Donal *Grany*, on the lintel of his own castle in Kinalmeaky."

"I am he of whom you speak," returned Turlogh; "and when I have buried my Bishop, and fulfilled to the last the commands of his testament, which I have here with me writ by his own hand, we will talk further of this hanging. But now I will be moving forward on my way."

Other sounds of laughter rose about them in the darkness.

"They are all mere Irish," said a rough man's voice, after a moment. "They bear with them a bier of some sort, true enough, but they have their women and children and herds with them as well. It is a strange game. Why should we not fall upon them now, before they have wrought the mischief of their conceit?"

"You are outside the law," spoke the first voice, that of authority. "We may put you all to the sword, here where we find you."

"I know of no law but my Lord Bishop's wish," replied  
Turlogh.

Turlogh. "I am not outside that. I will be making a truce with you until he has been buried as he desired. Thereafter I ask no accommodation at your hands."

"Saw any one ever such another land of holy men and lunatics?" communed the English captain with the blackness.

"Nay," one of his party urged, "it is not holiness but empty superstition, and to be a lunatic argues previous sound wit, which these savages never yet possessed. Say rather an island of idolatrous idiots."

The captain spoke again: "If you are Turlogh Mahowne, as you declare yourself, go forward then to Rosscarbery, if you can find it by the smoke over its ashes, and bury your Papist carrion wherever the ground is not baked too stiff for digging, and when you have made an end of it, then will we have more talk."

The day dawned, and showed to Turlogh and his caravan bodies of armed men on either side, moving along at a distance, in even progress with the funeral train. There were leaders in the saddle, encased in metal to the thighs; and the footmen, breeched in buff leather and with iron caps, bore long pikes on their shoulders. In numbers they were to the men of Dunbeekin as three to one; and in another four hours, upon the meeting of the high roads outside Rosscarbery, two score more joined them.

"They are fine men," said Goron, walking at his master's bridle. "I have never seen them in the open country before. They are better than we are. They will make but one bite of us, as a white trout with a May-fly."

"The May-fly!" answered Turlogh, musingly. "Two years does it be spending underground, preparing its wings. And then—the portion of one day up above in the air and the sunlight, and it ends in the beak of a bird or the jaws of a strong fish. Your speech is always wise, Goron, son of Tiarnan. It is I

who



who am the May-fly, and this is my one little morning in the world."

Where Rosscarbery had been, Turlogh and his people traced through choked paths and streets blocked with stones of broken houses the place of the cathedral. They moved about among its blackened ruins, and lifting great blocks of masonry from the site of the high altar, dug there a grave and shaped a rude coffin of large stones, and laid Laurence, son of Ivar, to his rest. They knelt uncovered while the chaplain said the funeral mass; and the singing priests chanted, and the elder women raised their voices in the last wail over the grave.

Then Turlogh gave a sign to his people, and going out, led in his own horse over the tumbled débris of the shattered transept. He drew his sword, and the animal fell with a pierced throat upon the place where they had buried the Bishop. The men of Dunbeekin brought forward the other horses, neighing in their fright, and slew them one by one; and the cattle, driven in and leaping wildly in terror over the despoiled floors, were beaten down with the war-axes, and piled, smoking, on the high altar. At Turlogh's command, the jewels and fine cloths and books they had brought were heaped here too, and with his own hand he struck a flame and set them alight. The smoke curled thickly outward, and forced the chieftain back. He led the way forth to the open air. In the space beyond the west front he came upon a line of English drawn close to bar his passage. Over his shoulders he saw other lines guarding the sides against escape. His eye sought out the captain, and he moved toward him.

"There will be a price on my head?" he asked, calmly—"on me, Turlogh, son of Fineen, Lord in Dunbeekin?"

The other shook his head.

"You flatter yourself," he said. "You were not accounted of sufficient

sufficient dignity for that. A trifle of drink-money, perhaps, to the man who should run you down in the bog and cut your throat: no more."

"That is very bad news for me," replied Turlogh. "If it were otherwise, I would be asking you for that money, to place it there in the fire I have built in offering to my Lord Bishop. All that I had I have given, but it is not nearly enough. My Lord Bishop was mercifully spared the knowledge of the ruin and great calamities that have fallen upon us all. He died bequeathing large moneys to the poor, and a sum of the value of sixty cows for masses for his soul; and other sums for a grand tomb, and for needy scholars and the like; and I am pledged to carry out his will. His poor have been starved or murdered; his students are dispersed; out of charity the masses will be said in Spain and France, and other pious lands, whither our priests have fled. But I would not that any penny should be spared to the enrichment of his tomb. Yet if there be nothing more forthcoming, then there is an end to my task. And now my truce with you will be over, too."

The young Englishman looked at the tall pale old man in doubtful silence for a little.

"You are no better than a heathen, in your spiritual part," he said at last; "but I know not that you are a harmful rebel. Get you back to your Dunbeacon, as you call it, and take your motley ragamen with you, and swear an oath of loyal behaviour to Her Most Splendid Majesty before you go; and the truce—who shall say—it may last your lifetime. At the worst, it was your brother we wanted, not you."

Turlogh straightened his thin form, and stepped out to face the captain.

"They call me Turlogh of the Two Minds," he said, with a greater

greater calmness than before. "All my life I have not shed any man's blood, because it did not seem to me to be wholly a good thing to do, and I hesitated. But now, in my old age, my last day, I have only one mind in me. You and your people have come where no one asked you, and you have put massacre and desolation of famine and destruction upon us, when we had not deserved it. And I have told you that our truce is ended, and you will not be believing it, and now I will prove it to you."

Upon the word he smote the captain in the face with one hand, and with the other plunged his skene into his neck. The two men clutched each other, and as they toppled, writhing, to the ground, rival cries of battle split the air. The English, with full-mouthed oaths and shouts of wrath, hurled themselves forward. The Irish, huddling backward to guard their unarmed folk, raised a defiant answering yell, and fought in wild despair. They were hewn down where they stood, and after them their priests and women and children. Nothing that had come out of Dunbeekin was left with a breath in it.

The English captain, chalk-faced, and with his throat swathed in stained bandages, leant upon his sword while the straps of his cuirass were unbuckled, and the cumbrous breastplate lifted from him. He looked down with a rueful, musing half-smile at the trampled form of an old man which had been dragged out from a confused pile of bodies, and lay stretched at his feet. The head was bruised and the white hair was torn and clotted, but the withered upturned face, looking very small and waxen now, wore an aspect of pride and sweetness which moved him. He gently pushed the hair aside from the marble temples with his boot, and sighed as he looked again.

"Shall we send the head to Cork?" asked another officer, resting on one knee beside the body. "After all, he was a lord

lord in the eyes of the Irish, and he had a castle, such as it was."

"No," responded the captain, on reflection. "He came a long way to bury his Bishop, and he gave him a funeral of distinction to the full measure of his ability. Bear him inside, and let him lie beside his Bishop. They have heads and to spare in Cork without his."

Then after a little pause he lifted his gaze and turned away.

"It may be that you are right," he said again. "It may be they are idolatrous idiots and nothing better; but when I looked upon the old man lying there, the whimsy came to me. I should have liked him to have been my father."

A sharp exclamation of surprise came from the kneeling officer, and the captain wheeled on his heel.

"I'll be sworn I saw it!" the former cried, staring fixedly down at the face on the ground. "When you spoke those words, the old rebel's body stirred, and his death's-head shook itself."

The speaker had a knife out from his belt, and the captain bent to lay a sharply restraining hand on his arm. Together they scrutinized the body before them. It was plainly a corpse.

"My oath on it, he moved!" insisted the kneeling man.

"You dream!" said the captain, stoutly enough, but a little shudder ran through the sigh with which he turned away.