

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DETECTIVE ACHIEVES A VICTORY.

THE operations of the detective as a laborer in the coal mines were destined to be of brief duration. Commencing nigh the middle of February, 1874, working a few days loading coal-wagons from the chute in the slope, to be run to, and then emptied in the breaker, he soon had all that he cared for in that particular line of industry. A day's apportionment was considered to be about eight of these wagon-loads of the mass coal, comprising pieces varying in weight from a few pounds to several hundreds of pounds, all of which he was expected to place in the body of the small truck for removal to the upper regions. He was supposed to be in the shaft from half-past six in the morning until about five or half past five o'clock in the afternoon, which was the day shift, when other workmen took his place. Everything, at first, appeared very strange to him, and the close air made him sick and giddy. Each wagon would transport some two and one-half tons of coal, hence the shoveler's ten hours' stint would be equal to handling twenty tons of anthracite *per diem*, a task that one, accustomed, for mere pastime, to shovel into a cellar, handily with a scoop, his ton or half ton of grate or range coal, can hardly appreciate. He may come near it, but the strength required to lift the larger pieces he cannot properly estimate. And this wearisome occupation must be steadily pursued, from early morning until the hour for luncheon, and from one o'clock P.M. until time to be relieved by the night force. It constituted much heavier work than McKenna had ever been accustomed to, hence it is not to be

wondered at that his hands were worn quite raw when he left the shaft-house at the colliery, after his first day's experience in it. Indeed, had there not occurred an accident, in which some of the apparatus by which the loaded trucks were elevated to the hopper of the breaker gave way, it is more than probable that, before quitting time, he would have found himself entirely disabled and compelled to vacate his post. As it was, the condition of his bruised and bleeding fingers, when he returned to Lawler's for supper, after a good cleansing in the kitchen, was quite deplorable, and he employed his knife and fork awkwardly and painfully enough during the meal. He made no wry faces, however, as this would have been an admission that he had never before had anything to do with mining of any sort, but bore the pain in gritty silence, retiring early to his apartment, not to write or sleep, however, as the tortures he experienced interfered with the use of the pen, and kept his eyes open, in spite of his exhaustion and desire to become oblivious to sublunary affairs. It was almost time to rise and prepare for another laborious day, before his eyelids closed in broken and fitful slumber.

The second day, the detective was approached by a miner, seemingly at the head of the society, who demanded a view of his card from the Miners' and Laborers' Union. As he had none, the request could not be complied with, and the man, named Mullaly, was so informed. The man told McKenna that, unless he joined the organization, he could not labor in that calling. Of course the operative was willing to do this as soon as able, and so expressed himself, when, after some further words, Mullaly took his departure.

The severe pain in his hands and limbs left the detective after five or six days, and he felt well enough to roam abroad in the city soon after supper. But it was very little he cared about sitting up late following a day's digging in the shaft

and nine or ten o'clock at night generally found him in bed. But an accident that befell him on the seventeenth of the month put him upon the shelf for some time. Having his hand severely injured, by being crushed between two car-wheels, he was unable to pursue any laborious occupation until it healed. On the succeeding day, Mrs. Lawler was suddenly attacked with serious illness, and all the boarders at the tavern, McKenna included, were forced to leave and secure other accommodations. Mrs. Lawler was not expected to sufficiently recover to return to her duties very soon, and no proper substitute for her could be found in Shenandoah. Excepting the bad health of Mrs. Lawler—for which he really felt sorry—the occurrence furnished that which the detective had lately been seeking for—an excuse to change boarding-places—and he soon obtained a room passibly to his liking at the residence of Fenton Cooney, who had moved to Shenandoah. The little bedroom that he tenanted was rather cold and cheerless, but there was one thing about it which fully compensated—he was to be its only occupant, unless, when the house might be crowded, he chose to share the bed with some of his friends. There was one slight objection to the apartment, which, however, he soon obviated. It came in the shape of a large hole in the wall separating him from another room, just in the corner, at the head of his bed, caused by uneven settling of the foundations of the building, through which a man might thrust his arm. Not that he particularly cared for the draught of air, but when he came to composing his reports and using a lamp, which was generally late at night, it would not do to have any chance observer in the hall, or prying servants, see a gleam of light emanating from his bedroom. This was prevented by stopping up the large aperture with such old clothes as he could spare from his satchel—taking the precaution of packing them away again in the morning before vacating the premises—and hanging his old shifting

hat on the knob of the lock, over the keyhole. After these preparations, he was enabled to work in safety. A small bottle of ink, however, which he procured and secreted in the room, froze as solid as a rock the very first night, and he was reduced, for several days, to the expedient of trying a lead pencil. Subsequently, he used a newly-patented copying pencil, but had poor luck with it, as the nearly undecipherable reports he sent in abundantly testify. By employing a portable inkstand and filling it frequently out of Mrs. Cooney's bluing bottle, which, happily for him, was left near the fire, in the kitchen, he managed to do better until an event occurred that rendered such a proceeding unnecessary. Cooney, who was no scholar, chanced to have a number of letters to send to Pottsville, and, learning that his new boarder, McKenna, could "use the pen iligantly"—as Lawler expressed it—he was pressed into the service, first having been sent to the nearest store for some ink. He took care to buy a middling-sized bottleful, and, after completing his task for Cooney, put it beside the bluing in the same place, and all he had to do when he needed to perform some work in his room, was to take away a quantity in his pocket stand and throw out what was left when he concluded his labors. Mrs. Cooney was particularly cautioned to keep the ink-bottle where it was, and, without asking any questions, complied. Thus was this trouble, for a time, wiped away. These details may seem trifling, but the emergency demanded great caution.

It was at this time that McKenna formed the acquaintance of one Frank McAndrew. A friendship immediately sprung up between these two men that, notwithstanding the trials and troubles through which both have passed—in fact, danger and adventure seemed to strengthen the feeling—remains, to this day, unimpaired and unshaken. McAndrew held true to McKenna in his darkest hour, through good and bad repute; and as he must play a conspicuous part in the

course of this relation, some reference to his *personnel* may prove of advantage to the reader.

Of Celtic descent, McAndrew was twenty-eight or twenty-nine years of age, fair to look upon, of medium height, having round and well-proportioned limbs. His hair was of a lightish auburn, somewhat wavy, fine in texture and worn rather gracefully. He had a mustache of sandy hue, good teeth, blue eyes, regular features, and a complexion sometimes described as florid. His nose was rather long and sharp. Usually clad in good and decently-fashioned clothing, when out of his shifting suit, Frank was, if anything, generally more presentable than the usual run of men brought up to the calling of a miner. He was married and the father of two children.

It was from McAndrew that McKenna, about the middle of February, heard that a man named Lanaham had been shot the preceding day at Centralia. The crime was by some charged upon the sheriff, or his assistants, and by others upon the chain-gang, but, as McAndrew remarked, "the Mollies would have to bear the blame, whether guilty or innocent." The probability was that they had something to do with it.

About the close of the same month, McKenna, only suffering the loss of some of his finger-nails, as the result of the mining accident, was sufficiently recovered to return to coal-shoveling in the shaft of the West Shenandoah colliery. McAndrew was employed in the same mine, not far from him, and they had Mike Lawler as a companion almost within speaking distance. During their dinner hour Mike Lawler suggested that he wanted McKenna well inside the ring before St. Patrick's day, so that he could appear in the procession. It was then the intention to make as good a show as possible on that occasion. McAndrew readily acceded to the proposition, and the operative assenting, it was agreed that his name should be taken in at the ensuing

regular meeting. But McKenna did not march in the procession on the seventeenth. A few members from a country division came out. The majority of the Mollies, preferring to remain incog., did not attempt to walk with those belonging to other societies.

About the beginning of March the times were so hard that a number of men had to be discharged from the colliery, including McKenna and his companions. They were promised work when business was more lively. In the meantime, the detective's efforts—which could not be very active without attracting undesirable attention—to gain admission to the Ancient Order, as it was sometimes called, were unavailing. Lawler sometimes referred to his promise, but seemed unwilling or afraid to proceed. McKenna was aware of the fact that he had not been black-balled, and all now wanting was a fairly attended meeting to call for his admission. McAndrew and Lawler had lately fallen out. They did not openly quarrel, but Lawler wanted to be re-elected Bodymaster of the division, and McAndrew thought it was due to him. Lawler urged that, as McAndrew could not read or write, he was ineligible, and there were a few members who sided with him. Others contended that lack of education made no difference. McAndrew being McKenna's warm friend, that fact might have had something to do with the delay by Lawler in having the applicant initiated.

Matters remained in this condition, McKenna and his friends working part of the time and then for weeks being unemployed, until about the thirteenth of the following April. Thinking to accelerate action a little, the detective, one day, proposed to Lawler, that, in a little while, he would have to bid him good-by, alleging that work was so dull he had concluded to go to Luzerne County, and there pass the spring and summer. He knew he could get work in Wilkes-barre, or find an old friend who had proposed to set him up in business—that is, give him a supply of bogus bank bills

to be disposed of on commission. "Anything," he remarked, "is better than idleness." This had the desired effect.

McKenna had been instructed to take some such course, but not to push the matter.

Lawler stirred himself, said he did not want McKenna to leave, informed him that a meeting would soon be held, and his case should certainly be acted upon. He had his own reasons for desiring McKenna to remain at Shenandoah, and for getting him into the division; but he wanted first to be sure that he would support him (Lawler) for Bodymaster. In default of this, he wished to be elected County Delegate, a lucrative and high position then held by one Barney Dolan, of Big Mine Run. A hint of this was all McKenna needed. While he could not promise to go against McAndrew, he could, and did, say that he would do his utmost to put Lawler in Dolan's position. Thereupon Lawler exclaimed, with a chuckle of satisfaction: "At the very next meeting we'll see you made all right!"

As the division held its sessions at Lawler's house during these days, the would-be Mollie made it his business to be present nearly every evening. But it was not until the night of Tuesday, the fourteenth of April, that his watchfulness earned its merited reward. He was at Lawler's, after supper, as usual, and Mike had been drinking more than needful, assisted somewhat by McKenna, who wished his friend to be in good trim for doing something generous, as he had heard it was the date for the regular monthly gathering of the society. Presently, as nine o'clock arrived, there dropped in at the tavern several well known Mollies, among them Ed. Ferguson—called Fergus—Pete Monaghan, Thomas Hurley, Frank McAndrew and Tom McNulty. In a little while, seeming to take their cue from Lawler, who left his wife to attend the bar, the rest of the family having retired, they one by one dropped into the kitchen and quietly ascended the stairway leading to the second floor. McAndrew

and McKenna were thus alone in the beer room with the landlady. The former appeared to be acting as a sort of outside guardian of the division. Very few words were exchanged by the two men.

The thoughts which passed through the brain of the detective at the moment, as he sat listening to the retreating footsteps of the Mollies, may possibly be imagined by those who have been in similar positions, but others can have small conception of their meaning and effect, and to describe them is quite impracticable. His heart stood almost still during the following few minutes of suspense, and only beat regularly and calmly when he heard a quick-descending tread, and then the same sound approaching him from the kitchen. He breathed more freely when he saw that the arrival was Pete Monaghan, who made a signal that he should accompany him upstairs, still leaving only McAndrew below. The decisive period, for which he had labored, watched, and waited during five long, weary months, had at last arrived. It was a trying and critical crisis in the detective's experience, and he felt within him keener evidence of mental excitement than he remembered having been the subject of since entering the State. As he ascended the steep steps he endeavored to take in, comprehend, and forecast the probable result of the act he was about to take part in, and mentally asked himself, more than once, if it would end in failure or success. This cast of thought was turned from its course by arriving at the door of Mike Lawler's sleeping apartment, which, it will be remembered, was reasonably large and decently furnished. Space left within, on account of the wide bed, the tables and chairs, was a little circumscribed, yet enough remained to tolerably accommodate the sparse assemblage of brothers. A large lamp burned brightly on the bureau, before the oval mirror, at one extremity of the room, between the two heavily draped windows, and another, giving a lesser light, rested upon a stand, or table, at the opposite end of the apartment

Behind the small table Mike Lawler, the Bodymaster of the Division, stood, holding in his hand a slip of paper, which at the moment he was intently and earnestly studying. The other men were ranged, standing erect with arms folded, around the room, leaving a clear spot of carpet in the centre of the floor. Each Mollie devoutly made the sign of the cross as Monaghan and McKenna entered. The latter was instructed to similarly bless himself, and promptly obeyed. He was then taken to the middle of the room, and, still standing by his side, Monaghan proclaimed all in readiness to proceed.

"The neophyte will kneel!" said Lawler.

"Now get down on your prayer-bones," whispered Monaghan; and McKenna knelt upon the carpet.

Here all the members, at a given signal from Lawler, drew nearer the initiate, leaving room for the Bodymaster, who came also, still holding the mysterious paper in his hand.

"I will now proceed," said the presiding officer, in a pompous and affected tone of voice, "to explain to you the objects of the Ancient Order of Hibernians: 'We are joined together to promote friendship, unity and true Christian charity among our members, by raising money for the maintenance of the aged, sick, blind, and infirm. The motto of the order is, Friendship, Unity, and true Christian Charity; unity, in uniting for mutual support in sickness and distress; friendship, in assisting each other to the best of our ability; true Christian charity by doing to each other and all the world as we would wish they should do unto us.' It is the desire to promote friendship among the Irish Catholics, and especially to assist one another in all trials. You are expected to keep all matters occurring within the division room a secret in your own heart. None of the workings of the society are to be recalled to those not known to be members."

Here there was a short pause, and the initiate was asked



Each Mollie devoutly made the sign of the cross as Monaghan and McKenna entered.

if he subscribed to all these things, to which he made audible answer in the affirmative.

"I will then proceed to administer the solemn and binding obligation with which all present have already pledged themselves. You will repeat these words after me:"

McKenna, still upon his knees, and guarded by Monaghan, repeated the oath, or obligation, as Lawler read it from the paper, as near as may be, as follows:

"I, James McKenna, having heard the objects of the order fully explained, do solemnly swear that I will, with the help of God, keep inviolably secret all the acts and things done by this order, and obey the constitution and by-laws in every respect. Should I hear a member illy spoken of, I will espouse his cause, and convey the information to him as soon as possible for me so to do. I will obey my superior officers in every thing lawful, and not otherwise. All this I do solemnly swear!"

Then McKenna was told to cross himself once more, the surrounding brothers doing the same, and the test-paper, as it was called, was handed to him by Lawler, and, still in a kneeling posture, he reverently kissed it, and was prompted by Monaghan to rise.

This concluded the brief initiatory ceremony. Afterward, the new-made member walked to the treasurer's table, which was the bureau, and there paid three dollars, the sum assessed as the initiatory fee.

He should have subsequently signed his name in a book containing the constitution of the body, but this was omitted, as were many other things which in regular lodges of the order of Ancient Hibernians are always insisted upon. All present now came forward and warmly shook hands with McKenna, welcoming him as brother.

The next thing was the instruction of the new member in the passwords and signs—or secret work—commonly called "the goods" of the society, by Lawler, as follows:

"The sign of recognition, which is changed every three months, for the present is made by putting the tip of the little finger of the right hand to the outer corner of the right eye, thus: and the Bodymaster made the sign, which McKenna was requested to imitate. He did so, and the officer resumed:

"The answer to this is, to catch the right lapel of the vest, or coat, with the little finger and thumb of the right hand, in this manner;" and Lawler performed the answering signal which the novitiate imitated as well as he could.

Lawler continued:

"There are a number of toasts, or hailing signs and responses, by which members of the order recognize each other. When the signal just furnished cannot be seen, what is called the drinking toast for the quarter is employed. It is this:

"The Emperor of France and Don Carlos of Spain."

"And is answered:

"May unite together and the people's rights maintain."

"The password, now used in entering a division, is this:

"Question: Will tenant right in Ireland flourish?"

"Answer: If the people unite and the landlords subdue."

"The quarreling word, to be employed when a brother is in doubt if one with whom he is about to dispute or come to blows is a member of the order, or not, is as follows:

"Question: Your temper is high!"

"Answer: I have good reason!"

"The night word, to be used when two men meet in darkness, is:

"Question: The nights are very dark!"

"Answer: I hope they soon will mend!"

This concluded the ceremonies, and the meeting, without transacting any further business of importance, adjourned, all going straight to the bar, where, as was expected, the newly initiated Mollie spent some money in treating his comrades. When, at about midnight, McKenna and McAndrew left for their respective homes, Lawler was on his way to bed, more

decidedly mellow than he had been seen since the detective's arrival in the place.

In the cold, silent room at Fenton Cooney's, very late that night, before retiring, McKenna indited the most important report he had ever written, minutely detailing, as here given, every particular of the ceremony attending his initiation into Shenandoah Division of the Mollie Maguires, with the signs, toasts, passwords, and other matters of interest. His concluding sentence was:

"So you see victory is won at last!"

It was not until that report had been sealed, stamped, and deposited in the post-office box, that the detective sought repose, thinking he would not immediately leave Shenandoah.

CHAPTER XV.

MORE WORK OF THE MOLLIES.

THE detective was now competent to encounter modern as well as old-time Mollie Maguires. He apprehended no more trouble from the questions of Dormer, Lawler, or even Jack Kehoe himself, and felt that however imperfect his introductory work with the order in the coal country might have been, he was then prepared to meet all members of the order, and enabled, from his late instructions, to suit his companions. The danger coming from sudden inquiries, made by strangers, he no longer dreaded. Just as well posted in the mysteries of the society as anybody well could be—he had already learned that there were no degrees beyond the initiatory in the Ancient Order—he believed he could work his