

THE DETECTIVE'S INITIATION BY THE MOLLY MAGUIRES

Pinkerton Man Passing as McKenna, a Murderer. Barely Escaped Unmasking as He Bullied and Bluffed His Way Into the Cutthroats' Confidence.

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If you were called upon to join a band of murderers—men who made it their business to kill—no doubt you would think twice about the matter. If your orders were to become an active member—not to take part in any of the crimes, but to stop all you could while gathering evidence which later on was to hang twenty-three men and send scores to prison, no doubt you would think you had a hard task.

That is what James McParland was instructed to do, and he did it—did it without any frills; did it by hard and everyday work, but so effectively that he became known as the greatest detective of the time, and to-day, after more than thirty-five years, the work of James McParland on the Molly Maguire cases is still spoken of with awe by police officials.

To-day Mr. McParland is living in Denver and is still in the employ of Pinkerton's National Detective Agency as superintendent of the Denver branch. It was easier for him to break up the world famous band of murderers than to tell his story, for he is a modest man with all his wonderful record as a detective.

But once you get him started on his subject facts and dates and names come rolling out of his mouth in the same way that gained him a reputation for having a remarkable memory at the trial of the various members of the Molly Maguires.

"To explain how I became a member of the Molly Maguires, in an effort to break up that lawless organization, I must detail some of my movements, the first of which will give the reader an idea how I obtained the original information that gave me the long sought chance," declared Mr. McParland.

"It was in October, 1874, that I went to Philadelphia from Chicago, and there conferred with Benjamin Franklin, the local superintendent of the Pinkertons. We agreed on our outline, ciphers and the manner of my work, but of course the majority of the details had to be left to chance.

"When I arrived in Port Clinton, Pa., I stayed but one day. I had to learn the lay of the country, it must be remembered. I went on to Auburn, and after a few hours went to Pinegrove, and from there to Schuylkill Haven, four miles from Pottsville, a town that was later on to be the scene of so many stirring incidents in my life. I found it interesting enough to spend four days in Pottsville, and then rode to Tremont.

Thought Reports Exaggerated.
"It was not until I reached Tremont that I first talked about the Molliés. Before leaving Philadelphia I had told Mr. Franklin that I thought the reports about the Molliés foolish and exaggerated. I did not take much stock in the story that a band of men was organized for the sole purpose of murder, but as a detective it was my business to get the facts, and I did not let my opinion sway me. I had a copy of the Boston Pilot, which told of the outlawry of the Molliés.

"I discussed this article, venturing for local information, with a man named Fitzgibbons, a railroad employe, and Donohue, who kept a tavern.

"This is a foolish story," I asserted. "I don't think there is such a thing as a Molly Maguire society."

"Well, you are mistaken, young man," I was told emphatically. "You stay in this district for a time and you will mighty soon find out." I had gained my first information—not much, it is true, but it was a starter.

I went on to Newton, Swatara, Middle Creek, Raush's Creek and Donaldson, looking for work. I told the people I met. After spending four days in Town City I went back to Tremont and then on to Minersville. In this wandering I had picked up enough to know that the Molliés were a real organization—more real than even F. B. Gowen, president of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, or Allan Pinkerton thought.

I decided to go to Philadelphia and make a detailed report of what I had heard, found and thought. My report convinced my superiors that I should go on with the case and make Pottsville my working headquarters.

"I arrived in Pottsville in December with instructions to try to join the Molly Maguires. Mr. Pinkerton deemed this of the greatest importance, as he declared we could never get the real leaders until we knew the inside facts.

"I hired a room at Mrs. O'Regan's boarding house, in East Norwegian street. I was a healthy young fellow, less than thirty years of age, and I could sing, do a jig and tell a story. I explained I was looking for a job, but as I had saved some money I was not in a big rush. I managed to get in a fight with a fellow

my first day in town, and licked him—it was important that I 'lick' my man, for a fellow who could not hold his own with his fists in that country was held to be not much good. I made it my business to get around town and settled upon 'Pat' Dormer, who kept the Sheridan House, as a man well worth my knowing. I suspected him of being a Mollié, but of course I was not sure.

"The very fact that I could sing and dance and would stand a treat made me a welcome visitor to Dormer's barroom. 'Pat' had a lot of friends who dropped in every day, and I heard an interesting word now and then fall by some fellow who was in his cups. I soon discovered that a number of them had a password and a drinking toast, signs and the like, and I kept track of every mysterious word they uttered.

"One day I was alone in the barroom with 'Pat' and I bought him a drink, leaned across the bar, tipped my glass and whispered some of the words I had heard.

"'Pat' jumped back and, looking at me with a scared expression, asked:—'Are you one of those things?'

"That's what they call me," I replied.

"It was easy enough to fool 'Pat,' but when Michael Cooney came into the bar and 'Pat' told him I was a Molly, 'Mike' wanted to see my card, and asked for the name of my bodymaster. There were a number of men in the room and I was in a mighty tight place. All the information I knew was what I had picked up in 'Pat's' saloon, but I knew that would not be enough for Cooney. I had to do some mighty quick thinking, so I yelled out an order for a drink all round, and, quickly filling my glass, I tossed off about the biggest drink I ever took. I managed to slip to the floor in what the crowd thought was a drunken stupor. Cooney was excited and tried to kick me on the head, but Dormer went to my help.

Squaring Matters with Dormer.
"He is a good lad," he said. "Let him alone. He is only drunk now, and when he is sober he will show you that he belongs to our order."

"Cooney was satisfied with the word and I escaped a serious beating or even being kicked to death. I had learned two new things—the Molliés had cards and a bodymaster, whatever that was."

Mr. McParland was asked how he "squared" matters with Dormer.

"I had to do some tall talking to 'Pat,'" he laughed. "I told him I had worked in an elevator in Buffalo and had got in some trouble with the boss and killed him and had to escape; that I owned some real estate in Buffalo, but could not lay claim to it or the rent for fear of the police. I also told him I was a member of a band of counterfeiters and that I passed a lot of the 'queer.' 'Pat' wanted to know why I did not write to Buffalo and get my card, but I told him I was afraid to write, for the police were sure to get the trace of me. 'Pat' seemed to think I was being careful and that the thing for me to do was to join the Molliés all over again.

"Dormer had me meet Michael, or 'Muff,' Lawler, as he was called, who was the bodymaster of the Shenandoah district. I first met Lawler in the latter part of January, 1874, and it was my business to become his friend. Dormer told 'Muff' that I wanted to join the Molliés again and we discussed the plan at length. I managed to travel around the district continually, looking for work. Lawler told me he could get me a job as a laborer at the Indian Ridge shaft and I could board with him until I found some other place. I held down the job for two weeks and found it mighty hard work swinging a pick. 'Muff' and I had become good friends, but I later on took a room at Penton

and the harder you fought among the Molliés the better you were. But you could not be all bluff; you had to back up some of your talk with deeds. No doubt I was 'sized' up for a long time, and it was not until April 14, 1874, that I at last became a member of the organized band of murderers.

"It was at the home of 'Muff' Lawler that I became a member. The test, as the bylaws were called, were first read to me, and I had to kiss them to show my good faith—that is, kiss the written 'test,' not the men. My surprise can be guessed when I heard the words 'Friendship, unity and true Christian charity' given as the real secret phrase of the Molly Maguires. The 'test' contained the purest sentiments of morality and benevolence, and I was dumfounded as I heard the orders read. It was impossible for the Molly Maguires to be a band of murderers and still have such a set of secret rules. There must be something wrong, I began to believe. I had done a great injustice to the Molliés and to some of the men. My information must all be wrong. Where could the mistake be? I had gained enough facts before I became a member to know the Molliés were a band of killers, but now I was convinced that I had made a bad error and so had the general public.

Passwords Changed Frequently.
"I found there were passwords, a night password, signs, a quarrelling toast and a bodymaster's toast. I kept a record of the various passwords and signs, as they were changed very often.

"For example, the night password would be, 'Long nights are unpleasant.'

"The answer would be, 'I hope they will be at an end.'

"Then the sign would be given, which was also changed frequently. A simple sign would be—The front finger and thumb of the right hand to touch the neck or top button of shirt.

"The answering motion would be—Right hand to rub across forehead, touching the hair.

Cooney's home. The idea of working in a mine was at first all right, but I found it kept me back in my real investigation, and a man could be a good Molly Maguire and not work—in fact, if he had money to spend, he would be a better member if he did not work—so on March 10, 1874, I gave up work.

"It must have been hard work being a good fellow with this gang?"

"No one will ever know or understand the amount of difficulty I had in being a good fellow with the other Molliés," he said. "I had to be a 'mixer' and I had to have a new lot of stories to tell the boys. Then I had to be a fighter—that was important, to be a good fighter and a loud talker—for the louder you talked



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"A quarrelling toast—that is, when a man was 'on a job'—would be:—'You are provoking, sir.'

"The answer would be:—'I am not to blame.'

"The body masters also had secret signs among themselves which only a fellow body master would know. The term body master was given to a man who was nothing more than a district leader or local president. He was in charge of the members in his district and his laws or orders must be obeyed. Next in authority were a secretary, assistant secretary and treasurer. I later became secretary of the Shenandoah district.

"Of course I was delighted when I had at last gained the high ranks of the Molliés, but that day when I was initiated in 'Muff' Lawler's home will always be important in my memory.

While the idea of 'Friendship, unity and true Christian charity' stood out in my mind, it was not long until I found this was a thin veil for the band of murderers, for that is all you can call them, and murder was exactly their purpose.

"When I became a Molly I learned that they had named their clan for Molly Maguire, a lawless woman who had lived in Ireland and who had been credited with killing a number of men. Her fame had spread so far throughout that land that soon all murders were generally attributed to her, and men or companies of men following in her work were known as 'Molly Maguires.' There was the greatest secrecy and mystery about the organization that had taken her name in this country. Everything was done in a mysterious way. When I was only a lay member it required but a few days for me to learn that I had to get higher to gain the real working secrets of the society if I was to get the results I was after.

"The chief county officer, or county delegate, was the only man cognizant of all that happened in his district. I wanted to know more about these men. The only way I could get the details of their plans was to become an extraordinarily active member. And so I planned. The day I joined was one of doubt, but before midnight I had all my doubts brushed to one side. That the Molliés comprised a band of cutthroats I learned surely, and from the members themselves.

"How would the men be selected to do the killing?"

"When it was agreed that some one was to be killed, I was told by Lawler, lots would be drawn among the men, or perhaps the body master might make the selection himself—and that was considered an honor," he explained. "It was agreed that no one but young men should be asked to do a killing, and, where it was possible, an unmarried man."

"There were always four or five men selected to kill one man. While bragging of their deeds and declaring their bravery, the Molliés seemed to like to have four or five comrades near by when a murder was to be committed.

"The planning of a murder was the cause of much discussion on the part of the members. Sometimes it would be agreed to kill a man in the daylight hours, making it appear very bold; and in the midst of a crowd, that the man who did the killing might escape by the very boldness of his methods.

"There were numbers of murders planned, and while I managed to get out many warnings to intended victims, I was not always able to save the man. Sometimes I would be selected to go on a 'job' myself, but all the months I worked gathering evidence I never had to join in a real case of murder. I had to work on attacks on mines, but I was fortunate enough not to take actual part in a death. It required all sorts of schemes on my part to get out of such cases, but good fortune seemed to be with me.

"When the Molliés were brought to justice later it was recalled that after I became a member more men who were marked for death had escaped than ever before. The public did not know this, but the Molliés did. And this fact went against me in the eyes of 'Jack' Kehoe, and it was he who first accused me of being a detective."

"What was the favorite way of killing a man by the Molliés?"

"Perhaps shooting was the favorite method of putting a victim to death by a Molly," he exclaimed, "but if a fight had to be started and a man beaten to death in a crowd it was all right for these ruffians. If they deemed a knife should be used, then they used a knife; or if it was decided that it was safer to walk up to a man standing by a mine shaft, perhaps just about to go to work or resting after his day's toil, and to push him down the deep pit, that would be the way selected.

"There was only one rule, and that was to kill a man—kill him the quickest way they could—when that man had made it apparent that he would not submit to the lawless threats of a lawless band.

"The warning sent to a victim—a man who was not to be killed, but just ordered to give up his home—for some offence to a Molly was often very crude. Written in a scrawling manner on any sort of paper that would carry the threatening words, the notice, as a rule, also carried a picture of a knife, coffin, rope or revolver.

Made an Officer of the Molliés.
"While I was gathering evidence against the members in the district in which I had settled, I wanted to get in the good graces of the other bodymasters to learn how they were carrying on their work—whom they killed and whom they planned to kill in the future had an equal interest to me. I had made my evidence complete, as it was agreed by my superior officers that the suppression of one district would not stop the Molliés from carrying out their murderous plans in other parts.

"The fact that I could write and was better educated than the majority of the members of the band counted in my favor and advanced me in the organization. 'Muff' Lawler was one of my best 'boosters,' and it was through his efforts that I became secretary of the Shenandoah district. The fact that I had at last become an officer of the Molliés brought me into contact with other districts. I made it my business to go to one district from another on every possible pretext, and in this way I learned of many plans in advance. When I found that district No. 1, 2 or 3 was about to kill some one I would manage to get word to Mr. Franklin, in Philadelphia, or Captain R. J. Linden, assistant superintendent of the Pinkertons, who had come upon the scene to help break up the band.

"I know we saved a good many persons at various times through our getting word to the man marked for death. I had been a member but a short time when I was called the 'bulliest Molly' of them all. This title was given to me because I made it my business to do the most talking and dig into the plans of the society. Of course, the local police did not know I was a detective, and I gained a reputation among the law abiding citizens of being dangerous. This reputation stood me in good account and advanced me still closer into the inner circles. Perhaps it is strange that a 'real bad man' should be the one who was fighting the hardest to bring peace into Eastern Pennsylvania, but that was the work of the detective.

"Did the Molliés seem to like you?"

"You might hear a Molly say, 'Jimmie' McKenna is the boy that knows how to do things.' Every one called me 'Jimmie' rather than 'Jim' when I was singing or dancing, but at a meeting it was 'Jim' or 'McKenna' surely when real serious work was under way," was the explanation. "Before 'Jack' Kehoe answered for his long list of crimes on the gallows he tried to say I planned many of the acts of the Molliés. He was correct. I did a lot of planning, but I was sure to let Captain Linden know what had been planned and he would take the proper steps to protect life and property."

"Take care, my lady bird—take care. Don't spoil your make-up. You're painted so lovely and sweet to-night; don't get trickles and stripes down your cheeks from tears," and, guarding my fiery carefully, she rocked me gently on her breast, murmuring:—"There, there, I'll shed all the tears if, after your little hand has kept the stage door open for me, they go to close it on me."

"Never, Addie! I'll see to that. No manager that I play with will ever close his stage door on you."

"That same tender heart may not be distressed I pass over the woful parting. She declared to those about her a fixed determination to live till I came back to New York, and to the amazement of all she kept her word. She inhaled once more the dusty, mouldy odor of behind the scenes with delight, though it was her poison. She received the warm greetings and welcome of the company. The manager, removing his hat, told her the stage door would be always open to her, and in my room, where the dresser was doing moderately well—still I found nightly occasion to reprimand her sharply for forgetfulness—the rapid, shallow breathing of Addie deepened to a sigh of rapture, for those complaining words were sweeter to her ears than the piping of mating birds—she knew she was not replaced."

"The evening over, the little gift I had brought her buttoned inside of her loose, loose bodice, she as of old restored the jewels to their proper place in the old case and said:—"I haven't slept much lately. I had to watch myself so close, honey, for fear of slipping away without again seeing you. But now you're here, where I can reach you, I can afford to sleep sound—sound."

"With grave dignity she promised to teach my dresser some of her accomplishments; then helped me to my carriage. She would not ride herself, but, reaching in, she held my hand to her lips, to her cheek, while her eyes dwelt upon my face and seemed blessing me as they looked.

"You've just given me the happiest night of my whole life, Miss Clara, and I'm going to bed with your face right before me, and, now I see, I'll sleep—Lord, lady bird, how I will sleep!"

"She spoke the truth, for Addie is sleeping yet and only one great call can wake her.



Photo by Alvin Dupont.

My One Inheritance; A Reminiscence. BY CLARA MORRIS.

"Do believe you have experienced every human emotion?"

"Not I," I laughed; "I have never received an inheritance. So there is still one untasted emotion awaiting me."

They retired before a gale of merriment, yet hardly was the door closed upon them when my memory recalled that strange creature of mixed blood who had always claimed that I had inherited her—Addie, octocean—and even

with the smile of amusement parting my lips, I felt a sharp sting in my eyelids that always comes with the sudden thought of her. Her tender devotion as maid to the woman she served was simply immeasurable, while the struggles between the two natures she had inherited was of undying interest to the looker-on.

Her father had been a prominent physician of Baltimore, her mother his quadroon housekeeper, and so wonderful was her resemblance to him that her features might have been moulded from a youthful mask of his. A line from the brow, sweeping back over the head and down to the nape of the neck, was beautiful, and artistic people in studying her profile found in the delicately modelled nose, drooped brooding eyelids and the outward thrust of the full nether lip, a faint, but thrilling suggestion of the Sphinx. She and her mistress had preceded me at Mr. Daly's for a year, and I was quick to notice the consideration shown by all the company to Addie, maid at that time to the handsome, Kate Newton. Other maids and dressers there were, decent, honest women, but treated with general indifference, and were found often in the way; not so Addie.

In the stage waits I sometimes passed a few minutes chatting with Miss Newton in her dressing room, and there I saw Addie's adoration for her mistress express itself through a humility of personal service such as surprised and half repelled me. To see this tall and stately woman putting herself all supine, motionless, into Addie's hands, to be bathed and clothed; to see the Sphinx faced one drop to the floor and take into her lap her mistress' feet, holding them between

her soft palms and gently stroking them, or placing herself at the back of the chair that her beloved might use her breast to lean her head and shoulders against while she fanned her, a devotion that caused me to exclaim:—"Oh, Katie, I wonder you do not have Addie breathe for you; it would save you so much fatigue!"

My adoration for Miss Newton's beauty was so open and genuine that all unconsciously I began to share a little in the strange woman's doglike love, and when a year and a half later I saw the brilliant, high spirited actress lying on her bed facing slow coming death, I could not look at Addie, who never wept, but whose hopeless eyes held such speechless misery as turned others to very founts of tears.

When Katie realized how near the end was she became anxious for Addie's future.

And so it came about that when Kate Newton had gone to her rest the octocean woman, Addie, appeared before me clutching a slip of paper on which was my house address, and she announced with proud humility, "Miss Clara, you've inherited me from Miss Newton."

"Thus she entered upon that long service, wherein she surrounded me with a watchful, loving care that defied the winds of heaven to blow too roughly upon me—in fact, her cunning in my defence was charming to witness. One enjoyed the rencontre greatly as a spectator.

A girl superlatively sensitive, quick to learn and adapt herself to the circumstances by which I was surrounded—so different from her late employer's—Addie was of such surpassing perfection as dresser, packer, traveller and nurse that curious actresses strove to bribe, to steal, to buy her from me; and always in that low voice and with her faint smile she would answer, "Why, I belong to Miss Clara now. You'd better speak to her; I'll do just as she says," and her eyes would twinkle, for she knew what the result would be.

Her one regret was that I was not Southern bred, so that her wailing affection might be better understood. I have spoken elsewhere of the hot temper that was my birthright and of how adversity and sharp necessity had forced me to conquer it to a great degree; yet now and then at long intervals when too sorely tried I lost my hold on bridge and bit and abandoned myself to wild, headlong passion, always to my after shame and deep contrition, as on that night when the leading man utterly destroyed the mad scene that was the climax of the play, "L'Article 47." Then, ignoring all the reason I had had for temper, I apologized to those concerned and returned in deep humiliation to my dressing room, with Addie carrying my train and looking like one triumphant, uplifted, inwardly agonized.

"She kissed my shoulder as she unlaced my bodice.

"There," I said, heavily, "now you see what I'm capable of!" adding in laborious jest:—"Take care, lest some day you, too, get a taste of my quality!"

"Oh, my lady bird, that's what I want to get! Make your big eyes blaze at me. Hook your fingers at me like you did at him just now." Clasp her arms about my waist, she slipped to her knees. "Stomp your foot on my neck, honey, and then grind it down, and Addie'll only love you the more, 'cause if you'll only thump and bang me about then I'll know that I am yours, same as your shoes, your gloves are yours!"

"Addie!" I cried, and shrank from her. "How can you talk so?"

As ever, she misunderstood me, and with a twist of her lips answered:—"Only one forbidden drop in eight—yet for you, honey, it would blacken all Niagara."

Another season went by in monotonous stage routine, and if in the passing there was a subtle sweetness diffused through the days' and nights' work I was not unconscious that much was due to Addie. With gentle voice, velvet touch, and feet shod in silence, she waited upon, dressed and undressed me; packed and unpacked, travelled ever in spotless, uncrumpled white and widow's black; made my coffee, kept an unsleeping eye upon the freshness of the ribbons of all lingerie, watched glove buttons; wore white gloves when fastening on tight bodices; in all ways so mindful and gentle that a slow anger was growing in my heart against the friend in Washington who had prophesied differently, and on our approaching Chicago for the closing of our season I composed a nice little satirical letter to that effect.

Flew Into a Rage.
As usual, we arrived late and the customary hurry and confusion with stage and hotel baggage commenced. My advance man, who was awaiting us, was applying a little balm to the receptive palms of a couple of baggage men, who began hauling and pitching trunks with iconoclastic joy. Addie, calm and shrilled, said to me:—"Wait one moment, Miss Clara, while I get your special trunk so we can take it on the carriage with us," and the next moment she was pointing it out, saying:—"That's my lady's private trunk and we're so late I'd like to take it with us, please."

"A-rah," was the contemptuous answer. "You and your lady will have to wait. Out of my way, will you! Out of my way, I say, damn you!"

This untoward insult quickened in her all the devils that mixed blood and unguarded passions are heir to, and without a word or a cry, as if she had been hurled from a catapult, she was upon him, her left hand twisted in the collar of his flannel shirt, while her right hand fell furiously beneath her apron for the scissors in her chaperone.

"Addie!" I gasped, for she was dreadful to look at. The outward thrust of the nether lip was so accentuated that both lips seemed to protrude thickly, her nostrils dilated till her nose looked broad; her face was a dusky purplish red, and the strange tea colored eyes were palely malevolent, gazing from that dark mask.

The porter was tearing at her arm with both hands, when a policeman, coming behind her, caught her by both wrists and held her so for a moment. Slowly she turned her head and looked up at him. The blood sank from her face; the old faint smile returned, and, as he released her, she unrolled a few explanatory words. The old charm worked, the blue coated giant turned a scathing glance upon the porter, growling, "Take that trunk and put it on the lady's carriage, as you were told or I'll—" and he turned to assist me into the carriage, shouting, "Additorium!" to the driver.

A painful silence, and then Addie said, in her low, level tones, "Lady bird, I'm dreadful sorry." "Oh," I interrupted, "I know you must be." "Wait, honey; I ain't doin' no lynin'. Don't suppose I'm sorry for chokin' that trash thing! But, oh, didn't I tell you that sometimes I'm all black, clear through! That's what I'm sorry for, for you didn't let me love you much before, and now—well, now I s'pose you won't be able to bear me at all!"

The slow, heavy words dropped one by one like difficult tears. A great compassion filled my heart to pain. Suddenly I leaned forward and, taking her troubled face between my hands, for the first time I kissed her.

It was late in the next season that one night I found Addie, in a dark entrance, eating ice. "What on earth are you doing that for?"

"I—I," she slightly stammered, "er, Miss H— is usin' it for her stomacher. I took a bit, that's all."

Perhaps a fortnight later, by mere chance, I glanced behind the mirror on my dressing table, and there stood a bowl of broken ice. I meant to question Addie about it, but in the rush and fatigue of a five costume party I quite forgot the small matter. The following matinee, being dressed ahead of time, I sat down to wait the ending of the overture, and, looking at Addie, as she deftly laced narrow ribbons through yards of lace-binding, I noted the loose, sagging fit of her black waist. "Gracious!" I exclaimed, "have you lost flesh to win a wager or what?"

"Oh, honey, this here is an old time waist, when I was heavier—you never saw it before!"

"Oh," I sighed contentedly, and responded to the prompter that I was ready to begin.

But between acts I would stare at her, and slowly, unheeding my vision cleared. I saw the sharpened shoulders, the flattened bust, the thin wrist, the long hollow in the cheeks, the stalinalike shadow beneath the