Handy Andy, Vol. 2

Samuel Lover

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HANDY ANDY
A Tale of Irish Life
IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME TWO
THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF SAMUEL LOVER (V. 4)
[Illustration: Tom Organ Loftus' Coldairian System]
[Illustration: Tom Connor's Cat]

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS VOLUME TWO

Etched by W. H. W. Bicknell from drawings by Samuel Lover

CHAPTER XXII

The night was pitch dark, and on rounding the adjacent corner no vehicle could be seen; but a peculiar whistle from Dick was answered by the sound of approaching wheels and the rapid footfalls of a horse, mingled with the light rattle of a smart gig. On the vehicle coming up, Dick took his little mare, that was blacker than the night, by the head, the apron of the gig was thrown down, and out jumped a smart servant−boy.

“You have the horse ready, too, Billy?”

“Yis, sir,” said Billy, touching his hat.

“Then follow, and keep up with me, remember.”

“Yis, sir.”

“Come to her head, here,” and he patted the little mare's neck as he spoke with a caressing “whoa,” which was answered by a low neigh of satisfaction, while the impatient pawing of her fore foot showed the animal's desire to start. “What an impatient little devil she is,” said Dick, as he mounted the gig; “I'll get in first, Murphy, as I'm going to drive. Now up with you—hook on the apron—that's it—are you all right?”

“Quite,” said Murphy.

“Then you be into your saddle and after us, Billy,” said Dick; “and now let her go.”

Billy gave the little black mare her head, and away she went, at a slapping pace, the fire from the road answering the rapid strokes of her nimble feet. The servant then mounted a horse which was tied to a neighbouring palisade, and had to gallop for it to come up with his master, who was driving with a swiftness almost fearful, considering the darkness of the night and the narrowness of the road he had to traverse, for he was making the best of his course by cross−ways to an adjacent roadside inn, where some non−resident electors were expected to arrive that night by a coach from Dublin; for the county town had every nook and cranny occupied, and this inn was the nearest point where they could get any accommodation.

Now don't suppose that they were electors whom Murphy and Dick in their zeal for their party were going over to greet with hearty welcomes and bring up to the poll the next day. By no means. They were the friends of the opposite party, and it was with the design of retarding their movements that this night's excursion was undertaken. These electors were a batch of plain citizens from Dublin, whom the Scatterbrain interest had induced to leave the peace and quiet of the city to tempt the wilds of the country at that wildest of times—during a contested election; and a night coach was freighted inside and out with the worthy cits, whose aggregate voices would be of immense importance the next day; for the contest was close, the county nearly polled out, and but two days more for the struggle. Now, to intercept these plain unsuspecting men was the object of Murphy, whose well−supplied information had discovered to him this plan of the enemy, which he set about countermining. As they rattled over the rough by−roads, many a laugh did the merry attorney and the untameable Dick the Devil exchange, as the probable success of their scheme was canvassed, and fresh expedients devised to meet the possible impediments which might interrupt them. As they topped a hill Murphy pointed out to his companion a moving light in the plain beneath.

“That's the coach, Dick—there are the lamps, we're just in time—spin down the hill, my boy—let me get in as they're at supper, and 'faith they'll want it, after coming off a coach such a night as this, to say nothing of some of them being aldermen in expectancy perhaps, and of course obliged to play trencher−men as often as they can, as a requisite rehearsal for the parts they must hereafter fill.”

In fifteen minutes more Dick pulled up before a small cabin within a quarter of a mile of the inn, and the mounted servant tapped at the door, which was immediately opened, and a peasant, advancing to the gig, returned the civil salutation with which Dick greeted his approach.

“I wanted to be sure you were ready, Barny.”

“Oh, do you think I'd fail you, Misther Dick, your honour?”

“I thought you might be asleep, Barny.”

“Not when you bid me wake, sir; and there's a nice fire ready for you, and as fine a dhrop o' *potteen* as ever tickled your tongue, sir.”

“You're the lad, Barny!—good fellow—I'll be back with you by−and−by;” and off whipped Dick again.

After going about a quarter of a mile further, he pulled up, alighted with Murphy from the gig, unharnessed the little black mare, and then overturned the gig into the ditch.

“That's as natural as life,” said Dick.

“What an escape of my neck I've had!” said Murphy.

“Are you much hurt?” said Dick.

“A trifle lame only,” said Murphy, laughing and limping.

“There was a great *boccagh* [Footnote: Lame beggar.] lost in you, Murphy. Wait; let me rub a handful of mud on your face—there—you have a very upset look, 'pon my soul,” said Dick, as he flashed the light of his lantern on him for a moment, and laughed at Murphy scooping the mud out of his eye, where Dick had purposely planted it.

“Devil take you,” said Murtough; “that's too natural.”

“There's nothing like looking your part,” said Dick.

“Well, I may as well complete my attire,” said Murtough, so he lay down in the road and took a roll in the mud; “that will do,” said he; “and now, Dick, go back to Barny and the mountain dew, while I storm the camp of the Philistines. I think in a couple of hours you may be on the look−out for me; I'll signal you from the window, so now good bye;" and Murphy, leading the mare, proceeded to the inn, while Dick, with a parting “Luck to you, my boy,” turned back to the cottage of Barny.

The coach had set down six inside and ten out passengers (all voters) about ten minutes before Murphy marched up to the inn door, leading the black mare, and calling “ostler” most lustily. His call being answered for “the beast,” “the man” next demanded attention; and the landlord wondered all the wonders he could cram into a short speech, at seeing Misther Murphy, sure, at such a time; and the sonsy landlady, too, was all lamentations for his illigant coat and his poor eye, sure, all ruined with the mud:—and what was it at all? an upset, was it? oh, wirra! and wasn't it lucky he wasn't killed, and they without a spare bed to lay him out dacent if he was—sure, wouldn't it be horrid for his body to be only on sthraw in the barn, instead of the best feather−bed in the house; and, indeed, he'd be welcome to it, only the gintlemen from town had them all engaged.

“Well, dead or alive, I must stay here to−night, Mrs. Kelly, at all events.”

“And what will you do for a bed?”

“A shake down in the parlour, or a stretch on a sofa, will do; my gig is stuck fast in a ditch—my mare tired—ten miles from home—cold night, and my knee hurt.” Murphy limped as he spoke.

“Oh! your poor knee,” said Mrs. Kelly; “I'll put a dhrop o' whisky and brown paper on it, sure—”

“And what gentlemen are these, Mrs. Kelly, who have so filled your house?”

“Gintlemen that came by the coach a while agone, and supping in the parlour now, sure.”

“Would you give my compliments, and ask would they allow me, under the present peculiar circumstances, to join them? and in the meantime, send somebody down the road to take the cushions out of my gig; for there is no use in attempting to get the gig out till morning.”

“Sartinly, Misther Murphy, we'll send for the cushions; but as for the gentlemen, they are all on the other side.”

“What other side?”

“The Honourable's voters, sure.”

“Pooh! is that all?” said Murphy,—“I don't mind that, I've no objection on that account; besides, *they* need not know who *I* am,” and he gave the landlord a knowing wink, to which the landlord as knowingly returned another.

The message to the gentlemen was delivered, and Murphy was immediately requested to join their party; this was all he wanted, and he played off his powers of diversion on the innocent citizens so successfully, that before supper was half over they thought themselves in luck to have fallen in with such a chance acquaintance. Murphy fired away jokes, repartees, anecdotes, and country gossip, to their delight; and when the eatables were disposed of, he started them on the punch−drinking tack afterwards so cleverly, that he hoped to see three parts of them tipsy before they retired to rest.

“Do you feel your knee better now, sir?” asked one of the party, of Murphy.

“Considerably, thank you; whisky punch, sir, is about the best cure for bruises or dislocations a man can take.”

“I doubt that, sir,” said a little matter−of−fact man, who had now interposed his reasonable doubts for the

twentieth time during Murphy's various extravagant declarations, and the interruption only made Murphy romance the more.

"*You* speak of your fiery *Dublin* stuff, sir; but our country whisky is as mild as milk, and far more wholesome; then, sir, our fine air alone would cure half the complaints without a grain of physic."

"I doubt that, sir!" said the little man.

"I assure you, sir, a friend of my own from town came down here last spring on crutches, and from merely following a light whisky diet and sleeping with his window open, he was able to dance at the race ball in a fortnight; as for this knee of mine, it's a trifle, though it was a bad upset too."

"How did it happen, sir? Was it your horse—or your harness—or your gig— or—"

"None o' them, sir; it was a *Banshee*."

"A Banshee!" said the little man; "what's that?"

"A peculiar sort of supernatural creature that is common here, sir. She was squatted down on one side of the road, and my mare shied at her, and being a spirited little thing, she attempted to jump the ditch and missed it in the dark."

"Jump a ditch, with a gig after her, sir?" said the little man.

"Oh, common enough to do that here, sir; she'd have done it easy in the daylight, but she could not measure her distance in the dark, and bang she went into the ditch: but it's a trifle, after all. I am generally run over four or five times a year."

"And you alive to tell it!" said the little man, incredulously.

"It's hard to kill us here, sir, we are used to accidents."

"Well, the worst accident I ever heard of," said one of the citizens, "happened to a friend of mine, who went to visit a friend of his on a Sunday, and all the family happened to be at church; so on driving into the yard there was no one to take his horse, therefore he undertook the office of ostler himself, but being unused to the duty, he most incautiously took off the horse's bridle before unyoking him from his gig, and the animal, making a furious plunge forward—my friend being before him at the time—the shaft of the gig was driven through his body, and into the coach−house gate behind him, and stuck so fast that the horse could not drag it out after; and in this dreadful situation they remained until the family returned from church, and saw the awful occurrence. A servant was despatched for a doctor, and the shaft was disengaged, and drawn out of the man's body—just at the pit of the stomach; he was laid on a bed, and every one thought of course he must die at once, but he didn't; and the doctor came next day, and he wasn't dead—did what he could for him—and, to make a long story short, sir, the man recovered."

"Pooh! pooh!" said the diminutive doubter.

"It's true," said the narrator.

"I make no doubt of it, sir," said Murphy; "I know a more extraordinary case of recovery myself."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the cit; "I have not finished my story yet, for the most extraordinary part of the story remains to be told; my friend, sir, was a very sickly man before the accident happened—a *very* sickly man, and after that accident he became a hale healthy man. What do you think of that, sir?"

"It does not surprise me in the least, sir," said Murphy; "I can account for it readily."

"Well, sir, I never heard It accounted for, though I know it to be true; I should like to hear how you account for it?"

"Very simply, sir," said Murphy; "don't you perceive the man discovered a *mine* of health by a *shaft* being sunk in the *pit* of his stomach?"

Murphy's punning solution of the cause of cure was merrily received by the company, whose critical taste was not of that affected nature which despises *jeu de mots*, and *will not* be satisfied under a *jeu d'esprit*; the little doubting man alone refused to be pleased.

"I doubt the value of a pun always, sir. Dr. Johnson said, sir—"

"I know," said Murphy; "that the man who would make a pun would pick a pocket; that's old, sir,—but is dearly remembered by all those who cannot make puns themselves."

"Exactly," said one of the party they called Wiggins. "It is the old story of the fox and the grapes. Did you ever hear, sir, the story of the fox and the grapes? The fox one day was—"

"Yes, yes," said Murphy, who, fond of absurdity as he was, could *not* stand the fox and the grapes by way of

something new.

“They're sour, said the fox.”

“Yes,” said Murphy, “a capital story.”

“Oh, them fables is so good!” said Wiggins.

“All nonsense!” said the diminutive contradictor.

“Nonsense, nothing but nonsense; the ridiculous stuff of birds and beasts speaking! As if any one could believe such stuff.”

“I do—firmly—for one,” said Murphy.

“You do?” said the little man.

“I do—and do you know why?”

“I cannot indeed conceive,” said the little man, with a bitter grin.

“It is, sir, because I myself know a case that occurred in this very country of a similar nature.”

“Do you want to make me believe you knew a fox that spoke, sir?” said the mannikin, almost rising into anger.

“Many, sir,” said Murphy, “many.”

“Well! after that!” said the little man.

“But the case I immediately allude to is not of a fox, but a cat,” said Murphy.

“A cat? Oh, yes—to be sure—a cat speak, indeed!” said the little gentleman.

“It is a fact, sir,” said Murphy; “and if the company would not object to my relating the story, I will state the particulars.”

The proposal was received with acclamation; and Murphy, in great enjoyment of the little man's annoyance, cleared his throat, and made all the preparatory demonstrations of a regular *raconteur*; but, before he began, he recommended the gentlemen to mix fresh tumblers all round that they might have nothing to do but listen and drink silently. “For of all things in the world,” said Murtough, “I hate a song or a story to be interrupted by the rattle of spoons.”

They obeyed; and while they are mixing their punch, we will just turn over a fresh page, and devote a new Chapter to the following

MARVELLOUS LEGEND

CHAPTER XXIII

MURTOUGH MURPHY'S STORY; BEING YE MARVELLOUS LEGEND OF TOM CONNOR'S CAT

“There was a man in these parts, sir, you must know, called Tom Connor, and he had a cat that was equal to any dozen of rat−traps, and he was proud of the baste, and with rayson; for she was worth her weight in goold to him in saving his sacks of meal from the thievery of the rats and mice; for Tom was an extensive dealer in corn, and influenced the rise and fall of that article in the market, to the extent of a full dozen of sacks at a time, which he either kept or sold, as the spirit of free trade or monopoly came over him. Indeed, at one time, Tom had serious thoughts of applying to the government for a military force to protect his granary when there was a threatened famine in the county.”

“Pooh! pooh! sir,” said the matter−of−fact little man: “as if a dozen sacks could be of the smallest consequence in a whole county—pooh! pooh!”

“Well, sir,” said Murphy, “I can't help if you don't believe; but it's truth what I am telling you, and pray don't interrupt me, though you may not believe; by the time the story's done you'll have heard more wonderful things than *that*,—and besides, remember you're a stranger in these parts, and have no notion of the extraordinary things, physical, metaphysical, and magical, which constitute the idiosyncrasy of rural destiny.”

The little man did not know the meaning of Murphy's last sentence—nor Murphy either; but, having stopped the little man's throat with big words, he proceeded—

“This cat, sir, you must know, was a great pet, and was so up to everything, that Tom swore she was a'most like a Christian, only she couldn't speak, and had so sensible a look in her eyes, that he was sartin sure the cat knew every word that was said to her. Well, she used to sit by him at breakfast every morning, and the eloquent cock of her tail, as she used to rub against his leg, said, 'Give me some milk, Tom Connor,' as plain as print, and the plenitude of her purr afterwards spoke a gratitude beyond language. Well, one morning, Tom was going to the neighbouring town to market, and he had promised the wife to bring home shoes to the childre' out o' the price of the corn; and sure enough, before he sat down to breakfast, there was Tom taking the measure of the children's feet, by cutting notches on a bit of stick; and the wife gave him so many cautions about getting a 'nate fit' for 'Billy's purty feet,' that Tom, in his anxiety to nick the closest possible measure, cut off the child's toe. That disturbed the harmony of the party, and Tom was obliged to breakfast alone, while the mother was endeavouring to cure Billy; in short, trying to make a *heal* of his *toe*. Well, sir, all the time Tom was taking measure for the shoes, the cat was observing him with that luminous peculiarity of eye for which her tribe is remarkable; and when Tom sat down to breakfast the cat rubbed up against him more vigorously than usual; but Tom, being bewildered between his expected gain in corn and the positive loss of his child's toe, kept never minding her, until the cat, with a sort of caterwauling growl, gave Tom a dab of her claws, that went clean through his leathers, and a little further. 'Wow!' says Tom, with a jump, clapping his hand on the part, and rubbing it, 'by this and that, you drew the blood out o' me,' says Tom; 'you wicked divil—tish!—go along!' says he, making a kick at her. With that the cat gave a reproachful look at him, and her eyes glared just like a pair of mail−coach lamps in a fog. With that, sir, the cat, with a mysterious 'mi−ow' *fixed a most penetrating glance on Tom, and distinctly uttered his name.*

“Tom felt every hair on his head as stiff as a pump−handle; and scarcely crediting his ears, he returned a searching look at the cat, who very quietly proceeded in a sort of nasal twang—

“'Tom Connor,' says she.

“'The Lord be good to me!' says Tom, 'if it isn't spakin' she is!'

“'Tom Connor,' says she again.

“'Yes, ma'am,' says Tom.

“'Come here,' says she; 'whisper—I want to talk to you, Tom,' says she, 'the laste taste in private,' says she—rising on her hams, and beckoning him with her paw out o' the door, with a wink and a toss o' the head aiqual to a milliner.

“Well, as you may suppose, Tom didn't know whether he was on his head or his heels, but he followed the cat, and off she went and squatted herself under the edge of a little paddock at the back of Tom's house; and as he came round the corner, she held up her paw again, and laid it on her mouth, as much as to say, 'Be cautious, Tom.'

Well, divil a word Tom could say at all, with the fright, so up he goes to the cat, and says she—

"'Tom,' says she, 'I have a great respect for you, and there's something I must tell you, becase you're losing character with your neighbours,' says she, 'by your goin's on,' says she, 'and it's out o' the respect that I have for you, that I must tell you,' says she.

"'Thank you, ma'am,' says Tom.

"'You're goin' off to the town,' says she, 'to buy shoes for the childre',' says she, 'and never thought o' gettin' me a pair.'

"'You!' says Tom."

"'Yis, me, Tom Connor,' says she; 'and the neighbours wondhers that a respectable man like you allows your cat to go about the counthry barefutted,' says she."

"'Is it a cat to ware shoes?' says Tom."

"'Why not?' says she; 'doesn't horses ware shoes?—and I have a prettier foot than a horse, I hope,' says she, with a toss of her head."

"'Faix, she spakes like a woman; so proud of her feet,' says Tom to himself, astonished, as you may suppose, but pretending never to think it remarkable all the time; and so he went on discoursin'; and says he, 'It's thrue for you, ma'am,' says he, 'that horses wares shoes—but that stands to rayson, ma'am, you see—seeing the hardship their feet has to go through on the hard roads.'"

"'And how do you know what hardship my feet has to go through?' says the cat, mighty sharp."

"'But, ma'am,' says Tom, 'I don't well see how you could fasten a shoe on you,' says he."

"'Lave that to me,' says the cat."

"'Did any one ever stick walnut shells on you, pussy?' says Tom, with a grin."

"'Don't be disrespectful, Tom Connor,' says the cat, with a frown."

"'I ax your pard'n, ma'am,' says he, 'but as for the horses you wor spakin' about wearin' shoes, you know their shoes is fastened on with nails, and how would your shoes be fastened on?'"

"'Ah, you stupid thief!' says she, 'haven't I illigant nails o' my own?' and with that she gave him a dab of her claw, that made him roar."

"'Ow! murdher!' says he."

"'Now, no more of your palaver, Misther Connor,' says the cat; 'just be off and get me the shoes.'"

"'Tare an' ouns!' says Tom, 'what'll become o' me if I'm to get shoes for my cats?' says he, 'for you increase your family four times a year, and you have six or seven every time,' says he; 'and then you must all have two pair a piece—wirra! wirra!—I'll be ruined in shoe−leather,' says Tom.

"'No more o' your stuff,' says the cat; 'don't be stand in' here undher the hedge talkin', or we'll lose our karacthers—for I've remarked your wife is jealous, Tom.'

"'Pon my sowl, that's thrue,' says Tom, with a smirk.

"'More fool she,' says the cat, 'for, 'pon my conscience, Tom, you're as ugly as if you wor bespoke.'

"Off ran the cat with these words, leaving Tom in amazement. He said nothing to the family, for fear of fright'ning them, and off he went to the *town* as he *pretended*—for he saw the cat watching him through a hole in the hedge; but when he came to a turn at the end of the road, the dickings a mind he minded the market, good or bad, but went off to Squire Botherum's, the magisthrit, to sware examinations agen the cat."

"Pooh! pooh!—nonsense!!" broke in the little man, who had listened thus far to Murtough with an expression of mingled wonder and contempt, while the rest of the party willingly gave up the reins to nonsense, and enjoyed Murtough's Legend and their companion's more absurd common sense.

"Don't interrupt him, Goggins," said Mister Wiggins.

"How can you listen to such nonsense?" returned Goggins. "Swear examinations against a cat, indeed! pooh! pooh!"

"My dear sir," said Murtough, "remember this is a fair story, and that the country all around here is full of enchantment. As I was telling you, Tom went off to swear examinations."

"Ay, ay!" shouted all but Goggins; "go on with the story."

"And when Tom was asked to relate the events of the morning, which brought him before Squire Botherum, his brain was so bewildered between his corn, and his cat, and his child's toe, that he made a very confused account of it.

"'Begin your story from the beginning,' said the magistrate to Tom.

"'Well, your honour,' says Tom, 'I was goin' to market this mornin', to sell the child's corn—I beg your pard'n—my own toes, I mane, sir.'

"'Sell your toes!' said the Squire.

"'No, sir, takin' the cat to market, I mane—'

"'Take a cat to market!' said the Squire. 'You're drunk, man.'

"'No, your honour, only confused a little; for when the toes began to spake to me—the cat, I mane—I was bothered clane—'

"'The cat speak to you!' said the Squire. 'Phew! worse than before—you're drunk, Tom.'

"'No, your honour; it's on the strength of the cat I come to spake to you—'

"'I think it's on the strength of a pint of whisky, Tom—'

"'By the vartue o' my oath, your honour, it's nothin' but the cat.' And so Tom then told him all about the affair, and the Squire was regularly astonished. Just then the bishop of the diocese and the priest of the parish happened to call in, and heard the story; and the bishop and the priest had a tough argument for two hours on the subject; the former swearing she must be a witch; but the priest denying *that*, and maintaining she was *only* enchanted; and that part of the argument was afterwards referred to the primate, and subsequently to the conclave at Rome; but the Pope declined interfering about cats, saying he had quite enough to do minding his own bulls.

"'In the meantime, what are we to do with the cat?' says Botherum.

"'Burn her,' says the bishop, 'she's a witch.'

"*Only* enchanted,' said the priest—'and the ecclesiastical court maintains that—'

"'Bother the ecclesiastical court!' said the magistrate; 'I can only proceed on the statutes;' and with that he pulled down all the law−books in his library, and hunted the laws from Queen Elizabeth down, and he found that they made laws against everything in Ireland, *except a cat*. The devil a thing escaped them but a cat, which did *not* come within the meaning of any act of parliament:—*the cats only had escaped*.

"'There's the alien act, to be sure,' said the magistrate, 'and perhaps she's a French spy, in disguise.'

"'She spakes like a French spy, sure enough,' says Tom; 'and she was missin', I remember, all last Spy−Wednesday.'

"'That's suspicious,' says the squire—'but conviction might be difficult; and I have a fresh idea,' says Botherum.

"'Faith, it won't keep fresh long, this hot weather,' says Tom; 'so your honour had betther make use of it at wanst.'

"'Right,' says Botherum,—'we'll make her subject to the game laws; we'll hunt her,' says he.

"'Ow!—elegant!' says Tom;—'we'll have a brave run out of her.'

"'Meet me at the cross roads,' says the Squire, 'in the morning, and I'll have the hounds ready.'

"'Well, off Tom went home; and he was racking his brain what excuse he could make to the cat for not bringing the shoes; and at last he hit one off, just as he saw her cantering up to him, half−a−mile before he got home.

"'Where's the shoes, Tom?' says she.

"'I have not got them to−day, ma'am,' says he.

"'Is that the way you keep your promise, Tom?' says she;—'I'll tell you what it is, Tom—I'll tare the eyes out o' the childre' if you don't get me shoes.'

"'Whisht! whisht!' says Tom, frightened out of his life for his children's eyes. 'Don't be in a passion, pussy. The shoemaker said he had not a shoe in his shop, nor a last that would make one to fit you; and he says, I must bring you into the town for him to take your measure.'

"'And when am I to go?' says the cat, looking savage.

"'To−morrow,' says Tom.

"'It's well you said that, Tom,' said the cat, 'or the devil an eye I'd leave in your family this night'—and off she hopped.

"Tom thrimbled at the wicked look she gave.

"'Remember!' says she, over the hedge, with a bitter caterwaul.

"'Never fear,' says Tom. Well, sure enough, the next mornin' there was the cat at cock−crow, licking herself as

nate as a new pin, to go into the town, and out came Tom with a bag undher his arm, and the cat afther him.

"'Now git into this, and I'll carry you into the town,' says Tom, opening the bag.

"'Sure I can walk with you,' says the cat.

"'Oh, that wouldn't do,' says Tom; 'the people in the town is curious and slandherous people, and sure it would rise ugly remarks if I was seen with a cat afther me:—a dog is a man's companion by nature, but cats does not stand to rayson.'

"Well, the cat, seeing there was no use in argument, got into the bag, and off Tom set to the cross roads with the bag over his shoulder, and he came up, *quite innocent−like*, to the corner, where the Squire, and his huntsman, and the hounds, and a pack o' people were waitin'. Out came the Squire on a sudden, just as if it was all by accident.

"'God save you, Tom,' says he.

"'God save you kindly, sir,' says Tom.

"'What's that bag you have at your back?' says the Squire.

"'Oh, nothin' at all, sir,' says Tom—makin' a face all the time, as much as to say, I have her safe.

"'Oh, there's something in that bag, I think,' says the Squire; 'and you must let me see it.'

"'If you bethray me, Tom Connor,' says the cat in a low voice, 'by this and that I'll never spake to you again!'

"'Pon my honour, sir,' said Tom, with a wink and a twitch of his thumb towards the bag, 'I haven't anything in it.'

"'I have been missing my praties of late,' says the Squire; 'and I'd just like to examine that bag,' says he.

"'Is it doubting my charackther you'd be, sir?' says Tom, pretending to be in a passion.

"'Tom, your sowl!' says the voice in the sack, '*if you let the cat out of the bag*, I'll murther you.'

"'An honest man would make no objection to be sarched,' said the Squire; 'and I insist on it,' says he, laying hold o' the bag, and Tom purtending to fight all the time; but, my jewel! before two minutes, they shook the cat out o' the bag, sure enough, and off she went with her tail as big as a sweeping brush, and the Squire, with a thundering view halloo after her, clapt the dogs at her heels, and away they went for the bare life. Never was there seen such running as that day—the cat made for a shaking bog, the loneliest place in the whole country, and there the riders were all thrown out, barrin' the huntsman, who had a web−footed horse on purpose for soft places; and the priest, whose horse could go anywhere by reason of the priest's blessing; and, sure enough, the huntsman and his riverence stuck to the hunt like wax; and just as the cat got on the border of the bog, they saw her give a twist as the foremost dog closed with her, for he gave her a nip in the flank. Still she went on, however, and headed them well, towards an old mud cabin in the middle of the bog, and there they saw her jump in at the window, and up came the dogs the next minit, and gathered round the house with the most horrid howling ever was heard. The huntsman alighted, and went into the house to turn the cat out again, when what should he see but an old hag lying in bed in the corner?

"'Did you see a cat come in here?' says he.

"'Oh, no—o—o—o!' squealed the old hag, in a trembling voice; 'there's no cat here,' says she.

"'Yelp, yelp, yelp!' went the dogs outside.

"'Oh, keep the dogs out o' this,' says the old hag—'oh—o—o—o!' and the huntsman saw her eyes glare under the blanket, just like a cat's.

"'Hillo!' says the huntsman, pulling down the blanket—and what should he see but the old hag's flank all in a gore of blood.

"'Ow, ow! you old divil—is it you? you ould cat!' says he, opening the door.

"In rushed the dogs—up jumped the old hag, and changing into a cat before their eyes, out she darted through the window again, and made another run for it; but she couldn't escape, and the dogs gobbled her while you could say 'Jack Robinson.' But the most remarkable part of this extraordinary story, gentlemen, is, that the pack was ruined from that day out; for after having eaten the enchanted cat, *the devil a thing they would ever hunt afterwards but mice*."

CHAPTER XXIV

Murphy's story was received with acclamation by all but the little man.

“That is all a pack of nonsense,” said he.

“Well, you're welcome to it, sir,” said Murphy, “and if I had greater nonsense you should have it; but seriously, sir, I again must beg you to remember that the country all around here abounds in enchantment; scarcely a night passes without some fairy frolic; but, however you may doubt the wonderful fact of the cat speaking, I wonder you are not impressed with the points of moral in which the story abounds—”

“Fiddlestick!” said the miniature snarler.

“First, the little touch about the corn monopoly [1]—then maternal vanity chastised by the loss of the child's toe—then Tom's familiarity with his cat, showing the danger arising from a man making too free with his female domestics—the historical point about the penal laws—the fatal results of letting the cat out o' the bag, with the curious final fact in natural history.”

[1][Footnote: Handy Andy was written when the “vexed question” of the “Corn Laws” was the all−absorbing subject of discussion.]

“It's all nonsense,” said the little man, “and I am ashamed of myself for being such a fool as to sit—alistening to such stuff instead of going to bed, after the fatigue of my journey and the necessity of rising early to−morrow, to be in good time at the polling.”

“Oh! then you're going to the election, sir?” said Murphy.

“Yes, sir—there's some sense in *that*—and *you*, gentlemen, remember we must be *all* up early—and I recommend you to follow my example.”

The little man rang the bell—the bootjack and slippers were called for, and, after some delay, a very sleepy−looking *gossoon* entered with a bootjack under his arm, but no slippers.

“Didn't I say slippers?” said the little man.

“You did, sir.”

“Where are they, sir?”

“The masther says there isn't any, if you plaze, sir.”

“No slippers! and you call this an inn? Oh!—well, 'what can't be cured must be endured'—hold me the bootjack, sir.”

The gossoon obeyed—the little man inserted his heel in the cleft, but, on attempting to pull his foot from the boot, he nearly went heels over head backward. Murphy caught him and put him on his legs again. “Heads up, soldiers,” exclaimed Murtough; “I thought you were drinking too much.”

“Sir, I'm not intoxicated!” said the mannikin, snappishly. “It is the fault of that vile bootjack—what sort of a thing is that you have brought?” added he in a rage to the *gossoon*.

“It's the bootjack, sir; only one o' the horns is gone, you see,” and he held up to view a rough piece of board with an angular slit in it, but one of “the horns,” as he called it, had been broken off at the top, leaving the article useless.

“How dare you bring such a thing as *that*?” said the little man, in a great rage.

“Why, sir, you ax'd for a bootjack, sure, and I brought you the best I had—and it's not my fault it's bruk, so it is, for it wasn't me bruk it, but Biddy batin' the cock.”

“Beating the cock!” repeated the little man in surprise. “Bless me! beat a cock with a bootjack!—what savages!”

“Oh, it's not the *hen* cock I mane, sir,” said the gossoon, “but the beer cock—she was batin' the cock into the barrel, sir, wid the bootjack, sir.”

“That was decidedly wrong,” said Murphy; “a bootjack is better suited to a heel−tap than a full measure.”

“She was tapping the beer, you mean?” said the little man.

“Faix, she wasn't tapping it at all, sir, but hittin' it very hard, she was, and that's the way she bruk it.”

“Barbarians!” exclaimed the little man; “using a bootjack instead of a hammer!”

“Sure the hammer was gone to the priest, sir; bekase he wanted it for the crucifixion.”

“The crucifixion!” exclaimed the little man, horrified; “is it possible they crucify people?”

“Oh no, sir!” said the gossoon, grinning, “it's the picthure I main, sir— an illigant picthure that is hung up in the chapel, and he wanted a hammer to dhrive the nails—”

“Oh, a *picture* of the crucifixion,” said the little man.

“Yes, sure, sir—the alther−piece, that was althered for to fit to the place, for it was too big when it came down from Dublin, so they cut off the sides where the sojers was, bekase it stopt out the windows, and wouldn't lave a bit o' light for his riverence to read mass; and sure the sojers were no loss out o' the alther−piece, and was hung up afther in the vesthery, and serve them right, the blackguards. But it was sore agen our will to cut off the ladies at the bottom, that was cryin' and roarin'; but great good luck, the head o' the Blessed Virgin was presarved in the corner, and sure it's beautiful to see the tears runnin' down her face, just over the hole in the wall for the holy wather—which is remarkable.”

The gossoon was much offended by the laughter that followed his account of the altar−piece, which he had no intention of making irreverential, and suddenly became silent, with a muttered “More shame for yiz;” and as his bootjack was impracticable, he was sent off with orders for the chamber− maid to supply bed candles immediately.

The party soon separated for their various dormitories, the little man leaving sundry charges to call them early in the morning, and to be sure to have hot water ready for shaving, and, without fail, to have their boots polished in time and left at their room doors;—to all which injunctions he severally received the answer of—“Certainly, sir;” and as the bed−room doors were slapped−to, one by one, the last sound of the retiring party was the snappish voice of the indefatigable little man, shouting, ere he shut his door,—“Early—early—don't forget, Mistress Kelly—*early!*“

A shake−down for Murphy in the parlour was hastily prepared; and after Mrs. Kelly was assured by Murtough that he was quite comfortable, and perfectly content with his accommodation, for which she made scores of apologies, with lamentations it was not better, &c., &c., the whole household retired to rest, and in about a quarter of an hour the inn was in perfect silence.

Then Murtough cautiously opened his door, and after listening for some minutes, and being satisfied he was the only watcher under the roof, he gently opened one of the parlour windows and gave the preconcerted signal which he and Dick had agreed upon. Dick was under the window immediately, and after exchanging a few words with Murtough, the latter withdrew, and taking off his boots, and screening with his hand the light of a candle he carried, he cautiously ascended the stairs, and proceeded stealthily along the corridor of the dormitory, where, from the chambers on each side, a concert of snoring began to be executed, and at all the doors stood the boots and shoes of the inmates awaiting the aid of Day and Martin in the morning. But, oh! innocent calf−skins—destined to a far different fate— not Day and Martin, but Dick the Devil and Company are in wait for you. Murphy collected as many as he could carry under his arms and descended with them to the parlour window, where they were transferred to Dick, who carried them directly to the horse−pond which lay behind the inn, and there committed them to the deep. After a few journeys up and down stairs, Murtough had left the electors without a morsel of sole or upper leather, and was satisfied that a considerable delay, if not a prevention of their appearance at the poll on the morrow, would be the consequence.

“There, Dick,” said Murphy, “is the last of them,” as he handed the little man's shoes out of the window,—“and now, to save appearances, you must take mine too—for I must be without boots as well as the rest in the morning. What fun I shall have when the uproar begins—don't you envy me, Dick? There, be off now: but hark 'e, notwithstanding you take away my boots, you need not throw them into the horse−pond.”

“'Faith, an' I will,” said Dick, dragging them out of his hands; “'t would not be honourable, if I didn't—I'd give two pair of boots for the fun you'll have.”

“Nonsense, Dick—Dick, I say—my boots!”

“Honour!” cried Dick, as he vanished round the corner.

“That devil will keep his word,” muttered Murphy, as he closed the window —“I may bid good bye to that pair of boots—bad luck to him!” And yet the merry attorney could not help laughing at Dick making him a sufferer by his own trick.

Dick *did* keep his word; and after, with particular delight, sinking Murphy's boots with the rest, he, as it was preconcerted, returned to the cottage of Barny, and with his assistance drew the upset gig from the ditch, and with

a second set of harness, provided for the occasion, yoked the servant's horse to the vehicle and drove home.

Murphy, meanwhile, was bent on more mischief at the inn; and lest the loss of the boots and shoes might not be productive of sufficient impediment to the movements of the enemy, he determined on venturing a step further. The heavy sleeping of the weary and tipsy travellers enabled him to enter their chambers unobserved, and over the garments they had taken off he poured the contents of the water−jug and water−bottle he found in each room, and then laying the empty bottle and a tumbler on a chair beside each sleeper's bed, he made it appear as if the drunken men had been dry in the night, and, in their endeavours to cool their thirst, had upset the water over their own clothes. The clothes of the little man, in particular, Murphy took especial delight in sousing more profusely than his neighbour's, and not content with taking his shoes, burnt his stockings, and left the ashes in the dish of the candlestick, with just as much unconsumed as would show what they had been. He then retired to the parlour, and with many an internal chuckle at the thought of the morning's hubbub, threw off his clothes and flinging himself on the shake−down Mrs. Kelly had provided for him, was soon wrapt in the profoundest slumber, from which he never awoke until the morning uproar of the inn aroused him. He jumped from his lair and rushed to the scene of action, to soar in the storm of his own raising; and to make it more apparent that he had been as great a sufferer as the rest, he only threw a quilt over his shoulders and did not draw on his stockings. In this plight he scaled the stairs and joined the storming party, where the little man was leading the forlorn hope, with his candlestick in one hand and the remnant of his burnt stocking between the finger and thumb of the other.

“Look at that, sir!” he cried, as he held it up to the landlord.

The landlord could only stare.

“Bless me!” cried Murphy, “how drunk you must have been to mistake your stocking for an extinguisher!”

“Drunk, sir—I wasn't drunk!”

“It looks very like it,” said Murphy, who did not wait for an answer, but bustled off to another party who was wringing out his inexpressibles at the door of his bed−room, and swearing at the gossoon that he *must* have his boots.

“I never seen them, sir,” said the boy.

“I left them at my door,” said the man.

“So did I leave mine,” said Murphy, “and here I am barefooted—it is most extraordinary.”

“Has the house been robbed?” said the innocent elector.

“Not a one o' me knows, sir!” said the boy; “but how could it be robbed and the doors all fast this mornin'?”

The landlady now appeared, and fired at the word “robbed!”

“Robbed, sir!” exclaimed Mrs. Kelly; “no, sir—no one was ever robbed in my house—my house is respectable and responsible, sir—a vartuous house— none o' your rantipole places, sir, I'd have you to know, but decent and well behaved, and the house was as quiet as a lamb all night.”

“Certainly, Mrs. Kelly,” said Murphy—“not a more respectable house in Ireland—I'll vouch for that.”

“You're a gentleman, Misther Murphy,” said Mrs. Kelly, who turned down the passage, uttering indignant ejaculations in a sort of snorting manner, while her words of anger were returned by Murphy with expressions of soothing and condolence as he followed her down−stairs.

The storm still continued above, and while there they shouted and swore and complained, Murphy gave *his* notion of the catastrophe to the landlady below, inferring that the men were drunk and poured the water over their own clothes. To repeat this idea to themselves he re−ascended, but the men were incredulous. The little man he found buttoning on a pair of black gaiters, the only serviceable decency he had at his command, which only rendered his denuded state more ludicrous. To him Murphy asserted his belief that the whole affair was enchantment, and ventured to hope the small individual would have more faith in fairy machinations for the future; to which the little abortion only returned his usual “Pho! pho! nonsense!”

Through all this scene of uproar, as Murphy passed to and fro, whenever he encountered the landlord, that worthy individual threw him a knowing look; and the exclamation of, “Oh, Misther Murphy—by dad!” given in a low chuckling tone, insinuated that the landlord not only smoked but enjoyed the joke.

“You must lend me a pair of boots, Kelly!” said Murtough.

“To be sure, sir—ha! ha! ha!—but you are the quare man, Misther Murphy—”

“Send down the road and get my gig out of the ditch.”

“To be sure, sir. Poor devils! purty hands they got into,” and off went the landlord, with a chuckle.

The messengers sent for the gig returned, declaring there was no gig to be seen anywhere.

Murphy affected great surprise at the intelligence—again went among the bamboozled electors, who were all obliged to go to bed for want of clothes; and his bitter lamentations over the loss of his gig almost reconciled them to their minor troubles.

To the fears they expressed that they should not be able to reach the town in time for polling that day, Murphy told them to set their minds at rest, for they would be in time on the next.

He then borrowed a saddle as well as the pair of boots from the landlord, and the little black mare bore Murphy triumphantly back to the town, after he had securely impounded Scatterbrain's voters, who were anxiously and hourly expected by their friends. Still they came not. At last, Handy Andy, who happened to be in town with Scatterbrain, was despatched to hurry them, and his orders were not to come back without them.

Handy, on his arrival at the inn, found the electors in bed, and all the fires in the house employed in drying their clothes. The little man, wrapped in a blanket, was superintending the cooking of his own before the kitchen grate; there hung his garments on some cross sticks suspended by a string, after the fashion of a roasting−jack, which the small gentleman turned before a blazing turf fire; and beside this contrivance of his swung a goodly joint of meat, which a bouncing kitchen wench came over to baste now and then.

Andy was answering some questions of the inquisitive little man, when the kitchen maid, handing the basting−ladle to Andy, begged him to do a good turn and just to baste the beef for her, for that her heart was broke with all she had to do, cooking dinner for so many.

Andy, always ready to oblige, consented, and plied the ladle actively between the troublesome queries of the little man; but at last, getting confused with some very crabbed questions put to him, Andy became completely bothered, and lifting a brimming ladle of dripping, poured it over the little man's coat instead of the beef.

A roar from the proprietor of the clothes followed, and he implanted a kick at such advantage upon Andy, that he upset him into the dripping−pan; and Andy, in his fall, endeavouring to support himself, caught at the suspended articles above him, and the clothes, and the beef, and Andy, all swam in gravy.

[Illustration: Andy's Cooking extraordinary]

CHAPTER XXV

While disaster and hubbub were rife below, the electors up−stairs were holding a council whether it would not be better to send back the “Honourable's” messenger to the town and request a supply of shoes, which they had no other means of getting. The debate was of an odd sort; they were all in their several beds at the time, and roared at each other through their doors, which were purposely left open that they might enjoy each other's conversation; number seven replied to number three, and claimed respect to his arguments on the score of seniority; the blue room was completely controverted by the yellow; and the double−bedded room would, of course, have had superior weight in the argument, only that everything it said was lost by the two honourable members speaking together. The French king used to hold a council called a “bed of justice,” in which neither justice nor a bed had anything to do, so that this Irish conference better deserved the title than any council the Bourbon ever assembled. The debate having concluded, and the question being put and carried, the usher of the black counterpane was desired to get out of bed, and, wrapped in the robe of office whence he derived his title, to go down−stairs and call the “Honourable's” messenger to the “bar of the house,” and there order him a pint of porter, for refreshment after his ride; and forthwith to send him back again to the town for a supply of shoes.

The house was unanimous in voting the supplies. The usher reached the kitchen and found Andy in his shirt sleeves, scraping the dripping from his livery with an old knife, whose hackled edge considerably assisted Andy's own ingenuity in the tearing of his coat in many places, while the little man made no effort towards the repair of his garment, but held it up before him, and regarded it with a piteous look.

To the usher of the black counterpane's question, whether Andy was the “Honourable's messenger,” Andy replied in the affirmative; but to the desire expressed, that he would ride back to the town, Andy returned a decided negative.

“My ordhers is not to go back without you,” said Andy.

“But we have no shoes,” said the usher; “and cannot go until we get some.”

“My ordher is not to go back without you.”

“But if we can't go?”

“Well, then, I can't go back, that's all,” said Andy.

The usher, the landlord, and the landlady all hammered away at Andy for a long time, in vain trying to convince him he ought to return, as he was desired; still Andy stuck to the letter of his orders, and said he often got into trouble for not doing *exactly* what he was bid, and that he was bid “not to go back without them, and he would not—so he wouldn't— divil a fut.”

At last, however, Andy was made to understand the propriety of riding back to the town; and was desired to go as fast as his horse could carry him, to gallop every foot of the way; but Andy did no such thing; he had received a good thrashing once for being caught galloping his master's horse on the road, and he had no intention of running the risk a second time, because “*the stranger*” told him to do so. “What does he know about it?” said Andy to himself; “'faith, it's fair and aisy I'll go, and not disthress the horse to plaze any one.” So he went back his ten miles at a reasonable pace only; and when he appeared without the electors, a storm burst on poor Andy.

“There! I knew how it would be,” said he, “and not my fault at all.”

“Weren't you told not to return without them?”

“But wait till I tell you how it was, sure;” and then Andy began an account of the condition in which the voters lay at the inn but between the impatience of those who heard, and the confused manner of Andy's recital, it was some time before matters were explained; and then Andy was desired to ride back to the inn again, to tell the electors shoes should be forwarded after him in a post−chaise, and requesting their utmost exertions in hastening over to the town, for that the election was going against them. Andy returned to the inn; and this time, under orders from head quarters, galloped in good earnest, and brought in his horse smoking hot, and indicating lameness. The day was wearing apace, and it was so late when the electors were enabled to start that the polling−booths were closed before they could leave the town; and in many of these booths the requisite number of electors had not been polled that day to keep them open; so that the next day nearly all those outlying electors, about whom there had been so much trouble and expense, would be of no avail. Thus, Murphy's trick was quite

successful, and the poor pickled electors were driven back to their inn in dudgeon.

Andy, when he went to the stable to saddle his steed, for a return to Neck−or−Nothing Hall, found him dead lame, so that to ride him better than twelve miles home was impossible. Andy was obliged to leave him where he was, and trudge it to the hall; for all the horses in Kelly's stables were knocked up with their day's work.

As it was shorter by four miles across the country than by the road, Andy pursued the former course; and as he knew the country well, the shades of evening, which were now closing round, did not deter him in the least. Andy was not very fresh for the journey to be sure, for he had ridden upwards of thirty miles that day, so the merry whistle, which is so constantly heard from the lively Irish pedestrian, did not while away the tedium of his walk. It was night when Andy was breasting up a low ridge of hills, which lay between him and the end of his journey; and when in silence and darkness he topped the ascent, he threw himself on some heather to rest and take breath. His attention was suddenly caught by a small blue flame, which flickered now and then on the face of the hill, not very far from him; and Andy's fears of fairies and goblins came crowding upon him thick and fast. He wished to rise, but could not; his eye continued to be strained with the fascination of fear in the direction he saw the fire, and sought to pierce the gloom through which, at intervals, the small point of flame flashed brightly and sunk again, making the darkness seem deeper. Andy lay in perfect stillness, and in the silence, which was unbroken even by his own breathing, he thought he heard voices underground. He trembled from head to foot, for he was certain they were the voices of the fairies, whom he firmly believed to inhabit the hills.

“Oh! murdher, what'll I do?” thought Andy to himself: “sure I heerd often, if once you were within the sound of their voices, you could never get out o' their power. Oh! if I could only say a *pather* and *ave*, but I forget my prayers with the fright. Hail, Mary! The king o' the fairies lives in these hills, I know—and his house is undher me this minit, and I on the roof of it—I'll never get down again—I'll never get down again—they'll make me slater to the fairies; and sure enough I remember me, the hill is all covered with flat stones they call fairy slates. Oh! I am ruined—God be praised!” Here he blessed himself, and laid his head close to the earth. “Guardian angels—I hear their voices singin' a dhrinking song—Oh! if I had a dhrop o' water myself, for my mouth is as dhry as a lime−burner's wig—and I on the top o' their house —see—there's the little blaze again—I wondher is their chimbley afire —Oh! murther, I'll die o' thirst—Oh! if I had only one dhrop o' wather —I wish it would rain or hail—Hail, Mary, full o' grace—whisht! what's that?” Andy crouched lower than before, as he saw a figure rise from the earth, and attain a height which Andy computed to be something about twenty feet; his heart shrank to the size of a nut−shell, as he beheld the monster expand to his full dimensions; and at the same moment, a second, equally large, emerged from the ground.

Now, as fairies are notoriously little people, Andy changed his opinion of the parties into whose power he had fallen, and saw clearly they were giants, not fairies, of whom he was about to become the victim. He would have ejaculated a prayer for mercy, had not terror rendered him speechless, as the remembrance of all the giants he had ever heard of, from the days of Jack and the Bean−stalk down, came into his head; but though his sense of speaking was gone, that of hearing was painfully acute, and he heard one of the giants say—

“That pot is not big enough.”

“Oh! it howlds as much as we want,” replied the other.

“O Lord,” thought Andy; “they've got their pot ready for cooking.”

“What keeps him?” said the first giant.

“Oh! he's not far off,” said the second.

A clammy shivering came over Andy.

“I'm hungry,” said the first, and he hiccupped as he spoke.

“It's only a false appetite you have,” said the second, “you're drunk.”

This was a new light to Andy, for he thought giants were too strong to get drunk. “I could ate a young child, without parsley and butther,” said the drunken giant. Andy gave a faint spasmodic kick.

“And it's as hot as ——down there,” said the giant.

Andy trembled at the horrid word he heard.

“No wonder,” said the second giant; “for I can see the flame popping out at the top of the chimbley; that's bad: I hope no one will see it, or it might give them warning. Bad luck to that young divil for making the fire so sthrong.”

What a dreadful hearing this was for Andy: young devils to make their fires; there was no doubt what place

they were dwelling in. “Thunder and turf!” said the drunken giant; “I wish I had a slice of—”

Andy did not hear what he wished a slice of, for the night wind swept across the heath at the moment, and carried away the monster's disgusting words on its pure breath.

“Well, I'd rather have—” said the other giant; and again Andy lost what his atrocious desires were—“than all the other slices in the world. What a lovely round shoulder she has, and the nice round ankle of her—”

The word “ankle” showed at once it was a woman of whom he spoke, and Andy shuddered. “The monsters! to eat a woman.”

“What a fool you are to be in love,” said the drunken giant with several hiccups, showing the increase of his inebriation.

“Is that what the brutes call love,” thought Andy, “to ate a woman?”

“I wish she was bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh,” said the second giant. Of this speech Andy heard only “bone” and “flesh,” and had great difficulty in maintaining the serenity of his diaphragm.

The conversation of the giants was now more frequently interrupted by the wind which was rising, and only broken sentences reached Andy, whose senses became clearer the longer he remained in a state of safety; at last he heard the name of Squire Egan distinctly pass between the giants.

“So they know Squire Egan,” thought Andy.

The first giant gave a drunken laugh at the mention of Squire Egan's name, and exclaimed—

“Don't be afraid of him (*hiccup*); I have him undher my thumb (*hiccup*). I can crush him when I plase.”

“O! my poor owld masther!” mentally ejaculated Andy.

Another break in their conversation occurred, and the next name Andy overheard was “O'Grady.”

“The big bully!” said the second giant.

“They know the whole country,” thought Andy.

“But tell me, what was that you said to him at the election?” said the drunken one.

The word “election” recalled Andy to the business of this earth back again; and it struck upon his hitherto bewildered sensorium that giants could have nothing to do with elections, and he knew he never saw them there; and, as the thought struck him, it seemed as if the giants diminished in size, and did not appear *quite* so big.

“Sure you know,” said the second.

“Well, I'd like to hear it again,” said the drunken one (*hiccup*).

“The big bully says to me, 'Have you a lease?' says he; 'No,' says I; 'but I have an article!' 'What article?' says he; 'It's a fine brass blunderbuss,' says I, 'and *I'd like to see the man would dispute the title!*'“

The drunken listener chuckled, and the words broke the spell of supernatural terror which had hung over Andy; he knew, by the words of the speaker, it was the bully joker of the election was present, who browbeat O'Grady and out−quibbled the agent about the oath of allegiance; and the voice of the other he soon recognised for that of Larry Hogan. So now his giants were diminished into mortal men—the pot, which had been mentioned to the terror of his soul, was for the making of whisky instead of human broth—and the “hell” he thought his giants inhabited was but a private still. Andy felt as if a mountain had been lifted from his heart when he found it was but mortals he had to deal with; for Andy was not deficient in courage when it was but thews and sinews like his own he had to encounter. He still lay concealed, however, for smugglers might not wish their private haunt to be discovered, and it was possible Andy would be voted one too many in the company should he announce himself; and with such odds as two to one against him he thought he had better be quiet. Besides, his curiosity became excited when he found them speaking of his old master, Egan, and his present one, O'Grady; and as a woman had been alluded to, and odd words caught up here and there, he became anxious to hear more of their conversation.

“So you're in love,” said Larry, with a hiccup, to our friend of the blunderbuss; “ha! ha! ha! you big fool.”

“Well, you old thief, don't you like a purty girl yourself?”

“I did, when I was young and foolish.”

“'Faith, then, you're young and foolish at that rate yet, for you're a rogue with the girls, Larry,” said the other, giving him a slap on the back.

“Not I! not I!” said Larry, in a manner expressive of his not being displeased with the charge of gallantry; “he! he! he!—how do you know, eh?” (*Hiccup*.) “Sure, I know myself; but as I wos telling you, if I could only lay howld of—” here his voice became inaudible to Andy, and the rest of the sentence was lost.

Andy's curiosity was great. “Who could the girl be?”

“And you'd carry her off?” said Larry.

“I would,” said the other; “I'm only afraid o' Squire Egan.”

At this announcement of the intention of “carrying her off,” coupled with the fear of “Squire Egan,” Andy's anxiety to hear the name of the person became so intense that he crawled cautiously a little nearer to the speakers.

“I tell you again,” said Larry, “I can settle *him* aisy (*hiccup*)— he's undher my thumb (*hiccup*).”

“Be aisy,” said the other, contemptuously, who thought this was a mere drunken delusion of Larry's.

“I tell you I'm his masther!” said Larry, with a drunken flourish of his arm; and he continued bragging of his power over the Squire in various ejaculations, the exact meaning of which our friend of the blunderbuss could not fathom, but Andy heard enough to show him that the discovery of the post−office affair was what Larry alluded to.

That Larry, a close, cunning, circumventing rascal, should so far betray the source of his power over Egan may seem strange; but be it remembered Larry was drunk, a state of weakness which his caution generally guarded him from falling into, but which being in, his foible was bragging of his influence, and so running the risk of losing it.

The men continued to talk together for some time, and the tenour of the conversation was, that Larry assured his companion he might carry off the girl without fear of Egan, but her name Andy could not discover. His own name he heard more than once, and voluptuous raptures poured forth about lovely lips and hips and ankles from the herculean knight of the blunderbuss, amidst the maudlin admiration and hiccups of Larry, who continued to brag of his power, and profess his readiness to stand by his friend in carrying off the girl.

“Then,” said the Hercules, with an oath, “I'll soon have you in my arms, my lovely—”

The name was lost again.

Their colloquy was now interrupted by the approach of a man and woman, the former being the person for whose appearance Larry made so many inquiries when he first appeared to Andy as the hungry giant; the other was the sister of the knight of the blunderbuss. Larry having hiccupped his anger against the man for making them wait so long for the bacon, the woman said he should not wait longer without his supper now, for that she would go down and fry the rashers immediately. She then disappeared through the ground, and the men all followed.

Andy drew his breath freely once more, and with caution raised himself gradually from the ground with a careful circumspection, lest any of the subterranean community might be watchers on the hill; and when he was satisfied he was free from observation, he stole away from the spot with stealthy steps for about twenty paces, and there, as well as the darkness would permit, after taking such landmarks as would help him to retrace his way to the still, if requisite, he dashed down the hill at the top of his speed. This pace he did not moderate until he had placed nearly a mile between him and the scene of his adventure; he then paced slowly to regain his breath. His head was in a strange whirl; mischief was threatened against some one of whose name he was ignorant; Squire Egan was declared to be in the power of an old rascal; this grieved Andy most of all, for he felt *he* was the cause of his old master's dilemma.

“Oh! to think I should bring him into trouble,” said Andy, “the kind and good masther he was to me ever, and I live to tell it like a blackguard— throth I'd rather be hanged any day than the masther would come to throuble—maybe if I gave myself up and was hanged like a man at once, that would settle it; 'faith, if I thought it would, I'd do it sooner than Squire Egan should come to throuble!” and poor Andy spoke just what he felt. “Or would it do to kill that blackguard Hogan? *sure they could do no more than hang me afther*, and that would save the masther, and be all one to me, for they often towld me I'd be hanged. [1] But then there's my sowl,” said Andy, and he paused at the thought—, “if they hanged me for the letthers, it would be only for a mistake, and sure then I'd have a chance o' glory; for sure I might go to glory through a mistake; but if I killed a man on purpose, sure it would be slappin' the gates of Heaven in my own face. Faix, I'll spake to Father Blake about it.” [2]

[1][Footnote: How often has the sanguinary penal code of past years suggested this reflection and provoked the guilt it was meant to awe! Happily, now our laws are milder, and more protective from their mildness.]

[2][Footnote: In the foregoing passage, Andy stumbles on uttering a quaint pleasantry, for it is partly true as well as droll—the notion of a man gaining Paradise through a mistake. Our intentions too seldom lead us there, but rather tend the other way, for a certain place is said to be paved with “good” ones, and surely “bad” ones would not lead us upwards. Then the phrase of a man “slapping the gates of Heaven in his own face,” is one of

those wild poetic figures of speech in which the Irish peasantry often indulge. The phrase “slapping the door” is every−day and common; but when applied to “the gates of Heaven,” and “in a man's own face,” the common phrase becomes fine. But how often the commonest things become poetry by the fitness of their application, though poetasters and people of small minds think greatness of thought lies in big words.]

CHAPTER XXVI

The following day was that eventful one which should witness the return of either Edward Egan, Esq., or the Honourable Sackville Scatterbrain as member for the county. There was no doubt in any reasonable man's mind as to the real majority of Egan, but the numbers were sufficiently close to give the sheriff an opportunity of doing a bit of business to oblige his friends, and therefore he declared the Honourable Sackville Scatterbrain duly elected. Great was the uproar; the people hissed, and hooted, and groaned, for which the Honourable Sackville very good−naturedly returned them his thanks. Murphy snapped his fingers in the sheriff's face, and told them his honourable friend should not long remain member, for that he must be unseated on petition, and that he would prove the return most corrupt, with which words he again snapped his fingers in the sheriff's face.

The sheriff threatened to read the riot act if such conduct was repeated.

Egan took off his hat, and thanked him for his *honourable, upright, and impartial* conduct, whereupon all Egan's friends took off their hats also, and made profound bows to the functionary, and then laughed most uproariously. Counter laughs were returned from the opposite party, who begged to remind the Eganites of the old saying, “that they might laugh who win.” A cross−fire of sarcasms was kept up amidst the two parties as they were crushing forward out of the courthouse; and at the door, before entering his carriage, Scatterbrain very politely addressed Egan, and trusted that, though they had met as rivals on the hustings, they nevertheless parted friends, and expressing the highest respect for the squire, offered his hand in amity.

Egan, equally good−hearted as his opponent, shook his hand cordially; declaring he attributed to him none of the blame which attached to other persons. “Besides, my dear sir,” said Egan, laughing, “I should be a very ill−natured person to grudge you so small an indulgence as being member of parliament *for a month or so*.”

Scatterbrain returned the laugh, good−humouredly, and replied that, “at all events, he *had* the seat.”

“Yes, my dear sir,” said Egan, “and make the most of it *while* you have it. In short, I shall owe you an obligation when I go over to St. Stephen's, for you will have just *aired my seat* for me—good bye.”

They parted with smiles, and drove to their respective homes; but as even doubtful possession is preferable to expectation for the time being, it is certain that Neck−or−Nothing Hall rang with more merriment that night on the reality of the present, than Merryvale did on the hope of the future.

Even O'Grady, as he lay with his wounded arm on the sofa, found more healing in the triumph of the hour than from all the medicaments of the foregoing week, and insisted on going down−stairs and joining the party at supper.

“Gusty, dear,” said his wife, “you know the doctor said—”

“Hang the doctor!”

“Your arm, my love.”

“I wish you'd leave off pitying my arm, and have some compassion on my stomach.”

“The doctor said—”

“There are oysters in the house; I'll do myself more good by the use of an oyster−knife than all the lancets in the College of Surgeons.”

“But your wound, dear?”

“Are they Carlingfords or Poldoodies?”

“So fresh, love.”

“So much the better.”

“Your wound I mean, dear?”

“Nicely opened.”

“Only dressed an hour ago?”

“With some mustard, pepper, and vinegar.”

“Indeed, Gusty, if you take my advice—”

“I'd rather have oysters any day.”

O'Grady sat up on the sofa as he spoke and requested his wife to say no more about the matter, but put on his cravat. While she was getting it from his wardrobe, his mind wandered from supper to the pension, which he

looked upon as secure now that Scatterbrain was returned; and oyster−banks gave place to the Bank of Ireland, which rose in a pleasing image before O'Grady's imagination. The wife now returned with the cravat, still dreading the result of eating to her husband, and her mind occupied wholly with the thought of supper, while O'Grady was wrapt in visions of a pension.

“You won't take it, Gusty, dear,” said his wife with all the insinuation of manner she could command.

“Won't I, 'faith?” said O'Grady. “Maybe you think I don't want it?”

“Indeed, I don't, dear.”

“Are you mad, woman? Is it taking leave of the few senses you ever had you are?”

“'T won't agree with you.”

“Won't it? just wait till I'm tried.”

“Well, love, how much do you expect to be allowed?”

“Why I can't expect much just yet—we must begin gently—feel the pulse first; but I should hope, by way of start, that six or seven hundred—”

“Gracious Heaven!” exclaimed his wife, dropping the cravat from her hands. “What the devil is the woman shouting at?” said O'Grady.

“Six or seven hundred!!!” exclaimed Mrs. O'Grady; “my dear, there's not as much in the house.”

“No, nor has not been for many a long day; I know that as well as you,” said O'Grady; “but I hope we shall get as much for all that.”

“My dear, where could you get them?” asked the wife, timidly, who began to think his head was a little light.

“From the treasury, to be sure.”

“The treasury, my dear?” said the wife, still at fault; “how could you get oysters from the treasury?”

“Oysters!” exclaimed O'Grady, whose turn it was now to wonder, “who talks of oysters?”

“My dear, I thought you said you'd eat six or seven hundred of oysters!”

“Pooh! pooh! woman; it is of the pension I'm talking—six or seven hundred pounds—pounds—cash—per annum; now I suppose you'll put on my cravat. I think a man may be allowed to eat his supper who expects six hundred a year.”

A great many people besides O'Grady order suppers, and dinners too, on the expectation of less than six hundred a year. Perhaps there is no more active agent for sending people into the Insolvent Court than the aforesaid “*expectation*.”

O'Grady went down−stairs, and was heartily welcomed by Scatterbrain on his re−appearance from his sick−room; but Mrs. O'Grady suggested that, for fear any excess would send him back there for a longer time, a very moderate indulgence at the table should suffice. She begged the honourable member to back her argument, which he did; and O'Grady promised temperance, but begged the immediate appearance of the oysters, for he experienced that eager desire which delicate health so often prompts for some particular food.

Andy was laying the table at the time, and was ordered to expedite matters as much as possible.

“Yis, ma'am.”

“You're sure the oysters are all good, Andy?”

“Sartin, ma'am.”

“Because the last oysters you know—”

“Oh, yis, ma'am—were bad, ma'am—bekase they had their mouths all open. I remember, ma'am; but when I'm towld a thing once, I never forget it again; and you towld me when they opened their mouths once they were no good. So you see, ma'am, I'll never bring up bad oysthers again, ma'am.”

“Very good, Andy; and you have kept them in a cool place, I hope.”

“Faix, they're cowld enough where I put them, ma'am.”

“Very well; bring them up at once.”

Off went Andy, and returned with all the haste he could with a large dish heaped up with oysters.

O'Grady rubbed his hands with the impatience of a true lover of the crustaceous delicacy, and Scatterbrain, eager to help him, flourished his oyster−knife; but before he had time to commence operations the olfactory nerves of the company gave evidence that the oysters were rather suspicious; every one began sniffing, and a universal “Oh dear!” ran round the table.

“Don't you smell it, Furlong?” said Scatterbrain, who was so lost in looking at Augusta's mustachios that he

did not mind anything else.

“Isn't it horrid?” said O'Grady, with a look of disgust.

Furlong thought he alluded to the mustachio, and replied with an assurance that he “liked it of all things.”

“Like it?” said O'Grady; “you've a queer taste. What do *you* think of it, miss?” added he to Augusta, “it's just under your nose.” Furlong thought this rather personal, even from a father.

“I'll try my knife on one,” said Scatterbrain, with a flourish of the oyster−knife, which Furlong thought resembled the preliminary trial of a barber's razor.

Furlong thought this worse than O'Grady; but he hesitated to reply to his chief, and an *honourable* into the bargain.

In the meantime, Scatterbrain opened an oyster, which Furlong, in his embarrassment and annoyance, did not perceive.

“Cut off the beard,” said O'Grady, “I don't like it.”

This nearly made Furlong speak, but, considering O'Grady's temper and ill−health, he hesitated, till he saw Augusta rubbing her eye, in consequence of a small splinter of the oyster−shell having struck it from Scatterbrain's mismanagement of his knife; but Furlong thought she was crying, and then he could be silent no longer; he went over to where she sat, and with a very affectionate demonstration in his action, said, “Never mind them, dear Gussy—never mind—don't cwy—I love her dear little moustachios, I do.” He gave a gentle pat on the back of the neck as he spoke, and it was returned by an uncommonly smart box on the ear from the young lady, and the whole party looked thunderstruck. “Dear Gussy” cried for spite, and stamped her way out of the room, followed by Furlong.

“Let them go,” said O'Grady; “they'll make it up outside.”

“These oysters are all bad,” said Scatterbrain.

O'Grady began to swear at his disappointment—he had set his heart on oysters. Mrs. O'Grady rang the bell—Andy appeared.

“How dare you bring up such oysters as these?” roared O'Grady.

“The misthris ordhered them, sir.”

“I told you never to bring up bad oysters,” said she.

“Them's not bad, ma'am,” said Andy,

“Have you a nose?” says O'Grady.

“Yes, sir.”

“And can't you smell them, then?”

“Faix, I smelt them for the last three days, sir.”

“And how could you say they were good, then?” asked his mistress.

“Sure you tould me, ma'am, that if they didn't open their mouths they were good, and I'll be on my book oath them oysters never opened their mouths since I had them, for I laid them on a coolflag in the kitchen and put the jack−weight over them.”

Notwithstanding O'Grady's rage, Scatterbrain could not help roaring with laughter at Andy's novel contrivance for keeping oysters fresh. Andy was desired to take the “ancient and fish−like smell” out of the room, amidst jeers and abuse; and, as he fumbled his way to the kitchen in the dark, lamenting the hard fate of servants, who can never give satisfaction, though they do everything they are bid, he went head over heels down−stairs, which event was reported to the whole house as soon as it happened, by the enormous clatter of the broken dish, the oysters, and Andy, as they all rolled one over the other to the bottom.

O'Grady, having missed the cool supper he intended, and had longed for, was put into a rage by the disappointment; and as hunger with O'Grady was only to be appeased by broiled bones, accordingly, against all the endeavours of everybody, the bells rang violently through the house, and the ogre−like cry of “broiled bones!” resounded high and low.

The reader is sufficiently well acquainted with O'Grady by this time to know, that of course, when once he had determined to have his broiled bone, nothing on the face of the earth could prevent it but the want of anything to broil, or the immediate want of his teeth; and as his masticators were in order, and something in the house which could carry mustard and pepper, the invalid primed and loaded himself with as much combustible matter as exploded in a fever the next day.

The supper−party, however, in the hope of getting him to bed, separated soon; and as Scatterbrain and Furlong were to start early in the morning for Dublin, the necessity of their retiring to rest was pleaded. The honourable member had not been long in his room when he heard a tap at his door, and his order to “come in” was followed by the appearance of Handy Andy.

“I found somethin' on the road nigh the town to−day, sir, and I thought it might be yours, maybe,” said Andy, producing a small pocket−book.

The honourable member disavowed the ownership.

“Well, there's something else I want to speak to your honour about.”

“What is it, Handy?”

“I want your honour to see the account of the money your honour gave me that I spint at the *shebeen* [Footnote: Low publick house.] upon the 'lecthors that couldn't be accommodated at Mrs. Fay's.”

“Oh! never mind it, Andy; if there's anything over, keep it yourself.”

“Thank your honour, but I must make the account all the same, if you plaze, for I'm going to Father Blake, to my duty, [Footnote: Confession.] soon, and I must have my conscience as clear as I can, and I wouldn't like to be keeping money back.”

“But if I give you the money, what matter?”

“I'd rather you'd just look over this little bit of a count, if you plaze,” said Andy, producing a dirty piece of paper, with some nearly inscrutable hieroglyphics upon it. Scatterbrain commenced an examination of this literary phenomenon from sheer curiosity, asking Andy at the same time if *he* wrote it.

“Yis, sir,” said Andy; “but you see the man couldn't keep the count of the piper's dhrink at all, it was so confusin', and so I was obliged to pay him for that every time the piper dhrunk, and keep it separate, and the 'lecthors that got their dinner afther the bill was made out I put down myself too, and that's it you see, sir, both ating and dhrinkin'.”

To Dhrinkin A blind piper everry day
wan and in Pens six dais 0 16 6
To atein four Tin Illikthurs And Thare 1 8 8
horses on Chewsdai 0 14 0
————−
Toe til 2 19 4
Lan lord Bil For All Be four 7 17 8−1/2
————−
10 18 12−1/2

“Then I owe you money, instead of your having a balance in hand, Andy,” said the member.

“Oh, no matter, your honour; it's not for that I showed you the account.”

“It's very like it, though,” said Scatterbrain, laughing; “here, Andy, here are a couple of pounds for you, take them, Andy—take it and be off; your bill is worth the money,” and Scatterbrain closed the door on the great accountant.

Andy next went to Furlong's room, to know if the pocket−book belonged to him; it did not, but Furlong, though he disclaimed the ownership, had that small curiosity which prompts little minds to pry into what does not belong to them, and taking the pocket−book into his hands, he opened it, and fumbled over its leaves; in the doing of which a small piece of folded paper fell from one of the pockets unnoticed by the impertinent inquisitor or Andy, to whom he returned the book when he had gratified his senseless curiosity. Andy withdrew, Furlong retired to rest; and as it was in the grey of an autumnal morning he dressed himself, the paper still remained unobserved: so that the housemaid, on setting the room to rights, found it, and fancying Miss Augusta was the proper person to confide Mr. Furlong's stray papers to, she handed that young lady the manuscript which bore the following copy of verses:—

I CAN NE'ER FORGET THEE

I

It is the chime, the hour draws near
When you and I must sever;
Alas, it must be many a year,

And it *may* be for ever!
How long till we shall meet again!
How short since first I met thee!
How brief the bliss—how long the pain—
For I can ne'er forget thee.

II

You said my heart was cold and stern;
You doubted love when strongest:
In future days you'll live to learn
Proud hearts can love the longest.
Oh! sometimes think, when press'd to hear,
When flippant tongues beset thee,
That *all* must love thee, when thou'rt near,
But *one* will ne'er forget thee!

III

The changeful sand doth only know
The shallow tide and latest;
The rocks have mark'd its highest flow,
The deepest and the greatest;
And deeper still the flood−marks grow:—
So, since the hour I met thee,
The more the tide of time doth flow,
The less can I forget thee!

When Augusta saw the lines, she was charmed. She discovered her Furlong to be a poet! That the lines were his there was no doubt—they were *found in his room,* and of course they *must* be his, just as partial critics say certain Irish airs must be English, because they are to be found in Queen Elizabeth's music−book.

Augusta was so charmed with the lines that she amused herself for a long time in hiding them under the sofa−cushion and making her pet dog find and fetch them. Her pleasure, however, was interrupted by her sister Charlotte remarking, when the lines were shown to her in triumph, that the writing was not Furlong's, but in a lady's hand.

Even as beer is suddenly soured by thunder, so the electric influence of Charlotte's words converted all Augusta had been brewing to acidity; jealousy stung her like a wasp, and she boxed her dog's ears as he was barking for another run with the verses.

“A *lady's* hand?” said Augusta, snatching the paper from her sister; “I declare if it ain't! the wretch—so he receives lines from ladies.”

“I think I know the hand, too,” said Charlotte.

“You do?” exclaimed Augusta, with flashing eyes.

“Yes, I'm certain it is Fanny Dawson's writing.”

“So it is,” said Augusta, looking at the paper as if her eyes could have burnt it; “to be sure—he was there before he came here.”

“Only for two days,” said Charlotte, trying to slake the flame she had raised.

“But I've heard that girl always makes conquests at first sight,” returned Augusta, half crying; “and what do I see here? some words in pencil.”

The words were so faint as to be scarcely perceptible, but Augusta deciphered them; they were written on the margin, beside a circumflex which embraced the last four lines of the second verse, so that it stood thus:—

[Sidenote: Dearest, I will.]

Oh! sometimes think, when press'd to hear,
When flippant tongues beset thee,
That *all* must love thee when thou'rt near,
But *one* will ne'er forget thee!

“Will you, indeed?” said Augusta, crushing the paper in her hand, and biting it; “but I must not destroy it—I

must keep it to prove his treachery to his face.” She threw herself on the sofa as she spoke, and gave vent to an outpour of spiteful tears.

CHAPTER XXVII

How many chapters have been written about love verses—and how many more might be written!—might, would, could, should, or ought to be written!— I will venture to say, *will* be written! I have a mind to fulfil my own prophecy and write one myself; but no—my story must go on. However, I *will* say, that it is quite curious in how many ways the same little bit of paper may influence different people: the poem whose literary merit may be small becomes precious when some valued hand has transcribed the lines; and the verses whose measure and meaning viewed in type might win favour and yield pleasure, shoot poison from their very sweetness, when read in some particular hand and under particular circumstances. It was so with the copy of verses Augusta had just read—they were Fanny Dawson's manuscript—that was certain—and found in the room of Augusta's lover; therefore Augusta was wretched. But these same lines had given exquisite pleasure to another person, who was now nearly as miserable as Augusta in having lost them. It is possible the reader guesses that person to be Edward O'Connor, for it was he who had lost the pocket−book in which those (to him) precious lines were contained; and if the little case had held all the bank−notes he ever owned in his life, their loss would have been regarded less than that bit of manuscript, which had often yielded *him* the most exquisite pleasure, and was now inflicting on Augusta the bitterest anguish. To make this intelligible to the reader, it is necessary to explain under what circumstances the lines were written. At one time, Edward, doubting the likelihood of making his way at home, was about to go to India and push his fortunes there; and at that period, those lines, breathing of farewell—implying the dread of rivals during absence—and imploring remembrance of his eternal love, were written and given to Fanny; and she, with that delicacy of contrivance so peculiarly a woman's, hit upon the expedient of copying his own verses and sending them to him in her writing, as an indication that the spirit of the lines was her own.

But Edward saw that his father, who was advanced in years, looked upon a separation from his son as an eternal one, and the thought gave so much pain, that Edward gave up the idea of expatriation. Shortly after, however, the misunderstanding with Major Dawson took place, and Fanny and Edward were as much severed as if dwelling in different zones. Under such circumstances, those lines were peculiarly precious, and many a kiss had Edward impressed upon them, though Augusta thought them fitter for the exercise of her teeth than her lips. In fact, Edward did little else than think of Fanny; and it is possible his passion might have degenerated into mere love−sickness, and enfeebled him, had not his desire of proving himself worthy of his mistress spurred him to exertion, in the hope of future distinction. But still the tone of tender lament pervaded all his poems, and the same pocket−book whence the verses which caused so much commotion fell contained the following also, showing how entirely Fanny possessed his heart and occupied his thoughts:—

WHEN THE SUN SINKS TO REST

I

When the sun sinks to rest,
And the star of the west
Sheds its soft silver light o'er the sea;
What sweet thoughts arise,
As the dim twilight dies—
For then I am thinking of thee!
Oh! then crowding fast
Come the joys of the past,
Through the dimness of days long gone by,
Like the stars peeping out,
Through the darkness about,
From the soft silent depth of the sky.

II

And thus, as the night
Grows more lovely and bright

With the clust'ring of planet and star,
So this darkness of mine
Wins a radiance divine
From the light that still lingers afar.
Then welcome the night,
With its soft holy light!
In its silence my heart is more free
The rude world to forget,
Where no pleasure I've met
Since the hour that I parted from thee.

But we must leave love verses, and ask pardon for the few remarks which the subject tempted, and pursue our story.

The first prompting of Augusta's anger, when she had recovered her burst of passion, was to write "*such a letter*" to Furlong—and she spent half a day at the work; but she could not please herself—she tore twenty at least, and determined, at last, not to write at all, but just wait till he returned and overwhelm him with reproaches. But, though she could not compose a letter, she composed herself by the endeavour, which acted as a sort of safety−valve to let off the superabundant steam; and it is wonderful how general is this result of sitting down to write angry letters: people vent themselves of their spleen on the uncomplaining paper, which silently receives words a listener would not. With a pen for our second, desperate satisfaction is obtained with only an effusion of ink, and when once the pent−up bitterness has oozed out in all the blackness of that fluid—most appropriately made of the best galls—the time so spent, and the "letting of words," if I may use the phrase, has cooled our judgment and our passions together; and the first letter is torn: 't is *too* severe; we write a second; we blot and interline till it is nearly illegible; we begin a third; till at last we are tired out with our own angry feelings, and throw our scribbling by with a "Pshaw! what's the use of it?" or, "It's not worth my notice;" or, still better, arrive at the conclusion, that we preserve our own dignity best by writing without temper, though we may be called upon to be severe.

Furlong at this time was on his road to Dublin in happy unconsciousness of Augusta's rage against him, and planning what pretty little present he should send her specially, for his head was naturally running on such matters, as he had quantities of commissions to execute in the millinery line for Mrs. O'Grady, who thought it high time to be getting up Augusta's wedding−dresses, and Andy was to be despatched the following day to Dublin to take charge of a cargo of bandboxes back from that city to Neck−or− Nothing Hall. Furlong had received a thousand charges from the ladies, "to be sure to lose no time" in doing his devoir in their behalf, and he obeyed so strictly, and was so active in laying milliners and mercers under contributions, that Andy was enabled to start the day after his arrival, sorely against Andy's will, for he would gladly have remained amidst the beauty and grandeur and wonders of Dublin, which struck him dumb for the day he was amongst them, but gave him food for conversation for many a day after. Furlong, after racking his invention about the souvenir to his "dear Gussy," at length fixed on a fan, as the most suitable gift; for Gussy had been quizzed at home about "blushing," and all that sort of thing, and the puerile perceptions of the *attache* saw something very smart in sending her wherewith "to hide her blushes." Then the fan was the very pink of fans; it had quivers and arrows upon it, and bunches of hearts looped up in azure festoons, and doves perched upon them; though Augusta's little sister, who was too young to know what hearts and doves were, when she saw them for the first time, said they were pretty little birds picking at apples. The fan was packed up in a nice case, and then on scented note paper did the dear dandy indite a bit of namby−pamby badinage to his fair one, which he thought excessively clever:—

"DEAR DUCKY DARLING,—You know how naughty they are in quizzing you about a little something, *I won't say what*, you will guess, I dare say— but I send you a little toy, *I won't say what*, on which Cupid might write this label after the doctor's fashion, 'To be used occasionally, when the patient is much troubled with the symptoms.'

"Ever, ever, ever yours,

"P.S. Take care how you open it."

"J.F."

Such was the note that Handy Andy was given, with particular injunctions to deliver it the first thing on his

arrival at the Hall to Miss Augusta, and to be sure to take most particular care of the little case; all which Andy faithfully promised to do. But Andy's usual destiny prevailed, and an unfortunate exchange of parcels quite upset all Furlong's sweet little plan of his pretty present and his ingenious note: for as Andy was just taking his departure, Furlong said he might as well leave something for him at Reade's, the cutler, as he passed through College Green, and he handed him a case of razors which wanted setting, which Andy popped into his pocket, and as the fan case and that of the razors were much of a size, and both folded up, Andy left the fan at the cutler's and took the case of razors by way of present to Augusta. Fancy the rage of a young lady with a very fine pair of *moustachios* getting such a souvenir from her lover, with a note, too, every word of which applied to a beard and a razor, as patly as to a blush and a fan—and this, too, when her jealousy was aroused and his fidelity more than doubtful in her estimation.

Great was the row in Neck−or−Nothing Hall; and when, after three days, Furlong came down, the nature of his reception may be better imagined than described. It was a difficult matter, through the storm which raged around him, to explain all the circumstances satisfactorily, but, by dint of hard work, the verses were at length disclaimed, the razors disavowed, and Andy at last sent for to “clear matters up.”

Andy was a hopeful subject for such a purpose, and by his blundering answers nearly set them all by the ears again; the upshot of the affair was, that Andy, used as he was to good scoldings, never had such a torrent of abuse poured on him in his life, and the affair ended in Andy being dismissed from Neck−or−Nothing Hall on the instant; so he relinquished his greasy livery for his own rags again, and trudged homewards to his mother's cabin.

“She'll be as mad as a hatter with me,” said Andy; “bad luck to them for razhirs, they cut me out o' my place: but I often heard cowld steel is unlucky, and sure I know it now. Oh! but I'm always unfort'nate in having cruked messages. Well, it can't be helped; and one good thing at all events is, I'll have time enough now to go and spake to Father Blake;” and with this sorry piece of satisfaction poor Andy contented himself.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Father Blake, of whom Andy spoke, was more familiarly known by the name of Father Phil, by which title Andy himself would have named him, had he been telling how Father Phil cleared a fair, or equally "leathered" both the belligerent parties in a faction−fight, or turned out the contents (or malcontents) of a public−house at an improper hour; but when he spoke of his Reverence respecting ghostly matters, the importance of the subject begot higher consideration for the man, and the familiar "Father Phil" was dropped for the more respectful title of Father Blake. By either title, or in whatever capacity, the worthy Father had great influence over his parish, and there was a free−and−easy way with him, even in doing the most solemn duties, which agreed wonderfully with the devil−may−care spirit of Paddy. Stiff and starched formality in any way is repugnant to the very nature of Irishmen; and I believe one of the surest ways of converting all Ireland from the Romish faith would be found, if we could only manage to have her mass celebrated with the dry coldness of the Reformation. This may seem ridiculous at first sight, and I grant it is a grotesque way of viewing the subject, but yet there may be truth in it; and to consider it for a moment seriously, look at the fact, that the north of Ireland is the stronghold of Protestantism, and that the north is the *least* Irish portion of the island. There is a strong admixture of Scotch there, and all who know the country will admit that there is nearly as much difference between men from the north and south of Ireland as from different countries. The Northerns retain much of the cold formality and unbending hardness of the stranger−settlers from whom they are descended, while the Southerns exhibit that warm−hearted, lively, and poetical temperament for which the country is celebrated. The prevailing national characteristics of Ireland are not to be found in the north, where Protestantism flourishes; they are to be found in the south and west, where it has never taken root. And though it has never seemed to strike theologians, that in their very natures some people are more adapted to receive one faith than another, yet I believe it to be true, and perhaps not quite unworthy of consideration. There are forms, it is true, and many in the Romish church, but they are not *cold* forms, but *attractive* rather, to a sensitive people; besides, I believe those very forms, when observed the least formally, are the most influential on the Irish; and perhaps the splendours of a High Mass in the gorgeous temple of the Holy City would appeal less to the affections of an Irish peasant than the service he witnesses in some half−thatched ruin by a lone hillside, familiarly hurried through by a priest who has sharpened his appetite by a mountain ride of some fifteen miles, and is saying mass (for the third time most likely) before breakfast, which consummation of his morning's exercise he is anxious to arrive at.

It was just in such a chapel, and under such circumstances, that Father Blake was celebrating the mass at which Andy was present, and after which he hoped to obtain a word of advice from the worthy Father, who was much more sought after on such occasions than his more sedate superior who presided over the spiritual welfare of the parish—and whose solemn celebration of the mass was by no means so agreeable as the lighter service of Father Phil. The Rev. Dominick Dowling was austere and long− winded; *his* mass had an oppressive effect on his congregation, and from the kneeling multitude might be seen eyes fearfully looking up from under bent brows, and low breathings and subdued groans often rose above the silence of his congregation, who felt like sinners, and whose imaginations were filled with the thoughts of Heaven's anger; while the good−humoured face of the light−hearted Father Phil produced a corresponding brightness on the looks of his hearers, who turned up their whole faces in trustfulness to the mercy of that Heaven whose propitiatory offering their pastor was making for them in cheerful tones, which associated well with thoughts of pardon and salvation.

Father Dominick poured forth his spiritual influence like a strong dark stream that swept down the hearer—hopelessly struggling to keep his head above the torrent, and dreading to be overwhelmed at the next word. Father Phil's religion bubbled out like a mountain rill—bright, musical, and refreshing. Father Dominick's people had decidedly need of cork jackets; Father Phil's might drink and be refreshed.

But with all this intrinsic worth, he was, at the same time, a strange man in exterior manners; for, with an abundance of real piety, he had an abruptness of delivery and a strange way of mixing up an occasional remark to his congregation in the midst of the celebration of the mass, which might well startle a stranger; but this very want of formality made him beloved by the people, and they would do ten times as much for Father Phil as for Father Dominick.

On the Sunday in question, when Andy attended the chapel, Father Phil intended delivering an address to his flock from the altar, urging them to the necessity of bestirring themselves in the repairs of the chapel, which was in a very dilapidated condition, and at one end let in the rain through its worn−out thatch. A subscription was necessary; and to raise this among a very impoverished people was no easy matter. The weather happened to be unfavourable, which was most favourable to Father Phil's purpose, for the rain dropped its arguments through the roof upon the kneeling people below in the most convincing manner; and as they endeavoured to get out of the wet, they pressed round the altar as much as they could, for which they were reproved very smartly by his Reverence in the very midst of the mass, and these interruptions occurred sometimes in the most serious places, producing a ludicrous effect, of which the worthy Father was quite unconscious in his great anxiety to make the people repair the chapel.

A big woman was elbowing her way towards the rails of the altar, and Father Phil, casting a sidelong glance at her, sent her to the right−about, while he interrupted his appeal to Heaven to address her thus:— *"Agnus Dei*—you'd better jump over the rails of the althar, I think. Go along out o' that, there's plenty o' room in the chapel below there."

Then he would turn to the altar, and proceed with the service, till turning again to the congregation he perceived some fresh offender.

"Orate, fratres!—will you mind what I say to you and go along out of that? there's room below there. Thrue for you, Mrs. Finn—it's a shame for him to be thramplin' on you. Go along, Darby Casy, down there, and kneel in the rain; it's a pity you haven't a dacent woman's cloak undher you indeed!—*Orate, fratres!*"

Then would the service proceed again, and while he prayed in silence at the altar, the shuffling of feet edging out of the rain would disturb him, and casting a backward glance, he would say—

"I hear you there—can't you be quiet and not be disturbin' the mass, you haythens?"

Again he proceeded in silence, till the crying of a child interrupted him. He looked round quickly.

"You'd better kill the child, I think, thramplin' on him, Lavery. Go out o' that—your conduct is scandalous—*Dominus vobiscum!*" Again he turned to pray, and after some time he made an interval in the service to address his congregation on the subject of the repairs, and produced a paper containing the names of subscribers to that pious work who had already contributed, by way of example to those who had not.

"Here it is," said Father Phil, "here it is, and no denying it—down in black and white; but if they who give are down in black, how much blacker are those who have not given at all!—but I hope they will be ashamed of themselves when I howld up those to honour who have contributed to the uphowlding of the house of God. And isn't it ashamed o' yourselves you ought to be, to leave His house in such a condition—and doesn't it rain a'most every Sunday, as if He wished to remind you of your duty? aren't you wet to the skin a'most every Sunday? Oh, God is good to you! to put you in mind of your duty, giving you such bitther cowlds that you are coughing and sneezin' every Sunday to that degree that you can't hear the blessed mass for a comfort and a benefit to you; and so you'll go on sneezin' until you put a good thatch on the place, and prevent the appearance of the evidence from Heaven against you every Sunday, which is condemning you before your faces, and behind your backs too, for don't I see this minit a strame o' wather that might turn a mill running down Micky Mackavoy's back, between the collar of his coat and his shirt?"

Here a laugh ensued at the expense of Micky Mackavoy, who certainly *was* under a very heavy drip from the imperfect roof.

"And is it laughing you are, you haythens?" said Father Phil, reproving the merriment which he himself had purposely created, *that he might reprove it*. "Laughing is it you are—at your backslidings and insensibility to the honour of God—laughing, because when you come here to be *saved* you are *lost* intirely with the wet; and how, I ask you, are my words of comfort to enter your hearts, when the rain is pouring down your backs at the same time? Sure I have no chance of turning your hearts while you are undher rain that might turn a mill—but once put a good roof on the house, and I will inundate you with piety! Maybe it's Father Dominick you would like to have coming among you, who would grind your hearts to powdher with his heavy words." (Here a low murmur of dissent ran through the throng.) "Ha! ha! so you wouldn't like it, I see. Very well, very well—take care then, for if I find you insensible to my moderate reproofs, you hard−hearted haythens—you malefacthors and cruel persecuthors, that won't put your hands in your pockets, because your mild and quiet poor fool of a pasthor has no tongue in his head!—I say your mild, quiet, poor fool of a pasthor (for I know my own faults, partly, God forgive

me!), and I can't spake to you as you deserve, you hard−living vagabones, that are as insensible to your duties as you are to the weather. I wish it was sugar or salt you were made of, and then the rain might melt you if I couldn't: but no—them naked rafthers grin in your face to no purpose—you chate the house of God; but take care, maybe you won't chate the divil so aisy"—(here there was a sensation). "Ha! ha! that makes you open your ears, does it? More shame for you; you ought to despise that dirty enemy of man, and depend on something betther—but I see I must call you to a sense of your situation with the bottomless pit undher you, and no roof over you. Oh dear! dear! dear!—I'm ashamed of you—troth, if I had time and sthraw enough, I'd rather thatch the place myself than lose my time talking to you; sure the place is more like a stable than a chapel. Oh, think of that!—the house of God to be like a stable!—for though our Redeemer, in his humility, was born in a stable, that is no reason why you are to keep his house always like one.

"And now I will read you the list of subscribers, and it will make you ashamed when you hear the names of several good and worthy Protestants in the parish, and out of it, too, who have given more than the Catholics."

He then proceeded to read the following list, which he interlarded copiously with observations of his own; making *viva voce* marginal notes as it were upon the subscribers, which were not unfrequently answered by the persons so noticed, from the body of the chapel, and laughter was often the consequence of these rejoinders, which Father Phil never permitted to pass without a retort. Nor must all this be considered in the least irreverent. A certain period is allowed between two particular portions of the mass, when the priest may address his congregation on any public matter: an approaching pattern, or fair, or the like; in which, exhortations to propriety of conduct, or warnings against faction fights, &c., are his themes. Then they only listen in reverence. But when a subscription for such an object as that already mentioned is under discussion, the flock consider themselves entitled to "put in a word" in case of necessity.

This preliminary hint is given to the reader, that he may better enter into the spirit of Father Phil's

SUBSCRIPTION LIST FOR THE REPAIRS AND ENLARGEMENT OF BALLY−SLOUGHGUTPHERY CHAPEL

L s. d. PHILIP BLAKE, P.P.

Micky Hicky 0 7 6 "He might as well have made ten shillings: but half a loaf is betther than no bread."

"Plase your reverence," says Mick, from the body of the chapel, "sure seven and six−pence is more than the half of ten shillings." (*A laugh*.)

"Oh! how witty you are. 'Faith, if you knew your duty as well as your arithmetic, it would be betther for you, Micky."

Here the Father turned the laugh against Mick.

L s. d.

Bill Riley 0 3 4 "Of course he means to subscribe again.

L s. d.

John Dwyer 0 15 0 "That's something like! I'll be bound he's only keeping back the odd five shillings for a brush full o' paint for the althar; it's as black as a crow, instead o' being as white as a dove."

He then hurried over rapidly some small subscribers as follows:—

Peter Heffernan 0 1 8
James Murphy 0 2 6
Mat Donovan 0 1 3
Luke Dannely 0 3 0
Jack Quigly 0 2 1
Pat Finnegan 0 2 2
Edward O'Connor, Esq. 2 0 0 “There's for you! Edward O'Connor, Esq., *a Protestant in the parish*—Two pounds!”

“Long life to him,” cried a voice in the chapel.

“Amen,” said Father Phil; “I'm not ashamed to be clerk to so good a prayer.

Nicholas Fagan 0 2 6
Young Nicholas Fagan 0 5 0 “Young Nick is better than owld Nick, you see.”

The congregation honoured the Father's demand on their risibility.

L s. d.
Tim Doyle 0 7 6
Owny Doyl 1 0 0 “Well done, Owny na Coppal—you deserve to prosper for you make good use of your thrivings.

L s. d.
Simon Leary 0 2 6
Bridget Murphy 0 10 0 “You ought to be ashamed o' yourself, Simon: a lone widow woman gives more than you.”

Simon answered, “I have a large family, sir, and she has no childhre.”

“That's not her fault,” said the priest—“and maybe she'll mend o' that yet.” This excited much merriment, for the widow was buxom, and had recently buried an old husband, and, by all accounts, was cocking her cap at a handsome young fellow in the parish.

L s. d.
Judy Moylan 0 5 0 Very good, Judy; the women are behaving like gentlemen; they'll have their reward in the next world.

Pat Finnerty 0 3 4 “I'm not sure if it is 8s. 4d. or 3s. 4d., for the figure is blotted—but I believe it is 8s. 4d.”

“It was three and four pince I gave your reverence,” said Pat from the crowd.

“Well, Pat, as I said eight and four pence you must not let me go

back o' my word, so bring me five shillings next week."

"Sure you wouldn't have me pay for a blot, sir?"

"Yes, I would—that's the rule of back−mannon, you know, Pat. When I hit the blot, you pay for it."

Here his reverence turned round, as if looking for some one, and called out, "Rafferty! Rafferty! Rafferty! Where are you, Rafferty?"

An old grey−headed man appeared, bearing a large plate, and Father Phil continued—

"There now, be active—I'm sending him among you, good people, and such as cannot give as much as you would like to be read before your neighbours, give what little you can towards the repairs, and I will continue to read out the names by way of encouragement to you, and the next name I see is that of Squire Egan. Long life to him!

	L	s.	d.	
Squire Egan	5	0	0	"Squire Egan—five pounds—listen to that—five pounds—a Protestant in the parish—five pounds! 'Faith, the Protestants will make you ashamed of yourselves, if we don't take care.
Mrs. Flanagan	2	0	0	"Not her own parish, either—a kind lady.
James Milligan of Roundtown	1	0	0	"And here I must remark that the people of Roundtown have not been backward in coming forward on this occasion. I have a long list from Roundtown—I will read it separate." He then proceeded at a great pace, jumbling the town and the pounds and the people in a most extraordinary manner: "James Milligan of Roundtown, one pound; Darby Daly of Roundtown, one pound; Sam Finnigan of Roundtown, one pound; James Casey of

Roundpound, one town; Kit Dwyer
of Townpound, one round—pound
I mane; Pat Roundpound—Pounden,
I mane—Pat Pounden a pound
of Poundtown also—there's an
example for you!—but what are you
about, Rafferty? *I don't like the
sound of that plate of yours*;—
you are not a good gleaner—go up
first into the gallery there, where I
see so many good−looking bonnets—I
suppose they will give something to
keep their bonnets out of the rain,
for the wet will be into the gallery
next Sunday if they don't. I think
that is Kitty Crow I see, getting her
bit of silver ready; them ribbons of
yours cost a trifle, Kitty. Well,
good Christians, here is more of the
subscription for you.

L s. d.

Matthew Lavery 0 2 6 “*He* doesn't belong to
Roundtown—Roundtown will be renowned
in future ages for the support
of the Church. Mark my
words—Roundtown will prosper
from this day out—Roundtown
will be a rising place.

Mark Hennessy 0 2 6

Luke Clancy 0 2 6

John Doolin 0 2 6 “One would think they all agreed
only to give two and sixpence apiece.
And they comfortable men, too!
And look at their names—Matthew,
Mark, Luke, and John, the
names of the Blessed Evangelists,
and only ten shillings among them!
Oh, they are apostles not worthy of
the name—we'll call them the *Poor
Apostles* from this out” (here a
low laugh ran through the chapel)—
“Do you hear that, Matthew, Mark,
Luke, and John? 'Faith! I can tell
you that name will stick to you.'“
(Here the laugh was louder.)

A voice, when the laugh subsided,
exclaimed, “I'll make it ten
shillin's, your reverence.”

“Who's that?” said Father Phil.

“Hennessy, your reverence.”

“Very well, Mark. I suppose

Matthew, Luke, and John will follow
your example?"

"We will, your reverence."

"Ah! I thought you made a mistake;
we'll call you now the *Faithful
Apostles*—and I think the change
in the name is better than seven
and sixpence apiece to you.

"I see you in the gallery there,
Rafferty. What do you pass that
well−dressed woman for?—thry back
—ha!—see that—she had her money
ready if you only asked for it—don't
go by that other woman
there—oh, oh!—So you won't give
anything, ma'am. You ought to be
ashamed of yourself. There is a
woman with an elegant sthraw bonnet,
and she won't give a farthing.
Well now—afther that—remember—I
give it from the althar, that
*from this day out sthraw bonnets
pay fi'penny pieces.*

	L	s.	d.	
Thomas Durfy, Esq.	1	0	0	"It's not his parish and he's a brave gentleman."
Miss Fanny Dawson	1	0	0	"*A Protestant out of the parish*, and a sweet young lady, God bless her! Oh, 'faith, the Protestants is shaming you!!!
Dennis Fannin	0	7	6	"Very good, indeed, for a working mason."
Jemmy Riley	0	5	0	"Not bad for a hedge−carpenther."

"I gave you ten, plaze, your reverence," shouted Jemmy, "and by the same token, you may remember it was on the Nativity of the Blessed Vargin, sir, I gave you the second five shillin's."

"So you did, Jemmy," cried Father Phil—"I put a little cross before it, to remind me of it; but I was in a hurry to make a sick call when you gave it to me, and forgot it after: and indeed myself doesn't know what I did with that same five shillings."

Here a pallid woman, who was kneeling near the rails of the altar, uttered an impassioned blessing, and exclaimed, "Oh, that was the very five shillings, I'm sure, you gave to me that very day, to buy some little comforts for my poor husband, who was dying in the fever!"—and the poor woman burst into loud sobs as she spoke.

A deep thrill of emotion ran through the flock as this accidental proof of their poor pastor's beneficence burst upon them; and as an affectionate murmur began to rise above the silence which that emotion produced, the burly Father Philip blushed like a girl at this publication of his charity, and even at the foot of that altar where he stood, felt something like shame in being discovered in the commission of that virtue so highly commended by the Holy One to whose worship the altar was raised. He uttered a hasty "Whisht—whisht!" and waved with his outstretched hands his flock into silence.

In an instant one of those sudden changes common to an Irish assembly, and scarcely credible to a stranger,

took place. The multitude was hushed—the grotesque of the subscription list had passed away and was forgotten, and that same man and that same multitude stood in altered relations— *they* were again a reverent flock, and *he* once more a solemn pastor; the natural play of his nation's mirthful sarcasm was absorbed in a moment in the sacredness of his office; and with a solemnity befitting the highest occasion, he placed his hands together before his breast, and raising his eyes to Heaven he poured forth his sweet voice, with a tone of the deepest devotion, in that reverential call to prayer, "*Orate, fratres*."

The sound of a multitude gently kneeling down followed, like the soft breaking of a quiet sea on a sandy beach; and when Father Philip turned to the altar to pray, his pent−up feelings found vent in tears; and while he prayed, he wept.

I believe such scenes as this are not of unfrequent occurrence in Ireland; that country so long−suffering, so much maligned, and so little understood.

Suppose the foregoing scene to have been only described antecedent to the woman in the outbreak of her gratitude revealing the priest's charity, from which he recoiled,—suppose the mirthfulness of the incidents arising from reading the subscription−list—a mirthfulness bordering on the ludicrous—to have been recorded, and nothing more, a stranger would be inclined to believe, and pardonable in the belief, that the Irish and their priesthood were rather prone to be irreverent; but observe, under this exterior, the deep sources of feeling that lie hidden and wait but the wand of divination to be revealed. In a thousand similar ways are the actions and the motives of the Irish understood by those who are careless of them; or worse, misrepresented by those whose interest, and too often *business*, it is to malign them.

Father Phil could proceed no further with the reading of the subscription− list, but finished the office of the mass with unusual solemnity. But if the incident just recorded abridged his address, and the publication of donors' names by way of stimulus to the less active, it produced a great effect on those who had but smaller donations to drop into the plate; and the grey−headed collector, who could have numbered the scanty coin before the bereaved widow had revealed the pastor's charity, had to struggle his way afterwards through the eagerly outstretched hands that showered their hard−earned pence upon the plate, which was borne back to the altar heaped with contributions, heaped as it had not been seen for many a day. The studied excitement of their pride and their shame—and both are active agents in the Irish nature—was less successful than the accidental appeal to their affections.

Oh! rulers of Ireland, why have you not sooner learned to *lead* that people by love, whom all your severity has been unable to *drive* ? [Footnote: When this passage was written Ireland was disturbed (as she has too often been) by special parliamentary provocation:—the vexatious vigilance of legislative lynxes—the peevishness of paltry persecutors.]

When the mass was over, Andy waited at the door of the chapel to catch "his riverence" coming out, and obtain his advice about what he overheard from Larry Hogan; and Father Phil was accordingly accosted by Andy just as he was going to get into his saddle to ride over to breakfast with one of the neighbouring farmers, who was holding the priest's stirrup at the moment. The extreme urgency of Andy's manner, as he pressed up to the pastor's side, made the latter pause and inquire what he wanted. "I want to get some advice from your riverence," said Andy.

"'Faith, then, the advice I give you is never to stop a hungry man when he is going to refresh himself," said Father Phil, who had quite recovered his usual cheerfulness, and threw his leg over his little grey hack as he spoke. "How could you be so unreasonable as to expect me to stop here listening to your case, and giving you advice indeed, when I have said three masses [Footnote: The office of the mass must be performed fasting.] this morning, and rode three miles; how could you be so unreasonable, I say?"

"I ax your riverence's pardon," said Andy; "I wouldn't have taken the liberty, only the thing is mighty particular intirely."

"Well, I tell you again, never ask a hungry man advice; for he is likely to cut his advice on the patthern of his stomach, and it's empty advice you'll get. Did you never hear that a 'hungry stomach has no ears'?"

The farmer who was to have the honour of the priest's company to breakfast exhibited rather more impatience than the good−humoured Father Phil, and reproved Andy for his conduct.

"But it's so particular," said Andy.

"I wondher you would dar' to stop his riverence, and he black fastin'. Go 'long wid you!"

"Come over to my house in the course of the week, and speak to me," said Father Phil, riding away.

Andy still persevered, and taking advantage of the absence of the farmer, who was mounting his own nag at the moment, said the matter of which he wished to speak involved the interests of Squire Egan, or he would not "make so bowld."

This altered the matter; and Father Phil desired Andy to follow him to the farm−house of John Dwyer, where he would speak to him after he had breakfasted.

CHAPTER XXIX

John Dwyer's house was a scene of activity that day, for not only was the priest to breakfast there—always an affair of honour—but a grand dinner was also preparing on a large scale; for a wedding−feast was to be held in the house, in honour of Matty Dwyer's nuptials, which were to be celebrated that day with a neighbouring young farmer, rather well to do in the world. The match had been on and off for some time, for John Dwyer was what is commonly called a “close−fisted fellow,” and his would−be son−in− law could not bring him to what he considered proper terms, and though Matty liked young Casey, and he was fond of her, they both agreed not to let old Jack Dwyer have the best of the bargain in portioning off his daughter, who, having a spice of her father in her, was just as fond of *number one* as old Jack himself. And here it is worthy of remark, that, though the Irish are so prone in general to early and improvident marriages, no people are closer in their nuptial barter, when they are in a condition to make marriage a profitable contract. Repeated meetings between the elders of families take place, and acute arguments ensue, properly to equalise the worldly goods to be given on both sides. Pots and pans are balanced against pails and churns, cows against horses, a slip of bog against a gravel−pit, or a patch of meadow against a bit of a quarry; a little lime−kiln sometimes burns stronger than the flame of Cupid—the doves of Venus herself are but crows in comparison with a good flock of geese—and a love−sick sigh less touching than the healthy grunt of a good pig; indeed, the last−named gentleman is a most useful agent in this traffic, for when matters are nearly poised, the balance is often adjusted by a grunter or two thrown into either scale. While matters are thus in a state of debate, quarrels sometimes occur between the lovers the gentleman's caution sometimes takes alarm, and more frequently the lady's pride is aroused at the too obvious preference given to worldly gain over heavenly beauty; Cupid shies at Mammon, and Hymen is upset and left in the mire.

I remember hearing of an instance of this nature, when the lady gave her *ci−devant* lover an ingenious reproof, after they had been separated some time, when a marriage−bargain was broken off, because the lover could not obtain from the girl's father a certain brown filly as part of her dowry. The damsel, after the lapse of some weeks, met her swain at a neighbouring fair, and the flame of love still smouldering in his heart was re−illumined by the sight of his charmer, who, on the contrary, had become quite disgusted with *him* for his too obvious preference of profit to true affection. He addressed her softly in a tent, and asked her to dance, but was most astonished at her returning him a look of vacant wonder, which tacitly implied, *“Who are you?”* as plain as looks could speak.

“Arrah, Mary,” exclaimed the youth.

“Sir!!!”—answered Mary, with what heroines call “ineffable disdain.”

“Why one would think you didn't know me!”

“If I ever had the honour of your acquaintance, sir,” answered Mary, “I forget you entirely.”

“Forget me, Mary?—arrah be aisy—is it forget the man that was courtin' and in love with you?”

“You're under a mistake, young man,” said Mary, with a curl of her rosy lip, which displayed the pearly teeth to whose beauty her woman's nature rejoiced that the recreant lover was not yet insensible—“You're under a mistake, young man,” and her heightened colour made her eye flash more brightly as she spoke—“you're quite under a mistake—no one was ever in love with *me*;” and she laid signal emphasis on the word. “There was a dirty mane blackguard, indeed, once *in love with my father's brown filly*, but I forget him intirely.”

Mary tossed her head proudly as she spoke, and her filly−fancying admirer, reeling under the reproof she inflicted, sneaked from the tent, while Mary stood up and danced with a more open−hearted lover, whose earnest eye could see more charms in one lovely woman than all the horses of Arabia.

But no such result as this was likely to take place in Matty Dwyer's case; she and her lover agreed with one another on the settlement to be made, and old Jack was not to be allowed an inch over what was considered an even bargain. At length all matters were agreed upon, the wedding−day fixed, and the guests invited; yet still both parties were not satisfied, but young Casey thought he should be put into absolute possession of a certain little farm and cottage, and have the lease looked over to see all was right (for Jack Dwyer was considered rather slippery), while old Jack thought it time enough to give him possession and the lease and his daughter altogether.

However, matters had gone so far that, as the reader has seen, the wedding−feast was prepared, the guests

invited, and Father Phil on the spot to help James and Matty (in the facetious parlance of Paddy) to “tie with their tongues what they could not undo with their teeth.”

When the priest had done breakfast, the arrival of Andy was announced to him, and Andy was admitted to a private audience with Father Phil, the particulars of which must not be disclosed; for in short, Andy made a regular confession before the Father, and, we know, confessions must be held sacred; but we may say that Andy confided the whole post−office affair to the pastor—told him how Larry Hogan had contrived to worm that affair out of him, and by his devilish artifice had, as Andy feared, contrived to implicate Squire Egan in the transaction, and, by threatening a disclosure, got the worthy Squire into his villanous power. Andy, under the solemn queries of the priest, positively denied having said one word to Hogan to criminate the Squire, and that Hogan could only infer the Squire's guilt; upon which Father Phil, having perfectly satisfied himself, told Andy to make his mind easy, for that he would secure the Squire from any harm, and he moreover praised Andy for the fidelity he displayed to the interests of his old master, and declared he was so pleased with him, that he would desire Jack Dwyer to ask him to dinner. “And that will be no blind nut, let me tell you,” said Father Phil—“a wedding dinner, you lucky dog—'lashings [Footnote: Overflowing abundance, and plenty left after.] and lavings,' and no end of dancing afther!”

Andy was accordingly bidden to the bridal feast, to which the guests began already to gather thick and fast. They strolled about the field before the house, basked in groups in the sunshine, or lay in the shade under the hedges, where hints of future marriages were given to many a pretty girl, and to nudges and pinches were returned small screams suggestive of additional assault—and inviting denials of “Indeed I won't,” and that crowning provocative to riotous conduct, “Behave yourself.”

In the meantime, the barn was laid out with long planks, supported on barrels or big stones, which planks, when covered with clean cloths, made a goodly board, that soon began to be covered with ample wooden dishes of corned beef, roasted geese, boiled chickens and bacon, and intermediate stacks of cabbage and huge bowls of potatoes, all sending up their wreaths of smoke to the rafters of the barn, soon to become hotter from the crowd of guests, who, when the word was given, rushed to the onslaught with right good will.

The dinner was later than the hour named, and the delay arose from the absence of one who, of all others, ought to have been present, namely, the bridegroom. But James Casey was missing, and Jack Dwyer had been closeted from time to time with several long−headed greybeards, canvassing the occurrence, and wondering at the default on the bridegroom's part. The person who might have been supposed to bear this default the worst supported it better than any one. Matty was all life and spirits, and helped in making the feast ready, as if nothing wrong had happened; and she backed Father Phil's argument to sit down to dinner at once;—“that if James Casey was not there, that was no reason dinner should be spoiled, he'd be there soon enough; besides, if he didn't arrive in time, it was better he should have good meat cold, than everybody have hot meat spoiled: the ducks would be done to cindhers, the beef boiled to rags, and the chickens be all in jommethry.”

So down they sat to dinner: its heat, its mirth, its clatter, and its good cheer we will not attempt to describe; suffice it to say, the viands were good, the guests hungry, and the drink unexceptionable; and Father Phil, no bad judge of such matters, declared he never pronounced grace over a better spread. But still, in the midst of the good cheer, neighbours (the women particularly) would suggest to each other the “wondher” where the bridegroom could be; and even within ear−shot of the bride elect, the low−voiced whisper ran, of “Where in the world is James Casey?”

Still the bride kept up her smiles, and cheerfully returned the healths that were drunk to her; but old Jack was not unmoved; a cloud hung on his brow, which grew darker and darker as the hour advanced, and the bridegroom yet tarried. The board was cleared of the eatables, and the copious jugs of punch going their round; but the usual toast of the united healths of the happy pair could not be given, for one of them was absent. Father Phil hardly knew what to do; for even his overflowing cheerfulness began to forsake him, and a certain air of embarrassment began to pervade the whole assembly, till Jack Dwyer could bear it no longer, and, standing up, he thus addressed the company:—

“Friends and neighbours, you see the disgrace that's put on me and my child.”

A murmur of “No, no!” ran round the board.

“I say, yis.”

“He'll come yet, sir,” said a voice.

“No, he won't,” said Jack, “I see he won't—I know he won't. He wanted to have everything all his own way, and he thinks to disgrace me in doing what he likes, but he shan't”; and he struck the table fiercely as he spoke; for Jack, when once his blood was up, was a man of desperate determination. “He's a greedy chap, the same James Casey, and he loves his bargain betther than he loves you, Matty, so don't look glum about what I'm saying: I say he's greedy: he's just the fellow that, if you gave him the roof off your house, would ax you for the rails before your door; and he goes back of his bargain now, bekase I would not let him have it all his own way, and puts the disgrace on me, thinkin' I'll give in to him, through that same; but I won't. And I tell you what it is, friends and neighbours; here's the lease of the three−cornered field below there,” and he held up a parchment as he spoke, “and a snug cottage on it, and it's all ready for the girl to walk into with the man that will have her; and if there's a man among you here that's willing, let him say the word now, and I'll give her to him!”

The girl could not resist an exclamation of surprise, which her father hushed by a word and look so peremptory, that she saw remonstrance was in vain, and a silence of some moments ensued; for it was rather startling, this immediate offer of a girl who had been so strangely slighted, and the men were not quite prepared to make advances, until they knew something more of the why and wherefore of her sweetheart's desertion.

“Are yiz all dumb?” exclaimed Jack, in surprise. “Faix, it's not every day a snug little field and cottage and a good−looking girl falls in a man's way. I say again, I'll give her and the lase to the man that will say the word.”

Still no one spoke, and Andy began to think they were using Jack Dwyer and his daughter very ill, but what business had *he* to think of offering himself, “a poor devil like him”? But, the silence still continuing, Andy took heart of grace; and as the profit and pleasure of a snug match and a handsome wife flushed upon him, he got up and said, “Would I do, sir?”

Every one was taken by surprise, even old Jack himself; and Matty could not suppress a faint exclamation, which every one but Andy understood to mean “she didn't like it at all,” but which Andy interpreted quite the other way, and he grinned his loutish admiration of Matty, who turned away her head from him in sheer distaste, which action Andy took for mere coyness.

Jack was in a dilemma, for Andy was just the last man he would have chosen as a husband for his daughter; but what could he do? he was taken at his word, and even at the worst he was determined that some one should marry the girl out of hand, and show Casey the “disgrace should not be put on him”; but, anxious to have another chance, he stammered something about the fairness of “letting the girl choose,” and that “some one else might wish to spake”; but the end of all was, that no one rose to rival Andy, and Father Phil bore witness to the satisfaction he had that day in finding so much uprightness and fidelity in “the boy”; that he had raised his character much in his estimation by his conduct that day; and if he was a little giddy betimes, there was nothing like a wife to steady him; and if he was rather poor, sure Jack Dwyer could mend that.

“Then come up here,” says Jack; and Andy left his place at the very end of the board and marched up to the head, amidst clapping of hands and thumping of the table, and laughing and shouting.

“Silence!” cried Father Phil, “this is no laughing matther, but a serious engagement—and, John Dwyer, I tell you—and you Andy Rooney, that girl must not be married against her own free−will; but if she has no objection, well and good.”

“My will is her pleasure, I know,” said Jack, resolutely.

To the surprise of every one, Matty said, “Oh, I'll take the boy with all my heart!”

Handy Andy threw his arms round her neck and gave her a most vigorous salute which came smacking off, and thereupon arose a hilarious shout which made the old rafters of the barn ring again.

“There's the lase for you,” said Jack, handing the parchment to Andy, who was now installed in the place of honour beside the bride elect at the head of the table, and the punch circulated rapidly in filling to the double toast of health, happiness, and prosperity to the “happy pair”; and after some few more circuits of the enlivening liquor had been performed, the women retired to the dwelling−house, whose sanded parlour was put in immediate readiness for the celebration of the nuptial knot between Matty and the adventurous Andy.

In half an hour the ceremony was performed, and the rites and blessings of the Church dispensed between two people, who, an hour before, had never looked on each other with thoughts of matrimony.

Under such circumstances it was wonderful with what lightness of spirit Matty went through the honours consequent on a peasant bridal in Ireland: these, it is needless to detail; our limits would not permit; but suffice it to say, that a rattling country−dance was led off by Andy and Matty in the barn, intermediate jigs were indulged

in by the “picked dancers” of the parish, while the country dancers were resting and making love (if making love can be called rest) in the corners, and that the pipers and punch−makers had quite enough to do until the night was far spent, and it was considered time for the bride and bridegroom to be escorted by a chosen party of friends to the little cottage which was to be their future home. The pipers stood at the threshold of Jack Dwyer, and his daughter departed from under the “roof−tree” to the tune of “Joy be with you”; and then the lilters, heading the body−guard of the bride, plied drone and chanter right merrily until she had entered her new home, thanked her old friends (who did all the established civilities, and cracked all the usual jokes attendant on the occasion); and Andy bolted the door of the snug cottage of which he had so suddenly become master, and placed a seat for the bride beside the fire, requesting *“Miss Dwyer”* to sit down—for Andy could not bring himself to call her “Matty” yet—and found himself in an awkward position in being “lord and master” of a girl he considered so far above him a few hours before; Matty sat quiet, and looked at the fire.

“It's very quare, isn't it?” says Andy with a grin, looking at her tenderly, and twiddling his thumbs.

“What's quare?” inquired Matty, very drily.

“The estate,” responded Andy.

“What estate?” asked Matty.

“Your estate and my estate,” said Andy.

“Sure you don't call the three−cornered field my father gave us an estate, you fool?” answered Matty.

“Oh no,” said Andy. “I mane the blessed and holy estate of matrimony the priest put us in possession of;” and Andy drew a stool near the heiress, on the strength of the hit he thought he had made.

“Sit at the other side of the fire,” said Matty, very coldly.

“Yes, miss,” responded Andy, very respectfully; and in shoving his seat backwards the legs of the stool caught in the earthen floor, and Andy tumbled heels over head.

Matty laughed while Andy was picking himself up with increased confusion at this mishap; for even amidst rustics there is nothing more humiliating than a lover placing himself in a ridiculous position at the moment he is doing his best to make himself agreeable.

“It is well your coat's not new,” said Matty, with a contemptuous look at Handy's weather−beaten vestment.

“I hope I'll soon have a betther,” said Andy, a little piqued, with all his reverence for the heiress, at this allusion to his poverty. “But sure it wasn't the coat you married, but the man that's in it; and sure I'll take off my clothes as soon as you please, Matty, my dear—Miss Dwyer, I mane—I beg your pardon.”

“You had better wait till you get better,” answered Matty, very drily. “You know the old saying, 'Don't throw out your dirty wather until you get in fresh.'“

“Ah, darlin', don't be cruel to me!” said Andy, in a supplicating tone. “I know I'm not desarvin' of you, but sure I did not make so bowld as to make up to you until I seen that nobody else would have you.”

“Nobody else have me!” exclaimed Matty, as her eyes flashed with anger.

“I beg your pardon, miss,” said poor Andy, who in the extremity of his own humility had committed such an offence against Matty's pride. “I only meant that—”

“Say no more about it,” said Matty, who recovered her equanimity. “Didn't my father give you the lase of the field and house?”

“Yis, miss.”

“You had better let me keep it then; 'twill be safer with me than you.”

“Sartainly,” said Andy, who drew the lease from his pocket and handed it to her, and—as he was near to her—he attempted a little familiarity, which Matty repelled very unequivocally.

“Arrah! is it jokes you are crackin'?” said Andy, with a grin, advancing to renew his fondling.

“I tell you what it is,” said Matty, jumping up, “I'll crack your head if you don't behave yourself!” and she seized the stool on which she had been sitting, and brandished it in a very amazonian fashion.

“Oh, wirra! wirra!” said Andy, in amaze—“aren't you my wife?”

“*Your* wife!” retorted Matty, with a very devil in her eye— “ *Your* wife, indeed, you great *omadhaun*; why, then, had you the brass to think I'd put up with *you*?”

“Arrah, then, why did you marry me?” said Andy, in a pitiful argumentative whine.

“Why did I marry you?” retorted Matty—“Didn't I know betther than refuse you, when my father said the word *when the divil was busy with him*? Why did I marry you?—it's a pity I didn't refuse, and be murthered that

night, maybe, as soon as the people's backs was turned. Oh, it's little you know of owld Jack Dwyer, or you wouldn't ask me that; but, though I'm afraid of him, I'm not afraid of you—so stand off I tell you."

"Oh, Blessed Virgin!" cried Andy; "and what will be the end of it?"

There was a tapping at the door as he spoke.

"You'll soon see what will be the end of it," said Matty, as she walked across the cabin and opened to the knock.

James Casey entered and clasped Matty in his arms; and half a dozen athletic fellows and one old and debauched−looking man followed, and the door was immediately closed after their entry.

Andy stood in amazement while Casey and Matty caressed each other; and the old man said in a voice tremulous with intoxication, "A very pretty filly, by jingo!"

"I lost no time the minute I got your message, Matty," said Casey, "and here's the Father ready to join us."

"Ay, ay," cackled the old reprobate—"hammer and tongs!—strike while the iron's hot!—I'm the boy for a short job"; and he pulled a greasy book from his pocket as he spoke.

This was a degraded clergyman, known in Ireland under the title of "Couple−Beggar," who is ready to perform irregular marriages on such urgent occasions as the present; and Matty had contrived to inform James Casey of the desperate turn affairs had taken at home, and recommended him to adopt the present plan, and so defeat the violent measure of her father by one still more so.

A scene of uproar now ensued, for Andy did not take matters quietly, but made a pretty considerable row, which was speedily quelled, however, by Casey's bodyguard, who tied Andy neck and heels, and in that helpless state he witnessed the marriage ceremony performed by the "couple−beggar," between Casey and the girl he had looked upon as his own five minutes before.

In vain did he raise his voice against the proceeding; the "couple−beggar" smothered his objections in ribald jests.

"You can't take her from me, I tell you," cried Andy.

"No; but we can take you from her," said the "couple−beggar"; and, at the words, Casey's friends dragged Andy from the cottage, bidding a rollicking adieu to their triumphant companion, who bolted the door after them and became possessor of the wife and property poor Andy thought he had secured.

To guard against an immediate alarm being given, Andy was warned on pain of death to be silent as his captors bore him along, and he took them to be too much men of their word to doubt they would keep their promise. They bore him through a lonely by−lane for some time, and on arriving at the stump of an old tree, bound him securely to it, and left him to pass his wedding−night in the tight embraces of hemp.

CHAPTER XXX

The news of Andy's wedding, so strange in itself, and being celebrated before so many, spread over the country like wildfire, and made the talk of half the barony for the next day, and the question, *“ Arrah, did you hear of the wondherful wedding?*” was asked in high−road and by−road,— and scarcely a *boreen* whose hedges had not borne witness to this startling matrimonial intelligence. The story, like all other stories, of course got twisted into various strange shapes, and fanciful exaggerations became grafted on the original stem, sufficiently grotesque in itself; and one of the versions set forth how old Jack Dwyer, the more to vex Casey, had given his daughter the greatest fortune that ever had been heard of in the country.

Now one of the open−eared people who had caught hold of the story by this end happened to meet Andy's mother, and, with a congratulatory grin, began with “The top o' the mornin' to you, Mrs. Rooney, and sure I wish you joy.”

“Och hone, and for why, dear?” answered Mrs. Rooney, “sure, it's nothin' but trouble and care I have, poor and in want, like me.”

“But sure you'll never be in want any more.”

“Arrah, who towld you so, agra?”

“Sure the boy will take care of you now, won't he?”

“What boy?”

“Andy, sure!”

“Andy!” replied his mother, in amazement. “Andy, indeed!—out o' place, and without a bawbee to bless himself with!—stayin' out all night, the blackguard!”

“By this and that, I don't think you know a word about it,” cried the friend, whose turn it was for wonder now.

“Don't I, indeed?” said Mrs. Rooney, huffed at having her word doubted, as she thought. “I tell you he never *was* at home last night, and maybe it's yourself was helping him, Micky Lavery, to keep his bad coorses—the slingein' dirty blackguard that he is.”

Micky Lavery set up a shout of laughter, which increased the ire of Mrs. Rooney, who would have passed on in dignified silence but that Micky held her fast, and when he recovered breath enough to speak, he proceeded to tell her about Andy's marriage, but in such a disjointed way, that it was some time before Mrs. Rooney could comprehend him—for his interjectional laughter at the capital joke it was, that she should be the last to know it, and that he should have the luck to tell it, sometimes broke the thread of his story—and then his collateral observations so disfigured the tale, that its incomprehensibility became very much increased, until at last Mrs. Rooney was driven to push him by direct questions.

“For the tendher mercy, Micky Lavery, make me sinsible, and don't disthract me—is the boy married?”

“Yis, I tell you.”

“To Jack Dwyer's daughter?”

“Yis.”

“And gev him a fort'n'?”

“Gev him half his property, I tell you, and he'll have all when the owld man's dead.”

“Oh, more power to you, Andy!” cried his mother in delight: “it's you that *is* the boy, and the best child that ever was! Half his property, you tell me, *Misther* Lavery?” added she, getting distant and polite the moment she found herself mother to a rich man, and curtailing her familiarity with a poor one like Lavery.

“Yes, *ma'am,*” said Lavery, touching his hat, “and the whole of it when the owld man dies.”

“Then indeed I wish him a happy relase!” [Footnote: A “happy release” is the Irish phrase for departing this life] said Mrs. Rooney, piously—“not that I owe the man any spite—but sure he'd be no loss—and it's a good wish to any one, sure, to wish them in heaven. Good mornin', Misther Lavery,” said Mrs. Rooney, with a patronising smile, and “going the road with a dignified air.”

Mick Lavery looked after her with mingled wonder and indignation. “Bad luck to you, you owld sthrap!” he muttered between his teeth. “How consaited you are, all of a sudden—by Jakers, I'm sorry I towld you—cock you up, indeed—put a beggar on horseback to be sure—humph!—the devil cut the tongue out o' me if ever I give any

one good news again. I've a mind to turn back and tell Tim Dooling his horse is in the pound."

Mrs. Rooney continued her dignified pace as long as she was in sight of Lavery, but the moment an angle of the road screened her from his observation, off she set, running as hard as she could, to embrace her darling Andy, and realise with her own eyes and ears all the good news she had heard. She puffed out by the way many set phrases about the goodness of Providence, and arranged at the same time sundry fine speeches to make to the bride; so that the old lady's piety and flattery ran a strange couple together along with herself; while mixed up with her prayers and her blarney, were certain speculations about Jack Dwyer—as to how long he could *live*—and how much he might *leave*.

It was in this frame of mind she reached the hill which commanded a view of the three−cornered field and the snug cottage, and down she rushed to embrace her darling Andy and his gentle bride. Puffing and blowing like a porpoise, bang she went into the cottage, and Matty being the first person she met, she flung herself upon her, and covered her with embraces and blessings.

Matty, being taken by surprise, was some time before she could shake off the old beldame's hateful caresses; but at last getting free and tucking up her hair, which her imaginary mother−in−law had clawed about her ears, she exclaimed in no very gentle tones—

"Arrah, good woman, who axed for *your* company—who are you at all?"

"Your mother−in−law, jewel!" cried the Widow Rooney, making another open−armed rush at her beloved daughter−in−law; but Matty received the widow's protruding mouth on her clenched fist instead of her lips, and the old woman's nose coming in for a share of Matty's knuckles, a ruby stream spurted forth, while all the colours of the rainbow danced before Mrs. Rooney's eyes as she reeled backward on the floor.

"Take that, you owld faggot!" cried Matty, as she shook Mrs. Rooney's tributary claret from the knuckles which had so scientifically tapped it, and wiped her hand in her apron.

The old woman roared "millia' murthur" on the floor, and snuffled out a deprecatory question "if that was the proper way to be received in her son's house."

"*Your* son's house, indeed!" cried Matty. "Get out o' the place, you stack o' rags."

"Oh, Andy! Andy!" cried the mother, gathering herself up.

"Oh—that's it, is it!" cried Matty; "so it's Andy you want?"

"To be sure: why wouldn't I want him, you hussy? My boy! my darlin'! my beauty!"

"Well, go look for him!" cried Matty, giving her a shove towards the door. "Well, now, do you think I'll be turned out of my son's house so quietly as that, you unnatural baggage?" cried Mrs. Rooney, facing round, fiercely. Upon which a bitter altercation ensued between the women; in the course of which the widow soon learnt that Andy was not the possessor of Matty's charms: whereupon the old woman, no longer having the fear of damaging her daughter−in−law's beauty before her eyes, tackled to for a fight in right earnest, in the course of which some reprisals were made by the widow in revenge for her broken nose; but Matty's youth and activity, joined to her Amazonian spirit, turned the tide in her favour, though, had not the old lady been blown by her long run, the victory would not have been so easy, for she was a tough customer, and *left* Matty certain marks of her favour that did not rub out in a hurry—while she took *away* (as a keepsake) a handful of Matty's hair, by which she had long held on till a successful kick from the gentle bride finally ejected Mrs. Rooney from the house.

Off she reeled, bleeding and roaring, and while on her approach she had been blessing Heaven and inventing sweet speeches for Matty, on her retreat she was cursing fate and heaping all sorts of hard names on the Amazon she came to flatter. Alas, for the brevity of human exultation!

How fared it in the meantime with Andy? He, poor devil! had passed a cold night, tied up to the old tree, and as the morning dawned, every object appeared to him through the dim light in a distorted form; the gaping hollow of the old trunk to which he was bound seemed like a huge mouth, opening to swallow him, while the old knots looked like eyes, and the gnarled branches like claws, staring at and ready to tear him in pieces.

A raven, perched above him on a lonely branch, croaked dismally, till Andy fancied he could hear words of reproach in the sounds, while a little tomtit chattered and twittered on a neighbouring bough, as if he enjoyed and approved of all the severe things the raven uttered. The little tomtit was the worst of the two, just as the solemn reproof of the wise can be better borne than the impertinent remark of some chattering fool. To these imaginary evils was added the reality of some enormous water−rats that issued from an adjacent pool and began to eat Andy's hat and shoes, which had fallen off in his struggle with his captors; and all Andy's warning ejaculations

could not make the vermin abstain from his shoes and his hat, which, to judge from their eager eating, could not stay their stomachs long, so that Andy, as he looked on at the rapid demolition, began to dread that they might transfer their favours from his attire to himself, until the tramp of approaching horses relieved his anxiety, and in a few minutes two horsemen stood before him—they were Father Phil and Squire Egan.

Great was the surprise of the Father to see the fellow he had married the night before, and whom he supposed to be in the enjoyment of his honeymoon, tied up to a tree and looking more dead than alive; and his indignation knew no bounds when he heard that a “couple−beggar" had dared to celebrate the marriage ceremony, which fact came out in the course of the explanation Andy made of the desperate misadventure which had befallen him; but all other grievances gave way in the eyes of Father Phil to the “couple−beggar.”

“A 'couple−beggar'!—the audacious vagabones!” he cried, while he and the Squire were engaged in loosing Andy's bonds. “A 'couple−beggar' in my parish! How fast they have tied him up, Squire!” he added, as he endeavoured to undo a knot. “A 'couple−beggar,' indeed! I'll undo the marriage!—have you a knife about you, Squire?—the blessed and holy tie of matrimony!—it's a black knot, bad luck to it, and must be cut—take your leg out o' that now—and wait till I lay my hands on them—a 'couple−beggar' indeed!”

“A desperate outrage this whole affair has been!” said the Squire.

“But a 'couple−beggar,' Squire.”

“His house broken into—”

“But a 'couple−beggar'—”

“His wife taken from him—”

“But a 'couple−beggar'—”

“The laws violated—”

“But *my dues*, Squire—think o' that!—what would become o' *them*, if 'couple−beggars' is allowed to show their audacious faces in the parish. Oh, wait till next Sunday, that's all—I'll have them up before the althar, and I'll make them beg God's pardon, and my pardon, and the congregation's pardon, the audacious pair!” [Footnote: A man and woman who had been united by a “couple−beggar” were called up one Sunday by the priest in the face of the congregation, and summoned, as Father Phil threatens above, to beg God's pardon, and the priest's pardon, and the congregation's pardon; but the woman stoutly refused the last condition. “I'll beg God's pardon and your Reverence's pardon,” she said, “but I won't beg the congregation's pardon.” “You won't?” says the priest. “I won't,” says she. “Oh you conthrairy baggage,” cried his Reverence: “take her home out o' that,” said he to her husband who HAD humbled himself— “take her home, and leather her well—for she wants it; and if you don't leather her, you'll be sorry—for if you don't make her afraid of you, she'll master YOU, too—take her home and leather her.”—FACT.]

“It's an assault on Andy,” said the Squire.

“It's a robbery on me,” said Father Phil.

“Could you identify the men?” said the Squire.

“Do you know the 'couple−beggar'?” said the priest.

“Did James Casey lay his hands on you?” said the Squire; “for he's a good man to have a warrant against.”

“Oh, Squire, Squire!” ejaculated Father Phil; “talking of laying hands on *him* is it you are?—didn't that blackguard 'couple−beggar' lay his dirty hands on a woman that my bran new benediction was upon! Sure, they'd do anything after that!” By this time Andy was free, and having received the Squire's directions to follow him to Merryvale, Father Phil and the worthy Squire were once more in their saddles and proceeded quietly to the same place, the Squire silently considering the audacity of the *coup−de−main* which robbed Andy of his wife, and his reverence puffing out his rosy cheeks and muttering sundry angry sentences, the only intelligible words of which were “couple−beggar.”

CHAPTER XXXI

Doubtless the reader has anticipated that the presence of Father Phil in the company of the Squire at this immediate time was on account of the communication made by Andy about the post−office affair. Father Phil had determined to give the Squire freedom from the strategetic coil in which Larry Hogan had ensnared him, and lost no time in setting about it; and it was on his intended visit to Merryvale that he met its hospitable owner, and telling him there was a matter of some private importance he wished to communicate, suggested a quiet ride together; and this it was which led to their traversing the lonely little lane where they discovered Andy, whose name was so principal in the revelations of that day.

To the Squire those revelations were of the dearest importance; for they relieved his mind from a weight which had been oppressing it for some time, and set his heart at rest. Egan, it must be remarked, was an odd mixture of courage and cowardice: undaunted by personal danger, but strangely timorous where moral courage was required. A remarkable shyness, too, made him hesitate constantly in the utterance of a word which might explain away any difficulty in which he chanced to find himself; and this helped to keep his tongue tied in the matter where Larry Hogan had continued to make himself a bugbear. He had a horror, too, of being thought capable of doing a dishonourable thing, and the shame he felt at having peeped into a letter was so stinging, that the idea of asking any one's advice in the dilemma in which he was placed made him recoil from the thought of such aid. Now, Father Phil had relieved him from the difficulties his own weakness imposed; the subject had been forced upon him; and once forced to speak he made a full acknowledgment of all that had taken place; and when he found Andy had not borne witness against him, and that Larry Hogan only *inferred* his participation in the transaction, he saw on Father Phil's showing that he was not really in Larry Hogan's power; for though he admitted he had given Larry a trifle of money from time to time when Larry asked for it, under the influence of certain innuendoes, yet that was no proof against him; and Father Phil's advice was to get Andy out of the way as soon as possible, and then to set Larry quietly at defiance—that is to say, in Father Phil's own words, “to keep never minding him.”

Now Andy not being encumbered with a wife (as fate had so ordained it) made the matter easier, and the Squire and the Father, as they rode towards Merryvale together to dinner, agreed to pack off Andy without delay, and thus place him beyond Hogan's power; and as Dick Dawson was going to London with Murphy, to push the petition against Scatterbrain's return, it was looked upon as a lucky chance, and Andy was at once named to bear them company.

“But you must not let Hogan know that Andy is sent away under your patronage, Squire,” said the Father, “for that would be presumptive evidence you had an interest in his absence; and Hogan is the very blackguard would see it fast enough, for he is a knowing rascal.”

“He's the deepest scoundrel I ever met,” said the Squire.

“As knowing as a jailer,” said Father Phil. “A jailer, did I say—by dad, he bates any jailer I ever heard of—for that fellow is so 'cute, he *could keep Newgate with a book and eye.”*

“By−the−bye, there's one thing I forgot to tell you, respecting those letters I threw into the fire; for remember, Father, I only peeped into *one* and destroyed the others; but one of the letters, I must tell you, was directed to yourself.”

“'Faith, then, I forgive you that, Squire,” said Father Phil, “for I hate letters; but if you have any scruple of conscience on the subject, write me one yourself, and that will do as well.”

The Squire could not help thinking the Father's mode of settling the difficulty worthy of Handy Andy himself; but he did not tell the Father so.

They had now reached Merryvale, where the good−humoured priest was heartily welcomed, and where Doctor Growling, Dick Dawson, and Murphy were also guests at dinner. Great was the delight of the party at the history they heard, when the cloth was drawn, of Andy's wedding, so much in keeping with his former life and adventures, and Father Phil had another opportunity of venting his rage against the “couple−beggar.”

“That was but a slip−knot you tied, Father,” said the doctor.

“Aye, aye! joke away, doctor.”

“Do you think, Father Phil,” said Murphy, “that *that* marriage was made in heaven, where we are told marriages *are* made?”

“I don't suppose it was, Mr. Murphy; for if it had it would have held upon earth.”

“Very well answered, Father,” said the Squire.

“I don't know what other people think about matches being made in heaven,” said Growling, “but I have my suspicions they are sometimes made in another place.”

“Oh, fie, doctor!” said Mrs. Egan.

“The doctor, ma'am, is an old bachelor,” said Father Phil, “or he wouldn't say so.”

“Thank you, Father Phil, for so polite a speech.”

The doctor took his pencil from his pocket and began to write on a small bit of paper, which the priest observing, asked him what he was about, “or is it writing a prescription you are,” said he, “for compounding better marriages than I can?”

“Something very naughty, I dare say, the doctor is doing,” said Fanny Dawson.

“Judge for yourself, lady fair,” said the doctor, handing Fanny the slip of paper.

Fanny looked at it for a moment and smiled, but declared it was very wicked indeed.

“Then read it for the company, and condemn me out of your own pretty mouth, Miss Dawson,” said the doctor.

“It is too wicked.”

“If it is ever so wicked,” said Father Phil, “the wickedness will be neutralised by being read by an angel.”

“Well done, St. Omer's,” cried Murphy.

“Really, Father,” said Fanny, blushing, “you are desperately gallant to−day, and just to shame you, and show how little of an angel I am, I *will* read the doctor's epigram:—

'Though matches are all made in heaven, they say,
Yet Hymen, who mischief oft hatches,
Sometimes deals with the house *t'other side of the way*,
And *there* they make *Lucifer* matches.'“

“Oh, doctor! I'm afraid you are a woman−hater,” said Mrs. Egan. “Come away, Fanny, I am sure they want to get rid of us.”

“Yes,” said Fanny, rising and joining her sister, who was leaving the room, “and now, after abusing poor Hymen, gentlemen, we leave you to your favourite worship of Bacchus.”

The departure of the ladies changed the conversation, and after the gentlemen had resumed their seats, the doctor asked Dick Dawson how soon he intended going to London.

“I start immediately,” said Dick. “Don't forget to give me that letter of introduction to your friend in Dublin, whom I long to know.”

“Who is he?” asked the Squire.

“One Tom Loftus—or, as his friends call him, 'Piping Tom,' from his vocal powers; or, as some nickname him, '*Organ* Loftus,' from his imitation of that instrument, which is an excessively comical piece of caricature.”

“Oh! I know him well,” said Father Phil.

“How did you manage to become acquainted with him?” inquired the doctor, “for I did not think he lay much in your way.”

“It was *he* became acquainted with me,” said Father Phil, “and this was the way of it—he was down on a visit betimes in the parish I was in before this, and his behaviour was so wild that I was obliged to make an allusion in the chapel to his indiscretions, and threaten to make his conduct a subject of severe public censure if he did not mind his manners a little better. Well, my dear, who should call on me on the Monday morning after but Misther Tom, all smiles and graces, and protesting he was sorry he fell under my displeasure, and hoping I would never have cause to find fault with him again. Sure, I thought he was repenting of his misdeeds, and I said I was glad to hear such good words from him. 'A' then, Father,' says he, 'I hear you have got a great curiosity from Dublin—a shower−bath, I hear?' So I said I had: and indeed, to be candid, I was as proud as a peacock of the same bath, which tickled my fancy when I was once in town, and so I bought it. 'Would you show it to me?' says he. 'To be sure,' says I, and off I went, like a fool, and put the wather on the top, and showed him how, when a string was pulled, down it came —and he pretended not clearly to understand the thing, and at last he said, 'Sure it's not into

that sentry−box you get?' says he. 'Oh yes,' said I, getting into it quite innocent; when, my dear, he slaps the door and fastens it on me, and pulls the string and souses me with the water, and I with my best suit of black on me. I roared and shouted inside while Misther Tom Loftus was screechin' laughing outside, and dancing round the room with delight. At last, when he could speak, he said, 'Now, Father, we're even,' says he, 'for the abuse you gave me yesterday,' and off he ran."

"That's just like him," said old Growling, chuckling; "he's a queer devil. I remember on one occasion a poor dandy puppy, who was in the same office with him—for Tom is in the Ordnance department, you must know—this puppy, sir, wanted to go to the Ashbourne races and cut a figure in the eyes of a rich grocer's daughter he was sweet upon."

"Being sweet upon a grocer's daughter," said Murphy, "is like bringing coals to Newcastle."

"'Faith! it was coals to Newcastle with a vengeance, in the present case, for the girl would have nothing to say to him, and Tom had great delight whenever he could annoy this poor fool in his love−making plots. So, when he came to Tom to ask for the loan of his horse, Tom said he should have him *if he could make the smallest use of him* —'but I don't think you can,' said Tom. 'Leave that to me,' said the youth. 'I don't think you could make him go,' said Tom. 'I'll buy a new pair of spurs,' said the puppy. 'Let them be handsome ones,' said Tom. 'I was looking at a very handsome pair at Lamprey's, yesterday,' said the young gentleman. 'Then you can buy them on your way to my stables,' said Tom; and sure enough, sir, the youth laid out his money on a very costly pair of persuaders, and then proceeded homewards with Tom. 'Now, with all your spurs,' said Tom, 'I don't think you'll be able to make him go.' 'Is he so very vicious, then?' inquired the youth, who began to think of his neck. 'On the contrary,' said Tom, 'he's perfectly quiet, but won't go for *you*, I'll bet a pound.' 'Done!' said the youth. 'Well, try him,' said Tom, as he threw open the stable door. 'He's lazy, I see,' said the youth; 'for he's lying down.' 'Faith, he is,' said Tom, 'and hasn't got up these two days!' 'Get up, you brute!' said the innocent youth, giving a smart cut of his whip on the horse's flank; but the horse did not budge. '*Why, he's dead!*' says he. 'Yes,' says Tom, 'since Monday last. So I don't think you can make him go, and you've lost your bet!'"

"That was hardly a fair joke," said the Squire.

"Tom never stops to think of that," returned the doctor; "he's the oddest fellow I ever knew. The last time I was in Dublin, I called on Tom and found him one bitter cold and stormy morning standing at an open window, nearly quite undressed. On asking him what he was about, he said he was *getting up a bass voice*; that Mrs. Somebody, who gave good dinners and bad concerts, was disappointed of her bass singer, 'and I think,' said Tom, 'I'll be hoarse enough in the evening to take double B flat. Systems are the fashion now,' said he; 'there is the Logierian system and other systems, and mine is the Cold−air−ian system, and the best in the world for getting up a bass voice.'"

"That was very original certainly," said the Squire.

"But did you ever hear of his adventure with the Duke of Wellington?" said the doctor.

"The Duke!" they all exclaimed.

"Yes—that is, when he was only Sir Arthur Wellesley. Well, I'll tell you."

"Stop," said the Squire, "a fresh story requires a fresh bottle. Let me ring for some claret."

CHAPTER XXXII

The servant who brought in the claret announced at the same time the arrival of a fresh guest in the person of “Captain Moriarty,” who was welcomed by most of the party by the name of Randal. The Squire regretted he was too late for dinner, inquiring at the same time if he would like to have something to eat at the side−table; but Randal declined the offer, assuring the Squire he had got some refreshment during the day while he had been out shooting; but as the sport led, him near Merryvale, and “he had a great thirst upon him,” he did not know a better house in the country wherein to have “that same" satisfied.

“Then you're just in time for some cool claret,” said the Squire; “so sit down beside the doctor, for he must have the first glass and broach the bottle, before he broaches the story he's going to tell us—that's only fair.”

The doctor filled his glass, and tasted. “What a nice 'chateau,' 'Margaux' *must be,” said he, as he laid down his glass. “I should like to be a tenant−at−will there, at a small rent.”*

“And no taxes,” said Dick.

“Except my duty to the claret,” replied the doctor.

'My favourite chateau,
Is that of Margaux.'

“By−the−bye, talking of *chateau*, there's the big brewer over at the town, who is anxious to affect gentility, and he heard some one use the word *chapeau*, and having found out it was the French for *hat*, he determined to show off on the earliest possible occasion, and selected a public meeting of some sort to display his accomplishment. Taking some cause of objection to the proceedings, as an excuse for leaving the meeting, he said, 'Gentlemen, the fact is I can't agree with you, so I may as well take my *chateau* under my arm at once, and walk.'“

[Illustration: Tom Organ Loftus and the Duke]

“Is not that an invention of your own, doctor?” said the Squire.

“I heard it for fact,” said Growling.

“And 't is true,” added Murphy, “for I was present when he said it. And at an earlier part of the proceedings he suggested that the parish clerk should read the resolutions, because he had a good '*laudable* voice.'“

“A parish clerk ought to have,” said the doctor—“eh, Father Phil?— '*Laudamus!*'“

“Leave your Latin,” said Dick, “and tell us that story you promised about the Duke and Tom Loftus.”

“Right, Misther Dick,” said Father Phil.

“The story, doctor,” said the Squire.

“Oh, don't make such bones about it,” said Growling; “'tis but a trifle after all; only it shows you what a queer and reckless rascal Tom is. I told you he was called '*Organ*' Loftus by his friends, in consequence of the imitation he makes of that instrument; and it certainly is worth hearing and seeing, for your eyes have as much to do with the affair as your ears. Tom plants himself on a high office−stool, before one of those lofty desks with long rows of drawers down each side and a hole between to put your legs under. Well, sir, Tom pulls out the top drawers, like the stops of an organ, and the lower ones by way of pedals: and then he begins thrashing the desk like the finger−board of an organ with his hands, while his feet kick away at the lower drawers as if he were the greatest pedal performer out of Germany, and he emits a rapid succession of grunts and squeaks, producing a ludicrous reminiscence of the instrument, which I defy any one to hear without laughing. Several sows and an indefinite number of sucking pigs could not make a greater noise, and Tom himself declares he studied the instrument in a pigsty, which he maintains gave the first notion of an organ. Well, sir, the youths in the office assist in 'doing the service,' as they call it, that is, making an imitation of the chanting and so forth in St. Patrick's Cathedral.”

“Oh, the haythens!” said Father Phil.

“One does Spray, and another Weyman, and another Sir John Stevenson, and so on; and they go on responsing and singing 'Amen' till the Ordnance Office rings again.”

“Have they nothing better to do?” asked the Squire.

“Very little but reading the papers,” said the doctor.

“Well—Tom—you must know, sir—was transferred some time ago, by the interest of many influential

friends, to the London department; and the fame of his musical powers had gone before him from some of the English clerks in Ireland who had been advanced to the higher posts in Dublin, and kept up correspondence with their old friends in London; and it was not long until Tom was requested to go through an anthem on the great office− desk. Tom was only too glad to be asked, and he kept the whole office in a roar for an hour with all the varieties of the instrument—from the diapason to the flute−stop—and the devil a more business was done in the office *that* day, and Tom before long made the sober English fellows as great idlers as the chaps in Dublin. Well—it was not long until a sudden flush of business came upon the department, in consequence of the urgent preparations making for supplies to Spain, at the time the Duke was going there to take the command of the army, and organ−playing was set aside for some days; but the fellows, after a week's abstinence, began to yearn for it and Tom was requested to 'do the service.' Tom, nothing loath, threw aside his official papers, set up a big ledger before him, and commenced his legerdemain, as he called it, pulled out his stops, and began to work away like a weaver, while every now and then he swore at the bellows−blower for not giving him wind enough, whereupon the choristers would kick the bellows−blower to accelerate his flatulency. Well, sir, they were in the middle of the service, and all the blackguards making the responses in due season, when, just as Tom was quivering under a portentous grunt, which might have shamed the principal diapason of Harlaem, and the subs were drawing out a resplendent 'A−a−a−men,' the door opened, and in walked a smart−looking gentleman, with rather a large nose and quick eye, which latter glanced round the office, where a sudden endeavour was made by everybody to get back to his place. The smart gentleman seemed rather surprised to see a little fat man blowing at a desk instead of the fire, and long Tom kicking, grunting, and squealing like mad. The bellows−blower was so taken by surprise he couldn't stir, and Tom, having his back to them, did not see what had taken place, and went on as if nothing had happened, till the smart gentleman went up to him, and tapping on Tom's desk with a little riding−whip, he said, 'I'm sorry to disturb you, sir, but I wish to know what you're about.' 'We're doing the service, sir,' said Tom, no ways abashed at the sight of the stranger, for he did not know it was Sir Arthur Wellesley was talking to him. 'Not the *public* service, sir,' said Sir Arthur. 'Yes, sir,' said Tom, 'the service as by law established in the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth,' and he favoured the future hero of Waterloo with a touch of the organ. 'Who is the head of this office?' inquired Sir Arthur. Tom, with a very gracious bow, replied, 'I am principal organist, sir, and allow me to introduce you to the principal bellows−blower'—and he pointed to the poor little man who let the bellows fall from his hand as Sir Arthur fixed his eyes on him. Tom did not perceive till now that all the clerks were taken with a sudden fit of industry, and were writing away for the bare life; and he cast a look of surprise round the office while Sir Arthur was looking at the bellows− blower. One of the clerks made a wry face at Tom, which showed him all was not right. 'Is this the way His Majesty's service generally goes on here?' said Sir Arthur, sharply. No one answered; but Tom saw, by the long faces of the clerks and the short question of the visitor, that he was *somebody*.

"'Some transports are waiting for ordnance stores, and I am referred to this office,' said Sir Arthur; 'can any one give me a satisfactory answer?'

"The senior clerk present (for the head of the office was absent) came forward and said, 'I believe, sir——'

"'You *believe*, but you don't *know*,' said Sir Arthur; 'so I must wait for stores while you are playing tomfoolery here. I'll report this.' Then producing a little tablet and a pencil, he turned to Tom and said, 'Favour me with your name, sir?'

"'I give you my honour, sir,' said Tom.

"'I'd rather you'd give me the stores, sir,—I'll trouble you for your name?'

"'Upon my honour, sir,' said Tom, again.

"'You seem to have a great deal of that article on your hands, sir,' said Sir Arthur: 'you're an Irishman, I suppose?'

"'Yes, sir,' said Tom.

"'I thought so. Your name?'

"'Loftus, sir.'

"'Ely family?'

"'No, sir.'

"'Glad of it.'

"He put up his tablet after writing the name.

“'May I beg the favour to know, sir,' said Tom, 'to whom I have the honour of addressing myself?' “'Sir Arthur Wellesley, sir.'

“'Oh! J—−s!' cried Tom, 'I'm done!'

“Sir Arthur could not help laughing at the extraordinary change in Tom's countenance; and Tom, taking advantage of this relaxation in his iron manner, said in a most penitent tone, 'Oh, Sir Arthur Wellesley, only forgive me this time, and 'pon my *sowl* says he—with the richest brogue—'I'll play a *Te Deum* for the first licking you give the French.' Sir Arthur smiled and left the office.”

“Did he report as he threatened?” asked the Squire.

“'Faith, he did.”

“And Tom?” inquired Dick.

“Was sent back to Ireland, sir.”

“That was hard, after the Duke smiled at him,” said Murphy.

“Well, he did not let him suffer in pocket; he was transferred at as a good a salary to a less important department, but you know the Duke has been celebrated all his life for never overlooking a breach of duty.”

“And who can blame him?” said Moriarty.

“One great advantage of the practice has been,” said the Squire, “that no man has been better served. I remember hearing a striking instance of what, perhaps, might be called severe justice, which he exercised on a young and distinguished officer of artillery in Spain; and though one cannot help pitying the case of the gallant young fellow who was the sacrifice, yet the question of strict duty, *to the very word*, was set at rest for ever under the Duke's command, and it saved much *after*−trouble by making every officer satisfied, however fiery his courage or tender his sense of being suspected of the white feather, that implicit obedience was the course he *must* pursue. The case was this:—the army was going into action——” “What action was it?” inquired Father Phil, with that remarkable alacrity which men of peace evince in hearing the fullest particulars about war, perhaps because it is forbidden to their cloth; one of the many instances of things acquiring a fictitious value by being interdicted—just as Father Phil himself might have been a Protestant only for the penal laws.

“I don't know what action it was,” said the Squire, “nor the officer's name—for I don't set up for a military chronicler; but it was, as I have been telling you, going into action that the Duke posted an officer, with his six guns, at a certain point, telling him to remain there until he had orders from *him*. Away went the rest of the army, and the officer was left doing nothing at all, which he didn't like; for he was one of those high−blooded gentlemen who are never so happy as when they are making other people miserable, and he was longing for the head of a French column to be hammering away at. In half an hour or so he heard the distant sound of action, and it approached nearer and nearer, until he heard it close behind him; and he wondered rather that he was not invited to take a share in it, when, pat to his thought, up came an *aide−de−camp* at full speed, telling him that General Somebody ordered him to bring up his guns. The officer asked did not the order come from Lord Wellington? The *aide−de−camp* said no, but from the General, whoever he was. The officer explained that he was placed there by Lord Wellington, under command not to move, unless by *an order from himself*. The *aide−de−camp* stated that the General's entire brigade was being driven in and must be annihilated without the aid of the guns, and asked, 'would he let a whole brigade be slaughtered?' in a tone which wounded the young soldier's pride, savouring, as he thought it did, of an imputation on his courage. He immediately ordered his guns to move and joined battle with the General; but while he was away, an *aide−de−camp* from Lord Wellington rode up to where the guns *had been posted*, and, of course, no gun was to be had for the service which Lord Wellington required. Well, the French were repulsed, as it happened; but the want of those six guns seriously marred a preconcerted movement of the Duke's, and the officer in command of them was immediately brought to a court−martial, and would have lost his commission but for the universal interest made in his favour by the general officers in consideration of his former meritorious conduct and distinguished gallantry, and under the peculiar circumstances of the case. They did not break him, but he was suspended, and Lord Wellington sent him home to England. Almost every general officer in the army endeavoured to get his sentence revoked, lamenting the fate of a gallant fellow being sent away for a slight error in judgment while the army was in hot action but Lord Wellington was inexorable saying he must make an example to secure himself in the perfect obedience of officers to their orders; and it had the effect.”

“Well, that's what I call hard!” said Dick.

“My dear Dick,” said the Squire, “war is altogether a hard thing, and a man has no business to be a General

who isn't as hard as his own round shot."

"And what became of the *dear* young man?" said Father Phil, who seemed much touched by the readiness with which the *dear* young man set off to mow down the French.

"I can tell you," said Moriarty, "for I served with him afterwards in the Peninsula. He was let back after a year or so, and became so thorough a disciplinarian, that he swore, when once he was at his post 'They might kill *his father* before his face and he wouldn't budge until he had orders.'"

"A most Christian resolution," said the doctor.

"Well, I can tell you," said Moriarty, "of a Frenchman, who made a greater breach of discipline, and it was treated more leniently. I heard the story from the man's own lips, and if I could only give you his voice and gesture and manner it would amuse you. What fellows those Frenchmen are, to be sure, for telling a story! they make a shrug or a wink have twenty different meanings, and their claws are most eloquent—one might say they talk on their fingers—and their broken English, I think, helps them."

"Then give the story, Randal, in his manner," said Dick. "I have heard you imitate a Frenchman capitally."

"Well, here goes," said Moriarty "but let me wet my whistle with a glass of claret before I begin—a French story should have French wine." Randal tossed off one glass, and filled a second by way of reserve, and then began the French officer's story.

"You see, sare, it vos ven in *Espagne* de bivouac vos vairy ard indeet 'pon us, vor we coot naut get into de town at all, nevair, becos you dam Ingelish keep all de town to yoursefs—vor we fall back at dat time becos we get not support—no *corps de reserve*, you perceive— so ve mek *retrograde* movement—not *retreat* —no, no—but *retrograde* movement. Vell—von night I was wit my picket guart, and it was raining like de devil, and de vind vos vinding up de valley, so cold as noting at all, and de dark vos vot you could not see—no—not your nose bevore your face. Vell, I hear de tramp of horse, and I look into de dark—for ve vere vairy moche on the *qui vive*, because ve expec de Ingelish to attaque de next day—but I see noting; but de tramp of horse come closer and closer, and at last I ask, 'Who is dere?' and de tramp of de horse stop. I run forward, and den I see Ingelish offisair of cavallerie. I address him, and tell him he is in our lines, but I do not vant to mek him prisonair—for you must know dat he *vos* prisonair, if I like, ven he vos vithin our line. He is very polite—he says, '*Bien oblige—bon enfant*;' and we tek off our hat to each ozer. 'I aff lost my roat,' he say; and I say, 'Yais'—bote I vill put him into his roat, and so I ask for a moment pardon, and go back to my *caporal*, and tell him to be on de *qui vive* till I come back. De Ingelish offisair and me talk very plaisant vile we go togezer down de leetel roat, and ven we come to de turn, I say, '*Bon soir*, Monsieur le Capitaine—dat is your vay.' He den tank me, vera moche like gentilman, and vish he coot mek me some return for my generosite, as he please to say —and I say, ' *Bah!* Ingelish gentilman vood do de same to French offisair who lose his vay.' 'Den come here,' he say, '*bon enfant*, can you leave your post for 'aff an hour?' 'Leave my post?' I say. 'Yais,' said he, 'I know your army has not moche provision lately, and maybe you are ongrie?' '*Ma foi*, yais,' said I; 'I aff naut slips to my eyes, nor meat to my stomach, for more dan fife days.' 'Veil, *bon enfant*,' he say, 'come vis me, and I vill gif you good supper, goot vine, and goot velcome.' 'Coot I leave my post?' I say. He say, '*Bah! Caporal* take care till you come back.' By gar, I coot naut resist—*he* vos so *vairy* moche gentilman and *I* vos so ongrie—I go vis him—not fife hunder yarts—*ah! bon Dieu* —how nice! In de corner of a leetel ruin chapel dere is nice bit of fire, and hang on a string before it de half of a kid—*oh ciel!* de smell of de *ros−bif* was so nice—I rub my hands to de fire—I sniff de *cuisine*—I see in anozer corner a couple bottles of wine— *sacre*! it vos all watair in my mouts! Ve sit down to suppair—I nevair did ate so moche in my life. Ve did finish de bones, and vosh down all mid ver good wine—*excellent!* Ve drink de toast—*a la gloire* — and we talk of de campaign. Ve drink *a la Patrie*, and den *I* tink of *la belle France* and *ma douce amie*—and *he* fissel, 'Got safe de king.' Ve den drink *a l'amitie*, and shek hands over dat fire in good frainship —dem two hands that might cross de swords in de morning. Yais, sair, dat was fine—'t was *galliard* —'t was *la vrai chivalrie*—two sojair ennemi to share de same kid, drink de same wine, and talk like two friends. Vell, I got den so sleepy, dat my eyes go blink, blink, and my goot friend says to me, 'Sleep, old fellow; I know you aff got hard fare of late, and you are tired; sleep, all is quiet for to−night, and I will call you before dawn.' Sair, I vos *so* tired, I forgot my duty, and fall down fast asleep. Veil, sair, in de night de pickets of de two armie get so close, and mix up, dat some shot gets fired, and in one moment all in confusion. I am shake by de shoulder—I wake like from dream—I heard sharp *fusillade*—my friend cry, 'Fly to your post, it is attack!' We exchange one shek of de hand, and I run off to my post. *Oh, ciel!*—it is driven in—I see dem fly. *Oh,*

mon desespoir a ce moment−la! I am ruin— *deshonore*—I rush to de front—I rally *mes braves*—ve stand!—ve advance!!—ve regain de post!!!—I am safe!!!! De *fusillade* cease—it is only an affair of outposts. I tink I am safe—I tink I am very fine fellow —but Monsieur *l'Aide−Major* send for me and speak, 'Vere vos you last night, sair?' 'I mount guard by de mill.' 'Are you sure?' '*Oui, monsieur*.' 'Vere vos you when your post vos attack?' I saw it vos no use to deny any longair, so I confess to him everyting. 'Sair,' said he, 'you rally your men very good, *or you should be shot!* Young man, remember,' said he—I will never forget his vorts—'young man, *vine is goot—slip is goot—goat is goot—but honners is betters!'"*

"A capital story, Randal," cried Dick; "but how much of it did you invent?"

"'Pon my life, it is as near the original as possible."

"Besides, that is not a fair way of using a story," said the doctor. "You should take a story as you get it, and not play the dissector upon it, mangling its poor body to discover the bit of embellishment; and as long as a *raconteur* maintains *vraisemblance*, I contend you are bound to receive the whole as true."

"A most author−like creed, doctor," said Dick; "you are a story−teller yourself, and enter upon the defence of your craft with great spirit."

"And justice, too," said the Squire; "the doctor is quite right."

"Don't suppose I can't see the little touches of the artist," said the doctor; "but so long as they are in keeping with the picture, I enjoy them; for instance, my friend Randal's touch of the Englishman ' *fissling Got safe de King' is very happy—quite in character."*

"Well, good or bad, the story in substance is true," said Randal, "and puts the Englishman in a fine point of view—a generous fellow, sharing his supper with his enemy whose sword may be through his body in the next morning's 'affair.'"

"But the Frenchman was generous to him first," remarked the Squire.

"Certainly—I admit it," said Randal. "In short, they were both fine fellows."

"Oh, sir," said Father Phil, "the French are not deficient in a chivalrous spirit. I heard once a very pretty little bit of anecdote about the way they behaved to one of our regiments on a retreat in Spain."

"*Your* regiments!" said Moriarty, who was rather fond of hitting hard at a priest when he could; "a regiment of friars is it?"

"No, captain, but of soldiers; and it's going through a river they were, and the French, taking advantage of their helpless condition, were peppering away at them hard and fast."

"Very generous indeed!" said Moriarty, laughing.

"Let me finish my story, captain, before you quiz it. I say they were peppering them sorely while they were crossing the river, until some women—the followers of the camp—ran down (poor creatures) to the shore, and the stream was so deep in the middle they could scarcely ford it; so some dragoons who were galloping as hard as they could out of the fire pulled up on seeing the condition of the women−kind, and each horseman took up a woman behind him, though it diminished his own power of speeding from the danger. The moment the French saw this act of manly courtesy, they ceased firing, gave the dragoons a cheer, and as long as the women were within gunshot, not a trigger was pulled in the French line, but volleys of cheers instead of ball−cartridge was sent after the brigade till all the women were over. Now wasn't that generous?"

"'T was a handsome thing!" was the universal remark.

"And 'faith I can tell you, Captain Moriarty, the army took advantage of it; for there was a great struggle to have the pleasure of the ladies' company over the river."

"I dare say, Father Phil," said the Squire, laughing.

"Throth, Squire," said the *padre*, "fond of the girls as the soldiers have the reputation of being, they never liked them better than that same day."

"Yes, yes," said Moriarty, a little piqued, for he rather affected the "dare−devil,"

"I see you mean to insinuate that we soldiers fear fire."

"I did not say 'fear,' captain—but they'd like to get out of it, for all that, and small blame to them—aren't they flesh and blood like ourselves?"

"Not a bit like you," said Moriarty. "You sleek and smooth gentlemen who live in luxurious peace know little of a soldier's danger or feelings."

"Captain, we all have our dangers to go through; and may be a priest has as many as a soldier; and we only

show a difference of taste, after all, in the selection."

"Well, Father Blake, all I know is, that a true soldier fears nothing!" said Moriarty with energy.

"Maybe so," answered Father Phil, quietly. "It is quite clear, however," said Murphy, "that war, with all its horrors, can call out occasionally the finer feelings of our natures; but it is only such redeeming traits as those we have heard which can reconcile us to it. I remember having heard an incident of war, myself, which affected me much," said Murphy, who caught the infection of military anecdote which circled the table; and indeed there is no more catching theme can be started among men, for it may be remarked that whenever it is broached it flows on until it is rather more than time to go to the ladies.

"It was in the earlier portion of the memorable day of Waterloo," said Murphy, "that a young officer of the Guards received a wound which brought him to the ground. His companions rushed on to seize some point which their desperate valour was called on to carry, and he was left, utterly unable to rise, for the wound was in his foot. He lay for some hours with the thunder of that terrible day ringing around him, and many a rush of horse and foot had passed close beside him. Towards the close of the day he saw one of the Black Brunswick dragoons approaching, who drew rein as his eye caught the young Guardsman, pale and almost fainting, on the ground. He alighted, and finding he was not mortally wounded, assisted him to rise, lifted him into his saddle, and helped to support him there while he walked beside him to the English rear. The Brunswicker was an old man; his brow and moustache were grey; despair was in his sunken eye, and from time to time he looked up with an expression of the deepest yearning into the face of the young soldier, who saw big tears rolling down the veteran's cheek while he gazed upon him. 'You seem in bitter sorrow, my kind friend,' said the stripling. 'No wonder,' answered the old man, with a hollow groan. 'I and my three boys were in the same regiment—they were alive the morning of Ligny—I am childless to−day. But I have revenged them!' he said fiercely, and as he spoke he held out his sword, which was literally red with blood. 'But, oh! that will not bring me back my boys!' he exclaimed, relapsing into his sorrow. 'My three gallant boys!'—and again he wept bitterly, till clearing his eyes from the tears, and looking up in the young soldier's handsome face, he said tenderly, 'You are like my youngest one, and I could not let you lie on the field.'"

Even the rollicking Murphy's eyes were moist as he recited this anecdote; and as for Father Phil, he was quite melted, ejaculating in an under tone, "Oh, my poor fellow! my poor fellow!"

"So there," said Murphy, "is an example of a man, with revenge in his heart, and his right arm tired with slaughter, suddenly melted into gentleness by a resemblance to his child."

"'T is very touching, but very sad," said the Squire.

"My dear sir," said the doctor, with his peculiar dryness, "sadness is the principal fruit which warfare must ever produce. You may talk of glory as long as you like, but you cannot have your laurel without your cypress, and though you may select certain bits of sentiment out of a mass of horrors, if you allow me, I will give you one little story which shan't keep you long, and will serve as a commentary upon war and glory in general.

"At the peace of 1803, I happened to be travelling through a town in France where a certain count I knew resided. I waited upon him, and he received me most cordially, and invited me to dinner. I made the excuse that I was only *en route*, and supplied with but traveling costume, and therefore not fit to present myself amongst the guests of such a house as his. He assured me I should only meet his own family, and pledged himself for Madame la Comtesse being willing to waive the ceremony of a *grande toilette*. I went to the house at the appointed hour, and as I passed through the hall I cast a glance at the dining−room and saw a very long table laid. On arriving at the reception−room, I taxed the count with having broken faith with me, and was about making my excuses to the countess when she assured me the count had dealt honestly by me, for that I was the only guest to join the family party. Well, we sat down to dinner, three−and−twenty persons; myself, the count and countess, and their *twenty children!* and a more lovely family I never saw; he a man in the vigour of life, she a still attractive woman, and these their offspring lining the table, where the happy eyes of father and mother glanced with pride and affection from one side to the other on these future staffs of their old age. Well, the peace of Amiens was of short duration, and I saw no more of the count till Napoleon's abdication. Then I visited France again, and saw my old friend. But it was a sad sight, sir, in that same house, where, little more than ten years before, I had seen the bloom and beauty of twenty children, to sit down with *three*—all he had left him. His sons had fallen in battle—his daughters had died widowed, leaving but orphans. And thus it was all over France. While the public voice shouted 'Glory!' wailing was in her homes. Her temple of victory was filled with trophies, but her hearths were made desolate."

“Still, sir, a true soldier fears nothing,” repeated Moriarty.

“*Baithershin*,” said Father Phil. “'Faith I have been in places of danger you'd be glad to get out of, I can tell you, as bould as you are, captain.”

“You'll pardon me for doubting you, Father Blake,” said Moriarty, rather huffed.

“'Faith then you wouldn't like to be where I was before I came here; that is, in a mud cabin, where I was giving the last rites to six people dying in the typhus fever.”

“Typhus!” exclaimed Moriarty, growing pale, and instinctively withdrawing his chair as far as he could from the *padre* beside whom he sat.

“Ay, typhus, sir; most inveterate typhus.”

“Gracious Heaven!” said Moriarty, rising, “how can you do such a dreadful thing as run the risk of bearing infection into society?”

“I thought soldiers were not afraid of anything,” said Father Phil, laughing at him; and the rest of the party joined in the merriment.

“Fairly hit, Moriarty,” said Dick.

“Nonsense,” said Moriarty; “when I spoke of danger, I meant such open danger as—in short, not such insidious lurking abomination as infection; for I contend that—”

“Say no more, Randal,” said Growling, “you're done!—Father Phil has floored you.”

“I deny it,” said Moriarty, warmly; but the more he denied it, the more every one laughed at him.

“You're more frightened than hurt, Moriarty,” said the Squire; “for the best of the joke is, Father Phil wasn't in contact with typhus at all, but was riding with me—and 'tis but a joke.”

Here they all roared at Moriarty, who was excessively angry, but felt himself in such a ridiculous position that he could not quarrel with anybody.

“Pardon me, my dear captain,” said the Father; “I only wanted to show you that a poor priest has to run the risk of his life just as much as the boldest soldier of them all. But don't you think, Squire, 't is time to join the ladies? I'm sure the tay will be tired waiting for us.”

CHAPTER XXXIII

Mrs. Egan was engaged in some needlework, and Fanny turning over the leaves of a music−book, and occasionally humming some bars of her favourite songs, as the gentlemen came into the drawing−room. Fanny rose from the pianoforte as they entered.

“Oh, Miss Dawson,” exclaimed Moriarty, “why tantalise us so much as to let us see you seated in that place where you can render so much delight, only to leave it as we enter?”

Fanny turned off the captain's flourishing speech with a few lively words and a smile, and took her seat at the tea−table to do the honours. “The captain,” said Father Phil to the doctor, “is equally great in love or war.”

“And knows about as little of one as the other,” said the doctor. “His attacks are too open.”

“And therefore easily foiled,” said Father Phil; “How that pretty creature, with the turn of a word and a curl of her lip, upset him that time! Oh! what a powerful thing a woman's smile is, doctor? I often congratulate myself that my calling puts all such mundane follies and attractions out of my way, when I see and know what fools wise men are sometimes made by silly girls. Oh, it is fearful, doctor; though, of course, part of the mysterious dispensation of an all−wise Providence.”

“That fools should have the mastery, is it?” inquired the doctor, drily, with a mischievous query in his eye as well. “Tut, tut, tut, doctor,” replied Father Phil, impatiently; “you know well enough what I mean, and I won't allow you to engage me in one of your ingenious battles of words. I speak of that wonderful influence of the weaker sex over the stronger, and how the word of a rosy lip outweighs sometimes the resolves of a furrowed brow; and how the—pooh! pooh! I'm making a fool of myself talking to you—but to make a long story short, I would rather *wrastle* out a logical dispute any day, or a tough argument of one of the fathers, than refute some absurdity which fell from a pretty mouth with a smile on it.”

“Oh, I quite agree with you,” said the doctor, grinning, “that the fathers are not half such dangerous customers as the daughters.”

“Ah, go along with you, doctor!” said Father Phil, with a good−humoured laugh. “I see you are in one of your mischievous moods, and so I'll have nothing more to say to you.”

The Father turned away to join the Squire, while the doctor took a seat near Fanny Dawson and enjoyed a quiet little bit of conversation with her, while Moriarty was turning over the leaves of her album; but the brow of the captain, who affected a taste in poetry, became knit, and his lip assumed a contemptuous curl, as he perused some lines, and asked Fanny whose was the composition.

“I forget,” was Fanny's answer.

“I don't wonder,” said Moriarty; “the author is not worth remembering, for they are very rough.”

Fanny did not seem pleased with the criticism, and said that, when sung to the measure of the air written down on the opposite page, they were very flowing.

“But the principal phrase, the 'refrain' *I may say, is so vulgar,” added Moriarty, returning to the charge. “The gentleman says, 'What would you do?' and the lady answers, 'That's what I'd do.' Do you call that poetry?”*

“I don't call *that* poetry,” said Fanny, with some emphasis on the word; “but if you connect those two phrases with what is intermediately written, and read all in the spirit of the entire of the verses, I think there is poetry in them—but if not poetry, certainly feeling.”

“Can you tolerate '*That's what I'd do'?*—the pert answer of a housemaid.”

“A phrase in itself homely,” answered Fanny, “may become elevated by the use to which it is applied.”

“Quite true, Miss Dawson,” said the doctor, joining in the discussion. “But what are these lines which excite Randal's ire?”

“Here they are,” said Moriarty. “I will read them, if you allow me, and then judge between Miss Dawson and me.

'What will you do, love, when I am going,
With white sail flowing,
The seas beyond?
What will you do, love, when—'“

“Stop thief!—stop thief!” cried the doctor. “Why, you are robbing the poet of his reputation as fast as you can. You don't attend to the rhythm of those lines—you don't give the ringing of the verse.”

“That's just what I have said in other words,” said Fanny. “When sung to the melody, they are smooth.”

“But a good reader, Miss Dawson,” said the doctor, “will read verse with the proper accent, just as a musician would divide it into bars; but my friend Randal there, although he can tell a good story and hit off prose very well, has no more notion of rhythm or poetry than new beer has of a holiday.”

“And why, pray, has not new beer a notion of a holiday?”

“Because, sir, it works of a Sunday.”

“Your *beer* may be new, doctor, but your *joke* is not—I have seen it before in some old form.”

“Well, sir, if I found it in its old form, like a hare, and started it fresh, it may do for folks to run after as well as anything else. But you shan't escape your misdemeanour in mauling those verses as you have done, by finding fault with my joke *redevivus.* You read those lines, sir, like a bellman, without any attention to metre.”

“To be sure,” said Father Phil, who had been listening for some time; “they have a ring in them—”

“Like a pig's nose,” said the doctor.

“Ah, be aisy,” said Father Phil. “I say they have a ring in them like an owld Latin canticle—

'What *will* you *do*, love, when I am *go*−ing,
With white sail *flow*−ing,
The says be_yond?'

That's it!”

“To be sure,” said the doctor. “I vote for the Father's reading them out on the spot.”

“Pray, do, Mister Blake,” said Fanny.

“Ah, Miss Dawson, what have I to do with reading love verses?”

“Take the book, sir,” said Growling, “and show me you have some faith in your own sayings, by obeying a lady directly.”

“Pooh! pooh!” said the priest.

“You *won't* refuse me?” said Fanny, in a coaxing tone.

“My dear Miss Dawson,” said the *padre.*

“*Father Phil!*” said Fanny, with one of her rosy smiles.

“Oh, wow! wow! wow!” ejaculated the priest, in an amusing embarrassment, “I see you will make me do whatever you like.” So Father Phil gave the rare example of a man acting up to his own theory, and could not resist the demand that came from a pretty mouth. He took the book and read the lines with much feeling, but, with an observance of rhythm so grotesque, that it must be given in his own manner.

WHAT WILL YOU DO, LOVE?

I

“What *will* you *do*, love, when I am *go*−ing,
With white sail *flow*−ing,
The seas be−*yond?*
What *will* you *do*, love, when waves di−*vide* us,
And friends may chide us,
For being *fond*?”
“Though waves di−*vide* us, and friends be *chi*−ding,
In faith a−*bi*−ding,
I'll still be true;
And I'll pray for *thee* on the stormy *o*−cean,
In deep de−*vo*−tion,—
That's *what* I'll do!”

II

“What *would* you *do*, love, if distant *ti*−dings
Thy fond con−*fi*−dings
Should under−*mine*
And I a−*bi*−ding 'neath sultry *skies*,

Should think other *eyes*
Were as bright as *thine*?"
"Oh, name it *not*; though guilt and *shame*
Were on thy *name*,
I'd still be *true*;
But that heart of *thine*, should another *share* it,
I could not *bear it*;—
What *would* I do?"
III
"What *would* you do, when, home re−*turn*−ing,
With hopes high *burn*−ing,
With wealth for *you*,—
If my *bark*, that *bound*−ed o'er foreign *foam*,
Should be lost near *home*,—
Ah, what *would* you do?"
"So them wert *spar*−d, I'd bless the *mor*−row,
In want and *sor*−row,
That left me *you*;
And I'd welcome *thee* from the wasting *bil*−low,
My heart thy *pil*−low!—
THAT'S *what* I'd do!"

[Footnote: NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION.—The foregoing dialogue and Moriarty's captious remarks were meant, when, they appeared in the first edition, as a hit at a certain small critic—a would−be song−writer—who does ill−natured articles for the Reviews, and expressed himself very contemptuously of my songs because of their simplicity; or, as he was pleased to phrase it, "I had a knack of putting common things together." The song was written to illustrate my belief that the most common−place expression, *appropriately applied*, may successfully serve the purposes of the lyric; and here experience has proved me right, for this very song of "What will you do?" (containing within it the other common− place, "That's what I'd do") has been received with special favour by the public, whose long−continued goodwill towards my compositions generally I gratefully acknowledge.]

"Well done, *padre!*" said the doctor; "with good emphasis and discretion."

"And now, my dear Miss Dawson," said Father Phil, "since I've read the lines at your high bidding, will you sing them for me at my humble asking?"

"Very antithetically put, indeed," said Fanny; "but you must excuse me."

"You said there was a tune to it?"

"Yes; but I promised Captain Moriarty to sing him *this*," said Fanny, going over to the pianoforte, and laying her hand on an open music−book.

"Thanks, Miss Dawson," said Moriarty, following fast.

Now, it was not that Fanny Dawson liked the captain that she was going to sing the song; but she thought he had been rather "*mobbed* " by the doctor and the *padre* about the reading of the verses, and it was her good breeding which made her pay this little attention to the worsted party. She poured forth her sweet voice in a simple melody to the following words:—

SAY NOT MY HEART IS COLD
I
"Say not my heart is cold,
Because of a silent tongue!
The lute of faultless mould
In silence oft hath hung.
The fountain soonest spent
Doth babble down the steep;
But the stream that *ever* went

Is silent, strong, and deep.
II
"The charm of a secret life
Is given to choicest things:—
Of flowers, the fragrance rife
Is wafted on viewless wings;
We see not the charmed air
Bearing some witching sound;
And ocean deep is where
The pearl of price is found.
III
"Where are the stars by day?
They burn, though all unseen!
And love of purest ray
Is like the stars, I ween:
Unmark'd is the gentle light
When the sunshine of joy appears,
But ever, in sorrow's night,
'T will glitter upon thy tears!"

"Well, Randal, does that poem satisfy your critical taste?—of the singing there can be but one opinion."

"Yes, I think it pretty," said Moriarty; "but there is one word in the last verse I object to."

"Which is that?" inquired Growling.

"*Ween*" said the other, "'the stars, I ween,' I object to."

"Don't you see the meaning of that?" inquired the doctor. "I think it is a very happy allusion."

"I don't see any allusion whatever," said the critic.

"Don't you see the poet alluded to the stars in the *milky* way, and says, therefore, 'The stars I *wean*'?"

"Bah! bah! doctor," exclaimed the critical captain; "you are in one of your quizzing moods to−night, and it is in vain to expect a serious answer from you." He turned on his heel as he spoke, and went away.

"Moriarty, you know, Miss Dawson, is a man who affects a horror of puns, and therefore I always punish him with as many as I can," said the doctor, who was left by Moriarty's sudden pique to the enjoyment of a pleasant chat with Fanny, and he was sorry when the hour arrived which disturbed it by the breaking up of the party and the departure of the guests.

CHAPTER XXXIV

When the Widow Rooney was forcibly ejected from the house of Mrs. James Casey, and found that Andy was not the possessor of that lady's charms, she posted off to Neck−or−Nothing Hall, to hear the full and true account of the transaction from Andy himself. On arriving at the old iron gate, and pulling the loud bell, she was spoken to through the bars by the savage old janitor and told to “go out o' that.” Mrs. Rooney thought fate was using her hard in decreeing she was to receive denial at every door, and endeavoured to obtain a parley with the gate−keeper, to which he seemed no way inclined.

“My name's Rooney, sir?”

“There's plenty bad o' the name,” was the civil rejoinder.

“And my son's in Squire O'Grady's sarvice, sir.”

“Oh—you're the mother of the beauty we call Handy, eh?”

“Yis, sir.”

“Well, he left the sarvice yistherday.”

“Is it lost the place?”

“Yis.”

“Oh dear! Ah, sir, let me up to the house and spake to his honour, and maybe he'll take back the boy.”

“He doesn't want any more servants at all—for he's dead.”

“Is it Squire O'Grady dead?”

“Aye—did you never hear of a dead squire before?”

“What did he die of, sir?”

“Find out,” said the sulky brute, walking back into his den.

It was true—the renowned O'Grady was no more. The fever which had set in from his “broiled bones,” which he *would* have in spite of anybody, was found difficult of abatement; and the impossibility of keeping him quiet, and his fits of passion, and consequent fresh supplies of “broiled bones,” rendered the malady unmanageable; and the very day after Andy had left the house the fever took a bad turn, and in four−and−twenty hours the stormy O'Grady was at peace.

What a sudden change fell upon the house! All the wedding paraphernalia which had been brought down lay neglected in the rooms where it had been the object of the preceding day's admiration. The deep, absorbing, silent grief of the wife,—the more audible sorrow of the girls,—the subdued wildness of the reckless boys, as they trod silently past the chamber where they no longer might dread reproof for their noise,—all this was less touching than the effect the event had upon the old dowager mother. While the senses of others were stunned by the blow, hers became awakened by the shock; all her absurd aberration passed away, and she sat in intellectual self−possession by the side of her son's death−bed, which she never left until he was laid in his coffin. He was the first and last of her sons. She had now none but grandchildren to look upon—the intermediate generation had passed away, and the gap yawned fearfully before her. It restored her, for the time, perfectly to her senses; and she gave the necessary directions on the melancholy occasion, and superintended all the sad ceremonials befitting the time, with a calm and dignified resignation which impressed all around her with wonder and respect.

Superadded to the dismay which the death of the head of a family produces was the terrible fear which existed that O'Grady's body would be seized for debt—a barbarous practice, which, shame to say, is still permitted. This fear made great precaution necessary to prevent persons approaching the house, and accounts for the extra gruffness of the gate porter. The wild body−guard of the wild chief was on doubly active duty; and after four−and−twenty hours had passed over the reckless boys, the interest they took in sharing and directing this watch and ward seemed to outweigh all sorrowful consideration for the death of their father. As for Gustavus, the consciousness of being now the master of Neck−or−Nothing Hall was apparent in a boy not yet fifteen; and not only in himself, but in the grey−headed retainers about him, this might be seen: there was a shade more of deference—the boy was merged in “*the young master*.” But we must leave the house of mourning for the present, and follow the Widow Rooney, who, as she tramped her way homeward, was increasing in hideousness of visage every hour. Her nose was twice its usual dimensions, and one eye was perfectly useless in showing her the road.

At last, however, as evening was closing, she reached her cabin, and there was Andy, arrived before her, and telling Oonah, his cousin, all his misadventures of the preceding day.

The history was stopped for a while by their mutual explanations and condolences with Mrs. Rooney, on the "cruel way her poor face was used."

"And who done it all?" said Oonah.

"Who but that born divil, Matty Dwyer—and sure they towld me *you* were married to her," said she to Andy.

"So I was," said Andy, beginning the account of his misfortunes afresh to his mother, who from time to time would break in with indiscriminate maledictions on Andy, as well as his forsworn damsel; and when the account was ended, she poured out a torrent of abuse upon her unfortunate forsaken son, which riveted him to the floor in utter amazement.

"I thought I'd get pity here, at all events," said poor Andy; "but instead o' that it's the worst word and the hardest name in your jaw you have for me."

"And sarve you right, you dirty cur," said his mother. "I ran off like a fool when I heerd of your good fortune, and see the condition that baggage left me in—my teeth knocked in and my eye knocked out, and all for your foolery, because you couldn't keep what you got."

"Sure, mother, I tell you—"

"Howld your tongue, you *omadhaun!* And then I go to Squire O'Grady's to look for you, and there I hear you lost *that* place, too."

"Faix, it's little loss," said Andy.

"That's all you know about it, you goose; you lose the place just when the man's dead and you'd have had a shuit o' mournin'. Oh, you are the most misfortunate divil, Andy Rooney, this day in Ireland—why did I rear you at all?"

"Squire O'Grady dead!" said Andy, in surprise and also with regret for his late master.

"Yis—and you've lost the mournin'—augh!"

"Oh, the poor Squire!" said Andy.

"The iligant new clothes!" grumbled Mrs. Rooney. "And then luck tumbles into your way such as man never had; without a place, or a rap to bless yourself with, you get a rich man's daughter for your wife, and you let her slip through your fingers."

"How could I help it?" said Andy.

"Augh!—you bothered the job just the way you do everything," said his mother.

"Sure I was civil−spoken to her."

"Augh!" said his mother.

"And took no liberty."

"You goose!"

"And called her Miss."

"Oh, indeed you missed it altogether."

"And said I wasn't desarvin' of her."

"That was thrue—*but you should not have towld her so*. Make a woman think you're betther than her, and she'll like you."

"And sure, when I endayvoured to make myself agreeable to her——"

"*Endayvoured*!" repeated the old woman contemptuously. " *Endayvoured*, indeed! Why didn't you *make* yourself agreeable at once, you poor dirty goose?—no, but you went sneaking about it—I know as well as if I was looking at you—you went sneakin' and snivelin' until the girl took a disgust to you; for there's nothing a woman despises so much as shilly−shallying."

"Sure, you won't hear my defince," said Andy.

"Oh, indeed you're betther at defince than attack," said his mother.

"Sure, the first little civil'ty I wanted to pay to her, she took up the three−legged stool to me."

"The divil mend you! And what civil'ty did you offer her?"

"I made a grab at her cap, and I thought she'd have brained me."

Oonah set up such a shout of laughter at Andy's notion of civility to a girl, that the conversation was stopped for some time, and her aunt remonstrated with her at her want of common sense; or, as she said, hadn't she "more

decency than to laugh at the poor fool's nonsense?”

“What could I do agen the three−legged stool?” said Andy.

“Where was your *own* legs, and your own arms, and your own eyes, and your own tongue?—eh?”

“And sure I tell you it was all ready conthrived, and James Casey was sent for, and came.”

“Yis,” said the mother, “but not for a long time, you towld me yourself; and what were you doing all that time? Sure, supposing you *wor* only a new acquaintance, any man worth a day's mate would have discoorsed her over in the time and made her sinsible he was the best of husbands.”

“I tell you she wouldn't let me have her ear at all,” said Andy. “Nor her cap either,” said Oonah, laughing.

“And then Jim Casey kem.”

“And why did you let him in?”

“It was *she* let him in, I tell you.”

“And why did you let her? He was on the wrong side of the door—that's the *outside*; and you on the right—that's the *inside*; and it was *your* house, and she was *your* wife, and you were her masther, and you had the rights of the church, and the rights of the law, and all the rights on your side; barrin' right rayson—that you never had; and sure without *that*, what's the use of all the other rights in the world?”

“Sure, hadn't he his friends, *sthrong*, outside?”

“No matther, if the door wasn't opened to them, for *then* YOU would have had a stronger friend than any o' them present among them.”

“Who?” inquired Andy.

“The *hangman*” answered his mother; “for breaking doors is hanging matther; and I say the presence of the hangman's always before people when they have such a job to do, and makes them think twice sometimes before they smash once; and so you had only to keep one woman's hands quiet.”

“Faix, some of them would smash a door as soon as not,” said Andy.

“Well, then, you'd have the satisfaction of hanging them,” said the mother, “and that would be some consolation. But even as it is, I'll have law for it—I will—for the property is yours, any how, though the girl is gone—and indeed a brazen baggage she is, and is mighty heavy in the hand. Oh, my poor eye!—it's like a coal of fire—but sure it was worth the risk living with her for the sake of the purty property. And sure I was thinkin' what a pleasure it would be living with you, and tachin' your wife housekeepin', and bringing up the young turkeys and the childhre—but, och hone, you'll never do a bit o' good, you that got sitch careful bringin' up, Andy Rooney! Didn't I tache you manners, you dirty hanginbone blackguard? Didn't I tache you your blessed religion?—may the divil sweep you! Did I ever prevent you from sharing the lavings of the pratees with the pig?—and didn't you often clane out the pot with him? and you're no good afther all. I've turned my honest penny by the pig, but I'll never make my money of *you*, Andy Rooney!”

There was some minutes' silence after this eloquent outbreak of Andy's mother, which was broken at last by Andy uttering a long sigh and an ejaculation.

“Och? it's a fine thing to be a gintleman,” said Andy.

“Cock you up!” said his mother. “Maybe it's a gintleman you want to be; what puts that in your head, you *omadhaun*?”

“Why, because a gintleman has no hardships, compared with one of uz. Sure, if a gintleman was married, his wife wouldn't be tuk off from him the way mine was.”

“Not so soon, maybe,” said the mother, drily.

“And if a gintleman brakes a horse's heart, he's only a '*bowld rider*,' while a poor sarvant is a 'careless blackguard' for only taking a sweat out of him. If a gintleman dhrinks till he can't see a hole in a laddher, he's only '*feesh*—but '*dhrunk*' is the word for a poor man. And if a gintleman kicks up a row, he's a 'fine sperited fellow,' while a poor man is a 'disordherly vagabone' for the same; and the Justice axes the one to dinner and sends th' other to jail. Oh, faix, the law is a dainty lady; she takes people by the hand who can afford to wear gloves, but people with brown fists must keep their distance.”

“I often remark,” said his mother, “that fools spake mighty sinsible betimes; but their wisdom all goes with their gab. Why didn't you take a betther grip of your luck when you had it? You're wishing you wor a gintleman, and yet when you had the best part of a gintleman (the property, I mane) put into your way, you let it slip through your fingers; and afther lettin' a fellow take a rich wife from you and turn you out of your own house, you sit

down on a stool there, and begin to *wish* indeed!—you sneakin' fool—wish, indeed! Och! if you wish with one hand, and wash with th' other, which will be clane first—eh?"

"What could I do agen eight?" asked Andy.

"Why did you let them in, I say again?" said the mother, quickly.

"Sure the blame wasn't with me," said Andy, "but with—"

"Whisht, whisht, you goose!" said his mother. "Av course you'll blame every one and everything but yourself—'*The losing horse blames the saddle*.'"

"Well, maybe it's all for the best," said Andy, "afther all."

"Augh, howld your tongue!"

"And if it *wasn't* to be, how could it be?"

"Listen to him!"

"And Providence is over us all."

"Oh! yis!" said the mother. "When fools make mistakes they lay the blame on Providence. How have you the impidence to talk o' Providence in that manner? *I'll* tell you where the Providence was. Providence sent you to Jack Dwyer's, and kep Jim Casey away, and put the anger into owld Jack's heart—that's what the Providence did!—and made the opening for you to spake up, and gave you a wife—a wife with *property!* Ah, there's where the Providence was!—and you were the masther of a snug house—that was Providence! And wouldn't myself have been the one to be helping you in the farm—rearing the powlts, milkin' the cow, makin' the iligant butther, with lavings of butthermilk for the pigs—the sow thriving, and the cocks and hens cheering your heart with their cacklin'—the hank o' yarn on the wheel, and a hank of ingins up the chimbley—oh! there's where the Providence would have been—that *would have been Providence indeed!*—but never tell me that Providence turned you out of the house; *that* was your own *goostherumfoodle.*"

"Can't he take the law o' them, aunt?" inquired Oonah.

"To be sure he can—and shall, too," said the mother. "I'll be off to 'torney Murphy to−morrow; I'll pursue her for my eye, and Andy for the property, and I'll put them all in Chancery, the villains!"

"It's Newgate they ought to be put in," said Andy.

"Tut, you fool, Chancery is worse than Newgate: for people sometimes get out of Newgate, but they never get out of Chancery, I hear."

As Mrs. Rooney spoke, the latch of the door was raised, and a miserably clad woman entered, closed the door immediately after her, and placed the bar against it. The action attracted the attention of all the inmates of the house, for the doors of the peasantry are universally "left on the latch," and never secured against intrusion until the family go to bed.

"God save all here!" said the woman, as she approached the fire.

"Oh, is that you, ragged Nance?" said Mrs. Rooney; for that was the unenviable but descriptive title the new−comer was known by: and though she knew it for her *soubriquet*, yet she also knew Mrs. Rooney would not call her by it if she were not in an ill temper, so she began humbly to explain the cause of her visit, when Mrs. Rooney broke in gruffly—

"Oh, you always make out a good rayson for coming; but we have nothing for you to−night."

"Throth, you do me wrong," said the beggar, "if you think I came *shooling.* [Footnote: Going on chance here and there, to pick up what one can.] It's only to keep harm from the innocent girl here."

"Arrah, what harm would happen her, woman?" returned the widow, savagely, rendered more morose by the humble bearing of her against whom she directed her severity; as if she got more angry the less the poor creature would give her cause to justify her harshness. "Isn't she undher my roof here?"

"But how long may she be left there?" asked the woman, significantly.

"What do you mane, woman?"

"I mane there's a plan to carry her off from you to−night."

Oonah grew pale with true terror, and the widow screeched, after the more approved manner of elderly ladies making believe they are very much shocked, till Nance reminded her that crying would do no good, and that it was requisite to make some preparation against the approaching danger. Various plans were hastily suggested, and as hastily relinquished, till Nance advised a measure which was deemed the best. It was to dress Andy in female attire and let him be carried off in place of the girl. Andy roared with laughter at the notion of being made

a girl of, and said the trick would instantly be seen through.

"Not if you act your part well; just keep down the giggle, jewel, and put on a moderate *phillelew,* and do the thing nice and steady, and you'll be the saving of your cousin here."

"*You* may deceive them with the dhress; and *I* may do a bit of a small *shilloo,* like a *colleen* in disthress, and that's all very well," said Andy, "as far as seeing and hearing goes; but when they come to grip me, sure they'll find out in a minute."

"We'll stuff you out well with rags and sthraw, and they'll never know the differ—besides, remember, the fellow that wants a girl never comes for her himself, [Footnote: This is mostly the case.] but sends his friends for her, and they won't know the differ—besides, they're all dhrunk."

"How do you know?"

"Because they're always dhrunk—that same crew; and if they're not dhrunk to−night, it's the first time in their lives they ever were sober. So make haste, now, and put off your coat, till we make a purty young colleen out o' you."

It occurred now to the widow that it was a service of great danger Andy was called on to perform; and with all her abuse of "*omadhaun* " she did not like the notion of putting him in the way of losing his life, perhaps.

"They'll murdher the boy, maybe, when they find out the chate," said the widow.

"Not a bit," said Nance.

"And suppose they did," said Andy, "I'd rather die, sure, than the disgrace should fall upon Oonah, there."

"God bless you, Andy dear!" said Oonah. "Sure, you have the kind heart, anyhow; but I wouldn't for the world hurt or harm should come to you on my account."

"Oh, don't be afeard!" said Andy, cheerily; "divil a hair I value all they can do; so dhress me up at once."

After some more objections on the part of his mother, which Andy overruled, the women all joined in making up Andy into as tempting an imitation of feminality as they could contrive; but to bestow the roundness of outline on the angular form of Andy was no easy matter, and required more rags than the house afforded, so some straw was indispensable, which the pig's bed only could supply. In the midst of their fears, the women could not help laughing as they effected some likeness to their own forms, with their stuffing and padding; but to carry off the width of Andy's shoulders required a very ample and voluptuous outline indeed, and Andy could not help wishing the straw was a little sweeter which they were packing under his nose. At last, however, after soaping down his straggling hair on his forehead, and tying a bonnet upon his head to shade his face as much as possible, the disguise was completed, and the next move was to put Oonah in a place of safety.

"Get upon the hurdle in the corner, under the thatch," said Nance.

"Oh, I'd be afeard o' my life to stay in the house at all."

"You'd be safe enough, I tell you," said Nance; "for once they see that fine young woman there," pointing to Andy, and laughing, "they'll be satisfied with the lob we've made for them."

Oonah still expressed her fear of remaining in the cabin.

"Then hide in the pratee−trench, behind the house."

"That's better," said Oonah.

"And now I must be going," said Nance; "for they must not see me when they come."

"Oh, don't leave me, Nance dear," cried Oonah, "for I'm sure I'll faint with the fright when I hear them coming, if some one is not with me."

Nance yielded to Oonah's fears and entreaties, and with many a blessing and boundless thanks for the beggar−woman's kindness, Oonah led the way to the little potato garden at the back of the house, and there the women squatted themselves in one of the trenches and awaited the impending event.

[Illustration: The Abduction]

It was not long in arriving. The tramp of approaching horses at a sharp pace rang through the stillness of the night, and the women, crouching flat beneath the overspreading branches of the potato tops, lay breathless in the bottom of the trench, as the riders came up to the widow's cottage and entered. There they found the widow and her pseudo niece sitting at the fire; and three drunken vagabonds, for the fourth was holding the horses outside, cut some fantastic capers round the cabin, and making a mock obeisance to the widow, the spokesman addressed her with—

"Your sarvant, ma'am!"

“Who are yiz at all, gintleman, that comes to my place at this time o' night, and what's your business?”

“We want the loan o' that young woman there, ma'am,” said the ruffian.

Andy and his mother both uttered small squalls.

“And as for who we are, ma'am, we're the blessed society of Saint Joseph, ma'am—our coat of arms is two heads upon one pillow, and our motty, 'Who's afraid?—Hurroo!'“ shouted the savage, and he twirled his stick and cut another caper. Then coming up to Andy, he addressed him as “young woman,” and said there was a fine strapping fellow whose heart was breaking till he “rowled her in his arms.”

Andy and the mother both acted their parts very well. He rushed to the arms of the old woman for protection, and screeched small, while the widow shouted “*millia murther!*” at the top of her voice, and did not give up her hold of the make−believe young woman until her cap was torn half off, and her hair streamed about her face. She called on all the saints in the calendar, as she knelt in the middle of the floor and rocked to and fro, with her clasped hands raised to heaven, calling down curses on the “villains and robbers” that were tearing her child from her, while they threatened to stop her breath altogether if she did not make less noise, and in the midst of the uproar dragged off Andy, whose struggles and despair might have excited the suspicion of soberer men. They lifted him up on a stout horse, in front of the most powerful man of the party, who gripped Andy hard round the middle and pushed his horse to a hand gallop, followed by the rest of the party. The proximity of Andy to his *cavaliero* made the latter sensible to the bad odour of the pig's bed, which formed Andy's luxurious bust and bustle; but he attributed the unsavoury scent to a bad breath on the lady's part, and would sometimes address his charge thus:—

“Young woman, if you plaze, would you turn your face th' other way;" then in a side soliloquy, “By Jaker, I wondher at Jack's taste—she's a fine lump of a girl, but her breath is murther intirely—phew—young woman, turn away your face, or by this and that I'll fall off the horse. I've heerd of a bad breath that might knock a man down, but I never met it till now. Oh, murther! it's worse it's growin'—I suppose 't is the bumpin' she's gettin' that shakes the breath out of her sthrong—oh, there it is again—phew!”

It was as well, perhaps, for the prosecution of the deceit, that the distaste the fellow conceived for his charge prevented any closer approaches to Andy's visage, which might have dispelled the illusion under which he still pushed forward to the hills and bumped poor Andy towards the termination of his ride. Keeping a sharp look−out as he went along, Andy soon was able to perceive they were making for that wild part of the hills where he had discovered the private still on the night of his temporary fright and imaginary rencontre with the giants, and the conversation he partly overheard all recurred to him, and he saw at once that Oonah was the person alluded to, whose name he could not catch, a circumstance that cost him many a conjecture in the interim. This gave him a clue to the persons into whose power he was about to fall, after having so far defeated their scheme, and he saw he should have to deal with very desperate and lawless parties. Remembering, moreover, the herculean frame of the inamorato, he calculated on an awful thrashing as the smallest penalty he should have to pay for deceiving him, but was, nevertheless, determined to go through the adventure with a good heart, to make deceit serve his turn as long as he might, and at the last, if necessary, to make the best fight he could.

As it happened, luck favoured Andy in his adventure, for the hero of the blunderbuss (and he, it will be remembered, was the love−sick gentleman) drank profusely on the night in question, quaffing deep potations to the health of his Oonah, wishing luck to his friends and speed to their horses, and every now and then ascending the ladder from the cave, and looking out for the approach of the party. On one of these occasions, from the unsteadiness of the ladder, or himself, or perhaps both, his foot slipped, and he came to the ground with a heavy fall, in which his head received so severe a blow that he became insensible, and it was some time before his sister, who was an inhabitant of this den, could restore him to consciousness. This she did, however, and the savage recovered all the senses the whisky had left him; but still the stunning effect of the fall cooled his courage considerably, and, as it were, “bothered” him so, that he felt much less of the “gallant gay Lothario” than he had done before the accident.

The tramp of horses was heard overhead ere long, and *Shan More*, or Big John, as the Hercules was called, told Bridget to go up to “the darlin',” and help her down.

“For that's a blackguard laddher,” said he; “it turned undher me like an eel, bad luck to it!—tell her I'd go up myself, only the ground is slipping from undher me—and the laddher—”

Bridget went off, leaving Jack growling forth anathemas against the ground and the ladder, and returned

speedily with the mock−lady and her attendant squires.

“Oh, my jewel!” roared Jack, as he caught sight of his prize. He scrambled up on his legs, and made a rush at Andy, who imitated a woman's scream and fright at the expected embrace; but it was with much greater difficulty he suppressed his laughter at the headlong fall with which Big Jack plunged his head into a heap of turf, [Footnote: Peat] and hugged a sack of malt which lay beside it.

Andy endeavoured to overcome the provocation to merriment by screeching; and as Bridget caught the sound of this tendency towards laughter between the screams, she thought it was the commencement of a fit of hysterics, and it accounted all the better for Andy's extravagant antics.

“Oh, the craythur is frightened out of her life!” said Bridget. “Leave her to me,” said she to the men. “There, jewel machree!” she continued to Andy, soothingly, “don't take on you that way—don't be afeerd, you're among friends—Jack is only dhrunk dhrinking your health, darlin', but he adores you.” Andy screeched.

“But don't be afeerd, you'll be thrated tender, and he'll marry you, darlin', like an honest woman!”

Andy squalled.

“But not to−night, jewel—don't be frightened.”

Andy gave a heavy sob at the respite.

“Boys, will you lift Jack out o' the turf, and carry him up into the air? 't will be good for him, and this dacent girl will sleep with me to−night.”

Andy couldn't resist a laugh at this, and Bridget feared the girl was going off into hysterics again.

“Aisy, dear—aisy—sure you'll be safe with me.”

“Ow! ow! ow!” shouted Andy.

“Oh, murther!” cried Bridget, “the sterricks will be the death of her! You blackguards, you frightened her coming up here, I'm sure.”

The men swore they behaved in the genteelest manner. “Well, take away Jack, and the girl shall have share of my bed for this night.”

Andy shook internally with laughter.

“Dear, dear, how she thrimbles!” cried Bridget, “Don't be so frightful, *lanna machree*—there, now—they're taking Jack away, and you're alone with myself and will have a nice sleep.”

The men all the time were removing *Shan More* to upper air; and the last sounds they heard as they left the cave were the coaxing tones of Bridget's voice, inviting Andy, in the softest words, to go to bed.

CHAPTER XXXV

The workshops of Neck−or−Nothing Hall rang with the sounds of occupation for two days after the demise of its former master. The hoarse grating sound of the saw, the whistling of the plane, and the stroke of the mallet denoted the presence of the carpenter; and the sharper clink of a hammer told of old Fogy, the family “milliner,” being at work; but it was not on millinery Fogy was now employed, though neither was it legitimate tinker's work. He was scrolling out with his shears, and beating into form, a plate of tin, to serve for the shield on O'Grady's coffin, which was to record his name, age, and day of departure; and this was the second plate on which the old man worked, for one was already finished in the corner. Why are there two coffin−plates? Enter the carpenter's shop, and you will see the answer in two coffins the carpenter has nearly completed. But why two coffins for one death? Listen, reader, to a bit of Irish strategy.

It has been stated that an apprehension was entertained of a seizure of the inanimate body of O'Grady for the debts it had contracted in life, and the harpy nature of the money−lender from whom this movement was dreaded warranted the fear. Had O'Grady been popular, such a measure on the part of a cruel creditor might have been defied, as the surrounding peasantry would have risen *en masse* to prevent it; but the hostile position in which he had placed himself towards the people alienated the natural affection they are born with for their chiefs, and any partial defence the few fierce retainers whom individual interest had attached to him could have made might have been insufficient; therefore, to save his father's remains from the pollution (as the son considered) of a bailiff's touch, Gustavus determined to achieve by stratagem what he could not accomplish by force, and had two coffins constructed, the one to be filled with stones and straw, and sent out by the front entrance with all the demonstration of a real funeral, and be given up to the attack it was feared would be made upon it while the other, put to its legitimate use, should be placed on a raft, and floated down the river to an ancient burial−ground which lay some miles below on the opposite bank. A facility for this was afforded by a branch of the river running up into the domain, as it will be remembered; and the scene of the bearish freaks played upon Furlong was to witness a trick of a more serious nature.

While all these preparations were going forward, the “waking” was kept up in all the barbarous style of old times; eating and drinking in profusion went on in the house, and the kitchen of the hall rang with joviality. The feats of sports and arms of the man who had passed away were lauded, and his comparative achievements with those of his progenitors gave rise to many a stirring anecdote; and bursts of barbarous exultation, or more barbarous merriment, rang in the house of death. There was no lack of whisky to fire the brains of these revellers, for the standard of the measurement of family grandeur was, too often, a liquid one in Ireland, even so recently as the time we speak of; and the dozens of wine wasted during the life it helped to shorten, and the posthumous gallons consumed in toasting to the memory of the departed, were among the cherished remembrances of hereditary honour. “There were two hogsheads of whisky drank at my father's wake!” was but a moderate boast of a true Irish squire, fifty years ago.

And now the last night of the wake approached, and the retainers thronged to honour the obsequies of their departed chief with an increased enthusiasm, which rose in proportion as the whisky got low; and songs in praise of their present occupation—that is, getting drunk—rang merrily round, and the sports of the field and the sorrows and joys of love resounded; in short, the ruling passions of life figured in rhyme and music in honour of this occasion of death—and as death is the maker of widows, a very animated discussion on the subject of widowhood arose, which afforded great scope for the rustic wits, and was crowned by the song of “Widow Machree” being universally called for by the company; and a fine−looking fellow with a merry eye and large white teeth, which he amply displayed by a wide mouth, poured forth in cheery tones a pretty lively air which suited well the humorous spirit of the words:—

WIDOW MACHREE

“Widow *machree*, it's no wonder you frown,
Och hone! widow machree:
'Faith, it ruins your looks, that same dirty black gown,
Och hone! widow machree.

How altered your hair,
With that close cap you wear—
'Tis destroying your hair
  Which should be flowing free:
Be no longer a churl
Of its black silken curl,
  Och hone! widow machree.
    “Widow machree, now the summer is come,
  Och hone! widow machree;
When everything smiles, should a beauty look glum!
  Och hone! widow machree.
See the birds go in pairs,
And the rabbits and hares—
Why even the bears
  Now in couples agree;
And the mute little fish,
Though they can't spake, they wish,
  Och hone! widow machree.
    “Widow machree, and when winter comes in,
  Och hone! widow machree,
To be poking the fire all alone is a sin,
  Och hone! widow machree,
Sure the shovel and tongs
To each other belongs,
And the kittle sings songs
  Full of family glee,
While alone with your cup,
Like a hermit *you* sup—
  Och hone! widow machree.
    “And how do you know, with the comforts I've towld,
  Och hone! widow machree,
But you're keeping some poor fellow out in the cowld,
  Och hone! widow machree.
With such sins on your head,
Sure your peace would be fled,
Could you sleep in your bed,
  Without thinking to see
Some ghost or some sprite,
That would wake you each night,
  Crying, 'Och hone! widow machree.'
    “Then take my advice, darling widow machree,
  Och hone! widow machree,
And with my advice, 'faith I wish you'd take me,
  Och hone! widow machree.
You'd have me to desire
Then to sit by the fire;
And sure hope is no liar
  In whispering to me
That the ghosts would depart,
When you'd me near your heart,
  Och hone! widow machree.”

The singer was honoured with a round of applause, and his challenge for another lay was readily answered, and mirth and music filled the night and ushered in the dawn of the day which was to witness the melancholy sight of the master of an ample mansion being made the tenant of the “narrow house.”

In the evening of that day, however, the wail rose loud and long; the mirth which “the waking” permits had passed away, and the *ulican*, or funeral cry, told that the lifeless chief was being borne from his hall. That wild cry was heard even by the party who were waiting to make their horrid seizure, and for *that* party the stone−laden coffin was sent with a retinue of mourners through the old iron gate of the principal entrance, while the mortal remains were borne by a smaller party to the river inlet and placed on the raft. Half an hour had witnessed a sham fight on the part of O'Grady's people with the bailiffs and their followers, who made the seizure they intended, and locked up their prize in an old barn to which it had been conveyed, until some engagement on the part of the heir should liberate it; while the aforesaid heir, as soon as the shadows of evening had shrouded the river in obscurity, conveyed the remains, which the myrmidons of the law fancied they possessed, to its quiet and lonely resting−place. The raft was taken in tow by a boat carrying two of the boys, and pulled by four lusty retainers of the departed chief, while Gustavus himself stood on the raft, astride over the coffin, and with an eel−spear, which had afforded him many a day's sport, performed the melancholy task of guiding it. It was a strangely painful yet beautiful sight to behold the graceful figure of the fine boy engaged in this last sad duty; with dexterous energy he plied his spear, now on this side and now on that, directing the course of the raft, or clearing it from the flaggers which interrupted its passage through the narrow inlet. This duty he had to attend to for some time, even after leaving the little inlet; for the river was much overgrown with flaggers at this point, and the increasing darkness made the task more difficult.

In the midst of all this action not one word was spoken, even the sturdy boatmen were mute, and the fall of the oar in the rowlock, the plash of the water, and the crushing sound of the yielding rushes as the “watery bier” made its way through them were the only sounds which broke the silence. Still Gustavus betrayed no emotion; but by the time they reached the open stream, and that his personal exertion was no longer required, a change came over him. It was night,—the measured beat of the oars sounded like a knell to him—there was darkness above him and death below, and he sank down upon the coffin, and plunging his face passionately between his hands, he wept bitterly. Sad were the thoughts that oppressed the brain and wrung the heart of the high−spirited boy. He felt that his dead father was *escaping*, as it were, to the grave,—that even death did not terminate the consequences of an ill−spent life. He felt like a thief in the night, even in the execution of his own stratagem, and the bitter thoughts of that sad and solemn time wrought a potent spell over after− years; that one hour of misery and disgrace influenced the entire of a future life.

On a small hill overhanging the river was the ruin of an ancient early temple of Christianity, and to its surrounding burial−ground a few of the retainers had been despatched to prepare a grave. They were engaged in this task by the light of a torch made of bog−pine, when the flicker of the flame attracted the eye of a horseman who was riding slowly along the neighbouring road. Wondering what could be the cause of light in such a place, he leaped the adjoining fence and rode up to the grave−yard.

“What are you doing here?” he said to the labourers. They paused and looked up, and the flash of the torch fell upon the features of Edward O'Connor. “We're finishing your work,” said one of the men with malicious earnestness.

“My work?” repeated Edward.

“Yes,” returned the man, more sternly than before—“this is the grave of O'Grady.”

The words went like an ice−bolt through Edward's heart, and even by the torchlight the tormentor could see his victim grew livid.

The fellow who wounded so deeply one so generally beloved as Edward O'Connor was a thorough ruffian. His answer to Edward's query sprang not from love of O'Grady, nor abhorrence of taking human life, but from the opportunity of retort which the occasion offered upon one who had once checked him in an act of brutality.

Yet Edward O'Connor could not reply—it was a home thrust. The death of O'Grady had weighed heavily upon him; for though O'Grady's wound had been given in honourable combat, provoked by his own fury, and not producing immediate death; though that death had supervened upon the subsequent intractability of the patient; yet the fact that O'Grady had never been “up and doing” since the duel tended to give the impression that his wound was the remote if not the immediate cause of his death, and this circumstance weighed heavily on

Edward's spirits. His friends told him he felt over keenly upon the subject, and that no one but himself could entertain a question of *his* total innocence of O'Grady's death; but when from the lips of a common peasant he got the answer he did, and *that* beside the grave of his adversary, it will not be wondered at that he reeled in his saddle. A cold shivering sickness came over him, and to avoid falling he alighted and leaned for support against his horse, which stooped, when freed from the restraint of the rein, to browse on the rank verdure; and for a moment Edward envied the unconsciousness of the animal against which he leaned. He pressed his forehead against the saddle, and from the depth of a bleeding heart came up an agonised exclamation.

A gentle hand was laid on his shoulder as he spoke, and, turning round, he beheld Mr. Bermingham.

"What brings you here?" said the clergyman.

"Accident," answered Edward. "But why should I say accident?—it is by a higher authority and a better—it is the will of Heaven. It is meant as a bitter lesson to human pride: we make for ourselves laws of *honour*, and forget the laws of God!"

"Be calm, my young friend," said the worthy pastor; "I cannot wonder you feel deeply—but command yourself." He pressed Edward's hand as he spoke and left him, for he knew that an agony so keen is not benefited by companionship.

Mr. Bermingham was there by appointment to perform the burial service, and he had not left Edward's side many minutes when a long wild whistle from the waters announced the arrival of the boat and raft, and the retainers ran down to the river, leaving the pine−torch stuck in the upturned earth, waving its warm blaze over the cold grave. During the interval which ensued between the departure of the men and their reappearance, bearing the body to its last resting−place, Mr. Bermingham spoke with Edward O'Connor, and soothed him into a more tranquil bearing. When the coffin came within view he advanced to meet it, and began the sublime burial−service, which he repeated most impressively. When it was over, the men commenced filling up the grave. As the clods fell upon the coffin, they smote the hearts of the dead man's children; yet the boys stood upon the verge of the grave as long as a vestige of the tenement of their lost father could be seen; but as soon as the coffin was hidden, they withdrew from the brink, and the younger boys, each taking hold of the hand of the eldest, seemed to imply the need of mutual dependence:—as if death had drawn closer the bond of brotherhood.

There was no sincerer mourner at that place than Edward O'Connor, who stood aloof, in respect for the feelings of the children of the departed man, till the grave was quite filled up, and all were about to leave the spot; but then his feelings overmastered him, and, impelled by a torrent of contending emotions, he rushed forward, and throwing himself on his knees before Gustavus, he held up his hands imploringly, and sobbed forth, "Forgive me!"

The astonished boy drew back.

"Oh, forgive me!" repeated Edward—"I could not help it—it was forced on me—it was—"

As he struggled for utterance, even the rough retainers were touched, and one of them exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. O'Connor, it was a fair fight!"

"There!" exclaimed Edward—"you hear it! Oh, give me your hand in forgiveness!"

"I forgive you," said the boy, "but do not ask me to give you my hand to−night."

"You are right" said Edward, springing to his feet—"you are right—you are a noble fellow; and now, remember my parting words, Gustavus:—Here, by the side of your father's grave, I pledge you my soul that through life and till death, in all extremity, Edward O'Connor is your sworn and trusty friend."

CHAPTER XXXVI

While the foregoing scene of sadness took place in the lone churchyard, unholy watch was kept over the second coffin by the myrmidons of the law. The usurer who made the seizure had brought down from Dublin three of the most determined bailiffs from amongst the tribe, and to their care was committed the keeping of the supposed body in the old barn. Associated with these worthies were a couple of ill−conditioned country blackguards, who, for the sake of a bottle of whisky, would keep company with Old Nick himself, and who expected, moreover, to hear “a power o' news” from the “gentlemen” from Dublin, who, in their turn did not object to have their guard strengthened, as their notions of a rescue in the country parts of Ireland were anything but agreeable. The night was cold, so, clearing away from one end of the barn the sheaves of corn with which it was stored, they made a turf fire, stretched themselves on a good shake−down of straw before the cheering blaze, and circulated among them the whisky, of which they had a good store. A tap at the door announced a new−comer; but the Dublin bailiffs, fearing a surprise, hesitated to open to the knock until their country allies assured them it was a friend whose voice they recognised. The door was opened, and in walked Larry Hogan, to pick up his share of what was going, whatever it might be, saying—

“I thought you wor for keeping me out altogether.”

“The gintlemin from Dublin was afeard of what they call a riskya" (rescue), said the peasant, “till I told them 't was a friend.”

“Divil a riskya will come near you to−night,” said Larry, “you may make your minds aisy about that, for the people doesn't care enough about *his* bones to get their own broke in savin' him, and no wondher. It's a lantherumswash bully he always was, quiet as he is now. And there you are, my bold squire,” said he, apostrophising the coffin which had been thrown on a heap of sheaves. “Faix, it's a good kitchen you kep', anyhow, whenever you had it to spind; and indeed when you *hadn't* you spint it all the same, for the divil a much you cared how you got it; but death has made you pay the reckoning at last—that thing that filly− officers call the debt o' nature must be paid, whatever else you may owe.”

“Why, it's as good as a sarmon to hear you,” said one of the bailiffs. “O Larry, sir, discourses iligant,” said a peasant.

“Tut, tut, tut,” said Larry, with affected modesty: “it's not what *I* say, but I can tell you a thing that Docthor Growlin' put out on him more nor a year ago, which was mighty 'cute. Scholars calls it an 'epithet of dissipation,' which means getting a man's tombstone ready for him before he dies; and divil a more cutting thing was ever cut on a tombstone than the doctor's rhyme; this is it—

'Here lies O'Grady, that cantankerous creature,
Who paid, as all must pay, the debt of nature;
But, keeping to his general maxim still,
Paid it—like other debts—against his will.'“

[Footnote: These bitter lines on a “bad pay” were written by a Dublin medical wit of high repute, of whom Dr. Growling is a prototype.]

“What do *you* think o' that, Goggins?” inquired one bailiff from the other; “you're a judge o' po'thry.”

“It's *sevare,”* answered Goggins, authoritatively, “but *coorse,* I wish you'd brile the rashers; I begin to feel the calls o' nature, as the poet says.”

This Mister Goggins was a character in his way. He had the greatest longing to be thought a poet, put execrable couplets together sometimes, and always talked as fine as he could; and his mixture of sentimentality, with a large stock of blackguardism, produced a strange jumble.

“The people here thought it nate, sir,” said Larry.

“Oh, very well for the country!” said Goggins; “but 't wouldn't do for town.”

“Misther Coggings knows best,” said the bailiff who first spoke, “for he's a pote himself, and writes in the newspapers.”

“Oh, indeed!” said Larry.

“Yes,” said Goggins, “sometimes I throw off little things for the newspapers. There's a friend of mine you see,

a gentleman connected with the press, who is often in defficulties, and I give him a hint to keep out o' the way when he's in trouble, and he swears I've a genus for the muses, and encourages me—"

"Humph!" says Larry.

"And puts my things in the paper, when he gets the editor's back turned, for the editor is a consaited chap that likes no one's po'thry but his own; but never mind—if I ever get a writ against that chap, *won't* I sarve it!"

"And I dar say some day you will have it agen him, sir," said Larry.

"Sure of it, a'most," said Goggins; "them litherary men is always in defficulties."

"I wondher you'd be like them, then, and write at all," said Larry.

"Oh, as for me, it's only by way of amusement; attached as I am to the legal profession, my time wouldn't permit; but I have been infected by the company I kept. The living images that creeps over a man sometimes is irresistible, and you have no pace till you get them out o' your head."

"Oh, indeed, they are very throublesome," says Larry, "and are the litherary gintlemen, sir, as you call them, mostly that way?"

"To be sure; it is *that* which makes a litherary man: his head is full—teems with creation, sir."

"Dear, dear!" said Larry.

"And when once the itch of litherature comes over a man, nothing can cure it but the scratching of a pen."

"But if you have not a pen, I suppose you must scratch any other way you can."

"To be sure," said Goggins, "I have seen a litherary gentleman in a sponging−house do crack things on the wall with a bit of burnt stick, rather than be idle—they must execute."

"Ha!" says Larry.

"Sometimes, in all their poverty and difficulty, I envy the 'fatal fatality,' as the poet says, of such men in catching ideas."

"That's the genteel name for it," says Larry.

"Oh!" exclaimed Goggins, enthusiastically, "I know the satisfaction of catching a man, but it's nothing at all compared to catching an idea. For the man, you see, can give hail and get off, but the idea is your own for ever. And then a rhyme—when it has puzzled you all day, the pleasure you have in *nabbing* it at last!"

"Oh, it's po'thry you're spakin' about," said Larry.

"To be sure," said Goggins; "do you think I'd throw away my time on prose? You're burning that bacon, Tim," said he to his *sub*.

"Poethry, agen the world!" continued he to Larry, "the Castilian sthraime for me!—Hand us that whisky"—he put the bottle to his mouth and took a swig—"That's good—you do a bit of private here, I suspect," said he, with a wink, pointing to the bottle.

Larry returned a significant grin, but said nothing. Oh, don't be afraid o' me—I would n't'peach—"

"Sure it's agen the law, and you're a gintleman o' the law," said Larry.

"That's no rule," said Goggins: "the Lord Chief Justice always goes to bed, they say, with six tumblers o' potteen under his belt; and dhrink it myself."

"Arrah, how do you get it?" said Larry.

"From a gentleman, a friend o' mine, in the Custom−house."

"A−dad, that's quare," said Larry, laughing.

"Oh, we see queer things, I tell you," said Goggins, "we gentlemen of the law."

"To be sure you must," returned Larry; "and mighty improvin' it must be. Did you ever catch a thief, sir?"

"My good man, you mistake my profession," said Goggins, proudly; "we never have anything to do in the *criminal* line, that's much beneath *us*."

"I ax your pardon, sir."

"No offence—no offence."

"But it must be mighty improvin', I think, ketching of thieves, and finding out their thricks and hidin'−places, and the like?"

"Yes, yes," said Goggins, "good fun; though I don't do it, I know all about it, and could tell queer things too."

"Arrah, maybe you would, sir?" said Larry.

"Maybe I will, after we nibble some rashers—will you take share?"

"Musha, long life to you," said Larry, always willing to get whatever he could. A repast was now made, more

resembling a feast of savages round their war−fire than any civilised meal; slices of bacon broiled in the fire, and eggs roasted in the turf−ashes. The viands were not objectionable; but the cooking! Oh!—there was neither gridiron nor frying−pan, fork nor spoon; a couple of clasp−knives served the whole party. Nevertheless, they satisfied their hunger and then sent the bottle on its exhilarating round. Soon after that, many a story of burglary, robbery, swindling, petty larceny, and every conceivable crime, was related for the amusement of the circle; and the plots and counterplots of thieves and thief−takers raised the wonder of the peasants. Larry Hogan was especially delighted; more particularly when some trick of either villany or cunning came out.

“Now women are troublesome cattle to deal with mostly,” said Goggins. “They are remarkably 'cute first, and then they are spiteful after; and for circumventin' *either* way are sharp hands. You see they do it quieter than men; a man will make a noise about it, but a woman does it all on the sly. There was Bill Morgan—and a sharp fellow he was, too—and he had set his heart on some silver spoons he used to see down in a kitchen windy, but the servant−maid, somehow or other, suspected there was designs about the place, and was on the watch. Well, one night, when she was all alone, she heard a noise outside the windy, so she kept as quiet as a mouse. By−and−by the sash was attempted to be riz from the outside, so she laid hold of a kittle of boiling wather and stood hid behind the shutter. The windy was now riz a little, and a hand and arm thrust in to throw up the sash altogether, when the girl poured the boiling wather down the sleeve of Bill's coat. Bill roared with the pain, when the girl said to him, laughing, through the windy, 'I *thought* you came for something.'“

“That was a 'cute girl,” said Larry, chuckling.

“Well, now, that's an instance of a woman's cleverness in preventing. I'll teach you one of her determination to discover and prosecute to conviction; and in this case, what makes it curious is, that Jack Tate had done the bowldest thing, and run the greatest risks, 'the eminent deadly,' as the poet says, when he was done up at last by a feather−bed.”

“A feather−bed,” repeated Larry, wondering how a feather−bed could influence the fate of a bold burglar, while Goggins mistook his exclamation of surprise to signify the paltriness of the prize, and therefore chimed in with him.

“Quite true—no wonder you wonder—quite below a man of his pluck; but the fact was, a sweetheart of his was longing for a feather−bed, and Jack determined to get it. Well, he marched into a house, the door of which he found open, and went up−stairs, and took the best feather−bed in the house, tied it up in the best quilt, crammed some caps and ribbons he saw lying about into the bundle, and marched down−stairs again; but you see, in carrying off even the small thing of a feather−bed, Jack showed the skill of a high practitioner, for he descendhered the stairs backwards.”

“Backwards!” said Larry, “what was that for?”

“You'll see by−and−by,” said Goggins; “he descendhered backwards when suddenly he heard a door opening, and a faymale voice exclaim, 'Where are you going with that bed?'

“'I am going up−stairs with it, ma'am,' says Jack, whose backward position favoured his lie, and he began to walk up again.

“'Come down here,' said the lady, 'we want no beds here, man.'

“'Mr. Sullivan, ma'am, sent me home with it himself,' said Jack, still mounting the stairs.

“'Come down, I tell you,' said the lady, in a great rage. 'There's no Mr. Sullivan lives here—go out of this with your bed, you stupid fellow.'

“'I beg your pardon, ma'am,' says Jack, turning round, and marching off with the bed fair and aisy. Well, there was a regular shilloo in the house when the thing was found out, and cart−ropes wouldn't howld the lady for the rage she was in at being diddled; so she offered rewards, and the dickens knows all; and what do you think at last discovered our poor Jack?”

“The sweetheart, maybe,” said Larry, grinning in ecstasy at the thought of human perfidy.

“No,” said Goggins, “honour even among sweethearts, though they do the trick sometimes, I confess; but no woman of any honour would betray a great man like Jack. No—'t was one of the paltry ribbons that brought conviction home to him; the woman never lost sight of hunting up evidence about her feather−bed, and, in the end, a ribbon out of one of her caps settled the hash of Jack Tate.”

From robbings they went on to tell of murders, and at last that uncomfortable sensation which people experience after a feast of horrors began to pervade the party; and whenever they looked round, *there* was the

coffin in the background.

“Throw some turf on the fire,” said Goggins, “'t is burning low; and change the subject; the tragic muse has reigned sufficiently long—enough of the dagger and the bowl—sink the socks and put on the buckskins. Leather away, Jim—sing us a song.”

“What is it to be?” asked Jim.

“Oh—that last song of the Solicitor−General's,” said Goggins, with an air as if the Solicitor−General were his particular friend.

“About the robbery?” inquired Jim.

“To be sure,” returned Goggins.

“Dear me,” said Larry, “and would so grate a man as the Solicithor−General demane himself by writin' about robbers?”

“Oh!” said Goggins, “those in the heavy profession of the law must have their little private moments of rollickzation; and then high men, you see, like to do a bit of low by way of variety. 'The Night before Larry was stretched' was done by a bishop, they say; and 'Lord Altamont's Bull' by the Lord Chief Justice; and the Solicitor−General is as up to fun as any bishop of them all. Come, Jim, tip us the stave!”

Jim cleared his throat and obeyed his chief.

THE QUAKER'S MEETING

I

“A traveller wended the wilds among,
With a purse of gold and a silver tongue;
His hat it was broad, and all drab were his clothes,
For he hated high colours—except on his nose,
And he met with a lady, the story goes.
Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee.

II

“The damsel she cast him a merry blink,
And the traveller nothing was loth, I think;
Her merry black eye beamed her bonnet beneath,
And the quaker, he grinned, for he'd very good teeth,
And he asked, 'Art thee [1] going to ride on the heath?'
Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee.

[1][Footnote: The inferior class of quakers make THEE serve not only its own grammatical use, but also do the duty of THY and THINE.]

III

“'I hope you'll protect me, kind sir,' said the maid,
'As to ride this heath over I'm sadly afraid;
For robbers, they say, here in numbers abound,
And I wouldn't “for anything” I should be found,
For, between you and me, I have five hundred pound.'
Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee.

IV

“'If that is thee own, dear,' the quaker he said,
'I ne'er saw a maiden I sooner would wed;
And I have another five hundred just now,
In the padding that's under my saddle−bow,
And I'll settle it all upon thee, I vow!'
Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee.

V

“The maiden she smiled, and her rein she drew,
'Your offer I'll take, though I'll not take you;'
A pistol she held at the quaker's head—

'Now give me your gold, or I'll give you my lead,
'Tis under the saddle I think you said.'
Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee.
VI
"The damsel she ripp'd up the saddle−bow,
And the quaker was never a quaker till now;
And he saw by the fair one he wish'd for a bride
His purse borne away with a swaggering stride,
And the eye that looked tender now only defied.
Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee.
VII
"'The spirit doth move me, friend Broadbrim,' quoth she,
'To take all this filthy temptation from thee;
For Mammon deceiveth, and beauty is fleeting:
Accept from thy *maai−d'n* a right loving greeting,
For much doth she profit by this quaker's meeting.
Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee.
VIII
"'And hark! jolly quaker, so rosy and sly,
Have righteousness more than a wench in thine eye,
Don't go again peeping girls' bonnets beneath,
Remember the one that you met on the heath,
Her name's *Jimmy* Barlow—I tell to your teeth!'
Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee.
IX
"'*Friend* James,' quoth the quaker, 'pray listen to me,
For thou canst confer a great favour, d' ye see;
The gold thou hast taken is not mine, my friend,
But my master's—and on thee I depend
To make it appear I my trust did defend.
Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee.
X
"'So fire a few shots through my clothes, here and there,
To make it appear 't was a desp'rate affair.'
So Jim he popped first through the skirt of his coat,
And then through his collar quite close to his throat.
'Now once through my broad−brim,' quoth Ephraim, 'I vote.
Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee.
XI
"'I have but a brace,' said bold Jim, 'and they 're spent,
And I won't load again for a make−believe rent.'
'Then,' said Ephraim—producing his pistols—'just give
My five hundred pounds back—or, as sure as you live,
I'll make of your body a riddle or sieve.'
Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee.
XII
"Jim Barlow was diddled, and though he was game,
He saw Ephraim's pistol so deadly in aim,
That he gave up the gold, and he took to his scrapers;
And when the whole story got into the papers,
They said that '*the thieves were no match for the quakers*.'

Heigho! *yea* thee and *nay* thee."

"Well, it's a quare thing you should be singin' a song here," said Larry Hogan, "about Jim Barlow, and it's not over half a mile out of this very place he was hanged."

"Indeed!" exclaimed all the men at once, looking with great interest at Larry.

"It's truth I'm telling you. He made a very bowld robbery up by the long hill there, on *two* gintlemen, for he was mighty stout."

"Pluck to the back−bone," said Goggins.

"Well, he tuk the purses aff both o' them; and just as he was goin' on afther doin' the same, what should appear on the road before him, but two other travellers coming up forninst him. With that the men that was robbed cried out, 'Stop thief!' and so Jim, seein' himself hemmed in betune the four o' them, faced his horse to the ditch and took across the counthry; but the thravellers was well mounted as well as himself, and powdhered afther him like mad. Well, it was equal to a steeple chase a'most; and Jim, seein' he could not shake them off, thought the best thing he could do was to cut out some troublesome work for them; so he led off where he knew there was the divil's own leap to take, and he intended to 'pound [Footnote: Impound] them there, and be off in the mane time; but as ill luck would have it, his own horse, that was as bowld as himself, and would jump at the moon if he was faced to it, missed his foot in takin' off, and fell short o' the leap and slipped his shouldher, and Jim himself had a bad fall of it too, and, av coorse, it was all over wid him—and up came the four gintlemen. Well, Jim had his pistols yet, and he pulled them out, and swore he'd shoot the first man that attempted to take him; but the gintlemen had pistols as well as he, and were so hot on the chase they determined to have him, and closed on him. Jim fired and killed one o' them; but he got a ball in the shouldher himself, from another, and he was taken. Jim sthruv to shoot himself with his second pistol, but it missed fire. 'The curse o' the road is on me,' said Jim; 'my pistol missed fire, and my horse slipped his shouldher, and now I'll be scragged,' says he, 'but it's not for nothing—I've killed one o' ye,' says he."

"He was all pluck," said Goggins.

"Desperate bowld," said Larry. "Well, he was thried and condimned *av coorse*, and was hanged, as I tell you, half a mile out o' this very place, where we are sittin', and his appearance walks, they say, ever since."

"You don't say so!" said Goggins.

"'Faith, it's thrue!" answered Larry.

"You never saw it," said Goggins.

"The Lord forbid!" returned Larry; "but it's thrue, for all that. For you see the big house near this barn, that is all in ruin, was desarted because Jim's ghost used to walk."

"That was foolish," said Goggins; "stir up the fire, Jim, and hand me the whisky."

"Oh, if it was only walkin', they might have got over that; but at last one night, as the story goes, when there was a thremendious storm o' wind and rain—"

"Whisht!" said one of the peasants, "what's that?"

As they listened, they heard the beating of heavy rain against the door, and the wind howled through its chinks.

"Well," said Goggins, "what are you stopping for?"

"Oh, I'm not stoppin'," said Larry; "I was sayin' that it was a bad wild night, and Jimmy Barlow's appearance came into the house and asked them for a glass o' sper'ts, and that he'd be obleeged to them if they'd help him with his horse that slipped his shouldher; and, 'faith, afther *that*, they'd stay in the place no longer; and signs on it, the house is gone to rack and ruin, and it's only this barn that is kept up at all, because it's convaynient for owld Skinflint on the farm."

"That's all nonsense," said Goggins, who wished, nevertheless, that he had not heard the "nonsense."

"Come, sing another song, Jim."

Jim said he did not remember one.

"Then you sing, Ralph."

Ralph said every one knew he never did more than join a chorus.

"Then join me in a chorus," said Goggins, "for I'll sing, if Jim's afraid."

"I'm not afraid," said Jim.

"Then why won't you sing?"

“Because I don't like.”

“Ah!” exclaimed Goggins.

“Well, maybe you're afraid yourself,” said Jim, “if you towld thruth.” “Just to show you how little I'm afeard,” said Goggins, with a swaggering air, “I'll sing another song about Jimmy Barlow.”

“You'd better not,” said Larry Hogan. “Let him rest in pace!”

“Fudge!” said Goggins. “Will you join chorus, Jim?”

“I will,” said Jim, fiercely.

“We'll all join,” said the men (except Larry), who felt it would be a sort of relief to bully away the supernatural terror which hung round their hearts after the ghost story by the sound of their own voices.

“Then here goes!” said Goggins, who started another long ballad about Jimmy Barlow, in the opening of which all joined. It ran as follows:—

“My name it is Jimmy Barlow,
I was born in the town of Carlow,
And here I lie in the Maryborough jail,
All for the robbing of the Wicklow mail.
Fol de rol de rol de riddle−ido!”

As it would be tiresome to follow this ballad through all its length, breadth, and thickness, we shall leave the singers engaged in their chorus, while we call the reader's attention to a more interesting person than Mister Goggins or Jimmy Barlow.

CHAPTER XXXVII

When Edward O'Connor had hurried from the burial−place, he threw himself into his saddle, and urged his horse to speed, anxious to fly the spot where his feelings had been so harrowed; and as he swept along through the cold night wind which began to rise in gusty fits, and howled past him, there was in the violence of his rapid motion something congenial to the fierce career of painful thoughts which chased each other through his heated brain. He continued to travel at this rapid pace, so absorbed in bitter reflection as to be quite insensible to external impressions, and he knew not how far nor how fast he was going, though the heavy breathing of his horse at any other time would have been signal sufficient to draw the rein; but still he pressed onward, and still the storm increased, and each acclivity was topped but to sweep down the succeeding slope at the same desperate pace. Hitherto the road over which he pursued his fleet career lay through an open country, and though the shades of a stormy night hung above it, the horse could make his way in safety through the gloom; but now they approached an old road which skirted an ancient domain, whose venerable trees threw their arms across the old causeway, and added their shadows to the darkness of the night.

Many and many a time had Edward ridden in the soft summer under the green shade of these very trees, in company with Fanny Dawson, his guiltless heart full of hope and love; perhaps it was this very thought crossing his mind at the moment which made his present circumstances the more oppressive. He was guiltless no longer—he rode not in happiness with the woman he adored under the soft shade of summer trees, but heard the wintry wind howl through their leafless boughs as he hurried in maddened speed beneath them, and heard in the dismal sound but an echo of the voice of remorse which was ringing through his heart. The darkness was intense from the canopy of old oaks which overhung the road, but still the horse was urged through the dark ravine at speed, though one might not see an arm's length before. Fearlessly it was performed, though ever and anon, as the trees swung about their heavy branches in the storm, smaller portions of the boughs were snapped off and flung in the faces of the horse and the rider, who still spurred and plashed his headlong way through the heavy road beneath. Emerging at length from the deep and overshadowed valley, a steep hill raised its crest in advance, but still up the stony acclivity the feet of the mettled steed rattled rapidly, and flashed fire from the flinty path. As they approached the top of the hill, the force of the storm became more apparent; and on reaching its crest, the fierce pelting of the mingled rain and hail made the horse impatient of the storm of which his rider was heedless—almost unconscious. The spent animal with short snortings betokened his labour, and shook his head passionately as the fierce hail−shower struck him in the eyes and nostrils. Still, however, was he urged downward, but he was no longer safe. Quite blown, and pressed over a rough descent, the generous creature, that would die rather than refuse, made a false step, and came heavily to the ground. Edward was stunned by the fall, though not seriously hurt; and, after the lapse of a few seconds, recovered his feet, but found the horse still prostrate. Taking the animal by the head, he assisted him to rise, which he was not enabled to do till after several efforts; and when he regained his legs, it was manifest he was seriously lamed; and as he limped along with difficulty beside his master, who led him gently, it became evident that it was beyond the animal's power to reach his own stable that night. Edward for the first time was now aware of how much he had punished his horse; he felt ashamed of using the noble brute with such severity, and became conscious that he had been acting under something little short of frenzy. The consciousness at once tended to restore him somewhat to himself, and he began to look around on every side in search of some house where he could find rest and shelter for his disabled horse. As he proceeded thus, the care necessarily bestowed on his dumb companion partially called off his thoughts from the painful theme with which they had been exclusively occupied, and the effect was most beneficial. The first violent burst of feeling was past, and a calmer train of thought succeeded; he for the first time remembered the boy had forgiven him, and that was a great consolation to him; he recalled, too, his own words, pledging to Gustavus his friendship, and in this pleasing hope of the future he saw much to redeem what he regretted of the past. Still, however, the wild flare of the pine−torch over the lone grave of his adversary, and the horrid answer of the grave−digger, that he was but “finishing *his* work,” would recur to his memory and awake an internal pang.

From this painful reminiscence he sought to escape, by looking forward to all he would do for Gustavus, and had become much calmer, when the glimmer of a light not far ahead attracted him, and he soon was enabled to

perceive it proceeded from some buildings that lay on his right, not far from the road. He turned up the rough path which formed the approach, and the light escaped through the chinks of a large door which indicated the place to be a coach−house, or some such office, belonging to the general pile which seemed in a ruinous condition.

As he approached, Edward heard rude sounds of merriment, amongst which the joining of many voices in a "ree−raw" chorus indicated that a carouse was going forward within.

On reaching the door he could perceive through a wide chink a group of men sitting round a turf fire piled at the far end of the building, which had no fire−place, and the smoke, curling upwards to the roof, wreathed the rafters in smoke; beneath this vapoury canopy the party sat drinking and singing, and Edward, ere he knocked for admittance, listened to the following strange refrain:—

"For my name it is Jimmy Barlow,
I was born in the town of Carlow,
And here I lie in Maryborough jail,
All for the robbing of the Wicklow mail.
Fol de rol de riddle−iddle−ido!"

Then the principal singer took up the song, which seemed to be one of robbery, blood, and murder, for it ran thus:—

"Then he cocked his pistol gaily,
And stood before him bravely,
Smoke and fire is my desire,
So blaze away, my game−cock squire.
For my name it is Jimmy Barlow,
I was born &c."

Edward O'Connor knocked at the door loudly; the words he had just heard about "pistols," "blazing away," and, last of all, "*squire* " fell gratingly on his ear at that moment, and seemed strangely to connect themselves with the previous adventures of the night and his own sad thoughts, and he beat against the door with violence.

The chorus ceased; Edward repeated his knocking. Still there was no answer; but he heard low and hurried muttering inside. Determined, however, to gain admittance, Edward laid hold of an iron hasp outside the door, which enabled him to shake the gate with violence, that there might be no excuse on the part of the inmates that they did not hear; but in thus making the old door rattle in its frame, it suddenly yielded to his touch and creaked open on its rusty hinges; for when Larry Hogan had entered, it had been forgotten to be barred.

As Edward stood in the open doorway, the first object which met his eye was the coffin—and it is impossible to say how much at that moment the sight shocked him; he shuddered involuntarily, yet could not withdraw his eyes from the revolting object; and the pallor with which his previous mental anxiety had invested his cheek increased as he looked on this last tenement of mortality. "Am I to see nothing but the evidences of death's doing this night?" was the mental question which shot through Edward's over−wrought brain, and he grew livid at the thought. He looked more like one raised from the grave than a living being, and a wild glare in his eyes rendered his appearance still more unearthly. He felt that shame which men always experience in allowing their feelings to overcome them; and by a great effort he mastered his emotion and spoke, but the voice partook of the strong nervous excitement under which he laboured, and was hollow and broken, and seemed more like that which one might fancy to proceed from the jaws of a sepulchre than one of flesh and blood. Beaten by the storm, too, his hair hung in wet flakes over his face and added to his wild appearance, so that the men all started up at the first glimpse they caught of him, and huddled themselves together in the farthest corner of the building, from whence they eyed him with evident alarm.

Edward thought some whisky might check the feeling of faintness which overcame him; and though he deemed it probable he had broken in upon the nocturnal revel of desperate and lawless men, he nevertheless asked them to give him some; but instead of displaying that alacrity so universal in Ireland, of sharing the "creature" with a new−comer, the men only pointed to the bottle which stood beside the fire, and drew closer together.

Edward's desire for the stimulant was so great, that he scarcely noticed the singular want of courtesy on the part of the men; and seizing the bottle (for there was no glass), he put it to his lips, and quaffed a hearty dram of the spirit before he spoke.

"I must ask for shelter and assistance here," said Edward. "My horse, I fear, has slipped his shoulder—"

Before he could utter another word, a simultaneous roar of terror burst from the group; they fancied the ghost of Jimmy Barlow was before them, and made a simultaneous rush from the barn; and when they saw the horse at the door, another yell escaped them, as they fled with increased speed and terror. Edward stood in amazement as the men rushed from his presence; he followed to the gate to recall them; they were gone; he could only hear their yells in the distance. The circumstance seemed quite unaccountable; and as he stood lost in vain surmises as to the cause of the strange occurrence, a low neigh of recognition from the horse reminded him of the animal's wants, and he led him into the barn, where, from the plenty of straw which lay around, he shook down a litter where the maimed animal might rest.

He then paced up and down the barn, lost in wonder at the conduct of those whom he found there, and whom his presence had so suddenly expelled; and ever as he walked towards the fire, the coffin caught his eye. As a fitful blaze occasionally arose, it flashed upon the plate, which brightly reflected the flame, and Edward was irresistibly drawn, despite his original impression of horror at the object, to approach and read the inscription. The shield bore the name of “O'Grady,” and Edward recoiled from the coffin with a shudder, and inwardly asked, was he in his waking senses? He had but an hour ago seen his adversary laid in his grave, yet here was his coffin again before him, as if to harrow up his soul anew. Was it real, or a mockery? Was he the sport of a dream, or was there some dreadful curse fallen upon him that he should be for ever haunted by the victim of his arm, and the call of vengeance for blood be ever upon his track? He breathed short and hard, and the smoky atmosphere in which he was enveloped rendered respiration still more difficult. As through this oppressive vapour, which seemed only fit for the nether world, he saw the coffin−plate flash back the flame, his imagination accumulated horror on horror; and when the blaze sank, and but the bright red of the fire was reflected, it seemed to him to burn, as it were, with a spot of blood, and he could support the scene no longer, but rushed from the barn in a state of mind bordering on frenzy.

It was about an hour afterwards, near midnight, that the old barn was in flames; most likely some of the straw near the fire, in the confusion of the breaking up of the party, had been scattered within range of ignition, and caused the accident. The flames were seen for miles round the country, and the shattered walls of the ruined mansion−house were illuminated brightly by the glare of the consuming barn, which in the morning added its own blackened and reeking ruin to the desolation, and crowds of persons congregated to the spot for many days after. The charred planks of the coffin were dragged from amongst the ruin; and as the roof in falling in had dragged a large portion of the wall along with it, the stones which had filled the coffin could not be distinguished from those of the fallen building, therefore much wonder arose that no vestige of the bones of the corpse it was supposed to contain should be discovered. Wonder increased to horror as the strange fact was promulgated, and in the ready credulity of a superstitious people, the terrible belief became general, that his sable majesty had made off with O'Grady and the party watching him; for as the Dublin bailiffs never stopped till they got back to town, and were never seen again in the country, it was most natural to suppose that the devil had made a haul of *them* at the same time. In a few days rumour added the spectral appearance of Jim Barlow to the tale, which only deepened its mysterious horror; and though, after some time, the true story was promulgated by those who knew the real state of the case, yet the truth never gained ground, and was considered but a clever sham, attempted by the family to prevent so dreadful a story from attaching to their house; and tradition perpetuates to this hour the belief that *the devil flew away with O'Grady.*

Lone and shunned as the hill was where the ruined house stood, it became more lone and shunned than ever, and the boldest heart in the whole country−side would quail to be in its vicinity, even in the day−time. To such a pitch the panic rose, that an extensive farm which encircled it, and belonged to the old usurer who made the seizure, fell into a profitless state from the impossibility of men being found to work upon it. It was useless even as pasture, for no one could be found to herd cattle upon it; altogether it was a serious loss to the money−grubber; and so far the incident of the burnt barn, and the tradition it gave rise to, acted beneficially in making the inhuman act of warring with the dead recoil upon the merciless old usurer.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

We left Andy in what may be called a delicate situation, and though Andy's perceptions of the refined were not very acute, he himself began to wonder how he should get out of the dilemma into which circumstances had thrown him; and even to his dull comprehension various terminations to his adventure suggested themselves, till he became quite confused in the chaos which his own thoughts created. One good idea, however, Andy contrived to lay hold of out of the bundle which perplexed him; he felt that to gain time would be an advantage, and if evil must come of his adventure, the longer he could keep it off the better; so he kept up his affectation of timidity, and put in his sobs and lamentations, like so many commas and colons, as it were, to prevent Bridget from arriving at her climax of going to bed.

Bridget insisted bed was the finest thing in the world for a young woman in distress of mind.

Andy protested he never could get a wink of sleep when his mind was uneasy. Bridget promised the most sisterly tenderness.

Andy answered by a lament for his mother.

“Come to bed, I tell you,” said Bridget.

“Are the sheets aired?” sobbed Andy.

“What!” exclaimed Bridget, in amazement.

“If you are not sure of the sheets bein' aired,” said Andy, “I'd be afeard of catchin' cowld.”

“Sheets, indeed!” said Bridget; “'faith, it's a dainty lady you are, if you can't sleep without sheets.”

“What!” returned Andy, “no sheets?”

“Divil a sheet.”

“Oh, mother, mother!” exclaimed Andy, “what would you say to your innocent child being tuk away to a place where there was no sheets?”

“Well, I never heerd the like!” says Bridget.

“Oh, the villains! to bring me where I wouldn't have a bit o' clane linen to lie in!”

“Sure, there's blankets, I tell you.”

“Oh, don't talk to me!” roared Andy; “sure, you know, sheets is only dacent.”

“Bother, girl! Isn't a snug woolly blanket a fine thing?”

“Oh, don't brake my heart that−a−way!” sobbed Andy; “sure, there's wool on any dirty sheep's back, but linen is dacency! Oh, mother, mother, if you thought your poor girl was without a sheet this night!”

And so Andy went on, spinning his bit of “linen manufacture” as long as he could, and raising Bridget's wonder that, instead of the lament which abducted ladies generally raise about their “vartue,” this young woman's principal complaint arose on the scarcity of flax. Bridget appealed to common sense if blankets were not good enough in these bad times; insisting, moreover, that, as “love was warmer than friendship, so wool was warmer than flax,” the beauty of which parallel case nevertheless failed to reconcile the disconsolate abducted. Now Andy had pushed his plea of the want of linen as far as he thought it would go, and when Bridget returned to the charge, and reiterated the oft−repeated “Come to bed, I tell you!” Andy had recourse to twiddling about his toes, and chattering his teeth, and exclaimed in a tremulous voice, “Oh, I've a thrimblin' all over me!”

“Loosen the sthrings o' you, then,” said Bridget, about to suit the action to the word. “Ow! ow!” cried Andy, “don't touch me—I'm ticklish.”

“Then open the throat o' your gown yourself, dear,” said Bridget.

“I've a cowld on my chest, and darn't,” said Andy; “but I think a dhrop of hot punch would do me good if I had it.”

“And plenty of it,” said Bridget, “if that'll plaze you.” She rose as she spoke, and set about getting “the materials” for making punch.

Andy hoped, by means of this last idea, to drink Bridget into a state of unconsciousness, and then make his escape; but he had no notion, until he tried, what a capacity the gentle Bridget had for carrying tumblers of punch steadily; he proceeded as cunningly as possible, and, on the score of “the thrimblin' over him,” repeated the doses of punch, which, nevertheless, he protested he couldn't touch, unless Bridget kept him in countenance, glass for

glass; and Bridget—genial soul—was no way both; for living in a still, and among smugglers, as she did, it was not a trifle of stingo could bring her to a halt. Andy, even with the advantage of the stronger organisation of a man, found this mountain lass nearly a match for him, and before the potations operated as he hoped upon her, his own senses began to feel the influence of the liquor, and his caution became considerably undermined.

Still, however, he resisted the repeated offers of the couch proposed to him, declaring he would sleep in his clothes, and leave to Bridget the full possession of her lair.

The fire began to burn low, and Andy thought he might facilitate his escape by counterfeiting sleep; so feigning slumber as well as he could, he seemed to sink into insensibility, and Bridget unrobed herself and retired behind a rough screen.

It was by a great effort that Andy kept himself awake, for his potations, added to his nocturnal excursion, tended towards somnolency; but the desire of escape, and fear of a discovery and its consequences, prevailed over the ordinary tendency of nature, and he remained awake, watching every sound. The silence at last became painful—so still was it, that he could hear the small crumbling sound of the dying embers as they decomposed and shifted their position on the hearth, and yet he could not be satisfied from the breathing of the woman that she slept. After the lapse of half an hour, however, he ventured to make some movement. He had well observed the quarter in which the outlet from the cave lay, and there was still a faint glimmer from the fire to assist him in crawling towards the trap. It was a relief when, after some minutes of cautious creeping, he felt the fresh air breathing from above, and a moment or two more brought him in contact with the ladder. With the stealth of a cat he began to climb the rungs—he could hear the men snoring on the outside of the cave: step by step as he arose he felt his heart beat faster at the thought of escape, and became more cautious. At length his head emerged from the cave, and he saw the men lying about its mouth; they lay close around it—he must step over them to escape—the chance is fearful, but he determines to attempt it—he ascends still higher—his foot is on the last rung of the ladder—the next step puts him on the heather—when he feels a hand lay hold of him from below!

His heart died within him at the touch, and he could not resist an exclamation.

“Who's that?” exclaimed one of the men outside. Andy crouched.

“Come down,” said the voice softly from below; “if Jack sees you, it will be worse for you.”

It was the voice of Bridget, and Andy felt it was better to be with her than exposed to the savagery of Shan More and his myrmidons; so he descended quietly, and gave himself up to the tight hold of Bridget, who, with many asseverations that “out of her arms she would not let the prisoner go till morning,” led him back to the cave.

CHAPTER XXXIX

"Great wit to madness nearly is allied,
And thin partitions do the bounds divide."

So sings the poet; but whether the wit be great or little, the "thin partition" separating madness from sanity is equally mysterious. It is true that the excitability attendant upon genius approximates so closely to madness, that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between them; but, without the attendant "genius" to hold up the train of madness, and call for our special permission and respect in any of its fantastic excursions, the most ordinary crack−brain sometimes chooses to sport in the regions of sanity, and, without the license which genius is supposed to dispense to her children, poach over the preserves of common sense. This is a well−known fact, and would not be reiterated here, but that the circumstances about to be recorded hereafter might seem unworthy of belief; and as the veracity of our history we would not have for one moment questioned, we have ventured to jog the memory of our readers as to the close neighbourhood of madness and common sense, before we record a curious instance of intermitting madness in the old dowager O'Grady.

Her son's death had, by the violence of the shock, dragged her from the region of fiction in which she habitually existed; but after the funeral she relapsed into all her strange aberration, and her bird−clock and her chimney−pot head−dress were once more in requisition.

The old lady had her usual attendance from her granddaughter, and the customary offering of flowers was rendered, but they were not so cared for as before, and Charlotte was dismissed sooner than usual from her morning's attendance, and a new favourite received in her place. And "of all the birds in the air," who should this favourite be but Master Ratty. Yes!—Ratty—the caricaturist of his grandmamma, was, "for the nonce," her closeted companion. Many a guess was given as to "what in the world" grandmamma *could* want with Ratty; but the secret was kept between them, for this reason, that the old lady kept *the reward she promised* Ratty for preserving it in her own hands, until the duty she required on his part should be accomplished, and the shilling a day to which Ratty looked forward kept him faithful.

Now the duty Master Ratty had to perform was instructing his grandmamma how to handle a pistol; the bringing up quick to the mark, and levelling by "the sight," was explained; but a difficulty arose in the old lady's shutting her left eye, which Ratty declared to be indispensable, and for some time Ratty was obliged to stand on a chair and cover his grandmamma's eye with his hand while she took aim; this was found inconvenient, however, and the old lady substituted a black silk shade to obfuscate her sinister luminary in her exercises, which now advanced to snapping the lock, and knocking sparks from the flint, which made the old lady wink with her right eye. When this second habit was overcome, the "dry" practice, that is, without powder, was given up; and a "flash in the pan" was ventured upon, but this made her shut both eyes together, and it was some time before she could prevail on herself to hold her eye fixed on her mark, and pull the trigger. This, however, at last was accomplished, and when she had conquered the fear of seeing the flash, she adopted the plan of standing before a handsome old−fashioned looking−glass which reached from the ceiling to the floor, and levelling the pistol at her own reflection within it, as if she were engaged in mortal combat; and every time she snapped and burned priming she would exclaim, "I hit him that time!—I know I can kill him—*tremble, villain*!"

As long as this pistol practice had the charm of novelty for Ratty, it was all very well; but when, day by day, the strange mistakes and nervousness of his grandmamma became less piquant from repetition, it was not such good fun; and when the rantipole boy, after as much time as he wished to devote to the old woman's caprice, endeavoured to emancipate himself and was countermanded, an outburst of *"Oh, bother!"* would take place, till the grandmother called up the prospective shillings to his view, and Ratty bowed before the altar of Mammon. But even Mammon failed to keep Ratty loyal; for that heathen god, Momus, claimed a superior allegiance; Ratty worshipped the "cap and bells" as the true crown, and "the bauble" as the sovereign sceptre. Besides, the secret became troublesome to him, and he determined to let the whole house know what "gran" and he were about, in a way of his own.

The young imp, in the next day's practice, worked up the grandmamma to a state of great excitement, urging

her to take a cool and determined aim at the looking−glass. “Cover him well, gran,” said Ratty.

“I will,” said the dowager, resolutely.

“You ought to be able to hit him at six paces.”

“I stand at twelve paces.”

“No—you are only six from the looking−glass.”

“But the reflection, child, in the mirror, doubles the distance.”

“Bother!” said Ratty. “Here, take the pistol—mind your eye and don't wink.”

“Ratty, you are singularly obtuse to the charms of science.”

“What's science?” said Ratty.

“Science, child, is knowledge of a lofty and abstruse nature, developing itself in wonderful inventions—gunpowder, for instance, is made by science.”

“Indeed it is not,” said Ratty; “I never saw his name on a canister. Pigou, Andrew, and Wilks, or Mister Dartford Mills, are the men for gunpowder. You know nothing about it, gran.”

“Ratty, you are disrespectful, and will not listen to instruction. I knew Kirwan—the great Kirwan, the chemist, who always wore his hat—”

“Then he knew chemistry better than manners.”

“Ratty, you are very troublesome. I desire you listen, sir. Kirwan, sir, told me all about science, and the Dublin Society have his picture, with a bottle in his hand—”

“Then he was fond of drink,” said Ratty.

“Ratty, don't be pert. To come back to what I was originally saying—I repeat, sir, I am at twelve paces from my object, six from the mirror, which, doubled by reflection, makes twelve; such is the law of optics. I suppose you know what optics are?”

“To be sure I do.”

“Tell me, then.”

“Our eyes,” said Ratty.

“Eyes!” exclaimed the old lady, in amaze.

“To be sure,” answered Ratty, boldly. “Didn't I hear the old blind man at the fair asking charity 'for the loss of his blessed optics'?”

“Oh, what lamentable ignorance, my child!” exclaimed the old lady. “Your tutor ought to be ashamed of himself.”

“So he is,” said Ratty. “He hasn't had a pair of new breeches for the last seven years, and he hides himself whenever he sees mamma or the girls.”

“Oh, you ignorant child! Indeed, Ratty, my love, you must study. I will give you the renowned Kirwan's book. Charlotte tore some of it for curl papers; but there's enough left to enlighten you with the sun's rays, and reflection and refraction—”

“I know what *that* is,” said Ratty.

“What?”

“Refraction.”

“And what is it, dear?”

“Bad behaviour,” said Ratty.

“Oh, Heavens!” exclaimed his grandmother.

“Yes, it is,” said Ratty, stoutly; “the tutor says I'm refractory when I behave ill; and he knows Latin better than you.”

“Ratty, Ratty! you are hopeless!” exclaimed his grandmamma.

“No, I am not,” said Ratty. “I'm always *hoping*. And I hope Uncle Robert will break his neck some day, and leave us his money.”

The old woman turned up her eyes, and exclaimed, “You wicked boy!”

“Fudge!” said Ratty; “he's an old shaver, and we want it; and indeed, gran, you ought to give me ten shillings for ten days' teaching, now; and there's a fair next week, and I want to buy things.”

“Ratty, I told you when you made me perfect in the use of my weapon I would pay you. My promise is sacred, and I will observe it with that scrupulous honour which has ever been the characteristic of the family; as soon as I

hit something, and satisfy myself of my mastery over the weapon, the money shall be yours, but not till then."

"Oh, very well," said Ratty; "go on then. *Ready*—don't bring up your arm that way, like the handle of a pump, but raise it nice from the elbow —that's it. *Ready—fire!* Ah! there you blink your eye, and drop the point of your pistol—try another. *Ready—fire!* That's better. Now steady the next time."

[Illustration: A Crack Shot]

The young villain then put a charge of powder and ball into the pistol he handed his grandmother, who took steady aim at her reflection in the mirror, and at the words, *"Ready—fire!"* bang went the pistol—the magnificent glass was smashed—the unexpected recoil of the weapon made it drop from the hand of the dowager, who screamed with astonishment at the report and the shock, and did not see for a moment the mischief she had done; but when the shattered mirror caught her eyes, she made a rush at Ratty, who was screeching with laughter in the far corner of the room where he ran to when he had achieved his trick, and he was so helpless from the excess of his cachinnation, that the old lady cuffed him without his being able to defend himself. At last he contrived to get out of her clutches and jammed her against the wall with a table so tightly, that she roared "Murder!" The report of the pistol ringing through the house brought all its inmates to the spot; and there the cries of murder from the old lady led them to suppose some awful tragedy, instead of a comedy, was enacting inside; the door was locked, too, which increased the alarm, and was forced in the moment of terror from the outside. When the crowd rushed in, Master Ratty rushed out, and left the astonished family to gather up the bits of the story, as well as they could, from the broken looking−glass and the cracked dowager.

CHAPTER XL

Though it is clear the serious events in the O'Grady family had not altered Master Ratty's propensities in the least, the case was far different with Gustavus. In that one night of suffering which *he* had passed, the gulf was leaped that divides the boy from the man; and the extra frivolity and carelessness which clung from boyhood up to the age of fifteen was at once, by the sudden disrupture produced by events, thrown off, and as singular a ripening into manhood commenced.

Gustavus was of a generous nature; and even his faults belonged less to his organisation than to the devil−may−care sort of education he received, if education it might be called. Upon his generosity the conduct of Edward O'Connor beside the grave of the boy's father had worked strongly; and though Gustavus could not give his hand beside the grave to the man with whom his father had engaged in deadly quarrel, yet he quite exonerated Edward from any blame; and when, after a night more sleepless than Gustavus had ever known, he rose early on the ensuing morning, he determined to ride over to Edward O'Connor's house to breakfast, and commence that friendship which Edward had so solemnly promised to him, and with which the boy was pleased; for Gustavus was quite aware in what estimation Edward was held; and though the relative circumstances in which he and the late Squire stood prevented the boy from “caring a fig” for him, as he often said himself, yet he was not beyond the influence of that thing called “reputation,” which so powerfully attaches to and elevates the man who wins it; and the price at which Edward was held in the country influenced opinion even in Neck−or−Nothing Hall, albeit though “against the grain.” Gustavus had sometimes heard, from the lips of the idle and ignorant, Edward sneered at for being “cruel wise,” and “too much of a schoolmaster,” and fit for nothing but books or a boudoir, and called a “piano man,” with all the rest of the hackneyed dirt which jealous inferiority loves to fling at the heights it cannot occupy; for though —as it has been said—Edward, from his manly and sensible bearing, had escaped such sneers better than most men, still some few there were to whom his merit was offensive. Gustavus, however, though he sometimes heard such things, saw with his own eyes that Edward could back a horse with any man in the country—was always foremost in the chace—could bring down as many brace of birds as most men in a day—had saved one or two persons from drowning; and if he did all these things as well as other men, Gustavus (though hitherto too idle to learn much himself) did not see why a man should be sneered at for being an accomplished scholar as well. Therefore he had good foundation for being pleased at the proffered friendship of such a man, and remembering the poignancy of Edward's anguish on the foregoing eve, Gustavus generously resolved to see him at once and offer him the hand which a nice sense of feeling made him withhold the night before. Mounting his pony, an hour's smart riding brought him to Mount Eskar, for such was the name of Mr. O'Connor's residence.

It was breakfast−time when Gustavus arrived, but Edward had not yet left his room, and the servant went to call him. It need scarcely be said that Edward had passed a wretched night; reaching home, as he did, weary in mind and body, and with feelings and imagination both overwrought, it was long before he could sleep; and even then his slumber was disturbed by harassing visions and frightful images. Spectral shapes and things unimaginable to the waking senses danced and crawled and hissed about him. The torch flared above the grave, and that horrid coffin, with the name of the dead O'Grady upon it, “murdered sleep.” It was dawn before anything like refreshing slumber touched his feverish eyelids, and he had not enjoyed more than a couple of hours of what might be called sleep, when the servant called him; and then, after the brief oblivion he had obtained, one may fancy how he started when the first words he heard on waking were, “Mister O'Grady is below, sir.”

Edward started up from his bed and stared wildly on the man, as he exclaimed, with a look of alarm, “O'Grady! For God's sake, you don't say O'Grady?”

“'Tis Master Gustavus, sir,” said the man, wondering at the wildness of Edward's manner.

“Oh, the boy!—ay, ay, the boy!” repeated Edward, drawing his hands across his eyes and recovering his self−possession. “Say I will be down presently.”

The man retired, and Edward lay down again for some minutes to calm the heavy beating of his heart which the sudden mention of that name had produced; that name so linked with the mental agony of the past night; that name which had conjured up a waking horror of such might as to shake the sway of reason for a time, and which

afterwards pursued its reign of terror through his sleep. After such a night, fancy poor Edward doomed to hear the name of O'Grady again the first thing in the morning, and we cannot wonder that he was startled.

A few minutes, however, served to restore his self−possession; and he arose, made his toilet in haste, and descended to the breakfast−parlour, where he was met by Gustavus with an open hand, which Edward clasped with fervour and held for some time as he looked on the handsome face of the boy, and saw in its frank expression all that his heart could desire. They spoke not a word, but they understood one another; and that moment commenced an attachment which increased with increasing intimacy, and became one of those steadfast friendships which are seldom met with.

After breakfast Edward brought Gustavus to his “den,” as he called a room which was appropriated to his own particular use, occupied with books and a small collection of national relics. Some long ranges of that peculiar calf binding, with its red label, declared at once the contents to be law and by the dry formal cut of the exterior gave little invitation to reading. The very outside of a law library is repulsive; the continuity of that eternal buff leather gives one a surfeit by anticipation, and makes one mentally exclaim in despair, “Heavens! how can any one hope to get all that into his head?” The only plain honest thing about law is the outside of the books where it is laid down—there all is simple; inside all is complex. The interlacing lines of the binder's patterns find no place on the covers; but intricacies abound inside, where any line is easier found than a straight one. Nor gold leaf nor tool is employed without, but within how many fallacies are enveloped in glozing words; the gold leaf has its representative in “legal fiction;” and as for “*tooling*“ there's plenty of that!

Other books, also, bore external evidence of the nature of their contents. Some old parchment covers indicated the lore of past ages; amidst these the brightest names of Greece and Rome were to be found, as well as those who have adorned our own literature, and implied a cultivated taste on the part of the owner. But one portion of the library was particularly well stored. The works bearing on Irish history were numerous, and this might well account for the ardour of Edward's feelings in the cause of his country; for it is as impossible that a river should run backwards to its source, as that any Irishman of a generous nature can become acquainted with the real history of his country, and not feel that she has been an ill−used and neglected land, and not struggle in the cause of her being righted. Much *has* been done in the cause since the days of which this story treats, and Edward was amongst those who helped to achieve it; but much has still to be done, and there is glorious work in store for present and future Edward O'Connors.

Along with the books which spoke the cause of Ireland, the mute evidences, also, of her former glory and civilisation were scattered through the room. Various ornaments of elegant form, and wrought in the purest gold, were tastefully arranged over the mantel−piece; some, from their form, indicating their use, and others only affording matter of ingenious speculation to the antiquary, but all bearing evidence of early civilisation. The frontlet of gold indicated noble estate, and the long and tapering bodkin of the same metal, with its richly enchased knob or pendent crescent, implied the robe it once fastened could have been of no mean texture, and the wearer of no mean rank. Weapons were there, too, of elegant form and exquisite workmanship, wrought in that ancient bronze, of such wondrous temper that it carries effective edge and point. The sword was of exact Phoenician mould; the double−eyed spear−head, formed at once for strength and lightness, might have served as the model for a sculptor in arming the hand of Minerva. Could these be the work of an uncultivated people? Impossible! The harp, too, was there, that unfailing mark of polish and social elegance. The bard and barbarism could never be coeval. But a relic was there, exciting still deeper interest—an ancient crosier, of curious workmanship, wrought in the precious metals and partly studded with jewels; but few of the latter remained, though the empty collets showed it had once been costly in such ornaments. Could this be seen without remembering that the light of Christianity first dawned over the western isles *in Ireland?* that *there* the Gospel was first preached, *there* the work of salvation begun?

There be cold hearts to which these touching recollections do not pertain, and they heed them not; and some there are, who, with a callousness which shocks sensibility, have the ignorant effrontery to ask, “Of what use are such recollections?” With such frigid utilitarians it would be vain to argue; but this question, at least, may be put in return:—Why should the ancient glories of Greece and Rome form a large portion of the academic studies of our youth?—why should the evidences of *their* arts and *their* arms be held precious in museums, and similar evidences of ancient cultivation be despised because they pertain to another nation? Is it because they are Irish they are held in contempt? Alas! in many cases it is so—ay, and even (shame to say) within her own shores. But

never may that day arrive when Ireland shall be without enough of true and fond hearts to cherish the memory of her ancient glories, to give to her future sons the evidences of her earliest western civilisation, proving that their forefathers were not (as those say who wronged and therefore would malign them) a rabble of rude barbarians, but that brave kings, and proud princes, and wise lawgivers, and just judges, and gallant chiefs, and chaste and lovely women were among them, and that inspired bards were there to perpetuate such memories!

Gustavus had never before seen a crosier, and asked what it was. On being informed of its name, he then said, “But what *is* a crosier?”

“A bishop's pastoral staff,” said Edward.

“And why have you a bishop's staff, and swords, and spears, hung up together?”

“That is not inappropriate,” said Edward. “Unfortunately, the sword and the crosier have been frequently but too intimate companions. Preaching the word of peace has been too often the pretext for war. The Spaniards, for instance, in the name of the gospel, committed the most fearful atrocities.”

“Oh, I know,” said Gustavus, “that was in the time of bloody Mary and the Armada.”

Edward wondered at the boy's ignorance, and saw in an instant the source of his false application of his allusion to the Spaniards. Gustavus had been taught to vaguely couple the name of “bloody Mary" with everything bad, and that of “good Queen Bess” with all that was glorious; and the word “Spanish,” in poor Gusty's head, had been hitherto connected with two ideas, namely, “liquorice” and the “Armada.”

Edward, without wounding the sensitive shame of ignorant youth, gently set him right, and made him aware he had alluded to the conduct of the Spaniards in America under Cortes and Pizarro.

For the first time in his life Gustavus was aware that Pizarro was a real character. He had heard his grandmamma speak of a play of that name, and how great Mr. Kemble was in Rollo, and how he saved a child; but as to its belonging to history, it was a new light—the utmost Gusty knew about America being that it was discovered by Columbus.

“But the crosier,” said Edward, “is amongst the most interesting of Irish antiquities, and especially belongs to an Irish collection, when you remember the earliest preaching of Christianity in the western isles was in Ireland.”

“I did only know that,” said the boy.

“Then you don't know why the shamrock is our national emblem?”

“No,” said Gustavus, “though I take care to mount one in my hat every Patrick's day.”

“Well,” said Edward, anxious to give Gustavus credit for *any* knowledge he possessed, “you know at least it is connected with the memory of St. Patrick, though you don't know why. I will tell you. When St. Patrick first preached the Christian faith in Ireland, before a powerful chief and his people, when he spoke of one God, and of the Trinity, the chief asked how one could be in three. St. Patrick, instead of attempting a theological definition of the faith, thought a simple image would best serve to enlighten a simple people, and stooping to the earth he plucked from the green sod a shamrock, and holding up the trefoil before them he bade them there behold one in three. The chief, struck by the illustration, asked at once to be baptised, and all his sept followed his example.”

“I never heard that before,” said Gusty. “'T is very beautiful.”

“I will tell you something else connected with it,” said Edward.

“After baptising the chief, St. Patrick made an eloquent exhortation to the assembled multitude, and in the course of his address, while enforcing his urgent appeal with appropriate gesture, as the hand which held his crosier, after being raised towards heaven, descended again towards the earth, the point of his staff, armed with metal, was driven through the foot of the chief, who, fancying it was part of the ceremony, and but a necessary testing of the firmness of his faith, never winced.”

“He was a fine fellow,” said Gusty. “And is that the crosier?” he added, alluding to the one in Edward's collection, and manifestly excited by what he had heard.

“No,” said Edward, “but one of early date, and belonging to some of the first preachers of the gospel amongst us.”

“And have you other things here with such beautiful stories belonging to them?” inquired Gusty, eager for more of that romantic lore which youth loves so passionately.

“Not that I know of,” answered Edward “but if these objects here had only tongues, if every sword, and belt, and spear−head, and golden bodkin, and other trinket could speak, no doubt we should hear stirring stories of gallant warriors and their ladye−loves.”

"Aye, that would be something to hear!" exclaimed Gusty.

"Well," said Edward, "you may have many *such* stories by reading the history of your country; which if you have not read, I can lend you books enough."

"Oh, thank you," said Gusty; "I should like it so much."

Edward approached the book−shelf and selected a volume he thought the most likely to interest so little practised a reader; and when he turned round he saw Gusty poising in his hand an antique Irish sword of bronze.

"Do you know what that is?" inquired Edward.

"I can't tell you the name of it," answered Gusty, "but I suppose it was *something to stick a fellow*."

Edward smiled at the characteristic reply, and told him it was an antique Irish sword.

"A sword?" he exclaimed. "Isn't it short for a sword?"

"All the swords of that day were short."

"When was that?" inquired the boy.

"Somewhere about two thousand years ago."

"Two thousand years," exclaimed Gusty, in surprise. "How is it possible you can tell this is two thousand years old?"

"Because it is made of the same metal and of the same shape as the swords found at Cannae, where the Carthaginians fought the Romans."

"I know the Roman history," said Gusty, eager to display his little bit of knowledge; "I know the Roman history. Romulus and Remus were educated by a wolf." Edward could not resist a smile, which he soon suppressed, and continued:—"Such works as you now hold in your hand are found *in quantities* in Ireland, and seldom anywhere else in Europe, except in Italy, particularly at Cannae, where some thousands of Carthaginians fell; and when we find the sword of the same make and metal in places so remote, it establishes a strong connecting link between the people of Carthage and of Ireland, and at once shows their date."

"How curious that is!" exclaimed Gusty; "and how odd I never heard it before! Are there many such curious things you know?"

"Many," said Edward.

"I wonder how people can find out such odd things," said the boy.

"My dear boy," said Edward, "after getting a certain amount of knowledge, other knowledge comes very fast; it gathers like a snowball—or perhaps it would be better to illustrate the fact by a milldam. You know, when the water is low in the milldam, the miller cannot drive his wheel; but the moment the water comes up to a certain level it has force to work the mill. And so it is with knowledge; when once you get it up to a certain level, you can 'work your mill,' with this great advantage over the milldam, that the stream of knowledge, once reaching the working level, never runs dry."

"Oh, I wish I knew as much as you do," exclaimed Gusty.

"And so you can if you wish it," said Edward.

Gusty sighed heavily, and admitted he had been very idle. Edward told him he had plenty of time before him to repair the damage.

A conversation then ensued, perfectly frank on the part of the boy, and kind on Edward's side to all his deficiencies, which he found to be lamentable, as far as learning went. He had some small smattering of Latin; but Gustavus vowed steady attention to his tutor and his studies for the future. Edward, knowing what a miserable scholar the tutor himself was, offered to put Gustavus through his Latin and Greek himself. Gustavus accepted the offer with gratitude, and rode over every day to Mount Eskar for his lesson; and, under the intelligent explanations of Edward, the difficulties which had hitherto discouraged him disappeared, and it was surprising what progress he made. At the same time he devoured Irish history, and became rapidly tinctured with that enthusiastic love of all that belonged to his country which he found in his teacher; and Edward soon hailed, in the ardent neophyte, a noble and intelligent spirit redeemed from ignorance and rendered capable of higher enjoyments than those to be derived merely from field sports. Edward, however, did not confine his instructions to book−learning only; there is much to be learned by living with the educated, whose current conversation alone is instructive; and Edward had Gustavus with him as constantly as he could; and after some time, when the frequency of Gusty's visits to Mount Eskar ceased to excite any wonder at home, he sometimes spent several days together with Edward, to whom he became continually more and more attached. Edward showed great judgment

in making his training attractive to his pupil: he did not attend merely to his head; he thought of other things as well; joined him in the sports and exercises he knew, and taught him those in which he was uninstructed. Fencing, for instance, was one of these; Edward was a tolerable master of his foil, and in a few months Gustavus, under his tuition, could parry a thrust and make no bad attempt at a hit himself. His improvement in every way was so remarkable, that it was noticed by all, and its cause did not long remain secret; and when it *was* known, Edward O'Connor's character stood higher than ever, and the whole country said it was a lucky day for Gusty O'Grady that he found such a friend. As the limits of our story would not permit the intercourse between Edward and Gustavus to be treated in detail, this general sketch of it has been given; and in stating its consequences so far, a peep into the future has been granted by the author, with a benevolence seldom belonging to his ill−natured and crafty tribe, who endeavour to hoodwink their docile followers as much as possible, and keep them in a state of ignorance as to coming events. But now, having been so indulgent, we must beg to lay hold of the skirts of our readers and pull them back again down the ladder into the private still, where Bridget pulled back Andy very much after the same fashion, and the results of which we must treat of in our next chapter.

CHAPTER XLI

When Bridget dragged Andy back and insisted on his going to bed—

No—I will not be too good natured and tell my story in that way; besides, it would be a very difficult matter to tell it; and why should an author, merely to oblige people, get himself involved in a labyrinth of difficulties, and rack his unfortunate brain to pick and choose words properly to tell his story, yet at the same time to lead his readers through the mazes of this very ticklish adventure, without a single thorn scratching their delicate feelings, or as much as making the smallest rent in the white muslin robe of propriety? So, not to run unnecessary risks, the story must go on another way.

When Shan More and the rest of the "big blackguards" began to wake, the morning after the abduction, and gave a turn or two under their heather coverlid, and rubbed their eyes as the sun peeped through the "curtains of the east"—for these were the only bed−curtains Shan More and his companions ever had—they stretched themselves and yawned, and felt very thirsty, for they had all been blind drunk the night before, be it remembered; and Shan More, to use his own expressive and poetic imagery, swore that his tongue was "as rough as a rat's back," while his companions went no further than saying theirs were as "dry as a lime−burner's wig." We should not be so particular in those minute details but for that desire of truth which has guided us all through this veracious history and as in this scene, in particular, we feel ourselves sure to be held seriously responsible for every word, we are determined to be accurate to a nicety, and set down every syllable with stenographic strictness.

"Where's the girl?" cried Shan, not yet sober.

"She's asleep with your sisther," was the answer.

"Down−stairs?" inquired Shan.

"Yes," said the other, who now knew that Big Jack was more drunk than he at first thought him, by his using the words *stairs*; for Jack when he was drunk was very grand, and called *down the ladder* "down−*stairs*."

"Get me a drink o' wather," said Jack, "for I'm thundherin' thirsty, and can't deludher that girl with soft words till I wet my mouth."

His attendant vagabond obeyed the order, and a large pitcher full of water was handed to the master, who heaved it upwards to his head and drank as audibly and nearly as much as a horse. Then holding his hands to receive the remaining contents of the pitcher, which his followers poured into his monstrous palms, he soused his face, which he afterwards wiped in a wisp of grass—the only towel of Jack's which was not then at the wash.

Having thus made his toilet, Big Jack went downstairs, and as soon as his great bull−head had disappeared beneath the trap, one of the men above said, "We'll have a *shilloe* soon, boys."

And sure enough they did before long hear an extraordinary row. Jack first roared for Bridget, and no answer was returned; the call was repeated with as little effect, and at last a most tremendous roar was heard above, but not from a female voice. Jack was heard below, swearing like a trooper, and, in a minute or two, back he rushed "*up−stairs*" and began cursing his myrmidons most awfully, and foaming at the mouth with rage.

"What's the matther?" cried the men.

"Matther!" roared Jack; "oh, you 'tarnal villains! You're a purty set to carry off a girl for a man—a purty job you've made of it!"

"Arrah, didn't we bring her to you?"

"*Her*, indeed—bring *her*—much good what you brought is to me!"

"Tare an' ouns! what's the matther at all? We dunna what you mane!" shouted the men, returning rage for rage.

"Come down, and you'll see what's the matther," said Jack, descending the ladder; and the men hastened after him.

He led the way to the further end of the cabin, where a small glimmering of light was permitted to enter from the top, and lifting a tattered piece of canvas, which served as a screen to the bed, he exclaimed, with a curse, "Look there, you blackguards!"

The men gave a shout of surprise, for—what do you think they saw?—An empty bed!

CHAPTER XLII

It may be remembered that, on Father Phil's recommendation, Andy was to be removed out of the country to place him beyond the reach of Larry Hogan's machinations, and that the proposed journey to London afforded a good opportunity of taking him out of the way. Andy had been desired by Squire Egan to repair to Merryvale; but as some days had elapsed and Andy had not made his appearance, the alarms of the Squire that Andy might be tampered with began to revive, and Dick Dawson was therefore requested to call at the Widow Rooney's cabin as he was returning from the town, where some business with Murphy, about the petition against Scatterbrain's return, demanded his presence.

Dick, as it happened, had no need to call at the widow's, for on his way to the town who should he see approaching but the renowned Andy himself. On coming up to him, Dick pulled up his horse, and Andy pulled off his hat.

“God save your honour,” said Andy.

“Why didn't you come to Merryvale, as you were bid?” said Dick.

“I couldn't, sir, becase—”

“Hold your tongue, you thief; you know you never can do what you're bid— you are always wrong one way or other.”

“You're hard on me, Misther Dick.”

“Did you ever do anything right?—I ask yourself?”

“Indeed, sir, this time it was a rale bit o' business I had to do.”

“And well you did it, no doubt. Did you marry any one lately?” said Dick, with a waggish grin and a wink.

“Faix, then, maybe I did,” said Andy, with a knowing nod.

“And I hope *Matty* is well?” said Dick.

“Ah, Misther Dick, you're always goin' on with your jokin', so you are. So, you heerd o' that job, did you? Faix, a purty lady she is—oh, it's not her at all I am married to, but another woman.”

“Another woman!” exclaimed Dick, in surprise.

“Yis, sir, another woman—a kind craythur.”

“Another woman!” reiterated Dick, laughing; “married to two women in two days! Why you're worse than a Turk!”

“Ah, Misther Dick!”

“You Tarquin!”

“Sure, sir, what harm's in it?”'

“You Heliogabalus!!”

“Sure, it's no fault o' mine, sir.”

“Bigamy, by this and that, flat bigamy! You'll only be hanged, as sure as your name's Andy.”

“Sure, let me tell you how it was, sir, and you'll see I am quit of all harm, good or bad. 'T was a pack o' blackguards, you see, come to take off Oonah, sir.”

“Oh, a case of abduction!”

“Yis, sir; so the women dhressed me up as a girl, and the blackguards, instead of the seduction of Oonah, only seduced me.”

“Capital!” cried Dick; “well done, Andy! And who seduced you?”

“Shan *More*, 'faith—no less.”

“Ho, ho! a dangerous customer to play tricks on, Andy.”

“Sure enough, 'faith, and that's partly the rayson of what happened; but, by good luck, Big Jack was blind dhrunk when I got there, and I shammed screechin' so well that his sisther took pity on me, and said she'd keep me safe from harm in her own bed that night.”

Dick gave a “view hallo” when he heard this, and shouted with laughter, delighted at the thought of Shan More, instead of carrying off a girl for himself, introducing a gallant to his own sister.

“Oh, now I see how you are married,” said Dick; “that was the biter bit indeed.”

“Oh, the divil a bit I'd ha' bit her only for the cross luck with me, for I wanted to schame off out o' the place, and escape; but she wouldn't let me, and cotch me and brought me back.”

“I should think she would, indeed,” said Dick, laughing. “What next?”

“Why I drank a power o' punch, sir, and was off my guard, you see, and couldn't keep the saycret so well afther that, and by dad she found it out.”

“Just what I would expect of her,” said Dick.

“Well, do you know, sir, though the thrick was agen her own brother, she laughed at it a power, and said I was a great divil, but that she couldn't blame me. So then I'd sthruv to coax her to let me make my escape, but she told me to wait a bit till the men above was faster asleep; but while I was waitin' for them to go to sleep, faix, I went to asleep myself, I was so tired; and when Bridget, the crathur, 'woke me in the morning, she was cryin' like a spout afther a thunder−storm, and said her characther would be ruined when the story got abroad over the counthry, and sure she darn't face the world if I wouldn't make her an honest woman.”

“The brazen baggage!” said Dick; “and what did you say?”

“Why what could any man say, sir, afther that? Sure her karacther would be gone if—”

“Gone,” said Dick, “'faith it might have gone further before it fared worse.”

“Arrah! what do you mane, Misther Dick?”

“Pooh, pooh! Andy—you don't mean to say you married that one?”

“Faix, I did,” said Andy.

“Well, Andy,” said Dick, grinning, “by the powers, you *have* done it this time! Good morning to you!” and Dick put spurs to his horse.

CHAPTER XLIII

Andy, “knocked all of a heap,” stood in the middle of the road, looking after Dick as he cantered down the slope. It was seldom poor Andy was angry—but he felt a strong sense of indignation choking him as Dick's parting words still rung in his ears. “What does he mane?” said Andy, talking aloud; “what does he mane?” he repeated, anxious to doubt and therefore question the obvious construction which Dick's words bore. “Misther Dick is fond of a joke, and maybe this is one of his making; but if it is, 't is not a fair one, 'pon my sowl: a poor man has his feelin's as well as a rich man. How would you like your own wife to be spoke of that way, Misther Dick, as proud as you ride your horse there—humph?”

Andy, in great indignation, pursued his way towards his mother's cabin to ask her blessing upon his marriage. On his presenting himself there, both the old woman and Oonah were in great delight at witnessing his safe return; Oonah particularly, for she, feeling that it was for her sake Andy placed himself in danger, had been in a state of great anxiety for the result of the adventure, and, on seeing him, absolutely threw herself into his arms, and embraced him tenderly, impressing many a hearty kiss upon his lips, between whiles that she vowed she would never forget his generosity and courage, and ending with saying there was *nothing* she would not do for him.

Now Andy was flesh and blood like other people, and as the showers of kisses from Oonah's ripe lips fell fast upon him he was not insensible to the embrace of so very pretty a girl—a girl, moreover, he had always had a “sneaking kindness” for, which Oonah's distance of manner alone had hitherto made him keep to himself; but now, when he saw her eyes beam gratitude, and her cheek flush, after her strong demonstration of regard, and heard her last words, so *very* like a hint to a shy man, it must be owned a sudden pang shot through poor Andy's heart, and he sickened at the thought of being married, which placed the tempting prize before him hopelessly beyond his reach.

He looked so blank, and seemed so unable to return Oonah's fond greeting, that she felt the pique which every pretty woman experiences who fancies her favours disregarded, and thought Andy the stupidest lout she ever came across. Turning up her hair, which had fallen down in the excess of her friendship, she walked out of the cottage, and, biting her disdainful lip, fairly cried for spite.

In the meantime, Andy popped down on his knees before the widow, and said, “Give me your blessing, mother!”

“For what, you omadhawn?” said his mother, fiercely; for her woman's nature took part with Oonah's feelings, which she quite comprehended, and she was vexed with what she thought Andy's disgusting insensibility. “For what should I give you my blessing?”

“Bekase I'm marri'd, ma'am.”

“What!” exclaimed the mother. “It's not marri'd again you are? You're jokin' sure.”

“Faix, it's no joke,” said Andy, sadly, “I'm marri'd sure enough; so give us your blessin', anyhow,” cried he, still kneeling.

“And who did you *dar' for to marry, sir, if I make so bowld to ax, without my lave or license?”*

“There was no time for axin', mother—'t was done in a hurry, and I can't help it, so give us your blessing at once.”

“Tell me who is she, before I give you my blessin'?”

“*Shan More's* sister, ma'am.”

“What!” exclaimed the widow, staggering back some paces—“Shan More's sisther, did you say—Bridget *rhua* [Footnote: Red−haired Bridget.] is it?”

“Yis, ma'am.”

“Oh, wirrasthru!—plillelew!—millia murther!” shouted the mother, tearing her cap off her head,—“Oh blessed Vargin, holy St. Dominick, Pether an' Paul the 'possel, what'll I do?—Oh, patther an' ave—you dirty *bosthoon*—blessed angels and holy marthyrs!—kneelin' there in the middle o' the flure as if nothing happened—look down on me this day, a poor vartuous *dissolute* woman!—Oh, you disgrace to me and all belonging to you,—and is it the impidence to ask my blessin' you have, when it's a whippin' at the cart's tail you

ought to get, you shameless scapegrace?”

She then went wringing her hands, and throwing them upwards in appeals to Heaven, while Andy still kept kneeling in the middle of the cabin, lost in wonder.

The widow ran to the door and called Oonah in.

“Who do you think that blackguard is marri'd to?” said the widow.

“Married!” exclaimed Oonah, growing pale.

“Ay, marri'd, and who to, do you think?—Why to Bridget *rhua*.”

Oonah screamed and clasped her hands.

Andy got up at last, and asked what they were making such a rout about; he wasn't the first man who married without asking his mother's leave; and wanted to know what they had to “say agen it.”

“Oh, you barefaced scandal o' the world!” cried the widow, “to ax sitch a question—to marry a thrampin' sthreel like that—a great red−headed jack—”

“She can't help her hair,” said Andy.

“I wish I could cut it off, and her head along with it, the sthrap! Oh, blessed Vargin! to have my daughter−in−law—”

“What?” said Andy, getting rather alarmed.

“That all the country knows is—”

“What?” cried Andy.

“Not a fair nor a market−town doesn't know her as well as—Oh, wirra! wirra!”

“Why you don't mane to say anything agen her charackther, do you?” said Andy.

“Charakther, indeed!” said his mother, with a sneer.

“By this an' that,” said Andy, “if she was the child unborn she couldn't make a greater hullabaloo about her charakther than she did the mornin' afther.”

“Afther what?” said his mother.

“Afther I was tuk away up to the hill beyant, and found her there, and— but I b'lieve I didn't tell you how it happened.”

“No,” said Oonah, coming forward, deadly pale, and listening anxiously, with a look of deep pity in her soft eyes.

Andy then related his adventure as the reader already knows it; and when it was ended, Oonah burst into tears and in passionate exclamations blamed herself for all that had happened, saying it was in the endeavour to save her that Andy had lost himself.

“Oh, Oonah! Oonah!” said Andy, with more meaning in his voice than the girl had ever heard before, “it isn't the loss of myself I mind, but I've lost *you* too. Oh, if you had ever given me a tendher word or look before this day, 't would never have happened, and that desaiver in the hills never could have *deludhered me*. And tell me, *lanna machree*, is my suspicions right in what I hear—tell me the worst at oncet—is she *non compos*?”

“Oh, I never heerd her called by that name before,” sobbed Oonah, “but she has a great many others just as bad.”

“Ow! ow! ow!” exclaimed Andy. “Now I know what Misther Dick laughed at; well, death before dishonour—I'll go 'list for a sojer, and never live with her!”

CHAPTER XLIV

It has been necessary in an earlier chapter to notice the strange freaks madness will sometimes play. It was then the object to show how strong affections of the mind will recall an erring judgment to its true balance; but, the action of the counterpoise growing weaker by time, the disease returns, and reason again kicks the beam. Such was the old dowager's case: the death of her son recalled her to herself; but a few days produced relapse, and she was as foolish as ever. Nevertheless, as Polonius remarks of Hamlet,

"There is method in his madness;"

so in the dowager's case there was method—not of a sane intention, as the old courtier implies of the Danish Prince, but of *in_sane birth—begot of a chivalrous feeling on an enfeebled mind.*

To make this clearly understood it is necessary to call attention to one other peculiarity of madness,—that, while it makes those under its influence liable to say and enact all sorts of nonsense on some subjects, it never impairs their powers of observation on those which chance to come within the reach of the un−diseased portion of the mind; and moreover, they are quite as capable of arriving at just conclusions upon what they *so* see and hear, as the most reasonable person, and, perhaps, in proportion as the reasoning power is limited within a smaller compass, so the capability of observation becomes stronger by being concentrated.

Such was the case with the old dowager, who, while Furlong was "doing devotion" to Augusta, and appeared the pink of faithful swains, saw very clearly that Furlong did not like it a bit, and would gladly be off his bargain. Yea, while the people in their sober senses on the same plane with the parties were taken in, the old lunatic, even from the toppling height of her own mad chimney−pot, could look down and see that Furlong would not marry Augusta if he could help it.

It *was* even so. Furlong had acted under the influence of terror when poor Augusta, shoved into his bedroom through the devilment of that rascally imp, Ratty, and found there, through the evil destiny of Andy, was flung into his arms by her enraged father, and accepted as his wife. The immediate hurry of the election had delayed the marriage—the duel and its consequences further interrupted "the happy event"—and O'Grady's death caused a further postponement. It was delicately hinted to Furlong, that when matters had gone so far as to the wedding−dresses being ready, that the sooner the contracting parties under such circumstances were married, the better. But Furlong, with that affectation of propriety which belongs to his time−serving tribe, pleaded the "regard to appearances"— "so soon after the ever−to−be−deplored event,"—and other such specious excuses, which were but covers to his own rascality, and used but to postpone the "wedding−day." The truth was, the moment Furlong had no longer the terrors of O'Grady's pistol before his eyes, he had resolved never to take so bad a match as that with Augusta appeared to be—indeed was, as far as regarded money; though Furlong should only have been too glad to be permitted to mix his plebeian blood with the daughter of a man of high family, whose crippled circumstances and consequent truckling conduct had reduced him to the wretched necessity of making *such a cur* as Furlong the inmate of his house. But so it was.

The family began at last to suspect the real state of the case, and all were surprised except the old dowager; she had expected what was coming, and had prepared herself for it. All her pistol practice was with a view to call Furlong to the "last arbitrament" for this slight to her house. Gusty was too young, she considered, for the duty; therefore she, in her fantastic way of looking at the matter, looked upon *herself* as the head of the family, and, as such, determined to resent the affront put upon it.

But of her real design the family at Neck−or−Nothing Hall had not the remotest notion. Of course, an old lady going about with a pistol, powder− flask, and bullets, and practising on the trunks of the trees in the park, could not pass without observation, and surmises there were on the subject; then her occasional exclamation of "Tremble, villain!" would escape her; and sometimes in the family circle, after sitting for a while in a state of abstraction, she would lift her attenuated hand armed with a knitting−needle or a ball of worsted, and assuming the action of poising a pistol, execute a smart *click* with her tongue, and say, "I hit him that time."

These exclamations, indicative of vengeance, were supposed at length by the family to apply to Edward O'Connor, but excited pity rather than alarm. When, however, one morning, the dowager was nowhere to be found, and Ratty and the pistols had also disappeared, an inquiry was instituted as to the old lady's whereabouts,

and Mount Eskar was one of the first places where she was sought, but without success; and all other inquiries were equally unavailing.

The old lady had contrived, with that cunning peculiar to insane people, to get away from the house at an early hour in the morning, unknown to all except Ratty, to whom she confided her intention, and he managed to get her out of the domain unobserved, and thence together they proceeded to Dublin in a post−chaise. It was the day after this secret expedition was undertaken that Mr. Furlong was sitting in his private apartment at the Castle, doing "the state some service" by reading the morning papers, which heavy official duty he relieved occasionally by turning to some scented notes which lay near a morocco writing−case, whence they had been drawn by the lisping dandy to flatter his vanity. He had been carrying on a correspondence with an anonymous fair one, in whose heart, if her words might be believed, Furlong had made desperate havoc.

It happened, however, that these notes were all fictitious, being the work of Tom Loftus, who enjoyed playing on a puppy as much as playing on the organ; and he had the satisfaction of seeing Furlong going through his paces in certain squares he had appointed, wearing a flower of Tom's choice and going through other antics which Tom had demanded under the signature of "Phillis," written in a delicate hand on pink satin note− paper with a lace border; one of the last notes suggested the possibility of a visit from the lady, and, after assurances of "secrecy and honour" had been returned by Furlong, he was anxiously expecting "what would become of it;" and filled with pleasing reflections of what "a devil of a fellow" he was among the ladies, he occasionally paced the room before a handsome dressing−glass (with which his apartment was always furnished), and ran his fingers through his curls with a complacent smile. While thus occupied, and in such a frame of mind, the hall messenger entered the apartment, and said a lady wished to see him.

"A lady!" exclaimed Furlong, in delighted surprise.

"She won't give her name, sir, but—"

"Show her up! show her up!" exclaimed the Lothario, eagerly.

All anxiety, he awaited the appearance of his donna; and quite a donna she seemed, as a commanding figure, dressed in black, and enveloped in a rich veil of the same, glided into the room.

"How vewy Spanish!" exclaimed Furlong, as he advanced to meet his incognita, who, as soon as she entered, locked the door, and withdrew the key.

"Quite pwactised in such secwet affairs," said Furlong slily. "Fai' lady, allow me to touch you' fai' hand, and lead you to a seat."

The mysterious stranger made no answer; but lifting her long veil, turned round on the lisping dandy, who staggered back, when the dowager O'Grady appeared before him, drawn up to her full height, and anything but an agreeable expression in her eye. She stalked up towards him, something in the style of a spectre in a romance, which she was not very unlike; and as she advanced, he retreated, until he got the table between him and this most unwelcome apparition.

"I am come," said the dowager, with an ominous tone of voice.

"Vewy happy of the hono', I am sure, Mistwess O'Gwady," faltered Furlong.

"The avenger has come." Furlong opened his eyes. "I have come to wash the stain!" said she, tapping her fingers in a theatrical manner on the table, and, as it happened, she pointed to a large blotch of ink on the table−cover. Furlong opened his eyes wider than ever, and thought this the queerest bit of madness he ever heard of; however, thinking it best to humour her, he answered, "Yes, it was a little awkwa'dness of mine—I upset the inkstand the othe' day."

"Do you mock me, sir?" said she, with increasing bitterness.

"La, no! Mistwess O'Gwady."

"I have come, I say, to wash out in your blood the stain you have dared to put on the name of O'Grady."

Furlong gasped with mingled amazement and fear.

"Tremble, villain!" she said; and she pointed toward him her long attenuated finger with portentous solemnity.

[Illustration: The Challenge]

"I weally am quite at a loss, Mistwess O'Gwady, to compwehend—"

Before he could finish his sentence, the dowager had drawn from the depths of her side−pockets a brace of pistols, and presenting them to Furlong, said, "Be at a loss no longer, except the loss of life which may ensue: take your choice of weapons, sir."

“Gwacious Heaven!” exclaimed Furlong, trembling from head to foot.

“You won't choose, then?” said the dowager. “Well, there's one for you;” and she laid a pistol before him with as courteous a manner as if she were making him a birthday present.

Furlong stared down upon it with a look of horror.

“Now we must toss for choice of ground,” said the dowager. “I have no money about me, for I paid my last half−crown to the post−boy, but this will do as well for a toss as anything else;” and she laid her hands on the dressing−glass as she spoke. “Now the call shall be 'safe,' or 'smash;' whoever calls 'safe,' if the glass comes down unbroken, has the choice, and *vice versa*. I call first—' *Smash*,'“ said the dowager, as she flung up the dressing−glass, which fell in shivers on the floor. “I have won,” said she; “oblige me, sir, by standing in that far corner. I have the light in my back—and you will have something else in yours before long; take your ground, sir.”

Furlong, finding himself thus cooped up with a mad woman, in an agony of terror suddenly bethought himself of instances he had heard of escape, under similar circumstances, by coinciding to a certain extent with the views of the insane people, and suggested to the dowager that he hoped she would not insist on a duel without their having a “friend" present.

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said the old lady: “I quite forgot that form, in the excitement of the moment, though I have not overlooked the necessity altogether, and have come provided with one.”

“Allow me to wing for him,” said Furlong, rushing to the bell.

“Stop!” exclaimed the dowager, levelling her pistol at the bell−pull; “touch it, and you are a dead man!”

Furlong stood riveted to the spot where his rush had been arrested.

“No interruption, sir, till this little affair is settled. Here is my friend,” she added, putting her hand into her pocket and pulling out the wooden cuckoo of her clock. “My little bird, sir, will see fair between us;” and she perched the painted wooden thing, with a bit of feather grotesquely sticking up out of its nether end, on the morocco letter−case.

“Oh, Lord!” said Furlong.

“He's a gentleman of the nicest honour, sir!” said the dowager, pacing back to the window.

Furlong took advantage of the opportunity of her back being turned, and rushed at the bell, which he pulled with great fury.

The dowager wheeled round with haste. “So you have rung,” said she, “but it shall not avail you—the door is locked; take your weapon, sir,— quick!—what!—a coward!”

“Weally, Mistwess O'Gwady, I cannot think of deadly arbitrament with a lady.”

“Less would you like it with a man, *poltroon*!” said she, with an exaggerated expression of contempt in her manner. “However,” she added, “if you *are* a coward, you shall have a coward's punishment.” She went to a corner where stood a great variety of handsome canes, and laying hold of one, began soundly to thrash Furlong, who feared to make any resistance or attempt to disarm her of the cane, for the pistol was yet in her other hand.

The bell was answered by the servant, who, on finding the door locked, and hearing the row inside, began to knock and inquire loudly what was the matter. The question was more loudly answered by Furlong, who roared out, “Bweak the door! bweak the door!” interlarding his directions with cries of “mu'der!”

The door at length was forced, Furlong rescued, and the old lady separated from him. She became perfectly calm the moment other persons appeared, and was replacing the pistols in her pocket, when Furlong requested the “dweadful weapons” might be seized. The old lady gave up the pistols very quietly, but laid hold of her bird and put it back into her pocket.

“This is a dweadful violation!” said Furlong, “and my life is not safe unless she is bound ove' to keep the peace.”

“Pooh! pooh!” said one of the gentlemen from the adjacent office, who came to the scene on hearing the uproar, “binding over an old lady to keep the peace—nonsense!”

“I insist upon it,” said Furlong, with that stubbornness for which fools are so remarkable.

“Oh—very well!” said the sensible gentleman, who left the room.

A party, pursuant to Furlong's determination, proceeded to the head police−office close by the Castle, and a large mob gathered as they went down Cork−hill and followed them to Exchange−court, where they crowded before them in front of the office, so that it was with difficulty the principals could make their way through the

dense mass.

At length, however, they entered the office; and when Major Sir heard any gentleman attached to the Government wanted his assistance, of course he put any other case aside, and had the accuser and accused called up before him.

Furlong made his charge of assault and battery, with intent to murder, &c., &c. “Some mad old rebel, I suppose,” said Major Sir. “Do you remember '98, ma'am?” said the major.

“Indeed I do, sir—and I remember *you* too: Major Sir I have the honour to address, if I don't mistake.”

“Yes, ma'am. What then?”

“I remember well in '98 when you were searching for rebels, you thought a man was concealed in a dairy−yard in the neighbourhood of my mother's house, major, in Stephen's Green; and you thought he was hid in a hay− rick, and ordered your sergeant to ask for the loan of a spit from my mother's kitchen to probe the haystack.”

“Oh! then, madam, your mother was *loyal*, I suppose.”

“Most loyal, sir.”

“Give the lady a chair,” said the major.

“Thank you, I don't want it—but, major, when you asked for the spit, my mother thought you were going to practise one of your delightfully ingenious bits of punishment, and asked the sergeant *who it was you were going to roast*?”

The major grew livid on the bench where he sat, at this awkward reminiscence of one of his friends, and a dead silence reigned through the crowded office. He recovered himself, however, and addressed Mrs. O'Grady in a mumbling manner, telling her she must give security to keep the peace, herself—and find friends as sureties. On asking her had she any friends to appear for her, she declared she had.

“A gentleman of the nicest honour, sir,” said the dowager, pulling her cuckoo from her pocket, and holding it up in view of the whole office.

A shout of laughter, of course, followed. The affair became at once understood in its true light; a mad old lady—a paltry coward—&c., &c. Those who know the excitability and fun of an Irish mob will not wonder that, when the story got circulated from the office to the crowd without, which it did with lightning rapidity, the old lady, on being placed in a hackney−coach which was sent for, was hailed with a chorus of “Cuckoo!” by the multitude, one half of which ran after the coach as long as they could keep pace with it, shouting forth the spring−time call, and the other half followed Furlong to the Castle, with hisses and other more articulate demonstrations of their contempt.

CHAPTER XLV

The fat and fair Widow Flanagan had, at length, given up shilly−shallying, and yielding to the fervent entreaties of Tom Durfy, had consented to name the happy day. She *would* have some little ways of her own about it, however, and instead of being married in the country, insisted on the nuptial knot being tied in Dublin. Thither the widow repaired with her swain to complete the stipulated time of residence within some metropolitan parish before the wedding could take place. In the meanwhile they enjoyed all the gaiety the capital presented, the time glided swiftly by, and Tom was within a day of being made a happy man, when, as he was hastening to the lodgings of the fair widow, who was waiting with her bonnet and shawl on to be escorted to the botanical gardens at Glasnevin, he was accosted by an odd−looking person of somewhat sinister aspect.

"I believe I have the honour of addressing Mister Durfy, sir?" Tom answered in the affirmative. "*Thomas* Durfy, Esquire, I think, sir?"

"Yes."

"This is for you, sir," he said, handing Tom a piece of dirty printed paper, and at the same time laying his hand on Tom's shoulder and executing a smirking sort of grin, which he meant to be the pattern of politeness, added, "You'll excuse me, sir, but I arrest you under a warrant from the High Sheriff of the city of Dublin; always sorry, sir, for a gintleman in defficulties, but it's my duty."

"You're a bailiff, then?" said Tom.

"Sir," said the bum,

"'Honour and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part—there all the honour lies.'"

"I meant no offence," said Tom. "I only meant—"

"I understand, sir—I understand. These little defficulties startles gintlemen at first—you've not been used to arrest, I see, sir?"

"Never in my life did such a thing happen before," said Tom. "I live generally, thank God, where a bailiff daren't show his face."

"Ah, sir," said the bailiff with a grin, "them rustic habits betrays the children o' nature often when they come to town; but we are *so fisticated* here in the metropolis, that we lay our hands on strangers aisy. But you'd better not stand in the street, sir, or people will understand it's an arrest, sir; and I suppose you wouldn't like the exposure. I can simperise in a gintle−man's feelings, sir. If you walk aisy on, sir, and don't attempt to escape or rescue, I'll keep a gentlemanlike distance."

Tom walked on in great perplexity for a few steps, not knowing what to do. The hour of his rendezvous had struck; he knew how impatient of neglect the widow always was; he at one moment thought of asking the bailiff to allow him to proceed to her lodgings at once, there boldly to avow what had taken place and ask her to discharge the debt; but this his pride would not allow him to do. As he came to the corner of a street, he got a tap on the elbow from the bailiff, who, with a jerking motion of his thumb and a wink, said in a confidential tone to Tom, "Down this street, sir— that's the way to the *pres'n* (prison)."

"Prison!" exclaimed Tom, halting involuntarily at the word.

"Shove on, sir—shove on!" hastily repeated the sheriff's officer, urging his orders by a nudge or two on Tom's elbow.

"Don't shove me, sir!" said Tom, rather angrily, "or by G—"

"Aisy, sir—aisy!" said the bailiff; "though I feel for the defficulties of a gintleman, the caption must be made, sir. If you don't like the pris'n, I have a nice little room o' my own, sir, where you can wait, for a small consideration, until you get bail."

"I'll go there, then," said Tom. "Go through as private streets as you can."

"Give me half−a−guinea for my trouble, sir, and I'll ambulate you through lanes every *fut* o' the way."

"Very well," said Tom.

They now struck into a shabby street, and thence wended through stable lanes, filthy alleys, up greasy broken steps, through one close, and down steps in another—threaded dark passages whose debouchures were blocked up

with posts to prevent vehicular conveyance, the accumulated dirt of years sensible to the tread from its lumpy unevenness, and the stagnant air rife with pestilence. Tom felt increasing disgust at every step he proceeded, but anything to him appeared better than being seen in the public streets in such company; for, until they got into these labyrinths of nastiness, Tom thought he saw in the looks of every passer−by, as plainly told as if the words were spoken, “There goes a fellow under the care of the bailiff.” In these by−ways, he had not any objection to speak to his companion, and for the first time asked him what he was arrested for.

“At the suit of Mr. M'Kail, sir.”

“Oh! the tailor?” said Tom.

“Yes, sir,” said the bailiff. “And if you would not consider it trifling with the feelings of a gintleman in defficulties, I would make the playful observation, sir, that it's quite in character to be arrested at the *suit* of a tailor. He! he! he!”

“You're a wag, I see,” said Tom.

“Oh no, sir, only a poetic turn: a small affection I have certainly for Judy Mot, but my rale passion is the muses. We are not far now, sir, from my little bower of repose—which is the name I give my humble abode—small, but snug, sir. You'll see another gintleman there, sir, before you. He is waitin' for bail these three or four days, sir—can't pay as he ought for the 'commodation, but he's a friend o' mine, I may almost say, sir—a litherary gintleman—them litherary gintlemen is always in defficulties mostly. I suppose you're a litherary gintleman, sir—though you're rather ginteely dhressed for one?”

“No,” said Tom, “I am not.”

“I thought you wor, sir, by being acquainted with this other gintleman.”

“An acquaintance of mine!” said Tom, with surprise.

“Yes, sir. In short it was through him I found out where you wor, sir. I have had the wret agen you for some time, but couldn't make you off, till my friend says I must carry a note from him to you.”

“Where is the note?” inquired Tom.

“Not ready yet, sir. It's po'thry he's writin'—something 'pithy' he said, and 'lame' too. I dunna how a thing could be pithy and lame together, but them potes has hard words at command.”

“Then you came away without the note?”

“Yis, sir. As soon as I found out where you wor stopping I ran off directly on Mr. M'Kail's little business. You'll excuse the liberty, sir; but we must all mind our professions; though, indeed, sir, if you b'lieve me, I'd rather nab a rhyme than a gintleman any day; and if I could get on the press I'd quit the shoulder−tapping profession.”

Tom cast an eye of wonder on the bailiff, which the latter comprehended at once; for with habitual nimbleness he could nab a man's thoughts as fast as his person. “I know what you're thinkin', sir—could one of my profession pursue the muses? Don't think, sir, I mane I could write the 'laders' or the pollitik'l articles, but the criminal cases, sir—the robberies and offinces—with the watchhouse cases—together with a little po'thry now and then. I think I could be useful, sir, and do better than some of the chaps that pick up their ha'pence that way. But here's my place, sir—my little bower of repose.”

He knocked at the door of a small tumble−down house in a filthy lane, the one window it presented in front being barred with iron. Some bolts were drawn inside, and though the man who opened the door was forbidding in his aspect, he did not refuse to let Tom in. The portal was hastily closed and bolted after they had entered. The smell of the house was pestilential— the entry dead dark.

“Give me your hand, sir,” said the bailiff, leading Tom forward. They ascended some creaking stairs, and the bailiff, fumbling for some time with a key at a door, unlocked it and shoved it open, and then led in his captive. Tom saw a shabby−genteel sort of person, whose back was towards him, directing a letter.

“Ah, Goggins!” said the writer, “you're come back in the nick of time. I have finished now, and you may take the letter to Mister Durfy.”

“You may give it to him yourself, sir,” replied Goggins, “for here he is.”

“Indeed!” said the writer, turning round.

“What!” exclaimed Tom Durfy, in surprise; “James Reddy!”

“Even so,” said James, with a sentimental air:

“'The paths of glory lead but to the grave.'

Literature is a bad trade, my dear Tom!—'tis an ungrateful world—men of the highest aspirations may lie in gaol for all the world cares; not that you come within the pale of the worthless ones; this is good−natured of you to come and see a friend in trouble. You deserve, my dear Tom, that you should have been uppermost in my thoughts; for here is a note I have just written to you, enclosing a copy of verses to you on your marriage —in short, it is an epithalamium."

"That's what I told you, sir," said Goggins to Tom.

"May the divil burn you and your epithalamium!" said Tom Durfy, stamping round the little room.

James Reddy stared in wonder, and Goggins roared, laughing.

"A pretty compliment you've paid me, Mister Reddy, this fine morning," said Tom; "you tell a bailiff where I live, that you may send your infernal verses to me, and you get me arrested."

"Oh, murder!" exclaimed James. "I'm very sorry, my dear Tom; but, at the same time, 't is a capital incident! How it would work up in a farce!"

"How funny it is!" said Tom in a rage, eyeing James as if he could have eaten him. "Bad luck to all poetry and poetasters! By the 'tarnal war, I wish every poet, from Homer down, was put into a mortar and pounded to death!"

James poured forth expressions of sorrow for the mischance; and extremely ludicrous it was to see one man making apologies for trying to pay his friend a compliment; his friend swearing at him for his civility, and the bailiff grinning at them both.

In this triangular dilemma we will leave them for the present.

CHAPTER XLVI

Edward O'Connor, on hearing from Gustavus of the old dowager's disappearance from Neck−or−Nothing Hall, joined in the eager inquiries which were made about her; and *his* being directed with more method and judgment than those of others, their result was more satisfactory. He soon “took up the trail,” to use an Indian phrase, and he and Gusty were not many hours in posting after the old lady. They arrived in town early in the morning, and lost no time in casting about for information.

One of the first places Edward inquired at was the inn where the postchaise generally drove to from the house where the old dowager had obtained her carriage in the country; but there no trace was to be had. Next, the principal hotels were referred to, but as yet without success; when, as they turned into one of the leading streets in continuance of their search, their attention was attracted by a crowd swaying to and fro in that peculiar manner which indicates there is a fight inside of it. Great excitement prevailed on the verge of the crowd, where exclamations escaped from those who could get a peep at the fight.

“The little chap has great heart!” cried one.

“But the sweep is the biggest,” said another.

“Well done, *Horish*!” [Footnote: The name of a celebrated sweep in Ireland, whose name is applied to the whole.] cried a blackguard, who enjoyed the triumph of his fellow. “Bravo! little fellow,” rejoined a genteel person, who rejoiced in some successful hit of the other combatant. There is an inherent love in men to see a fight, which Edward O'Connor shared with inferior men; and if *he* had not peeped into the ring, most assuredly Gusty would. What was their astonishment, when they got a glimpse of the pugilists, to perceive Ratty was one of them— his antagonist being a sweep, taller by a head, and no bad hand at the “noble science.”

Edward's first impulse was to separate them, but Gusty requested he would not, saying that he saw by Ratty's eye he was able to “lick the fellow.” Ratty certainly showed great fight; what the sweep had in superior size was equalized by the superior “game” of the gentleman−boy, to whom the indomitable courage of a high−blooded race had descended, and who would sooner have died than yield. Besides, Ratty was not deficient in the use of his “bunch of fives,” hit hard for his size, and was very agile: the sweep sometimes made a rush, grappled, and got a fall; but he never went in without getting something from Ratty to “remember him,” and was not always uppermost. At last, both were so far punished, and the combat not being likely to be speedily ended (for the sweep was no craven), that the bystanders interfered, declaring that “they ought to be separated,” and they were.

While the crowd was dispersing, Edward called a coach; and before Ratty could comprehend how the affair was managed, he was shoved into it and driven from the scene of action. Ratty had a confused sense of hearing loud shouts—of being lifted somewhere—of directions given—the rattle of iron steps clinking sharply—two or three fierce bangs of a door that wouldn't shut, and then an awful shaking, which roused him up from the corner of the vehicle into which he had fallen in the first moment of exhaustion. Ratty “shook his feathers,” dragged his hair from out of his eyes, which were getting very black indeed, and applied his handkerchief to his nose, which was much in need of that delicate attention; and when the sense of perfect vision was restored to him, which was not for some time (all the colours of the rainbow dancing before Ratty's eyes for many seconds after the fight), what was his surprise to see Edward O'Connor and Gusty sitting on the opposite seat!

It was some time before Ratty could quite comprehend his present situation; but as soon as he was made sensible of it, and could answer, the first questions asked of him were about his grandmother. Ratty fortunately remembered the name of the hotel where she put up, though he had left it as soon as the old lady proceeded to the Castle—had lost his way—and got engaged in a quarrel with a sweep in the meantime.

The coach was ordered to drive to the hotel named; and how the fight occurred was the next question.

“The sweep was passing by, and I called him 'snow−ball,'“ said Ratty; “and the blackguard returned an impudent answer, and I hit him.”

“You had no right to call him 'snow−ball,'“ said Edward.

“I always called the sweeps 'snow−ball' down at the Hall,” said Ratty, “and they never answered.”

“When you are on your own territory you may say what you please to your dependents, Ratty, and they dare not answer; or to use a vulgar saying, 'A cock may crow on his own dunghill.'“

“I'm no dunghill cock!” said Ratty, fiercely.

“Indeed, you're not,” said Edward, laying his hand kindly on the boy's shoulder; “you have plenty of courage.”

“I'd have licked him,” said Ratty, “if they'd have let me have two or three rounds more.”

“My dear boy, other things are needful in this world besides courage. Prudence, temper, and forbearance are required; and this may be a lesson to you, to remember, that, when you get abroad in the world, you are very little cared about, however great your consequence may be at home; and I am sure you cannot be proud about your having got into a quarrel *with a sweep*.”

Ratty made no answer—his blood began to cool—he became every moment more sensible that he had received heavy blows. His eyes became more swollen, he snuffled more in his speech, and his blackened condition altogether, from gutter, soot, and thrashing, convinced him a fight with a sweep was *not* an enviable achievement.

The coach drew up at the hotel. Edward left Gusty to see about the dowager, and made an appointment for Gusty to meet him at their own lodgings in an hour; while he in the interim should call on Dick Dawson, who was in town on his way to London.

Edward shook hands with Ratty and bade him kindly good bye. “You're a stout fellow, Ratty,” said he, “but remember this old saying, ' *Quarrelsome dogs get dirty coats*.'“

Edward now proceeded to Dick's lodgings, and found him engaged in reading a note from Tom Durfy, dated from the “Bower of Repose,” and requesting Dick's aid in his present difficulty.

“Here's a pretty kettle of fish,” said Dick: “Tom Durfy, who is engaged to dine with me to−day to take leave of his bachelor life, as he is going to be married to−morrow, is arrested, and now in *quod*, and wants me to bail him.”

“The shortest way is to pay the money at once,” said Edward; “is it much?”

“That I don't know; but I have not a great deal about me, and what I have I want for my journey to London and my expenses there—not but what I'd help Tom if I could.”

“He must not be allowed to remain *there*, however we manage to get him out,” said Edward; “perhaps I can help you in the affair.”

“You're always a good fellow, Ned,” said Dick, shaking his hand warmly.

Edward escaped from hearing any praise of himself by proposing they should repair at once to the sponging−house, and see how matters stood. Dick lamented he should be called away at such a moment, for he was just going to get his wine ready for the party—particularly some champagne, which he was desirous of seeing well iced; but as he could not wait to do it himself, he called Andy, to give him directions about it, and set off with Edward to the relief of Tom Durfy.

Andy was once more in service in the Egan family; for the Squire, on finding him still more closely linked by his marriage with the desperate party whose influence over Andy was to be dreaded, took advantage of Andy's disgust against the woman who had entrapped him, and offered to take him off to London instead of enlisting; and as Andy believed he would be there sufficiently out of the way of the false Bridget, he came off at once to Dublin with Dick, who was the pioneer of the party to London.

Dick gave Andy the necessary directions for icing the champagne, which he set apart and pointed out most particularly to our hero, lest he should make a mistake and perchance ice the port instead.

After Edward and Dick had gone, Andy commenced operations according to orders. He brought a large tub up−stairs containing rough ice, which excited Andy's wonder, for he never had known till now that ice was preserved for and applied to such a use, for an ice−house did not happen to be attached to any establishment in which he had served.

“Well, this is the quarest thing I ever heerd of,” said Andy. “Musha! what outlandish inventions the quolity has among them! They're not contint with wine, but they must have ice along with it—and in a tub, too! —just like pigs!—throth it's a dirty thrick, I think. Well, here goes!” said he; and Andy opened a bottle of champagne, and poured it into the tub with the ice. “How it fizzes!” said Andy, “Faix, it's almost as lively as the soda−wather that bothered me long ago. Well, I know more about things now; sure it's wondherful how a man improves with practice!”—and another bottle of champagne was emptied into the tub as he spoke. Thus, with several other complacent comments upon his own proficiency, Andy poured half−a−dozen of champagne into the tub of ice, and remarked, when he had finished his work, that he thought it would be “mighty cowld on their stomachs.”

Dick and Edward all this time were on their way to the relief of Tom Durfy, who, though he had cooled down from the boiling−pitch to which the misadventure of the morning had raised him, was still *simmering*, with his elbows planted on the rickety table in Mr. Goggins' “bower,” and his chin resting on his clenched hands. It was the very state of mind in which Tom was most dangerous.

At the other side of the table sat James Reddy, intently employed in writing; his pursed mouth and knitted brows bespoke a labouring state of thought, and the various crossings, interlinings, and blottings gave additional evidence of the same, while now and then a rush at a line which was knocked off in a hurry, with slashing dashes of the pen, and fierce after−crossings of *t's*, and determined dottings of *i's*, declared some thought suddenly seized, and executed with bitter triumph.

“You seem very *happy in yourself* in what you are writing,” said Tom. “What is it? Is it another epithalamium?”

“It is a caustic article against the successful men of the day,” said Reddy; “they have no merit, sir—none. 'T is nothing but luck has placed them where they are, and they ought to be exposed.” He then threw down his pen as he spoke, and, after a silence of some minutes, suddenly put this question to Tom:

“What do you think of the world?”

“'Faith, I think it so pleasant a place,” said Tom, “that I'm confoundedly vexed at being kept out of it by being locked up here; and that cursed bailiff is so provokingly free−and−easy—coming in here every ten minutes, and making himself at home.”

“Why, as for that matter, it is his home, you must remember.”

“But while a gentleman is here for a period,” said Tom, “this room ought to be considered his, and that fellow has no business here—and then his bows and scrapes, and talking about the feelings of a gentleman, and all that—'t is enough to make a dog beat his father. Curse him! I'd like to choke him.”

“Oh! that's merely his manner,” said James.

“Want of manners, you mean,” said Tom. “Hang me, if he comes up to me with his rascally familiarity again, but I'll kick him down stairs.”

“My dear fellow, you are excited,” said Reddy; “don't let these sublunary trifles ruffle your temper—you see how I bear it; and to recall you to yourself, I will remind you of the question we started from, 'What do you think of the world?' There's a general question—a broad question, upon which one may talk with temper and soar above the petty grievances of life in the grand consideration of so ample a subject. You see me here, a prisoner like yourself, but I can talk of *the world*. Come, be a calm philosopher, like me! Answer, what do you think of the world?”

“I've told you already,” said Tom; “it's a capital place, only for the bailiffs.”

“I can't agree with you,” said James. “I think it one vast pool of stagnant wretchedness, where the *malaria* of injustice holds her scales suspended, to poison rising talent by giving an undue weight to existing prejudices.”

To this lucid and good−tempered piece of philosophy, Tom could only answer, “You know I am no poet, and I cannot argue with you but, 'pon my soul, I *have* known, and *do* know, some uncommon good fellows in the world.”

“You're wrong, you're wrong, my unsuspecting friend. 'T is a bad world, and no place for susceptible minds. Jealousy pursues talent like its shadow—superiority alone wins for you the hatred of inferior men. For instance, why am *I* here? The editor of *my* paper will not allow *my* articles always to appear;—prevents their insertion, lest the effect they would make would cause inquiry, and tend to *my* distinction; and the consequence is, that the paper *I* came to *uphold* in Dublin is deprived of *my* articles, and *I* don't get paid; while *I* see *inferior* men, without asking for it, loaded with favour; *they* are abroad in affluence, and *I* in captivity and poverty. But one comfort is, even in disgrace I can write, and they shall get a slashing.”

Thus spoke the calm philosopher, who gave Tom a lecture on patience.

Tom was no great conjuror; but at that moment, like Audrey, “he thanked the gods he was not poetical.” If there be any one thing more than another to make an “every−day man” content with his average lot, it is the exhibition of ambitious inferiority, striving for distinction it can never attain; just given sufficient perception to desire the glory of success, without power to measure the strength that can achieve it; like some poor fly, which beats its head against a pane of glass, seeing the sunshine beyond, but incapable of perceiving the subtle medium which intervenes— too delicate for its limited sense to comprehend, but too strong for its limited power to pass.

But though Tom felt satisfaction at that moment, he had too good feeling to wound the self−love of the vain creature before him; so, instead of speaking what he thought, viz., “What business have you to attempt literature, you conceited fool?” he tried to wean him civilly from his folly by saying, “Then come back to the country, James; if you find jealous rivals *here*, you know you were always admired *there*.”

“No, sir,” said James; “even there my merit was unacknowledged.”

“No! no!” said Tom.

“Well, underrated, at least. Even there, *that* Edward O'Connor, somehow or other, I never could tell why—I never saw his great talents— but somehow or other, people got it into their heads that he was clever.”

“I tell you what it is,” said Tom, earnestly, “Ned−of−the−Hill has got into a better place than people's *heads*—he has got into their *hearts*!”

“There it is!” exclaimed James, indignantly. “You have caught up the cuckoo−cry—the heart! Why, sir, what merit is there in writing about feelings which any common labourer can comprehend? There's no poetry in that; true poetry lies in a higher sphere, where you have difficulty in following the flight of the poet, and possibly may not be fortunate enough to understand him—that's poetry, sir.”

“I told you I am no poet,” said Tom; “but all I know is, I have felt my heart warm to some of Edward's songs, and, by jingo, I have seen the women's eyes glisten, and their cheeks flush or grow pale, as they have heard them—and that's poetry enough for me.”

“Well, let Mister O'Connor enjoy his popularity, sir, if popularity it may be called, in a small country circle—let him enjoy it—I don't envy him *his*, though I think he was rather jealous about mine.”

“Ned jealous!” exclaimed Tom, in surprise.

“Yes, jealous; I never heard him say a kind word of any verses I ever wrote in my life; and I am certain he has most unkind feelings towards me.”

“I tell you what it is,” said Tom, “getting up” a bit; “I told you I don't understand poetry, but I *do* understand what's an infinitely better thing, and that's fine, generous, manly feeling; and if there's a human being in the world incapable of wronging another in his mind or heart, or readier to help his fellow−man, it is Edward O'Connor: so say no more, James, if you please.”

Tom had scarcely uttered the last word, when the key was turned in the door.

“Here's that infernal bailiff again!” said Tom, whose irritability, increased by Reddy's paltry egotism and injustice, was at its boiling−pitch once more. He planted himself firmly in his chair, and putting on his fiercest frown, was determined to confront Mister Goggins with an aspect that should astonish him.

The door opened, and Mister Goggins made his appearance, presenting to the gentlemen in the room the hinder portion of his person, which made several indications of courtesy performed by the other half of his body, while he uttered the words, “Don't be astonished, gentlemen; you'll be used to it by−and−by.” And with these words he kept backing towards Tom, making these nether demonstrations of civility, till Tom could plainly see the seams in the back of Mr. Goggins's pantaloons.

Tom thought this was some new touch of the “free−and−easy” on Mister Goggins's part, and, losing all command of himself, he jumped from his chair, and with a vigorous kick gave Mister Goggins such a lively impression of his desire that he should leave the room, that Mister Goggins went head foremost down the stairs, pitching his whole weight upon Dick Dawson and Edward O'Connor, who were ascending the dark stairs, and to whom all his bows had been addressed. Overwhelmed with astonishment and twelve stone of bailiff, they were thrown back into the hall, and an immense uproar in the passage ensued.

Edward and Dick were near coming in for some hard usage from Goggins, conceiving it might be a preconcerted attempt on the part of his prisoners and their newly arrived friends to achieve a rescue; and while he was rolling about on the ground, he roared to his evil−visaged janitor to look to the door first, and keep him from being “murthered" after.

Fortunately no evil consequences ensued, until matters could be explained in the hall, and Edward and Dick were introduced to the upper room, from which Goggins had been so suddenly ejected.

There the bailiff demanded in a very angry tone the cause of Tom's conduct; and when it was found to be *only* a mutual misunderstanding —that Goggins wouldn't take a liberty with a gentleman “in defficulties” for the world, and that Tom wouldn't hurt a fly, “only under a mistake” —matters were cleared up to the satisfaction of all parties, and the real business of the meeting commenced:—that was to pay Tom's debt out of hand; and when

the bailiff saw all demands, fees included, cleared off, the clouds from his brow cleared off also, he was the most amiable of sheriff's officers, and all his sentimentality returned.

Edward did not seem quite to sympathise with his amiability, so Goggins returned to the charge, while Tom and Dick were exchanging a few words with James Reddy.

“You see, sir,” said Goggins, “in the first place, it is quite beautiful to see the mind in adversity bearing up against the little antediluvian afflictions that will happen occasionally, and then how fine it is to remark the spark of generosity that kindles in the noble heart and rushes to the assistance of the destitute! I do assure you, sir, it is a most beautiful sight to see the gentlemen in defficulties waitin' here for their friends to come to their relief, like the last scene in Blue Beard, where sister Ann waves her han'kerchief from the tower —the tyrant is slain—and virtue rewarded!

“Ah, sir!” said he to Edward O'Connor, whose look of disgust at the wretched den caught the bailiff's attention, “don't entertain an antifassy from first imprissions, which is often desaivin'. I do pledge you my honour, sir, there is no place in the 'varsal world where human nature is visible in more attractive colours than in this humble retrait.”

Edward could not conceal a smile at the fellow's absurdity, though his sense of the ridiculous could not overcome the disgust with which the place inspired him. He gave an admonitory touch to the elbow of Dick Dawson, who, with his friend Tom Durfy, followed Edward from the room, the bailiff bringing up the rear, and relocking the door on the unfortunate James Reddy, who was left “alone in his glory,” to finish his slashing article against the successful men of the day. Nothing more than words of recognition had passed between Reddy and Edward. In the first place, Edward's appearance at the very moment the other was indulging in illiberal observations upon him rendered the ill−tempered poetaster dumb; and Edward attributed this distance of manner to a feeling of shyness which Reddy might entertain at being seen in such a place, and therefore had too much good breeding to thrust his civility on a man who seemed to shrink from it; but when he left the house he expressed his regret to his companions at the poor fellow's unfortunate situation.

It touched Tom Durfy's heart to hear these expressions of compassion coming from the lips of the man he had heard maligned a few minutes before by the very person commiserated, and it raised his opinion higher of Edward, whose hand he now shook with warm expressions of thankfulness on his own account, for the prompt service rendered to him. Edward made as light of his own kindness as he could, and begged Tom to think nothing of such a trifle.

“One word I will say to you, Durfy, and I'm sure you'll pardon me for it.”

“Could you say a thing to offend me?” was the answer.

“You are to be married soon, I understand?”

“To−morrow,” said Tom.

“Well, my dear Durfy, if you owe any more money, take a real friend's advice, and tell your pretty good−hearted widow the whole amount of your debts before you marry her.”

“My dear O'Connor,” said Tom, “the money you've lent me now is all I owe in the world; 't was a tailor's bill, and I quite forgot it. You know, no one ever thinks of a tailor's bill. Debts, indeed!” added Tom, with surprise; “my dear fellow, I never could be much in debt, for the devil a one would trust me.”

“An excellent reason for your unencumbered state,” said Edward, “and I hope you pardon me.”

“Pardon!” exclaimed Tom, “I esteem you for your kind and manly frankness.”

In the course of their progress towards Dick's lodgings, Edward reverted to James Reddy's wretched condition, and found it was but some petty debt for which he was arrested. He lamented, in common with Dick and Tom, the infatuation which made him desert a duty he could profitably perform by assisting his father in his farming concerns, to pursue a literary path, which could never be any other to him than one of thorns.

As Edward had engaged to meet Gusty in an hour, he parted from his companions and pursued his course alone. But, instead of proceeding immediately homeward, he retraced his steps to the den of the bailiff and gave a quiet tap at the door. Mister Goggins himself answered to the knock, and began a loud and florid welcome to Edward, who stopped his career of eloquence by laying a finger on his lip in token of silence. A few words sufficed to explain the motive of his visit. He wished to ascertain the sum for which the gentleman up−stairs was detained. The bailiff informed him; and the money necessary to procure the captive's liberty was placed in his hand.

The bailiff cast one of his melodramatic glances at Edward, and said, “Didn't I tell you, sir, this was the place for calling out the noblest feelings of human nature?”

“Can you oblige me with writing materials?” said Edward.

“I can, sir,” said Goggins, proudly, “and with other *materials* too, if you like—and 'pon my honour, I'll be proud to drink your health, for you're a raal gintleman.” [Footnote: The name given in Ireland to the necessary materials for the compounding of whisky−punch.]

Edward, in the civilest manner, declined the offer, and wrote, or rather tried to write, the following note, with a pen like a skewer, ink something thicker than mud, and on whity−brown paper:—

“DEAR SIR,—I hope you will pardon the liberty I have taken in your temporary want of money. You can repay me at your convenience. Yours,

“E. O'C.”

Edward left the den, and so did James Reddy soon after—a better man. Though weak, his heart was not shut to the humanities of life—and Edward's kindness, in opening his eyes to the wrong he had done *one* man, induced in his heart a kinder feeling towards all. He tore up his slashing article against successful men. Would that every disappointed man would do the same.

The bailiff was right: even so low a den as his becomes ennobled by the presence of active benevolence and prejudice reclaimed.

CHAPTER XLVII

Edward, on returning to his hotel, found Gusty there before him, in great delight at having seen a “splendid” horse, as he said, which had been brought for Edward's inspection, he having written a note on his arrival in town to a dealer stating his want of a first−rate hunter.

“He's in the stable now,” said Gusty; “for I desired the man to wait, knowing you would be here soon.”

“I cannot see him now, Gusty,” said Edward: “will you have the kindness to tell the groom I can look at the horse in his own stables when I wish to purchase?”

Gusty departed to do the message, somewhat in wonder, for Edward loved a fine horse. But the truth was, Edward's disposable money, which he had intended for the purchase of a hunter, had a serious inroad made upon it by the debts he had discharged for other men, and he was forced to forego the pleasure he had proposed to himself in the next hunting season; and he did not like to consume any one's time, or raise false expectations, by affecting to look at disposable property with the eye of a purchaser, when he knew it was beyond his reach; and the flimsy common−places of “I'll think of it,” or “If I don't see something better,” or any other of the twenty hackneyed excuses which idle people make, after consuming busy men's time, Edward held to be unworthy. He could ride a hack and deny himself hunting for a whole season, but he would not unnecessarily consume the useful time of any man for ten minutes.

This may be sneered at by the idle and thoughtless; nevertheless, it is a part of the minor morality which is ever present in the conduct of a true gentleman.

Edward had promised to join Dick's dinner−party on an impromptu invitation, and the clock striking the appointed hour warned Edward it was time to be off; so, jumping up on a jaunting car, he rattled off to Dick's lodgings, where a jolly party was assembled ripe for fun.

Amongst the guests was a rather remarkable man, a Colonel Crammer, who had seen a monstrous deal of service—one of Tom Durfy's friends whom he had asked leave to bring with him to dinner. Of course, Dick's card and a note of invitation for the gallant colonel were immediately despatched; and he had but just arrived before Edward, who found a bustling sensation in the room as the colonel was presented to those already assembled, and Tom Durfy giving whispers, aside, to each person touching his friend; such as —“Very remarkable man”—“Seen great service”—“A little odd or so”—“A fund of most extraordinary anecdote,” &c., &c.

Now this Colonel Crammer was no other than Tom Loftus, whose acquaintance Dick wished to make, and who had been invited to the dinner after a preliminary visit; but Tom sent an excuse in his own name, and preferred being present under a fictitious one—this being one of the odd ways in which his humour broke out, desirous of giving people a “touch of his quality” before they knew him. He was in the habit of assuming various characters; a methodist missionary—the patentee of some unheard−of invention—the director of some new joint−stock company—in short, anything which would give him an opportunity of telling tremendous bouncers was equally good for Tom. His reason for assuming a military guise on this occasion was to bother Moriarty, whom he knew he should meet, and held a special reason for tormenting; and he knew he could achieve this, by throwing all the stories Moriarty was fond of telling about his own service into the shade, by extravagant inventions of “hair−breadth 'scapes” and feats by “flood and field.” Indeed, the dinner would not be worth mentioning but for the extraordinary capers Tom cut on the occasion, and the unheard−of lies he squandered.

Dinner was announced by Andy, and with good appetite soup and fish were soon despatched; sherry followed as a matter of necessity. The second course appeared, and was not long under discussion when Dick called for the “champagne.”

Andy began to drag the tub towards the table, and Dick, impatient of delay, again called “champagne.”

“I'm bringin' it to you, sir,” said Andy, tugging at the tub.

“Hand it round the table,” said Dick.

Andy tried to lift the tub, “to hand it round the table;” but, finding he could not manage it, he whispered to Dick, “I can't get it up, sir.”

Dick, fancying Andy meant he had got a flask not in a sufficient state of effervescence to expel its own cork, whispered in return, “Draw it, then.”

“I was dhrawin' it to you, sir, when you stopped me.”

“Well, make haste with it,” said Dick.

“Mister Dawson, I'll trouble you for a small slice of the turkey,” said the colonel.

“With pleasure, colonel; but first do me the honour to take champagne. Andy—champagne!”

“Here it is, sir!” said Andy, who had drawn the tub close to Dick's chair.

“Where's the wine, sir?” said Dick, looking first at the tub and then at Andy. “There, sir,” said Andy, pointing down to the ice. “I put the wine into it, as you towld me.”

Dick looked again at the tub, and said, “There is not a single bottle there—what do you mean, you stupid rascal?”

“To be sure, there's no bottle there, sir. The bottles is all on the sideboord, but every dhrop o' the wine is in the ice, as you towld me, sir; if you put your hand down into it, you'll feel it, sir.”

The conversation between master and man growing louder as it proceeded attracted the attention of the whole company, and those near the head of the table became acquainted as soon as Dick with the mistake Andy had made, and could not resist laughter; and as the cause of their merriment was told from man to man, and passed round the board, a roar of laughter uprose, not a little increased by Dick's look of vexation, which at length was forced to yield to the infectious merriment around him, and he laughed with the rest, and making a joke of the disappointment, which is the very best way of passing one off, he said that he had the honour of originating at his table a magnificent scale of hospitality; for though he had heard of company being entertained with a whole hogshead of claret, he was not aware of champagne being ever served in a tub before. The company were too determined to be merry to have their pleasantry put out of tune by so trifling a mishap, and it was generally voted that the joke was worth twice as much as the wine. Nevertheless, Dick could not help casting a reproachful look now and then at Andy, who had to run the gauntlet of many a joke cut at his expense, while he waited upon the wags at dinner, and caught a lowly muttered anathema whenever he passed near Dick's chair. In short, master and man were both glad when the cloth was drawn, and the party could be left to themselves.

Then, as a matter of course, Dick called on the gentlemen to charge their glasses and fill high to a toast he had to propose—they would anticipate to whom he referred—a gentleman who was going to change his state of freedom for one of a happier bondage, &c., &c. Dick dashed off his speech with several mirth−moving allusions to the change that was coming over his friend Tom, and, having festooned his composition with the proper quantity of “rosy wreaths,” &c., &c., &c., naturally belonging to such speeches, he wound up with some hearty words— free from *badinage*, and meaning all they conveyed, and finished with the rhyming benediction of a “long life and a good wife” to him.

Tom having returned thanks in the same laughing style that Dick proposed his health, and bade farewell to the lighter follies of bachelorship for the more serious ones of wedlock, the road was now open for any one who was vocally inclined. Dick asked one or two, who said they were not within a bottle of their singing−point yet, but Tom Durfy was sure his friend the colonel would favour them.

“With pleasure,” said the colonel; “and I'll sing something appropriate to the blissful situation of philandering in which you have been indulging of late, my friend. I wish I could give you any idea of the song as I heard it warbled by the voice of an Indian princess, who was attached to me once, and for whom I ran enormous risks—but no matter—that's past and gone, but the soft tones of Zulima's voice will ever haunt my heart! The song is a favourite where I heard it—on the borders of Cashmere, and is supposed to be sung by a fond woman in the valley of the nightingales— 'tis so in the original, but as we have no nightingales in Ireland, I have substituted the dove in the little translation I have made, which, if you will allow me, I'll attempt.”

Loud cries of “Hear, hear!” and tapping of applauding hands on the table followed, while the colonel gave a few preliminary hems; and after some little pilot tones from his throat, to show the way, his voice ascended in all the glory of song.

THE DOVE−SONG

I

“*Coo! Coo! Coo! Coo!*
Thus did I hear the turtle−dove,
Coo! Coo! Coo!
Murmuring forth her love;

And as she flew from tree to tree,
How melting seemed the notes to me—
Coo! Coo! Coo!
So like the voice of lovers,
'T was passing sweet to hear
The birds within the covers,
In the spring−time of the year.

II

"*Coo! Coo! Coo! Coo!*
Thus the song's returned again—
Coo! Coo! Coo!
Through the shady glen;
But there I wandered lone and sad,
While every bird around was glad.
Coo! Coo! Coo!
Thus so fondly murmured they,
Coo! Coo! Coo!
While *my* love was away.
And yet the song to lovers,
Though sad, is sweet to hear,
From birds within the covers,
In the spring−time of the year."

The colonel's song, given with Tom Loftus' good voice, was received with great applause, and the fellows all voted it catching, and began "cooing" round the table like a parcel of pigeons.

"A translation from an eastern poet, you say?"

"Yes," said Tom.

"'T is not very eastern in its character," said Moriarty. "I mean a *free* translation, of course," added the mock colonel.

"Would you favour us with the song again, in the original?" added Moriarty.

Tom Loftus did not know one syllable of any other language than his own, and it would not have been convenient to talk gibberish to Moriarty, who had a smattering of some of the eastern tongues; so he declined giving his Cashmerian song in its native purity, because, as he said, he never could manage to speak their dialect, though he understood it reasonably well.

"But *there's* a gentleman, I am sure, will sing some other song—and a better one, I have no doubt," said Tom, with a very humble prostration of his head on the table, and anxious by a fresh song to get out of the dilemma in which Moriarty's question was near placing him.

"Not a better, colonel," said the gentleman who was addressed, "but I cannot refuse your call, and I will do my best; hand me the port wine, pray; I always take a glass of port before I sing—I think 't is good for the throat—what do you say, colonel?"

"When I want to sing particularly well," said Tom, "I drink *canary*."

The gentleman smiled at the whimsical answer, tossed off his glass of port, and began.

LADY MINE

"Lady mine! lady mine!
Take the rosy wreath I twine,
All its sweets are less than thine,
Lady, lady mine!
The blush that on thy cheek is found
Bloometh fresh the *whole* year round;
Thy sweet *breath* as sweet gives *sound*,
Lady, lady mine!

II

"Lady mine! lady mine!
How I love the graceful vine,
Whose tendrils mock thy ringlets' twine,
Lady, lady mine!
How I love that generous tree,
Whose ripe clusters promise me
Bumpers bright,—to pledge to *thee*,
Lady, lady mine!

III

"Lady mine! lady mine!
Like the stars that nightly shine,
Thy sweet eyes shed light divine,
Lady, lady mine!
And as sages wise, of old,
From the stars could fate unfold,
Thy bright eyes *my* fortune told,
Lady, lady mine!"

The song was just in the style to catch gentlemen after dinner—the second verse particularly, and many a glass was emptied of a "bumper bright," and pledged to the particular "*thee*," which each individual had selected for his devotion. Edward, at that moment, certainly thought of Fanny Dawson.

Let teetotallers say what they please, there is a genial influence inspired by wine and song—not in excess, but in that wholesome degree which stirs the blood and warms the fancy; and as one raises the glass to the lip, over which some sweet name is just breathed from the depth of the heart, what libation so fit to pour to absent friends as wine? What *is* wine? It is the grape present in another form; its essence is there, though the fruit which produced it grew thousands of miles away, and perished years ago. So the object of many a tender thought may be spiritually present, in defiance of space—and fond recollections cherished in defiance of time.

As the party became more convivial, the mirth began to assume a broader form. Tom Durfy drew out Moriarty on the subject of his services, that the mock colonel might throw every new achievement into the shade; and this he did in the most barefaced manner, but mixing so much of probability with his audacious fiction, that those who were not up to the joke only supposed him to be *a very great romancer*; while those friends who were in Loftus' confidence exhibited a most capacious stomach for the marvellous, and backed up his lies with a ready credence. If Moriarty told some fearful incident of a tiger hunt, the colonel capped it with something more wonderful, of slaughtering lions in a wholesale way, like rabbits. When Moriarty expatiated on the intensity of tropical heat, the colonel would upset him with something more appalling.

"Now, sir," said Loftus, "let me ask you what is the greatest amount of heat you have ever experienced—I say *experienced*, not *heard* of—for that goes for nothing. I always speak from experience."

"Well, sir," said Moriarty, "I have known it to be so hot in India, that I have had a hole dug in the ground under my tent, and sat in it, and put a table standing over the hole, to try and guard me from the intolerable fervour of the eastern sun, and even *then* I was hot. What do you say to that, colonel?" asked Moriarty, triumphantly.

"Have you ever been in the West Indies?" inquired Loftus.

"Never," said Moriarty, who, once entrapped into this admission, was directly at the colonel's mercy,—and the colonel launched out fearlessly.

"Then, my good sir, you know nothing of heat. I have seen in the West Indies an umbrella burned over a man's head."

"Wonderful!" cried Loftus' backers.

"'T is strange, sir," said Moriarty, "that we have never seen that mentioned by any writer."

"Easily accounted for, sir," said Loftus. "'T is so common a circumstance, that it ceases to be worthy of observation. An author writing of this country might as well remark that the apple−women are to be seen sitting at the corners of the streets. That's nothing, sir; but there are two things of which I have personal knowledge, *rather* remarkable. One day of intense heat (even for that climate) I was on a visit at the plantation of a friend of mine,

and it was so out−o'−the−way scorching, that our lips were like cinders, and we were obliged to have black slaves pouring sangaree down our throats by gallons—I don't hesitate to say gallons—and we thought we could not have survived through the day; but what could *we* think of *our* sufferings, when we heard that several negroes, who had gone to sleep under the shade of some cocoa−nut trees, had been scalded to death?"

"Scalded?" said his friends; "burnt, you mean."

"No, scalded; and *how* do you think? The intensity of the heat had cracked the cocoa−nuts, and the boiling milk inside dropped down and produced the fatal result. The same day a remarkable accident occurred at the battery; the French were hovering round the island at the time, and the governor, being a timid man, ordered the guns to be always kept loaded."

"I never heard of such a thing in a battery in my life, sir," said Moriarty.

"Nor I either," said Loftus, "till then."

"What was the governor's name, sir?" inquired Moriarty, pursuing his train of doubt.

"You must excuse me, captain, from naming him," said Loftus, with readiness, "after *incautiously* saying he was *timid*."

"Hear, hear!" said all the friends.

"But to pursue my story, sir:—the guns were loaded, and with the intensity of the heat went off, one after another, and quite riddled one of his Majesty's frigates that was lying in the harbour."

"That's one of the most difficult riddles to comprehend I ever heard," said Moriarty.

"The frigate answered the riddle with her guns, sir, I promise you."

"What!" exclaimed Moriarty, "fire on the fort of her own king?"

"There is an honest principle exists among sailors, sir, to return fire under all circumstances, wherever it comes from, friend or foe. Fire, of which they know the value so well, they won't take from anybody."

"And what was the consequence?" said Moriarty.

"Sir, it was the most harmless broadside ever delivered from the ports of a British frigate; not a single house or human being was injured—the day was so hot that every sentinel had sunk on the ground in utter exhaustion—the whole population were asleep; the only loss of life which occurred was that of a blue macaw, which belonged to the commandant's daughter."

"Where was the macaw, may I beg to know?" said Moriarty, cross−questioning the colonel in the spirit of a counsel for the defence on a capital indictment.

"In the drawing−room window, sir."

"Then surely the ball must have done some damage in the house?"

"Not the least, sir," said Loftus, sipping his wine.

"Surely, colonel!" returned Moriarty, warming, "the ball could not have killed the macaw without injuring the house?"

"My dear sir," said Tom, "I did not say the *ball* killed the macaw, I said the macaw was killed; but *that* was in consequence of a splinter from an *epaulement* of the south−east angle of the fort which the shot struck and glanced off harmlessly—except for the casualty of the macaw."

Moriarty returned a kind of grunt, which implied that, though he could not further *question*, he did not *believe*. Under such circumstances, taking snuff is a great relief to a man; and, as it happened, Moriarty, in taking snuff, could gratify his nose and his vanity at the same time, for he sported a silver−gilt snuff−box which was presented to him in some extraordinary way, and bore a grand inscription.

On this "piece of plate" being produced, of course it went round the table, and Moriarty could scarcely conceal the satisfaction he felt as each person read the engraven testimonial of his worth. When it had gone the circuit of the board, Tom Loftus put his hand into his pocket and pulled out the butt−end of a rifle, which is always furnished with a small box, cut out of the solid part of the wood and covered with a plate of brass acting on a hinge. This box, intended to carry small implements for the use of the rifleman, to keep his piece in order, was filled with snuff, and Tom said, as he laid it down on the table, "This is *my* snuff−box, gentlemen; not as handsome as my gallant friend's at the opposite side of the table, but extremely interesting to me. It was previous to one of our dashing affairs in Spain that our riflemen were thrown out in front and on the flanks. The rifles were supported by the light companies of the regiments in advance, and it was in the latter duty I was engaged. We had to feel our way through a wood, and had cleared it of the enemy, when, as we debouched from the wood on the

opposite side, we were charged by an overwhelming force of Polish lancers and cuirassiers. Retreat was impossible—resistance almost hopeless. 'My lads,' said I, 'we must do something *novel* here, or we are lost—startle them by fresh practice—the bayonet will no longer avail you—club your muskets, and hit the horses over the noses, and they'll smell danger.' They took my advice; of course we first delivered a withering volley, and then to it we went in flail−fashion, thrashing away with the butt−ends of our muskets; and sure enough the French were astonished and driven back in amazement. So tremendous, sir, was the hitting on our side, that in many instances the butt−ends of the muskets snapped off like tobacco−pipes, and the field was quite strewn with them after the affair: I picked one of them up as a little memento of the day, and have used it ever since as a snuff−box."

Every one was amused by the outrageous romancing of the colonel but Moriarty, who looked rather disgusted, because he could not edge in a word of his own at all; he gave up the thing now in despair, for the colonel had it all his own way, like the bull in a china−shop; the more startling the bouncers he told, the more successful were his anecdotes, and he kept pouring them out with the most astounding rapidity; and though all voted him the greatest liar they ever met, none suspected he was not a military man.

Dick wanted Edward O'Connor, who sat beside him, to sing; but Edward whispered, "For Heaven's sake don't stop the flow of the lava from that mighty eruption of lies!—he's a perfect Vesuvius of mendacity. You'll never meet his like again, so make the most of him while you have him. Pray, sir," said Edward to the colonel, "have you ever been in any of the cold climates? I am induced to ask you, from the very wonderful anecdotes you have told of the hot ones."

"Bless you, sir, I know every corner about the north pole."

"In which of the expeditions, may I ask, were you engaged?" inquired Moriarty.

"In none of them, sir. We knocked up a *little amateur party*, I and a few curious friends, and certainly we witnessed wonders. You talk here of a sharp wind; but the wind is so sharp there that it cut off our beard and whiskers. Boreas is a great barber, sir, with his north pole for a sign. Then as for frost!—I could tell you such incredible things of its intensity; our butter, for instance, was as hard as a rock; we were obliged to knock it off with a chisel and hammer, like a mason at a piece of granite, and it was necessary to be careful of your eyes at breakfast, the splinters used to fly about so; indeed, one of the party *did* lose the use of his eye from a butter−splinter. But the oddest thing of all was to watch two men talking to each other: you could observe the words, as they came out of their mouths, suddenly frozen and dropping down in little pellets of ice at their feet, so that, after a long conversation, you might see a man standing up to his knees in his own eloquence."

They all roared with laughter at this last touch of the marvellous, but Loftus preserved his gravity.

"I don't wonder, gentlemen, at your not receiving that as truth—I told you it was incredible—in short, that is the reason I have resisted all temptations to publish. Murray, Longmans, Colburn, Bentley, ALL the publishers have offered me unlimited terms, but I have always refused—not that I am a rich man, which makes the temptation of the thousands I might realise the harder to withstand; 't is not that the gold is not precious to me, but there is something dearer to me than gold—*it is my character for veracity!* and therefore, as I am convinced the public would not believe the wonders I have witnessed, I confine the recital of my adventures to the social circle. But what profession affords such scope for varied incident as that of the soldier? Change of clime, danger, vicissitude, love, war, privation one day, profusion the next, darkling dangers, and sparkling joys! Zounds! there's nothing like the life of a soldier! and, by the powers! I'll give you a song in its praise."

The proposition was received with cheers, and Tom rattled away these ringing rhymes—

THE BOWLD SOJER BOY

"Oh there's not a trade that's going
Worth showing,
Or knowing,
Like that from glory growing,
For a bowld sojer boy;
Where right or left we go,
Sure you know,
Friend or foe
Will have the hand or toe

From a bowld sojer boy!
There's not a town we march thro',
But the ladies, looking arch thro'
The window−panes, will search thro'
The ranks to find their joy;
While up the street,
Each girl you meet,
Will look so sly,
Will cry
'My eye!
Oh, isn't he a darling, the bowld sojer boy!'

II

"But when we get the route,
How they pout
And they shout
While to the right about
Goes the bowld sojer boy.
Oh, 'tis then that ladies fair
In despair
Tear their hair,
But 'the divil−a−one I care,'
Says the bowld sojer boy.
For the world is all before us,
Where the landladies adore us,
And ne'er refuse to score us,
But chalk us up with joy;
We taste her tap,
We tear her cap'—
'Oh, that's the chap
For me!'
Says she;
'Oh, isn't he a darling, the bowld sojer boy.'

III

"'Then come along with me,
Gramachree,
And you'll see
How happy you will be
With your bowld sojer boy;
'Faith! if you're up to fun,
With me run;
'T will be done
In the snapping of a gun,'
Says the bowld sojer boy;
'And 't is then that, without scandal,
Myself will proudly dandle
The little farthing candle
Of our mutual flame, my joy!
May his light shine
As bright as mine,
Till in the line
He'll blaze,

And raise
The glory of his corps, like a bowld sojer boy!'"

Andy entered the room while the song was in progress, and handed a letter to Dick, which, after the song was over, and he had asked pardon of his guests, he opened.

"By Jove! you sing right well, colonel," said one of the party.

"I think the gallant colonel's songs nothing in comparison with his *wonderful* stories," said Moriarty.

"Gentlemen," said Dick, "wonderful as the colonel's recitals have been, this letter conveys a piece of information more surprising than anything we have heard this day. That stupid fellow who spoiled our champagne has come in for the inheritance of a large property."

"What!—Handy Andy?" exclaimed those who knew his name.

"Handy Andy," said Dick, "is now a man of fortune!"

CHAPTER XLVIII

It was a note from Squire Egan which conveyed the news to Dick that caused so much surprise; the details of the case were not even hinted at; the bare fact alone was mentioned, with a caution to preserve it still a secret from Andy, and appointing an hour for dinner at “Morrison's” next day, at which hotel the Squire expected to arrive from the country, with his lady and Fanny Dawson, *en route* for London. Till dinner−time, then, the day following, Dick was obliged to lay by his impatience as to the “why and wherefore” of Andy's sudden advancement; but, as the morning was to be occupied with Tom Durfy's wedding, Dick had enough to keep him engaged in the meantime.

At the appointed hour a few of Tom's particular friends were in attendance to witness the ceremony, or, to use their own phrase, “to see him turned off,” and among them was Tom Loftus. Dick was holding out his hand to “the colonel,” when Tom Durfy stepped between, and introduced him under his real name. The masquerading trick of the night before was laughed at, with an assurance from Dick that it only fulfilled all he had ever heard of the Protean powers of a gentleman whom he so much wished to know. A few minutes' conversation in the recess of a window put Tom Loftus and Dick the Devil on perfectly good terms, and Loftus proposed to Dick that they should execute the old−established trick on a bridegroom, of snatching the first kiss from the bride.

“You must get in Tom's way,” said Loftus, “and I'll kiss her.”

“Why, the fact is,” said Dick, “I had proposed that pleasure to myself; and, if it's all the same to you, *you* can jostle Tom, and *I'll* do the remainder in good style, I promise you.”

“That I can't agree to,” said Loftus; “but as it appears we both have set our heart on cheating the bridegroom, let us both start fair, and 't is odd if between us Tom Durfy is not *done*“

This was agreed upon, and many minutes did not elapse till the bride made her appearance, and “hostilities were about to commence.” The mutual enemy of the “high contracting parties” first opened his book, and then his mouth, and in such solemn tones, that it was enough to frighten *even* a widow, much less a bachelor. As the ceremony verged to a conclusion, Tom Loftus and Dick the Devil edged up towards their 'vantage−ground on either side of the blooming widow, now nearly finished into a wife, and stood like greyhounds in the slip, ready to start after puss (only puss ought to be spelt here with a B). The widow, having been married before, was less nervous than Durfy, and, suspecting the intended game, determined to foil both the brigands, who intended to rob the bridegroom of his right; so, when the last word of the ceremony was spoken, and Loftus and Dick made a simultaneous dart upon her, she very adroitly ducked, and allowed the two “ruggers and rievers” to rush into each other's arms, and rub their noses together, while Tom Durfy and his blooming bride sealed their contract very agreeably without their noses getting in each other's way.

Loftus and Dick had only a laugh at *their own* expense, instead of a kiss at *Tom's*, upon the failure of their plot; but Loftus, in a whisper to Dick, vowed he would execute a trick upon the “pair of them” before the day was over.

There was a breakfast as usual, and chicken and tongue and wine, which, taken in the morning, are provocative of eloquence; and, of course, the proper quantity of healths and toasts were executed *selon la reglei*, it was time for the bride and bridegroom to bow and blush and curtsey out of the room, and make themselves food for a paragraph in the morning papers, under the title of the “happy pair,” who set off in a handsome chariot, &c., &c.

* * * * *

Tom Durfy had engaged a pretty cottage in the neighbourhood of Clontarf to pass the honeymoon. Tom Loftus knew this, and knew, moreover, that the sitting−room looked out on a small lawn which lay before the house, screened by a hedge from the road, but with a circular sweep leading up to the house, and a gate of ingress and egress at either end of the hedge. In this sitting−room Tom, after lunch, was pressing his lady fair to take a glass of champagne, when the entrance−gate was thrown open, and a hackney jaunting−car with Tom Loftus and a friend or two upon it, driven by a special ragamuffin blowing a tin horn, rolled up the skimping avenue, and as it scoured past the windows of the sitting−room, Tom Loftus and the other passengers kissed hands to the astonished bride and bridegroom, and shouted, “Wish you joy!”

The thing was so sudden that Durfy and the widow, not seeing Loftus, could hardly comprehend what it meant, and both ran to the window; but just as they reached it, up drove another car, freighted with two or three more wild rascals who followed the lead which had been given them; and as a long train of cars were seen in the distance all driving up to the avenue, the widow, with a timid little scream, threw her handkerchief over her face and ran into a corner. Tom did not know whether to laugh or be angry, but, being a good−humoured fellow, he satisfied himself with a few oaths against the incorrigible Loftus, and when the *cortege* had passed, endeavoured to restore the startled fair one to her serenity.

* * * * *

Squire Egan and party arrived at the appointed hour at their hotel, where Dick was waiting to receive them, and, of course, his inquiries were immediately directed to the extraordinary circumstance of Andy's elevation, the details of which he desired to know. These we shall not give in the expanded form in which Dick heard them, but endeavour to condense, as much as possible, within the limits to which we are prescribed.

The title of Scatterbrain had never been inherited directly from father to son; it had descended in a zigzag fashion, most appropriate to the name, nephews and cousins having come in for the coronet and the property for some generations. The late lord had led a *roue* bachelor life up to the age of sixty, and then thought it not worth while to marry, though many mammas and daughters spread their nets and arrayed their charms to entrap the sexagenarian.

The truth was, he had quaffed the cup of licentious pleasure all his life, after which he thought matrimony would prove insipid. The mere novelty induces some men, under similar circumstances, to try the holy estate; but matrimony could not offer to Lord Scatterbrain the charms of novelty, for *he had been* once married, though no one but himself was cognisant of the fact.

The reader will certainly say, “Here's an Irish bull; how could a man be married, without, at least, a woman and a priest being joint possessors of the secret?”

Listen, gentle reader, and you shall hear how none but Lord Scatterbrain knew Lord Scatterbrain was married.

There was nothing at which he ever stopped for the gratification of his passions—no wealth he would not squander, no deceit he would not practise, no disguise he would not assume. Therefore, gold, and falsehood, and masquerading were extensively employed by this reckless *roue* in the service of Venus, in which service, combined with that of Bacchus, his life was entirely passed.

Often he assumed the guise of a man in humble life, to approximate some object of his desire, whom fine clothes and bribery would have instantly warned and in too many cases his artifices were successful. It was in one of these adventures he cast his eyes upon the woman hitherto known in this story under the name of the Widow Rooney; but all his practices against her virtue were unavailing, and nothing but a marriage could accomplish what he had set his fancy upon but even *this* would not stop him, *for he married her*.

The Widow Rooney has appeared no very inviting personage through these pages, and the reader may wonder that a man of rank could proceed to such desperate lengths upon such slight temptation; but, gentle reader, she was young and attractive when she was married—never to say *handsome*, but good−looking decidedly, and with that sort of figure which is comprehended in the phrase “a fine girl.”

And has that fine girl altered into the Widow Rooney? Ah! poverty and hardship are sore trials to the body as well as to the mind. Too little is it considered, while we gaze on aristocratic beauty, how much good food, soft lying, warm wrapping, ease of mind, have to do with the attractions which command our admiration. Many a hand moulded by nature to give elegance of form to a kid glove, is “stinted of its fair proportion” by grubbing toil. The foot which might have excited the admiration of a ball−room, peeping under a flounce of lace in a satin shoe, and treading the mazy dance, *will* grow coarse and broad by tramping in its native state over toilsome miles, bearing perchance to a market town some few eggs, whose whole produce would not purchase the sandal−tie of my lady's slipper; will grow red and rough by standing in wet trenches, and feeling the winter's frost. The neck on which diamonds might have worthily sparkled, will look less tempting when the biting winter has hung icicles there for gems. Cheeks formed as fresh for dimpling blushes, eyes as well to sparkle, and lips to smile, as those which shed their brightness and their witchery in the tapestried saloon, will grow pale with want, and forget their dimples, when smiles are not there to wake them; lips become compressed and drawn with anxious thought, and eyes the brightest are quenched of their fires by many tears.

Of all these trials poor Widow Rooney had enough. Her husband, after living with her a month, in the

character of a steward to some great man in a distant part of the country, left her one day for the purpose of transacting business at a fair, which, he said, would require his absence for some time. At the end of a week, a letter was sent to her, stating that the make−believe steward had robbed his master extensively, and had fled to America, whence he promised to write to her, and send her means to follow him, requesting, in the meantime, her silence, in case any inquiry should be made about him. This villanous trick was played off the more readily, from the fact that a steward had absconded at the time, and the difference in the name the cruel profligate accounted for by saying that, as he was hiding at the moment he married her, he had assumed another name.

The poor deserted girl, fully believing this trumped−up tale, obeyed with unflinching fidelity the injunctions of her betrayer; and while reports were flying abroad of the absconded steward, she never breathed a word of, what had been confided to her, and accounted for the absence of “Rooney” in various ways of her own; so that all trace of the profligate was lost, by her remaining inactive in making the smallest inquiry about him, and her very fidelity to her betrayer became the means of her losing all power of procuring his discovery. For months she trusted all was right; but when moon followed moon, and she gave birth to a boy without hearing one word of his father, misgiving came upon her, and the only consolation left her was, that, though she was deserted, and a child left on her hands, still she was *an honest woman*. That child was the hero of our tale. The neighbours passed some ill−natured remarks about her, when it began to be suspected that her husband would never let her know more about him; for she had been rather a saucy lady, holding up her nose at poor men, and triumphing in her catching of the “steward,” a man well to do in the world; and it may be remembered, that this same spirit existed in her when Andy's rumoured marriage with Matty gave the prospect of her affairs being retrieved, for she displayed her love of pre−eminence to the very first person who gave her the good news. The ill−nature of her neighbours, however, after the birth of her child and the desertion of her husband, inducing her to leave the scene of her unmerited wrongs and annoyances, she suddenly decamped, and, removing to another part of Ireland, the poor woman began a life of hardship, to support herself and rear the offspring of her unfortunate marriage. In this task she was worthily assisted by one of her brothers, who pitied her condition, and joined her in her retreat. He married in course of time, and his wife died in giving birth to Oonah, who was soon deprived of her other parent by typhus fever, that terrible scourge of the poor; so that the praiseworthy desire of the brother to befriend his sister only involved her, as it happened, in the deeper difficulty of supporting two children instead of one. This she did heroically, and the orphan girl rewarded her, by proving a greater comfort than her own child; for Andy had inherited in all its raciness the blood of the Scatterbrains, and his deeds, as recorded in this history, prove he was no unworthy representative of that illustrious title. To return to his father—who had done the grievous wrong to the poor peasant girl: he lived his life of profligacy through, and in a foreign country died at last; but on his death−bed the scourge of conscience rendered every helpless hour an age of woe. Bitterest of all was the thought of the wife deceived, deserted, and unacknowledged. To face his last account with such fearful crime upon his head he dared not, and made all the reparation now in his power, by avowing his marriage in his last will and testament, and giving all the information in his power to trace his wife, if living, or his heir, if such existed. He enjoined, by the most sacred injunctions upon him to whom the charge was committed, that neither cost nor trouble should be spared in the search, leaving a large sum in ready money besides, to establish the right, in case his nephew disputed the will. By his own order, his death was kept secret, and secretly his agent set to work to discover any trace of the heir. This, in consequence of the woman changing her place of abode, became more difficult and it was not until after very minute inquiry that some trace was picked up, and a letter written to the parish priest of the district to which she had removed, making certain general inquiries. It was found, on comparing dates some time after, that it was this very letter to Father Blake which Andy had purloined from the post−office, and the Squire had thrown into the fire; so that our hero was very near, by his blundering, destroying his own fortune. Luckily for him, however, an untiring and intelligent agent was engaged in his cause, and a subsequent inquiry, and finally a personal visit to Father Blake, cleared the matter up satisfactorily, and the widow was enabled to produce such proof of her identity, and that of her son, that Handy Andy was indisputably Lord Scatterbrain; and the whole affair was managed so secretly, that the death of the late lord, and the claim of title and estates in the name of the rightful heir, were announced at the same moment; and the “Honourable Sackville,” instead of coming into possession of the peerage and property, and fighting his adversary at the great advantage of possession, could only commence a suit to drive him out, if he sued at all.

Our limits compel us to this brief sketch of the circumstances through which Handy Andy was entitled to and

became possessed of a property and a title, and we must now say something of the effects produced by the intelligence on the parties most concerned.

The Honourable Sackville Scatterbrain, on the advice of high legal authority, did not attempt to dispute a succession of which such satisfactory proofs existed, and, fortunately for himself, had knocked up a watering−place match, while he was yet in the bloom of heirship *presumptive* to a peerage, with the daughter of an English *millionaire*.

When the Widow Rooney heard the extraordinary turn affairs had taken, her emotions, after the first few hours of pleasurable surprise, partook of regret rather than satisfaction. She looked upon her past life of suffering, and felt as if Fate had cheated her. She, a peeress, had passed her life in poverty and suffering, with contempt from those over whom she had superior rights; and the few years of the prosperous future before her offered her poor compensation for the pinching past. But after such selfish considerations, the maternal feeling came to her relief, and she rejoiced that *her son* was a lord. But then came the terrible thought of his marriage to dash her joy and triumph.

This was a source of grief to Oonah as well. “If he wasn't married,” she would say to herself, “I might be *Lady* Scatterbrain;” and the tears would burst through poor Oonah's fingers as she held them up to her eyes and sobbed heavily, till the poor girl would try to gather consolation from the thought that, maybe, Andy's altered circumstances would make *her* disregarded. “There would be plenty to have him now,” thought she, “and he wouldn't think of me, maybe—so 't is well as it is.”

When Andy heard that he was a lord—a real lord—and, after the first shock of astonishment, could comprehend that wealth and power were in his possession, he, though the most interested person, never thought, as the two women had done, of the desperate strait in which his marriage placed him, but broke out into short peals of laughter, and exclaimed in the intervals, “that it was mighty quare;” and when, after much questioning, any intelligible desire he had could be understood, the first one he clearly expressed was *“to have a goold watch.”*

He was made, however, to understand that other things than “goold watches” were of more importance; and the Squire, with his characteristic good nature, endeavoured to open Andy's comprehension to the nature of his altered situation. This, it may be supposed, was rather a complicated piece of work, and too difficult to be set down in black and white; the most intelligible portions to Andy were his immediate removal from servitude, and a ready−made suit of gentlemanly apparel, which made Andy pay several visits to the looking−glass. Good−natured as the Squire was, it would have been equally awkward to him as to Andy for the newly fledged lord, though a lord, to have a seat at his table, neither could he remain in an inferior position in his house; so Dick, who loved fun, volunteered to take Andy under his especial care to London, and let him share his lodgings, as a bachelor may do many things which a man surrounded by his family cannot. Besides, in a place distant from such extraordinary chances and changes as those which befell our hero, the sudden and startling difference of position of the parties not being known renders it possible for a gentleman to do the good−natured thing which Dick undertook, without compromising himself. In Dublin it would not have done for Dick Dawson to allow the man who would have held his horse the day before, to share the same board with him merely because Fortune had played one of her frolics and made Andy a lord; but in London the case was different.

To London therefore they proceeded. The incidents of the journey, sea− sickness included, which so astonished the new traveller, we pass over, as well as the numberless mistakes in the great metropolis, which afforded Dick plentiful amusement, though, in truth, Dick had better objects in view than laughing at Andy's embarrassments in his new position. He really wished to help him in the difficult path into which the new lord had been thrust, and did this in a merry sort of way more successfully than by serious drilling. It was hard to break Andy of the habit of saying “Misther Dick,” when addressing him, but, at last, “Misther Dawson” was established. Eating with his knife, drinking as loudly as a horse, and other like accomplishments, were not so easily got under, yet it was wonderful how much he improved, as his shyness grew less, and his consciousness of being a lord grew stronger.

But, if the good nature of Dick had not prompted him to take Andy into training, the newly discovered nobleman would not have long been in want of society. It was wonderful how many persons were eager to show civility to his lordship, and some amongst them even went so far as to discover relationship. Plenty were soon ready to take Lord Scatterbrain here, and escort him there, accompany him to exhibitions and other public places, and charmed all the time with his lordship's remarks—“they were so original”—“quite delightful to meet

something so fresh”—“how remarkably clever the Irish were!” Such were among the observations his ignorant blunders produced; and he who, as Handy Andy, had been anathematised all his life as a “stupid rascal,” “a blundering thief,” “a thick−headed brute,” &c., under the title of Lord Scatterbrain all of a sudden was voted “vastly amusing—a little eccentric, perhaps, but *so* droll—in fact, so witty!” This was all very delightful for Andy—so delightful that he quite forgot Bridget *rhua*. But that lady did not leave him long in his happy obliviousness. One day, while Dick was absent, and Andy rocking on a chair before the fire, twirling the massive gold chain of his gold watch round his forefinger, and uncoiling it again, his repose was suddenly disturbed by the appearance of Bridget herself, accompanied by *Shan More* and a shrimp of a man in rusty black, who turned out to be a shabby attorney who advanced money to convey his lady client and her brother to London, for the purpose of making a dash at the lord at once, and securing a handsome sum by a *coup de main*.

Andy, though taken by surprise, was resolute. Bitter words were exchanged; and as they seemed likely to lead to blows, Andy prudently laid hold of the poker, and, in language not quite suited to a noble lord, swore he would see what the inside of *Shan More's* head was made of, if he attempted to advance upon him. Bridget screamed and scolded, while the attorney endeavoured to keep the peace, and, beyond everything, urged Lord Scatterbrain to enter at once into written engagements for a handsome settlement upon his “lady.”

“Lady!” exclaimed Andy; “oh!—a pretty *lady* she is!”

“I'm as good a lady as you are a lord, anyhow,” cried Bridget.

“Altercation will do no good, my lord and my lady,” said the attorney; “let me suggest the propriety of your writing an engagement at once;” and the little man pushed pen, ink, and paper towards Andy.

“I can't, I tell you!” cried Andy.

“You must!” roared *Shan More*.

“Bad luck to you, how can I when I never larned?”

“Your lordship can make your mark,” said the attorney.

“'Faith I can—with a poker,” cried Andy; “and you'd better take care, master parchment. Make my mark, indeed!—do you think I'd disgrace the House o' Peers by lettin' on that a lord couldn't write?—Quit the buildin', I tell you!”

In the midst of the row, which now rose to a tremendous pitch, Dick returned; and after a severe reprimand to the pettifogger for his sinister attempt on Andy, referred him to Lord Scatterbrain's solicitor. It was not such an easy matter to silence Bridget, who extended her claws towards her lord and master in a very menacing manner, calling down bitter imprecations on her own head if she wouldn't have her rights.

Every now and then between the bursts of the storm Andy would exclaim, “Get out!”

“My lord,” said Dick, “remember your dignity.”

“Av coorse!” said Andy; “but still she must get out!”

The house was at last cleared of the uproarious party; but though Andy got rid of their presence, they left their sting behind. Lord Scatterbrain felt, for the first time, that a lord can be very unhappy.

Dick hurried him away at once to the chambers of the law agent, but he, being closeted on some very important business with another client on their arrival, returned an answer to their application for a conference, which they forwarded through the double doors of this sanctum by a hard− looking man with a pen behind his ear, that he could not have the pleasure of seeing them till the next morning. Lord Scatterbrain passed a more unhappy night than he had ever done in his life—even than that when he was tied up to the old tree—croaked at by ravens, and the despised of rats.

Negotiations were opened the next day between the pettifogger on Bridget's side and the law agent of the noble lord, and the arguments, *pro and con.*, lay thus:

In the first place, the opening declaration was—Lord Scatterbrain never would live with the aforesaid Bridget.

Answered—that nevertheless, as she was his lawful wife, a provision suitable to her rank must be made.

They (the claimants) were asked to name a sum.

The sum was considered exorbitant; it being argued that when her husband had determined never to live with her, he was in a far different condition, therefore it was unfair to seek so large a separate maintenance now.

The pettifogger threatened that Lady Scatterbrain would run in debt, which Lord Scatterbrain must discharge. My Lord's agent suggested that my Lady would be advertised in the public papers, and the public cautioned against giving her credit.

A sum could not be agreed upon, though a fair one was offered on Andy's part; for the greediness of the pettifogger, who was to have a share of the plunder, made him hold out for more, and negotiations were broken off for some days.

Poor Andy was in a wretched state of vexation. It was bad enough that he was married to this abominable woman, without an additional plague of being persecuted by her. To such an amount this rose at last, that she and her big brother dodged him every time he left the house, so that in self− defence he was obliged to become a close prisoner in his own lodgings. All this at last became so intolerable to the captive, that he urged a speedy settlement of the vexatious question, and a larger separate maintenance was granted to the detestable woman than would otherwise have been ceded, the only stipulation of a stringent nature made being, that Lord Scatterbrain should be free from the persecutions of his hateful wife for the future.

CHAPTER XLIX

Squire Egan, with his lady and Fanny Dawson, had now arrived in London; Murtough Murphy, too, had joined them, his services being requisite in working the petition against the return of the sitting member for the county. This had so much promise of success about it, that the opposite party, who had the sheriff for the county in their interest, bethought of a novel expedient to frustrate the petition when a reference to the poll was required.

They declared the principal poll−book was lost.

This seemed not very satisfactory to one side of the committee, and the question was asked, “how could it be lost?” The answer was one which Irish contrivance alone could have invented: *“It fell into a pot of broth, and the dog ate it.”* [Footnote: If not this identical answer, something like it was given on a disputed Irish election, before a Committee of the House of Commons.]

This protracted the contest for some time; but eventually, in spite of the dog's devouring knowledge so greedily, the Squire was declared duly elected and took the oaths and his seat for the county.

It was hard on Sackville Scatterbrain to lose his seat in the house and a peerage, nearly at once; but the latter loss threw the former so far into the shade, that he scarcely felt it. Besides, he could console himself with having buttered his crumbs pretty well in the marriage−market; and, with a rich wife, retired from senatorial drudgery to private repose, which was much more congenial to his easy temper.

But while the Squire's happy family circle was rejoicing in his triumph— while he was invited to the Speaker's dinners, and the ladies were looking forward to tickets for “the lantern,” their pleasure was suddenly dashed by fatal news from Ireland.

A serious accident had befallen Major Dawson—so serious, that his life was despaired of; and an immediate return to Ireland by all who were interested in his life was the consequence.

Though the suddenness of this painful event shocked his family, the act which caused it did not surprise them; for it was one against which Major Dawson had been repeatedly cautioned, involving a danger he had been affectionately requested not to tempt; but the habitual obstinacy of his nature prevailed, and he persisted in doing that which his son—and his daughters—and friends—prophesied *would* kill him some time or other, and *did*, at last. The Major had three little iron guns, mounted on carriages, on a terrace in front of his house; and it was his wont to fire a salute on certain festival days from these guns, which, from age and exposure to the weather, became dangerous to use. It was in vain that this danger was represented to him. He would reply, with his accustomed “Pooh, pooh! I have been firing these guns for forty years, and they won't do me any harm now.”

This was the prime fault of the Major's character. Time and circumstances were never taken into account by him; what was done once, might be done *always—ought* to be done always. The bare thought of change of any sort, to him, was unbearable; and whether it was a rotten old law or a rotten old gun, he would charge both up to the muzzle and fire away, regardless of consequences. The result was, that on a certain festival his *favourite* gun burst in discharging; and the last mortal act of which the Major was conscious, was that of putting the port−fire to the touchhole, for a heavy splinter of iron struck him on the head, and though he lived for some days afterwards, he was insensible. Before his children arrived he was no more; and the only duty left them to perform was the melancholy one of ordering his funeral.

The obsequies of the old Major were honoured by a large and distinguished attendance from all parts of the country; and amongst those who bore the pall was Edward O'Connor, who had the melancholy gratification of testifying his respect beside the grave of Fanny's father, though the severe old man had banished him from his presence during his lifetime.

But now all obstacle to the union of Edward and Fanny was removed; and after the lapse of a few days had softened the bitter grief which this sudden bereavement of her father had produced, Edward received a note from Dick, inviting him to the manor−house, where *all* would be glad to see him.

In a few minutes after the receipt of that note Edward was in his saddle, and swiftly leaving the miles behind him till, from the top of a rising ground, the roof of the manor−house appeared above the trees in which it was embosomed. He had not till then slackened his speed; but now drawing rein, he proceeded at a slower pace towards the house he had not entered for some years, and the sight of which awakened such varied emotions.

To return after long years of painful absence to some place which has been the scene of our former joys, and whence the force of circumstance, and not choice, has driven us, is oppressive to the heart. There is a mixed sense of regret and rejoicing, which struggle for predominance; we rejoice that our term of exile has expired, but we regret the years which that exile has deducted from the brief amount of human life, never to be recalled, and therefore as so much *lost* to us. We think of the wrong or the caprice of which we have been the victims, and thoughts will stray across the most confiding heart, if friends shall meet as fondly as they parted; or if time, while impressing deeper marks upon the *outward* form, may have obliterated some impressions *within*. Who has returned after years of absence, however assured of the unflinching fidelity of the love he left behind, without saying to himself, in the pardonable yearning of affection, “Shall I meet smiles as bright as those that used to welcome me? Shall I be pressed as fondly within the arms whose encompassment were to me the pale of all earthly enjoyment?”

Such thoughts crowded on Edward as he approached the house. There was not a lane, or tree, or hedge, by the way, that had not for him its association. He reached the avenue gate; as he flung it open he remembered the last time he passed it; Fanny had then leaned on his arm. He felt himself so much excited, that, instead of riding up to the house, he took the private path to the stables, and throwing down the reins to a boy, he turned into a shrubbery and endeavoured to recover his self−command before he should present himself. As he emerged from the sheltered path and turned into a walk which led to the garden, a small conservatory was opened to his view, awaking fresh sensations. It was in that very place he had first ventured to declare his love to Fanny. There she heard and frowned not; there, where nature's choicest sweets were exhaling, he had first pressed her to his heart, and thought the balmy sweetness of her lips beyond them all. He hurried forward in the enthusiasm the recollection recalled, to enter that spot consecrated in his memory; but on arriving at the door, he suddenly stopped, for he saw Fanny within. She was plucking a geranium—the flower she had been plucking some years before, when Edward said he loved her. She, all that morning, had been under the influence of feelings similar to Edward's; had felt the same yearnings—the same tender doubts—the same fond solicitude that he should be the same Edward from whom she parted. But she thought of *more* than this; with the exquisitely delicate contrivance belonging to woman's nature, she wished to give him a signal of her fond recollection, and was plucking the flower she gathered when he declared his love, to place on her bosom when they should meet. Edward felt the meaning of her action, as the graceful hand broke the flower from its stem. He would have rushed towards her at once, but that the deep mourning in which she was arrayed seemed to command a gentler approach; for grief commands respect. He advanced softly—she heard a gentle step behind her—turned—uttered a faint exclamation of joy, and sank into his arms! In a few moments she recovered her consciousness, and opening her sweet eyes upon him, breathed softly, “dear Edward!”—and the lips which, in two words, had expressed so much, were impressed with a fervent kiss in the blessed consciousness of possession, on that very spot where the first timid and doubting word of love had been spoken.

In that moment he was rewarded for all his years of absence and anxiety. His heart was satisfied; he felt he was dear as ever to the woman he idolised, and the short and hurried beating of *both* their hearts told more than words could express. Words!—what were words to them?— thought was too swift for their use, and feeling too strong for their utterance; but they drank from each other's eyes large draughts of delight, and, in the silent pressure of each other's welcoming embrace, felt how truly they loved each other.

He led her gently from the conservatory, and they exchanged words of affection “soft and low,” as they sauntered through the wooded path which surrounded the house. That live−long day they wandered up and down together, repeating again and again the anxious yearnings which occupied their years of separation, yet asking each other was not all more than repaid by the gladness of the present—

“Yet *how* painful has been the past!” exclaimed Edward.

“But *now!*” said Fanny, with a gentle pressure of her tiny hand on Edward's arm, and looking up to him with her bright eyes—“but *now!*“

“True, darling!” he cried; “'tis ungrateful to think of the past while enjoying such a present and with such a future before me. Bless that cheerful heart, and those hope−inspiring glances! Oh, Fanny! in the wilderness of life there are springs and palm−trees—you are both to me! and heaven has set its own mark upon you in those laughing blue eyes which might set despair at defiance.”

“Poetical as ever, Edward!” said Fanny, laughing.

“Sit down, dearest, for a moment, on this old tree, beside me; 'tis not the first time I have strung rhymes in your presence and your praise.” He took a small note−book from his pocket, and Fanny looked on smilingly as Edward's pencil rapidly ran over the leaf and traced the lover's tribute to his mistress.

THE SUNSHINE IN YOU

I

“It is sweet when we look round the wide world's waste
To know that the desert bestows
The palms where the weary heart may rest,
The spring that in purity flows.
And where have I found
In this wilderness round
That spring and that shelter so true;
Unfailing in need,
And my own, indeed?—
Oh! dearest, I've found it in you!

II

“And, oh when the cloud of some darkening hour
O'ershadows the soul with its gloom,
Then where is the light of the vestal pow'r,
The lamp of pale Hope to illume?
Oh! the light ever lies
In those bright fond eyes,
Where Heaven has impressed its own blue
As a seal from the skies
As my heart relies
On that gift of its sunshine in you!”

Fanny liked the lines, of course. “Dearest,” she said, “may I always prove sunshine to you! Is it not a strange coincidence that these lines exactly fit a little air which occurred to me some time ago?”

“'Tis odd,” said Edward; “sing it to me, darling.”

Fanny took the verses from his hand, and sung them to her own measure. Oh, happy triumph of the poet!—to hear his verses wedded to sweet sounds, and warbled by the woman he loves! Edward caught up the strain, adding his voice to hers in harmony, and thus they sauntered homewards, trolling their ready−made duet together. There were not two happier hearts in the world that day than those of Fanny Dawson and Edward O'Connor.

CHAPTER L

Respect for the memory of Major Dawson of course prevented the immediate marriage of Edward and Fanny; but the winter months passed cheerfully away in looking forward to the following autumn which should witness the completion of their happiness. Though Edward was thus tempted by the society of the one he loved best in the world, it did not make him neglect the duties he had undertaken in behalf of Gustavus. Not only did he prosecute his reading with him regularly, but he took no small pains in looking after the involved affairs of the family, and strove to make satisfactory arrangements with those whose claims were gnawing away the estate to nothing. Though the years of Gusty's minority were but few, still they would give the estate some breathing−time; and creditors, seeing the minor backed by a man of character, and convinced a sincere desire existed to relieve the estate of its encumbrances and pay all just claims, presented a less threatening front than hitherto, and listened readily to such terms of accommodation as were proposed to them. Uncle Robert (for the breaking of whose neck Ratty's pious aspirations had been raised) behaved very well on the occasion. A loan from him, and a partial sale of some of the acres, stopped the mouths of the greedy wolves who fatten on men's ruin, and time and economy were looked forward to for the discharge of all other debts. Uncle Robert, having so far acted the friend, was considered entitled to have a partial voice in the ordering of things at the Hall; and having a notion that an English accent was genteel, he desired that Gusty and Ratty should pass a year under the roof of a clergyman in England, who received a limited number of young gentlemen for the completion of their education. Gustavus would much rather have remained near Edward O'Connor, who had already done so much for him; but Edward, though he regretted parting with Gustavus, recommended him to accede to his uncle's wishes, though he did not see the necessity of an Irish gentleman being ashamed of his accent.

The visit to England, however, was postponed till the spring, and the winter months were used by Gustavus in availing himself as much as he could of Edward's assistance in putting him through his classics, his pride prompting him to present himself creditably to the English clergyman.

It was in vain to plead *such* pride to Ratty, who paid more attention to shooting than his lessons. His mother strove to persuade—Ratty was deaf. His “gran” strove to bribe—Ratty was incorruptible. Gusty argued—Ratty answered after his own fashion.

“Why won't you learn even a little?”

“I'm to go to that 'English fellow' in spring, and I shall have no fun then, so I'm making good use of my time now.”

“Do you call it 'good use' to be so dreadfully idle and shamefully ignorant?”

“Bother!—the less I know, the more the English fellow will have to teach me, and Uncle Bob will have more worth for his money;” and then Ratty would whistle a jig, fling a fowling−piece over his shoulder, and shout “Ponto! Ponto! Ponto!” as he traversed the stable−yard; the delighted pointer would come bounding at the call, and, after circling round his young master with agile grace and yelps of glee at the sight of the gun, dash forward to the well−known “bottoms” in eager expectancy of ducks and snipe. How fared it all this time with the lord of Scatterbrain? He became established, for the present, in a house that had been a long time to let in the neighbourhood, and his mother was placed at the head of it, and Oonah still remained under his protection, though the daily sight of the girl added to Andy's grief at the desperate plight in which his ill− starred marriage placed him, to say nothing of the constant annoyance of his mother's growling at him for his making “such a Judy of himself;” for the dowager Lady Scatterbrain could not get rid of her vocabulary at once. Andy's only resource under these circumstances was to mount his horse and fly.

As for the dowager Lady Scatterbrain, she had a carriage with “a picture” on it, as she called the coat of arms, and was fond of driving past the houses of people who had been uncivil to her. Against Mrs. Casey (the renowned Matty Dwyer) she entertained an especial spite, in consideration of her treatment of her beautiful boy and her own pair of black eyes; so she determined to “pay her off” in her own way, and stopping one day at the hole in the hedge which served for entrance to the estate of the “three−cornered field,” she sent the footman in to say the *dowjer* Lady Scatter_breen wanted to speak with “Casey's wife.”

When the servant, according to instructions, delivered this message, he was sent back with the answer, “that if

any lady wanted to see Casey's wife, 'Casey's wife,' was at home."

"Oh, go back, and tell the poor woman I don't want to bring her to the door of my carriage, if it's inconvaynient. I only wished to give her a little help; and tell her if she sends up eggs to the big house, Lady Scatterbreen will pay her for them."

When the servant delivered this message, Matty grew outrageous at the means "my lady" took of crowing over her, and rushing to the door, with her face flushed with rage, roared out, "Tell the old baggage I want none of her custom; let her lay eggs for herself."

The servant staggered back in amaze; and Matty, feeling he would not deliver her message, ran to the hole in the hedge and repeated her answer to my lady herself, with a great deal more which need not be recorded. Suffice it to say, my lady thought it necessary to pull up the glass, against which Matty threw a handful of mud; the servant jumped up on his perch behind the carriage, which was rapidly driven away by the coachman, but not so fast that Matty could not, by dint of running, keep it "within range" for some seconds, during which time she contrived to pelt both coachman and footman with mud, and leave her mark on their new livery. This was a salutary warning to the old woman, who was more cautious in her demonstrations of grandeur for the future. If she was stinted in the enjoyment of her new−born dignity abroad, she could indulge it at home without let or hindrance, and to this end asked Andy to let her have a hundred pounds, in one−pound notes, for a particular purpose. What this purpose was no one was told or could guess, but for a good while after she used to be closeted by herself for several hours during the day.

Andy had his hours of retirement also, for with praiseworthy industry he strove hard, poor fellow, to lift himself above the state of ignorance, and had daily attendance from the parish schoolmaster. The mysteries of "pothooks and hangers" and ABC weighed heavily on the nobleman's mind, which must have sunk under the burden of scholarship and penmanship, but for the other "ship"—the horsemanship—which was Andy's daily self− established reward for his perseverance in his lessons. Besides he really *could* ride; and as it was the only accomplishment of which he was master, it was no wonder he enjoyed the display of it; and, to say the truth, he did, and that on a first−rate horse too. Having appointed Murtough Murphy his law−agent, he often rode over to the town to talk with him, and as Murtough could have some fun and thirteen and fourpence also per visit, he was always glad to see his "noble friend." The high road did not suit Andy's notion of things; he preferred the variety, shortness, and diversion of going across the country on these occasions; and in one of these excursions, in the most secluded portion of his ride, which unavoidably lay through some quarries and deep broken ground, he met "Ragged Nance," who held up her finger as he approached the gorge of this lonely dell, in token that she would speak with him. Andy pulled up.

"Long life to you, my lord," said Nance, dropping a deep curtsey, "and sure I always liked you since the night you was so bowld for the sake of the poor girl—the young lady, I mane, now, God bless her—and I just wish to tell you, my lord, that I think you might as well not be going these lonely ways, for I see *them* hanging about here betimes, that maybe it would not be good for your health to meet; and sure, my lord, it would be a hard case if you were killed now, havin' the luck of the sick calf that lived all the winther and died in the summer."

"Is it that big blackguard, *Shan More*, you mane?" said Andy.

"No less," said Nance—growing deadly pale as she cast a piercing glance into the dell, and cried, in a low, hurried tone—"Talk of the divil—and there he is—I see him peep out from behind a rock."

"He's running this way," said Andy.

"Then you run the other way," said Nance; "look there—I see him strive to hide a blunderbuss under his coat—gallop off, for the love o' God! or there'll be murther."

"Maybe there will be that same," said Andy, "if I leave you here, and he suspects you gave me the hard word." [Footnote: "Hard word" implies a caution.]

"Never mind me," said Nance, "save yourself—see, he's moving fast, he'll be near enough to you soon to fire."

"Get up behind me," said Andy; "I won't leave you here."

"Run, I tell you."

"I won't."

"God bless you, then," said the woman, as Andy held out his hand and gripped hers firmly.

"Put your foot on mine," said Andy.

The woman obeyed, and was soon seated behind our hero, gripping him fast by the waist, while he pushed his horse to a fast canter.

“Hold hard now,” said Andy, “for there's a stiff jump here.” As he approached the ditch of which he spoke, two men sprang up from it, and one fired, as Andy cleared the leap in good style, Nance holding on gallantly. The horse was not many strokes on the opposite side, when another shot was fired in their rear, followed by a scream from the woman. To Andy's inquiry, if she was “kilt,” she replied in the negative, but said “they hurt her sore,” and she was “bleeding a power;” but that she could still hold on, however, and urged him to speed. The clearance of one or two more leaps gave her grievous pain; but a large common soon opened before them, which was skirted by a road leading directly to a farm−house, where Andy left the wounded woman, and then galloped off for medical aid; this soon arrived, and the wound was found not to be dangerous, though painful. The bullet had struck and pierced a tin vessel of a bottle form, in which Nance carried the liquid gratuities of the charitable, and this not only deadened the force of the ball, but glanced it also; and the escapement of the butter−milk, which the vessel contained, Nance had mistaken for the effusion of her own blood. It was a clear case, however, that if Nance had not been sitting behind Andy, Lord Scatterbrain would have been a dead man, so that his gratitude and gallantry towards the poor beggar woman proved the means of preserving his own life.

CHAPTER LI

The news of the attack on Lord Scatterbrain ran over the country like wildfire, and his conduct throughout the affair raised his character wonderfully in the opinion of all classes. Many who had hitherto held aloof from the mushroom lord, came forward to recognise the manly fellow, and cards were left at “the big house,” which were never seen there before. The magistrates were active in the affair, and a reward was immediately offered for the apprehension of the offenders; but before any active steps could be taken by the authorities, Andy, immediately after the attack, collected a few stout fellows himself, and knowing where the den of Shan and his miscreants lay, he set off at the head of his party to try if he could not secure them himself; but before he did this, he despatched a vehicle to the farmhouse, where poor Nance lay wounded, with orders that she should be removed to his own house, the doctor having said that the transit would not be injurious.

A short time served to bring Andy and his followers to the private still, where a little looking about enabled them to discover the entrance, which was covered by some large stones, and a bunch of furze placed as a mask to the opening. It was clear that it was impossible for any persons inside to have thus covered the entrance, and it suggested the possibility that some of its usual inmates were then absent. Nevertheless, having such desperate characters to deal with, it was a service of danger to be leader in the descent to the cavern when the opening was cleared; but Andy was the first to enter, which he did boldly, only desiring his attendants to follow him quickly, and give him support in case of resistance. A lantern had been provided, Andy knowing the darkness of the den; and the party was thereby enabled to explore with celerity and certainty the hidden haunt of the desperadoes. The ashes of the fire were yet warm, but no one was to be seen, till Andy, drawing the screen of the bed, discovered a man lying in a seemingly helpless state, breathing with difficulty, and the straw about him dabbled with blood. On attempting to lift him, the wretch groaned heavily and muttered, “D—n you, let me alone—you've done for me—I'm dying.”

The man was gently carried from the cave to the open air, which seemed slightly to revive him. His eyes opened heavily, but closed again; yet still he breathed. His wounds were staunched as well as the limited means and knowledge of the parties present allowed; and the ladder, drawn up from the cave and overlaid with tufts of heather, served to bear the sufferer to the nearest house, whence Andy ordered a mounted messenger to hurry for a doctor. The man seemed to hear what was going forward, for he faintly muttered, “the priest—the priest.”

Andy, anxious to procure this most essential comfort to the dying man, went himself in search of Father Blake, whom he found at home, and who suggested that a magistrate might be also useful upon the occasion; and as Merryvale lay not much out of the way, Andy made a detour to obtain the presence of Squire Egan, while Father Blake pushed directly onward upon his ghostly mission.

Andy and the Squire arrived soon after the priest had administered spiritual comfort to the sufferer, who still retained sufficient strength to make his depositions before the Squire, the purport of which turned out to be of the utmost importance to Andy.

This man, it appeared, *was the husband of Bridget*, who had returned from transportation, and sought his wife and her dear brother, and his former lawless associates, on reaching Ireland. On finding Bridget had married again, his anger at her infidelity was endeavoured to be appeased by the representations made to him that it was a “good job,” inasmuch as “the lord” had been screwed out of a good sum of money by way of separate maintenance, and that he would share the advantage of that. When matters were more explained, however, and the convict found this money was divided among so many, who all claimed right of share in the plunder, his discontent returned. In the first place, the pettifogger made a large haul for his services. Shan More swore it was hard if a woman's own brother was not to be the better for her luck; and Larry Hogan claimed hush−money, for he could prove Bridget's marriage, and so upset their scheme of plunder. The convict maintained his claim as husband was stronger than any; but this, all the others declared, was an outlandish notion he brought back with him from foreign parts, and did not prevail in their code of laws by any manner o' means, and even went so far as to say they thought it hard, after they had “done the job,” that he was to come in and lessen their profit, which he would, as they were willing to give an even share of the spoil; and after that, he must be the most discontented villain in the world if he was not pleased.

The convict feigned contentment, but meditated at once revenge against his wife and the gang, and separate profit for himself. He thought he might stipulate for a good round sum from Lord Scatterbrain, as he could prove him free of his supposed matrimonial engagement, and inwardly resolved he would soon pay a visit to his lordship. But his intentions were suspected by the gang, and a strict watch kept upon him; and though his dissimulation and contrivance were of no inferior order, Larry Hogan was his overmatch, and the convict was detected in having been so near Lord Scatterbrain's dwelling, that they feared their secret, if not already revealed, was no longer to be trusted to their new confederate's keeping; and it was deemed advisable to knock him on the head, and shoot my lord, which they thought would prevent all chance of the invalidity of the marriage being discovered, and secure the future payment of the maintenance.

How promptly the murderous determination was acted upon, the preceding events prove. Andy's courage in the first part of the affair saved his life; his promptness in afterwards seeking to secure the offenders led to the important discovery he had just made; and as the convict's depositions could be satisfactorily backed by proofs which he showed the means of obtaining, Andy was congratulated heartily by the Squire and Father Blake, and rode home in almost delirious delight at the prospect of making Oonah his wife. On reaching the stables, he threw himself from his saddle, let the horse make his own way to his stall, dashed through the back hall, and nearly broke his neck in tumbling up−stairs, burst open the drawing−room door, and made a rush upon Oonah, whom he hugged and kissed most outrageously, amidst exclamations of the wildest affection.

Oonah, half strangled and struggling for breath, at last freed herself from his embraces, and asked him, angrily, what he was about—in which inquiry she was backed by his mother.

Andy answered by capering round the room, shouting, “Hurroo! I'm not married at all—hurroo!” He turned over the chairs, upset the tables, threw the mantelpiece ornaments into the fire, seized the poker and tongs, and banged them together as he continued dancing and shouting.

Oonah and his mother stood gazing at his antics in trembling amazement, till at last the old woman exclaimed, “Holy Vargin! he's gone mad!” whereupon she and her niece set up a violent screaming, which called Andy back to his propriety, and, as well as his excitement would permit, he told them the cause of his extravagant joy. His wonder and delight were shared by his mother and the blushing Oonah, who did not struggle so hard in Andy's embrace on his making a second vehement demonstration of his love for her.

“Let me send for Father Blake, my jewel,” said Andy, “and I'll marry you at once.”

His mother reminded him he must first have his present marriage proved invalid. Andy uttered several pieces of *original* eloquence on “the law's delay.”

“Well, anyhow,” said he, “I'll drink your health, my darling girl, this day, as Lady Scatterbrain—for you must consider yourself as sitch.”

“Behave yourself, my lord,” said Oonah, archly.

“Bother!” cried Andy, snatching another kiss.

“Hillo!” cried Dick Dawson, entering at the moment, and seeing the romping−match. “You're losing no time, I see, Andy.”

Oonah was running from the room, laughing and blushing, when Dick interposed, and cried, “Ah, don't go, 'my lady,' that *is to be*.”

Oonah slapped down the hand that barred her progress, exclaiming, “You're just as bad as he is, Mister Dawson!” and ran away.

Dick had ridden over, on hearing the news, to congratulate Andy, and consented to remain and dine with him. Oonah had rather, after what had taken place, he had not been there, for Dick backed Andy in his tormenting the girl and joined heartily in drinking to Andy's toast, which, according to promise, he gave to the health of the future Lady Scatterbrain.

It was impossible to repress Andy's wild delight; and in the excitement of the hour he tossed off bumper after bumper to all sorts of love−making toasts, till he was quite overcome by his potations, and fit for no place but bed. To this last retreat of “the glorious” he was requested to retire, and, after much coaxing, consented. He staggered over to the window−curtain, which he mistook for that of the bed; in vain they wanted to lead him elsewhere—he would sleep in no other bed but *that* —and, backing out at the window−pane, he made a smash, of which he seemed sensible, for he said it wasn't a fair trick to put pins in the bed. “I know it was Oonah did that!—hip!—ha! ha! Lady Scatterbrain!—never mind —hip!—I'll have my revenge on you yet!”

They could not get him up−stairs, so his mother suggested he should sleep in her room, which was on the same floor, for that night, and at last he was got into the apartment. There he was assisted to disrobe, as he stood swaying about at a dressing−table. Chancing to lay his hands on a pill−box, he mistook it for his watch.

“Stop—stop!” he stammered forth—“I must wind my watch;” and, suiting the action to the word, he began twisting about the pill−box, the lid of which came off and the pills fell about the floor. “Oh, murder!” said Lord Scatterbrain, “the works of my watch are fallin' about the flure—pick them up—pick them up—pick them up—” He could speak no more, and becoming quite incapable of all voluntary action, was undressed and put to bed, the last sound which escaped him being a faint muttering—“pick them up.”

CHAPTER THE LAST

The day following the eventful one just recorded, the miserable convict breathed his last. A printed notice was posted in all the adjacent villages, offering a reward for the apprehension of *Shan More* and “other persons unknown,” for their murderous assault; and a small reward was promised for such “private information as might lead to the apprehension of the aforesaid,” &c., &c. Larry Hogan at once came forward and put the authorities on the scent, but still Shan and his accomplices remained undiscovered. Larry's information on another subject, however, was more effective. He gave his own testimony to the previous marriage of Bridget, and pointed out the means of obtaining more, so that, ere long, Lord Scatterbrain was a “free man.” Though the depositions of the murdered man did not directly implicate Larry in the murderous attack, still it showed that he had participated in much of their villany; but, as in difficult cases, we must put up with bad instruments to reach the ends of justice, so this rascal was useful for his evidence and private information, and got his reward.

But he got his reward in more ways than one. He knew that he dare not longer remain in the country after what had taken place, and set off directly for Dublin by the mail, intending to proceed to England; but England he never reached. As he was proceeding down the Custom−house quay in the dusk of the evening, to get on ship−board, his arms were suddenly seized and drawn behind him by a powerful grasp, while a woman in front drew a handkerchief across his mouth, and stifled his attempted cries. His bundle was dragged from him, and the woman ransacked his pockets but they contained but a few shillings, Larry having hidden the wages of his treachery to his confederates in the folds of his neck−cloth. To pluck this from his throat, many a fierce wrench was made by the woman, when her attempts on the pockets proved worthless; but the handkerchief was knotted so tightly that she could not disengage it. The approach of some passengers along the quay alarmed the assailants of Larry, who, ere the iron grip released him, heard a deep curse in his ear growled by a voice he well knew, and then he felt himself hurled with gigantic force from the quay wall. Before the base, cheating, faithless scoundrel could make one exclamation, he was plunged into the Liffey—even before one mental aspiration for mercy, he was in the throes of suffocation! The heavy splash in the water caught the attention of those whose approach had alarmed the murderers, and seeing a man and woman running, a pursuit commenced, which ended by Newgate having two fresh tenants the next day.

And so farewell to the entire of the abominable crew, whose evil doings and merited fates have only been recorded when it became necessary to our story. It is better to leave the debased and the profligate in oblivion than drag their doings before the day; and it is with happy consciousness an Irishman may assert, that there is plenty of subject afforded by Irish character and Irish life honourable to the land, pleasing to the narrator, and sufficiently attractive to the reader, without the unwholesome exaggerations of crime which too often disfigure the fictions which pass under the title of “Irish,” alike offensive to truth as to taste—alike injurious both for private and public considerations.

* * * * *

It was in the following autumn that a particular chariot drove up to the door of the Victoria Hotel, on the shore of Killarney lake. A young man of elegant bearing handed a very charming young lady from the chariot; aand that kindest and mos accommodating of hostesses, Mrs. F——, welcomed the fresh arrival with her good−humoured and smiling face.

Why, amidst the crowd of arrivals at the Victoria, one chariot should be remarkable beyond another, arose from its quiet elegance, which might strike even a casual observer; but the intelligent Mrs. F——saw with half an eye the owners must be high−bred people. To the apartments already engaged for them they were shown; but few minutes were lost within doors where such matchless natural beauty tempted them without. A boat was immediately ordered, and then the newly arrived visitors were soon on the lake. The boatmen had already worked hard that day, having pulled one party completely round the lakes—no trifling task; but the hardy fellows again bent to their oars, and made the sleeping waters wake in golden flashes to the sunset, till told they need not pull so hard.

“Faith, then, we'll *plaze* you, sir,” said the stroke−oarsman, with a grin, “for we have had quite enough of it to−day.”

“Do you not think, Fanny,” said Edward O'Connor, for it was he who spoke to his bride, “Do you not think 'tis more in unison with the tranquil hour and the coming shadows, to glide softly over the lulled waters?”

“Yes,” she replied, “it seems almost sacrilege to disturb this heavenly repose by the slightest dip of the oar—see how perfectly that lovely island is reflected.”

“That is Innisfallin, my lady,” said the boatman, hearing her allude to the island, “where the hermitage is.” As he spoke, a gleam of light sparkled on the island, which was reflected on the water.

“One might think the hermit was there too,” said Fanny, “and had just lighted a lamp for his vigils.”

“That's the light of the guide that shows the place to the quality, my lady, and lives on the island always in a corner of the ould ruin. And, indeed, if you'd like to see the island this evening, there's time enough, and 'twould be so much saved out of to−morrow.”

The boatman's advice was acted upon, and as they glided towards the island, Fanny and Edward gazed delightedly on the towering summits of Magillicuddy's reeks, whose spiral pinnacles and graceful declivities told out sharply against the golden sky behind them, which, being perfectly reflected in the calm lake, gave a grand chain of mountain the appearance of being suspended in glowing heather, for the lake was one bright amber sheet of light below, and the mountains one massive barrier of shade, till they cut against the light above. The boat touched the shore of Innisfallin, and the delighted pair of visitants hurried to its western point to catch the sunset, lighting with its glory the matchless foliage of this enchanting spot, where every form of grace exhaustless nature can display is lavished on the arborial richness of the scene, which, in its unequalled luxuriance, gives to a fanciful beholder the idea that the *trees themselves have a conscious pleasure in growing there.* Oh! what a witching spot is Innisfallin!

Edward had never seen anything so beautiful in his life; and with the woman he adored resting on his arm, he quoted the lines which Moore has applied to the Vale of Cashmere, as he asked Fanny would she not like to live there.

“Would you?” said Fanny.

Edward answered—

“If woman can make the worst wilderness dear,
Think—think what a heaven she must make of Cashmere.”

They lingered on the island till the moon arose, and then re−embarked. The silvery light exhibited the lake under another aspect, and the dimly discovered forms of the lofty hills rose one above another, tier upon tier, circling the waters in their shadowy frame, the beauty of the scene reached a point of sublimity which might be called holy. As they returned towards the shelving strand, a long row of peeled branches, standing upright in the water, attracted Fanny's attention, and she asked their use.

“All the use in life, my lady,” said the boatman, “for without the same branches, maybe it's not home to−night you'd get.”

On Fanny inquiring further the meaning of the boatman's answer, she learned that the sticks were placed there to indicate the only channel which permitted a boat to approach the shore on that side of the lake, where the water was shoal, while in other parts the depth had never been fathomed.

An early excursion on the water was planned for the morning, and Edward and Fanny were wakened from their slumbers by the tones of the bugle; a soft Irish melody being breathed by Spillan, followed by a more sportive one from the other minstrel of the lake, Ganzy.

The lake now appeared under another aspect—the morning sun and morning breeze were upon it, and the sublimity with which the shades of evening had invested the mountains was changed to that of the most varied richness; for Autumn hung out its gaudy banner on the lofty hills, crowned to their summits with all variety of wood, which, though tinged by the declining year, had scarcely shed one leafy honour. The day was glorious, and the favouring breeze enabled the boat to career across the sparkling lake under canvas, till the overhanging hills of the opposite side robbed them of their aerial wings, and the sail being struck, the boatmen bent to their oars. As they passed under a promontory, clothed from the water's edge to its topmost ridge with the most luxuriant vegetation, it was pointed out to the lady as “the minister's back.”

“'T is a strange name,” said Fanny. “Do you know why it is called so?”

“Faix, I dunna, my lady—barrin' that it is the best covered back in the country. But here we come to the *aichos*,” said he, resting on his oars. The example was followed by his fellows, and the bugler, lifting his

instrument to his lips, gave one long well−sustained blast. It rang across the waters gallantly. It returned in a few seconds with such unearthly sweetness, as though the spirit of the departed sound had become heavenly, and revisited the place where it had expired.

Fanny and Edward listened breathlessly.

The bugle gave out its notes again in the well−known “call,” and as sweetly as before the notes were returned distinctly.

And now a soft and slow and simple melody stole from the exquisitely played bugle, and phrase after phrase was echoed from the responding hills. How many an emotion stirred within Edward's breast, as the melting music fell upon his ear! In the midst of matchless beauties he heard the matchless strains of his native land, and the echoes of her old hills responding to the triumphs of her old bards. The air, too, bore with it historic associations;—it told a tale of wrong and of suffering. The wrong has ceased, the suffering is past, but the air which records them still lives.

“Oh! triumph of the minstrel!” exclaimed Edward in delight. “The tyrant crumbles in his coffin, while the song of the bard survives! The memory of a sceptred ruffian is endlessly branded by a simple strain, while many of the elaborate chronicles of his evil life have passed away and are mouldering like himself.”

Scarcely had the echoes of this exquisite air died away, when the entrancement it carried was rudely broken by one of the vulgarest tunes being brayed from a bugle in a boat which was seen rounding the headland of the wooded promontory. Edward and Fanny writhed, and put their hands to their ears. “Give way, boys!” said Edward; “for pity's sake get away from these barbarians. Give way!”

Away sprang the boat. To the boatman's inquiry whether they should stop at “Lady Kenmare's Cottage,” Fanny said “no,” when she found on inquiry it was a particularly “show−place,” being certain the vulgar party following *would* stop there, and therefore time might be gained in getting away from such disagreeable followers.

Dinas Island, fringed with its lovely woods, excited their admiration, as they passed underneath its shadows, and turned into Turk Lake; here the labyrinthine nature of the channels through which they had been winding was changed for a circular expanse of water, over which the lofty mountain, whence it takes its name, towers in all its wild beauty of wood, and rock, and heath.

At a certain part of the lake, the boatmen, without any visible cause, rested on their oars. On Edward asking them why they did not pull, he received this touching answer:—

“Sure, your honour would not have us disturb Ned Macarthy's grave!”

“Then a boatman was drowned here, I suppose?” said Edward.

“Yes, your honour.” The boatman then told how the accident occurred “one day when there was a stag−hunt on the lake;” but as the anecdote struck Edward so forcibly that he afterwards recorded it in verse, we will give the story after his fashion.

MACARTHY'S GRAVE

I

The breeze was fresh, the morn was fair,
The stag had left his dewy lair;
To cheering horn and baying tongue,
Killarney's echoes sweetly rung.
With sweeping oar and bending mast,
The eager chase was following fast;
When one light skiff a maiden steer'd
Beneath the deep wave disappeared:
Wild shouts of terror wildly ring,
A boatman brave, with gallant spring
And dauntless arm, the lady bore;
But he who saved—was seen no more!

II

Where weeping birches wildly wave,
There boatmen show their brother's grave;
And while they tell the name he bore,

Suspended hangs the lifted oar;
The silent drops they idly shed
Seem like tears to gallant Ned;
And while gently gliding by,
The tale is told with moistened eye.
No ripple on the slumbering lake
Unhallow'd oar doth ever make;
All undisturb'd, the placid wave
Flows gently o'er Macarthy's grave.

Winding backwards through the channels which lead the explorers of this scene of nature's enchantment from the lower to the upper lake, the surpassing beauty of the “Eagle's nest” burst on their view; and as they hovered under its stupendous crags, clustering with all variety of verdure, the bugle and the cannon awoke the almost endless reverberation of sound which is engendered here. Passing onward, a sudden change is wrought; the soft beauty melts gradually away, and the scene hardens into frowning rocks and steep acclivities, making a befitting vestibule to the bold and bleak precipices of “The Reeks,” which form the western barrier of this upper lake, whose savage grandeur is rendered more striking by the scenes of fairy−like beauty left behind. But even here, in the midst of the mightiest desolation, the vegetative vigour of the numerous islands proves the wondrous productiveness of the soil in these regions.

On their return, a great commotion was observable as they approached the rapids formed by the descending waters of the upper lake to the lower, and they were hailed and warned by some of the peasants from the shore that they must not attempt the rapids at present, as a boat, which had just been upset, lay athwart the passage. On hearing this, Edward and Fanny landed upon the falls, and walked towards the old bridge, where all was bustle and confusion, as the dripping passengers were dragged safely to shore from the capsized boat, which had been upset by the principal gentleman of the party, whose vulgar trumpetings had so disturbed the delight of Edward and Fanny, who soon recognised the renowned Andy as the instigator of the bad music and the cause of the accident. Yes, Lord Scatterbrain, true to his original practice, was author of all.

Nevertheless, he and his party, soused over head and ears as they were, took the thing in good humour, which was unbroken even by the irrepressible laughter which escaped from Edward and Fanny, as they approached and kindly offered assistance. An immediate removal to the neighbouring cottage on Dinas Island was recommended, particularly as Lady Scatterbrain was in a delicate situation, as well, indeed, as Mrs. Durfy, who, with her dear Tom, had joined Lord Scatterbrain's party of pleasure.

On reaching the cottage, sufficient change of clothes was obtained to prevent evil consequences from the ducking. This, under ordinary circumstances, might not have been easy for so many; but, fortunately, Lord Scatterbrain had ordered a complete dinner from the hotel to be served in the cottage, and some of the assistants from the Victoria, who were necessarily present, helped to dress more than the dinner. What between cookmaids and waiters, the care−taker of the cottage and the boatmen, bodies, and skirts, jackets and other conveniences, enabled the party to sit down to dinner in company, until fire could mend the mistake of his lordship. Edward and Fanny courteously joined the party; and the honour of their company was sensibly felt by Andy and Oonah, who would have borne a ducking a day for the honour of having Fanny and Edward as their guests. Oonah was by nature a nice creature, and adapted herself to her elevated position with a modest ease that was surprising. Even Andy was by this time able to conduct himself tolerably well at table—only on that particular day he did make a mistake; for when salmon (which is served at Killarney in all sorts of variety) made its appearance for the first time in the novel form “*en papillote*,” Andy ate paper and all. He refused a second cutlet, however, saying he “*thought the skin tough*.” The party, however, passed off mirthfully, the very accident helping the fun; for, instead of any one being called by name, the “lady in the jacket,” or the “gentleman in the bedgown,” were the terms of address; and, after a merrily spent evening, the beds of the Victoria gave sleep and pleasing dreams to the sojourners of Killarney.

[Illustration: The Party at Killarney]

Kind reader! the shortening space we have prescribed to our volume warns us we must draw our story to an end. Nine months after this Killarney excursion, Lord Scatterbrain met Dick Dawson near Mount Eskar, where Lord Scatterbrain had ridden to make certain inquiries about Mrs. O'Connor's health. Dick wore a smiling

countenance, and to Andy's inquiry answered, “All right, and doing as well as can be expected.”

Lord Scatterbrain, wishing to know whether it was a boy or a girl, made the inquiry in the true spirit of Andyism—“Tell me, Misther Dawson, *are you an uncle or an aunt?*“

Andy's mother died soon after of the cold caught by her ducking. On her death−bed she called Oonah to her, and said, “I leave you this quilt, *alanna*—'t is worth more than it appears. The hundred−pound notes Andy gave me I quilted into the lining, so that if I lived poor all my life till lately, I died under a quilt of banknotes, anyhow.”

Uncle Bob was gathered to his fathers also, and left the bulk of his property to Augusta, so that Furlong had to regret his contemptible conduct in rejecting her hand. Augusta indulged in a spite to all mankind for the future, enjoying her dogs and her independence, and defying Hymen and hydrophobia for the rest of her life.

Gusty went on profiting by the early care of Edward O'Connor, whose friendship was ever his dearest possession; and Ratty, always wild, expressed a desire for leading a life of enterprise. As they are both “Irish heirs,” as well as Lord Scatterbrain, and heirs under very different circumstances, it is not improbable that in our future “accounts” something may yet be heard of them, and the grateful author once more meet his kind readers.

THE END