

## *William Graham's Murder*

### AN IRISH STORY

“There is that fence broken again,” said William Graham, Mr. Jennings’ Scotch steward, as he entered his comfortable home in the yard, in which he had lived for fifteen years. “I wish the blackguard Murphys were out of this, for I know they will never quit this mischief as long as they are here.”

“So do I, Bill,” answered his wife, while Graham got a hatchet, a hammer and some long nails with which to repair the wooden paling. “But had ye not better wait and eat your breakfast before ye go out now? It is nearly ready.”

“No, I will make the fence right in five minutes, and then I can eat my breakfast in comfort; but I wish the master would come home and do something about the Murphys. It would be better to leave them the bit of a field than to have all this trouble at his yard gate if he does not put them out.”

“Well, for God’s sake, take care, Bill, and don’t ye be gettin’ into any arguments with them until the master returns; for they are a dangerous lot, and ye had better let him settle with them himself.”

“Tut, woman, I don’t fear all the Murphys this villainous country ever bred; but don’t ye be afraid that I am goin’ to enter into any argument with them. Indeed, they have been more civil-like for the last week than since they lost the field: and I’m thinking they see that it’s no use trying threatening letters on me.”

“Will ye have two eggs or three?” the good woman called after him, as he went through the back gate, close outside which was the house where lived the Murphys, to whom he had alluded.

“Three; for I’m thinking I’ll go into the market the day,” he answered, as he looked back, with a smile.

They were the last word he ever spoke.

Mrs. Graham returned to the comfortable parlor, where the breakfast things were laid, and, calculating that he would return in ten minutes, [s]he had everything ready for him: the eggs were boiled, and piles of buttered toast were carefully laid before the fire. But twenty minutes passed, and he did not appear. She replaced the eggs in hot water, cracking the shells that they might not become hard; and after waiting another ten minutes, she went to the yard gate to call him.

The wooden fence that he had gone to repair was not a hundred yards from the gate, and had been put up to fence off about an acre from the grass field, immediately behind the yard. This here had been let to Michael Murphy about five years before, as he had taken the home farm during the absence abroad of Mr. Jennings, and he wanted the accommodation of the same plot.

But a year before, as it was required for Mr. Jennings' use, he was called upon to give it up, and refused point-blank. Within six months a notice to quit was served upon him by Graham, the steward, and at the next sessions it wanted but the legal proof of the service of the notice to obtain, in due course, a decree for possession. Twice before the service of the notice Graham had received threatening letters, and once since the service had been effected. But, fearless in the performance of his duties, he took no heed of the missives, which he placed in his desk.

Mrs. Graham walked out of the yard gate, and past the door of Murphy's house. Through the open door she observed Mrs. Murphy and her two daughters sitting over the fire knitting. None of the men were about. Looking to the fence, she saw at once where the top and second rail had been displaced. No man stood repairing it, but close by a something that might be a bundle of clothes. Too well she knew what that meant: and with a cry of horror she rushed to the spot, to find her husband on his face, his arms extended, and the hatchet lying beside him. Mrs. Graham was not a woman to go into hysterics, or to give way to the loud wailing that would have relieved a weaker nature. As she gently turned him over, it needed not a glance at his pallid face to show that he was dead. With a stunned despair she sat down, and, taking his head in her lap, remained quietly regarding him for a considerable time. She did not see Mrs. Murphy come to the door, and, looking over at the place where she sat, in the bright blaze of the morning sun, turn back to resume her knitting at the fire. She did not see their own workman look cautiously over the garden wall, and as cautiously disappear. She saw nothing but the dead face of her husband, and her mind flew back over the many happy years they had lived together since they left their northern home: the years of his strong manhood, and the last anxious year of his slowly ebbing life—for sickness had laid its hand upon him, and the dispensary doctor had given but slender hope of his ultimate recovery.

At length, laying him down, with her apron over his face, she walked resolutely to the open door of Murphy's house.

"Come out, you murderers, and let me look you in the face!" she shouted. "You have threatened him long enough, and now you have killed him at last, like the cowards that you are!"

"The Lord save us! What is the matter, Mrs. Graham?" answered Mrs. Murphy, with an air of the deepest concern.

"Matter? Well you know! Where are your murdering sons that killed my husband?"

"Oh, the cross of heaven be about us! What do you mean, ma'am?" said Mrs. Murphy, apparently almost speechless with agitation, while she reverently made the sign of the cross on her forehead and her breast.

"What do I mean? There—there! Do you see where he lies—where your murderers have left him?" again shouted Mrs. Graham, dragging Mrs. Murphy to the door. "Oh, my poor Bill! my good husband! what brought us to this murdering country?" And wringing her hands wildly, she turned abruptly and went back to the house.

All this I learned after my arrival. The police had already sent for the Coroner, and from all the surrounding station[s] additional constables kept dropping in, until at length there were thirty men at the place. Everybody was rigidly excluded from the field, and a thorough search began for any clue that might be discovered. Not ten yards from the broken paling was found a brass cartridge case similar to those used in American breech-loading rifles. It had recently been discharged, and already the police had found that two bullets had passed through Graham's body. About the spot were found a couple of rusty nails, an old tobacco pipe, a piece of bootlace, the iron tip of a bootheel, half a horn coat button, and a torn piece from the leaf of a song book. Except the cartridge and the leaf they were not much; but they were carefully put by lest by any chance they might afford a clue.

The three Murphys were absent, and from the information given by Mrs. Graham there was little doubt that one or the other was the murderer. I directed, therefore, that the house should be thoroughly searched from roof to floor.

Into the house the police went, and searched it carefully; passing their hands over every beam to see if it might not be hollowed on the top, and a gun laid in the place; probing the thatch, where arms are often hidden; scanning every square foot of the floor; searching the chimney, the fireplace, under the hearthstone; feeling inside the frames of the bedsteads, where guns are sometimes hung on hooks; examining the beds themselves; searching carefully under them, where long wells are often sunk for the arms, and covered over with a board, the clay, if a clay floor, being carefully rammed down on top; looking closely at the jambs of the doors and the lintels; peering into every cupboard, box, pail and jug; lifting out the dresser, behind which is a favorite hiding place, and generally turning upside down everything in the house. In the dark corner of a little cupboard was found an empty cartridge case, exactly the same as the one found close to the body; and on the clay floor of the room was the remains of a piece of burnt paper that had probably been used to light a pipe. A small oval piece remained unconsumed, and had evidently rested under the heel of a gunstock, the mark remaining in the damp floor. This was all: and, though affording indications in confirmation of our suspicions, I could not see much hope of evidence sufficient to justify an arrest.

By this time the Coroner had arrived, and the jury, having viewed the body, a postmortem examination was ordered. To a person who has not gone through a course of surgery nothing can be imagined more horrible than the postmortem examination necessary in cases of murder. With none of the conveniences of a regular dissecting room, everything is a makeshift, from the ordinary dining table, pressed into the sickening duty, to the amateur assistant, who is not seldom obliged to be relieved by a man of stronger nerves. The doctor is the one person present who rises superior to the feelings of less blunted humanity; and even in the case of Graham, on whom he had been in constant attendance, I could discern, as he cut through the breast and removed the heart and lungs, no feeling of pity for the man from whom he had received many a fee.

The doctor spoke to himself, as he carefully examined the various organs. "Ho, ho! Lungs good, heart healthy! Dear me, it's his liver that is gone: and I have been treating him for his lungs! Ah, well, well; he would not have lived twelve months anyway; so I was right, after all!"

I was present—impelled by extreme anxiety to know exactly the direction that the bullets had taken. If the first shot had killed him dead, then why fire a second, except a second person were present, and thus made himself a principal? If the second shot were fired after he had fallen, the direction of the wound would be oblique, from back to front, from below upwards, as the shot was fired from behind. On the other hand, if Graham did not fall from the effects of the first shot, the probability was that the same person reloaded and fired again while he was struggling away. I decided that both shots were fired by one man, who reloaded; and as both bullets traversed the chest from back to front at the same height, both were fired when Graham was still standing.

Nothing further was discovered at the inquest. Mrs. Murphy and her three daughters were examined, and swore they heard no shots. The man working in the garden had heard two shots, but thought somebody was frightening crows, so took no notice. He did not even look up from his work. A farmer working in a field a quarter of a mile away had stated that he heard the shots, and a short time after saw a man running along the bottom of his field, and carrying a gun. He was sent for, and sworn, when he acknowledged that he saw a man, but declared that he could not remember seeing a gun. On this point he was pressed. The person to whom he had told it was brought forward and sworn. He did not like to say positively that Connor, the farmer, had told him there was a gun. Reminded that but a couple of hours had passed since the conversation, he said that he would not be positive upon his oath. Connor swore that the man he saw was not one of the Murphys, being much smaller.

The police proved the finding of the cartridges. A juror requested that Mrs. Graham should be recalled, and examined her closely as to the relations existing between her and her husband. After a time the Coroner interposed and suggested that further examination in that direction could throw no light upon the murder. The juror suggested that Graham might have shot himself, but reluctantly assented to the proposition that he could not have afterward secreted or carried away the gun. This juror, with another, appeared to take a much deeper interest in the evidence than the remainder of the jury, who sat stolidly listening to the witnesses with apparent indifference. No further evidence was forthcoming, and the Coroner addressed the jury, saying that there could be no doubt that a foul murder had been committed; and though they could not help feeling that the circumstances with regard to the property, in which Graham was involved, may have had something to say to the crime, there was no evidence before them to throw any light upon the matter. The second juror objected to the assumption that the crime was agrarian. He declared that he had heard whispers of Graham's name having been coupled with two or three girls, and suggested that such a state of things would account for the murder, without assuming that it had any connection with agrarianism. He did not see why the country should, without proof, be cast under such a stigma, and perhaps saddled with a police tax.

Murmurs of approbation followed the speech, and a verdict of wilful murder was returned, stating that by whom or for what cause there was no evidence to show.

After the inquest the two jurors, Burke and Halloran, walked away together.

“It was well done,” said Burke, “and neatly, too. I’m glad the Murphys kept away.”

“Yes,” answered Halloran. “And you may as well give me your subscription now, as the less meeting the better for a short time.”

Burke handed him a one pound note without a word, and at the crossroad they separated, each for his home.

Where were the Murphys? This was the question to which I was anxious to have answer[ed]. No doubt Connor swore that a man passed in the direction of Clarewell, who was not one of the Murphys. But why were all the latter absent? Was not Connor’s statement one of those always forthcoming after a murder, to put the police off the scent? No [agrarian] murder ever takes place when similar statements are not made for that purpose. As to the observations of Burke and Halloran, I had too often heard exactly the same line taken to attach any weight to the observations of the latter. No man held a higher character than Graham, and the idea of a murder by irate friends of fallen virtue was absurd. But the fear that, in case of an agrarian murder, a special police station might be established at the spot, and the expense charged to the neighborhood, always produces a crop of statements, reports, innuendoes tending toward immunity from tax.

No trace of the Murphys could be found, but a close watch would be kept upon the various houses. That evening every house was searched within six miles of Ballymorley, where the murder was committed, but not a Murphy could be found. A reward of three hundred pounds was offered for information that would lead to a conviction; and so the case rested for the present.

John Hennessey’s comfortable farmhouse is situated on a gently rising ground. Behind and around are fat pasture land and arable fields, whose deep and fertile soil is only to be found in that portion of Ireland where its quality has won for it the name of “golden vein.” At a little distance the Bog of Allen begins, and stretches away far as the eye can reach. For sixty miles you can walk straight on without leaving the spongy peat moss and purple heather, whose annual growth and decay contributes to the ever-increasing peat mould. An arm of the bog separates Hennessey’s house from Ballymorley, which is not more than three miles distant. Around the verge of the bog are hundreds of deep pits, from which the turf has been cut. Into these the dark brown water has filtered, and here, buried nine or ten feet below the surface, is a splendid hiding place for anything that water will not spoil. In these holes lie many a gun, the barrels filled with grease, well-oiled stockings covering the locks and hammers, with an outer covering of grease and a linen rag. When required, ten minutes by the fireside makes them fit for service, and, even if found, their presence in a boghole can compromise no man.

John Hennessey is a wealthy man. His haggard is filled with the produce of his cornfields and meadows. Fat cattle are his byre. Herds and flocks stock the pasturage, of which he holds a long lease, and the banker in the nearest town holds a “snug” balance to his credit. His rent has always been paid to the day, and his landlord is prepared to vouch for him as one of the most respectable of his tenants.

In Hennessey’s house, about three weeks after the murder, were assembled about twenty men. Some were respectably dressed, while the ragged garments of others showed that they belonged to the most needy class of day laborers. At a large fire in the outer apartment, which served as a

kitchen and general reception room, sat the wife, a comely woman, with a broad, good-natured face, and three daughters of various shades of ugliness. The men stood in groups, chatting in a low tone, and the most perfect equality existed between the ragged men and the better dressed. A man lounged outside the house, who, by a cough, gave notice of any approach, and, at the same time, went forward to meet the newcomer, that no stranger should take the company unawares. Into the house a young man entered quickly, and with that profound air of self-effacement that some men assume when they know their presence will be welcomed with enthusiasm. He was about five feet five, with hair of a reddish tinge, and light blue eyes. He had the pale freckled face so often seen with men of evil temper, but his broad, upturned nose, and the play of his large weak mouth seemed to indicate a thoughtless good humor.

“God save all here,” said the newcomer.

“Ah, Martin Grady, *cead mille falthe*,” answered Mrs. Hennessey, who met him with effusion, and shook him heartily by the hand. All the others crowded round to seize his hand, one after another.

“Well done, Martin!” said one.

“More good luck to you!” said another.

“Now, boys, business,” said Hennessey, in a loud tone, as he led the way into [an] inner room, in which were two beds—one for Hennessey and his wife, the other for the daughters. Candles were lit, and placed on a table in the centre, at which Hennessey sat, while the others arranged themselves round the room, some sitting on the beds, others standing, or leaning carelessly against the walls. One young man took a revolver from his pocket, and, unloading it, amused himself by pulling the trigger and snapping the hammer, to see how truly the chambers revolved.

Grady sat on one of the beds in a corner talking earnestly with two men, who listened attentively to his whispered tale.

Hennessey rapped on the table, and was about to speak, when Halloran, the juryman, entered, accompanied by a man who was evidently a stranger.

“Blood and thunder!” shouted Hennessey, with startled emphasis, as he hastily blew out one candle. Before he could extinguish the second, Halloran said:

“I am answerable. It is all right.”

Already the meeting had made hasty preparations for departure, and their faces showed how frightened they had been. The young man with the revolver had thrown it at the back of the bed, and Grady, whose hand convulsively clutched the corner of the bed on which it rested, presented a picture of abject terror.

“It is all right,” repeated Halloran, advancing to the table and relighting the candle. “My friend, Brynn Hughes, from Roscommon, is a true and trusty brother.”

“You ought not to have brought him here without notice,” retorted Hennessey; “but”—turning to the stranger—“as you are here, I will ask you some questions. Come forward to the table.”

Hughes advanced, and Hennessey held out his right hand, which was seized with the grip of the society. The following passwords were then put by Hennessey, and the corresponding answers given by Hughes:

Q.—All things are commendable at present?

A.—We have no reason to complain.

Q.—We have got more than we expected?

A.—Yes, the Lord is all-wise, and merciful to His people.

“So far so good,” said Hennessey. “Now, first tell me the name of your centre, your subcentre and your committeemen.”

Hughes repeated several names.

“What is your position?”

“I am a committeeman.”

Taking him aside, Hennessey whispered: “Every man should do his duty.” To which the other answered, in a similar tone:

“Yes, according to his station.”

“All right,” said Hennessey aloud, resuming his seat at the table, when, addressing the meeting, he continued: “You all know the business we have met for tonight; and I hope to find that the collectors have done their duty. The job has been done, and well done; and I say the management of the whole thing is a credit to our district. Tom Murphy would have come here tonight to thank the brave man who has done his duty so well, but I told him that for six months he must not come near us, for every move will be watched by the peelers. He has sent a good substitute anyway, and handed me the ten-pound note at mass yesterday that I now lay on the table. I say that a hundred pounds would not overpay the man that has done this job, for it is worth many hundred to the farmers of this county; so now let me see what the people have done.”

Each man came forward in turn. One handed in four pounds, another eleven, another three and so on in different amounts, which were received by Hennessey with various remarks, as the amounts were fair or small.

“Tom Casey,” he said to one who handed in but sixteen shillings, “do you mean to say that the people of Knockroe could only put down the beggarly sum of sixteen shillings for the man that has done his business like a hero, and saved them hundreds of pounds?”

“Begor, I do! I tried them all round as far as I dare go; but the Malleys have a grudge against the Murphys, and they are very strong there, so they would not subscribe.”

“May their own land go from them, the traitors!” said Hennessey.

He then counted the proceeds of the collection, which amounted in all to forty-eight pounds. This amount he rolled in a newspaper and left on the corner of the table, that when the candles were extinguished, Grady, for whom it was collected, could take it without the actual taking being observed by anyone, so that under no circumstances could evidence of its receipt be given even by an informer.

“Now,” said Hennessey, “is there any other business to be done?”

“Yes,” answered Hughes, the newcomer, whose entrance had caused such consternation. “Graham is gone and a good example made; but the country will never be safe until the master feels our power as well as his man, and I propose that he is settled when he comes home. We might as well try to cure the smallpox by cutting off the pimples as cure this landlord tyranny by cutting off their servants. The land is ours, and ours it must be, and no thinking tenant can sleep easy in his bed while his landlord sleeps easy in his. I tell you—”

The remainder of Hughes’ speech was lost, for at this moment two loud whistles were heard, and a few moments after a boy about 12 years of age came breathless into the room.

“The peelers are out!” he said. “I watched the barracks all the evening, as you told me: and when I saw the patrol coming in this direction, I ran as hard as I could. They won’t be here anyway for twenty minutes.”

In an instant the candles were out, and the meeting suddenly dissolved; Hughes and Halloran boldly striking out for home across the bog, the others carefully avoiding the roads along which the police usually patrolled. To cover the fire with the ashes was the work of a minute, and in less than a quarter of an hour the entire Hennessey family was in bed, the lights extinguished, and the dogs turned outside to perform their duty by barking at the police.

Weeks passed away, and not a gleam of light was thrown upon the murder. The £300 reward offered by the Government was supplemented by £800, offered by the owner of Ballymorley for private information that would lead to a conviction. From time to time various people were named to the police as having committed the murder; but inquiry showed that the information could not be depended upon, and sinister whispers reached me that the society was determined to pay me off, for what was considered an overzealous anxiety to keep the police on the alert.

A girl named Kate Donohue had confessed that on the morning of the murder she had seen a person coming across the bog; but who he was she would not say, though the constable



suspected that she was coquetting with the offer of the reward. The Murphys had returned to their house after a week, but where they had been was kept a profound secret. That it was in the neighborhood was known; yet four times had large bodies of police surrounded a district of about five miles in diameter, and searched every house inward to Ballymorley without success.

By post one morning I received the following letter:

‘If your honor will meet me tonight at 11 o’clock at Ballynacrasa, where Tim Delaney’s boren goes down to the bog, I can tell you the man that shot Graham. But you must come alone, as I do not wish any of the police should know me, until I see your honor about the reward. If you are alone, I will whistle.’

This letter puzzled me much. On the one hand, it was quite probable that the writer did not like to trust a constable; on the other, remembering the warnings that I had received, I could not ignore the possibility that the letter was a cleverly contrived trap for me. Within twenty miles there was not a more unfrequented spot than the place indicated; and dangerous to the society as I had the credit of being, its members would gladly compass my death, which would increase its prestige. However, my duty was plainly to take any course that provided the faintest hope of elucidating the mystery of Graham’s murder, so I determined to go.

Ballynacrasa was about seven miles from my station. Taking two men with me, I drove to within a mile of the place, and then, turning down a crossroad toward Tim Delaney’s house, walked on alone, leaving directions to the men to follow for half a mile slowly; then, if they heard a shot, to run on to the place as quickly as possible. The night was fine, but dark, and as the road was pretty fair and fenced by low walls only, I got along quickly, keeping my eyes well about me lest my people should be behind the walls, and my revolver ready in my hand, to return any possible attentions to which I might be subjected.

Arrived at the boren to the bog, I was rather taken aback at finding that along both sides ran high hedges of whitethorn. Here was a most undesirable passage through which to walk, as the man on the road was completely at the mercy of anybody inside either fence. I lay down at the roadside, and listened carefully. Not a stir broke the stillness of the night. Then I determined to walk inside the fence. If a trap were laid, they must await me at one side or the other of the lane. Cautiously walking along the back of the fence, and listening carefully from time to time, at last I found myself at the end of the lane, and close to the verge of the bog. An old Rath stood not far from the spot, from which, even in daylight, no sign of human habitation was to be seen. Sitting low against the corner of the bank, I waited quietly, listening intently for the smallest sound. From the old Rath came the low cry of a curlew, and after a short interval it was repeated. I gave a short, low whistle, and watched carefully in the direction of the Rath. Soon a stooping figure came between me and the dim skyline, and approached the end of the lane where I sat. When he had come quite close, I stood up.

“Is that Mr. McGrath?” he whispered.

“Yes,” I answered.

Then stepping close to him, I placed the revolver to his breast, while I ran my left hand over his pockets, and felt his hands, to insure that he was not armed.

He stood passively, though I could hear his heart beat.

“Come to the old Rath,” he whispered; “I am afraid to stand here.”

“All right. Go on; but remember, if there is any treachery I will shoot you.”

He walked on to the Rath, stopping once or twice and listening carefully, while his head turned from side to side as he peered into the darkness.

“Oh, your honor! Sure if I was found out, not a bit of the world’s bread would I ever eat.”

“Now, first, who are you?” I asked, as we stood in a deep hollow in the heart of the old fort.

“I am Jem Brophy from Ballyphilip; and I thought your honor might like to know who it was that shot William Graham.”

My eyes being now accustomed to the darkness, I could faintly discern his face, and a worse type I never saw—low and debased in every feature. As he spoke, he restlessly jerked his head from one side to the other, looking to see that no person approached.

“Now, first, who shot Graham?”

“Well, sir, I was thinking of asking your honor about the reward that is offered. Would I get the money if I tell you who shot him?”

“Yes, if you swear it, and a jury believes you.”

“Well, now, sure that is hard. Would not I be murdered the minute it’s known that I told?”

“Not a bit of it. You would emigrate, and buy a farm. However, I cannot remain here all night, so now tell me what you want to say at once.”

“Well, faith, I’d lave my dependence on your honor: sure it was Martin Grady from Carrickbeg beyant that shot him.”

“I don’t believe you.”

“Well, on my oath, he is the man, and, by the same token, he shot him with Hennessey’s rifle that was over at Murphy’s. For, first, Mick Murphy said he would shoot him, but the Lodge said that it should be done regular, and Martin Grady was appointed.”

“How do you know?”

“Because I am in the society myself. And was not I one of the meeting where he was appointed? And was not I at the meeting last week when we paid him the collection that was made for him at Hennessey’s of Clarewell?”

“How did he shoot Graham?”

“Well, the Murphys broke the wooden paling four or five times [to] see how Graham would mend it, because he was a careful man, and they found he always mended it the minute he found it broken, for he was fond of driving nails. So they broke it that night, and went away on their keeping, so that the police would suspect them, and Martin Grady went to their house. Then, when Graham was mending the fence, he followed him down and shot him from behind.”

“Then he was alone, I suppose? Tell me what he did with the rifle?”

“I don’t know what he did with it if he did not hide it on the way across to Kilpatrick. They waited to shoot Graham until they could get a good funeral, so that if Grady was seen near Ballymorley the funeral would account for it; and when Mrs. Byrne died it was settled that she was to be buried at 9 o’clock in the morning; so when Martin did the job he ran to the funeral across the bog, and in the graveyard he spoke to Father Joyce, as if he came all the way with the funeral, so that if there was any trouble out of it he could call Father Joyce as a witness that he was at Mrs. Byrne’s funeral. Then, on his way to Kilpatrick, he took off the old boots he wore, and burnt them in a heap of weeds that was burning on Harney’s farm, so that if there was any track left it could not be brought against him. He had another pair of boots left in the ditch near the weeds.”

“Surely he did not tell you all this?”

“Ay, did he, faith! He told me and Mick Tracy at John Hennessey’s house, where we had a meeting to pay Martin the money for the job.”

“Do you mean to say that John Hennessey is in the society?”

“Ay, begor! Isn’t he the district centre of this place?”

“But why shouldn’t Grady trust you with all this?”

“Oh, sure we all knew he was to do it, and weren’t we paying him for the job? Besides, it was I that arranged when Barney Tansey was to be shot, and settled the alibis, only Dooley, that was to do it, cowed two days before the time, and then the boys thought that maybe it would be unlucky. But I had the slugs ready, and poisoned.”

Never before did I feel a longing to commit a murder, but as I heard the ruffian coolly relate his damnable precautions, I felt inclined to shoot him where he stood. However, repressing my loathing, I asked:

“How do you poison them?”

“Oh, I use white arsenic, and grind it through the lead, and then the man will surely die eleven days after. I made the slugs that shot Mr. Evans about twelve years ago. James Carney shot him and went to America. He has just returned; and as there is law pending between his father and Mr. Moon, the landlord, I [believe] Carney is to shoot Mr. Moon, if the law goes against him. And, bedad, I heard that your honor was to be shot, too.”

“Ah well, that would not do them much good. Have you heard who is told off to shoot me?”

“Oh, no. I don’t think it is settled, but I suppose Martin Grady, or Carney, or maybe one of the Murphys. Sure, whoever is ordered must do it.”

All this the ruffian told with the most perfect unconcern and coolness, but at short intervals he stopped and looked from side to side as before.

“Where have the Murphys been?”

“Begor, they were within a quarter of a mile of Ballymorley. Sure they were all safe on Father Ryan’s hayloft, and of course the police never thought of searching the priest’s house.”

“Do you mean to say Father Ryan knew they were there?”

“Oh, no; but his boy is a cousin of a friend of Murphy’s by marriage, so of course he gave them a corner on the loft, and gave them their bread and milk every day.”

“Well, you must come in to me tomorrow night at 10 o’clock, and swear what you tell me before a magistrate.”

“Oh, blood and agurs! Your honor, sure you would not do that to me! I could not do that!”

“If you do not, then I shall have Grady arrested, and I will swear in the court what you have told me, and examine you on it, and I wish you joy of your safety when the society knows all that you have told me.”

“Sure I trusted your honor; and you would not treat me that way!”

“I did not ask you to come. You asked me; and, except for your evidence, I do not want to hear your story. That evidence you must give; and you need not fear for your safety, as the police will provide for you in Dublin for the present.”

“Well, sir, I have no money, and I will be thankful if you give me a pound to give to my poor mother.”

I handed him a pound note, and reminding him that he must present himself at my house the next night, I turned from him, and left the old Rath. Picking up the men, I returned to my station, and the next night Brophy knocke[d] at my door. The resident magistrate was with me and took

Brophy's information, telling him that if nothing further turned up he would probably not be called upon to give evidence, and in the meantime information of the proceedings of the society would be well paid for. A five-pound note made the ruffian happy, and he returned to Ballyphilip.

This information was of immense importance. Inquiries showed the truth of some of Brophy's statements. Weeds had been burning on Harney's farm on that day. The ashes were still there, and in them the remains of two boots or shoes. Father Joyce was spoken to about the funeral, and, without betraying the object of the conversation, the fact was elicited that Grady had spoken to him.

If Kate Donohue could only be persuaded to say what she knew, a case might be made against Grady, whose movements were now closely watched.

Armed with the knowledge derived from Brophy's information, the constable at length succeeded in persuading her to come forward; and her information was taken, to the effect that on the morning of the murder she saw Martin Grady, whom she knew, run across from the grounds of Ballymorley. He carried a gun. She was pulling heather in the bog, and he did not observe her. She saw him stop and do something to the gun, which he then threw into a boghole, and went on at a quick pace toward the churchyard of Kilpatrick. She had known Martin Grady for several years, and could not be mistaken.

The constable produced a rifle that he had found in the boghole indicated by Kate Donohue. A piece of tallow candle was forced into the muzzle, and over the lock was drawn the oiled leg of a stocking, which, however, was no protection from the water. On opening the creach an exploded cartridge was found in the chamber, exactly similar to the one picked up at the scene of the murder.

A warrant for Grady's arrest was immediately granted, and in the afternoon he was brought in. In his house were seven cartridges similar to the ones found close to Graham's body and in the rifle. And in his box was a songbook with half a leaf torn out, the corresponding half being the piece of paper picked up at the scene of the murder.

While he stood in the day room of the barrack, he nervously buttoned and unbuttoned his coat. Why he should have done so is a mystery; but as the eye followed the mechanical movement, one of the constables was struck by the fact that one button was broken[.] The half leaf of the song book had just been fitted and the paper containing the various articles picked up was on the table. He picked out the half of a broken button, and placed it with the broken one on Grady's coat. It completed the button, of which it had evidently formed the half, and supplied additional corroboration of the evidence of the two principal witnesses.

The case was heard at the next assizes, and excited immense interest. Money was forthcoming to employ for Grady the ablest counsel, and for two days the trial continued. Brophy's evidence was listened to with breathless attention, and the cross-examination of such a ruffian afforded a nice opportunity for the scathing and merciless exposure of his infamy. Kate Donohue's evidence was straightforward and unshaken. She indignantly denied that she was influenced in

telling the truth by any prospect of reward, and declared she neither looked for it nor would take it. In cross-examination she confessed that she loved Phil. Beatty, and looked forward to the time when perhaps they might be able to marry and emigrate to America or Australia; but she never intended to do that with "Government money."

The circumstantial evidence in the case was apparently conclusive; and when the leading counsel for the crown sat down, saying: "That's our case, my lord," he did so with the air of a man who feels that but one verdict is open to the jury.

When Kate Donohue left the court and was taken by a policeman to the outer hall, Phil. Beatty stood before her, his face distorted with scornful anger. For months they had been looking forward to the time when, perhaps, they might get together the very small sum upon which an Irishman thinks he may marry. Seeing him, she held out her hand with nervous eagerness.

"What!" he exclaimed, "do you think that I would demean myself by touching the hand of an informer? How dar[e] you have the impudence to spake my name? If you were hung about with diamonds, they would be red with Martin Grady's blood. You murderer! Take your blood money, if you can get it, but never show your face again to an honest boy!"

The policeman led the wretched girl into one of the offices, where, half fainting, she sank into a corner, and, covering her head with her shawl, wept bitterly, as all her hopes of happiness faded away and left behind them blank despair.

The defense was long and carefully planned. Five men swore that Grady had left home that morning with them at 7 o'clock and gone with them to the funeral. Father Joyce proved that Grady had asked him the hour in the churchyard at Kilpatrick. Mr. Halloran, who was on the Coroner's jury, swore that, about a month before the murder, Grady had come to him about some work, and that he had walked back with him through the field where the murder was committed. Mrs. Murphy swore that she saw them there, and that Grady leaned on the paling. This was to account for the button and paper. As to the cartridges, the counsel for the defense produced ten exactly similar to those in evidence, and Halloran swore that he had often seen such cartridges in the country.

The Judge charged the jury fairly, giving due weight to the points for the defense, but pointing out that the finding of the gun in the boghole was a strong corroboration of Kate Donohue, whose evidence had not been shaken in the least; and when the jury retired the prisoner's counsel agreed with his brother for the Crown that a verdict of guilty would probably be returned. Not so the prisoner's attorney. He had carefully scanned and noted the jury list, and as a man came forward who was known to be determined to "well and truly try," he was ordered to stand aside. So with the Crown solicitor on the other side; but one man, well dressed and apparently very respectable, was unchallenged by either side. As soon as he had been sworn the prisoner's attorney relaxed his vigilance and felt that the battle was won. That man was Burke, who had sat on the Coroner's jury.

An hour had passed since the Judge had concluded his charge and the jury had retired. The prisoner sat in the dock; the Judge remained on the bench talking to the High Sheriff, and a

suppressed murmur of conversation ailed the densely crowded court, when the door of the jury room opened and the jury entered the box, following the foreman, who held the issue paper in his hand. "Silence!" shouted the crier; but there was no need, for everything was still as death. The prisoner stood up, and, clutching the rail in front of the dock, fixed his eyes on the issue paper, upon the contents of which depended his life or death. His wide mouth open, with trembling lips and a sickly dew upon his pallid face, he must in that moment have had a foretaste of the agony of death.

But it was not to be just yet. The foreman said:

"My lord, the jury wishes to know if the evidence of Brophy is receivable on the points in which he has not been corroborated?"

"Is there any particular point upon which you wish to ask my assistance?"

"Yes, my lord. We want to know if we can consider the evidence of Brophy as to the meeting where the prisoner was paid the money, and as to his knowledge that the prisoner was appointed to commit the murder?"

"Well, gentlemen, the broad principle is this: The evidence of an accomplice—and by his own showing the witness Brophy was an accessory before and after the fact—must always be received with the gravest suspicion, and except corroborated by untainted evidence or by circumstances, it would not be safe to convict upon it. But if there are independent circumstances that corroborate that testimony, it is right that you should weigh all together, and, as honest men, give to the tainted evidence its proper weight. Now, here, gentlemen, you have it sworn by Brophy that the prisoner was employed by this desperate society to murder William Graham, and that after the murder the witness Brophy was present at the meeting where the subscriptions in payment for that murder were paid for the prisoner, who was also present. At that meeting the murder was openly alluded to, and, if the witness is to be believed, the position of the murderer was accepted by the prisoner at the bar. Now, Kate Donohue, who, I must say, gave her evidence fairly—and you, gentlemen, can form your own opinions as to her manner in the witness box—swears that on the morning of the murder she saw the prisoner come from the lands of Ballymorley, and saw him throw a gun into a boghole. Constable Timothy proves the finding of the rifle in the boghole, and in it was found an exploded cartridge of a peculiar make. A similar cartridge was found beside the body of the murdered man, and it was proved that two shots were fired. The bolt button found on the spot has been explained by the defense on the theory that the prisoner broke the button when leaning over the paling a month before the murder, and dropped the paper at the same time. On the other hand, the witness who found the button swore that it was not close to the paling; and the theory put forward by the Crown is that the button was broken in the hurry of reloading the rifle, and that the paper, if dropped then, must have been wet with the recent rain, whereas it was quite dry. It is for you, gentlemen, to say if you consider this testimony, oral and circumstantial, sufficient to corroborate the evidence of Brophy."

Again a long pause. Again the hush of expectation; but it was only to say that the jury could not agree.

“Very well, gentlemen, you must retire. I shall wait for an hour; and then, if you still are unable to agree, you must remain for the night in the hands of the Sheriff.”

In half an hour the jury again poured into the box, and the foreman handed the issue paper to the clerk of the Crown. The prisoner’s eyes grew dim, and he clutched convulsively the front rail of the dock.

“How say you, gentlemen? Have you all agreed to your verdict?”

“We have.”

“And you say the prisoner is not guilty.”

A roar came from a hundred voices in the court, and a surging crowd pressed forward toward the dock.

“Silence!” was shouted, but no silence came until the mass of people had rushed from the court to the street, where wild cheers rent the air.

The prisoner was discharged, and on his appearance at the door of the courthouse was lifted bodily and carried triumphantly through the town. Then a piebald horse was procured, and on this he rode at the head of a procession, past the house of Ballymorley, where the mob stopped, shouting and yelling. A brass band preceded the procession; and as it approached the townland of Carrickbeg, played ‘See the Conquering Hero Comes,’ and a banner was produced, on which was written: ‘Down with the tyrants! Grady forever!’

Here Grady made a speech. The verdict was found, and never again could he be tried for the same case, so he made no secret of having “rid the world of one tyrant;” and ended his speech by saying: “I have done my duty honestly and well, and am ready to do it again.”

A special police station was established at Clarewell, but subscriptions were made all through the county to pay the special tax. Brophy could not show his face in the county. His life would not be worth a day’s purchase; so, choosing a locality in another country, he received from the Government a sum sufficient to take him there. Kate Donohue returned to her father’s house, but no human being spoke to her. As she went along the road the children spat at her and called her an informer. From behind walls and hedges stones were thrown at her from time to time, and as she entered the chapel one Sunday, the entire congregation rose and left it, as if she were plague-stricken. Her father and mother wished her to leave the house, so she tried to get a situation as servant, but for her no house was open, and at length the poor house was the only spot on earth where rest and safety were within her reach. This having been represented, Government granted her a free passage to New Zealand, where she is now the wife of a flourishing farmer. The Murphys were evicted; but never since has Mr. Jennings dared to return to Ballymorley, where his advent would give the signal for the execution of sentence of death that he knows has been passed upon him. The society, though closely watched, is still in full swing; and the “Graham murder case” has gone to swell the annals of “undetected crime.” —*Time*.



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