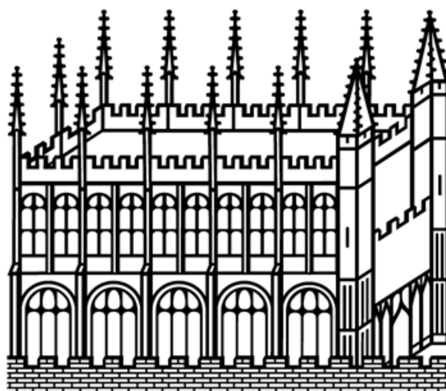

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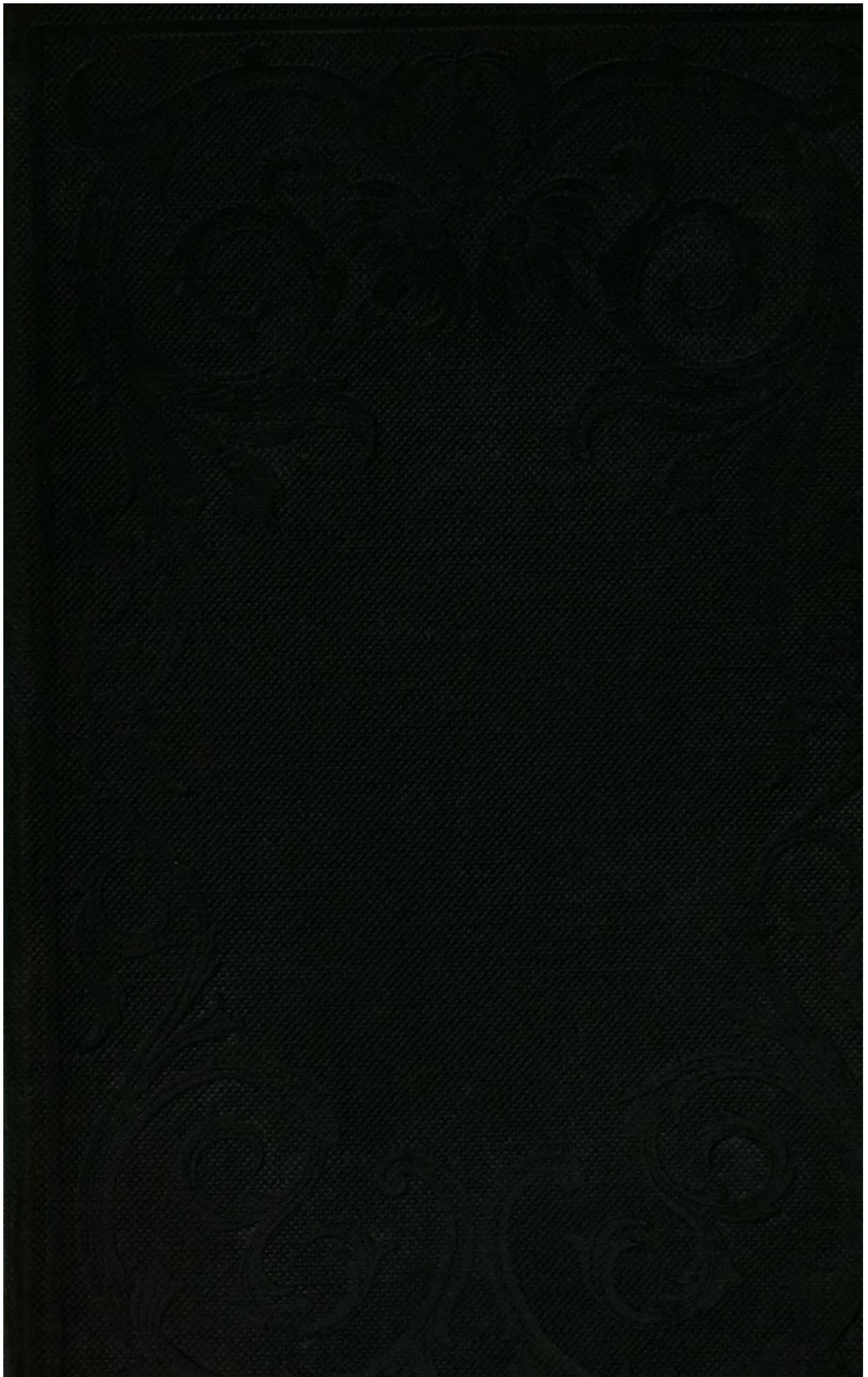

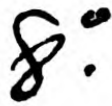

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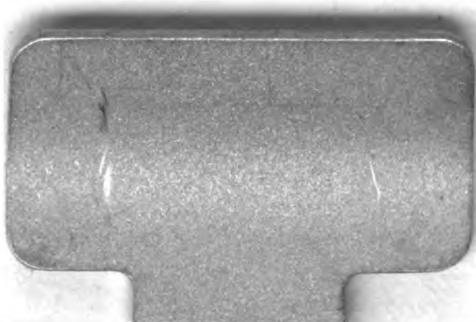


With the publishers compliments

THE HAND AND WORD.

Samuel Watson Del. 1841.

" He was yet speaking, when the rope severed under Black Yamon's breast, and the three men were precipitated into the boiling waters beneath."

1842

THE HAND AND WORD.

under Black Yamon's breast, and the three men were precipitated into the boiling waters beneath."

THE AYLMERS OF BALLY-AYLMER

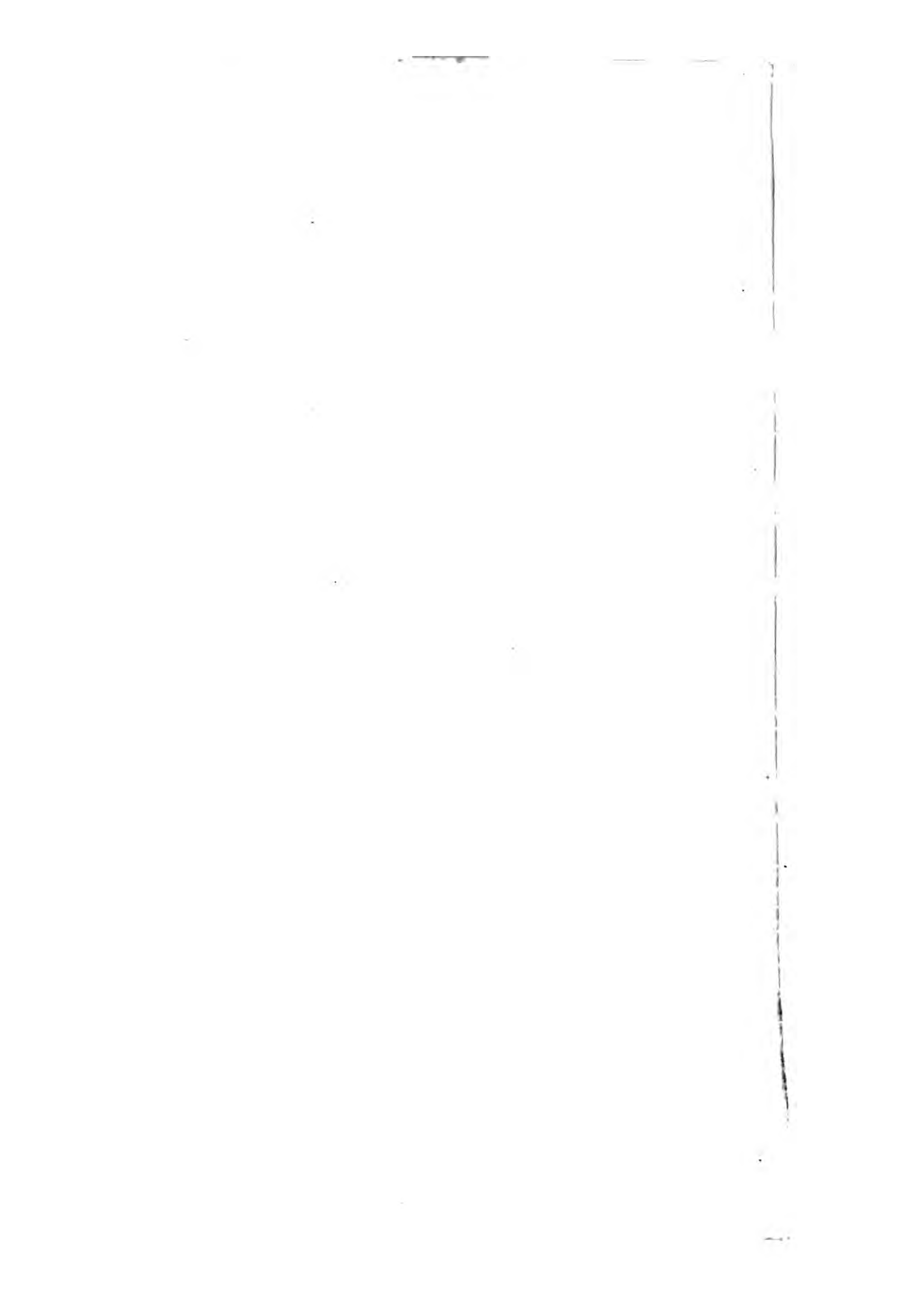
by

GERALD GRIFFIN ESQ^RE^

"From this concealment enveloped as he was in a piece of impenetrable shade he could see his bandy-legged shag-eared foe bound fiercely to the bank immediately above him."

LONDON

1842



HOLLAND-TIDE.

"Now let it rain potatoes!"
Merry Wives of Windsor.

LONDON:
MAXWELL AND CO, PUBLISHERS,
30, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.
JOHN CUMMING, DUBLIN; AND BELL AND BRADFUTE,
EDINBURGH.

1842.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following TALES are the result of some notes made during a residence of several years in a part of Ireland but little visited by writers, whose acknowledged abilities might enable them to turn the abundant material, which it everywhere presents, to better advantage. Whatever be the opinion formed of his book, the writer will feel little disappointment, provided it has the effect of leading abler hands to the accomplishment of a task but slightly attempted by him.

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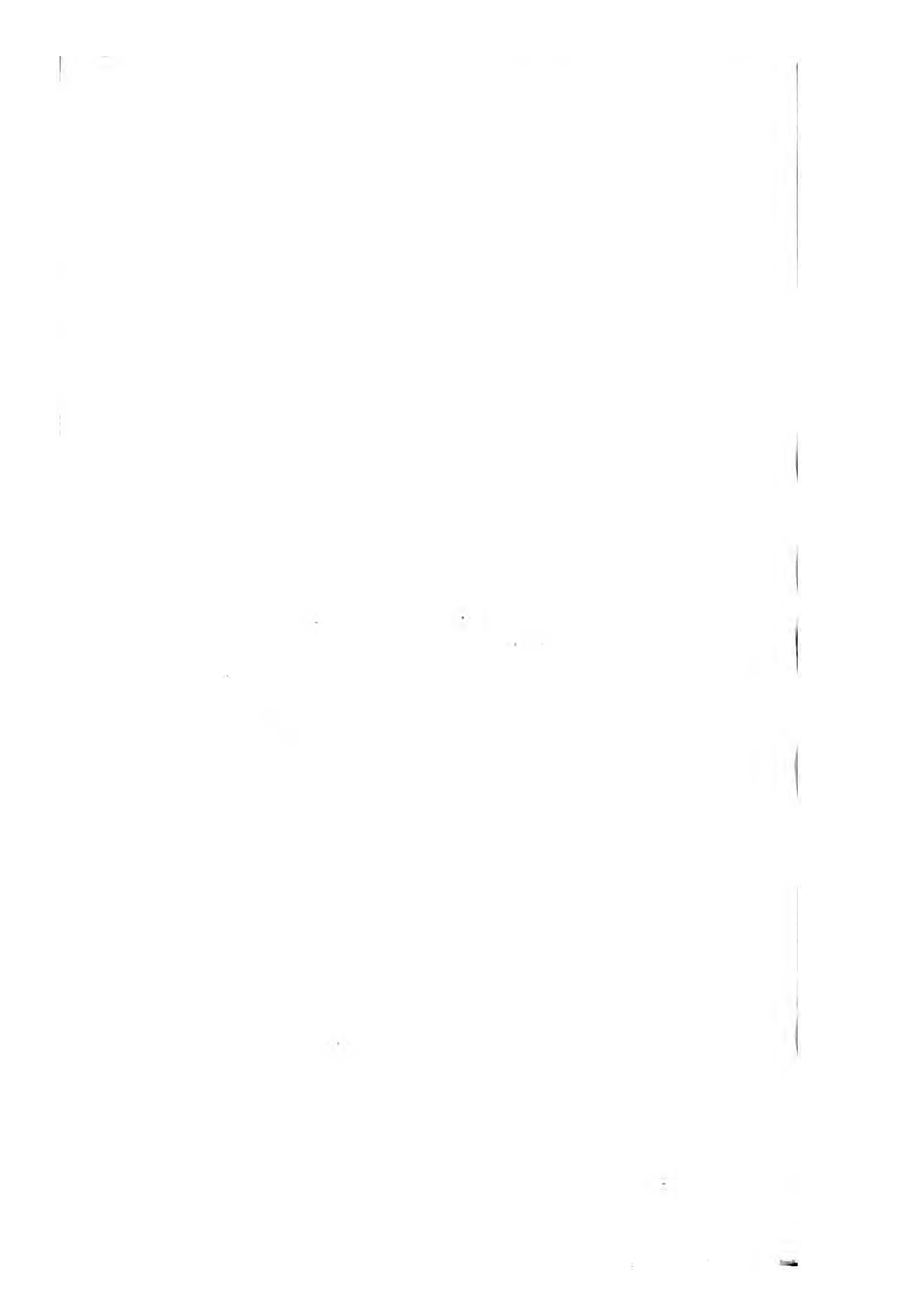
"HOLLAND-TIDE."

Straw for your gentilesse! quod our hoste—
What, Frankeleine! Parde, Sire, wel thou wost
That eche of you mote tellen at the lest
A Tale or two, or breken his behest.

CHAUCER.



"HOLLAND-TIDE."

"Holland-Tide," "All-Hollands," "Hollands-Eve," or November-Eve, was once a merrier time in Ireland than it is at present, though even still its customary enjoyments are by no means neglected. Fortunately for "all the Saints," in whose honour the feast is celebrated, it occurs at a season of the year when the pressure of want is less sensibly felt than at most others, and, among a people who are, generally speaking, so easily satisfied as to the external comforts of life, that a comparative alleviation of suffering is hailed with as hearty a welcome as if it were a positive acquisition of happiness. The peasant sees, at this period at least, the assurance of present abundance around him. He beholds a vast extent of land all cultivated, and burthened with the treasured produce of the soil—gardens of stubble covered with *shocks* of wheat, oats, and barley, which look just as if they were intended to make bread for him and his neighbours—fields of potatoes, some in which the nu-

merous earthen mounds, or *pits*,* have been already raised; others, in which the first nipping frost that is borne on the November blast has embrowned the stalks and withered the leaves upon their stem. The stroke of the flail, and the clack of the water-mill are in his ear—the meadow-land is green and fresh with its after-grass—and the *haggart*, or hay-yard, is stacked into a labyrinth with hay and corn. He is satisfied with the appearance of things about him—he thinks he has no business asking himself whether any of these good things are destined for his use, or for that of a foreign mechanic—he never stops to anticipate in fancy, while he puts the spade for the first time into his own little half acre, and discloses the fair produce of his labour, how many calls from tithe-proctor, assessed tax-gatherer, landlord, priest, &c. may yet diminish his little store—he sees the potatoes, they are his and his pig's by right, and he and his pig are merry fellows while they last, and while they can procure a turfen fire, or the smoke of a fire, to warm the little cabin about them.

Or, if this last comfort is denied him, he can take his stick, and his "God save all here," along with him, and make the best of his way into the spacious kitchen of the neighbouring "strong farmer," "middle-man," "small gentleman," or "half-sir," when the festival evening above-mentioned has arrived. Here he can take his place among the revellers, and pay for his warm seat in the chimney-corner by a joke, a laugh, a tale, a gibe, a magic sleight, a form of conjuration proper to the time—in short, by adding his subscription of merriment to the general fun of the meeting.

* There is a curious inversion of signification in the words *pit*, *ditch*, and *dyke*, in the sister isle. A potato *pit* is an *elevated* mound of earth, containing potatoes. A *ditch* is a dyke, and a dyke means a ditch.

Just such a quiet, contented, droll fellow, formed one of a most frolick November-Eve party at the house of a respectable farmer in the west of Munster, upon whose hospitality chance threw the collector of these stories, on the 31st of last October. The earthen floor had been swept as clean as a new pin; the two elderly rulers of the mansion were placed side by side in two venerable, high-backed, carved wooden chairs, near a blazing turf fire; their daughter, a bright-haired Munster lass (and Munster is as remarkable for fair faces, in Ireland, as Lancashire in the neighbouring country,) all alive with spirit and jocund health (that dearest dower of beauty,) was placed opposite, contending with, and far overmatching the wits of two rustic beaus the one the assistant of the village apothecary, the other (the more favoured of the two,) a wild, noisy, rude, red-faced savage, son to the agent at the "great house," as the mother gave me to understand in a whisper. The school-master, the seneschal, half a dozen neighbours, and a few shy looking, rosy-cheeked girls, looking forward with most unchristian anxiety and credulity to the cabalistic ceremonies of the evening, and anxiously longing for the retirement of the scrupulous old couple, whose presence alone prevented their being immediately put in train, in defiance of Father Maney and his penances, filled up the remainder of the scene immediately around the fire—while Paddy, the *gorsoon*, and the two maid-servants, sat whispering together in respectful distance, seated in shade upon the settle-bed, at the upper end of the apartment.

Previous to the commencement of the evening sports the jolly-looking fellow in the corner before mentioned, throwing himself back on his *sugan* chair, stretching

out his unstockinged, polished, and marbly legs, variegated by the cherishing influence of many a warm fireside, snapped his fingers, and made glad the heart of his ancient host, by leading out the famous old chorus:—

I.

"I love ten-pence, jolly, joll ten-pence;
I love ten-pence better than my life;
I spent a penny of it,
I lent a penny of it,
I took eight-pence home to my wife.

II.

"I love eight-pence, jolly, jolly eight-pence,
I love eight-pence better than my life;
I spent a penny of it,
I lent a penny of it,
I took six-pence home to my wife.

III.

I love six-pence, &c. &c.

and so forth, to

"I love two-pence, jolly, jolly two-pence,
I love two-pence better than my life;
I spent a penny of it,
I lent a penny of it,
I took NOTHING home to my wife!'

The chorus having died away in a most musical discord, a clear space was made in the midst, and a fat faced little urchin, clambering up on the back of one of the high chairs, lowered from the roof a sort of apparatus made of two laths crossed, and suspended from one of the bacon-hooks above by a whip-cord, fastened from the centre. A large bag of apples was now brought forward from the corner of the room, and

two of the sleekest and largest affixed to the extremities of one of the cross-sticks, while the other was furnished with two short bits of candle, lighted. When the balance was fairly adjusted, and the whole machine lowered to the level of the mouths of the guests, it was sent twirling round with a touch of the finger; the fun being now, to see who would fix his or her teeth in the immense apple, while in rapid motion, and avoid taking, instead, the unwelcome inch of lighted candle, which appeared to be whisking round in pursuit.

E'then, bad manners to you, Norry Foley," said the merry fellow with the legs before mentioned, addressing himself to a modest, blue-eyed, simpering maiden, who advanced in her turn to the "snap-apple," with a sly coquettish management of lip and eye, "only mark what a weeny dawny little mouth she makes at it, becase the gintlemin is looking at her now, all o' one I hadn't seen her myself many's the time make no more than the one offer at a white-eye that would make two of that apple."

And, as if to demonstrate the facility of the undertaking, he advanced in his turn with an easy, careless, swaggering confidence in his own prowess, and a certain ominous working of his immense jaws, which struck awe into the hearts of the junior spectators. The orifice which was displayed when he expanded them, banished the faintest glimmering of hope; and when they closed, with a hollow sound, upon the devoted fruit, a general groan announced that the sports and chances of "snap-apple" for that evening were at an end.

Next followed the floating apple, of still greater dimensions than the former, placed in a tub of clear

water, and destined to become the property of him who should, fairly between his teeth, and without help from hands, or the side of the vessel, lift it out of the fluid. This created most uproarious mirth for some time, until the man with the legs, in his own quiet, silent way, stalked among the disputants like the genius of fate, and picking it off the surface as if it had been a walnut, retired to his corner, followed by the wondering and envious glances of the gaping juniors.

While these things were transacted above, another group about the fire were occupied more interestingly, though not so merrily, in melting the lead through the handle of a key placed over a *porringer* of water, and conjecturing from the fantastical shapes which the metal assumed, their own future destiny; in burning the beans,* (in which process, much to the dissatisfaction of the young hostess and her noisy sweetheart, the village apothecary's lad was observed to burn quietly by her side, while the former bounced away with a "pop!" like a shot) and other innocent and permitted arts of the Ephesian letter. These little minor tricks, however, were but child's play to the great girls, who were on thorns until the field should be left clear to themselves—when they might put in practice the darker and more daring ceremonies proper to the time—the drying of the shift sleeve on the three-legged stool, and watching in the silence of the midnight for the shadowy resemblance of the future spouse, who was to turn it before the fire; the sowing of hemp or rapeseed, the adjuration with a sage-leaf, and all the gloomy and forbidden mysteries of the night, into which we shall not at present penetrate; these ceremonies not

* Such is the demand for those articles "coming on" November Eve, that rural speculators sow bean gardens for the purpose of profiting by the occasion.

being peculiar or strictly national, and having already found admirable historians in the authors of "Halloween," and of "The Boyne Water."

After the company had wearied their spirits and memories in search of new matter of amusement, and exhausted all the accustomed festivities of the evening, the loudness of their merriment began to die away, and a drowsiness crept upon their laughter and conversation. As the noisier revellers grew comparatively silent, the voices of two or three old gossips who sat inside the hearth in the chimney-corner, imbibing the grateful warmth, and seeming to breathe as freely and contentedly amid the volumes of smoke which enveloped them as if it had been pure aroma—their knees gathered up to their chins, and the tails of their cotton or stuff gowns drawn up over their heads, suffering the glazed blue or green petticoat to dazzle the eyes of the admiring spectators—the voices, as we have said, of these old crones became more audible as the noisy mirth around them began to decrease, and at length attracted the attention of the other guests.

"What is it ye're doing there?" exclaimed the old master of the house, looking towards the corner with an expression of face in which much real curiosity and some assumed ridicule were blended.

"Oyeh thin nothing in the world," replied a smoke-dried, crow-footed, white-haired, yet sharp-eyed hag, whose three last teeth were employed in masticating a piece of "that vile roguish tobacco." "Nothing;—only we to be talking among ourselves of ould times—and things—the quare doings that used to be there long ago—

'Onst on a time
When pigs drank wine,
And turkeys smoked tobaccy;'—

whin THEMSELVES used to be seen by the ould and the young, by day and night, roving the fields and places, and not to be scaming about as they do now, (maning 'em no disparagement,) in a whisk of a dusty road on a windy day,—whin goold was as plenty as bog-dust, and there used to be joyants there as long as the round towers; when it was the fashion for the girls to come coorting the boys, instead of the boys going after the girls, and things that way, entirely."

"Poh, what nonsense!" exclaimed the hero of the snap-apple, "there's not a word ever to be had out o' the ould women, passing a chronicle of a fable about the fairies, and priests, and joyants, and things that we never seen, nor that nobody ever come back to tell us about—what kind they wor—or what truth was in 'em. Let somebody sit upright and tell us something that we'll know is it a lie that he's telling, or not."

"Something about wakes and weddings, and them things," said (a note above her breath) the modest, small mouthed Norry Foley.

"Or smugglers, or coiners, or fighting at fairs, or Moll Doyle, or rebellion, or murthering of one sort or another," roared he of the legs.

"Easy now—easy the whole o' ye!—easy again!" said the host, waving his hand round the circle to enjoin silence,—there may be a way found to please ye all?" (this was said with an air of good-natured condescension, as if the speaker, in his benevolence, were about to tolerate rather than enjoy the silly amusement which the youngsters meditated)—"gather round the fire, do ye, and let every body tell his story after his own way; and let the rest hearken, whether they like it or not, until 'tis over, and then tell their own if they think 'tis better."

A clattering of chairs and stools, and a general bustle announced the ready concurrence of the company in this polite arrangement. In a short time all were hushed into a most flattering silence, and the following tales passed round the circle, lulling some to sleep, keeping others awake, each finding its particular number of indulgent, gratified, and attentive auditors though no single one, perhaps, succeeded in pleasing all.

Whether such may be the lot of the narratives among a more extensive and less considerate audience, remains to be seen. Avowing the source from which his materials were taken, the collector thinks himself entitled to tell the stories after his own liking, only requesting the critical reader to keep the pretensions of the book in mind whenever its defects shall arouse the tiger, judgment, within his breast. It is not that we absolutely fear the beast, but we would have him reserve his royal ferocity for a worthier prey, which a little forbearance in this instance may induce us, ere long, to lay before him.

THE

AYLMERS OF BALLY-AYLMER.

With pleasure and amaze I stand transported!
What do I see? Dead and alive at once!

Cato.

THE

AYLMERS OF BALLY-AYLMER.

"The mountains! The Kerry hills! Alone by yourself and at this time o'night!—Now, hear to me, will you, sir, for its a lonesome way you're taking, and them mountains is the place for all manner of evil doings from the living and from the dead. Take this little bottle of holy water, and shake a little of it upon your fore-head, when you step upon the heath. Walk on bold and straight before you, and if the dead night come upon you, which I hope no such thing will happen till you reach Tralee any way, you won't whistle, don't, for it is that calls 'em all about one if they do be there; you know who I mean, sir. If you chance to see or hear any thing bad, you have only to hold these beads up over your head and stoop under it, and whatever it is, it must pass over the beads without doing you any harm. Moreover—"

"Easy, easy, Mrs. Giltinaan, if you please. There is something of much more consequence to me than those fine instructions of yours. Don't mind telling

me what I shall do in case I lose my way, until you have let me know first how I am to find it,

"Oh, then, why shouldn't I, and welcome, Mr. Aylmer? listen to me and I'll tell you, only be careful and don't slight *themselves* for all."

The above formed part of a conversation which took place between the hostess of an humble inn on the west border of the county of Limerick, and a young gentleman whose sharp accent and smart dress bespoke a recent acquaintance with Dublin-life at least, As he was a very handsome young fellow, and likely to fall into adventures, perhaps I may be excused for giving some account of him, and in order to do this the more fully and satisfactorily, I shall begin by telling who his father was.

Robert Aylmer, Esq. of Bally-Aylmer, was a private gentleman of real Milesian extraction, residing near the west coast of Ireland. Like most of the gentry around him at that time, he did not scruple to add to his stock of wordly wealth, a portion of that which by legal right should have gone into his Majesty's exchequer. In a word, he meddled in the *running* trade on the coast, a circumstance not calculated at the period in question to attach any thing like opprobrium to the character of a gentleman and a real Milesian. Although he added considerably to his patrimony by this traffic, the expenses of the establishment at Bally-Aylmer were so creditable to the hospitality of its master, that he felt himself sinking rather than rising in the world, and was, indeed, on the eve of ruin, or more properly of an ejectment, when a desperate resource presented itself in the form of a smuggling enterprise, so daring in its nature that none but a Milesian would have even dreamt of putting it in ex-

ecution. He formed this project, as he had done many others, in conjunction with an old friend and neighbour, Mr. Cahill Fitzmaurice, or as he was called by the smugglers, from his hardiness and cruelty, Cahill-cruv-dharug, (Cahill of the red hand,) a name, however, which like many other nicknames, was but little appropriate, for Mr. Fitzmaurice was known to mingle much humanity with his enterprise. Those two friends undertook the affair together, succeeded with an ease which they hardly anticipated, and realized a sum of money more than sufficient to have tempted them into danger still more imminent. Gratifying as was his success so far however, this enterprise was of fatal consequence to Mr. Aylmer. Having embarked with his friend on board a Galway hooker, (a kind of vessel used for carrying fish or turf along the coast and up the Shannon,) for the mouth of the river, they happened to engage in a dispute on some trivial occasion or other which, nevertheless, was made up between them with little difficulty. On the same night however, a very dark one, as the little vessel was *putting about* in a hard gale, a stamping of feet and struggling was heard on the forecastle, and immediately afterwards a heavy plash on the lee bow. Running forward to ascertain the cause, the boatmen found that Mr. Aylmer had fallen overboard, and Fitzmaurice was observed standing near the lee gunwale, and holding by the fluke of the anchor, apparently under the influence of strong agitation. He was seized instantly and questioned as to the occurrence, which he described to be perfectly accidental. A jury of his countrymen subsequently confirmed the allegation, and the innocence of the man was considered to be put beyond all doubt, by the circumstance of his adopting the only child of the deceas-

ed, William Aylmer, educating him at his own expense and clearing off all the debts to a very large amount with which his father's patrimony had been encumbered. The youth had been educated with the infant daughter of his father's friend, until the age of ten, when he was sent to the metropolis; and he was now returning to the house of his benefactor, after an absence of nine years, during which time he had made himself perfect in all the accomplishments which a college, and subsequently a polite education, could afford.

Having performed the greater part of his journey in a kind of itinerant penitentiary called a jingle, an illegitimate sort of vehicle, somewhat between a common cart and a damaged spring-carriage, possessing all the ricketty insecurity of the one, with all the clumsiness of the other, young Aylmer determined to trust to a pair of well qualified legs for the remainder of the route, and was now in the act of striking off the high road into the Kerry mountains which lay between him and Bally-Aylmer, near which Mr. Fitzmaurice resided, with the intention of completing his journey before night.

The "Kingdom of Kerry" is, as Horace Walpole said of a county in England which happens to be very fashionable at present, a great damper of curiosity. Among the mountainous districts in which it abounds, are vast tracts of barren, heathy, and boggy soil, which are totally destitute of human inhabitants. The champaign which now presented itself to the gaze of the traveller, was one of the dreariest that may be easily imagined: heath beyond heath, and bog after bog, as far as his sight could reach in prospect, canopied over by a low dingy and variable sky, and rendered still more dispiriting by the passing gusts of wind which

occasionally shrieked over the desolate expanse, with so wildering a cadence as almost to excuse the superstition of the natives, that the fairies of the mountain ride in the blast, these formed the prominent characteristics of the scene which lay before him.

Now and then as he advanced on his route, a traveling tinker touched his hat to him, and a fish-jolter, from the western coast, nodded a courteous "Dieu ith," as he passed, in his complete suit of sky-blue frieze, whistling to his mule; while, with downcast, meditative look, the patient, passionless animal plodded on, stooping under the weight of two large *cleaves* of fish, intended for the next market. Often, too, the eye of the young collegian found matter more interesting in the laughing, round, red cheeks, snow-white teeth, and roguish blue eyes of the country girls, who hurried past him with a drop curtsy, and a half modest, half cunning glance, shot from under the eye-lash, with an expression which seemed to say, "there be coquets out of Dublin." All traces of cultivation had not yet disappeared—the hardy potatoe, in all its varities of cup, white-eye, English red, kidney, London lady, black bull, rattle, early American apple, white potatoe, &c. &c. &c, diversified the ungrateful plain, with several plots or gardens of variegated bloom, and filled the air with sweetness. The young gentleman's pair of velocipedes, however, were so vigorous in the execution of the trust confided to them, as to quickly place him beyond the influence of these outskirts of cultivation, and, after an hour's walking, he found himself far beyond the sight or sign of human habitation, a good hazel stick in his hand, and a Murphy's Lucian in his coat pocket. He had received and noted down in his memory with great exactness the various landmarks

by which his course was to be directed, and he felt too unbounded a confidence in his own powers of discrimination, to doubt his being able to recognise them when they should occur. But those who have been similarly circumstanced will easily acknowledge the probability of a miscalculation in this respect. It is even as in the great world—however minute or provident may be the code of instructions with which the young adventurer is furnished at his outset, he quickly finds the number of novel contingencies which thrust themselves upon him, too extensive for any second-hand experience to secure him against all necessity for exercising his own natural judgment.

It was not, however, until he had been journeying for some hours, that Aylmer began to think at all of the possibility of mistaking his route. His mind was occupied with meditations of a far more agreeable nature,—the expectation of speedily revisiting scenes so dear to him, from the recollection of the merry hours he had passed among them, and from their association in his mind with the few friends of his childhood. His benefactor he had seldom seen, for Mr. Fitzmaurice was a silent, solitary, musing man, who loved little company of any kind, after the loss of his friend, and who was not anxious to conceal that a certain natural weakness of temper rendered the sight of the little orphan at no time pleasing to him. Miss Fitzmaurice however, entertained a very different feeling on this subject: and the childish affection which had swiftly developed itself on both sides, was quite strong enough to supply the want of natural or instinctive fondness The time that had elapsed since Aylmer's separation from her, had not abated any of the regard which he always cherished towards his fair friend, and he con-

templated their approaching meeting with a glee which originated a great deal in real kindness, and not a little in that curiosity which is so frequently mistaken for affection by those who feel it. He had shaped out, with his mind's eye, a thousand full length portraits of the now womanly Kate Fitzmaurice, from the dusky evening air, and had completed one very much to his satisfaction, when a sudden salutation in a strange voice startled him from his reverie. He looked round him, and perceived now, for the first time, that the night was rapidly closing in. The appearance of the heavens had changed since he had last observed them. Clusters of broken vapour were now hurrying past in swift succession, and there was a bleakness in the air which seemed to portend an approaching change of weather. Turning to ascertain from whom, or whence, the voice proceeded, he beheld a man seated on the heath, his back supported against an in-sloping crag, a grey frieze coat thrown loosely about his person, a pair of brogues well studded with *pavers* (large-headed nails used for the strong shoes of the peasantry in Ireland,) and an auburn-coloured felt hat, pressed down upon his brows. There was, nevertheless, something of finery in his address, which seemed inconsistent with this coarseness of appearance.

"A question from a stranger is hardly sinful in such a place as this," he proceeded, after Aylmer had acknowledged his courtesy, "particularly as a man has his own choice about answering it. Do you mean to journey much farther to-night, sir?"

"I hope to reach Bally-Aylmer before the night has become much darker,"

The stranger shifted his position, and was silent for

a few minutes. "Bally-Aylmer?" he exclaimed at last, "you are the young master, then?"

"My name is Aylmer."

"Bally-Aylmer! Um. It is seven long miles from you now, if you took the nearest way that is, and that is not possible for any one to do that knows so little of the mountain-roads or tracks as you do. I was going in the same direction myself, but seeing the night about to fall dark, I preferred taking my chance for shelter under this crag, where I shall lie dry, at least to my chance of a drenching, and perhaps something worse, among the bogs and crags that lie about half a mile beyond us. If you will proceed, you are like enough to have a hard night. Do you not hear the *Cashen** roar?"

"I do; but the fear of a little rain must not deter me. I have been out on worse nights."

"There are other dangers, sir, no less worthy to be avoided than the chances of pit and bog"

"Oh, I remember that too—my head is filled with tales of the Kerry mountains, and their marauders, and banathees, and phukas; but for the one, I am provided with this amulet brandishing his beads, and here is a charm for the other" elevating his stout black-thorn in a gay humour.

The stranger was again silent for a short time, during which he seemed to canvass the whole persou of the young collegian with a curious eye, at the same time that, whether accidentally or otherwise, his own features were almost entirely concealed by his position. At length, taking from his pocket a sealed letter he handed

* The *Cashen* is a stream which empties itself into the Shannon, at no great distance from Ballylongford, in Kerry. At the approach of rainy weather, the sound of its waters can be heard distinctly at a distance of many leagues.

it towards Aylmer, and said, "I had orders to leave this at Bally-Aylmer, for some one of the family there. If you will pardon the liberty of my offering it, you will do me a great service, and save me a long journey out of my way."

Aylmer readily took the letter, and in placing it in his pocket-book, caught, for the first time, a view of the stranger's countenance. It was that of an aged man, with nothing very uncommon in its character; though a flashing, yet wavering and doubtful recollection, seemed to rush on Aylmer's mind the instant he looked upon it. He felt satisfied that he had never seen the countenance before, and yet its expression startled him with a feeling of sudden recognition, for which he afterwards could in no manner account. He had not an opportunity of pursuing his scrutiny farther, for at that instant the muttering of a distant thunder-peal, preceded by the falling of a few large drops of rain, induced the old man to return to his shelter beneath the rock. Wishing him a courteous farewell, the youth proceeded on his way, puzzled a little at he knew not what

"If I were a Pythagorean," said he within himself, "this adventure might help to strengthen my faith, for unless it be a glimpse into another state of existence, I am at a loss what I shall make of it."

After casting a rather uncomfortable glance at the heavens, which were now darkening above him so rapidly as to leave him little hope of clearing the mountains so speedily as he intended, he pushed on at a vigorous rate. The storm which had been threatening, however, in a very short time burst forth in all its violence. The sky became one dense mass of black, illuminated only at intervals by the blue and sheeted

lightning, that served to reveal to him the perils among which he was entangled, without assisting to guide him out of them. He could perceive that the beaten path which he now followed, lay through a wide morass, or bog, and so indistinctly was it marked out, that he found himself obliged to proceed with the utmost caution, although the rain had already begun to descend in torrents upon him.

He was mincing his steps in this manner, and beginning to feel a greater respect than he had hitherto done for the recommendation of the old man, when he was startled by feeling some living creature brush swiftly by his legs, so as almost to touch them, and presently after, in a pause of the storm, a loud ringing whistle, followed by a shouting and hallooing at a distance, greeted his ear. A low grumbling bark, very near him, seemed to give answer to the sounds; and Aylmer heard the animal which had been snuffing inquisitively about him just before, bound and scamper off in the direction from whence the voice proceeded. In the hope of obtaining some assistance, the adventurer put his lungs to their best uses, and endeavoured to outroar the warring of the elements themselves; but the effort proved to be a total failure, for he was not heard, or at least not attended to. He hurried on, nevertheless, with a feeling of greater security, on the path which the dog had taken, and in a short time was rewarded for his perseverance, by feeling the firm mountain heath beneath his feet. He now looked round him in the hope of finding himself in the neighbourhood of some human habitation, and for once was not deceived. Not more than a hundred yards to his right, in a sudden declivity of the mount, he perceived a cabin, with half the wicker-door thrown open, and re-

vealing, in the strong light of a well-furnished hearth, an abode which seemed to promise much comfort and accommodation. He made no more ado, but straightway presented himself at the entrance.

"Boloa irath!"* he exclaimed, as he bent forward over the half-door, willing to conciliate the good-will of the inmates, by affecting a familiarity with their habits and language.

"And you likewise," was the answer returned by the "all" whom he had blessed; a plain looking aged woman, who sat enjoying the delights of ease and a dhudheen (short pipe) in the chimney-corner. Aylmer drew back the bolt of the wicker and entered. The old woman continued smoking her pipe without expressing either displeasure at his intrusion, or anxiety to do the honours of her house; almost without raising her eyes from the heap of red and blazing turf on which they were musingly bent. Finding whom he had to deal with, and not disposed to lose much time in ceremony, her unbidden guest drew a sugan-chair close to the fire, and while he briefly explained the circumstances which had compelled him to be a trespasser on her hospitality, he made himself perfectly at home, with respect to his shoes, stockings, and coat, which he suspended before the blaze, while he received with much satisfaction its full influence upon his person. After he had in some degree elevated his own temperature to the level of the atmosphere in which he was now placed, another inconvenience began to press upon his recollection, which he yet saw no means of removing. He turned his eye in various directions, but could discern nothing that could be useful to a man in want of a supper. At length he ventured to break his mind

* Bless all here.

to his hostess on the subject. She at once directed his attention to a cupboard at the end of the room, to which he repaired with highly excited anticipations. All his anxieties were set at rest by the apparition of a good supply of cold roast mutton, with some oaten bread, and potatoes in great abundance. Laying joyous hands upon his prize, he bore it with much gratification to the deal table which stood in the centre of the apartment, aud presently fell to work upon it; his hostess, during the whole time, preserving her attitude and look of indifference or listlessness, of which her guest was now too agreeably occupied to take any cognisance.

While he was yet seated at table, the sound of several voices outside the door diverted his attention, for the first time, from his fare. The occasional broken and hurried sentences of command or remonstrance which were bandied from one to the other of the unseen speakers, were alternated by the low and stifled bleatings of a sheep, which speedily terminated in a quick and gurgling expression of pain, that sufficiently demonstrated the means which had been adopted to secure its silence.

"Smaha buhill!" exclaimed one, "faix, she's a joyant of a baste. Take her round to the barn, Will; and do you an Lewy make haste in to your supper.—Here, Vauria!"

"Vauria is here av you want her," shrilled out the old woman, who had, at the first sound of the voices, made an extraordinary exertion to place a *skillet* of potatoes over the fire before the speaker should enter, and had now resumed her pipe and indolence.

This had scarcely passed, when a stout, able-bodied man, his face smeared with bog-dust, having the ap-

pearance of a grazier, (and a very ill-looking one) flung himself into the house. His astonishment at beholding a stranger quietly seated at his table, and demolishing his cheer, was so vividly expressed as scarcely for the moment to place his hospitality in a very favourable point of view. It was only after an uninterrupted gaze of a few seconds, that he suffered a half unconscious "Dieu ith" to pass his lips. "Dieu ith agus a Vauria!"* was the reply of Aylmer.

"'Tisn't driven in by the weather you were?" continued the cottager, (meaning directly the contrary.) Aylmer nodded an assent, as he continued eating. "A smart evening, indeed," was the next observation; "*Sha guthine!*"† replied the collegian, still continuing to use his vernacular tongue, and in every possible way endeavouring to mystify his real condition.

The querist was about to address the old woman, when darting a sudden glance at his guest, he quickly asked him "if he understood English?" a question which the infrequency of the accomplishment in those districts rendered feasible enough. Instantly catching at the probable motive in which it originated, Aylmer replied at once in the negative. The cottager and the old woman soon after entered into conversation in their own broken and mangled effort at the idiom.

"An who tould him fare the mutton was?" inquired the owner of the house, after the woman had satisfied him as to all previous particulars, "In truth it's asy seen what a thrashen he meant to give it, when he stript to the work that way." Here Aylmer was near betraying himself by the smile which began to struggle on his lips.

"Lewy did a purty piece o' work this evening, (night)" continued the host, "Cahill-cruv-dharug's herdsman

* God and Mary be with you. † Yes, indeed.

will be missen a ha' porth o' tar in the mornen. One of the prettiest creatures on the long walk, and fat, ready to melt in our arms. Take it from me, Vauria, Cahill Fitzmaurice won't be a bit glad to be eased of her, to-morrow morning."

"Let him score it over against the blood of Robert Aylmer, then, and he'll be the gainer still, may be," muttered the old woman.

"Pho! Pho! Easy. What nonsense you talk. Was'nt he cleared o' that be a judge an jury, in the face o' the whole country?—Pho!"

"I was aboord the boat that awful night, an I heard words spoken that ought'nt to pass a Christian's lips, except he was a Turk. But what's the use of being talking? There's as much time to come after as ever went before us, an they say blood will speak if it bursts the grave for it."

Often as he had heard these circumstances repeated, and enthusiastic as early conviction had made him in the confidence of their utter groundlessness, it was not very easy for Aylmer to support his assumption of perfect listlessness and indifference, while the above conversation was passing. Notwithstanding the feeling of indignation which the rambling imputations of the hag excited in his mind, he could not prevent their sinking deep into his spirits, and taking a hold there which he in vain endeavoured to shake off. The conviction, too, of the immediate and imminent peril in which he was placed—for it was no longer a matter of doubt to him that he had fallen upon a gang of the far-famed Kerry sheep-stealers—contributed not a little to the uneasiness of his situation. He began strenuously to long for an opportunity of withdrawing himself from the

chance of further illustrations of their mountain hospitality.

Shortly after, the cottager started up from his seat by the fire, and said rapidly, "There's the white horse on the pzaties; I'll go and see what is it keeps the boys, and do you get up one o' your old ancient fables, and keep this man by the fire till we come back. We'll talk o' what's to be done abroad."

No sooner had the speaker disappeared than Aylmer began to meditate the most probable means of taking himself out of the cottage, and its neighbourhood, without awakening suspicion. He got up from the table—walked towards the fire—resumed all his dress, with the exception of his hat, which still hung in the chimney corner, reeking against the heat: and after all this was done, with as great an appearance of carelessness and indifference as he could command, he took his seat by the fire, stirred it up briskly, and made an effort to engage his hostess in conversation; in which, however, to his great satisfaction, he totally failed. The old woman seemed to be one whom time had beaten down into a state of almost negative existence, and whose only positive enjoyment seemed to consist in the absence of all exertion. Far from complying with the cottager's desire that she should endeavour to entertain her guest, she seemed, from the moment of his departure, to be almost unconscious of the presence of a second person; and went on, exhausting her store of tabacco, and musing over the fire with the comfortable air of a slave who has been relieved from the presence of the task-master.

The violence of the tempest had now considerably abated, although the night still continued dark, and the wind hissed along the broken thatched roof in fitful

and uneasy gusts. After making some observation on the change, Aylmer walked towards the little window, as if to look out upon the night, and in so doing stumbled upon a new confirmation of his suspicions. Casting his eye, accidentally, towards the hurdle loft, which was constructed over the ceiling of an inner apartment, he observed several piles of sheepskins thrust under the sloping eaves, and heaped towards the centre, the spoils of many an enterprise similar to that of which he had just before witnessed the termination.

As the time rolled on, the anxiety of the youth increased, and he determined at length on making some exertion for his freedom, before the male tenants of the cottage should return. Leaving his hat, where it hung, in order the more effectually to baffle the suspicions which his absence might occasion, he made some trifling remark to the old woman, and passed into the air. After he had crept a few paces from the house, and felt himself placed without the immediate circle of the influence of its possessors, he made a joyous bound on his path, and ran along for a considerable distance, without a moment's pause, in the direction from which he had turned aside during the tempest. The rain had ceased and the wind abated, but the sky was yet loaded with vapour, and the wanderer had little more than random conjecture to depend upon in pursuing his route over the mountain heath. Early as it yet was in the night, and totally ignorant as he was of the distance he might have to conquer before he should arrive at the termination of the wilds, he could not avoid feeling an occasional depression of spirits when he reflected on the possibility of his being pursued; in which case the familiarity of his enemies with the passes of the mountain, and its bogs, must leave him at a perilous

disadvantage. He dashed forward on his way, however, without stopping to calculate disheartening probabilities, and journeyed for nearly an hour without meeting any impediment to arrest his progress, or any piece of good fortune that might assist it.

On a sudden, the disparting of an immense mass of cloud, which had for a long time been condensed on the horizon behind him, betrayed the night-walker to the glances of a few kind stars, and very shortly after the veil was withdrawn from the fair, round, fat face of the winter moon herself, and a welcome flood of light was poured about his path. He now discovered himself to be still surrounded, as far as his sight could reach, with the uneven wilderness of heath, over which he had so long been toiling, and no indication lay, within the wide circuit which his eye was enabled to comprehend, of human neighbourhood. There was no sign of cultivation, no bounds of partition, nothing but heath and bog to be discovered, and this circumstance contributed materially to depress the cheerfulness of spirit which the sudden accession of light had awakened within him. This uncomfortable state of mind, however, in some time began to give place to a feeling of more immediate and positive alarm. Whether it was that his imagination, highly excited as it had been by the events of the evening, became over quick at transforming all indistinct sights and sounds into occasions of terror, or that such occasions did in reality exist, Aylmer could not divest himself of a strong consciousness that the chase was up behind. Now and then, in the intervals of the distant moaning of the Cashen, his ear was startled by the fancied or actual echoes of the baying of a hound upon his track, a sound however which was yet so fine and so equivocal,

——"that nothing lived
'Twixt it and silence—"

He paused for a moment, and bent his ear to the earth in order to assure himself. In a little time he became convinced of its reality. The portrait of the cottage hound which had startled him at first sight by the indications of fatal sagacity, which he could collect from its appearance, "so flewed, so sanded," its head,

"——— hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew,
Cross-kneed, and dewlapp'd like Thessalian bulls."

its sullen, blood-shot eye, and lumpish mouth, all rushed together upon his recollection, and utterly discomfited the slight feeling of security to which he had just before begun to deliver himself up. He grasped his black thorn club with a firmer gripe, and at once made up his mind to the most desperate contingencies that could arrive. If a much more extensive tract of land lay between him and the houses of honest men, it was evident he had not the slightest chance of eluding his pursuers, provided as they were, with so fearful and so infallible a clue to his position. His only reliance was on a pair of vigorous limbs, which he forthwith applied to the best purpose possible, and which he might have calculated on with very great rationality, had his hunters been altogether human. As it was, in spite of all his exertions, he found that they were gaining rapidly upon him. He darted forward with renewed speed, and as he panted and stumbled on his course, in one of those glances of reflection, which even in the act of the most violent bodily exertion, will sometimes flash upon the reason, he made a wordless resolution

within his heart, that he never would hunt or course a hare as long as he lived.

Still he dashed forward headlong on his path, and still that horrid, sullen, twanging cry became louder and louder upon his track, until it sounded in his ear, as the trumpet's charge might be supposed to do in that of a soldier destined to a forlorn hope. The shouting of the animal's master, too, cheering their guide upon the game, became audible in the distance. With a failing spirit, Aylmer glanced on all sides as he bounded along, but could discern no means of even possible protection. No stream, no tract of water by which he might baffle the terrible instinct of his four-footed enemy, not one of the many contrivances by which he had heard and read this had been successfully accomplished, here presented themselves. His brain, his sight, his senses became confused, a fear like that which oppresses the dreamer in a fit of night-mare, lodged itself upon his heart, his will became powerless, and the motion which still hurried him along his path, might almost be termed involuntary. He thought of nothing, he saw nothing, he heard nothing, but the fast approaching terrors in his rear, the heavy, confident, baying of the hound, and the fierce hallooing of his pursuers. Fortune seemed in every way to conspire against the devoted youth, for in rushing down a slight declivity of the heath, a small tuft of the weed came in contact with his foot, and flung him with considerable violence on the ground. He sprung to his feet again, but fell at the first effort to proceed; his foot was maimed past all use. One thrill of utter despair shot through his frame, and the next moment a perfect indifference came over him. The shouts of the hunters were now almost close upon him, but, and he hardly

trusted his sense, when it first informed him of it, there was another sound mingled with theirs. He started to his feet, and stood erect in spite of his hurt; he heard the sound distinctly, it was the dash of waters on his left. Clasping his hands together, and offering, in one flashing thought, as fervent a thanksgiving as ever passed sinner's lips, he staggered toward the spot. Coming suddenly over the brow of the hill he beheld immediately before him, a small river, broken in its course by several ledges of rock, and flinging itself in masses of white foam into a kind of basin, whose surface the full winter's moon had lighted up with its gladdening influence, so as to shine " like a welcoming" in the student's eyes. The banks of the stream were fringed with drooping sallows, and a dark angle close to where he stood, seemed to offer the closet and securest mode of concealment that he could desire. Without a moment's thought, or wavering, he slipped down the bank, and seizing one of the twigs, plunged himself, all reeking with perspiration as he was, into the cold, freezing, November flood.

He had not been in this situation long enough to feel the inconvenience of the transition, when his anxieties were renewed by the approach of his pursuers. Creeping under the screen of the hanging sallows, and still clinging to the twig which he had grasped, he remained up to his chin in the water, imitating the action of some species of water-fowl, when conscious that they are under the eye of the fowler. From this concealment, completely enveloped, as he was, in a piece of impenetrable shade, he could see his bandy-legged, shag-eared foe, bound fiercely to the bank immediately above him. The animal stopped short, snorted, looked across the stream, and whisked his head, with an action of im-

patience and disappointment. He ran up and down the bank, his nostrils expanded, and bent to the earth, and snuffed long and argumentatively about the very spot where Aylmer had descended. In a few seconds after he heard the voices of the mountaineers at the top of the hill.

"Blessed Saviour o' the airth!—O Lewy! the strame!—We're lost for ever—Come back here, Sayzer!—The unnait'rel, informing Dane! To come among us, and make a fool of a shoulder of as good mutton as was ever dhrov the wrong way off a sheep-walk; and, I'll be your bail for it, he'll have the army with us to buckisht * in the morning, av we stay for them (which we won't.)—sorrow skreed o' the mait he left upon the bones, as much as would make a supper for old Vauria herself."

Aylmer was too uncomfortably situated at the moment, to enjoy these jests on his prowess at the sheep-stealer's board, and waited with much uneasiness until the speaker and his companions might be concluded out of all power of observation. Day had begun to dawn before he ventured to re-ascend the bank; and never was the benevolent eye of the morning startled by a more pitiable spectacle of solitary human misery, than he presented at that moment. His fingers stiff and crimpled up with the cold, refused to close around the shrubs which he attempted to grasp, his joints were all stark and painful, and his hair and clothes distilling a hundred streams, as if he were, like a male Niobe, about to be resolved into a portion of the element to which he had just been indebted for his existence. Great as was the general inconvenience which he felt, however, he had the satisfaction to find that the cold

* Breakfast.

immersion had arrested the progress of whatever inflammatory symptoms his sprain in the foot had occasioned, and he was now enabled to turn the limb to which it appertained to some account. He walked, like a piece of half-animated stone-work, along the banks of the stream, for nearly half a mile, and had the pleasure to observe, in spite of the clouds which the agitations and exertions of the night had still left upon his brain, that he was close to one of the most frequented public roads of the country. He had no difficulty in discovering his exact position, and was not a little comforted at finding that he was no more than a mile from the residence of his friend and guardian, Mr. Fitzmaurice. Not willing, however, to present himself before his old friends in the deplorable, yet ludicrous plight to which his mountain adventure had reduced him, he directed his course toward his own family residence, which lay at no great distance from him, and which, though it had only occasionally been occupied by him, was, he knew, tenanted by the aged widow of his dead father's herdsman, and her son, Sandy Culhane. At the hands of those old " follyers" of his family, Aylmer knew he might calculate on receiving all the accommodation which his present condition rendered necessary. His long absence from the country, uninterrupted, as it had been, by even a visit to his friends at the customary seasons for such indulgence, secured him against all probability of being recognised on the way to the " great house," and he met with no interruption in his walk thither, which was easily accomplished before the sun had well shook himself after his night's sleep.

Bally-Aylmer was one of those architectural testimonies to the folly of our fathers, which are scattered

rather abundantly over the face of the green isle. Although the term has slipped from beneath our pen, there was little worthy of the name of architecture, about either the principal building, or its official appendages. The site of the house appeared to have been selected in those days when it was the wont (contrary to modern practice on similar occasions,) to choose the lowest, as the most graceful, as well as convenient and salubrious position; and when that position was ascertained, by rolling a large round stone down an eminence, and sinking the foundation wherever it happened to repose. Aylmer, fatigued as he was, found a sufficient excitement in the first view of his native place, to divert his attention, in some degree, from his sufferings. Accustomed, as he had been during his absence, to the splendours of metropolitan architecture, he could not avoid feeling a momentary sense of humiliation, when he perceived the utter poverty and tastelessness of an establishment which in his childhood he had been used to look upon as the perfection of elegance, and with which even his distant recollection had not presumed to quarrel, until he now brought his classical feeling and experienced judgment full upon it, in all its hideous and awkward reality. The entrance consisted of two lean, gawky looking piers, built of plain rough stone, and standing bolt-upright, like young steeples, on each side of a low, shattered, paltry wooden gate, which had long discontinued the use of its hinges, and was propped up to its office by the assistance of a few large stones, rolled against the lower bars, the removal of which, for the admission of *cars* (carts) and horses, usually occupied as much time each day as a carpenter might have lost in screwing on a fresh pair of hinges. On the summit of one of those piers, a noseless Ban-

thee, or Banathee, done in limestone, the work of some rustic Westmacott, might be observed, in the act of combing her long and flowing hair, an action very generally attributed to this warning spirit. Upon the other, nothing was visible to the naked eye. That fashionable appendage to modern improvement, a factitious lake, was not wanted here, though the specimen presented was rather on the small scale. It consisted of a sheet of some liquid, or other, about twenty feet by twelve in extent (lying close inside the entrance,) and greeted more senses than one of the incomer, with an intensity which it required no great fastidiousness to deprecate. The house itself, a square-roofed, lumpish-looking edifice, sadly out of repair, and destitute of even a solitary twig, or fir, to conceal its threadbare masonry ; its line of red binding-tiles broken and blown away; its chimneys damaged and menacing; and its slated roof hospitably inviting, in divers-apertures, the visitations of the winds and rain—all, together, presented as bleak and comfortless a spectacle as ever greeted even a provincial eye. Without detaining the adventurous youth any longer in his uncomfortable deshabille, we shall hasten to relieve the pain of our sympathising reader, by informing him that Aylmer was not disappointed in his calculations on the services of old Ally Culhane, by whose assistance he was presently rid of his cumbersome habiliments, and introduced to the consolation of a well aired, well blanketted state bed, where he speedily lost all memory of his night's ramble, in a good sound, healthy, dreamless sleep.

The only immediately habitable rooms in the venerable mansion, were that in which its heritor at present slumbered, and the kitchen in which the aged Ally and

her son had domiciliated since the house had been, in a great measure, abandoned to them by its original possessors. The others had been partly stript of their furniture and locked up, or appropriated to the Irish use of store-rooms and granaries for the produce of the adjacent acres, which were turned to the best possible account for the benefit of his ward by Mr. Fitzmaurice, who seemed never happy, or even contented, unless when he was occupied in some way or other about the Aylmer property. Though he was a native of a country where more apologies are found for the shedding of human blood than would, if universally admitted, greatly further the interests of society; and although much of his life had passed amid scenes where homicide was familiar as the day-light, Cahill Fitzmaurice had, either from a natural quickness of feeling, or from the influence of that half-animal, half-chivalrous sense of moral honour which is so often made to supply the place of system, of principle, or of true religion in the minds of a neglected people, retained a tetchiness of spirit about what he was pleased to call his reputation, which would come with an ill grace enough from the lips of a smuggler of the present day. Notwithstanding his "honourable acquittal," too, by the county grand jury, of the horrible offence imputed to him, and the assurance of those his judges, that "he left his dungeon with as unstained a character as if he never had been called to it;" for speeches of this kind were among the specimens of cant in vogue then, as well as now,—Fitzmaurice felt convinced, and the conviction sunk deep into his soul, that suspicion was a shade of guilt, and that there was, in fact, no such thing as an "honourable acquittal" from a public accusation. The consequence of this feeling was, a total and marked al-

teration in the character of the man. His frankness—his hospitality—his broad-faced, laughing good-humour,—all his social qualities were blasted, as if by a lightning shock. He was no longer to be seen at the fair or session; his steward being entrusted with an unlimited discretion, as to the fate of the flocks and droves which were transmitted to all places of public traffic. His farm was, in a great degree, neglected by him; and the only active business in which he still continued to take any thing like an active interest, was, as before alluded to, the improvement of his young ward's inheritance, in which he was vigorous and successful; having contrived, during the long period of the youth's minority, to amass for his future benefit a sum of money which might enable him, at the proper season, to take possession of his patrimony in a manner calculated to assure him of an influential station in his native country. His house and his board were still open to the traveller, and the welcome was not diminished either in its warmth or sincerity; but it came no longer from his own lips,—he never appeared among his guests——and was seldom visible even to an early acquaintance. His pride, in fact his Irish pride—had been stabbed to the heart; he felt that it was in the power of any man who grudged him the fragment of reputation he still retained, to snatch it from him by a word—a look—a gesture. With this conviction full upon his own mind, he had, in the two or three efforts which he made immediately after his liberation, to regain his old place among his old friends, entered into their society with an almost morbid tremulousness of feeling—a quickness to anticipate the intention of slight, which is alike the characteristic of the fiery and chivalrous, and of the weak and sensitive nature; and which

in various degrees, has been set down as the leading peculiarity of the veritable Milesian by all painters of national character, from the days of Captain Macmorris down to those of the knight of Blunderbuss Hall. The embarrassment which this feeling imparted to his manner, naturally communicated itself to those whom he addressed, and the unfortunate Fitzmaurice, not possessed of sufficient philosophy to trace the effect to its real origin in his own demeanour, attributed it at once to the unquieted suspicions which his overwrought susceptibility had led him to anticipate, and gave up the attempt at once in a paroxysm of despair. Thus it was that, with as kind, as generous, and as benevolent a heart as ever beat, Fitzmaurice found himself, in the vigour of his manhood, and in the full possession of all those qualities which had for a long series of years rendered him the delight of his companions, struck down, by one home-blow, into a branded and degraded wretch, whom chance had protected from death, but not from ignominy. The gloom which was thus cast over his heart, speedily found its way to his brow; and, in a few years, he would have been a skilful physiognomist who could have traced, in the sallow, wasted cheek, the indented temples, the contracted, darkening brows, the thin colourless lips, and sullen, dark, disappointed eye of the man; a memory of the broad, red, careless, moon-cheeked face of the noisy Cahill Fitzmaurice, the Pylades of Robert Aylmer. No consciousness of innocence could comfort or support him under the pressure of so grievious, so overwhelming an accusation as that which had been cast upon him. He had been charged in open court with the murder of his oldest and kindest friend; he had even been bowed down to the ignominy of giving

a formal denial to such a charge. There are imputations, the very necessity of disproving which is as blasting to a man's character, as the recording guilty to others; and Fitzmaurice thought, or felt, that this was one of them. One merit, however, he at least possessed amid all the blameful sullenness and darkness of spirit to which he delivered himself up—he never was heard to indulge in those "why's" and "wherefore's" on the justice of his fate—in which (very unhappily,) so many sufferers, self-tormentors, and uneasy speculators in matters of Providence, are apt to look for consolation. Fitzmaurice took the more rational and amiable part of quiet endurance; and those who were familiar with his temper and habits (as he had once been,) remarked, some with wonder, some with pleasure and commendation, that the doom which seemed to oppress his heart, even to breaking, never had the power to wring from his lips a single murmur of complaint against heaven.

Notwithstanding this sentiment of resignation, or—whatever it might be, it is still doubtful whether the heart of the man could have borne up long, if it were left to its own solitary broodings over the events of the past, and the bleak, dreary nothingness of the prospect which the future presented to the eye of his sorrow. One consolation, however, had been spared him—one true friend—unchanged, unchangeable—one wound up in all his interests and feelings, as intimately as even in the helplessness of unfriended degradation he could have desired,—one whose duty as well as inclination it was to cling to him under any circumstances that stopped short of moral guilt, and who would have died, even at that point, before the link that bound them together had been sundered. It was his only child

and daughter, Katharine, of whom mention has been made before now in our story. True, it was not until many years had elapsed, after her father found cause to sigh for a real friend, that Kate had reached an age sufficiently matured to enable her to comprehend, much less to sympathise in his distresses; but her devoted and passionate attachment to her parent seemed to be born with her, and the slow but sensible developement of a vigorous reason which manifested itself in the progressive force and eloquence of her consolations in his hours of depression, came over the spirit of the broken man with the influence of a gradual summer sunrise. There is so much of vanity mixed up with even the most amiable sentiments of our nature, that we never fail to direct all the energies of our affection with most satisfaction and assiduity, where we perceive them to be most successful. There is too an unconscious self-gratification in the exercise of any influence over the thoughts and feelings of a suffering fellow being, which endears him to us at least quite as sensibly as his unhappy fortunes do; and ill-natured as the conjecture may appear, perhaps we should not widely err in attributing to a partial operation of this unintended, undetected self-seeking some portion of the deep devotedness of love, with which the merry-hearted Kate abandoned herself in the full glow of youth, and with the fullest capabilities for the enjoyment of more congenial society, to the silence, the solitude, and the gloom of her father's dark oaken parlour. Without once daring to gratify a mean curiosity by ascertaining, or striving to ascertain the occasion of the heaviness that oppressed him, she applied all the powers of her mind and heart to lighten and relieve it. Such curiosity, indeed, she never was at any time assailed with,

for however changed her parent might appear to others who remembered him in the gaiety of his manhood, he had always been the same in her eyes, always the discomfited, downcast, silent, and fitful, yet kind and affectionate old man. Her education had taken place altogether under her paternal roof, and Fitzmaurice had the happiness to find that he had not injured his daughter by neglecting the hints respecting a few years boarding in Killarney convent, which some religious friends had scattered in his ear.

On the evening, and about (perhaps) the very period when Aylmer was conversing with the stranger in the Kerry mountains, the father and daughter were seated in the large, old-fashioned parlour, the window of which commanded, at a vast distance, a view of the hills, or yet more gentle elevations of the soil which ran along the line of coast, revealing at intervals certain glimpses of the blue waters of Dingle Bay, which were all massed at present in one glow of hazy splendour, by the influence of the departing sun. Now and then a white sail, glancing like a speck of light on the waters, appeared and flitted across those scanty gaps in the horizon, all moving inland, and relieving by their motion and the associations which they waked up, a good deal of the still and monotonous repose of the interjacent prospect. The old man, who had been more than usually gloomy during the evening, and who had not spoken during several hours, now sat, his armchair drawn towards the window and fronting the distant bay, on which his eyes were fixed with an expression varied only in its intensity, but at all times stamped with the hue of a consistent and enduring melancholy. Kate, with the fineness of tact which long habit as well as native delicacy had given her, perceived that some-

thing had occurred during the course of the day, most of which he had spent at Bally Aylmer, to agitate him, and she felt that it was one of those moments at which all interference with, or intrusion upon, his feelings, would jar against his very nature. She pursued her work therefore in silence, venturing only in an occasional impulse of anxiety to steal a glance from under her curved eye-lashes at his darkening, dispirited countenance. Had Kate been gifted with any portion of physiognomical penetration, she might have read, in that apparently still and evenly dejected range of features, the influence of thoughts which should have excited her love, her pity, her sorrow, and her dismay, by turns. She might have beheld a long train of mournfully joyous associations, touched from their sleep by the influence of the sweet scene on which his eye was fixed, and wakening, in their turn, recollections still more remote, all blended and mixed up with the absorbing event in which all his misery had originated; and each bringing a new stimulant to the disease which that event, and its consequence, had occasioned in his mind.

While each thus followed up their own fancies "in social silence," the attention of Katharine was diverted by a light tapping at the parlour–door, which, opening presently after, admitted the tip of a polished, pretty nose, a blue eye, and a section of a broad, bold forehead. The blue eye was directed on the young mistress of the mansion, and the finger of a hand, yet reeking with soap suds, and of a wrinkled whiteness, was forthwith protruded, to beckon her from the apartment. Kate obeyed the action in silence.

"What's the matter now, Norry?" said the young lady.

"It's from Bally-Aylmer, miss," was the reply, "Sandy Culhane to be to the posht-office to day, and to have letters for yourself and himself."

Without waiting to hear more, her lively mistress bounded and skipped past the girl to the kitchen, where stood the welcome messenger, who had, it would seem, refused to deliver up his precious freight, until he should have received his *albricias*, either in smiles or commendations from the lips of the "young missis herself, the darlen."

These letters were what Katharine judged them to be, the avant couriers of Aylmer's return, written about a month before, and now almost overtaken by him, an event less usual in Irish post-offices at the present day than it was then, when there was no Sir Edward Lees to keep the machinery in working condition. More than half the delight which she felt, however, instantly referred itself to her parent, and her affectionate heart bounded at the thought, that she had at last found something with which she might venture to break in upon the gloom, that had taken possession of his mind during the whole afternoon.

"I have news for you, sir," said she as she re-entered the apartment on tiptoe, her pretty lip pinched up to murder a smile that was still struggling for its life, her half-shut, grey, waggish eyes bent merrily on his, and her whole face beaming with a child-like, irrepressible delight.

"Go, go, you little fool, mind your work."

"I know who will be the loser then," retorted Kate, as with an affectation of hoydenish freedom, she leaned over the back of his chair, and flourished the letter before his eyes.

"Who, monkey?"

"Do you know that hand?" replied Kate, slipping one soft white arm round her father's neck, and with the other holding the letter steadily before him, while she watched his countenance, as one would that of a child to whom one has just given a new gilt covered picture-book. While Fitzmaurice put on his spectacles and glanced over the contents of the letter, she felt a quick and hurried pulsation beneath her hand, which at once induced her to withdraw it from his neck. Her intuitive delicacy of feeling made her shrink with scorn from the acquiring an insight into the soul of another, by the use of any of those "points of cunnynge" of which my Lord Verulam, Bacon, gives us so elaborate and philosophical a detail.

"The third?" said Fitzmaurice, when he had concluded, "then I should not be surprised if we had him here this evening."

"This evening! *O my!*" exclaimed Kate, as she glanced first at her dress, and then, involuntarily, at the ancient pier-glass, with its gorgeous volumes of gilded foliage, on the other side of the room

"O *my! O you!* What you? Poh, what nonesense!" exclaimed Fitzmaurice, as he observed the direction which her eyes had taken. "This young man's arrival, Kate, seems to give you a great deal of pleasure."

Kate blushed, betwen a feeling of consciousness and of surprise, and without making any reply, she looked in her father's face with an expression of astonishment, confusion, and curiosity.

"To me," he continued, replying to her gesture, "I confess this intelligence brings no unmingled sensation. I believe I have done enough to shew that I love young Aylmer well—I like him, too, for his own gentle qualities, as much as for his name's sake; but I cannot

forget, neither, that to that very name I owe the loss of all I prized in life—all my old friends—my good fame my poor wife, your sweet mother, Kate, who was lying on a sick-bed when I was dragged from her side, to ———and who mingled her death-groan with your first cry of sorrow, my girl, as she placed you in my arms. But these are unfair and selfish modes of feeling," he continued, as he saw a tear glisten in the eye of his daughter, "I must learn to conquer them. Only I would be alone for the rest of the evening." And kissing his daughter affectionately, the old man passed to his sleeping apartment.

*   *   *   *

During all this while Aylmer has been enjoying a comfortable sleep, and it is high time we should wake him up again, for the amusement of our readers, or, to speak more modestly, for the furtherance of our story. The noon of a bright frosty day had just passed when he awoke. So heavy and unbroken had been his rest, that he could scarcely believe his eyes, when he saw the sunbeams strike on a point of noon which he remembered from his childhood. Aylmer had not yet passed that happy season of life when novelty is enjoyment, and change of place and circumstance seems almost to imply change of being. As he opened his eyes on the old-fashioned curtains of his old-fashioned state bed, under whose lofty tester he had often reposed in childhood, and recognised the faces of many familiar friends on those hangings—the same pike-nosed greyhound, in the yet unaccomplished act of springing over the same barred gate, the same hunter, sticking in the same slough, and the same clumsy squire, kissing the same funny-looking, blowzy-check-

ed milk-maid—it seemed to him as if the whole intervening space had been but the circle of one long night, and all its crowd of events and changes nothing more than the shadows of a vivid dream. When he flung back the curtains, however, and tossed his manly bulk out of bed, the sight of a tolerably rounded calf gave him, like the beard of Rip Van Winkle, assurance of their reality.

His toilet, and the preparations for it made by his old friend, Alley, also reminded him of his change from Irish city to Irish country life. The luxury of soap was what she appeared to be totally unprovided with, from her having substituted in its place a handful of dry oatmeal, and a small, clean, piggin-full of new milk, a quid-pro-quo by no means satisfactory to a young man whose darkening chin advised him of the necesity of raising a lather. He now perceived, what in the grey doubtful light of the morning dawn had escaped his observation, the extremely dilapidated state of the apartment in which he stood. The single window was eked out, half glass, half paper; and the shutters swung crazily on their hinges. The plastering of the ceiling, as well as of the walls, had fallen away in various places; and, on one side of the room, where a partition divided it from the kitchen this circumstance disclosed a secret of true Munster economy, creditable alike to the ancient and the present tenants of the mansion. The partition appeared to be composed of hard *slane*-turf,* which, in its smooth coat of mortar and white-wash, had escaped the eyes of inquisitive housewives for a succession of *lustra*, until this

* So called to distinguish it from *hand* turf; the one being cut from the soil with an instrument called a *slane*, the other shaped with the hand out of a soft boggy stuff, which is afterwards dried.

unfortunate demolition of the outworks had taken place. On the first occasion for an immediate supply of firing, which subsequently occurred, Sandy sent his right leg through the partition, and furnished his hearth from the breach, to which he often afterwards recurred, although a bog lay within twenty perches of the house, declaring that "the ould wall burned like coal." The breach was at present stopped with a dismantled door of an inner room. "No matter!" thought Aylmer, as he plunged his puckered up, grinning face into the basin of biting cold water, "these things shall be mended when I take the management of the place into my own hands."

As he proceeded in the act of purification, he perceived that his own clothes had been removed from the apartment, as he concluded, for the purpose of being dried; and a suit perfectly strange to him, both from its fashion and its material, was laid across the lofty back of a huge oaken chair in their stead. It consisted of a blue jacket and trowsers bagging toward the ankle in sailor fashion, both closely studded with gilt buttons, strung in rows wherever buttons were admissible, and altogether having a great deal more the air of venerable age, both in their *cut* and texture, than fell in very lovingly with the modern taste of the young student. He put them on, however, in default of better, and was not a little surprised to find himself as exactly fitted as if they had been cut *for* himself, and "upon scientific principles." As he concluded his toilet, he recognised, through the breach, the voice of his old companion, Sandy, crooning over an old fox-hunting ditty, as he sat in the chimney corner, addressing, between occasional bars of the

melody, sundry conjectures to his mother on the probable issue of Aylmer's return:

> "Good morrow, Fox,"—"Good morrow, Sir."
> "Pray, what is that you're ating?"
> "A fine fat goose I stole from you.
> Pray, will you come and taste it?"
> "Niel flash e piuc
> Niel niesh e giub,
> Indeed, I will not taste it;
> But I promise you, you'll sorely rue
> That fine fat goose you're ating!"

"Eh, mother! O holy saints, protect an' save us, look there!" cried Sandy, starting from his place, and crossing, with a face expanded in wonder and awe, to his mother, as Aylmer suddenly entered the kitchen, and confronted him. The old woman, turning her hung-beef countenance over her shoulder, seemed to catch the alarm from her son—and flung her withered arms round his neck for protection, while her smoky eyes continued bent on the astonished youth.

"Hooee! Alilu-war-yeh! Sandy, dear! O, murther! 'Tis it that's there!"

"'Tis himself, all out!" roared Sandy.

"The liven imidge!" said Alley.

"Jest as if it stept out o' the pictur frame, down! A sperrit, no less!"

"An the hair! an the eyes! an the whole tote! It bates cock-fighten!"

"My good people," said Aylmer, as soon as he had sufficiently recovered his surprise to cut short the torrent of their ejaculations—"this may be very amusing to you, and very flattering to me, for aught I know; but would you be kind enough to explain what

it is in my person that sets you roaring, and kicking, and plunging up in a corner that way?—eh?"

"Thu! thu—thu—thu! 'Tis master Will, then, himself after all!" said Alley, clacking her tongue against the roof of her mouth, as is usual among the peasant Irish, when they wish to express surprise, compassion, or perplexity. After a little time, he was enabled to gather the occasion of their sudden alarm. The clothes which he wore, and which, after a great deal of rummaging among old chests, presses, and worm-eaten wardrobes, were discovered by Alley in an inner apartment, belonged in times past to his father; and helped to strengthen the natural likeness of the son, into an almost deceptive similitude.

"Indeed, it's a burning shame for me to mintion it, Master Will, darling," said Alley, as she laid before him his breakfast of fresh eggs, butter, jelly, smooth-coated potatoes, and virgin white milk—" but I could'nt get a taste o' tay, high nor low. But av we have you here to-morrow, there'll be a *keeler* o' the *beestings**—a trate you hadn't in the 'cademy, I'll be your bail. Indeed, Sandy and meself are trusting now a long while to the milk of o' one stripper; as Mr. Fitzmaurice says we musn't lay a wet finger on the little Kerry cows that fill the firkins for your ixpinces behind up. Troth, as I tell Sandy, I think it's in the cow's horns it do be going from us, &c. &c. &c.

While this chat, and a great deal more, equally edifying and imaginative, was gliding forth from between the old herdswoman's lips, the person addressed was very sagaciously employed on the viands which she had set before him, and so vigorously did he exert

* The first milk of a cow immediately after her *accouchement* is called *beestings* in Ireland; and, dressed in a peculiar way, is considered a delicacy there.—Tastes vary.

himself, that long before Alley thought of discontinuing her harangue of mingled welcomes, and praises, and moanings, and complaints, he cut it short by declaring his intention of setting off immediately for his guardian's house, where, as he rightly calculated, it was probable his baggage had arrived before now.

It was too cold a morning to think a great deal of love, and yet, as Aylmer took his way over the crisp and frosty meadows that lay between him and the residence of the Fitzmaurices, he could not avoid renewing his conjectures as to the probable effect of time on the frame and mind of his fair play-fellow, and repeatedly putting the silent question to his heart, whether he should now seriously fall in love, or no. Capitulation, on such occasions, is a very usual consequence of parley; but as this happens to be one of those situations of the heart (so useful to a story-teller), in which the reader is kind enough to find novelty and entertainment even in repetition, just as one thinks the dinner-bell, at forty years of age, sounds quite as sweetly as it did at ten, there can be no great harm in following the steps of the deliberator through all the gradations of his defeat. His spirit warmed within him, in spite of the season, as he saw the smoke curling off in the light blue masses (it is turf smoke we speak of, gentle London reader), from the chimneys of Kilavariga-house (those classical names are destructive to all sentiment), every stone, and brick, and tile, and crink, and cranny of which were as familiar to his memory as the shape of his nose, or the colour of his hair. There was the great avenue gate, on which Kate and himself, when relieved from the stern constraint of their guardian's eye, were wont to induge in a fine romping bout of swinging, and riding, and shout-

ing, and screaming, and laughing; and which, if the truth must be told, was the scene of many a serious battle-royal between the pair, so far as that fray could be called a battle, in which all the offence lay on the feminine side. Stepping over the stile on one side of the closed entrance, a greater number of remembrancers of the olden time started up before him—the haggard (Irish-English for hay-yard), behind the stacks of which they had played many a merry game of *hoop*, and hide and seek; the little pond, on which they had launched their green flag boats, and cheered them as they skimmed over the surface, with as keen and, certainly, quite as philosophical an interest, as the speculators of the T. Y. C matches on the banks of father Thames. Leaving all these sweet stimulants of memory behind him, however, Aylmer approached the dwelling of the still sweeter being to whom they were indebted for more than half their interest. As he crossed the lawn, his eyes fixed on the window of the parlour, which (not the gentle instinct of affection, though we would fain assert it, but) his memory told him was her appointed place of work, of study, and of elegant amusement, he saw the light muslin blind withdrawn for an instant, and a fair face, with hair clustering about it, in papers, like ripening grapes just shewed itself, and "vanished, like a shooting star." The blind was re-adjusted, and Aylmer beheld nothing further of the inmates of Kilavariga, until he had applied himself to the brazen knocker of the hall-door. It was opened almost instantly, by (not the dear hand which his throbbing heart had led him to anticipate, but) the more robust and substantial one of Norry, the "getter up of small linen" to the establishment. Those who saw Norry on her return to the kitchen,

averred that there were, in the heightened colour of her cheek, and the sparkle of her eye, tokens of a welcome on her part, and a greeting on Aylmer's, a little more Irish than the lady of the house might have been pleased to witness—but this is none of our business. Aylmer hurried on, with a pulse throbbing in the tumultuousness of expectation, into the parlour, but he found no one there, although the disposition of the furniture shewed him that it had been very recently abandoned by its mistress. The slight feeling of disappointment which this seeming coldness and tardiness gave occasion to, was quickly removed, however, by the appearance of two or three curl-papers, dropped near the pier-glass. Aylmer smiled most roguishly and impudently, as he stooped to pick one up; but he was properly punished for his conceit and impertinence. It was torn from one of his own best composed and most poetical epistles.

Humbled and irritated a little, he began, in the absence of his friend, to collect from the objects around him all the indications of the present state of her mind and habits which these could supply. The dark-grained, well-polished oaken floor was strewed (around the work-table) with fragments of dress, a species of feminine carelessness, which however severely reprehended by mothers and governesses, has always been regarded both by Aylmer and myself with much tenderness, as imparting a very civilized air to a mansion, when disposed with a sufficiently careful negligence. Nothing is more ornamental to a lonely house, in a wild country, than those scattered symptoms of gentle womanhood. A volume of Ferrar's History of Limerick, lying with a thread-paper between the leaves, enabled Aylmer to form a diagnostic of a little female patriotism, while an

unmuffled harp, with a music stand and book near the window, rather modestly thrown into shade, gave indications of higher accomplishment than he had even been led to hope for. All these delightful conclusions were, however, soon cut short by the sound of a light foot upon the staircase without. His heart leaped into his eyes, as he bent them on the door—the handle stirred—it was opened.

"Kate! Kate!"

"Oh, William!"

—I know that there are many respectable persons, whose theory, as well as practice it is, to make all the impulses of passion and feeling, as well as all the varieties of action and attitude, obnoxious to the rules of etiquette—who can be joyous within limit, or most elegantly disconsolate, as the occasion may require—and to such I can have no apology to offer for the conduct of my heroine at this conjuncture. She received the friend and playmate of her childhood with an ecstacy truly barbarous—there is no denying the fact—she almost rushed into his arms—she hardly checked the kiss which he was presumptuous enough to snatch from her, and very faintly on its repetition—her delight was outrageously unsophisticated and natural—it was, in fact, an Irish meeting "all over."

When the "Kates," and "Williams," and "my goodness!" and "dear mees!" and bursts of laughter, and all the other delicious nothings in which this untamed affection is privileged to indulge itself on such occasions, had been nearly expended, Aylmer contemplated the face and figure of his young friend with greater attention, and we shall now describe what he saw as accurately as possible.

He was not disappointed in any way by either the

countenance or the person of his mistress (for as such, at the first glance, he had set her down), and yet though the one *was* beautiful, the former fell decidedly short of that standard. There was no exquisite combination of colour in the cheeks—no lillies and roses—no rubies—no diamonds, and yet the face itself was perfectly captivating. Her lips were thin, but eternally charged with an expression of arch gravity, or undisguised pleasure, which the restless heart supplied in such continual succession as totally to exclude all thought of considering their pretensions to mere material beauty. Her eye was grey, and shrewd, in its moments of comparative inaction, but full of fire, of passion, of mirth, of thought, of feeling, or of *fun*, according as those varying emotions were stirred up within her bosom. The whole countenance fell into a character of intensity and animation, which gave the fairest promise in the world of the evenness that might be expected from the mind and temper. It was the veritable window to the heart, for which the philosophic braggart affected to sigh, and was only to be loved for the revealment of the spirit which was in it.—"She is not handsome, decidedly," said the student to himself, after the elegant fashion of his compeers, in T. C. D.; "she is none of your brick-and-mortar beauties—but I like her the better—there's νοῦς about her. 'Tis a well built forehead, too."

The gentleman was no better satisfied with what he beheld in the person of the lady, than the lady was with that of the gentleman. She saw in the figure of her grown-up friend, a well-looking clever young fellow, rather under the stature of masculine beauty, and with, to a prophetic eye, a promise of rotundity, (*not* corpulency) in his person. His face was a good oval,

indicative of strong intellect, but perhaps quite as much, or rather more so, of strong passion, his forehead round and resolute, his eyebrows so Melpomenish, that they would have given a moped and anxious air to his *masque*, if they were not corrected by the vigour and bustle of the eye beneath them : *that* was an article of the greatest advantage to the character of the whole face. There was no affectation about it, and yet it was full of meaning, and had a frankness that was royal. His hair rather black, and doubtful whether it should curl or no, was thrown back on all sides in a kind of floating way, an arrangement that savoured too much of technicality, when it is considered that he was a haunter of Parnassus, and had moreover once upon a time been an accomplice in the perpetration of the "Historical Tragedy" of the "Battle of Aughrim," in a cock-loft near Smock Alley, "for charitable purposes," on which occasion he represented the heroic St. Ruth, who, as is pathetically narrated in the drama,

> "A down a winding valley met his fall,
> And died a victim to—a cannon ball !"

Aylmer was about to question his fair friend on the subject of her father, when the door again opened, and the old man entered. He advanced hurriedly to welcome his protégé, and scarcely looked at him, until he had grasped his hand, while his own, as Aylmer felt, trembled in the effort. He was about to speak when his eyes fell full on Aylmer's person; he glanced quickly, and rather wildly over his dress and features; and the words of welcome stuck in his throat. He dropped the young man's hand, and shrunk back with a look of mingled wildness and distrust.

"Oh, father," exclaimed Kate, her eyes filling up, "won't you speak to William?"

"What is it Kate?—Come near me, give me your arm, child."

"Oh, Mr. Fitzmaurice, is this my welcome home?"

"Father, dear father!"

"Let the candles be lighted in my room, the sky is darkening. God bless us! What ails you, Kate?—I am well, I am very well. Stand back, Aylmer!"

"I am not welcome then!"

"Stand back, I say! no——yes——welcome?—— Kate, keep near me, my darling. You wrong me young man, indeed you do!"

"How, sir?—O tell me!"

"May the great and merciful Lord of the universe forgive us all! Surely we are none of us without our weakness! William, do I deserve this of *you*? The night has fallen already:—Kate, come with me, and get candles in my room. Don't drag me down so, girl! I have weight enough upon me: this way;" and gathering the terrified and weeping girl closer to him, he hurried through the door, leaving Aylmer overwhelmed with wonder, indignation, and dismay.

It was some time before he heard any thing further of his host. The night had, as he remarked, fallen with much suddenness, and the indications of an approaching snow-storm began to make themselves evident in the thickening, greyish masses of cloud that drifted close over-head, so as speedily to spread themselves over the face of the heavens. As Aylmer looked from the parlour window, the dreariness of the change produced a chilling effect on his excited spirits for the moment, and served to check the resolution which he had formed, of instantly quitting the house

and returning to Bally-Aylmer. He sat at the window, expecting the return of some of the family, and resolved if possible to obtain some elucidation of the extraordinary scene that had taken place

He mused in this position for a considerable time, with no other sights or sounds to divert his mind from the anxiety that was gradually deepening around it, but the heavy whirring of the wind, as it swept over the whitening plain, the pattering of the snow and hail against the window panes, the cackling of poultry as they ran with expanded tails and disordered plumage right before the wind, to the shelter of the nearest turf-rick, the short dissatisfied grunt of the hog as he stumped it sturdily beneath the window towards the piggery, like a four-footed Caliban, driven in a sulk from his feast of "pignuts;" and in the intervals of the driving gusts, the solitary cry of a house-sparrow, at finding himself compelled to quit the exposed farm-yard, before his little craw was half stored with its thimbleful of the scattered grain, and retire supperless to roost for the night. All those appliances however, in Aylmer's present state of mind produced only the effect of throwing an additional gloom over his spirits, and filling his heart with wavering and flashing doubts, conjectures, and uncertainties, with which, until the present moment, he had never been disturbed, and which even now resisted all his exertions to turn "them to shapes," and give them an assumed existence.

After he had waited a considerable time in fruitless expectation, his patience again became exhausted, and a feeling of deep and bitter indignation took possession of his mind. The disappointment which his young and ardent heart had met with in the very first burst of its affection, was calculated to sting more

keenly on consideration. He had come to his home and his only friends after a nine years' absence, with a breast all glowing with love and ecstacy, and this was his welcome! A cold and almost repulsive greeting, a few short sentences of unprovoked reproach, left wholly unexplained by the utterer, and here he remained, apparently quite forgotten by the family, in a dreary apartment, without a sign of preparation or of kindness. It is in such moments as this that the orphan is most oppressed with the full and bitter sense of his situation, and though Aylmer was the last disposed youth in the world to pule or whine, he could not help exclaiming to his own wounded heart, that it was not so parents were wont to receive their long absent children.

The wormwood of this reflection had scarcely diffused itself over his mind, when the door opened gently and Katharine entered. Her eyes were red and moist, and her movements still retained much of the agitation into which she had been betrayed by the preceding scene. Her look of distress was sufficient to subdue all the resentful emotions which had sprung up in the mind of the student, and the tenderness with which he took her hand, and offered his consolations, would seem almost to imply a consciousness of blame, attributable to his own conduct. Kate, however, did not appear to view the matter in this light: she was the bearer of her father's apologies, and joined to his her own entreaties, that he would endeavour to forget what had passed, and remain the night at Kilavariga. The old man was still, she said, ill to an alarming degree; in fact he had spoken so wildly on many occasions of late, that she sometimes feared——and a shivering of her

whole frame, and a momentary glance of horror completed the sentence which her lips refused to utter.

The probability of this startling suspicion darted on Aylmer's mind with all the force of truth, and he was instantly struck with a feeling of remorse at the selfishness of his resentment. He affected, however, to make very light of the conjecture, and succeeded in restoring his young friend to some degree of composure before they separated for the evening.

Aylmer used somewhat more care than usual in making his toilet the next morning, without, perhaps, being himself conscious of any motive for unusual decoration. And by a curious coincidence enough, a similar degree of care and taste had been called into use in the female department of the family, with doubtless, a similar innocency of intention. Miss Fitzmaurice was patriotic even in her gowns, skirts and bodies; (are not our names correct, ladies?)—and she did not depart from her national principle even on this occasion. Her dress consisted of a grave-coloured Dublin tabinet, bound tight around the waist, (it was the fashion then and there), with a broad riband, a plain muslin *collar*, (is this right too?) as white as this fair paper which we are blotting with her description, lying close and flat upon the *gorge* at either side: and that was all the finery about her.

When the young collegian descended, he found Fitzmaurice and his daughter already occupying their places by a blazing turf fire in the breakfast parlour; the one domestically occupied in cutting up a large *brick* of home-made pan-bread into slices for toast, the other plunged deep into the columns of the last Dublin Evening Post. Both received him cheerfully, and no allusion whatsoever was made to the occurrence of the

preceding evening. Whatever lingering of mental weakness the old man might yet labour under, it was soon banished by the frank and buoyant spirits of the young student, who appeared to have, and, in fact, at the time *had*, banished from his mind all thought or recollection of his ungentle reception.

During the progress of their morning meal Aylmer detailed circumstantially his adventure among the sheep-stealers the second evening before, and Fitz-maurice called to mind what he had already heard with indifference, a complaint of his herdsman, made on the previous morning, respecting the loss of a fat wether, from the long walk. The consequence of the communication was a resolution, on the part of the young man, to lodge informations at once before Mr. Geoffrey Hasset, an estated gentleman and a magistrate, who resided within a few miles of Bally Aylmer. The old man acquiesced in the proposal as soon as it was made, not that he entertained any longing for justice on his own despoilers, but feeling a satisfaction at the idea that he might thus be rid of the eternal charges of apathy and indolence which were very freely dealt forth by his aged steward, without the necessity of any active personal exertion. Miss Fitzmaurice, too, encouraged the enterprize, as she would have done any other, which was likely to occasion some little variety and bustle of circumstance in the monotonous thrum-thrum of Kilavariga life.

Forth accordingly fared our hero; and a few hours riding brought him within view of the little village, at a gentlemanlike distance from which the clumsy bulk of Hasset-Ville stood, like a *cock-throw,* on the summit of a round, squat hillock near the sea-side, with a few

lean-looking elms and elder-trees at the rear, which served only to make "barrenness visible."

An unusual commotion had been occasioned in the village by the expected return of the lord of the soil, the above named Mr. Hasset, who had just given his tenantry the first specimen of the benefits of absenteeism since the Union. The loyalty of the parish was fully manifested by the efforts made on the part of its inhabitants to receive their monarch with suitable enthusiasm. As his carriage turned the angle of a rock, some miles distant from his seat, the sound of all manner of villanous instruments rattling away to an inspiring national planxty, announced the approach of the villagers, and in a few minutes he was encountered by their advanced guard, a mounted deputation, headed by a lame carpenter, who filled his seat on the bony ridge of a wall-eyed, unfed gelding's back, with the dignity of an orderly on a field-day; and with the resignation of a martyr. The music being hushed for the moment into a delicious silence, and the open carriage drawn up, the schoolmaster of the village inflicted a harangue on the occupant, which was borne with gracious patience, and suitably acknowledged; after which, with tremendous yells, the crowd bounded on the carriage, emancipated the four-footed cattle, cashiered the postillions, and fastening two ropes on either side, hurried the lumbering vehicle along the rough and stony road, with a velocity which caused an expression of real alarm to take place of the smiling condescension which had before diffused itself over the gracious countenance of the proprietor. As they whirled him along, amid terrific shouts, and bursts of wild laughter, toward the demesne gate, the walls and the way-side were lined with gaping and noisy crowds,

principally composed of the younger urchins, whose scantiness of stature obliged them to make shift in this manner. One of these had clambered up a gate-pier, and sitting cross-legged on the back of a stone monkey, secured his seat by passing his arm round the neck of the dilapidated pug; while with the other he twirled his little hareskin cap above his head, and added his share of noisy triumph to the general voice.

Preparations having been made for the day's amusements some time previously, there was no pause, no lack of enjoyment after the first burst of welcome had been exhausted. The demesne was opened freely to to all who choose to mingle in the glee of the time. Tables were spread before the wooden rustic seats which were scattered through the grounds, and in the interval of the festive preparation, those who chose to witness or partake in the sports were summoned to a smooth plot before the drawing-room window, which was fixed on as the scene of contention for those who chose to put in their claims for the several prizes, which the liberality of the proprietor supplied for the occasion. The great personage was, himself, at the moment, enjoying the scene from the open casement.

Aylmer had formed one of this last mentioned group for a considerable time, and joined heartily in the bursts of laughter which broke from the delighted rustics, at the various spectacles of fun which were presented to them; the racing of old women on their *grugs* for a cotton *hankitcher*—the grinning through a horse-collar—and many other sports which it would require the pen of the author of the Æneid to celebrate with poetical justice. Suddenly a voice close at his elbow startled him; he turned quickly round, and gazed on the speaker, who, unconscious that he was

observed, repeated an exclamation of delight and applause, while the tones of the voice thrilled through the nerves of the student with a momentary influence of terror: a glance at the countenance was sufficient to satisfy him,—he laid his hand softly over the fellow's shoulder, and fixing a strong gripe on the breast of his blue frieze coat, dragged him back from the ring.

The scene was instantly changed. The man struggled to free himself from Aylmer's hold, but the latter clenched his hand the faster; and there was a consciousness about the stranger's efforts which enfeebled his strength, and beat him down almost to a level in point of bodily power with his captor. Astonished at the sudden confusion, Mr. Hasset disappeared from the open window, and presently hurried forth upon the lawn, followed by the seneschal of the parish, and a posse of domestics.

'Murder! murder! Is there nobody for the O'Deas?" exclaimed the prisoner.

"Man alive! let go your hoult!" shouted a young countryman, shaking a smoke-dried blackthorn at Aylmer's head.

"Will no one help me to secure a thief and robber? Ha!—Mr. Hasset!"

"Lewy—Oh! Lewy—darling, must it be this way with us?"

"Let go your hold!"

"Help! help! for justice——"

Before another instant Aylmer lay senseless on the earth; and in the same space a well directed blow from behind had done the same rough office for Lewy.

"*Shasthone!* Sandy Culhane, stick by the master!"

"Aisy, av you plaze!" cried Sandy, after he had fixed a similar gripe on the sheep-stealer's throat to

that which his young master had been so unceremoniously compelled to relinquish: "Wasn't it in high time I come?—Mr. Hasset, here's your prisoner."

"What has he done?"

"'Pon my life that's more than I can tell—only it's something, no doubt, and the master to seize him,—stand a one side, some o' ye, and let us rise him a little—there—pooh! it's nothen. What is it the villin's done to you, master Will, darling? Mr. Hasset wants to know——"

"Better ask questions within—keep both these men in custody—and remove the young gentleman into the house; he does not appear conscious yet."

"He isn't himself rightly, sure enough; for the eye do be shutting and opening upon me as if it was blind—mark. Indeed I'm but a poor hand at a *kippen* in a fight, and to say that born rogue is able to walk already;" as he observed the younger prisoner led off without much assistance, together with his companion, toward the house.

The orders of the magistrate were put in execution, and Aylmer, still half stupified from the effects of his hurt, though not seriously injured, was assisted to the house by two of the domestics.

It was long before Aylmer had sufficiently recovered himself to identify the mountain marauder, and to explain to the wondering administrator of petty justice the cause and manner of the extraordinary scene which had passed before him.

"And it was by Mr. Fitzmaurice's good will that you came to lodge informations this way again' me, was it?" said the sheep-stealer, when Aylmer had concluded.

"He certainly will not be sorry to hear that a thief has been brought to justice."

"Justice, inagh? O, it's justice Cahill is looking after, is it? Why, then, the Vergin speed him,—and tell him from me that he'll come by more of it than he's bargaining for, may be."

"What do you mean, ruffian?"

"Is it asking me what I mane, you are? Aisy. Tell Cahill-cruv-darug, that Lewy Histin, Vauria Histin's first cousin, that is rearing her this way, said it 'll be a sore day for him the day that Lewy enters Tralee gaol, barring he doesn't enter it at all, on his informations."

"You may be very well satisfied that insolence like this will do you no good with my friend."

"May be not, then. Only you asked me fot I meant, you see, and I told you plain, out. Tell Cahill I said, fot hurt was it to draw the blood of a little wether, in comparishun of an old friend's?—And see if Cahill will ask you what I mane, do."

As Aylmer was turning away with an expression of disgust, the prisoner seemed suddenly to call something to mind, and plunging his rough hand into the pocket of his frieze, drew from it a dingy piece of paper, folded and wafered like a letter, which, after sundry efforts to rub it white again with the sleeve of his coat, a process which by no means improved its appearance, he handed to the young gentleman. Notwithstanding its piteous condition Aylmer was able to recognize the letter which he had received from the unknown stranger in the mountains, and the recognition became immediately manifest on his countenance. It did not escape the observation of the prisoner.

"Aye—it's the very same, indeed. You left it in

the old Caroline as it was drying before the fire, and you see how honest and safe I *kep* it, although 'tis unknown to me whether there baint a halter for meself within in it."

The magistrate, who had been, during the above conversation, buried alive in a digest, now broke in upon it, to declare his conviction of the sufficiency of the evidence to warrant a committal. This was made out accordingly, and Aylmer, declining a handsome invitation to stay the evening, returned the often neglected letter to his pocket, without even looking at its superscription, and prepared to depart.

"You'll not forget to take my words to Mr. Fitzmaurice, sir?" said the sheep-stealer.

"I shall tell him what you have said, as you seem to desire it, although I think it would be better for yourself that I should be silent on the subject."

"Not at all, indeed!—O, no. Do you mark my words for it, Cahill will say 'yes' to my bidding; and a wise man he'll be when he says that. If he won't say it, come to me again, and I'll tell you a story that it concerns your father's child to hear."

The few sentences which had been dropt in the mountain-hut by the prisoner and his female companion, now recurred to Aylmer's mind! and as he proceeded along, on his way homeward, (accompanied by Sandy Culhane,) the uncertain and uneasy feeling of mingled anger, fear, and curiosity, excited as it had since been by the scene of the evening before, pressed itself upon him with an almost irresistible force. Fully convinced as he was that the threats and insinuations of the man originated in mere malice, he could not yet restrain the ardent, and, to himself, unaccountable longing which he felt to search the matter to the very

heart, and pluck the plain truth from its hiding-place. Although he had not yet thought long enough upon the subject to encourage even a shadow of momentary suspicion, the misty and uncertain doubts which he had flung from him with indignation on their first occurrence, now crowded back upon his mind, and tortured his imagination with vague and cloudy apprehensions of some approaching horror, while his excited fancy wasted itself in idle efforts to discover what that horror could be.

As he approached the house, the appearance of a muff and bonnet at a little distance directed his meditations into another channel. He dismounted, gave his horse to Sandy, who looked a volume of wit and prophecy, as he saw his young master vault over the stile, and run along the walk towards his mistress. He leaned with his arm across the saddle for a few moments, and continued with mouth expanded, and smiling, gazing in the direction of the youthful couple, whom he had already paired together by anticipation in "the incommunicable tie." Aylmer ran for some time before he overtook Miss. Fitzmaurice; she had the coquetry to quicken her pace as he approached, and at last feigned a fair flight, which gave opportunity to a world of laughing, romping, and adjusting of pélerine and tresses, when she was overtaken. Then there was a pretty battle about accepting his arm; she drew her little white hand from the muff, and with a sweet shrinking of the frame, as she felt the cold air, plunged it again into its warm nestling-place, from which, however, she was finally induced to withdraw it, and submit to her fate with the air of a martyr. None of these manœuvres, delicate and fine-drawn as the

sentiment was in which they originated, were lost on Sandy.

"Isn't it 'cute she is, then, for all?" he muttered in soliloquy, as the lovers, arm in arm, glided off and disappeared in a turning of the walk. "E'then, do, look away," he continued, addressing the horse, whose eyes happened to be turned in the same direction, and patting the animal on the face, "indeed it's no use for you to be throwing the eye after them. 'Tis to Bally-Aylmer she'll be going before long, mistress of yourself, and meself, and all belongen to us, my hand and word to you, ma copuleen beg." And flinging himself lazily over the back of the animal, he turned off in the direction of the avenue, quickening his pace a little as the lengthening shadows, cast by the hedge-rows across the plain, gave intimation of the approaching nightfall, for Sandy had no wish to be overtaken by darkness on his way, in a country so haunted as his was with smugglers, peep-o'-day boys, fairies, ghosts, headless equipages, and revenue officers. This excessive precaution may not appear to coincide with the account given of Sandy's prowess in the forenoon; but the fact was, that as there are many men who endeavour to conceal a conscious timidity beneath the affectation of non-chalance and braggadocio, so Sandy, on the contrary, was gifted with a much hardier temperament than he himself believed, or was willing to allow. His general anxiety to avoid danger was not merely assumed, but it was never suffered to be evident except in circumstances where no real peril existed. He was naturally nervous, and fond of quiet; but when once convinced that promptitude and exertion were absolutely necessary to his personal safety, or to that of any other individual in whom he was interested, he

seemed by a sudden impulse ro start into a totally different being, and many instances were recorded of his heroic prowess, while under the influence of these chronic affections of valour, which would not have been unworthy the most daring spirit in the neighbourhood. Sandy, however, was by no means vainglorious, and dreading above all things a reputation for valour, on account of the many troubles he feared it might induce, he invariably disclaimed in his cooler moments all merit for that which he had performed, as he believed, under the impulse of some supernatural agency.

As he turned into the avenue, he was suddenly accosted by a man who, from his position in a corner of the way, appeared to have been awaiting him for some time—he stept quickly out upon the road, and laid his hand on the horse's bridle.

"Culhane, stop! I have some questions to ask."

"Blessed saints! but you startled the heart within me, sir! Isn't it a droll way, that, for you to make out upon a body, as if it was *itself* that was there."

"No nonsense now, Sandy, we have too much business on our hands. Have you seen old Evans?"

"I did your honour's bidding. But he says, the only way for him, says he, is to deliver himself, round and sound, before the judge at the next assizes, and tell the whole story out o' the face. It's the greatest nonsins in life for him to be afeerd, for though the warrant is still ont against him, all the evidence is scattered and lost, and moreover the affair is forgotten a long time now: so that he had best make one bould stroke for his own again."

The stranger seemed lost in meditation for some time, then suddenly accosted Sandy–

"And the affair here at Killavariga, how does it go on, Sandy?"

"Why thin, smooth enough. I seen himself and herself funnen together a while ago, like two that would be coorten, and not far from the end of it, neither. Av they don't have a hauling home before next Sherrove, call me an honest man."

"Never, by this book!"* exclaimed the stranger, with vehemence, slapping his hand upon the pommel of the saddle, "I'll prevent that, at all events."

"And what do you say to Mr. Evans's advice?"

"We'll talk of that another time. You will take care to be in the way to-morrow, and let our friend Alley have a bed for me to-night, and keep the fire awake until I return, whatever hour that may be."

"But I have something more to tell you—"Sandy called out, in an under-tone, as he saw the stranger prepare to depart.

"Reserve it for this evening, or to-morrow."

"'Tis rigarden the Histins."

"Hang them all up, high! I want to hear little more of them now."

The reiterated "But, sir," of Sandy, was lost upon the retreating colloquist, who, as it then appeared, had taken his departure in good time to escape observation, if, as his manner indicated, he were in reality anxious to avoid it. As Sandy turned his horse's head to proceed towards the house, he encountered the plump, little, rosy-cheeked maiden whom we have before mentioned as one of the household of the Fitzmaurices. An Irishman, of whatever rank or grade he

* It does not necessarily follow, when an Irishman swears "by this book," that the object which he indicates shall be a book, or have any relation to it. The oath is a very usual one.

may be, thinks it always a serious part of his duty, whenever he meets a woman alone, to begin with a compliment, be it good or bad.

"It's comen out rubben snow-balls to your cheeks you do be, this way, that makes 'em so rosy, I'll be bound," with a smile which he intended should be an arch one.

"Never mind Norry's cheeks, whether they do be rosy, or no," replied the fair one, with a smile that dimpled them into the similitude of buds half-blown, and which, at the same time, confessed that the flattery had not been thrown away (when has it ever been?) —"only come, as fast as hops, to the master, and don't unsaddle the horse, for he's going to send you of a message."

"A'then, what's the murder now, Norry, eroo?"

"All on the 'count of young master Aylmer, thin. He to come in and to give tidings to the master about how he took the Histins, the sheep-stalers, and to make out a narraytion o' what Lewy Histin, the born-rogue, said concarning the master—and the master to be taken ill, just as he was, there isn't only a day there sence, when he seen Mr. Aylmer in the sailor's clothes. The master is like an innocent, mad intirely above in his bed-room, and the young missiz with him, fare he's callen for you, all so fast, there's half an hour there sence."

"It's a droll bizness, Norry, isn't it?" said Sandy, as he dismounted, and placing the bridle rein on the hasp of the kitchen door followed his fair conductress into the house.

In the meantime Aylmer was left in the parlour, to ruminate on this repetition of the wonders of the previous evening. He could scarcely persuade himself that

all this could be fortuitous, and the deep and festering suspicion had already begun to lodge itself upon his heart, and to darken on his brow, and in his eye, when it was again met, and disabled by a piece of frankness on the part of his guardian. He had, after the first access of agitation had gone by, freely admitted the occasion in which it originated. Those very Histins were the only persons present, when the fatal dispute took place between him and Robert Aylmer, and his young friend surely could not be surprised, that so powerful a remembrancer of that dreadful night, that night which had been to him the cause of so much grief, shame, and suffering (not the least of which might be accounted the loss of an old and dearly loved associate,) should exercise a more than ordinary influence upon his spirits. Aylmer could not but be affected by the justice of this representation, as well as by the agony of mind in which it was delivered by the sufferer; and he had separated from him and his daughter, after a thousand assurances of perfect confidence and affection, and various efforts at condolence, which, however, the old man seemed to receive, as was most natural, with sufficient impatience.

Still, however, there was a restlessness and a working at his heart, a craving and hungry curiosity, which told him there was much yet to be learned, and resisted all the efforts to persuade himself that he was satisfied. While he leaned on a table near the window, which looked into the yard, he heard the clattering of a horse's feet over the pavement, and presently after the voice of Sandy, addressing some words of grumbling indignation to some person near him, and alternating his complaints, as was his manner when under

any excitation, with snatches of an old piece of chimney-corner croonery.

"A fine time o' night, it is indeed, to be senden one a lonesome road off to Hasset-Ville, all a' one the day isn't long enough. Stand aizy, you ugly baste (to the horse). And the O'Deas, the Histins's faction vowen vengeance again me airly and late, for given Lewy to the law."

"To Hasset-Ville!" said Aylmer, starting from his seat, and looking out into the yard, where Sandy stood tightening the girths of the horse, and grumbling and singing, alternately.

> "*There was an old 'oman toss'd up in a blanket*
> *Seventy times as high as the moon,*
> *Fare she was—*"

"Aye, and the rivinue min out, too, not knowen is it for a smuggler they'll take me."

> "*Fare she was goen I couldn't emagine*
> *But in her hand—*"

"To shoot me, may be, unknownst, murder!"

> "*But in her hand she carried a broom.*"

"Isn't it what they done to Tim Dalton, near the cross in the bog, and I have to pass that cross too, and in the dark, fare they say Tim do be goen about with his head under his arm doen penance, in regard of cutting corn of a retrenched holliday; murder!"

> "*Ould 'oman, ould 'oman, ould 'oman, siz I*
> *Erra, fare are you goen up so high?*
> *To sweep the cobwebs off o' the sky,*
> *And av—*"

He was cut short in the melody by Aylmer, who threw up the window, and beckoned him close underneath.

"Who is sending you to Hasset-Ville, Sandy?"

"Himself thin."

"With what message?"

"With a letter, see, in regard o' the Histın's and I abn't to show my face, av I don't deliver it to-night—a poor case."

The recollection of the prisoner's words instantly flashed on Aylmer. This was a message for their liberation! There was a ground for the man's threat! Aylmer paused a moment, like one who has received a stunning blow, then addressing Sandy—

"Would you wish to have a brace of pistol bullets in your brain before morning?"

"O fie! murder! master William darlen, fot do you mane?"

"That you must not, as you value your life, go to Hasset-Ville to-night. Take the horse off to Bally-Aylmer, and have him ready for me to-morrow morning, In the mean time keep the letter safe, until you are called upon to deliver it up."

"And what'll I say to Mr. Fitzmaurice, sir, when he'll ax me concarnen his orders to-morrow?"

"Keep out of his sight altogether, and I will take all the blame upon my own shoulders."

"Murder! murder! but it's a droll story," muttered Sandy, secretly rejoiced in his heart at the countermand, "I'll do your honour's bidden any way, without any questions. Allilu, murder alive!" and off he rode in very good humour, leaving his young master in a state of mind by no means similar.

On inquiring from a servant, Aylmer learned that

the old man still continued ill, and that he had even requested his daughter to retire to her apartment, and leave him alone for the night. The young student's wish, in the first heat of his agitation at the discovery he had made, was to instantly fathom the motives of the old man, by a personal interview, but a moment's consideration suggested to him the propriety and advantage of a little caution. He resolved to use every exertion in his power to obtain something like a corroboration, if not confirmation, of his doubts. He took the light from the hands of the servant, and proceeded with a loaded and anxious heart toward his sleeping room.

Before we proceed to detail the occurrences of the night, it may be necessary to say something in the way of an apology to the enlightened reader, for what must at first sight appear to be a childish and threadbare assay on his credulity, more particularly as some little efforts have been hitherto made, to give the narrative a hue of verisimilitude. We beg to disclaim any unworthy purpose, and only, like faithful chroniclers, record every event, be it wonderful or otherwise, even when we are ourselves unable to find a cause for it, "in our philosophy." It will be much the better way, if the reader will suffer his judgement to travel quietly along with the narrative, suspending it where it is offended by improbability, and awaiting the occurrence of fresh incidents to atone for, and explain the past.

The side of the bed in which Aylmer slept was placed towards a large window, at about two yards distance, and the room itself was large, and half wrapt in gloom, on which the light which he held in his hand had but a very partial influence. Perceiving that the

moonlight fell with an unusual brightness, (the natural consequence of the snow showers which had covered the ground, and the roofs of the houses within the last few days), upon his bed and immediately around it, Aylmer threw down the heavy, dark curtains on that side, and after having endeavoured to compose his mind to prayer, proceeded to undress. In the progress of this ceremony, he happened to put his hand into the pocket in which he had deposited the mountain stranger's letter. He resolved, at length, now that he was perfectly at leisure, to examine it. The superscription, though half erased by the rain and ill usage, was still sufficiently legible to satisfy him that it was directed to himself, and with a passing emotion of surprise at the stupidity of the man, who took so little trouble to make himself certain into whose hands he was committing the paper, he broke the wafer, and read the following words:

"Mr. Robert aylmar. sir, there Is A Scame goen on bee Tune Cahil-cruv–darug an His daatur For you to mary Her, and make Her missis uv bally ayl Mur. william deer dont Take the hand Thats redd wit your fathers Blood. If you Wont bee sed be mee yool heer moar in Time frum

an Ould follyer o The famalee."

With something less of persevering industry than might have enabled him to make tolerable progress in the far-famed Babylonian slab, Alymer contrived to extract the above from the strange mass of hieroglyphics which the letter presented to him. Had he opened the paper but one day sooner, he would have flung it from him with contempt, and thought no more of its contents; but the occurrences of the last twenty-four hours had left his mind in such a state of excita-

tion, that he would have caught with eagerness at a much more slender clue to an explanation. The suspicion was not, at all events, peculiar to his own breast, and it seemed to be more than a suspicion with some. He determined, as he had at length obtained a guide, that he would thrid this labyrinth to its centre, and after muttering this resolve between his teeth, he extinguished the light, and threw himself on the bed.

Still it was long before he could sleep. After exhausting all the customary modes of inducing slumber, without producing the desired effect, trying in vain the right side. and the left side, and the right again—pummelling the innocent pillow, and railing in heart at the equally innocent chambermaid, he fairly abondoned himself to his waking meditations, and gave up the attempt to conquer his restlessness altogether. This show of non-resistance, however, he soon found, was the very surest mode of achieving triumph in such a case. Sleep, like good fortune, is not always to be taken by a *coup de main*—she will more frequently shed her blessings on the brain that is neglectful of her, than on that which is busy in devising means to accomplish her favour. He lay gazing on the curtain, which the moonlight rendered almost transparent, suffering thought after thought to glide quietly through his brain, each waxing fainter than the other, until at length the power of discrimination became inert, and consciousness itself began to fade away into that soft and gentle delirium which preceeds the access of perfect mental repose, and forms one of the most luxurious and exquisite enjoyments which the weary spirit can receive from absence of active exertion. His eyelids were just drooping, and the visual faculty itself was just dormant, when he was suddenly startled by

cbserving the shadow of a human figure, thrown upon the bed-curtain that hung between him and the window. It flitted across, and was lost, almost before he had sufficiently roused himself to be certain that it was not a creation of his fancy. After drawing the curtains aside, and demanding "Who was there?" without receiving any reply, he dropped them again, and in the moment of their fall, as they rattled on their brass rings, his ear caught, or fancied it caught, a sound like the turning of a door-handle. He listened again, but, "heard nothing only the silence." Satisfied that his auricular, as well as his optical senses, had been playing the antic with him, he flung himself back on the bed, and was speedily lost in the world of dreams.

In a short time his visions assumed a turbulent and anxious, though rather whimsical air. They were crowded with all the horrors of the three last days. He dreamt first that the letter before mentioned was written in greek, and that Doctor ——, one of his college superiors, was rating him for not being able to read it off at sight—that it suddenly changed into Gaelic, and the Doctor into Mr. Fitzmaurice, who seized him by the throat, and plunged him into a bog-hole, where he attempted to stifle him, while in endeavouring to remonstrate, he could do nothing himself but bark and bay like a hound, until at length a burst of laughter from his tormentor made him look up, when he saw that it was his own dead father who stood above him. He was impressed with this conversation from no other evidence than the arbitrary feeling of a dream, for he neither remembered his father's countenance, nor was there in that of the vision the least resemblance to any one that he had ever seen. The terror which the sight occasioned him went on deepening in rapid gradations

until an oppression seized him which proceeded almost to a point of suffocation. It was, in fact, a fit of actual nightmare which had been induced, and he speedily fell into that state of mental consciousness, and mental as well as bodily impotence, which constitutes one of the most terrific stages of the disease. His brow and limbs became bathed with perspiration in the vain efforts which he made to relieve himself. His eyes opened, and he distinctly saw the material objects which surrounded him; yet the visions of his sleep not only in part continued, but began to assume a frantic sort of reality, from the manner in which they became combined with these objects. His waking eyes began to take the part of his yet unregulated and delirious fancy, and he beheld, or at least strongly imagined he beheld, the figure of an old man standing by his bedside, holding back the curtain with one hand, while the other hung in perfectly motionless repose by his side. His form was so placed, that the dreamer could see little more than the strongly-marked outline of the shape and face, which the intercepted moon-light had pencilled out with the most perfect distinctness, and mellowed by a silver line of light, which corrected its harshness, while it revealed its character and expression in all their vigour. By degrees Aylmer's glance became settled, and fixed itself full upon the figure. The lips, which were before parted with an expression of kindness, began to move at length, and another of the young man's senses was called in to bear testimony to the reality of the appearance.

"I am come to warn you, William Aylmer, of a danger in which you are placed. Listen to me, for it is your father that speaks to you."

The young man attempted to stretch out his hands,

and speak, but the effort failed, and the words died in indistinct murmurs upon his lips.

"Listen, but do not speak," continued the figure, "for the night is flying fast, and the clouds are already grey in the east. You have heard of your father's death—the hand that plunged him living into the waters, was that of Cahill Fitzmaurice. Beware of him, for he called himself my friend for five and twenty years, and yet was not ashamed to take me unawares in an hour of weakness and of sin. He sought my life while I staggered in drunkenness upon the deck that I had died with unatoned blood."

Aylmer's countenance expressed the horror mingled with curiosity which this last intimation had excited within him. His informant perceived the meaning of the gesture, and proceeded :—

"In that affair Cahil had no part. I had taken out the vessel unaccompanied by him, and in the enterprise that followed, the blood of a king's servant was shed. We thought more of the peril, then, than of the crime. I have since learned to think more of the crime than of the peril. Mine was not the hand, thank Heaven, that dealt the blow, nor mine the tongue that directed it ; but in me, nevertheless, the guilt originated, and the hand of Fitzmaurice only anticipated the vengeance of the law. But these things are past. I have come now to warn you of another matter. Avoid the company of your guardian's daughter! Let all things rest as they are, at least for two months, in the space of which time you shall see me again. Till then touch not her hand, nor listen to her voice, as you, value your parent's peace. To Fitzmaurice I would have you say——"

The slapping of a door in another apartment sud-

denly cut short the intended commission, and as the figure

> "started, like a guilty thing
> Upon a fearful summons—"

Aylmer had a momentary view of the face, as the moon shone full upon it. There was an appearance of age, a paleness in the complexion, probably heightened by the peculiar light, and long flaxen locks depending around either temple. The expression of the countenance, during the instant, was that of anxiety and intense attention. On a repetition of the sound, the strange midnight visitor dropt the curtain which he had been holding, and with a low and gentle farewell blessing, uttered with the softest and kindest tone in the world, such as the lip of a parent alone can breathe, and the heart of a child alone can appreciate, the appearance fled.

Aylmer, in the effort which he made to detain the vision, both by voice and action, found that his nightmare had completely left him, and that, in fact, he had been lying wide awake for a considerable time, though consciousness had stolen by such imperceptible gradations upon him, that he could not tell at what period of the scene that passed he had been waking, and when he slept. It did not, however, escape the metaphisical eye of the young collegian, that the bed curtain had become wrinkled in the grasp of the spectre, precisely in the same manner as it would have done if the limb had been composed of mere material flesh and blood. He sprung from the bed, and rushed in the direction by which the appearance had departed. There was no person in the room, but a little search satisfied him that there existed no necessity either for a sliding pa-

nel, or the other resource, an impassible state of being, to aid his visitor's flight, for the room door stood a-jar. It certainly was a very vulgar exit for a ghost, but the probability that it had been used was more than feasible.

The morning broke before Aylmer was enabled to subdue, in any degree, the feverish excitement which this occurrence had induced. The dawn was cold and comfortless, and the cold drifts of snow, amid which it was ushered in, prolonged the greyish mistiness of its twilight a considerable space beyond its customary duration. Without waiting to form any resolution as to the immediate line which it would be necessary for him to pursue, further than might be suggested by the feverish impulse of the moment, and with his heart and mind and frame all glowing and trembling with the energy of the terrific discovery which he had chanced upon, he found himself hurrying almost instinctively along the passage which led to the sleeping room of Fitzmaurice, in a distant corner of the building. The chamber of the murderer!—his father's murderer! He scarcely knew—he never once thought of asking himself what his design was in thus breaking in upon the morning slumbers of the old man; but he had an indistinct, unsifted motive within his breast, which prompted him to take the criminal (if the spirit had not lied), by surprise, and startle the truth from its resting-place within his soul. A sensation too, perhaps, similar to that which is uttered by the ill-fated Danish prince, in a situation of equal perplexity, might have mingled itself with this undefined purpose:—

"——The spirit that I have seen
May be a devil; and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea—and, perhaps,
Out of my weakness and my melancholy
(As he is very potent with such spirits),
Abuses me, to damn me: I'll have grounds
More relative than this—"

"The sudden "Who's there?" that struck his ear as he stirred the door-handle, showed him that the old man had not been surprised in slumber by the awaking day. Without making any answer, he burst in tremulous agitation into the apartment, when the excess of feeling which swelled his bosom and rushed into his throat, compelled him to stop for a moment, and almost gasp for breath. He flung himself at last into an arm-chair by the bed-side, where he lay back for a few moments, oppressed almost to suffocation with the host of fearful and conflicting sensations that had been stirred up within him. The horror of his guardian's crime—the memory of all his kindness—pity for his present sufferings, and the natural instinct that prompted him to the course of justice, all contended for mastery within his soul, and made havoc of the region in their strife. It was the first time that the spear had been struck into the dwelling-place of his stormy passions, and they bounded from their hold with all the ungovernable fury which the novelty and fierceness of the excitement was calculated to produce. The old man had flung back the bed-curtain, and sitting erect, gazed with an expression of amazement, of terror, and cruel anxiety, upon the strange emotion in his young friend. Fear, and (an uncharitable observer might say) an instinctive consciousness of its cause, prevented his questioning the latter, on whom his wild, flickering

gaze continued to direct itself, while he waited with panting heart, gasping lips, and cheeks and brow made cadaverous with the dread of the coming horror, for the first speech of the youth.

At length their glances met, and the effect was electrical. Rising slowly to his feet, and uplifting his clenched hand above his head, while that and every other member of his frame shook with convulsive energy, and his voice became thick and hoarse, and his eyes grew red and watery with passion, he said:—

"Cahill Fitzmaurice, confess to your God and to me, for the time is come at length. You are the murderer of my father!"

A low muttering groan, and then a gurgling in the throat of the accused, were the only answer which the accuser received. The curtain fell from the hand of former, and he lay back motionless on the bed. Fully prepared, as he had been, for the conviction of guilt, which the seeming criminal's conscience thus afforded, its effect on Aylmer was not the less powerful when it flashed upon him in all its certainty. He felt a sickness at the heart, a sudden shooting at the eyes, and a reeling in his brain, which nearly made him stagger from his balance. Pressing both hands close upon his brow, as if to crush the burning thoughts that were rioting within, he hurried out of the chamber, just as Miss Fitzmaurice, in a night-dress and slippers and with a countenance full of alarm, entered it by another door.

When he reached his own apartment, he gave full vent to the whirlwind of emotions which he had been endeavouring to restrain during the last half-hour, and flung himself upon the bed in a convulsion of feeling. It was one of these great and extraordinary occasions

which, occurring when the character is matured by time and experience, serve only to strengthen or call forth its peculiarities, and wear their channels deeper in the heart; but which, when they come into contact with a youthful, undecided, and susceptible mind, can shake it to its very foundation, and mark its course for good or ill through life. The young man, who had lain down to rest the evening before, a raw, unformed, unfledged spirit, now rose from the bed, a fiery, austere, and resolute being, with a shadow of sternness and gloom struck into his heart, which clung to it during all his after-life.

After the first shock of his agitation was at an end, and he had, not without a passing emotion of shame at his own weakness, reduced his over-wrought spirits into some degree of calmness, he determined instantly to repair to Bally-Aylmer, and there deliberate on the course which it would be necessary for him to adopt.

He flung his *loody* about him, and regardless of the snow which drifted in large flakes into his face, he proceeded towards his family residence.

In the mean time, Katherine had hurried to the bedside of her parent. She had been awakened from her light sleep in the apartment next his (which she always occupied,) by the first sound of Aylmer's entering; and unknowing the cause of the intrusion, while she felt indignant that any disturbance should be made in his chamber at that early hour, she hurried on some careless additions to her night dress, and entered the room at the very moment the door closed on Aylmer's receding figure. Her anxieties being, in the first place, aroused for the immediate condition of the old man, she walked rapidly to the bed, and removing the hangings, discovered, in the grey morning light, a

spectacle that made her heart recoil with horror. He lay, half supported by the head of the bed, his jaw hanging, and his eyes, watery and motionless, fixed in a stare of stolid terror upon the ground, his forehead covered with a death-like moisture, and his cheeks and lips tinged with the cold, bluish colour which is cast over the features in the extreme agony, and is recognized as the liveried hue of the grave. Uttering a half-suppressed scream of anguish, the affrighted girl wound one arm around the head of her parent, and supported it upon her bosom, while she pressed the other in an agony of suspense upon his heart. The organ of life had suspended its function for a short time, and was now, throb after throb, slowly resuming its office.

The chamber-door soon after opened, and Norry hurried to the assistance of her mistress. While the latter endeavoured to recal sensation by the usual physical applications and resources, sprinkling the face with cold water, chafing the temples, and placing the body in a horizontal position, the unsophisticated attendant took the more effectual course of forcing open the stiff clenched fingers of the right hand, and making the sign of the cross with her thumb upon the palm. This feat accomplished, she stood thumping her bosom, and awaiting its effect in perfect faith, at the bed's foot.

"Don't mind any more o' the water, Miss Cauthleen; the little criss-crass I made in his hand, will soon lift him out o' the fit: it's the gentlemen, God speed 'em, (here she crossed herself, and curtsied with much devotion,) that were wantin to hoise him away with them this mornen."

"Hush! hush! girl—fall back out of the light—he is recovering, God be thanked and praised!"

"Guilty—aye—guilty!" muttered the still unconscious object of their solicitude.

"God save us; Do you hear him, Miss?"

"His senses are wandering yet."

"Where—where is he? Kate, my girl, you shall bear witness to this—call him! call him back!"

"Whom, my dear father?—William?'

"Mister Aylmer is gone off, Miss," said Norry.

"Gone! I am lost! Ungrateful boy! If I wronged the father, did I not serve the son? Haste! call him back! he has my life in his hands."

"Quit the room, Norry!" exclaimed Katharine, stamping her foot against the boards with an expression of anger which was foreign to her nature. The servant obeyed, after a world of wondering gestures, crossings, and muttered ejaculations.

The violence of the action served, in some degree, to recal Fitzmaurice to a perfect consciousness of his situation.

"What, Kate, my gentle Kate grown passionate?" he said, in wonder and tenderness, as he took her warm hand in his, and gazed still with some expression of listlessness into her eyes: "These veins have young and boiling blood within them, my little girl. You must learn to temper and subdue it in time, or it will lay the seeds of a bitter old age, and a fearful death for you."

"I will, sir—you are better, are you not, father?" said the daughter, regarding the speech as a part of the lingering delirium which had seized him, and affecting to coincide with it, in the light and cursory manner which one uses to satisfy the sufferer on all such occa-

sions; and *than* which nothing can be more irritating, if the person towards whom it happens to be adopted should at all suspect its motive.

"You treat me like a child," said Fitzmaurice, with sharpness, "no matter. It may be the time is not far distant, when it will be the act of a fool to mutter a word of reason in my ears," he continued, passing his hand over his brow, and turning his eyes wildly from her glance:—"Yes. Many that have eat and drank at my board, would only eat and drink the freer, when the master of the house was in Swift's Hospital. And the mistress of Kilavariga would smile as merrily too. She would be her own mistress then. Go, go! You are like the rest. Go from me, girl, go from me."

Shocked and wounded as she was by these expressions, the horrible indications by which they were accompanied, were more than sufficient to stifle all the selfish feelings of wronged and undervalued affection, which would at any other time have burned like a fever stroke within the breast of the devoted girl. Persisting, notwithstanding his pettish repulses, in clinging around her father's neck, she sobbed and wept upon his shoulder, until she felt an assurance of relenting in the renewed pressure of the hand, which he still retained.

"I did not, indeed, think of what I was saying, sir," she exclaimed, in her most repentant tones, perceiving at once, that the surest way of redeeming her error, was by adopting the directly opposite course. "But why will not my father confide in me? I am no longer a child, in whom one should fear to repose a trust, nor am I incapable of feeling and participating in the grief, the secret grief, whatever it is that is weighing down your heart. Do you not feel I love you, father? Have

you not been my only friend from my very childhood? Has not all that I prize and reverence most, my knowledge of right and wrong, my perception of virtue, my religion, been all taught me by you, and you only? and how could I, if I were of the worst nature in the world, do otherwise than dearly love and honour you?"

Surprised, and not a little pleased with the energy and fervour with which the gentle girl made her appeal, the old man paused a moment, while he surveyed her with a moistened and affectionate eye. The very last phrase which she used, however, appeared to jar against his thought, and interrupt the kindly feeling that had begun to diffuse itself over his breast. His brow contracted, and he mused for a moment.

"Aye, Kate," said he, "but will you continue to hold this sentiment? Suppose the time should come when none, but you, could or would do other than revile and hate me, do you think you would continue to honour your old, and perhaps erring, but fond, fond parent?"

"It was the commandment of the Eternal God himself," exclaimed the maiden, in a burst of staid enthusiasm, "delivered amid the lightnings and thunders of the Holy Mountain, 'Honour thy Father and Mother!' and there was no reservation found upon the tablet of stone. Man may persecute, sickness may change, grief may depress, poverty may chill, or guilt may blacken the heart of the parent, but the bonds of the child are never loosened."

"Then should the world call me a guilty wretch, and prove me little less, I may still have a daughter?"

"When that day comes, father, I will say my eyes

and ears are false, and trust my heart alone, that will speak for you against them."

The old man reclined against the head of the bed for a few moments, while his eyes closed, and his lips moved in silence. Then without altering his position, he waved his hand gently, and said in a soft and broken tone:—

"Leave me, Kate, for a few minutes to myself. I will look for you in the parlour. Clear all signs of anxiety from your countenance, and prepare yourself for a mournful confidence."

Katharine obeyed in silence, and her father, after performing the duties of the toilet, began to deliberate within his own mind the events of the morning, and their most probable consequences.

It was a passing comfort to him to know, that he had at last found one to whom he might show himself such as he really was, without meeting that quick repulsive horror and distrust, which he feared worse than conscience; and yet it was a bitter humiliation to be reduced to the necessity of lowering himself in the eyes of his own child, and directing those feelings of terror and detestation at vice, which his own instructions had generated in her mind, against himself in person. For one moment, an involuntary wish escaped him, that he had reared his daughter, with a somewhat less acute susceptibility of the hideousness of crime, and a more qualified admiration of its opposite than now formed the groundwork of her character. It was but a glance of thought, however, in which neither his reason nor his feeling had any participation, and was forgotten even before it was condemned. He concluded by determining to make the confidence which he meditated, and after praying, for the first time in many a

year, with a somewhat lightened spirit, he descended to the parlour, where Katharine was awaiting him.

The young lady in the mean time had been occupied with doubts and conjectures, of an equally agitating, though a less gloomy character. Notwithstanding the warmth of feeling, into which she had been hurried by the enthusiasm of her affection, during the preceding scene, she was very far from anticipating, even in thought, the possibility that her filial love could be put to so extreme a test, as her words declared it capable of surviving, and she looked for nothing more in truth than her father had himself led her to expect—"a mournful confidence." Even the wild and haggard air which was about his features and actions, as he entered the room, were insufficient to lead her to suspect, that his promised secret could comprise any thing of a darker, or more fearful hue.

He motioned his daughter to keep her seat, and after glancing along the passage by which he approached, closed the door and slipped the little bolt into its place. Then, after pacing up and down the room several times, as if debating with himself the easiest mode of opening a conversation so replete with humiliation, to one party, and horror to the other, as that which he was about to enter upon, he stopped opposite his daughter's chair, and fixing his eye, all lighted up as it was with a thousand fearful emotions, on her mild and tenderly anxious glance he said:

"You know not perhaps, or have not considered the full extent of the consequence which you draw upon yourself, by urging me to this confidence. You have not had time to think on the subject, how deeply and closely it will involve your peace of mind, nay, perhaps your health of soul, how intimately and perfectly your

fate must become intertwined with that of him, into whose secret heart you are now about to penetrate, unbidden."

"There must be safety, father," said the girl, a little startled and confounded by the strangeness of his manner, "there must be peace, wherever you lead me."

"Do nothing on presumption," was his reply, "I wish you to pause, and ponder well, before you have my secret, for when it is once told, I shall hold you bound to me, and to my service, more firmly than ever, though perhaps not equally to my love."

The last words were uttered in so mournful a tone, that the current of Katharine's feelings, which had been a little disturbed and qualified by the mysticism of the previous speech, again rushed into their old channel. Her eyes filled up as she grasped her parent's hand in hers, and wetting it with tears of filial love and reverence she said, in hurried, and yet irresolute accents:—

"O father, I do not know what you mean, or what I am to fear, but speak—speak, in God's name; whatever it is that troubles you ought not to be spared to me. If it be a sorrowful tale, I may make its memory sit lighter on your heart, and two, at least, can bear the burthen better than one. If it be guilt that—Guilt," (she shuddered and was silent one instant, as she detected a word on her lips, which her will had not directed them to utter)—"forgive me, sir, that cannot be, I know—No, father, no," in increasing agony, as she read not the indignant denial she looked so eagerly for in his cold and marbly eye—"you have taught me to love virtue, to adore a God, to fear his anger, to deserve his mercy, father! speak! speak to me—."

"Peace, girl!" said the old man sadly, yet sternly, "attribute not to the inactive instrument the music which was made by the divine breath that filled, and the hand that governed it. He who holds a light to another, is most like to fall himself. Sit still, and hear me." And replacing the trembling girl in the chair, which in her agitation she had left, he stood close at her side, and after a pause, began:

"You have heard of the circumstances which attended the death of William's father?"

"Yes, yes, sir!" replied Kate, in a low and hurried tone, with a horrible failure and sinking at her heart.

"When he died, there was but one friend at his side." As he proceeded, the sallow and ashy countenance of the old man became deepened in hue by the rushing of the scanty currents of life into channels which they had long ceased to visit, and his eye became gradually fiercer and fiercer, as the fear and horror that oppressed his daughter became more manifest in her look and attitude. "Sit erect, girl, and hear me steadily. You have forced me to say what, except in madness, I thought mortal ears should never hear me utter; and you must abide the consequence. Sit still, then, and do not flinch or waver, while I speak to you, as you value your father's reason."

"I will, sir. I am not terrified," whispered the bewildered girl, while a strange mixture of anxiety and listlessness became blended in the gaze which she now bent on the old man.

"The two friends," he continued, after a pause of fearful recollection, "were sitting together by the little brick hob in the hooker's cabin, and talking gaily enough about the work they had both been about. Friends leagued in crime are but light lovers, though

their bonds are the stronger by the addition of fear and community of guilt, than those which simple liking ties. Few words were necessary to bring the frown and the taunt where the laugh and the jest were seen and heard a little while before. A sharp speech provoked a blow, and the friendship of a long life was dissolved as suddenly as life itself, when the deathstroke touches it. The man who received the indignity remained silent and gloomy during the remainder of the evening, although he did not refuse his hand when the aggressor sued for reconciliation. The disgrace was festering at his heart. Soon after, a dark and foggy night came on. Both these men ascended on deck to speak at greater freedom, and draw a somewhat purer air than that of the close and smoky cabin where they had been lying just before. At a moment when the vessel heeled more deeply than usual before the blast, while the steersman was busy at the helm, and his mate with the foresheet—and while the two stood alone and unseen (though not unheard,) upon the forecastle—one roaring, laughing, and unsteady with drunkenness, and with triumph; the other equally intoxicated, but after a darker and more sullen fashion, and from a different cause, the aggressor staggered a little, reeled, and overhung the lee-gunwale. The opportunity flashed like lightning upon the heart of his enemy; he darted on him; and in the fierce effort almost precipitated his own fate, and mingled it with that of his victim. The fluke of an anchor, however, caught in a part of his frieze great coat, and he hung suspended between both worlds, while the dying shrieks of his victim, the gurgling of the death struggle, the angry dash of the waters, and the whirring of the wild gale, sounded in his ears like the din of the last judgment. He was

saved, however. The vessel swept on, and the voice of the dying man was speedily lost in the distance. A lie protected his destroyer."

The old man here paused, and sunk back in his chair, exhausted by the fierceness and horror of his recollected sensations; while his daughter sat stooping forward, her eyes fixed in motionless horror upon his, and every feature bent up, and set hard in an expression of devouring attention; her limbs and frame stiffening with the anguish of the dreadful suspense in which the old man's pause had left her:

> "——as if each other sense
> Were bound in that of hearing, aad each word
> Struck through it with an agony."

At length he resumed in a faint and hoarse tone, without daring to lift his eyes toward his auditor: "the man who died on that night was Robert Aylmer; and his murderer was——"

Uttering a low, yet piercing scream of agony, the wretched girl cast herself at the feet of her guilty father, in an attitude of deprecation and entreaty.

"No, no, you will not say it, sir. O, do not, in the name of the heaven you have taught me to venerate, plunge us both into such a gulf of horror. What, my father! my kind, good father, in whose bosom I have been fondled—whose lips I have kissed—whose hand has blest me morning and evening for fifteen years:—my dear, dear father, do a deed so full of horror and crime—a murderer—a secret murderer!—Ha!" with a cry of exultation, as a momentary flush of burning pride and shame, the impulse of an uncalculating instinct, passed over the brow of the old man, at the branding epithet,—"I see it there—I knew it could

not be; you are not he of whom you spoke, father? Forgive, forgive me, sir, for so cruel, so insulting an anticipation of your words."

"It is too late for recanting them now," said Fitzmaurice quietly, but with a dreadful ghastliness in his eye: "the blood of my oldest friend is on my hands; I have told my sin, and my soul is lighter."

"Good heaven! blessed mother of God!" muttered Katharine, as she rose from her knees, and passed one hand in a trembling and hurried manner over her forehead, and about her loosened hair, while her eye became fixed in stupid terror on the earth. A silence of terrible reflection to both ensued. Fitzmaurice perceived, at a glance, that he had for ever lost the esteem of his child. That was bitter. Katharine beheld, in one short hour, the peace, the happiness of her whole existence withered and parched up; her duty made burthensome as crime; her heart's warmest and oldest affections made grievous to her soul, its faith disproved, its idol broken down, and the shrine of its worship polluted and made desolate. This was more bitter still.

After a pause of some minutes, Fitzmaurice approached her and held out his hand. She shuddered, and shrunk back upon herself with an involuntary action, and half-stifled exclamation of repugnance. He attempted to smile, but his lip grew pale, and his brows were knit in anguish at the change.

"I thought this, Kate," he said, sadly; "but I do not blame you for it. And yet it is a sad promise to me of what I am to expect from a malignant and suspicious world, when my own daughter, whom I have reared and cared for, now sixteen years, shrinks from my touch as if it were that of a viper."

Perceiving that this appeal was ineffectual, and that the stroke had been too hardly dealt on his daughter's heart, Fitzmaurice continued, rising, "and now, Kate, though I put your affection to a strong test before I spoke to you on this, you shall not find me ungenerous enough to profit by the hasty enthusiasm of the moment. I have lost your love. I grieve for it, but I do not blame you. Yet, without your love I will never allow your service nor companionship. Go you out at that door—I will take this; and let that be our final parting. Go, my loved, my injured child; forget your miserable father,—think of him as of one departed but not in crime, for that would make his memory bitter to you; but as one who erred, and found the grace that heaven treasures for the penitent. Another land must be my refuge from the retribution which my guilt demands, and must afford me time to labour for that divine grace. Farewell, Kate; go, and be gay and happy, and innocent as ever, and leave your old parent to his guilt, his sorrow, and his solitude."

This speech had the effect on its hearer, which the speaker wished and intended. The sluices of her soft and feminine passions had been all dammed and choked up, almost to suffocation, by the grand and overwhelming horror that had been thrown about her, and only wanted a single pressure on the master-spring, one whisper in the ear of the heart to set them flowing again, in all the impetuosity of interrupted feeling. She flung herself into her father's arms, and twined her own around his neck, while she leaned her head against his bosom in a hysterical passion of grief.

"No, no, father!" she exclaimed, as soon as she could give words to her affliction, "part we shall not, at least. Whatever you may have been to others, you

have been always kind, and tender, and good to me, and my hand must not be the first to cast the stone at my only friend. The changes of the world can affect us but little, for we have always lived more to ourselves than to it; and a life of loneliness will be nothing more than a prolonging of past quiet. Yes, father, my resolution is taken. If you must leave home for ever, you take all my home with you; and, for my own heart's ease, I must follow it." It can hardly be said, (for thoughts will often come unbidden, and make obstinate battle with the will) that we charge the gentle and affectionate Kate with any selfishness of feeling, in acknowledging that while she spoke the last sentence a new thought, a new fear, and a new pang darted into her heart, and seemed, for the moment, to have almost cleft it asunder. William Aylmer? She gasped for breath, while her aged parent folded her to his breast, and moistened her neck with the first tears he had shed in many days.

We will close the scene on this afflicted pair, and cast our eyes for a short while in another direction.

It will be recollected that Sandy Culhane had received directions from William Aylmer to hold in readiness for him on this morning the horse on which he was about to bear the intercepted letter to Hasset-Ville. The winter dawn had scarcely whitened in the east, when he was at his post in the old stable, preparing the animal for the appointment. He was busied after his usual fashion, rubbing down the pleased and sleek-coated beast with a "wisp" of straw, while he puffed away the clouds of dust that enveloped his person, and hummed out an occasional bar of his favourite *madhereen rhu,** interrupted by "hirrups! stand over

* Little red fox.

eroo! hiss—ss—ss—ss—the little 'omaneen you were —Aizy!" when a "God bless all here," from the darkening doorway, suspended his labours; he looked up and beheld an old man in a grey frieze dress leaning against the jamb, and throwing his head on one side, to screen it from the snow that drifted across. It was the herdsman of Kilavariga.

"Yeh, then, isn't it airly you're goen roven this mornen, Mick? What's the murder now?"

"Whist! whist, Sandy, I have something to say to you.—Will she kick?"

"O, sorrow a taste! Aizy, you born jade, and let the nayburs come in," as he observed the animal throw back its ears, and use a menacing gesture towards the intruder. The latter shook down an armful of the sweet hay in a corner of the stable, and seating himself on it in a fair and easy Irish way, commenced business at once.

"Have you air a thief in your house, Sandy, that wears brogues an pavers?"

Sandy stared as he replied; "a thief, Mick, eroo? Bad 'cess to the thief at all in our house, wit or without the pavers."

The herdsman paused, and seemed to take thought for a moment, then glancing at Sandy's well greased dogskin shoes, he beckoned him to follow to a little distance where a long tract of footsteps intersected the plain white surface of the snow-covered lawn.

"Would you look here, Sandy?" said he. "The master's turf-rick, the slane turf, was broken last night, and I traced those steps over the little haggard wall, and through the paddock, and by the forge, and here, all the ways, to Bally-Aylmer. 'Tis hard to tell the marks o' these steps now, for it was snowen since

they wor made, but here's one of 'em close be the wall, put the print o' your crubeen a-nigh that av you plase."

Sandy indignantly stamped his foot in the snow, and the investigator, after viewing both impressions, shook his head, as if disappointed.

"They are quite different. There's pavers here wit heads as big as tin-pinnies, and yours hasn't only toe-tacks in 'em, like the gintlemin."

"Why then, you lahu-muthawn* o' the airth!" exclaimed the insulted Sandy, now that the cause of the herdsman's action was so unmincingly announced. "Is it maning that it was meself was at your ould turf-reek you wor?"

"Aisy, aisy, now, Sandy!" said the other moving on before him towards the stable, with one arm resting on his back, under his long coat skirts, and motioning him back with the other. "There's no offince. I seen the print of a handsome, clever foot in the snow, and where was I to look for it, av it wasn't with Sandy Culhane? But sure I ought to know better, for you shamed it out intirely whin you put your own a-near it. Sure av I wasn't blind, I ought to know, that it isn't sech a *plob* of a fut as that abroad, that could bother Norry Kilmartin's dreams."

With a heroic effort of forbearance, Sandy mastered his indignation, and complacently glancing down at a hideously formed foot, followed the herdsman into the stable, where he recommenced his labours on the ecclesiastical sides of the well-conditioned quadruped, while the former resumed his seat and meditative air on his heap of fresh hay.

* Half-natural.

"It's droll still who the brogues belonged to," he continued, after a pause, "but all is one; for if I was to bring him in bound hand an fut to the master, he'd be the first to let him off himself. What do you think did he do the other day, only relase the Barret's pzaties from the cant, and bid him say nothen about the trifle o' the rent that was due, but to set to work agen, fresh on a clear gale?"

"Wisha, the Barrets are poor craturs!" was all Sandy's reply.

"More's the pity to be losing to 'em, since it does 'em so little good.

"Did you ever hear the ould fable of Jack Finnane, and the white-eyes?" said Sandy.

"To be sure I didn't, for what should I?"

"Sit aisy then, and I'll tell you it. This Mr. John Finnane, you see, was a kind of a half-sir, a middleman that used to be great long ago, letting out land in acres and half-acres, and quarter-acres to the poor people, that would may be want a *gwal** of the pzaties coming on the idle season; and a hard and a bitter landlord he was to the poor fellows, that wouldn't have the rent agen the gale day, and good care he took, I'll be bound, that not a single connoppt†, ever left the airth ant'l every camack‡ was paid, dead gale and all. Signs on, it often chanced, as most like it was, that the poor tinants, not having the difference o' the rint, used to go into the pzatie fields at night, pulling up the stalks and filling their little Jack Daws** with what God sent up with the roots, which being made known to John Finnane you see, he sat up a night to know would he catch any of the plunderers at their doings,

* Armful. † Potatoe. ‡ Penny token.
** John Doe, a small bag.

which they having notice of, didn't come, as why should they? being marked for the quarter sessions, surely.

"Well! 'twas coming on midnight, and Mr. Finnane being as it were tired with himself, sat down on a ridge of the pzaties, with his feet in the furrow, and he very sleepy, it being Jerry Graham's quarter. 'Tis aisily known he opened his eyes wide enough, whin he heard what do you think, only Jerry's white-eyes talking to one another in the ground under him! He stooped his head down, and began to hearken. 'Will you grow any more?' says a little pzatie to a big one.—'No, *a gra gal*,' says the big pzatie, 'it's big enough I am already.'—'Well, then,' says the other, 'move out o' the way with you a piece, and let us grow for Jerry Graham and the craturs.'—'I'd be happy to oblige you then,' says the big pzatie, 'but sure it's well you know none of us can stir from our places an inch *ontil John Finnane gets his rint.* 'Murther alive!' says John, crossing himself and thumping his breast above, 'are the pzaties themselves cryen out agen me? Murther, but that's great intirely.' Home he went, wondering, and people say Jerry Graham was bid to dig his quarter and welcome next mornen."

"E'then, thanky for your parable, Sandy," said the herdsman, "but may be we'd find one on the other side, for an open hand isn't always the luckiest after all."

Sandy suffered his arm to rest on the shoulder of the animal he was tending, and placed himself in an attitude of attention, while the other, throwing himself back in an easy reclining posture, commenced his "fable."

"Mr. David Foy had a great heart, but, like the

master, there was too much of it, for there was no bounds at all to his doings, when he took it into his head to spend his money; an having no famaly nor air a wife that would look after the house and things, every whole tote went wrong intirely. Besides, he was great after the hounds; and a fine rider he was, and with sech a dawny darland of a horse, that he one day left the hounds, hunt, hare, an all behind him. On he went, an'he was goen, goen, goen (as the ould gossips say), ont'l he came to a great valley, intirely. And there he saw THEMSELVES, in their little red jackets, and with caps on their heads, and hurlies in their hands, and they playen goal. Well, an ould hag that was sitten as it might be this way like meself, see David and made to-*wards* him with a piggin of something that's good, which he refused, and well became him, knowen it was not good to take drink from the like. 'Take it, heart,' says the old hag, 'and don't spare. It's David Foy's cider, and long may he live and reign; we don't want for the best he has, for it's we that get all that's wasted in the house by bad looken after, and it's good liven we have here, while the poor christians are starving at his door. Take the drop and be comfortable.' 'Thanky kindly, ma'am,' says David, 'but I rather not, av you plase, wit the same thanks to you as if I did, my stomach is not well indeed this mornen, saving your favour.' 'No offince in life, sir,' says she. So they sat down together. By an by, in comes a strappen young Clooricaun with a pailful o' sweet milk. 'Where did you get that, eroo?' says the hag. 'E'then long life to Davy Foy, where should I get it only out of his dairy? He was out hunten, an Bridget was in the haggart wit Tim Fouloo, so I came in for my share wit the cat an the dog.

'*Sha guthine!* is this the way of it,' says Davy to himself. Then comes in another of the gentry with a firkin o' butter, and another wit a gammon o' bacon, and all in the same story, and Davy himself by all the time, and not one o' them knowen him, in rigard of his never being about the house, hardly. ''Tis little admiration for ye to be so fat, gintlemin,' says he at last, as he was wishen 'em a good mornen, at which they all laughed hearty, and nodded and winked their little wicked eyes at him, mighty merry intirely, as much as to say, 'True for you, lad.' In a year after he came to the same place: the little goal-players were nothen but skin and bone, and the old hag was scrapen a raw pzatie agen a grater to make a cake for their supper. 'Oh, then the Cromaylian curse upon your head, David Foy, for we know you now!' says the whole set of 'em together—'there's all we got losing after you this twelvemonth,' showen the raw pzatie the same time. 'The more my luck,' says David, 'wasn't it ye'r own taiching?'"

Having, as he believed, fully discomfited Sandy at his own weapons, old Michael rose to depart, with the view of instituting an inquiry at the neighbouring village relative to the owner of the mysterious brogues and pavers.

He was scarcely out of sight, when the back door of the dwelling-house opened, and the stranger who had on the preceding evening accosted Sandy in the avenue of Kilavariga, made his appearance. The latter was busily occupied in polishing a stubborn fetlock when the old man hurried into the stable.

"Come, Sandy, saddle the horse, and lead him out here," he exclaimed. "I have received a piece of intelligence from Mr. Evans which will render it neces-

sary for me to travel fifty miles before night-fall. Is the animal frost shod?"

"Quite complate, ye'r honour. But that's a thing o' nothen. Mr. William Aylmer that bid me have the cratur convanient for himself this morning."

"Where is he going?"

"Sarrow a know do I know."

"No matter. Give me the horse, and make out what excuse you can for your young master."

"The best I can offer then," said Sandy as he assisted the stranger to mount, "will be to keep out of his way intirely, for indeed he's not over honest* when he do be crossed"

"Kind father for him," said the stranger laughing.

"Wonst in his day, sir," replied Sandy, "but time and trouble changes the people."

The expression of merriment was instantly quelled on the lip of the stranger. He fetched his breath hard, and, checking the bridle, rode through the yard gate just as Aylmer, wrapped in his great coat, and covered with snow-flakes, made his appearance on the avenue. The latter used a slight action of surprise, as the other passed him at a more rapid pace than he had before employed.

"He knows the horse!" said Sandy, "time for me to be moven." And he was about to depart, when the young gentleman's voice arrested his flight.

"Who is that man, Sandy?"

"That man, sir? is it?——It's——Mick Donovan, sir, Mr. Fitzmaurice's herdsman."

"He looks more large, and rides better than he used."

"Thriving with him the place is, your honour.—Not

* *Honest* is a synonym for *mild*, or *gentle*, in Ireland.

a word about the horse!' he added, in some astonishment, as Aylmer, with a look of some disappointment, turned off in the direction of the house. "Some trouble at Kilavariga, I'll be bail."

The limits which we prescribed to ourselves at the commencement of this little tale, render it impossible for us to enter into a minute detail of many unimportant circumstances which occupied the principal personages during the several days which followed the eventful morning of Aylmer's discovery. It will save the reader a great deal of heavy reading, and the historian of the parties a great deal of analyzing matter, of speculations on impulse and motive, and cloudy talking, if we proceed to the next situation of the story with as little preface as possible.

Fitzmaurice and his daughter having heard nothing more of Aylmer, concluded that his resolution was fixed, not to enter the house of his old benefactor from that time forward. Although the cause of this determination, and the apparent probability of her young friend's persevering in it, had produced a mournful change both in the heart and in the appearance of the lively Katharine, she had exerted a sufficient degree of mastery over her wounded feelings to conceal at least the voluntary expression of her suffering from the eye of her parent. Convinced, as she now was, of the depth and intensity of her love for the haughty fugitive, and satisfied, even to the very limit of utter hopelessness, that no chance or change of circumstances could ever again restore the hearts of both to the relative position which they had occupied from childhood—satisfied, in a word, that loving as she did even

to sickness of soul and frame, she yet loved in vain, it was touching to witness the quiet fortitude with which she disguised those feelings, when in the presence of her parent. Frequently, indeed, in her wanderings about the lonely mansion, when a scattered remembrancer of "past, happy hours," caught her eye; when she looked from her window, in the calm and silent even-fall, on the scenes of their youthful sports; or when her hand, unconsciously straying over her neglected harp, happened to awaken a cadence of one of his favourite melodies, in those moments it was that her bosom would swell and tighten, while the sudden passion laboured in her throat, and relieved itself at length in bursts of overwhelming grief. But the moment her father's footstep sounded on the flagged hall without, these signs of anxiety disappeared, and the note of the harp was changed to one of a lesser interest and meaning.

The change which had taken place in the disposition and manner of the old man, was still more striking, and more rapid. It seemed as if, instead of experiencing any relief from the confidence he had made, it only added fresh terrors to those which he had so long confined in his own bosom, and multiplied the chances and fears of detection that had made the last years of his life one long and weary chain of anxiety and sorrow. His eye had lost its heaviness and gloom, while it assumed instead a restlessness of glance, and a wildness and distrust in its most ordinary expression, which furnished his now more than ever vigilant and affectionate daughter with a more startling subject for alarm, than even the increased paleness of his lips and brow, and the rapid wasting of his sallow cheeks afforded. The sound of a strange footstep, the shutting of a

door, the whistling of a sudden gust around the dreary mansion, any unexpected sight or sound, seemed to shake his being to the very centre. At these times, too, he was wont to receive the accustomed consolations of his daughter, with expressions full of a sharp and pettish asperity which, continued, repeated, and unatoned for, as they were, by any after-kindness, put the devotion of her filial love to a severer test than even the revolting cause in which they originated. With the fineness of perception which is so peculiarly the characteristic of her sex, she quickly arrived at the mode of treatment best adapted for the novel turn which the disease had taken. Like the minstrel of the Israelitish monarch, when the evil influence came over the mind of her patient, she abandoned all efforts to combat it by argument, or even condolence, and affected an air of perfect abstraction and security, while she ran, as if in careless practice, over the chords of her instrument, varying and accommodating the character of the melody to the changes which were visible in the countenance of the listener, with a tact and fidelity which would not have been unworthy even of the mighty name which we have before mentioned. Yet all this was far from being remedial, and it was even pallative in a very inconsiderable degree.

They had been sitting together for some time, on the morning of the eighth day from that of Aylmer's departure, without interchanging a single sentence beyond the customary domestic greetings. The old man sat near the fire, his head drooped upon his bosom, and his eyes fixed with a melancholy expression on the clear light blaze of the turfen fire before him, while Katharine, accompanying herself on her harp, murmured over, *sotto voce*, the words of a popular "keen-

the-caun," the lament of a mother over the grave of a beloved son. We give the stanzas:—

I.

The Christmas light* is burning bright
In many a village pane;
And many a cottage rings to night
With many a merry strain.
Young boys and girls run laughing by,
Their hearts and eyes elate—
I can but think on mine, and sigh,
For I am desolate.

II.

There's none to watch in our old cot,
Beside thy holy light;
No tongue to bless the silent spot
Against the parting night.*
I've closed the door—and hither come
To mourn my lonely fate;
I cannot bear my own old home,
It is so desolate!

III.

I saw my father's eyes grow dim,
And clasped my mother's knee;
I saw my mother follow him,
—My husband wept with me.
My husband did not long remain,
—His child was left me yet;
But now my heart's last love is slain,
And I am desolate!

* The Christmas candle—a light, blest by the priest, and lighted at sunset on Christmas-eve, in Irish houses. It is a kind of impiety to snuff, touch, or use it for any profane purpose after.

* It is the custom, in Irish Catholic families, to sit up till midnight on Christmas-eve, in order to join in devotion at that hour. Few ceremonies of the religion have a more splendid and imposing effect than the morning mass, which, in cities, is celebrated soon after the hour alluded to, and long before day-break.

The song was not concluded when both the melodist and listener were startled by a quick and vehement knocking at the chamber-door. The latter was the first to start from his chair, in a passion of terror. Before he could recover the command of speech or action, the voice of the little chambermaid was heard without, imploring instant admission, in accents which shewed that all the agitation was not confined to the interior. Katherine hastily slipped back the little bolt, and admitted the eager girl.

"What is the matter, Norry?" exclaimed her mistress.

"O ma'am, we're all zuin'd intirely. O master! O——" pausing, as her eye fell on the ghastly figure of the conscience-stricken Fitzmaurice, and fetching her breath for a moment, "Come, come this way, Miss Kate, I want to speak a piece wit you," beckoning the young lady after her.

"Stay!" cried the old man, hoarsely, "what have you seen? Speak, quickly!"

"Oh, murder, sir!" Norry cried aloud, wringing her hands in agony, "the army, the army,* intirely!"

"Coming hither!" inquired Kate.

"Two red coats, wit ould Hasset along wit 'em miss. Upon the aveny already."

The intelligence seemed almost to have paralysed both the mind and frame of Fitzmaurice. He did nothing, proposed nothing, and was even listless, helpless, and passive, while plan after plan, both of escape and concealment, was suggested and rejected in rapid succession by the agonised daughter and her faithful and anxious attendant. "The back window," "the loft," "the turf-rick," "between the bed-ticks," "the

* Any number of soldiers is so called by the Irish peasantry.

chimney," were all cast aside as stale and hopeless, when, her eyes suddenly flashing with a gleam of intelligence Norry slapped the palms of her tough hands together, so as to produce a report that echoed through the house like a pistol-shot, and startled the old man himself from his lethargy of fear.

"The ould makings of a cupboard," she exclaimed, pointing to the pier-glass, "the same place fare I hid the little dog the day the taxman was here, whin he began barken in the wall within."

The proposal was caught up and acted upon instantly. The large glass was removed, and a square niche in the solid wall, originally intended for a cupboard, was disclosed. Into this recess was the terrified old man hurried by the two girls, himself too perfectly overwhelmed with apprehension to offer either opposition or assistance to their movements. The mirror was then carefully replaced, and Katharine, after crossing her hands on her bosom for one moment, in a strong effort to master her struggling anxieties, and murmuring a brief and anxious petition to the throne of mercy, prepared to act her part in the coming emergency with the necessary firmness and composure.

"If he doesn't behave quieter than little Minos, there's little chance for him," said Norry, as she left the room.

The recollection of this circumstance was a new subject of alarm for the sensitive daughter. The story of Miss Fitzmaurice's dog, concealed from a tax-gatherer in a recess behind the pier-glass, and betrayed by his own barking, at the very instant when the old steward was leaving a blank for the article "dogs" in the inventory, had been so generally circulated, and excited so much amusement throughout the country, that there

was little hope of its having escaped the ears of Mr. Hasset. For this, however, she had to trust to fortune, as it was now too late to alter the position of the old man.

In a few minutes the magistrate made his appearance. He had had the delicacy, or the wariness, to forbid the approach of his armed attendants, and if it were not for the previous intimation of their approach, the young hostess would have had no reason to judge this other than a visit of mere ceremony. Katharine found herself, for the first time in her life, compelled to violate the truth, in the answers which she returned to this unwelcome guest. She did it, however, with tenderness

Was her father at home?

He had ridden out. (very frequently, understood.)

Whither?

She had not asked him.

Did she soon expect him?

She believed his *return* was quite uncertain.

The magistrate was silent for a few seconds; then, seeming to have formed a sudden resolution, he said,

"Miss Fitzmaurice will pardon me, but I have a very disagreeable duty to perform. The presence of her father is absolutely required—and that duty shall not be discharged until every possible means has been resorted to in order to secure it."

"The doors are open, sir," said Katharine, rising, with an assumed haughtiness in her carriage, while her heart bounded with terror, "you are at liberty to use your authority as you please."

The young lady left the room, and the soldiers were admitted. She remained in the next apartment, listening in an agony of the cruelest suspense to the move-

ments of the searchers within. They prolonged their scrutiny in a manner that showed how little reliance their director placed on the equivocations of the fair hostess. At times, a thrill of fierce terror shot to the very centre of her heart, and suspended its pulsation, when the footsteps of any of the party approached the hiding-place of the criminal.

"To the next room!" said the voice of the magistrate, "don't mind the mouse-holes." Katharine felt relief.

"Easy, sir," exclaimed a fourth man, who had just entered, and in whose sharp, angular cunning tones, the trembling Kate recognised the voice of Hasset's clerk, a gentleman who, to establish his qualifications for the situation he held, would very gladly have hanged half the parish, if necessary, "you have not done all the bizniz clean yet."

Kate grasped the back of a chair, and drew her light handkerchief tightly around her neck, while her whole frame shivered with a chilling anxiety.

"Well for ye," she heard the new comer continue, in a jeering way, "to have a lad that know's what he's about to guide ye. Did none o' ye hear the little matter about the dog and the tax-gatherer? Poh!"

"I remember something of it, I confess, Linehan" said Hasset, startled

"Try it then, now."

Almost delirous with fear and disappointment, the miserable daughter fetched a quick and hoarse breath, and bit her lip until the blood forsook it, to prevent her screaming aloud. Her limbs shook convulsively, and her eyes wandered with the wildness of despair around the chamber, while she waited the next movement of the inquirers.

"What are you about there?" exclaimed the informer. "Is it going to pick yourself out o' the glass you are for a prisoner? Behind the picktur is the place, you fool!"

"Never fear, Miss! whispered Norry, who had just before slipped into the apartment, "that'll bother 'em. They'll find nothen there, barring pusheen and her kittens, for she has a way of her own up into it."

A suppressed burst of laughter among the men confirmed the truth of this anticipation; and the hissings, spittings, and growlings of the indignant occupier of the recess, as she placed herself in front of her squeaking brood, seemed to increase their merriment. The magistrate, however, quickly restored order.

"Hush! hush! come along, lads. Linehan the place is there sure enough, and your hint was a good one: but Richard Hasset's name to a warrant for such a prisoner as this, would scarcely look well in the county kalendar."

The discomfited wit made no reply, and the party left the room. As soon as she heard the door close after them, the daughter sunk exhausted into the chair beside which she had been standing, and gave vent to her excited feelings in bursts of mingled tears and laughter, while her hands clasped and raised, all trembling as they were, to heaven, gave all the evidence she could then furnish of her deep and burning gratitude.

Both mistress and attendant then returned to the parlour, where they were soon after rejoined by Mr. Hasset and his downcast secretary, the soldiers this time remaining without. It is needless to say their search had been unsuccessful. After apologising for the uneasiness which he had given her in the performance of an unavoidable duty, &c., the former gentleman took his leave, and was followed by the clerk.

"I wonder what is it that thief o' the world, Linehan, is whisperen in ould Hasset's ear," said Norry, as she watched the party pacing slowly down the lawn.

"Are they returning hither?"

"They wor thinken of it I'm thinken, but to change their mind they did."

After having watched them fairly out of sight, the victorious pair proceeded to release their captive. He had sufficiently recovered from the stunning effects of the first announcement of his danger, to be now fully aware of its extent; and he descended from his lurking-place, the most perfect picture of guilt and horror that a stricken conscience ever made. Norry was extending one arm to support him, and with the other whisking the dust and mortar from his coat, when a deep and rapid inspiration of the young lady near her startled them both. The principle of life had been strained to so extreme a degree of excitement by the varying emotions of the last hour, that it was proportionably depressed on the restoration of security. The sight of her father, safely protected through the imminent perils which had during that time surrounded him, effected more than the immediate presence of those dangers themselves. In the effort which she made to cast herself into her father's arms, her powers suddenly failed her, and she sunk at his feet in an access of syncope.

The old man raised her from the ground, and supported her across his breast, while tears of grateful affection fell down in rapid showers upon her neck and bosom. The attendant, while she supplied the necessary means for the revival of her mistress, did not refuse her sympathy to the sufferings of the aged parent.

At that moment the door opened, and Mr. Secretary Linehan re-entered.

"I beg pardon, but I dropped a ***handkitcher*** somewhere,——O, murder! what's this, intirely?" as his eye fell on the group.

All were too completely absorbed in another matter to observe the intruder. Taking a speedy advantage of this circumstance, the honest limb of justice approached the window, and beckoned to some persons without. In a few minutes afterward, and while he yet stood concealed in the dark corner into which he had slunk, the whole party were present at his side. Norry, hearing the clatter of footsteps, looked over, her shoulder, shrieked, started to her feet, and dropping the stiff and clenched hand of her young lady began clapping her own, and repeating her doleful cries in all the phrenzy of Irish despair. The father turned his wildered eyes on the strangers, and resigning his daughter to the arms of her attendant—

"My child does not hear me," he said in a faint and mournful accent, "but give her my blessings when she wakes, and bid her pray for me, God bless you all! One moment sir———" As he spoke, he pressed his lips to the cold and marble brow of his still unconscious daughter; and untying the light silk handkerchief from her neck, he placed it listlessly in his bosom. Then putting himself in the custody of the magistrate, he was conducted in silence to the carriage which awaited him at the avenue gate.

Another actor was now added to the scene. William Aylmer had joined the party at their return; but unwilling, for many reasons, to encounter the unhappy object of their pursuit, he had remained without until

after their departure, and now entered the room just as Katharine began to revive.

"He is well—be comforted, Katharine," were all the answers which he returned to her first inquiries for her parent. She was not, however, so easily to be satisfied. She repeated her inquiries with an energy and determination of manner which made disguise hopeless.

"And what do *you* here?" she exclaimed, in a delirium of passion, so soon as she had collected from Norry's "O-hone's!" and Aylmer's silence, the truth of the event; "you were not with them when they first arrived—he was surprised—and you are his betrayer."

"You do me foul wrong. I endeavoured, perhaps against my conscience, to dissuade the officers of justice from entering here."

"Against your conscience!" she smiled with a ghastly bitterness on him, as she answered. "The conscience of an ingrate who could turn against the life of an adopted father; a man whose bread he ate, whose fire warmed him, whose roof protected him, and whose heart loved him for seventeen years. Justice! The justice of a law that would spill the cold blood of age, to make a peace-offering for the forgotten errors of youth; the law that continues to persecute after God has forgiven! Go, go, sir; you have less heart than I thought. Go, satisfy your conscience, and be just."

"If my words must not be credited," said Aylmer, "I have only to endure, and to be silent."

"Answer one question. Have you not linked your name with those of his accusers? Are you not numbered on their list?"

Aylmer was silent.

"You have pledged yourself to take the old man's

life! Aylmer, do not say so! think where you past your childhood. Look around you, and upon those scenes where you first learned to enjoy life yourself. Will you make them desolate? Oh! believe me, Aylmer, it is seldom, very seldom that it is in the power of human judgment to decide between the right and the wrong in cases so doubtful as this. The law of man that cries for "blood" to the last, may yet be wrong; laws as fierce and cruel have been, and are no more in existence: and a more merciful race of men may alter this. The law of God that commands mercy and holy forgiveness *may* possibly be right. Let your own grateful heart tell you to which of these chances you should incline."

"Katharine——"

"Or let this consideration guide you. Suppose yourself lying to-morrow on your death-bed, and gathering comfort to your soul from the memory of your past actions, would you feel happier, then, in the thought that you had forgiven a wrong, and saved your old friend, than if you had gratified your irresolute thirst for vengeance, or justice, now?"

"The Almighty that sees my heart, sees how clear it is from the tainting sin that you impute to it" exclaimed the youth; "but I have sworn to do what is just between the accused, his country, and his God, That oath I must not break."

"May that God, then, be my poor father's help, for his earthly friends have forsaken him! It is enough—Aylmer, farewell!" She placed her hand in his—"may he or she who acts ill in this, find mercy and pardon at the throne of grace. I leave you without anger; for you and I, whatever be the issue of this heavy trial, must never meet again!"

Before Aylmer could, by act or word, return any answer to her farewell, Katharine had glided out of the apartment. Wishing, nevertheless, to leave some message for her, which might possibly have the effect of vindicating him in some degree from the charge of wanton ingratitude, which she had urged against him, he turned towards Norry, who still remained, her back supported against the wall, clearing away, with the corner of her check apron, the tears that were pouring fast from her red and heavy eyes.

"Norry—" he was about to proceed—

"Oh! Go from me, sir!" cried the faithful attendant, with a fresh burst of grief; "go from me, you contrairy gentleman—I rise out o' you!"

And throwing her arms aloft, as if to give increased force to the expression, the indignant *soubrette* followed her mistress.

The next day's noon beheld the father and daughter inclosed within the prison doors of an inconsiderable assize-town on the western coast.

The first month of a mild spring had passed away, without inducing any material change in the condition of the persons of our history, and the little town above alluded to began to put on an appearance of life and bustle as the assize-week drew nigh. The generally silent and sunshiny streets were now made to echo the frequent tramp of the bespattered and reeking saddle-horse, and the lumbering rattle of the car which brought its load of corn (stacked until now, the season of scarcity), to the store of the small dealer, a sort of Lilliputian merchant, who made a new profit by shipping, or rather boating the grain to the next trading city. The fronts of the inns and *shebeens* were scow-

ered up, and the rooms made ready for the temporary convenience of petty jurors, summoned from the furthermost limits of the county; strong farmers anxiously looking for the success of their road presentments; Palatines seeking compensation for burnt hay-ricks and out-houses, fired by the hand of the ubiquitous White-boy; rural practitioners demanding the legal grant for the support of a dispensary: middlemen in the commission of the peace, eager to curry favour with the mighty sojourners by the number and the importance of their committals; grey coated rustics, who had come up to town to stand by a friend and relation, whose black-thorn perhaps had been a little too fatal among the neighbours at the last fair; country gentlemen willing to show off as lords of the scene, and ambitioning a niche on the grand jury list; and last and first and best, young and blooming speculators of another order, armed with as many terrors, bent up to as fatal a purpose, and with as fair, and philosophical a principle for their motive, as that which governed the awful sword-bearers of the law itself.

The concourse of in-comers on this occasion was more numerous than usual, a circumstance readily accounted for by the singular case which was to be decided during the ensuing week. All intercourse with the prisoner was interdicted, and even his daughter, in order to retain the permission, which had in the first instance been granted her of attending to her father's wants in person, was obliged to restrict her own movements to the limits of the prison.

A calm, breathless morning beheld the small fishing-smack, in which Aylmer had taken his passage for the town, drop her peak in the small inlet which glided by the village of Blennerville, a kind of pigmy outport to

the larger, or capital town. Nothing could be in more perfect accordance with the state of the voyager's mind, than the scene which was presented to his eyes, when the loud call of the boatman summoned him on deck. The air, as before mentioned, was perfectly still and breathless, and the clear sunless serenity of a spring forenoon rested on the landscape. On his left hand lay a flat champaigne of greyish marl, covered with numbers of sea-birds, who were busily angling in the little inequalities of the plain for the juniors of the scaly tribe, deserted by the tide in its retreat. Between him and the ocean, this marl or sand elevated itself into mounds of so considerable an altitude, as to leave only an occasional shimmering of the mighty sea without, visible between their obtunded summits. On the right hand the bleak and barren chain of mountains, which form the distance of the Killarney scenery, on the other side, rose suddenly in abrupt masses, to a height which left the southern prospect entirely to the imagination, and threw an air of softened gloom and solitude around the handsome villas, which were scattered over the richly wooded aud improved country at their base. The faint hum of the little town, in the distant inland, the twittering of the early swallow, the cry of the red shank, the occasional wild scream of the horse-gull, the whistle of the curlew, and the soft and plaintive cry of the green plover, all heard singly, and at long intervals, formed a fitting accompaniment to the scene, unless when the report of a shore-gun, directed by the murderous eye of some fustian-clad prowling duck-shooter on the coast, reverberated like a thunder-peal among the echoes of the mountain, and filled the air with a thousand whirring wings, and cries of terror and reproach. Above the little bridge of

Blennerville, a group of boys stood knee-deep in the stream which flowed from the town, groping for "*flukes*," while their occasional exclamations of success or disappointment, sounded as distinctly in Aylmer's ear as if they had been uttered by his side. Toward the offing of the little inlet, the drooping sails of the sloops and cutters, the sluggish heaving of the bulky ocean, and the jeering of the wits and master-spirits of the different crews, as they sat, dangling their legs over the sides of their vessels, formed no unworthy balance to the inland portion of the picture.

"The two tin-pinnies, ye'r honour?" said the boatman, touching his hat, as Aylmer, with the privileged abstraction of melancholy, was turning off in the direction of the town, forgetful of his fare. Having rectified his error entirely to the satisfaction of the other party, he persued his way to the town, which lay about a mile distant.

The flourishing of trumpets, and the trampling of many feet, announced to him as he entered the suburbs of the place, that the judges were already on their way to the court. As he hurried along the crowded street, obstructed in his career by persons as eagerly bent to accomplish the same end as himself, he fell in with a scene which presented as singular a contrast to that which he had just been admiring, as his imagination could possibly have anticipated. The rushing of the anxious multitude in various directions, the rattling of outside jaunting cars, empty turf-kishes, and grand jury-men's decayed and mud-covered carriages, the clattering of brogues and horse-hoofs, the shouting of one party at the release of a clansman from the clutches of the law, the shrieking and cursing of another group, who saw in the drooping head and

manicled hands of an equally valued kinsman, the fearful announcement of a contrary judgment, the war-hoop of a drunken faction-leader, as he made an effort to caper in the air, and wheel his seasoned black-thorn above his head, the yelping of dogs, the squalling of children, the shrill remonstrance of shrewish mothers, the yet hideous tones of a steam-engine ballad-singer, whose awful lungs, victorious over the frantic uproar about him, made most distinctly audible the burthen of a song on the woes of the then existing colonial war:

'And they powering down their chain-balls for to sweep our min away,
O wasn't that a could riciption in the North of Americay?'

alternated now and then, in compliment to the naval portion of his auditory, to the more popular doggrel of,

"A sailor courted a farmer's daatur
Who lived convanient to the Isle of Man."

These, superadded to the ordinary bustle of the town, formed a combination of sounds that would, had he been present, have qualified Old Morose for Hoxton; and would have sounded strangely in the ears of an election assessor, a common councilman, an M. P., or a writer of overtures.

It was past noon when Aylmer, after bustling his way through the narrow purlieus of the place, found himself placed in the centre of a small, low-roofed, ill-lighted, dingy court, on one side the bench, from which at that moment the final sentence of the law was issuing; on the other, the dock, over the bar of which leaned two or three squalid looking, pale-faced crea-

tures, listening with a stare of wildered abstraction to the announcement of their fate. The benches at either side were covered with counsel in blue frock-coats and coloured handkerchiefs, the usual forensic insignia being treated with philosophical indifference on a provincial circuit. In a small gallery at one end Aylmer witnessed an infraction of the inviolable rules of Irish female decorum, the presence of a woman among the audience of a court of justice. She seemed sensible herself of the singularity of her position, for her face and person were completely enveloped in a hood and cloak, and the place she occupied was the most unobtrusive that could have been selected.

"So the bills have been found against Cahil Fitzmaurice?" said a voice at Aylmer's side.

"Aye, have they, then," was the reply, "and it's the next on the list. It's a droll* story: they say counsellor——has instructions to call up young Aylmer, in regard of a ghost appearing to him, and telling him the whole tote, by which token he drew the confession out of the old man next morning. It was a quare thing. They say young Aylmer thrun holy-water on the sperit, but it did not mind that no more than the devil would a parson, until he threatened it with the saycrament, when it flew up through the roof in a sheet of flame as big as a bonefire of a St. John's Eve."

A whisper now passed from the clerk of the crown to the judge and was subsequently transmitted to the turnkey, who bowed and put himself in motion. The little grating at the far end of the dock was thrown open, and the rush which took place in the court, showed that all present anticipated the meaning of the

* Extraordinary.

order. Heads were thrust out, and eyes strained from their sockets to catch the first glimpse of the aged prisoner.

The slow and uncertain footstep at length sounded on the boarded ascent leading from the prison, and the form of the accused emerging from the gloom of the outer dock, was in a short time presented to the gaze of the multitude. The old man bowed as he took his place, and passing his hand once or twice over his eyes to relieve them from the influence of the strong light which fell immediately around him, he remained passively awaiting his fate. Although he had been prepared to expect a cansiderable change in the appearance of his old guardian, Aylmer experienced a shock when he first looked upon his face and person, which contributed very materially to shake his conviction of the fairness, or the justice of the course which he was himself pursuing. The pale and emaciated countenance of the prisoner, the thin, wrinkled cheeks, deeply indented temples, eyes, full of a morbid, sepulchral light, dry, staring hair, wasted fingers, and short hectic cough, seemed to intimate, that it was of little consequence to him, so far as life was concerned, in what way the trial terminated. His intellect, too, appeared to have suffered from the ravages which disease had made on his frame and constitution. It was some moments before his attention could be sufficiently aroused to enable him to give utterance to the plea of "not guilty!" and attend to the opening statement of the king's counsel.

In Ireland, where, from a certain train of causes (the origin of which we leave to weightier judgments to determine), it has been found necessary to appeal more to the cowardice than the generosity of human

nature; and where the even-handed goddess, Justice, has been too often accustomed to strike up her balance with her sword—in this strange country, people are not surprised to hear what is meant to be the opening statement of the facts of a criminal case, made the vehicle of cruel, unreasoning, and inhuman invective against the accused. Whatever be the evidence in reserve against him, be it so heavy and damning as to make any previous wordy accusation needless and brutal, or be it so light as to leave the wild and empty whirl of blackening assertions poured from the crown lawyer's lip unauthorised and libellous, still the malicious prosecutor has carried his point—he hears his victim, whether innocent or guilty, branded with all the diabolical epithets that a flowery vein of fancy, aided by a tolerable acquaintance with the poets, can suggest. The whole range of imaginative and real history is exhausted in search of monsters to serve for his parallel, and every sly and subtle art by which the personal feelings and prejudices of his judges can be enlisted against the unhappy culprit, is relentlessly put in execution. When we look at this fatal engine, which the law allows only to the accusing party, and consider that it is most frequently directed against some poor wretch who is not even acquainted with the language in which he is thus traduced in his own hearing, and consequently cannot avail himgelf of his privilege (!!) of reply, we may, perhaps, perceive why it is that persons once placed in the dock make their exit more frequently through the back than the front entrance, why ropemakers thrive at a certain season, why the hangman can endow his daughter so handsomely, and why the science of anatomy is so attainable, and so practically understood in Ireland.

On this occasion, however, there was some degree of tenderness observed, and the detail of the case was straight-forward, simple, and impartial. After going through the greater portion of the evidence which he had in reserve, the counsel was observed to pause as he came to that part of his brief which contained the deposition of William Aylmer. It was a difficult subject, and one which, if he had had a less credulous audience to deal with, the learned gentleman might have hesitated yet more about introducing. The deep silence, however—the hush which his own pause occasioned among his auditory, shewed him that they anticipated the tale (which was, indeed, already in circulation, with various embellishments similar to that overheard by Aylmer in the court), and that he would at least have to tell the story to grave and attentive ears. He was now coming, he said, to a portion of the evidence which would, perhaps, require a severer exercise of their judgments than any which had been hitherto submitted to their consideration. He believed, —he knew, than he was addressing himself to Christian hearers, to men convinced as he was himself of the divine origin of those sacred records which told of the last warning of the buried Samuel the supernatural revealment of the murder of Uriah, and a thousand other iuterpositions of the Almighty Being, setting aside, or suspending, for some immediate end, the ordinary processes of nature. Justice, he remarked, was the same now as in those days—it was the same God who watched over the actions of all generations, and although the completion of the divine code, left perfect by the founder of the Christian religion, rendered those miraculous interventions less

needful for the interests of mankind than they were while revelation was yet partial and defective, still there was no ground on which a man could be justified in declaring such occurrences out of the pale of things possible. He admitted that nothing short of evidence amounting almost to ocular demonstration—a wonderful corroboration in circumstances—and, in short, all the most powerful incentives to belief which could be adduced—would be sufficient to persuade them to do so much violence to their common experience, but he trusted he should be enabled to bring all the corroborative testimony, which they could deem necessary, before them in the course of the evening.

With this preamble, the learned counsel proceeded to a detail of the deposition made by Alymer; after which, the examination of witnesses commenced. The listless woman of the mountain, Vauria, was one of the first who were called; but her testimony went no further than to the quarrel of the friends, its termination, and a subsequent muttered threat on the part of the prisoner, as he followed the deceased up from the cabin. She admitted, too, on her cross-examination, that she was instigated to come forward now, after a long interval of silence, by the desire of her kinsman, who had been imprisoned on the information of young Aylmer, for plundering the prisoner's sheep-walk.

Night had fallen before the case for the prosecution closed. Numbers of the spectators, exhausted by the length of the trial, had dropped off one after another, leaving the audience now comparatively thin and meagre. The voices of the counsel sounded more loudly, owing to the emptiness of the adjacent hall, and the silence of the streets, while the dull, heavy light cast by the few tallow candles which were placed in sconces

against the walls and about the bench, added considerably to the comfortless solemnity of the scene.

At length young Alymer was called on to give his evidence. A heavy moan from the prisoner, almost the first audible sound which had broken his lips during the day, struck on the ear and on the heart of the youth, as he ascended the steps leading to the witness-table. It was too late, however, for pause or wavering. He mustered his spirits, and bent up his soul to the duty which he had to discharge.

At the moment he took the book in his hand, and proceeded to repeat the form of oath, a low, broken scream of anguish, long suppressd, and now in its effort to relieve itself, seeming to rend the heart from which it proceeded, rang through the building, and immediately after, a well-known, though strangely altered voice, from the now silent and nearly deserted gallery, exclaimed in a tone of piteous entreaty:—

"Aylmer! Aylmer! Oh, Aylmer! mercy! for the sake of old times, mercy! Do not swear away the old man's life!"

The sensation which this singular appeal produced in the court may be easily imagined. The softness and tenderness of the tones brought tears into the eyes of many of the hearers, and it was even with some difficulty that the judge could compel his features iuto an expression of high indignation.

"Remove that person, Mr. Sheriff," he said, quietly. "I know it, sir, and can make allowance for it," he continued, in answer to a whisper from one of the prisoner's counsel, "but it is exceedingly indecorous. It should not have been permitted."

Order was again restored, and the witness, mastering, by a violent effort the convulsions of passion by which

his frame was shaken to the centre, proceeded to make his deposition. He went through all the circumstances of his testimony with a plainness and feeling which won irresistibly upon the sympathies of his audience, and impressed even the most incredulous with the conviction, that however deluded his senses might have been, the youth was saying only that which in his heart he believed to be true. The chief ground, however, upon which the counsel for the crown rested his claim on the credence of the jury, was the corroboration which the prisoner's conduct, on the next morning, afforded to the supernatural revelation of the night preceding. The impression left on the minds of those who sat in the box was striking and perceptible.

As Almer concluded his evidence, and prepared to descend, a low whisper, addressed to the ear of the prisoner's leading counsel, caught his ear.

"MUST IT BE, SIR?"

"IT MUST. WE HAVE NO OTHER CHANCE, AND IT IS AS WELL FIRST AS LAST," was the reply, also conveyed in a whisper.

Aylmer, imagining that he recognized the voice of the querist, turned quickly round, but saw no face that he knew. The counsel was already engaged in earnest conversation with a learned brother.

The case for the prosecution having terminated with the evidence of William Aylmer, the gentleman who was engaged on the other side was about to rise and proceed with the defence, when he was interrupted by the court:—

"They had already," his lordship observed, "prolonged the hearing of the case far into the night, and many hours beyond the customary period of rising. He was far, however, from washing either to cut short, or

postpone the termination of the case, and he would sufler it to proceed until the whole of the testimony had been laid before the jury, if the counsel on either side desired it. But it appeared to him that a more direct course might be used, in order to arrive at a satisfactory decision. The doubt which remained on his own mind, was so strong, as to induce him to hesitate a moment on the propriety of sending the case to the jury, such as it was at that moment. The evidence was of so peculiar a character, that it required an exertion of reason, almost " beyond the reaches" of that faculty in man, to form a conscientious judgment upon it. He admitted the force of the learned counsel's argument, in his statement of the case: he could not—no believer in Christianity could deny the possibility of such supernatural appearances; bnt there was one short mode of deciding the question, as to the reality of that which was here deposed to with so much apparent sincerity. The only ground on which the jury could reconcile to their own consciences the possibility of the tale, was the necessity of such an intervention, the *dignus vindice nodus,* for the ends of justice. Let, then (his lordship continued, elevating his voice to a pitch of sonorous gravity), let the ghost of the murdered man (*if* murdered) come forward, and tell his tale here in this court, where his presence is much more necessary than in the chamber of a single individual.—Crier, repeat the form!"

A murmur of amazement ran through the court at this extraordinary speech, and immediately after a silence ensued, as breathless, anxious, and profound, as if the spectators really imagined they were about to witness a miracle. The crier twice went through the form, and twice the call died away unheeded among

the echoes of the deserted halls. Aylmer, anxious to observe its effect on the prisoner, turned round to gaze upon him, when a startling change which took place in the whole appearance of the man, rivetted and fixed his eyes in the direction they had taken. Fitzmaurice was elevating his head from the stooping posture which he had maintained during the period of the last witness's examination, and casting a wild and wavering glance around him, when those, who, like Aylmer, had their eyes fixed on his, observed them to settle in a stare of frozen horror upon a certain point. His lip grew white, quivered, and then was still as marble—his hair stirred and separated—his brow and cheek became yet more damp and death-like than before—a slight shivering passed over his frame, and then every member set and stiffened in a statue-like repose. There was no start—no sudden change of attitude; there was merely an interruption of the action of the frame, as if some fearful shock had penetrated at once to the principle of life, and left the will and the power of motion paralyzed and helpless; with a suddenness similar to that of a cataleptic attack, in which the patient seems to have

"——forgot himself to stone"

before any external change is visible. The eyes only, of the prisoner moved, following a certain object along the entrance of the court, and to the witness-table. Aylmer, terrified by the action of the criminal, looked in the same direction. An old white-haired man was in the act of ascending the steps. Aylmer felt as if a bolt of ice had been struck into his heart, when he recognised in the equivocal and lurid candlelight, the features of his midnight visitor; while the grey frieze-coat,

and heavy sounding tread of the figure, brought to his recollection the strange letter-bearer of the Kerry mountains!

"You see before you, my lord," said the stranger, "an unfortunate man, who has only within a few months returned to his native country, and has during that time been wandering like a thief about the precincts of his own estate, in fear of a legal visitation on a charge of many years' standing. I am weary of a life of anxiety and concealment, and even if I were not called upon by the tongue of justice herself to come forward now, I would, before long, have gladly delivered myself up to the laws of my country."

"Your lordship will observe," quickly remarked the counsel for the prisoner, "that this gentleman, *Mr. Robert Aylmer of Bally-Aylmer*, does not make any confession or admission whatsoever, of the truth of the charge to which he alludes; he merely comes forward to meet inquiry, and redeem his forfeited place in society."

His lordship smiled as he nodded an acquiescence and Mr. Aylmer smiled too, but in a more melancholy sort.

"Gentlemen," said the Judge, addressing the jury, "I am glad to inform you that your business is over for this night. You will find a verdict of acquittal and attend to-morrow."

"This beats the witch of Endor hollow," said the crown lawyer, as he threw his brief to the solicitor; "your lordship may take place among the cabalists of Domdaniel, ofter this."

Several other equally admirable witticisms passed among the junior counsel on the back benches; such as that his lordship was a clever resurrection-man—

that he had given a *grave* turn to the proceedings—that it was a dead-letter affair—with various inflictions of a similar nature, which we grieve to say our slippery memory will not enable us to lay before the reader.

No person had yet sufficiently abstracted their attention from the now engrossing point of interest, the resuscitated lord of Bally-Aylmer, to bestow a thought on the prisoner. It was with a general exclamation of surprise, therefore, that they perceived, when the court commanded his immediate discharge, that his place at the bar was empty. The turnkey, all confusion at this unaccountable disappearance, siezed a candle and examined the dock, when the unhappy man was found stretched on the floor, which was flooded with blood around his head. He was raised gently, and conveyed, while yet in a senseless state, to his bed-chamber in the adjoining prison; Sandy Culhane, by the direction of Mr. Aylmer, lending his assistance to the officers of the place.

The court immediately after became astir with the bustle of separation, and many a wondering hearer went home to astonish the ears of his fire-side circle with a red-hot narrative of the night's adventures, which have since been transmitted, with sundry decorations and gratuitous incidents superadded, to their children's children.

The two Aylmers, thus strangely restored to each other, proceeded together to a hotel, where the remainder of the night was spent in mutual inquiries and explanations, with an entire detail of which we shall not trouble the reader, The old man would, he said, have prevented all necessity for an investigation before it commenced, had he been aware of the cir-

cumstances that had taken place; but a communication from the Flushing contrabandist, who had saved his life on the night of the quarrel with Fitzmaurice, and who was then sojourning at Waterford, had called him suddenly away, the morning after he had visited Aylmer at Kilavariga. He had been induced to take this step by the information given him by Sandy Culhane, that a marriage was contemplated by Fitzmaurice between Aylmer and his daughter; a circumstance confirmed, in some degree, by the extraordinary care which he observed had been taken of the Aylmer property. This arrangement was not only unpleasing to him in itself, but doubly so from its interference with a long and anxiously cherished design of his own, with respect to the fascinating and accomplished daughter of his foreign friend, Miss Quisana Van Huggel Schneiderdrugger.

"I perceive," Mr. Aylmer continued, as a slight flush passed over the brow and cheek of his son, at the allusion to Katharine Fitzmaurice, "I see that I was wrong in my calculation, and so there is an end of the scheme at once. Totally ignorant as I was of my son's character and disposition, and rather induced to believe, from his intimate connexion with the family of Kilavariga, that I should at least have wounded feelings and severed and bleeding affections to contend with, it is hardly surprising that I should have prefered making a confidant of the ancient and faithful servant of our house, immediately on my arrival. All occasion for secrecy is now, however, done away with, as my old friend Evans, of Evanstown, informs me that I have nothing further to apprehend from the possibility of evidence being yet found to establish the charge once in existence against me."

The old man was correct in his anticipations on this head. The next morning he placed himself voluntarily under arrest, and was presently after discharged in consequence of the non-appearance of the prosecutors.

The shock which Fitzmaurice had recieved was not so immediately fatal as might have been expected. He lived long enough to be re-established in peace and good neighbourhood with the friend of his youth ; and to join the hands of his daughter and her lover in the holy clasp of authorised affection.

" Well, Mick," said Culhane, addressing the aged herdsman, as the wedding party passed near them in their return, " there's the thief with the brogues and pavers, that you traced from Kilavariga the night of the great snow, Which o' the three now do you think will dance the best *moneen* at the hauling home?"

" The master thin, agen the world! Ah! the times for grinding and footing are gone by, but the Aylmers were always great hands at the feet, and av there's a relic of ould times in the country, it will be shown that night at Bally-Aylmer."

THE HAND AND WORD.

—— Porque ninguno
De mi venganza tome
Vengarme de mi procuro
Buscando desde esa torre
En el ancho mar sepulchro.

CALDERON'S *El mayor Monstruo los Zelos.*

Vengeance is here the right of none—
My punishment be mine alone!
In the broad waves that heave and boom
Beneath this tower I seek my tomb.

THE HAND AND WORD.

THE village, of Kilkee, on the south-western coast of Ireland, has been for many years, to the city of Limerick, (on a small scale) that which Brighton is to London. At the time, however, when the events which form the subject of the following little history took place, it had not yet begun to take precedence of a watering place somewhat farther to the north, on the same coast, called Miltown Malbay, which had been for a long time, and still was a favourite summer resort with the fashionables of the county, such as they were. The village itself consists merely of six or eight streets, or straggling rows of houses, scattered irregularly enough over those waste banks of sand in which the land terminates as it approaches the Atlantic.

Those banks, or sandhills, as they are called, do not, in this place, slope gradually to the marge of the sea, but form a kind of abrupt barrier or natural terrace around the little bay; descending with such a suddenness that the lodges on the extreme verge completely overhang the water, and with their snow-white fronts, and neat green lattices, produce a sufficiently picturesque effect when the tide is at the full.

The little inlet which has been dignified by the title of a bay, opens to the north-west by a narrow mouth, rendered yet narrower in appearance by the Duggara rocks, which stretch more than half-way across from the southern extremity. A bed of fine hard sand reaches as far as low-water mark, and when the retiring waves have left it visible, affords a pleasant promenade to the bathers. Winding on either side towards the opening of the bay, and along the line of coast, are seen a number of broken cliffs which, gradually rising to a considerable height, form to the north a precipitous headland called Corballagh ; and to the southward they stretch away behind Duggara, in a thousand fantastic shapes. Close to the mouth or opening, on this side, is the Amphitheatre, which has been so named in later years, from the resemblance which instantly suggests itself to the beholder. Here the rocks lift themselves above the level of the sea in regular grades, bearing a kind of rude similitude to the benches of such a theatre as that above-named, to the height of two or three hundred feet. In the bathing season this place is seldom without a few groups or straggling figures, being turned to account in a great many different ways, whether as a resting-place to the wanderers on the cliffs, or a point of rendezvous to the numerous pic-nic parties who come here to enjoy a dinner *al fresco,* and luxuriate on the grand and boundless ocean-prospect which lies beneath and beyond them.

A waggish host of the village with whom I had the honour to domiciliate during a brief sojourn on the place a few years since, informed me that a number of serious accidents had rendered the visitors to the amphitheatre somewhat more cautious of suffering themselves to become entangled among the perils of the shelving and

disjointed crags of which it was composed. Among many anecdotes of warning he mentioned one which occurred to a meditative guest of his own, for which I at first gave him credit for a poetical imagination, though I afterwards found he had spoken nothing more than a real fact:—

"To take out his book," (he said in answer to a question from me, as to the manner of the occurrence,) "and to sit down as it might be this way on a shelving rock, and the sea to be roaring, and he to be thinking of nothing, only what he was reading, when a swell riz and took him out a distins, as it might be to give him a good sea-view of the cliffs, and the place, and turning again the same way it came, laid him up on the same stone, where, I'll be your bail, he was mighty scarce in less than no time."

Beyond the Amphitheatre, the cliff rises to a still greater height, forming an eminence called the Look-out. Shocking as the tale may appear to modern readers, it has been asserted, and but too many evidences remain to give weight and colour to the supposition, that in those barbarous, (though not very distant) times, this place was employed as an observatory by the wild fishermen of the coast and neighbouring hamlets, the principal portion of whose livelihood was derived from the plunder of the unfortunate men who happened to be wrecked on this inhospitable shore; and it is even recorded, and generally believed, that fires were, on tempestuous nights, frequently lighted here, and in other dangerous parts of the coast, in order to allure the labouring vessel, already hardly set by the war of winds and waves, to a more certain and immediate destruction on the rocks and shoals beneath,

a practice, it is said, which was often successful to a fearful extent.

The most remarkable point of scenery about the place, and one with which we shall close our perhaps not unneedful sketch of the little district is the Puffing-hole, a cavern near the base of the cliff last-mentioned, which vaults the enormous mass of crag to a considerable distance inland, where it has a narrow opening, appearing to the eyes of a stranger like a deep natural well. When the tremendous sea from abroad rolls into this cavern, the effect is precisely the same as if water were forced into an inverted funnel, its impetus of course increasing as it ascends through the narrow neck, until at length reaching the perpendicular opening, or Puffing-hole, it jets frequently to an immense height into the air, and falls in rain on the mossy fields behind.

At a little distance from this singular phænomenon stood a rude cottage. It was tenanted by an aged woman of the place, the relict of one of the most daring plunderers of the coast, who was suspected to have been murdered by one of his own comrades a good many years before. The interior of the little building bore sufficient testimony to the unlawful habits of its former master. All, even the greater proportion of the domestic utensils, were formed of ship timbers : a rudder had been awkwardly hacked and hewed up into something bearing a resemblance to a table, which stood in the middle of the principal apartment, the rafters were made from the spars of boom, peek, and yard ; a *settle-bed* at the further end had been constructed from the ruins of a gallant ship, and the little boarded parlour inside was furnished in part from the same materials. A number of planks, carelessly, fast-

ened together by way of a dresser, stood against the wall, shining forth in all the glory of burnished pewter, wooden-platter, and gaudily painted earthenware, the heir-looms of the house of Moran.

Terrified and shocked to the soul by the sudden fate of her late spouse, Mrs. Moran, the proprietress of the cottage, resolved that their boy, an only child, should not follow the dangerous courses of his father. In this she happened to be seconded by the youth's own disposition, which inclined to a quietude and gentleness of character. He was, at his sixteenth year, far beyond his compeers of the village in point of education, and not behind in beauty of person, and dexterity at all the manual exercises of *goal*, single-stick, &c. &c., accomplishments, however, which were doomed not to be wasted in the obscurity of his native wilderness, for before he had completed his seventeenth year, he was laid by the heels, one morning as he sat at breakfast, and pressed to sea.

One day was allowed him to take leave of old friends, and prepare to bid a long adieu to his native home. This day was a painful one, for more reasons than one.

Of course it is not to be supposed that so smart, handsome, clever, and well disposed a lad as Charlie Moran, should be unappreciated among the maidens of the district in which he vegetated. He had in short a lover; a fine flaxen-haired girl, with whom he had been intimate from infancy up to youth, when the wars (into the service of which he suspected he was betrayed by the agency of the girl's parent,, a comfortable *Palatine* in the neighbourhood) called him away from his boyish sports to the exercise of a premature manhood. Their parting was by no means more agreeable to little Ellen Sparling than to himself, seeing that they were more

fondly and deeply attached to one another, than is frequently the case with persons of their age and rank in life, and moreover that it would not have been the easiest matter possible to find a pair so well matched in temper and habits, as well as in personal loveliness (just then unfolding itself in each with a promise of perfect maturity) anywhere about the country-side.

The father of the girl, however, who, to say a truth, was indeed the contriver of Moran's impressment, looked forward to his absence with a great deal of joy. The old Palatine, who possessed all the prudence of parents in every soil and season, and all the natural obstinacy of disposition, inherent in the national character of the land of his forefathers, had on this occasion his prejudices doubly strengthened, and rendered at last inveterate, by the differences of religion and education, as well as by that eternal, reciprocal, and indomitable hatred which invariably divides the usurping and favoured emigrant from the oppressed, indigenous disinherited inheritor of the soil. Fond of his little girl, yet hating her friend, he took the part of wearing them asunder by long absence, a common mistake among more enlightened parents than Mr. Sparling.

On the day preceding that of young Moran's departure, when the weeping girl was hanging on his neck, and overwhelming him with conjurations to "prove true," an advice, to follow which he assured her, over and over again in his own way, he needed no exhortations, her lover proposed to her to walk (as it might be for the last time) towards a spot which had been the usual limit of their rambles, and their general rendezvous whenever her father thought proper to forbid their communing in his house, which was only done at intervals, his vigilance being a sort of chronic affection,

sometimes rising to a height which seemed dangerous to their hopes, sometimes relapsing into a state of almost perfect indifference. To this spot the lovers now repaired.

It was a recess in the cliff that beetled over the caverns, and was so formed as to hold no more than three or four persons; who, when they occupied the rude seats naturally formed in the rock, were invisible to any human eye which might be directed otherwhere than from the sea. The approach to it was by a narrow footway, in ascending or descending which, one seemed almost to hang in air, so far did the cliff-head project over the waters, and so scanty was the path of the descent on either side; custom however had rendered it a secure footing to the inhabitants of the village, and the lovers speedily found themselves within the little nook, secluded from every mortal eye. It was a still autumn evening, there was no sunshine, but the fixed splendour of the sky above and around them, on which the lines, or rather waves of thin vapour extending from the northwest, and tinged on one side by the red light of the sun, which had just gone down, presented the similitude of a sea frozen into a brilliant mass, in the act of undulation. Beyond them lay Bishop's Island, a little spot of land, shooting up from the waves in the form of a gigantic column, about three hundred feet in height, the sides barren and perpendicular, and the plain above covered with verdure to the marge itself. Immediately above their heads was a blighted elder tree, (one of the most remarkable phenomena* of this woodless district) which now hung,

* A sufficiently characteristic observation of Cromwell on the barrenness of the country inland, is preserved among the peasantry. "There was," he observed, "neither a tree to hang a man, fire to burn, nor water to drown him."

like a single grey hair, over the bare and barren brow of the aged cliff.

The wanderers sat here in perfect security, although by a step forward they might look upon a tremendous in-slanting precipice beneath, against the base of which, at times, the sea lashed itself with such fury, as to bound in huge masses over the very summit, and to make the cliff itself shake and tremble to a considerable distance inland.

"I have asked you to come here, Ellen," said her lover, as he held her hand in one of his, while the other was passed round her waist, "for a very solemn purpose. It is a belief amongst us, and many have seen it come to pass, that those who pledge themselves to any promise, whether of hate or love, and who, with their hands clasped together as ours are now, plight their faith and troth to perform that promise to one another—it is our belief, I say, that whether in the land of the living, or the dead, they can never enjoy a quiet soul until that promise is made good. I must serve five years before I obtain my discharge; when I get that, Ellen, I will return to this place, and let you know, by a token, that I am in the neighbourhood. Pledge me your hand and word, that when you receive that token, whether you are married or unmarried, whether it be dark, moon-light, or stormy, you will come out alone to meet me where I shall appoint, on the night when I shall send it."

Without much hesitation the young girl solemnly pledged herself to what he required. He then unbound from her hair a ribbon by which it was confined, kissed it, and placed it in his bosom, after which they ascended the cliff and separated.

After the departure of young Moran, his mother, to

relieve her loneliness, opened a little place of entertainment for the *fish-jolters*, whose trade it was (and is) to carry the fish taken on the coast to the nearest market-town for sale, as also for the fishermen of the village, and chance passengers. By this means she had accomplished a very considerable sum of money in a few years. Ellen Sparling observed this with the more satisfaction, as she felt it might remove the greatest bar that had hitherto opposed itself to her union with Charles Moran.

Five years and some months had rolled away since his departure, and he had not been heard of during that time in his native village. All things remained very nearly in the same state in which he had left them, with the exception of the increased prosperity of his mother's circumstances, and the matured beauty of Ellen, who was grown into a blooming woman, the admiration of all the men, and it is said, though I don't vouch for the fact, of all the women too, of her neighbourhood. There are limits of superiority beyond which envy cannot reach, and it might be said, perhaps, that Ellen was placed in this position of advantage above all her female acquaintances. It is not to be supposed that she was left untempted all this while, or at least unsought. On the contrary, a number of suitors had directly or indirectly presented themselves, with one of whom only, however, I have any business at present.

He was a young fisherman, and one of the most constant visitors at the elegant *soirèes* of the widow Moran, where, however, he was by no means a very welcome guest, either to the good woman or her customers. He held, nevertheless, a high place at the board, and seemed to exercise a kind of dominion over

the revellers, perhaps as much the consequence of his outward appearance, as of his life and habits. He was powerfully made, tall, and of a countenance which, even in his hours of comparative calmness and inaction, exhibited in the mere arrangement of its features, a brutal violence of expression which was exceedingly repugnant. The middle portion of his physiognomy was rather flat and sunken, and his mouth and forehead projecting much, rendered this deformity disgustingly apparent. Deep black, large glistening eyes glanced from beneath a pair of brows, which so nearly approached each other, as, on every movement of passion, or impulse of suspicion, to form in all appearance one thick shaggy line across, and the unamiable effect of the countenance altogether was not improved by the temper of the man, who was feared throughout the neighbourhood, as well for his enormous strength, as for the violence, the suspicious tetchiness, and the habitual gloominess of his character, which was never more visible than when, as now, he affected the display of jollity and hearted good-fellowship. It was whispered, moreover, that he was visited, after some unusual excitement, with fits of wildness approaching to insanity at the accession of which he was wont to conceal himself from all human intercourse for a period, until the evil influence (originating, as it was asserted privately among his old associates, in the remorse with which the recollection of his manifold crimes was accompanied) had passed away—a circumstance which seemed to augur a consciousness of this mental infirmity. At the end of those periods of retirement, he was wont to return to his companions with a haggard and jaded countenance, a dejected demeanour, and a sense of shame manifested in his address, which, for a

short space only, served to temper the violence of his conduct. Robbers and murderers, as all of his associates were, this evil-conditioned man had gone so far beyond them in his total recklessness of crime, that he had obtained for himself the distinguishing appellative (like most nicknames in Irish low life, ironically applied) of Yamon Macauntha, or Honest Ned; occasionally varied (after he had reached the estate of manhood, and distinguished himself among the smugglers, over whom he acquired a speedy mastery, by his daring spirit, and almost invariable success in whatever he undertook) with that of Yamon Dhiu, or Black Ned, a name which applied as well to his dark complexion, long, matted, coal-black hair and beard, as to the fierce and relentless energy of his disposition.

One anecdote, which was told with suppressed breath, and involuntary shuddering, even among those who were by his side in all his deeds of blood, may serve to illustrate the terrific and savage cruelty of the man. A Dutch vessel had gone to pieces on the rocks beneath the Look-out. The waves rolled in like mountains, and lashed themselves with such fury against the cliffs, that very speedily nearly all those among the crew who clung to the drifting fragments of the wreck, were dashed to atoms on the projecting granite. A few only, among whom was the captain of the vessel, who struggled with desperate vigour against the dreadful element, succeeded in securing themselves on a projecting rock, from whence, feeble and exhausted as they were, the poor mariners endeavoured to hail a number of people, who were looking out on the wreck from the cliff-head above them. They succeeded in attracting attention, and the spectators prepared to lower a rope for their relief, which, as they were

always provided against such accidents, they were not long in bringing to pass. It was first girded around the waist of the captain, and then fastened around that of his two companions, who, on giving a signal, were drawn into the air, the former holding in one hand a little casket, and with the other defending himself against the pointed projections of the cliff as he ascended. When very near the summit, which completely overhung the waves, he begged, in a faint tone, that some one would take the casket from his hands, as he feared it might be lost in the attempt to secure his own hold. Yamon was but too alert in acceding to the wretched man's request; he threw himself forward on the sand, with his breast across the rope, and took the casket from his uplifted hand.

"God's blessing on your souls, my deliverers," cried the poor man, wringing his clasped hands, with a gesture and look of fervent gratitude, "the casket is safe, thank God! and my faith to my employers——" he was yet speaking, when the rope severed under Black Yamon's breast, and the three men were precipitated into the yawning waters beneath. They were hurried out by the retiring waves, and the next moment their mingled bodies were left in the recesses of the cliff.

A cry of horror and of compassion burst even from the savage hearts of a crew of smugglers, who had beeen touched by the courage and constancy which was displayed by the brave unfortunates. Yamon alone remained unmoved, (and hard must the heart have been which even the voice of gratitude, unmerited though it was, could not soften or penetrate) he gave utterance to a burst of hoarse, grumbling laughter, as

he waved the casket in triumph before the eyes of his comrades:

"Huh! huh!" he exclaimed, "she was a muthaun —why didn't she keep her casket till she drew her painther ashore?"

One of the men, as if doubting the possibility of the inhuman action, advanced to the edge of the cliff. He found the rope had been evidently divided by some sharp instrument; and observing something glittering where Yamon lay, he stooped forward and picked up an open clasp-knife, which was presently claimed by the unblushing monster. However shocked they might have been at the occurrence, it was no difficult matter for Yamon to pursuade his companions that it would be nowise convenient to let the manner of it transpire in the neighbourhood; and in a very few minutes the fate of the Dutchmen seemed completely banished from their recollection, (never very retentive of benevolent emotions) and the only question held regarded the division of the booty. They were disappointed, however, in their hopes of spoil, for the casket which the faithful shipman was so anxious to preserve, and to obtain which his murderer had made sacrifice of so many lives, contained nothing more than a few papers of bottomry and insurance, valueless to all but the owners of the vessel. This circumstance seemed to touch the villain more nearly than the wanton cruelty of which he had been guilty; and his gang, who were superstitious exactly in proportion to their want of honesty and of all moral principle, looked upon it as a supernatural occurrence, in which the judgment of an offended Deity was made manifest.

This amiable person had a sufficiently good opinion of himself to make one among the admirers of Ellen

Sparling. It is scarcely necessary to say that his suit was unsuccessful. Indeed the maiden was heard privately to declare her conviction that it was impossible there could be found any where a more ugly and disagreeable man, in every sense.

One fine frosty evening, the widow Moran's was more than usually crowded. The fire blazed cheerfully on the hearth, so as to render any other light unnecessary, although the night had already begun to close in. The mistress of the establishment was busily occupied in replenishing the wooden *noggins*, or drinking vessels, with which the board was covered; her glossy white hair turned up under a clean kerchief, and a general gala-gladness spreading an unusual light over her shrivelled and attenuated features, as by various courtesies, addressed to the company around her, she endeavoured to make the gracious in her own house. Near the chimney-corner sat Dora Keys, a dark featured bright eyed girl, who, on account of her skill on the bagpipe, a rather unfeminine accomplishment, and a rare one in this district, (where, however, as in most parts of Ireland, music of some kind or another was constantly in high request) filled a place of high consideration among the merry-makers. The remainder of the scene was filled up with the fishermen, smugglers, and fish-jolters; the latter wrapt in their blue frieze-coats, and occupying a more unobtrusive corner of the apartment, while Yamon as noisy and imperious as usual, sat at the head of the rude table, giving the word to the whole assembly.

A knocking was heard at the slight hurdle-door. The good woman went to open it, and a young man entered. He was well formed, though rather thin and dark skinned, and a profusion of black curled hair

clustered about his temples, corresponding finely with his glancing, dark, fiery eye. An air of sadness, or of pensiveness, too, hung about him, which gave an additional interest to his appearance, and impressed the spectator with an involuntary respect. Mrs. Moran drew back with one of her lowest curtsies. The stranger smiled sadly, and extended his hand. "Don't you know me, mother?" he asked. The poor woman sprung to his neck with a cry of joy.

All was confusion in an instant. "Charles,"—"Charlie"—"Mr. Moran"—was echoed from lip to lip in proportion to the scale of intimacy which was enjoyed by the several speakers. Many a rough hand grasped his, and many a good-humoured buffet and malediction had he to endure before the tumultuous joy of his old friends had subsided. At length, after all questions had been answered, and all old friends, the dead, the living, and the absent, had been tenderly inquired for, young Moran took his place among the guests; the amusements of the evening were renewed, and Yamon, who had felt his importance considerably diminished by the entrance of the young traveller, began to resume his self-constituted sovereignty.

Gambling, the great curse of society in all climes, classes, ages, and states of civilisation, was not unknown or unpractised in this wild region. Neither was it here unattended with its usual effects upon the mind heart, and happiness of its votaries. The eager manifestation of assent which passed round the circle, when the proposition of just "a hand o' five-and-forty" was made, showed that it was by no means an unusual or unacceptable resource to any person present. The young exile, in particular, seemed to catch at it with peculiar readiness; and, in a few minutes, places and

partners being arranged, the old woman deposited in the middle of the table a pack of cards, approaching in shape more to the oval than the oblong square, and in colour scarcely distinguishable from the black oaken board on which they lay. Custom, however, had rendered the players particularly expert at their use, and they were dealt round with as much flippancy as the newest pack in the hands of a dæmon of St. James's, in our own time. One advantage, certainly, the fashionable gamesters possessed over these primitive gamblers: the latter were perfectly ignorant of the useful niceties of play, so much in request among the former. *Old gentlemen, stags, bridges*, &c., were matters totally unknown among our coast friends, and the only necessary consequences of play, in which they (perhaps) excelled, were the outrageous violence, good mouth-filling oaths, and the ferocious triumph which followed the winnings or the losses of the several parties.

After he had become so far acquainted with the dingy pieces of pasteboard in his hand, as to distinguish the almost obliterated impressions upon them, the superior skill of the sea-farer became apparent. Yamon, who played against him, soon began to show symptoms of turbulence, which the other treated with the most perfect coolness and indifference, stlll persevering in his good play, until his opponent, after lavishing abundance of abuse on every body around him, especially on his unfortunate partner in the game, acknowledged that he had no more to lose. The night had now grown late and the guests dropping off one by one, Moran and his mother were left alone in the cottage.

"Mother," said the young man, as he threw the little window-shutter open, and admitted a gush of moonlight which illumined the whole room, "will you keep

the fire stirring till I return, the night is fine and I must go over the cliffs?"

"The cliffs! to-night, child!" ejaculated the old woman. "You don't think of it, my heart?"

"I must go," was the reply, "I have given a pledge that I dare not be false to."

"The cliffs!" continued the old woman. "The way is uncertain even to the feet that know it best, and sure you wouldn't try it in the night, and after being away till you don't know, may be, a foot o' the way."

"When I left Ellen Sparling, mother," said the young man, "I pledged her my faith, that I would meet her on the night on which she should receive from me a token she gave me. She, in like manner, gave me hers. That token I sent to her before I entered your doors this evening, and I appointed her father's ould house, where he lived in his poor days, and where I first saw her, to meet me. I must keep my word on all hazards." And he flung the cottage-door open as he spoke.

"Then take care, take care," said the old woman, clasping her hands and extending them towards him, while she spoke in her native tongue. "The night, thank God! is a fine night, and the sea is still at the bottom of the cliffs, but it is an unsure path. I know the eyes that will be red, and the cheeks that will be white, and the young and the fair ones too, if anything *contrary* should come to you this holy evening."

"I have given her my hand and word," was Moran's reply as he closed the door, and took the path over the sand hills.

The moon was shining brightly when he reached the cliffs, and entered on the path leading to the old rendezvous of the lovers, and from thence to the ruined

building, where he expected to meet Ellen. He trudged along in the light-heartedness of feeling inspired by the conviction he felt, that the happiness of the times, which every object he beheld brought to his recollection, had not passed away with those days, and that a fair and pleasant future yet lay before him. He turned off the sand-hills while luxuriating in those visions of unchecked delight.

Passing the rocks of Duggara, he heard the plashing of oars, and the rushing of a canoe through the water. It seemed to make towards a landing-place further down, and lying almost on his path. He pursued his course, supposing, as in fact proved to be the case, that it was one of the fishermen drawing his canoe nearer to the caverns which were to be made the scene of a seal-hunt on the following day. As the little vessel glided through the water beneath him, a wild song, in the language of the country, rose to the broken crag on which he now rested, chaunted by a powerful masculine voice, with all the montonous and melancholy intonation to which the construction of the music is peculiarly favourable. The following may be taken as a translation of the stanzas:—

I.

The Priest stood at the marriage board,
  The marriage cake was made,
With meat the marriage chest was stored,
  Decked was the marriage bed.
The old man sat beside the fire,
  The mother sat by him,
The white bride was in gay attire
  But her dark eye was dim,
                    Ululah! Ululah!
The night falls quick—the sun is set,
Her love is on the water yet.

II.

I saw the red cloud in the west,
  Against the morning light,
Heaven shield the youth that she loves best
  From evil chance to-night.
The door flings wide! Loud moans the gale,
  Wild fear her bosom chills,
It is, it is the Banthee's wail,
  Over the darkened hills,
      Ululah! Ululah!
The day is past! the night is dark!
The waves are mounting round his bark.

III.

The guests sit round the bridal bed,
  And break the bridal cake,
Bnt they sit by the dead-man's head,
  And hold his wedding-wake.
The bride is praying in her room,
  The place is silent all!
A fearful call! a sudden doom!
  Bridal and funeral!
      Ululah! Ululah!
A youth to Kilfiehera's ta'en.
That never will return again.

Before Moran had decended much further on his way, he perceived that the canoe had reached a point of the rock close upon his route. The fishermen jumped to land, made fast the painter, and turning up the path by which Moran was descending, soon encountered him. It was Yamon Macauntha.

"Ho! Mr. Moran! Out on the cliffs this hour o' the night, sir?"

"Yes, I have a good way to go. Good bye to you."

"Easy a while, sir," said Yamon. "that is the same way I'm going myself, and I'll be with you."

Moran had no objection to this arrangement, although it was not altogether pleasing to him. He knew enough of the temper and habits of the smuggler to believe him capable of any design, and although he had been a stronger built man than he was, yet the odds, in case of any hostile attempt, would be fearfully in Yamon's favour. He remembered too certain rumours which had reached him of the latter being occasionally subject to fits of gloom approaching in their strength and intensity to actual derangement, and began to hesitate as to the more advisable course to be pursued. However, not to mention the pusillanimity of anything having the appearance of retreat, such a step would in all probability have been attempted in vain, for Yamon stood directly behind him, and the path was too narrow to admit the possibility of a successful struggle. He had only to obey the motion of the fisherman and move on.

"You don't know," said the latter, "or may be you never heard of what I'm going to tell you now; but easy, and you'll know all in a minute. Do you see that sloping rock down by the sea, where the horse-gull is standing at this minute, the same we passed a while ago. When my mother was little *better* than seven months married, being living hard by on the sand-hills she went many's the time down to that rock, to fetch home some of the salt-water for pickle and things, and never made any work of going down there late and early, and at all hours. Well, it was as it might be this way, on a fine bright night, that she took her can in her hand, and down with her to the rock. The tide was full in, and when she turned off o' the path, what should she see fronting her, out, and sitting quite erect intirely upon the rock, only a woman, and she having

the tail of her gown turned up over her head,, and she sitting quite still, and never spaking a word, and her back towards my mother. '*Dieu uth,*' says my mother, careless and civil, thinking of nothing, and wanting her to move; but she took no notice. 'Would it be troubling you if I'd just step down to get a drop o' the salt-water?' says my mother. Still no answer. So thinking it might be one of the neighbours that was funning, or else that it might be asleep she was, she asked her very plain and loud to move out o' the way. When there wasn't ere a word come after this, my mother stooped forward a little, and lifted the *gownd* from the woman's forehead, and peeped under—and what do you think she seen in the dark, within. Two eyes as red as fire, and a shrivelly old face without any lips hardly, and they drawn back, and teeth longer than lobster's claws, and as white as the bleached bones. Her heart was down in her brogue* when *it* started up from her, and with a screech that made two halves of my mother's brains, *it* flew out over the wide sea.

"My mother went home and took to her bed, from which she never stirred till 'twas to be taken to Kilfiehera church-yard. It was in that week I was born. I never pass that place at night alone, if I can help it —and that is partly the reason why I made so free to ask you to bear me company."

Moran had his confidence fully re-established by these words. He thought he saw in Yamon a wretch so preyed upon by remorse and superstition, as to be incapable of contemplating any deep crime, to which he had not a very great temptation. As Yamon still looked toward the rock beneath, the enormous horse-gull by which he had first indicated its position to

* Shoe.

Moran, took flight, and winged its way slowly to the elevation on which they stood. The bird rose above, wheeled round them, and with a shrill cry, that was repeated by a hundred echoes, dived again into the darkness underneath. Moran, at this instant, had his thoughts turned in another direction, altogether, by the sight of the little recess in which Ellen and he had held their last conversation. He entered, followed by Yamon, who threw himself on the rude stone seat, observing that it was a place "for the phuka to make her bed in."

The young traveller folded his arms, and gazed around for a few minutes in silence, his heart striving beneath the load of recollections which came upon him at every glance and motion. On a sudden, a murmured sound of voices was heard underneath, and Moran stooped down, and overlooked the brink of the tremendous precipice. There was a flashing of lights on the calm waters beneath, and in a few minutes a canoe emerged from the great cavern, bearing three or four men, with lighted torches, which, however, they extinguished as soon as they came into the clear moonlight. He continued to mark them until they were lost behind a projecting crag. He then turned, and in removing his hand from the verge, detached a pebble, which, falling after a long pause into the sea, formed what is called by the peasant children, who practise it in sport, "a dead man's skull." It is formed when a stone is cast into the water, so as to emit no spray, but cutting rapidly and keenly through, in its descent, produces a gurgling evolution, bearing a momentary resemblance to the tables of a human skull. The sound ceased, and all again was still and silent, with the ex-

ception of the sound which the stirring of the waters made in the mighty caverns beneath.

"I remember the time when that would have won a button* for me," said Moran, turning round. He at the same instant felt his shoulder grasped with a tremendous force. He looked quickly up, and beheld Yamon, his eyes staring and wild with some frantic purpose, bending over him. A half-uttered exclamation of terror escaped him, and he endeavoured to spring towards the path which led from the place. The giant arm of Yamon, however, intercepted him.

"Give me, cheat and plunderer that you are," cried the fisherman, while his limbs trembled with emotion, 'give me the money you robbed me of this night, or by the great light that's looking down on us, I'll shake you to pieces."

"There, Yamon, there, you have my life in your power—there is your money, and now—" He felt the grasp of the fisherman tightening upon his throat. He struggled, as a wretch might be expected to do, to whom life was new and dear; but he was as a child in the gripe of his enemy. There was a smothering shriek of entreaty—a wild attempt to twine himself in the limbs and frame of the murderer—and in the next instant he was hurled over the brow of the cliff.

"Another! another life!" said Yamon Dhu, as with hands stretched out, and fingers spread, as though yet in act to grasp, he looked out over the precipice. "The water is still again—Ha! who calls me?—From the caverns?—No.—Above?—Another life!—A deal of Christian's blood upon one man's soul!" and he rushed from the place.

* The practice of playing for *buttons* is very common among the peasant children.

About eleven o'clock on the following morning, (as fine a day as could be), a young lad named Terry Mick (Terry, the son of Mick, a species of patronymic very usual in Ireland), entered, with considerable haste, the kitchen of Mr. Morty Shannon, a gentleman farmer, besides being coroner of the county, and as jolly a man as any in the neighbourhood. Terry addressed a brief tale in the ear of Aby Galaghar, Mr. Shannon's steward and fac-totum, which induced the said Sandy to stretch his long, well-seasoned neck, from the chimney-corner, and directing his voice towards the door of an inner room, which was complimented with the appellation of a parlour, exclaim, " Mr. Morty! you're *calling*, sir."

" Who am I *calling*?" asked a rich, waggish voice, from within.

" Mr. Sparling, the Palatine's boy, sir," replied Aby, quite unconscious of the *quid pro quo*.

" Indeed! More than I knew myself. Walk in Terry."

" Go in to him, Terry dear," said Aby, resuming his comfortable position in the chimney-corner, and fixing a musing, contented eye upon a great cauldron of potatoes that hung over the turf-fire, and on which the first simmering froth, or *white horse* (as it is called in Irish cottages), had begun to appear.

" The master sent me to you, sir," said Terry, opening the door, and protruding an eye, and half a face into the sanctum sanctorum, " to know—with his compliments——"

But first, I should let you have the glimpse that Terry got of the company within. The person to whom he immediately addressed himself sat at one end of a small deal table, on which were placed a jug of

cold water, a broken bowl, half filled with coarse brown sugar, and a little jar, which, by the frequent changes of position it underwent, seemed to contain the favourite article of the three. Imagine to yourself a middle-sized man, with stout, well-set limbs, a short and thick bead of hair, an indented forehead, eyes of a piercing grey, bright and sparkling, with an expression between leer and satire, and a nose running in a curvilineal direction toward the mouth. Nature had, in the first instance, given it a *sinister inclination*, and chance, wishing to rectify the *morals* of the feature, had by the agency of a black-thorn stick, in the hands of a rebellious tenant, sent it again to the right. 'Twas kindly meant, as Mr. Morty himself used to say, though not so dexterously executed.

" *The* master's compliments, sir," continued Terry, "to know if your honour would just step over to Kilkee, where there has been a bad business this morning—Charlie Moran being lying dead, on the broad of his back, at the house, over."

When I say that an expression ef involuntary satisfaction, which he in vain endeavoured to conceal, diffused itself over the tortuous countenance of the listener, at this intelligence, it is necessary I should save his character by reminding the reader that he was a county coroner, and in addition to the four pounds which he was to receive for the inquest, there was the chance of an invitation to stay and dine with the Sparlings, people whose mode of living Mr. Morty had before now tried and approved.

" Come here, Terry, and take your morning," said he, filling a glass of ardent spirits, which the youth immediately disposed of, with a speed that showed a sufficient familiarity with its use, although some affec-

tation of mincing decency induced him to colour the delicious relish with a grimace and shrug of comical dislike, as he replaced the glass on the table.

"E'then, that's good stuff, please your honour. Sure I'd know the master's any where over the world. This is some of the two year old, sir. 'Twas made the time Mr. Grady, the gauger, was stationed below there, at the white house—and faix, many a drop he tasted of it himself, in the master's barn."

"And is the still so long at work, Terry?"

"Oh, long life to you, sir,—aye is it, and longer too. The master has *sech* a 'cute way with him in managing the still-hunters. 'Tis in vain for people to inform—to be sure, two or three tried it, but got nothing by it, barring a good lacing at the next fair-day. Mr. Grady used regularly to send notice when he got an information, to have him on his guard against he'd come with *the army*—and they never found any thing there, I'll be your bail for it, more than what served to send 'em home as drunk as pipers, every mother's son. To be sure, that Mr. Grady was a pleasant man, and well liked wherever he came, among high and low, rich and poor, although being a gauger and a protestant. I remember making him laugh hearty enough once. He asked me, says he, as it might be funning, 'Terry,' says he, 'I'm very bad inwardly. How would you like to be walking after a gauger's funeral this morning?' 'Why thin, Mr. Grady,' says I, 'I'd rather see a thousand of your *religion* dead than yourself, and meaning no love for *you*, neither.' And poor man, he did laugh hearty, to be sure. He had no pride in him—no pride, more than a child, hadn't Mr. Grady. God's peace be with him, wherever he is, this day."

In a few minutes Mr. Shannon's blind mare was saddled, and the head of the animal being directed toward Kilkee, away went Terry, trotting by the coroner's side, and shortening the road with his quaint talk. On arriving at the Palatine's house, they found it crowded with the inhabitants of the village. The fairy doctor of the district sat near the door; his brown and weather-beaten face wrapped in an extraordinary degree of mystery, and his eyes fixed with the assumption of deep thought on his twirling thumbs: in another part of the outer room was the schoolmaster of the parish, discussing the "crowner's quest law," to a circle of admiring listeners. In the chimney-corner, on stools which were ranged for the purpose, were congregated the "knowledgeable" women of the district. Two soldiers, detatched from the nearest guard, were stationed at the door, and at a little distance from them, seated at a table, and basking in the morning sunshine, might be seen a number of fishermen and others, all deeply engaged in converse upon the occurrence which had summoned them together. One of them was in the act of speaking when the coroner arrived:—

"We had been drawing the little canoe up hard by the cavern, seeing would we be the first to be in upon the seals when the hunt would begin, when I see a black thing lying on the shore among the sea-weed, about forty yards or upwards from the rock where I stood; and 'tisn't itself I see first, either, only two sea-gulls, and one of 'em perched up on it, while the other *kep* wheeling round above it, and screaming as nait'rel as a christen; and so I ran down to Phil, here, and says I, 'there's murder down upon the rocks, let us have it in from the fishes.' So we brought it ashore.

'Twas pale and stiff, but there was no great harm done to it, strange to say, in regard of the great rocks, and the place. We knew poor Moran's face, and we said nothing to one another, only wrapped the spritsail about it, and had it up here to Mr. Sparling's, (being handier to us than his own mother's) where we told our story."

Passing into the house, Mr. Morty Shannon was received with all the respect due to his exalted station. The woman curtsied low, and the men raised their hands to their foreheads with that courteous action which is familiar to all, even the most unenlightened of the peasantry of the south of Ireland. The master of the mansion, a comfortable looking farmer-like sort of person, rose from his seat near the hearth, and greeted the man of office with an air of greater familiarity, yet with a reserve becoming the occasion. As the door of an inner apartment stood open, Mr. Shannon could see the corpse of the murdered man laid out on a table near the window. Close to the head stood the mother of the dead, hanging over the corpse in silent grief, swaying herself backward and forward with a gentle motion, and wringing her hands; yet with so noiseless an action, that the profound silence of the room was never broken. On the opposite side, her fine head resting against the bier—her white, wan fingers wreathed together in earnest prayer above the body, while a half-stifled sob occasionally shook her delicate frame—and her long and curling tresses fell in flaxen masses over the bosom of the murdered, knelt Moran's betrothed love, Ellen Sparling. As she prayed, a sudden thought seemed to rush upon her, she raised her head, took from her bosom a light green ribbon, and kissing it fervently

and repeatedly, she folded and placed it in that of the murdered youth, after which she resumed her kneeling posture. There are few, I believe, who have lived among scenes of human suffering to so little purpose as not to be aware, that it is not the heaviness of a particular calamity, nor the violence of the sorrow which it produces, that is at any time most powerful in awakening the commisseration of an uninterested spectator. The capability of deep feeling may be more or less a property of all hearts, but the power of communicating it is a gift possessed by few. The murmur of a bruised heart, the faint sigh of a broken spirit, will often stir and thrill through all the strings of sympathy, while the frantic ravings of a wilder, though not less real woe, shall fail to excite any other sensation than that of pain and uneasiness. Perhaps it may be, that the selfishness of our nature is such, that we are alarmed and put on our guard, in proportion to the violence of the appeal which is made to us; and must be taken by surprise, before our benevolent emotions can be awakened. However all this might be, being no philosopher, I can only state the fact, that Mr. Morty Shannon, who had witnessed many a scene of frantic agony, without experiencing any other feeling than that of impatience, was moved, even to a forgetfulness of his office, by the quiet, unobtrusive grief, which he witnessed on entering this apartment.

It was the custom in those days, and is still the custom in most parts of Ireland, where any person is supposed to have " come by his end" unfairly, that all the inhabitants of his parish, or district, particularly those who, from any previous circumstances, may be rendered at all liable to suspicion, shall meet together and undergo a kind of ordeal, by touching the corpse,

each in his turn. Among a superstitious people, such a regulation as this, simple though it was, had been frequently successful in betraying the guilty conscience; and it was a current belief among the peasantry, that in many instances where the perpetrator of the horrid deed possessed strength of mind, or callousness of heart sufficient to subdue all appearance of emotion in the moment of trial, some miraculous change in the corpse itself had been known to indicate the evil doer. At all events, there was a degree of solemnity and importance attached to the test, which invested it with a strong interest in the minds of the multitude.

Suspicion was not idle on this occasion. The occurrences of the previous evening at the widow's house, and the loss there sustained by Yamon, contributed in no slight degree to fix the attention of the majority upon him. It did not pass without remark, neither, that he had not yet made his appearance at Mr. Sparling's house. Many wild tales, moreover were afloat respecting Ellen Sparling, who had, on that morning, before sunrise, been seen by a fish-jolter, who was driving his mule loaded with fish along the road towards Kilrush, returning across the hills toward her father's house, more like a mad-woman than a sober Christian. Before we proceed further in our tale, it is necessary we should say something of the circumstances which led to this appearance.

When Ellen received the token on the previous evening from young Moran's messenger, she tied her light checquered straw bonnet under her chin, and stole out by a back entrance, with a beating and anxious heart, to the appointed rendezvous. The old ruined house which had been named to her, was situated at the distance of a mile from her father's, and was at

present tenanted only by an aged herdsman in his employment. Not finding Moran yet arrived, although the sun was already in the west, she sent the old man away on some pretext, and took his place in the little rush-bottomed chair by the fire-side. Two hours of a calm and silent evening had already passed away, and yet he came not. Wearied with the long expectation, and by the tumult of thoughts and feelings which agitated her, she arose, walked to a short distance from the cottage, and sitting on a little knoll in the vicinity, which commanded a wide prospect to the sea, she continued to await his arrival, now and then gazing in the direction of the cliffs by which the messenger told her he was to pass. No object, however, met her eye on that path, and no sound came to her ear but the loud, full-toned, and plaintive whistle of the ploughman, as he guided his horses over a solitary piece of stubble-ground, lightening his own and their labour by the wild modulations of the *Keen-the-cawn*, or death-wail; the effect of which, though it had often delighted her under other circumstances, fell now with an oppressive influence upon her spirits.

Night fell at length, and she returned to the old house. As she reached the neglected *haggart* on the approach, a light breeze sprang up inland, and rustling in the thatch of the ruined out-houses, startled her by its suddenness, almost as much as if it had been a living voice. She looked up an instant, drew her handkerchief closer around her neck, and hurried on towards the door. It might be he had arrived by another path during her absence! High as her heart bounded at the suggestion, it sunk in proportion as she lifted the latch, and entered the deserted room. The turf-embers were almost expiring on the hearth, and all

was dark, cold, saddening, and comfortless. She felt vexed at the absence of the old servant, and regretted the caution which induced her to get rid of him. Amid all the intensity of her fondness too, she could not check a feeling of displeasure at the apparent want of ardour on the part of her lover. It had an almost slighting look; she determined she would make it evident in her manner on his arrival. In the next moment the fancied sound of a footstep made her spring from her seat, and extend her arms in a perfect oblivion of all her stern resolutions. Quite beaten down in heart by constant disappointments, and made nervous and feverish by anxiety, the most fearful suggestions began now to take the place of her pettishness and ill-humour. She was alarmed for his safety. It was a long time since he had trod the path over the cliffs. The possibility that here rushed upon her, made her cover her face with her hands, and bend forward in her chair in an agony of terror.

Midnight now came on. A short and heavy breathing at the door, as she supposed, startled her as she bent over the flame which she kept alive by placing fresh *sods* on the embers. She rose and went to the door. A large Newfoundland dog of her father's bounded by her as she opened it, and testified by the wildest gambols about the kitchen, the delight he felt in meeting her so unexpectedly, at such an hour, and so far from her home. She patted the faithful animal on the head, and felt restored in spirits by the presence even, of this uncommunicative acquaintance. The sagacious servant had evidently traced her to the ruin by the fineness of it's sense, and seemed everjoyed at the verification of his diagnostic. At length, after having sufficiently indulged the excitement of the mo-

ment, he took post before the fire, and after divers indecisive evolutions, he coiled himself up at her feet and slept. The maiden herself in a short time imitated the example.

The startling suggestions that had been crowding on her in her waking moments, now began to shape themselves in vivid and fearful visions to her sleeping fancy. As she lay back in her chair, her eyes not so entirely closed as to exclude the " lengthening rays." of the decaying fire before them, she became unaccountably, oppressed by the sense of a person sitting close at her side. There was a hissing, as if of water falling on the embers just before the figure, and after a great effort she fancied that she could turn so far round as to recognise the face of her lover, pale, cold, with the long dark hair hanging drearily at each side, and as she supposed, dripping with moisture. She strove to move, but was perfectly unable to do so, and the figure continued to approach her, until at length, placing his chilling face so close to her cheek, that she thought she felt the damp upon her neck, he said gently, " Ellen, I have kept my hand and word : living I would have done it ; dead, I am permitted." At this moment a low grumbling bark from the dog Minos, awoke her, and she started from her seat, in a state of nervousness which for a short time prevented a full conviction of the non-existence of the vision that had oppressed her slumber. The dog was sitting erect, and gazing, with crouched head, fixed eyes, and lips upturned in the expression of canine fear, toward the door. Ellen listened attentively for a few minutes, and a gentle knocking was heard. She recognised too, or thought she recognised, a voice precisely similar to that of the figure in her dream, which pronounced her name with

the gentlest tone in the world. What surprised her most, was that Minos, instead of starting fiercely up as was his wont, on hearing an unusual sound at night, cowed, whimpered, and slunk back into the chimney-corner. Not in the least doubting that it was her lover, she rose and opened the door. The vividness of her dream, being yet fresh upon her, and perhaps the certainty she felt of seeing him, made her imagine for the instant that she beheld the same figure standing before her. It was but for an instant, however; on looking a second time, there was no person to be seen. An overwhelming sensation of terror now rushed upon her, and she fled from the place with the rapidity of madness. In a state half-frantic, half-fainting, she reached her father's house, and flung herself on her bed, where the news of Moran's death reached her next morning.

To return, however to the present position of our tale. A certain number of the guests were now summoned into the room where the body lay, and all things were prepared for the ordeal. At a table near the window, with writing materials before him, was placed the worthy coroner, together with the lieutenant of the guard at the light-house, who had arrived a few minutes before. Mr. Sparling stood close by them, his face made up into an expression of wise abstraction, his hands thrust into his breeches-pockets, and jingling some half-pence which they contained. The betrothed lover of the murdered man had arisen from her knees, and put on a completely altered manner. She now stood in silence, and with tearless eyes, at the head of the bier, gazing with an earnestness of purpose, which might have troubled the carriage even of diffident innocence itself, into the face of every one who approached to touch the body. Having been aware of the suspi-

cions afloat against Yamon, and the grounds for those suspicions, she expected with impatience the arrival of that person.

He entered at length. All eyes were instantly turned on him. There was nothing unusual in the manner or appearance of the man. He glanced round the room, nodded to a few, touched his forehead to the coroner and the lieutenant, and then walking firmly and cooly to the centre of the apartment, awaited his turn for the trial. A very close observer might have detected a quivering and wincing of the eyelid, as he looked toward Ellen Sparling, but it was only momentary, and he did not glance in that direction a second time.

"Isn't that droll,* Shawn?" whispered Terry in the ear of the fairy doctor, who stood near him. The latter did not deem it convenient to answer in words, but he compressed his lips, contracted his brows, and threw an additional portion of empty wisdom into his physiognomy.

"E'then," continued Terry, "only mark Tim Fouloo going to touch the dead corpse all a' one any body would sispect *him* to be taking the life of a chicken, the *lahu-muthawn*,," (half-natural;) as a foolish looking, open-mouthed, open-eyed young booby advanced in his turn in a slow waddling gait to the corpse, and passing his hand over the face, retired with a stare of comic stupidity, which, notwithstanding the awful occasion, provoked a smile from many of the spectators.

Yamon was the last person who approached the corpse. From the moment he entered, the eye of Ellen Sparling had never been withdrawn from him for an

* "Droll," in Ireland, means simply, *extraordinary* and does not necessarily excite a comic association.

instant, and its expression now became vivid and intense. He walked to the place, however, with much indifference, and passed his hand slowly and repeatedly over the cheek and brow of the dead man. Many a head was thrust forward, as if in expectation that the inanimate lump of clay might stir beneath the feeler's touch. But no miracle took place, and they gazed on one another in silence as he slowly turned away, and folding his arms, resumed his place in the centre of the apartment.

"Well, Mr. Sparling," said his worship the coroner, "here is so much time lost: had we began to take evidence at once, the business would be nearly at an end by this time."

The old Palatine was about to reply, when their conversation was interrupted by an exclamation of surprise from Ellen Sparling. Turning quickly round, they beheld her with one of the clenched hands of the corpse between hers, gazing on it in stirless amazement. Between the dead-stiff fingers, appeared something of a bluish colour slightly protruded. Using the utmost strength of which she was mistress, Ellen forced open the hand, and took from it a small part of the lappel of a coat, with a button attached. And letting the hand fall, she rushed through the crowd, putting all aside without looking at one, until she stood before Yamon. A glance was sufficient. In the death, struggle, the unhappy Moran had torn away this portion of his murderer's dress, and the rent was visible at the moment.

"The murderer! blood for blood!" shrieked the frantic girl, grasping his garment, and looking almost delirious with passion. All was confusion and uproar. Yamon darted one fierce glance around, and sprung toward the open door, but Ellen Sparling still clung as

with a drowning grasp to her hold. He put forth the utmost of his giant strength to detach himself from her, but in vain. All his efforts seemed only to increase her strength, while they diminished his own. At last he bethought him of his fishing-knife, he plucked it from his belt, and buried it in her bosom. The unfortunate girl relaxed her hold, reeled, and fell on the corpse of her lover, while Yamon bounded to the door. Poor Terry crossed his way, but one blow laid him sprawling senseless on the earth, and no one cared to tempt a second. The rifles of the guard were discharged after him, as he darted over the sand-hills, but just before the triggers were pulled, his foot tripped against a loose stone, he fell, and the circumstance perhaps saved his life, (at least the marksmen said so.) He was again in rapid flight before the smoke cleared away.

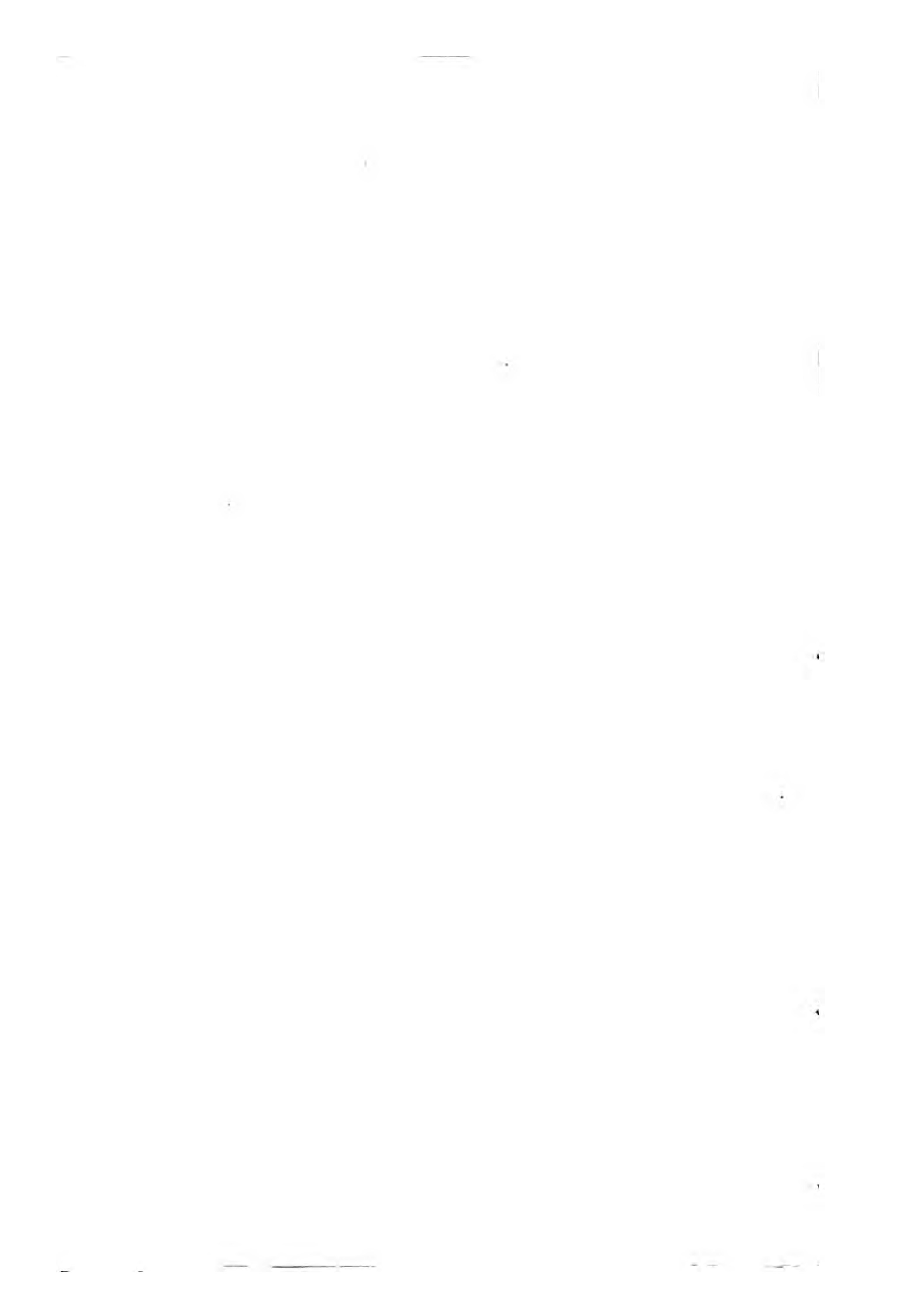
"*Shuil! Shuil!** The sand hills! the cliffs!" was now the general shout, and the chase immediately commenced. Many minutes elapsed ere they arrived at the cliffs, and half a dozen only of the most nimble footed just reached the spot in time to witness the last desperate resource of the murderer. He stood and looked over his shoulder for an instant, then rushing to the verge of the cliff, where it walled in the land to a height of forty feet, he waved his hand to his pursuers, and cast himself into the sea.

The general opinion was that he had perished, but there was no trace ever seen that could make such a consummation certain. The body was never found, and it was suspected by a few, that, incredible as the story might appear, he had survived the leap, and gained the little rocky island opposite.

* Come! Come!

The few who returned at dusk to Mr. Sparling's house, found it the abode of sorrow, of silence, and of death. Even the voice of the hired keener was not called in on this occasion to mock the real grief that sat on every brow, and in every heart. The lovers were waked together, and buried in the same grave at Kilfiehera.

THE BARBER OF BANTRY.



THE BARBER OF BANTRY.

CHAPTER I.

There is a small river which, rising amid the wildest and least cultivated upland of the county of Limerick in Ireland, pursues its lonesome course amid heath and bog, by cliff and quarry, through scenery of the bleakest and yet the most varied kinds, until it discharges its discoloured waters into the bosom of the Lower Shannon. Now gliding, deep and narrow, through some heathy plain, it presents a surface no wider than a meadow streamlet, and like placid characters in the world indicating its depth by its tranquillity; anon, it falls in one white and foamy volume over the brow of some precipitous crag, at the foot of which it dilates into a pool of tolerable extent. Further down it may be traced through the intricacies of a stunted wood, now babbling in one broad sheet over the limestone shallow; now rolling silent, deep, and dark, beneath the overhanging brier and hazel bushes that fling their tangled foliage across the waters from the indented bank In another place, it may be found dashing noisily from ledge to ledge of some opposing mass of

limestone, or pursuing its swift and gurgling course along the base of a perpendicular cliff until, as it approaches the mighty river in which its waters are received, it acquires surface and depth sufficient to float the fisher's skiff, and the small cot or lighter that conveys a lading of marl or sea-weed to manure the little potato garden of the humble agriculturist upon its banks. Nor even in this dreary region is the wild streamlet wholly destitute of animated figures to give a quickening interest to the general loneliness of the scenery along its side. The neighbouring cottager "snares" for pike and salmon in its shallows; the cabin housewife beetles her linen in the summer evening on its banks, and the barefoot and bareheaded urchin, standing or sitting by the side of an overhanging ash or elder, drops his pin-hook baited with an earthworm, into the deep and shaded corner which he knows, by profitable experience, to be the favourite haunt of the eel and trout; and in which it may be said, in passing, his simple apparatus is often as destructive as all the erudite machinery of Izaak Walton and his disciples.

In the summer season the appearance of this little river is such as we have described. In the winter, however, after the great rains, common in mountain scenery, have set in, the shallow bed of the stream is often filled, in the course of a few minutes, with a body of water, collected from the heights around its source, that presents a formidable contrast to the usually placid tenor of its course. It is then seen roaring and foaming along in one huge yellow flood, inundating not unfrequently the cottages and hamlets near its banks, and carrying dismay and death among pigs, poultry, and other anti-aquatic animals, who happen to stray

within reach of its overflowing current, and sometimes even placing life in jeopardy.

Not far from the banks of the river, and commanding a fnll prospect of its windings, through a varied and extensive though wild and thinly populated landscape, may be seen at this day the walls of a roofless mansion, which bears in its decay the marks of having been once inhabited by persons somewhat superior in rank to the "strong farmers" who with a few exceptions, constitute at present the sole aristocracy of the district. The style of the mason-work (the sounding term architecture would be somewhat misapplied to so simple an edifice) refers the date of its erection, and indeed correctly, to the beginning of the last century. The small windows are nearly square, and deep set in the massy stonework, while the lofty gables, comprising more than half the height of the whole building, present, when viewed from the end, an angle almost as acute as that of a wedge. Around, in a still more dilapidated condition than the dwelling-house, may be traced the ruins of numerous out-offices, the stable, the cow-house, the turf-house, the piggery, the fowl-house, and even (a contrast to the present poverty of the surrounding country) the coach-house. At a little distance the urchins of the neighbourhood point out the remains of earthen fences, not much more distinct than the immortal Roman entrenchment of Monkbarns, as all that is left of what was once the kitchen and flower-garden. Polyanthuses, almost dwindled into primroses, bachellors buttons impoverished both in size and colour, and a gooseberry or currant bush choked up in furze, furnish corroborative testimony to the tradition. The neighbouring peasantry still preserve the history of the building from its earliest foundation, as well as of its

successive owners, who were persons of no little notoriety in their time.

In the beginning of the last century, the tract of land on which the ruin stands was purchased by a certain Mr. Patrick Moynehan (more commonly known by the familiar diminutive Paddy Monehan, or Paddy the Lad). As, although respectably descended, Mr. Moynehan was not heir to any property whatever, and as his subsequent habits did not furnish any indications of that thrift which Shyloch tells us—

"Is blessing, if men steal it not,"

there was very general whispering and great perplexity as to how Paddy Moynehan could have acquired the means of purchasing an estate and building a handsome house. As the stories circulated upon the subject were numerous, and characteristic both of the place and period, we will venture to relate a few.

It was said by some, that on an occasion, when yet a young man, Pat Moynehan went to attend the "berrin'" of a friend. While the remainder of the crowd were occupied at their devotions in the place of death, young Moynehan, little impressed by the solemnity of the scene before him, rambled about among the graves, "funning" and amusing himself, and paying little attention to the severe glances that were occasionally directed towards him from the kneeling crowd. On one occasion, it happened that he found, placed upon the corner of a monument, a bleached skull, the eyeless sockets directed towards him, and seeming to convey a more terrible rebuke than ever could have proceeded from the eyes that once moved within their orbits. Moynehan, however, was nothing checked in his career of mirth.

"Look there!" he said, pointing out the skull to a companion, who in vain endeavoured to repress his unseasonable levity, "much as you think of yourself, that was once as fine a man as you are, and you'll have as ugly a grin upon your own face yet; he was just as good a gentleman, and as devout a Christian." Then turning to the skull, and taking off his hat with an air of mock politeness, he added, "I am happy, sir, to have the pleasure of making your acquaintance, and will feel obliged by your giving me the honour of your company at breakfast next Sunday." And off he turned with another bow of mock respect, and left the church-yard with his companion.

Before breakfast hour on the following Sunday (the legend still continues), young Moynehan went out to speak with a neighbour. While he was absent, and while the servant girl was occupied in preparing breakfast, the door was opened from without, and "a big man" entered. He did not say "God save you," nor "God bless you," as he came in, and walked silently to a chair that stood near the fire, and took his seat without speaking. His singular conduct was but the counterpart of his appearance. His dress was that of a gentleman, and rich, but so grotesque in form, and strange in material, that it was impossible to decide on the rank or country of the wearer. A high standing collar, a flowered silk waistcoat, ruffles at the wrists, a handsome pair of plush under-garments with golden knee-buckles, and silver ones of an enormous size across the instep of his square-toed shoes; these, togethor with a well-powdered head of hair, brushed backward and gathered behind into a handsome queue, a cocked hat, which he carried under his arm, and a slender rapier by his side, constituted the chief portion of

that costume which looked so perplexing in the eyes of the mountain handmaiden. With all this there was in the expression of his eyes, and in the mechanical regularity of his movements, an air of she knew not what, that chilled the spirit of the young woman, and left her scarce the power to ask his business. Being, however, naturally of a free and hearty disposition, she did not suffer herself to be altogether daunted, but said, in a laughing manner, and after waiting a considerable time to hear him speak—

"Why, then, sir, arn't you a droll gentleman, to walk into a house in that kind o' way, an' sate yourself without sayin' a ha'p'orth?"

The stranger looked fixedly at her. "It is a law where I come from," says he, "that none of us shall speak untill we are spoken to; and if the same law prevailed among people I know here, there are many of their friends that would have reason to be glad of it. But where's the man o' the house? isn't it a shame for him to ask a gentleman to breakfast with him and not to be at home before him?"

While he was speaking Moynehan entered.

"Isn't it a burning shame for you," said the stranger in a loud voice, "to ask a gentleman to breakfast with you, and not to be at home before him?"

"Me ask you to breakfast!" exclaimed the astonished Moynehan; "I never laid eyes on you before, but you're as welcome as if you got fifty invitations."

"Indeed, but you did ask me," said the stranger, "and I'll tell you where, too;"—and stooping over towards him, he whispered in his ear.

The instant Moynehan heard the whisper, he fell in a death-like faint upon the floor. The stranger showed not the least concern, nor made any effort to relieve

him, but waited with the utmost indifference until he should revive. While he was yet insensible, the girl, standing in awe of this mysterious guest, requested him to sit down to breakfast.

"No, no," he answered; "I can eat nothing until your master sits with me; it was with him I came to breakfast."

When Moynehan came to himself, understanding from the girl what the stranger had said, he repeated the invitation, which was immediately accepted, and both sat down together. The effect of the first shock having passed away, Moynehan made up his mind to perform the part of host with true Irish hospitality. He laughed, talked, jested, told his best stories, shook his guest by both hands together, and protested that he was as welcome "as a rose in June." He ordered the freshest eggs and fried the richest bacon, and treated the stranger with the most perfect hospitality.

They had scarcely done breakfast when a bell was heard ringing at a distance.

"What's that bell?" asked the stranger, in a sharp tone.

"Oh, it's nothing," said Moynehan with a careless air; "only the bell for chapel."

The stranger said nothing, but looked very serious. At length, rising from his chair he addressed his host as follows:—

"You're an honest fellow, after all, and you may thank your hearty hospitable conduct that I do not make you suffer severely for the trouble you gave me by your invitation; however, you must not say that you gave your breakfast for nothing. Meet me this evening by the elder tree near the river side, and you shall hear something that you will thank me for."

Moynehan kept the appointment, and those who gave credit to the story (and they comprised no small portion of the inhabitants of the surrounding cottages) asserted that during their evening conference, his unearthly visiter revealed to him a quantity of hidden treasure in a neighbouring ruin, more than sufficient to warrant the expensive style in which he soon began to live; others, while they admitted the truth of the greater portion of the story, denied that there was any thing supernatural in the case. They asserted that the whole was a *hoax* played upon Moynehan by a young man, a stanger in the place, who observed his conduct at the funeral, and availed himself of the mock-invitation which he overheard, to read the wag a lesson, and to help himself to a comfortable breakfast. It was certain, indeed, that Moynehan himself never liked to have the story alluded to in his hearing, but this circumstance was urged, by the advocates of the wonderful, as evidence in favour of their own version of the tale. Those who contended for the common-place, were in the habit of accounting for Moynehan's great accession of wealth by other than supernatural means. He had become engaged, they said, in common with many other persons in his time, in a species of commerce which is viewed with a jealous eye by all governments; and by his share in the disposal of two or three cargoes of tobacco and other expensive luxuries, had amassed money enough to rest on his oars for all his after life.

Other persons gave a different account of the manner in which Moynehan obtained his riches. This party seemed inclined to strike a medium between the supernatural and the common-place. Moynehan, they said, rented two or three small farms nearly adjoining

that tract of mountain-land which subsequently became his estate. Neither providence, nor settled and regular industry were amongst the qualities for which he was most remarkable. A man whose sole income was derived from his share in the profits of those small farms, he still maintained a style of living not surpassed by many who could boast of fee-simple patrimonies to support and palliate such extravagance. He kept a pack of hounds and a huntsman, and gave jovial entertainments to such of the neighbouring gentry as would condescend to accept his hospitality. His house was ever open; a family piper lent his music to the dance of ruin; there was nobody who did not look upon Moynehan as a paragon of good fellows, except his landlord, and even he could scarcely find it in his heart to proceed to extremities with a person of so much spirit and goodnature. It is the fate of most goodnatured spendthrifts, however, to tire out in the end the forbearance of even their most forbearing friends, and Moynehan formed no exception to the general rule. After running six years in arrear of of rent, he was thunderstruck by the intelligence that Sir David Hartigan was on the eve of visiting his property in the county, and of course would not leave Mr. Patrick Moynehan without a call. This was the signal for consternation. Ejectments and executions floated before the eyes of Moynehan; and before he could collect even a moderate portion of the arrear last due, the baronet was on his way to his estate. It was (no uncommon case with Irish landowners, even at that period of home legislation) the first visit he had ever made to his paternal inheritance, and of this circumstance Moynehan determined to take advantage for his security. He called the tenants together and

harangued them in the most earnest manner on the propriety of giving their landlord a suitable reception.

"I need not tell you all," he said, "that Sir David has been a good landlord to us all—[hurra! hurra!] a man that gives the poor man time for his money—[hurra!]—that never yet *distressed** a tenant for his rent, nor bore hard on those that he knew to be well inclined if they had the means—[hurra! hurra!]—very well then, lads; you will remember that this is the first time he has ever shown himself amongst his tenants, and let us take care that he has no cause to complain of his reception."

A new volley of cordial "hurras" announced the acquiescence of the assembled tenants iu this agreeable proposal, and preparations were immediately set on foot for receiving the baronet in the most splendid style. The demesnes and lawns of the small gentry within five miles round, were stripped of their fairest poplars and mountain ash, in order to form triumphal arches along the road which led to the village of * * * * *, where the great man was to reside during his stay. Hardy would have been the owner of a tapering fir or larch, who had dared to murmur at seeing his grounds invaded, and the pride of his shrubbery laid low for this festive purpose. The mothers, wives, and sisters of the cottiers lent their bright coloured shawls, ribands, and handkerchiefs, to flutter amid the foliage, and add new gaiety to the scene. There was one article of holiday splendour in which there was no stint. A great portion of Sir David's estate consisting of excellent bog, there was no lack of material for bonefires. Accordingly, at every cross road within half a mile round, and almost at every second cabin in

* Distrained.

the village itself, there was a pile of turf and bogwood, the contribution of the surrounding tenantry, ready for the torch the instant the carriage of the mountain sovereign should appear. But what exceeded all beside, was the zeal exhibited by Mr. Patrick Moynehan himself, the instigator, in a great degree, of the whole proceeding, and who was moved to it, partly by real good-will towards his landlord, and in part, by certain undefined hopes and impulses, which we will leave the knavish reader to divine. Before his door, upon the bare and level green, was piled a circle of turf, in the midst of which was suspended by machinery, which had taxed the ingenuity of the whole district, a prime ox, intended to be roasted whole. Besides this, were the lesser fires, at which pigs, turkeys, geese, and other inferior animals of culinary celebrity were prepared, each by the persons who had contributed both fire and meat.

Above the gateway which led to this gala spot, was suspended a painted board, surrounded by green boughs, with of course, what other inscription than "Cead millia faltha," executed in the best manner that the village could afford.

The day at length arrived, and the great man came. In consequence of his continual absenteeism, he had certain misgivings with respect to his popularity amongst his own tenantry, which made him wholly unprepared for the enthusiastic reception with which he was now honoured. Within half a mile of the village, he was met by a prodigious multitude of people, of both sexes, and of all ages, shouting, laughing, and capering for joy. Flutes, fiddles, bagpipes, and, in lieu of these, tin cans, dildorns, and every other implement from which any sound could be ex-

tracted that might bring the idea of music to the mind of the rudest hearer, added their obstreperous harmony to the general uproar. What need to pen our way through all the glories of the feast that followed? Some idea may be formed of the enjoyment of the worthy Baronet (who was amazingly fat), when we mention that he was placed from noon to evening of a broiling day in June, in the centre of between thirty and forty huge fires, the smoke of which settling low, in consequence of the calm, and the tenuity of the mountain air had well nigh stifled him; that in addition to this, he had to dance (according to indispensable custom) with almost all the young women in the place; besides other duties of courtesy, so oppressive, that he was afterwards heard to declare, that he had almost as lief be a king and go through all the labour of a levee, or drawing room, as to spend such another day at * * * * *. In addition to this, when it is remembered that the gates were thrown open, and free admission given to all travellers, comprising the numerous beggars, whom the foregone fame of the feast had drawn together from the distant parishes, it must be acknowledged that the situation of the excellent Baronet was truly enviable. At all events, he could not choose but feel the deepest gratitude to Mr. Moynehan, at whose house he spent the ensuing fortnight. The latter, however, seemed to think the glory sufficient for his landlord, for by some means or other, Sir David never could find an opportunity of engaging him in any serious conversation on the subject of his rent. If he spoke of money, Moynehan talked of woodcocks,—if he mentioned arrears, Moynehan could show him the prettiest fly-fishing in Ireland,—or he had a present of grey-hounds of the genuine old Irish stock,—known

relatives of those that were presented by Sir Somebody to the Great Mogul,—or he insisted on his accepting a beautiful mare of the most unblemished pedigree–anything–everything he was ready to furnish him with except the needful. And the issue was, that Sir David returned to Dublin, looking upon Moynehan as one of the most generous fellows and the most impracticable tenants in the world.

However, such a state of things could not continue. Year followed year, threat came on threat, and ruin showed her hideous countenance at length, in the shape of a formal ejectment from his holding. He might still (such were the times) have set the law at bay, and maintained possession for some years longer at least; but this he would not do. He must give up his farm, and the thought filled him with the deepest melancholy. At table, the huntsman cracked his joke in vain (for the huntsman, it should be understood, was a man of sufficient importance to occupy a small side table in the common dining room, and after dinner to take his seat by the ample fireside). It signified little that it was the same irresistible joke, or the same admirable anecdote which had shook his sides with laughter regularly once a day for half a score years before. He now listened to it with a vacant eye, and a countenance that plainly showed how far his thoughts were out of hearing.

What was to be done? Was he to bid farewell to his numerous domestics, and to tell his huntsman that he was to hunt no more for him, and to sell or give away the hounds, and to resign his flies and fishing-tackle, and to watch no more the beautiful motion of his greyhounds as they shot like ghosts across the mountain heath in March? The thought was dread-

ful. He wandered like a solitary being by the river side, and along the hedges which enclosed his lawn and paddock, and seemed to feel already the pressure of the abject poverty, to which he must soon be reduced.

Amid all the faults which he now so bitterly regretted, if not for a better motive, yet for the ruin they had brought upon himself, there was one feature in his past conduct which he called to mind with pleasure. He never in a single instance had refused assistance to a fellow-creature in distress. No matter who the individual, how indifferent the character, or what his own circumstances at the moment, he never had withheld his aid where it was wanted. No consideration of inconvenience to himself, no dread of theft or lack of means in his own household, prevented his affording to every individual, without exception, high or low, great or little, who chose to apply for it, a comfortable dinner and a night's lodging beneath his roof. This indiscriminate charity, it is said, was not wholly in accordance with the views of Mrs. Moynehan, whose wardrobe and fowl-house had often suffered to her husband's hospitality, but he would hear nothing of her complaints. Giving was with him the easiest of all duties, and as there were some others to which he did not attend so closely, he seemed determined to practise this in its perfection. The greater the loss and the greater the inconvenience, he thought the greater the merit also; and he had an idea, that what is bestowed in this way is not lost, but that merciful actions, beyond all others whatsoever, buoy up the spirit at the hour of death and after.

In his arguments with Mrs. Moynehan upon this subject, he was in the habit of relating an anecdote for

her edification, which we will transcribe for that of the reader.

"There were two brothers, twin-brothers," he said, "who were so fervently attached, that each made the other promise, in case he should die first, to return, if possible, and let the survivor know how he had fared in

> That undiscovered country from whose bourne
> No traveller returns.

Both, however, had passed the meridian of life without meeting any serious illness, and both forgot a compact which they had made in their youth, and which was blotted from their memory by the cares of manhood and the new engagements in which matrimony had involved them. On a sudden one of them was stunned by the intelligence that his brother had died of that species of brain fever called a *coup de soleil.* The news filled him with grief. In the evening he walked out to indulge his sorrow in a neighbouriug churchyard, and to relieve his mind by prayer. While thus occupied, an oppressive sense of some extraordinary presence fell upon his mind. He looked up—his brother stood before him. His first feeling was an emotion of extacy at the thought that the rumour of his brother's death was false, and he ran to cast himself upon his neck. But as he proceeded, the other retired, and always, to his extreme astonishment, preserved exactly the same distance at which he had at first beheld him.

"'Why do you not speak to me?' said the surviving brother; 'they told me you were dead, and that we should meet no more.'

"'Brother,' said the figure, in an unearthly voice,

'do you forget the agreement which we made near this spot exactly twenty-five years since?'

"The hearer instantly understood the whole, and that it was his brother's shade which he beheld. He trembled, and a cold moisture settled on his forehead.

"'I am allowed to come back,' says he, 'for your warning and for your consolation. Immediately after my death, I found myself in the finest country I ever saw in my life, with the richest demesnes and grandest houses that ever were found, and millions of people walking amongst the trees, and talking and laughing together, as happy as the day is long. To my great surprise I found that almost all the ladies and gentlemen that owned the fine houses were people that I remembered in this world as poor beggars, and religious christians, and persons of that kind, that nobody cares about. I went from one to another but not one of them knew me, and the man that had the charge of the place was going to turn me out, when one of the gentlemen called to him and said he knew me. I looked close at him, and at last remembered the face of a poor blind man whom I had guided once on a stormy night from a neighbouring village to his own door, but he had now a pair of eyes as bright as stars. That was the only act of real charity I ever recollected to have done in my life, and it was the means of getting me a handsome house and garden, where I live happier than I can describe."

A celebrated Greek critic tells us that if we separate the sublime from the allegorical, we shall often strip it of half its excellence. If the axiom be applied in the case of Moynehan's legend, even polished readers may find it not wholly without meaning. From the fact, however, that Mr. Moynehan was in the *habit* of re-

peating it for the improvement of his lady, it may be inferred that it had not all the influence upon her conduct which he could desire.

CHAPTER II.

A Few evenings previous to the day on which he, Moynehan, was to give up possession of his house and lands, a storm arose so terrible that it seemed doubtful whether the building would survive the ownership of its present master. The wind came howling and shrieking up the unsheltered heath, and through the close ravines in the neighbourhood. Now it shook the window frames as if in sudden passion at their obstinate resistance to its fury, now it hissed and roared against the well-bound thatch—and now wound its dismal horn in the lofty chimney-top. Mr. Moynehan sat by his parlour-fire, comparing his past with what must, in all probability, be his future style of living, and the contrast was almost too much for his philosophy. Suddenly the voice of Mrs. Moynehan, raised high in objurgation in the kitchen, attracted his attention. Half opening the parlour door, he paused to ascertain the cause of sounds "not unfamiliar to his ear."

"Out of my house—pack—out of my house this instant," exclaimed the lady, in a voice scarce a note of which was lower than C above the fifth over line. "It was you, and the like of you, that brought ruin to our door,—pack out!"

A shrill and querulous murmur was heard in answer.

"The storm!" continued Mrs. Moynehan, "it is no matter for the storm. As well as you found your way

here, find your way back, for here you shall not stay an hour. Do your hear me talking to you? Quit my house this instant. Aye—cough, cough—I dare say you know how to do more than that when it serves your turn. Out—pack at once!"

At this instant Mr. Moynehan entered the kitchen, where he beheld a sight that filled him with indignation against the cruelty of his helpmate. An old man, shaking with palsy, and so worn down by age and its infirmities that it seemed as if his years could scarcely number less than a century, was standing on the well-flagged kitchen floor, and gazing on the stout and portly Mrs. M. with a deprecating attitude. It would be difficult to conceive a more complete picture of misery than the old man presented. A long staff, half again as high as its possessor, and held in both hands, seemed all that enabled him to keep his feet; his knees his hands, his head, his whole frame shook violently with his disease, so that had his features been less strongly marked it would be difficult to gather their expression in the continual and rapid motion. His dress was ragged in the extreme, and so patched that it seemed as if he never had been the master of another suit. In addition to this he had been already drenched in rain from head to foot, and his long white hair and the hanging fritters of his garment, still dropped as if he were about to dissolve away upon the floor, while his face, which looked as if the loose skin had been drawn over without being attached to the fleshless bones was glistening with rain, and haggard with fear, at the prospect of being again exposed to the horrors of the storm. Moynehan could not help thinking, however, as he looked on the old man, that his terror seemed excessive for the occasion, and that his manner

resembled that of one who feared some danger of a still more appalling kind than any which the storm could bring.

"Will you—turn out—the—poor ould man in—the storm an' all—" he gasped forth word after word at long intervals, and with gestures of the most agonising terror. "Give me a night's—lodg—in' an' I'll pray for—you for— ever an'—ever. Don't send me out to the robb——storm, I mane."

"To the robbers? what robbers? What robbers do you expect to meet in———? and if it was full of them what have you to lose by robbers? eh?"

"Did I—say—robbers, a-gra?" said the old man—"don't mind me—I'm an ould fool that hasn't any sense. Sure enough, what robbing could they have upon me; a poor ould beggar that has nothin' only what rags is coverin' my ould bones—nothin' in life—nothin'—Ayeh—robbers—I don't know what I'm sayin' with the dint o' fear; but won't you, like a good Christian, gi' me a night's lodgin'—anywhere—upon these bare flags—I'm aisy, so as the robb——so as I'd have the roof betune me an' the clouds to-night,—an, may the heavens be your bed hereafther."

"She will—she will—come in and sit by the fire," exclaimed Moynehan, interposing just as his lady had opened her lips, to give vent to a fresh volley of reproaches. "Get supper ready for that poor man," he added, to a servant—"and you, my dear, will not even affliction itself teach you to pity the afflicted? you don't know how long we may have a house ourselves."

"I know how long we're to have this house," answered Mrs. Moynehan, in a low growling tone, like that of an over zealous watch-dog, which has received

a reprimand from its master for offering a too obstinate resistance to the entrance of a peaceable stranger.

"You don't know that neither," said Moynehan, "and no matter if it should be ours for no longer than an hour, I am determined to make a free use of it while it belongs to me. Walk in, good fellow."

The poor man, clapping his hands together, and muttering blessings, staggered forward to the fire-place, still casting a timid eye askance at the lady, as if he could have answered in the language of poor Buff—

> "I dare not, Sir,
> For fear of your cur."

Mr. Moynehan having seen the beggar comfortably established by the fire-side returned to the parlour. Here he began to meditate upon the difference between his own condition and that of the poor mendicant, and found so much that was preferable in the former that he began to recover his spirits.

"At the worst, my dear," said he, addressing Mrs. Moynehan, "we are not so badly off as that poor fellow. We will still have many friends, and we will not in all probability, be without a house of some kind or another, and at all events we have each of us a decent suit of clothes, which is more than can be said for him. So that 'tis a great comfort to think our case is not so bad but that it might be worse."

Before Mrs. Moynehan could reply, the parlour-door was opened, and a face, distinguished by a gaping mouth and a pair of staring eyes, appeared at the aperture. It was that of Rick or Rickhard Lillis, the faithful groom and valet (not to mention fifty other offices which he filled with equal fidelity and skill) of Mr. Moynehan. He remained for a little time in the

same position, gaping and gazing as if, like a ghost, he could not speak until some living being had addressed him.

"Well Rick, what ails you now?"

"The poor man, Sir!"

"What of him?"

"He wants the priest, Sir; I'm in dhread he's dyin'."

"Pooh, nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. Moynehan, snatching a light and hurrying from the room. Strange as it seemed, he found his servant's story true. The old beggar was lying in the kitchen, on the straw pallet which had been prepared for him, and gasping, as it appeared, almost in the agonies of death. By this the storm had in some degree abated, and Moynehan ordered Rick Lillis to tie a collar on the head of the working mare, and ride off at once for the clergyman and the neighbouring doctor. When both those functionaries had left the house (which was not for a few hours,) he paid another visit to his miserable guest. The old man was lying on his back in a feeble condition, and still muttering some incoherent sentences about "robbers" and "down the glen of B——" and of "the storm," and "his own cabin in the west." On hearing Mr. Moynehan's voice, he looked fixedly upon him, and seemed making an effort to collect his scattered reason.

"You will have no raison, Sir," he said, "to repent your charity to me. The docthor tells me I can't live; so I must only see and make use o' the time that's left me.

"I was born westwards, near Dingle. My father thought to make a scholar of me, but from a child I never could take to the book. Neither birch nor mas-

ther could ever get any good o' me. No one could equal me for michin' from school, and while I was there, I'd be at any thing but the learnin' So one day, afther a'most breakin' his heart to thry an' get good o' me, my father kem' out, an' he havin' a book in one hand and a spade in the other.

"Here, Tom,' says he, 'take your choice between these; if you choose the book, you may become a counsellor one time or other—if you take the spade, you'll die as you began."

"I looked this way and that, and afther considherin' for a while I took the spade. My father left me nothin' else, but I thought it enough, for I didn't know what it was to have more. I was light and happy; my conscience ga' me no throuble, an' I had no sort o' care upon my mind.

"Well, of a day, a burnin' day in June, (I remember it well—it was the worst day to me that ever came out of the skies)—of a Little St. John's eve, I was making a drain to clear a bog belongin' to a gentleman that used to gi' me work. I ought to think o' that day well, an' so I do; an' often did before. It was a fine bright day, but it darkened my mind for ever afther. The sun was shinin' all around, the birds were singin' in the little bushes, the cuckoo was cooin' at a distance in the wood, an' the young foals were galloppin' about upon the green fields like kittens at play. 'Twas a fine day to man an' beast, but 'twas a woeful day to me; it was just then, as I was whistling an' working in the thrench, I threw up somethin' upon the bank that sounded as it hit agin' a stone. I took it up an' looked at it. It was like a collar that would be roond a person's neck, an' I was told aftherwards, that it was a kind o' collar the ould Irish knights or kings, or people

o' that sort, used to wear as an ornament in former times. I scraped it a little, an' it was yellow inside; I took it to the docthor that lived in the same place, to see could he make any thing of it. He dipped the top of a quill in a little bottle he had, an' touched it where I scraped it, an' afther lookin' at it again, he wiped it an' handed it back to me, an' tould me it was raal goold.

"Until that time the thoughts o' riches, nor money, nor any thing o' the kind ever ga' me a day's unaisiness, I had my hire from one day to another, an I had health, an I cared for no more. But the minute he tould me it was raal goold, I felt as if my whole mind was changed within me at once; I took home the goold, an' put it under my head that night' an' slep' upon it, an' in the mornin' I went off to town, where I took it through all the gooldsmiths' shop to see what the'yd gi' me for it, and I sould it at last for seven pounds, which was twelve times more money than ever I had in my life before. From that day out, I never knew an hour's pace o' mind; and for eighty-seven years afther, that's to this present time, my whole end and aim was to add as much as I could to the price of what I found. I stinted my food, I stinted my clothin'; I never laid out as much as one ha'penny in sport. I never yet since that day, gave so much as one farthin' to a fellow crathur—an' now I must part it all—"

Here the unfortnnate old man heaved a deep groan, and his ghastly eyes rolled in their sockets with the agony.

"Bring witnesses if you have 'em," said he, in a feeble tone, "so that the law can't come between my words and their meaning afther I am gone."

Mr. Moynehan complied, and summoned Rick Lillis and another servant to the mendicant's bedside.

"Ye are witnesses," said the old man, faintly, "that out o' thanks to this gentleman for his charity to me, an' having no kith nor kindred o' my own, an' bein' sure he'll make a betther use o' what I have, than any body else I know, I lave him my outside coat an' its contents, an' all I have in the world besides."

The servants then retired, and the mendicant, taking a small and rusty key from his bosom, where it was tied fast with a piece of hempen twine, handed it to Moynehan, and said—

"There's a small cabin without a stick o' furniture, on the side of a hill by the ould bridge near Dingle. Any body will tell you where Garret Casey, the miser lives, when he's at home. There's a padlock on the doore, an' this is the key of it. Whisper hether. When I'm gone, go to that house, an' search in the corner near the cupboard in the inner room, an' rise up a brick that's there, an' have what's undher it—but—but—not till I'm gone, you know," the old man added, with a sudden expression of alarm; "the mother never loved her child, nor the wife her husband, nor the glutton his food, nor the drunkard his glass, as I loved what's undher that stone; an' what good is it for me now? I fasted for it—I watched for it—I hungered and thirsted for it—and I bore the heat and the cold, an' thought nothing of any kind o' labour that could add the smallest trifle to it; an' now I must part it all. If I suffered as much for my sins this would be a happy night to me. Many a mile I walked barefoot on many a flinty road, to add a little to it; an' all for you. If I loved the law o' God as well as I loved what's undher that brick, what a saint I'd be to night."

Soon after he began to rave in a distracted manner, about robbers, and felt for his key, and missing it, burst into feeble lamentations, and complained that he was undone, and that his house was plundered. Before morning he expired, after recovering his reason sufficiently to request that his remains might be conveyed to his own parish. On examining his garments they were found quilted with coins of every description, from gold to humble copper; guineas, dollars, shillings pence and halfpence, being stitched in indiscriminately between the lining and the cloth, to the amount of more than thirty pounds.

Mr. Moynehan complied with the last wishes of the dying man. He had the remains conveyed to the mendicant's native parish, and having found the cabin, waited until night in order to examine it. He then went, accompanied by Rick Lillis, and bearing a dark lantern in his hand, to the miser's wretched dwelling. It was a hovel of the very vilest kind. A round stone near the chimney corner served for a seat. There was no appearance of firing, no ashes on the hearth, nor even the least indication that any such luxury had brightened the lonely spot for years before. By the light of the lantern, Moynehan searched the gloomy little inner room which was partitioned off by a hurdle rudely smeared with clay. He found the brick and raised it. After clearing away a quantity of loose earth, he found a bag of tanned calf-skin, which, by its weight and bulk, he judged to be the treasure sought. It was nearly filled with gold, far more at the first glance than would be sufficient to relieve the legatee from all his difficulties.

When they had returned to the small inn at which they slept, Moynehan charged his servant to say no-

thing whatsoever when they should reach home, of their good fortune, judging of course that he might safely leave it to his own discretion to keep silence while they were still in a strange place. Rick Lillis could not for a long time find any form of expression in which to convey an idea of the extraordinary thoughts that filled his mind since the completion of this adventure. He remained sauntering from corner to corner of the room in which his master sat quietly musing by the fire side, now looking down at his feet, now directly up at the ceiling, now at every corner above, and anon successively at every corner below, as if he were looking out in all directions for suitable expressions.

"Well, there's no use in talking, masther; but this day flogged Ireland. See, for all, how 'tis no way foolish to do a good turn to high or low. Why then, I remember of a time, my father tellin' me (rest his sowl!) of a thing o' the kind that happened a first cousin of his own, one Brien Sheehy, that lived estwards in the hills o' Knockaderry. He was a very stupid man, sir, with submission to you, an' hadn't as much sense as would carry him from this to the bedpost; but he had a wife that was just as 'cute as he was foolish an' many's the time he'd be lost only for her. Well 'tis innocent people, they say, mostly gets the luck. Of a day Brien found a handful o' money in a field, where he was diggin', an' nobody lookin' at him the same time, so he went an' hid it in a ditch, makin' a hole for it with his spade, until he'd come an' take it away, when it would be his convenience. Well, sir, he went home and tould his wife what he found. 'You done some good, at last,' says she; 'where's the money?' 'Oh, I have it a-hide,' says he, 'in the field where I got it.' 'Well an' good,' says the wife; 'I

hope you have a mark upon it, the way you'll find it again; an' nat to be like Pat Piercy, the cobbler, that hid his tools so well that he never could find 'em afther.' 'Oh, I'll find it asy enough,' says Brien; 'for I took a fine big mark for it,' says he, 'a grey horse that was feedin' a-near the place when I put it a hide.' Well, the wife gev one screech that you'd hear a mile off. 'Oh, murther! you born *omodhaun*,' says she; 'sure the horse was no mark for you to take. Sure he'll lave that to go elsewhere,' says she, 'an then what 'll become o' your mark? 'Twas an evil day,' says she, I ever had anything to say to you; an' you'll bring us to beggary at last.' Well, poor Brien stood as if you shot him; an' then he darted out the doores, an' run for the bare life to the field where he left the money. An' sure enough the horse was clane at a conthrairy side o' the field. Poor Brien clapped his hands to his head, and was fit to be tied at the thoughts of it; but it was no use for him. He sarched the whole fields; but he might just as well be lookin' for lobsthers in the same place.

"Well, sir, as he was walkin' a few weeks afther, on the high road, comin' from market, he met an ould beggar-man that axed him for an alms. 'Don't be talkin' to me, man,' says Brien. 'I lost more money a month ago, than I'll ever have in my life again; but here's one penny for you any way.' 'Where did you lose it?' says the poor man. 'I lost it in such a field, where I had it a-hide in a ditch,' says he. 'Well,' says the beggar, 'one good turn desarves another. If you'll step acrass the field, to Paul Rahilly's, you'll hear somethin' of it,' says he: 'I turned in the *boreen*, 'while ago, an' I heard them talkin' of a power o' money the childher found in a ditch, as they were playin''

Well, sir, sure enough, he went acrass to Rahilly's; an', I declare, he got the money again. The Rahillys were very honest people; an' the first token he gev 'em o' the money bein' his, I'll engage they handed it over to him. So that even a poor beggar might have it in his——. Sonuhar to me," added Rick, as a loud sound, resembling the noise of a penny trumpet, cut short the moral of his tale.—" Sonuhar* to me; —but he's fast asleep the whole time, an' I, like a fool, tellin, my story to the four walls. Well, an' some walls have ears, they say, an' why shouldn't I? The masther is a made man, any way, that's plain enough."

CHAPTER III.

It will be recollected that we do not relate the above as a fact of which we have historical knowledge; but as one of the explanations rumour gave of the way in which Mr. Moynehan had obtained his sudden wealth. His secret was kept, and the day of sale arrived. An auctioneer from Limerick attended to put up the house-hold furniture and other articles to the highest bidder. Many, however, said it was folly to talk; that there would be no bidders at all, the Moynehans were so hospitable, and so well liked throughout the country. Though the morning was rainy, it did not prevent great crowds from attending; and, to the great astonishment of the whole world, biddings were just as smart as if Mr. Moynehan were a perfect stranger. There was one circumstance, however, which occasioned universal amazement in the crowd.

Mr. Moynehan had taken his seat next the auctio-

* A good wife, or husband.

neer, his hands, resting on his walking cane, and his eyes fixed upon the various bidders, as if to be satisfied by ocular demonstration of the identity of the individuals who were now pouncing like hawks upon the spoils of the mansion, which had been for near a score of years as free to their use as to his own. The auction was about to commence, when in strutted Rick Lillis, with the air of a nobleman, and took his place amongst the aristocratic purchasers.

"Give me a chair, here!" he cried aloud, in a voice like thunder.

Three or four servants flew to execute his orders, and he placed himself in the seat with an air of surly dignity, as if he wished to see who would presume to meddle with him. The gentlemen and ladies around him began to whisper, and gather their brows, and seemed not altogether to like it, but Rick maintained his place unmoved.

"Gi' me a bottle o' wine!" he called aloud, in the same tone—"an' a glass for dhrinkin', an' a crust o' bread."

Again half a dozen attendants flew to execute his wishes with the same alacrity as before.

"That'll do," said Rick; "Now, Misther auctioneer, you can commence business: I'm quite ready."

The auctioneer bowed low with mock gravity, and proceeded to put up the articles of furniture in succession. Nothing could be more painful to Mr. Moynehan's friends than to bid at all; but *as the articles were going*, each thought he might as well have them as another. What was their astonishment, however, when Rick Lillis bid for every lot just as it was about to be knocked down to another! Lot after lot, there was nothing too high nor too low for him; and he paid

for every article in sterling gold upon the instant. Every article, without exception,—not a stick of furniture, nor of any thing else, was carried out by a stranger. The bidders now began to turn the tables upon Rick, and many said that he was an ungrateful fellow, after having been able to save so much money through the liberality of his master, to make so thankless an use of it at the close. However, amid all this generous zeal for the ruined Moynehan, none of the jovial companions and old friends seemed to think of asking him to his house,—but, one after another, they dropped away, and left him to confer alone with his calamity.

Mr. Moynehan made no effort to retain his farms, but settled honourably with his landlord. He then made the purchase long since spoken of, and began to build the house, the ruins of which have been described at the commencement of our narrative. It would be a vain attempt to paint the consternation which was excited throughout the country side, by the news that Moynehan had purchased an estate, nor the celerity with which he had all his friends about him once again, as officious and as cordial as ever. The mystery of Rick Lillis's extraordinary wealth became clear when they found the furniture of the old house appropriated to its accustomed uses in the new.

Mr. Moynehan, however, did not reproach his old neighbours with their ingratitude.

"How would I be the gainer, my dear," he would say to his indignant helpmate, on perceiving her anger rise at the approach of any of those worthy adherents "how would I be the gainer by declaring war against all my neighbours, because they are not just the kind of people I would have them?—If I were to wait for

friends until I should find them without fault, I might live to the age of Methusalem without finding as much as would make a hand at whist, and Dumby one of the party too. Sure 'tis the very fault I have to find with myself, that I'm not just as I'd like to be. And, poor people, if they have acted wrong, they will suffer enough to it hereafter, without my endeavouring to make them uncomfortable at present."

Accordingly, there was no one who was not invited to the Housewarming. Now, if any uninitiated reader should desire to know what an Irish Honsewarming was in the days of Mr. Moynehan, he must be content with our brief description, seeing that no such entertainment is to be found amongst the extravagancies of the present day. The period was a century too late for the muse of DERRICK, and a century too early for the bard of Ballyporeen, or we would have considered it unnecessary to say more than that a Housewarming had been given.

"Rick!" Mr. Moynehan exclaimed from the bed room, where he was occupied in an operation from which half the human race are happily exempt—we mean that of shaving—"Rick!" exclaimed Mr. Moynehan.

"Goin', masther!" The reader must understand that Rick Lillis generally said *going*, when he meant *coming*. "Goin', masther!" answered Rick, and his gaping mouth and staring eyes were presently visible at the chamber door.

"Rick, do you know that I am to give a Housewarming on Thursday next?"

"Oyeh, iss, Sir—long life to you. The missez tould uz ov it."

"Well, Rick, you know we shall want music, so I leave that part of the affair to your management."

"Ullilu! me, Sir," exclaimed Rick, in modest alarm. "Sorrow tune did I ever play in my life upon any thing, exceptin' it was a little taste upon the jews-harp, an' I'm sure it is aisily known that wouldn't go far among a whole houseful."

"You mistake me, Rick; I have as little inclination to listen to your music as you can have to furnish it But I mean that you shall find musicians, so mind what I tell you. If I find that there is a man within three baronies round us, that ever drew horsehair across catgut, or ever danced the chanter of a bagpipe on his knee, or ever whistled God save the King upon a pip-olo, who shall not be at the Housewarming on Thursday next—I'll—no I can't hang you—ah, joy be with the times when I could,—before we ever had a law to interfere with us—but I'll be tempted to go as near it as I can—"

"Long life to your honour, sure I'll do my best."

"Take no excuse, as you value your head—"

"Excuse!" exclaimed Rick, with a half shout of surprise. "I'll go bail, I'll make 'em come jumpin' an' glad to be axed—I'll take my hazel stick in my hand, an' I'd like to see the man among 'em that would daar say 'no' to me, when I give the commands."

He left the room, and so punctually did he fulfil his commission, that on the Thursday following a troop of fiddlers, fifers, pipes, and other musicians, of all ages and of both sexes, had assembled at the new, edifice, sufficient of themselves to have constituted a numerous company. But they were soon lost in the multitudes that followed. Cars, horses, truckles (furnished with a bed tick, to supply the lack of springs and

cushion,) every species of vehicle, and every beast of burthen that the land afforded were put in requisition, by the numerous guests who came with unblushing countenances to claim a share of Moynehan's returning hospitality. Nor did he treat them to Timon's feast of " smoke, and lukewarm water." Moynehan never expected much gratitude from his friends, so he was not disappointed when he did not receive it. It was in compliance with the promptings of his own heart, and not in the wild goose chase of human gratitude that he ever was either hospitable or generous so he felt no indignation at being denied what he had never sought. Indeed, it is most probable that if he had heard the story of Timon of Athens, he would have thought him a selfish fellow, who precisely met with his desert for affecting the name of generosity, when in reality he gave nothing, for which he did not both expect and demand a return; and an exquisite temper he manifested too, when he made that wonderful discovery, that it is not quite so easy to borrow as it is to lend in this world. No—" uncover, dogs, and lap," was not the welcome Moynehan gave his guests—but such a banquet that it was " given up to it," such a " giving out" was never known before in that side of the country, any way. And he had the satisfaction too of finding that it was all a mistake about the ingratitude of his neighbours, for there was scarcely an individual amongst them that did not before morning take an opportunity of assuring their host, that all he had in the world was at his service, and his life if he wanted it into the bargain, a fact which shows how erroneous was the evil opinion entertained of them by Mrs. Moynehan, and how cautious we ought to be of judging by appearances.

And so the house was built and warmed.

CHAPTER IV.

DURING the life-time, or, as the peasantry on his estate termed it, the "reign" of Mr. Moynehan, the affairs of Tipsy Hall, as he named his new residence, 'for raisons," were managed with tolerable moderation. We have material enough to dwell at ample length on the subsequent history of the edifice, before it came into the hands of the individual whose earthly destinies were most intimately interwoven with the subject of our tale. We might describe the feasting, the drinking, and, unhappily for the credit of a portion of our ancestry, the duelling, the cock-fighting, the horse-racing, the dissipation of every kind of which it was once the scene and some readers might find so faithful a detail of manners, now happily almost forgotten, not wholly destitute of interest. We might dwell upon the unheard of magnificence, displayed at the funeral of the first Moynehan, who chose to be interred at his birth-place, which was "far up in the north," in the county of Donegal. We might follow the sable vehicle for eighteen days along the wild and varied road, attended as it was the whole way by near one thousand persons. We might describe the storm of rain, that, for three long days, pouring down incessantly upon the mournful train, added unexpected dreariness and discomfort to a task already full of gloom and woe; we might tell, (for the sources from which we draw our information faithfully record the number,) how many, dying on the wayside of cold and of fatigue, how many, in a sudden feud arising between two hostile factions, who were sleuded in the train, had given this testimony of their fidelity and zeal to the

manes of their benefactor. For a whole day it was said the coffin halted in its progress, until this controversy was decided, and then the whole proceeded in the same order as before. We might dilate yet further on the extravagancies of the more unbridled spirits who succeeded the founder of the mansion in his possesions, and on the wilder orgies with which they made its walls re-echo through many a winter night. But we write to illustrate not to satirise human nature, and it is possible that if we were to transcribe all that is preserved amongst the neighbouring peasantry of the history of the ruin, the reader might hardly thank us for our preciseness. Add to this, that we must confess, at the risk of losing no matter how many of our readers, the subject has for us but little attraction. Boisterous, quarrelsome manners, habitual excesses, the manners, in a word, of the drinking table, have for us, whether in life or on paper, but little charm, even when dashed with gaiety and wit, and made interesting by personal daring and adventure. Our ancestors had their follies —we have ours—and it is rather hard that we should laugh at their manners, when they have not the opportunity of returning the compliment.

We shall therefore, suffer this portion of our history to be gathered from the lips of no less a personage than Rick Lillis himself, as, an old and crutch-borne man, he stood amongst the ruins of the building on a summer day, detailing with melancholy interest, to an inquisitive tourist, the fortunes of the family he had survived.

" There was somethin' wrong about the house, sir, ever from the very big'nin'. The dhrollest* *nizes* ever you seen, used to be hard about the place at night,

* Strangest.

every day, from the time the first stone was laid, until the roof an' all came down. In the dead o' the night time the people used to be called out o' their sleep by sthrange voices, and they never could find out who it was that called 'em, It bate all ever you hear. For a time after the ould masther's death (rest his sowl!) there was no standin' the place at all, with the stories they all had, that he used to be seen risin'—himself an' the ould *bucogh,* that it was known afther left him all the money. Sometimes they used to be seen walkin' together, lock-arms, in the moonshine; more times, they say, when the family would be sittin' by the fire-side, talkin', an' no light in the place only the blaze o' the fire, they'd hear the doors open, an' they'd look back this way over their shoulders, an' there they'd see old Moynehan with his grave-clothes about him, lookin' in upon 'em. But there's one thing I was, as I may say, present at myself, an' 'tis as thrue as you're standin' there.

"You don't know, may be, the *dizaze* the ould masther died of? Asy, an' I'll tell you. It was what they call a stomach-wolf. He was out of a day in harvest with the men, an' bein' rather hot, an' the fresh hay convanient, he sat down upon a cock of it, an' fell asleep. Well, he knew nothin' of it, but it is then the rogue of a wolf took an advantage of him to get into his mouth, so 'cute, an' down his throath, an' into the stomach snug an' warm, an' the masther nivir knowing a word about it. When he woke by an' by, an' went home to dinner, he felt so hungry, that you'd think he'd ate the world, an' dhrink the ocean dhry. His dinner was no more to him than a boiled piatee. He ate an' he ate, an' he dhrank an' he dhrank, an' he was just as hungry an' as thirsty when he got up as he

was when he sat down. So it went on from day to day, an' instead of being betther, 'tis worse and worse he was gettin' ever an' always.

"One neighbour come in, an' another, an' not one of 'em could give the laste account o' what aileded him. An' what was worst of all was, that in place o' getting fat with all he ate, 'tis laner an' laner he was gettin' every day, till he was a complete nottomy. Not a ha'porth he ett or dhrank done him any good.

"Still nobody could tell from Adam what was the matther with him. The docthor that was in the place, although bein' a very knowin' man, he knew nothin' whatever of this ailment, never meetin' a case o' the kind before. One neighbour recommended one thing, and another another, but the masther did'nt give in to any of 'em some way, an' when they'd bring him any great physic, in place o' takin' it, he'd give it to the missiz to keep for him. Well, one day he came in, lookin' so pale and wake, that he was ready to dhrop. 'There's no use in talkin,' my dear,' says he to the missiz, 'but there's some bad work goin' on inside in me.' 'Can't you take some of the muddicines, my love?' says she. 'Rech 'em hether, says he, 'I believe I must do somethin'.' So he rech'd 'em all down. 'Why then, the heavens direct me now,' says the missiz, 'which o' these I'm to give you,' says she, lookin' at the hape. 'I'll tell you what,' says the masther, 'if one o' them is good, the whole o' them must be betther. Make them get a saucepan,' says he, 'an' a dhrop o' wather.' So she did. The saucepan was brought, and the master haved 'em all into it headforemost, bottles, an' pills, an' powders, in as they wor, an' boiled 'am all together, with the dhrop o' wather. When it was boiled he dhrank it, an' little was wanten' but it was

the last dhrop he ever dhrank. He *lost his walk** the same day, an' before night it was all the same thing as over with him.

"Well, nothin' would satisfy the missiz, but some docthor should see him, to keep peoples tongues quiet. While she was thinkin' who she'd send for, an ould *bucogh* come to the doore axin' charity, an' he up an' tould her where she'd get a rale docthor. 'There's a docthor,' says he, 'livin' upon the borders of Kerry, an' if there's any man,' says he, 'that's able to raise the dead to life, 'tis he.' So the missiz called Tim Dalton, or Tim Tell-truth, as we used all to call him, by raison he never would tell a word o' thruth by his own good will, an' sent him off on horseback for this great docthor. I can only give you Tim's word for what took place, until he came back next day following. He rode for a good part of a day, until he come into the lonesomest mountain counthry he ever seen in his life. He made inquiries, and they showed him where the docthor lived, in a lonesome house down in a little glen, an' the smoke comin' out o' the chimney. 'Well,' says Tim to me,' an he tellin' me the story, 'I med for the house, an' if I did, there I seen all the place sthrown all round with dead men's bones, an' the pathway up to the hall doore was paved with little white things that looked just like knuckle bones. Well become me,' says Tim, 'I med for the hall doore an' gev a great rap, and axed for the docthor. The sarvant girl shown me into the kitchen, where there was a great pot bilin' on the fire. Thinks I to myself I wondher what in the world is in the pot. So while I was wondherin', the docthor come out an' axed me my business, which I up an' toult him.' 'Well,' says he, 'stay asy a

* The use of his limbs.

minute, an' I'll be with you, but for your life,' says he, 'take care you don't look after me.' 'I'll engage,' says Tim, 'I was'nt said by him, but the instant he left the kitchen, I took an' opened the doore, an' gave a dawny peep into the room that was inside it.' Well, what Tim seen in that room, he never was very ready to tell, only from that day out, he wouldn't take a taste of muddicine if he was dyin'. He used to say he seen keelers all round the room an' dead people hangin' up, an' their blood dhroppin' into the keelers, to make muddicines. I'm sure as for myself, I only hould it to be one of Tim's stories. But he brought the docthor away with him any way.

"When the docthor come to the ould masther's room, an' felt his pulse, he looked very sarious. He began makin' a cut jest a near the heart with his insthruments, an' I declare you could hear the wolf barkin' inside, quite plain, at every cut he made. So he brought out the wolf, an' showed it to us all—a little dawny thing not the length o' my finger, but the tail going like a switch, an' the eyes like little sparks o' fire. But howsomever it was, the poor masther did'nt get much good of it, an' twas'nt long afther that we had to lay him with his people.

"Be coorse, the masther's son, Misther Henry, come after him—an' a sore day it was, for the estate, the day it come into his hands. If the ould masther was over foolish in spendin' he was twice more so. Cocks, an' horses, an' hounds, an' every other ha'p'orth that the first gentleman in the land could fancy, he had about him from year to year. But it wasn't that that broke him after all, only I'll tell you.

"There was a poor Dumby the ould masther kep, that used to dhraw out anything in the whole world

upon a slate; he was still in the house when the new masther was goin' on this way. Well, of a day when Misther Thomas was gettin' ready for the Curragh, sure the very day before the jockey was to take her off, the mare was found dead in the stable! The masther was fit to be tied—so he sent off privately for Shaun Dooley, a knowledgeable man that lived down near the *say*-side, that had a great report for bein' thick with the good people. 'Tis myself went for him, an' carried a led horse ready saddled to bring him up to Tipsy Hall, not to spake of a goold guinea I had for him at the first word. I waited till night-fall because the masther would be very unfond any body should know he' send for a fairy docthor.

"I brought Shaun Dooley up to the masther, and he seemed for a while greatly puzzled to know what could be the cause of it. 'Did you ever shoot a weazel?' says Shaun Dooley. 'Not to my knowledge,' says the masther. 'Or a magpie?' 'Not as I remember, indeed.' 'Do you be whistlin' when you do be out at night at all?' 'That can't be,' says the masther, 'for I never turned a tune.' 'Well I don't know in the world what to think of it,' says Shaun. So while he was thinkin' there was a great flutterin' outside. 'What's that noise?' says Shaun Dooly. 'I suppose it's the pigeon's that's comin' home,' says the masther. 'Pigeons!' cries Shaun, 'do you keep pigeons about the house? It's plain to me now,' says he, 'what rason your mare died, an' I would'nt wondher,' says he, 'if all belongin' to you was gone to rack and ruin.' 'What rason?' says the masther. 'I'll not tell you what rason,' says Shaun, 'but if you take my advice, you'll not have one of 'em about the place.'

"He went, an' next mornin' airly the masther went

about shootin all the pigeons. There was one of em that the Dumby had tamed, an' when he seen 'em all shootin,' he took an' hid it from the masther, poor crathur, it was so quiet an' so fond of him. Well, sure enough in less than two months after the ould missiz died, an' the masther found out that the Dumby kept the pigeon. I never seen one so wild. He turned the Dumby out o' doores (although the crathur cried a gallon full, an' went on his knees to ax pardon,) an twisted the head off o' the pigeon. But it was no good for him. From that day out it seemed as if the loock went out o' the doores with the Dumby. And when the next Mr. Moynehan came into the property, he found himself much in the situation of more jentlemen in the country then an' now, that have *'pon my honour,* and nothing to back it.

CHAPTER V.

But since the accession of this third Moynehan to the proprietorship of Tipsy Hall brings us into the most important portion of our tale, we shall take the story out of the hands of Rick Lillis, and resume our own task as historians of the ruined building.

So indeed it was. In the course of less than half a century, the fair estate which Mr. Moynehan was so anxious should be long preserved in the hands of his posterity, had melted away to a small remnant, which was wholly inadequate to the maintenance of the family in the style of splendid hospitality which they had always upheld. What added to this embarrasment was that Mr Thomas Moynehan never could be pre-

vailed upon to augment his diminishing income by seeking some situation suitable to his rank, which he might easily have procured amongst his influential friends. Antiquarians tell us that amongst the ancient Irish, all occupations of a commercial nature were held in the highest scorn and the term, *ceannuighe*, or merchant, was considered wholly incompatible with that of a gentleman. Until a very late period a strong tincture of the same spirit appears to have influenced the conduct of our Irish gentry. Mr. Moynehan seemed to think that his family would be disgraced if he were actually to earn the bread which he had hitherto received as his patrimonial right. A circumstance which took place while affairs were in this condition is said to have had a strong effect in withdrawing him from society, and indeed in hastening his death.

The public road, which passed close by Mr. Moynehan's gate, was the same by which the judges of assizes were accustomed to travel on their way to the western towns. It happened one evening (so goes the tale), that one of those personages who was about to open a commission in Tralee, was overtaken by nightfall in the neighbourhood of Tipsy Hall. As there was no inn within the distance of several miles, and the Judge and Mr. Moynehan were well acquainted, the former determined to pass the night at the house of his friend, and resume his journey on the following morning. Accordingly, he directed his coachman to drive through the avenue gate, and he was received with a ready welcome at the open door.

Mr. Thomas Moynehan, notwithstanding those weaknesses which we have seen, and a certain violence of temper, which was at times uncontrollable, was yet in many things a man of a reflective and solemn turn

of mind. Much of his attention had been given occasionally to the nature of human law and the extent of its power over human life andliberty. It was his opinion that in most governments too little regard was shown to human life; and there was one point in particular which moved his horror. This was the ease with which circumstantial evidence was received in British courts of justice on questions of a capital nature. Such convictions, taking into account the many occasions on which the innocence of the culprit had subsequently been manifested in time to redeem his reputation, but not to save his life, appeared to him in the light of so many formal and deliberate murders.

On the present occasion, as the judge and he were sitting quietly together by the fire-side after dinner, he could not resist the opportunity of introducing his favourite topic. He found, as he had expected, his learned guest entirely of the other way of thinking. The judge said that it was true circumstantial evidence might sometimes be merely specious, and undoubtedly in such cases it was wrong to convict; but that there were circumstances which were fully as demonstrative of the guilt or innocence of the accused as the most direct ocular testimony could be.

"For," said he, "Gentlemen of the Ju—Mr. Moynehan, I should say, we must remember that the degree of certainty is not altered by the nature of the evidence. Certainty is certainty still, by whatever means it is obtained. I am certain that two and two are the equation of four, and I am certain that this glass, if I drop it, will fall on the floor, and I am certain that King Charles the First lost his head. My certainty with regard to the three positions is the same, yet the means by which I arrive at it are different, for the

last fact I have only on hearsay, whereas the others are physical and metaphysical truths. So I grant you circumstantial evidence can only give us moral certainty; yet moral certainty, when it is certainty at all, is fully equal to any other whatsoever. When people say they are *only* morally certain of anything, they use a vulgar expression, which means that they are not certain at all; for if they were morally certain, they would be perfectly so."

So saying he hemmed, and looked as if he expected there should be no reply. Accordingly Mr. Moynehan, though he could not see what the lecture upon the nature of certainty had to do with his own assertion that circumstantial evidence could never produce it in a conscientious mind, did not conceive it prudent to urge the matter further, contenting himself with saying that perhaps the time might yet arrive when he would have an opportunity of furnishing his lordship with a case in point.

On the following day the judge continued his route, and Mr. Moynehan resumed his customary occupations. He still continued to reflect much upon the injustice of depriving a fellow-creature of life where there was even a possibility of his innocence. Even if there were cases, as he doubted not there might be some, in which circumstantial evidence might amount to certainty, he was yet convinced that no such strength of testimony was required in the great number of instances in which convictions had taken place. The more he thought upon it, the more he became assured of the correctness of his own views; and only longed for an opportunity of converting the judge to his opinion.

In a few mornings afterwards he was preparing to

take breakfast at an early hour, when Rick Lillis entered the parlour, to say, with a countenance aghast with horror, that some country men without had taken a murderer, and wanted that Mr. Moynehan (who was a justice of the peace) should commit him to the county gaol. Mr. Moynehan seemed deeply struck at the intelligence. It seemed as if he even felt a nearer interest in the case owing to his recent controversy with the judge.

"Let them wait outside," said he, "until I have done breakfast, and I will hear them."

In a short time after he ordered the men to be summoned into the office, where he usually took his examinations. Three countrymen entered, conducting a fourth, who by his pale and terrified countenance, his disordered appearance, and some reddish stains upon his garments, was evidently the person accused. One of the others held a pitchfork, the handle of which was dabbled with blood.

Mr. Moynehan, who knew the man perfectly well as one of his own labourers, and of the most peaceable characters in the country, seemed much concerned at beholding him in such a situation, but determined to give the fullest hearing to all the parties.

"Plase your worship," said the eldest of the three accusers, "this *boy* an' my son Ned were at work together yestherday, an' they *had some words* comin home, which nobody then took much notice of. But this morning it so happened that I went to work in your honour's piatee garden agreeable to ordhers. It was early, an' I expected to be first upon the ground, which I knew to be plaisin' to your honour, but I was overtaken on the road by these two neighbours; so the three of us went on together with our spades in

our hands. When we come into the field it was just the dusk o' dawn. 'Stop,' says this man here to me, 'don't you hear groaning'?' 'I hard something,' says I; 'but I made nothing of it, thinkin' it was the wind.' ''Tis not the wind,' says he, 'but some one that got a bad hurt, an' there they are!' Sure enough at that minute we seen this boy here thrying to make off with a pitch-fork, this pitch-fork here—in his hand, but we pinned him. Little I knew what use he was afther puttin' it to. I wish I had no more to tell—it's dear I airned your worship's piatees. We found my poor boy a dead corpse in the furrow, an' there's the villyan that done it."

The two other witnesses being examined, corroborated in all its circumstances the evidence given by the first. Having patiently heard all they had to say, and finding that they had not detected the man in the very act, Mr. Moynehan seemed desirous to dismiss the case. It was true, he said, they had found the man on the spot, and with the bloody weapon in his hand, and with his hands on the dead body. This and his precipitate flight when seen, and the disagreement of the previous evening, were strong ciscumstances; yet they did not amount to actual evidence of guilt, and he called on the prisoner for his explanation.

The unhappy man turned pale and red alternately, and trembled as if his doom had been already fixed. He acknowledged the dispute, and indeed all the circumstances deposed by his accusers, yet he attested heaven that he was wholly guiltless.

"I went into the field," said he, "to my work, an' I found the corpse before me in the furrow, an' the pitch-fork lyin' a-near it, an' while I was feelin' him to see had he any life, an' examinin' the spade, these people

come upon me. I run, becase I was afeerd they'd say 'twas I done it, an' I took the pitchfork with me in my fright."

Mr, Moynehan, who seemed affected in the strongest manner by the poor fellow's anxiety, was so far from judging him guilty, that he peremptorily refused to issue a warrant of committal, and used all his influence to dissuade the friends of the deceased from proceeding further against the prisoner. To this however, they would by no means listen. They conveyed the accused before another magistrate, who committed him to gaol without hesitation.

The day of trial came, and Mr. Moynehan happened to be one of the jury. The evidence was the same as before—the judge his old acquaintance. To the whole court, except Mr. Moynehan, the testimony seemed conclusive. He, however, would not listen to the thought of a conviction. The arguments of his eleven fellow-jurors were in vain—he would not subscribe to their verdict. The foreman made his report to the judge, who reproached Mr. Moynehan severely with his obstinacy. The latter, however, was not to be moved and the issue was (as the rumour goes) that the jur y were *kished*, and the prisoner set at liberty.

When the judge had returned to his lodgings, he could not avoid reflecting on the extraordinary character of this man, who had thus, to gratify a favourite theory, let a murderer loose upon society, and set up his own solitary judgment against the unanimous conviction of a crowded court. So deeply did it prey upon his mind, that he sent for Mr. Moynehan, in order that they might exchange some quiet conversation on the subject. The latter readily attended on his summons.

" My lord," said Mr. Moynehan, with a serious air,

on hearing the cause of the judge's message, "you may remember a conversation which we had some time since on the subject of circumstantial evidence?"

"Perfectly well," replied the judge.

"I told your lordship then," said Mr. Moynehan, "that the time might yet arrive when I should have an opportunity of making you a convert to my own opinion."

"That time, Mr. Moynehan, is certainly yet to come; for I never knew a case so clearly against you, as that which we have tried to-day. May I request to know your reasons for such extraordinary—perseverance— to give it no harsher name?"

"My reasons are at your lordship's service," answered Mr. Moynehan, "provided that I have your solemn word of honour not to divulge them during my own lifetime."

The judge, without hesitation, gave him the promise he desired.

"I admit, my lord," said Mr. Moynehan, "that this case had all the strength of circumstantial testimony which you considered necessary; but I could not in conscience convict the prisoner, for I AM MYSELF the slayer of the deceased."

The judge started back in horror.

"Yes," said he, "it happened on that morning that I was in the field before any of my workmen. The deceased was the first who made his appearance, and I rebuked him for his neglect. Being a man of a hot temper, he answered me with more than equal warmth, and I lost all command of mine. I struck him—he returned the blow—I held the pitchfork in my hand, and with one blow more I felled him to the earth. I fled in terror, and in less than one hour after, the

prisoner was brought before me. Judge whether I had not reason to be constant in my verdict of acquittal."

The Judge kept his promise but from that day forward he was more cautious in receiving circumstantial evidence on a capital charge.

On the death of Mr. Thomas Moynehan (a considerable portion of whose history might, perhaps, in the reader's opinion, have been omitted with advantage,) the estate and mansion of Tipsy Hall fell into the hands of Edmond Moynehan, his nephew, and the last of the race who held dominion beneath its roof.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Edmond Moynehan, though succeeding to a diminished income, had been, in some respects, more fortunate than any of his predecessors. He had received an excellent education, in the truest sense of the word; and up to the period of his accession to the estate of Tipsy Hall, had used it, in all appearance, to the best advantage. As far as any one could be said to enjoy happiness in a world where people find no situation so good that they do not long for better, Mr. Edmond Moynehan was a happy man. He had a wife, who, whether as a doctress, counsellor, or housewife, was without her equal in the country side. At the time when they were suddenly called to the inheritance of Tipsy Hall, they inhabited a small cottage near the romantic town where the Knights of the valley once held feudal sway. Their scanty income was derived from their agricultural pursuits; and industry,

united with economy, enabled them to maintain a more respectable station in their neighbourhood than many who were far superior in fortune. For it must be understood, that all this while it was not wholly for want of knowing better that so much dissipation prevailed amongst the Irish country squires—and instances might occasionally be found, of families who fulfilled in every respect the duties of their station. Of this description were Mr. Edmond Moynehan and his wife; they were examples of piety and of sobriety to their humble neighbours—they were active benefactors of the poor around them; and in a country where the wealthier gentry seldom made their appearance, it was an incalculable advantage to the peasantry to have even one family who could in some degree supply their place as counsellors and protectors. Fortunately kept at a distance from the coarse corruption that surrounded them, by their own good sense, they were still more fortunate in living at a distance from the more dangerous, because more subtle and less perceptible corruption that prevailed then, as at all times, in towns and cities. They were happy even in their ignorance how far the human mind and heart can go astray when they have forsaken the path of simple truth. It was true they saw vice around them, but they never yet had seen it justified—they saw the duties of religion neglected, but they did not know that the mind can even be brought to vindicate such neglect, and give it specious names. They maintained their plain and simple course at peace with themselves and heaven, and in goodwill with the whole world. Of politics (in the angry sense of the word) or of controversy, they heard and thought but little, and maintained a primitive simplicity as well in their mode

of thinking as of living. They fasted on all the fast days, and they kept all the holidays holy. They never troubled their heads about new points of doctrine, and thus were left more leisure to practise what they already believed.

Perhaps it would be difficult for a person engulfed in the vortex of the world, and all its cares, absorbed by the anxieties of commerce, the intrigues of love or of ambition, or consumed by the devouring thirst of fame or power, to imagine the happiness which the Moynehans up to this period had enjoyed in their tranquil river-side life. It was not slothful, for the Moynehans were stirring with the dawn, and till sunset, occupied in some charitable or useful avocation. Mr. Moynehan in the fields with his workmen, or on the road to some neighbouring fair, his fair help-mate in the dairy, or superintending her flax-dressers in the open barn, or the hearing her son Edmond read aloud while she knitted a stocking at the parlour window. Neither was it a solicitous life, for their attachment to the world or its possessions was not so strong as to awaken anxiety; the solitude in which they lived kept reflection awake, and no artificial rapidity of profit, or intoxicating violence of pleasure, ever seduced them into forgetfulness of the real value of mortal hope or joy. Even their love for each other was, we fear, such as would by no means satisfy a real votary of romance. That poetical gentleman, who said he knew only two places in the universe—viz., where his mistress was, and where she was not, would have looked with scorn upon Mrs. Moynehan for she knew a great many places besides that where her husband was; and yet it was not saying a little to assert that after ten years of

wedded life, there was no other which she liked so well.

If, amongst the many who occasionally shared the hospitality of Moynehan's cottage, some votary of fassion made his appearance, the life of these simple people must have appeared to him insipid, dull, and monotonous in the extreme. There was nothing in their tranquil pastoral enjoyments at all so highly seasoned as to satisfy a devotee of pleasure, and he would have attributed to the nature of the life they led the insipidity which was wholly owing to the defect in his own sense. But to the Moynehans, whose relish of the pleasures of innocence had never been dulled by any acquaintance with those of vice, it did not appear that there was any thing so tasteless or so burthensome in their daily life. They found health in the morning air, that blew freshly from the sunlit river, and relief from weariness of mind in the occupations of their farm. The undecorated exhortation of their parish clergyman on a Sunday, had with them more weight than all the eloquence and learning of a metropolitan pulpit upon the ears of metropolitan hearers. It might be said of them with truth, that they thought more with the heart than with the head, and if they had not the learning neither had they the pride of the philosopher.

From this humble, simple life it was that the Moynehans were called to the inheritance of Tipsy Hall. The news came upon them somewhat unexpectedly, and it might be almost said without a welcome. The cottage in which they now lived had been their residence since they were united. It was the birth-place of their only son, and the scene of their calm and prosperous industry during so many happy years. The

accession, however, to such a property as that of Tipsy Hall was too important an addition to their fortune to be neglected, and they prepared for a removal Mrs. Moynehan, in particular, had a strong misgiving with respect to this migration, and felt as if every knock of the carpenters, as they were taking the furniture to pieces for the purpose of conveyance, sounded the knell of their departing happiness. There was no use, however, indulging, much less communicating, such fancies.

The day appointed for their removal came, and a number of weeping friends and neighbours assembled to bid farewell to their long established associates and companions. An elderly lady, who had often filled the office of counsellor and instructor to Mrs. Moynehan on critical occasions, and who had not been sparing of her rhetoric upon the present, gave so many hints with respect to a family of the name of Tobin, living within the distance of two miles of Tipsy Hall, that Mrs. Moynehan became quite alarmed.

"I do not want to make you uneasy, my dear by what I say," concluded this sagacious friend, "but to make you cautious in time. I know how little relish Mr. Moynehan has for such society, indeed he's an angel of a man, where will you meet such another? but men are men after all—the best are frail, and the Tobins are enough to corrupt a monastery."

"Is it possible?" said Mrs. Moynehan, astonished, "I thought Mr. Tobin was a magistrate of the county Does he not sit at the Quarter Sessions?"

"He does—and a pretty Magistrate he is—but I don't choose to say any more at present. I have said enough to put you on your guard, and that was my only reason for speaking at all. The Tobins are a

very good family no doubt, and have excellent connexions, but it is a wild house!"

Mrs. Moynehan thanked her friend for those suggestions, which she promised to bear in mind. Soon after they set out for Tipsy Hall, their mode of conveyance being suited rather to their past than to their present fortunes. It consisted of a trucle or low cart with a block of timber for an axle-tree. On this were laid a feather-bed and quilt, on which Mrs. Moynehan and her son Edmond, a child about six years of age, took their seat, while Neddy Shaughnessy, "the boy," who acted as charioteer to the group, sat with his legs dangling from a corner. Behind rode Mr. Moynehan on horse back, musing much upon their sudden change of fortune. Even already his helpmate could imagine that she beheld a shade of solicitude darkening over his features, which, until this unhoped improvement had taken place in their circumstances, were as clear and unruffled as a noontide lake.

It was evening when they entered the small demesne of Tipsy Hall; Mr. Moynehan still looking more serious than he had ever done in his life before, and his soft-hearted companion crying as if some terrible misfortune had befallen them both. Her grief attracted the interest of Rick Lillis, who at first entertained some involuntary prejudice against his new master and mistress. In the course of the evening, while he was busy in arranging some furniture under her directions, she took an opportunity of making some inquiries about the Tobins.

"A family o' the name of Tobin, ma'am, plase your honour?" echoed Lillis, when he had heard her question. "There is indeed then, an' there's none has betther rason to know it than the masther's family;

an' if you plase, ma'am, plase your honour, Mrs. Moynehan, since you axed me the word, I'll tell you my mind o' them people, not out of any ill-will to them, but the way you'd put the masther upon his guard again 'em, in case they'd be borrowin' money or inveiglin' him any away to his hurt. Them Tobins, ma'am, arn't right people, with submission to you. They'd borry money an' they wouldn't pay it, an' if they couldn't borry, there's rason for sayin' that they'd go some other way about gettin' it besides what would be proper. You'd lend em a hundhert pounds, an' when you'd go to ax for your money, afther, in place o' gettin' it, or thanks, instead of it may be 'tis to challenge you to fight 'em they would—they're such *jewellers*, lord save us! There isn't such *jew'lyery* goin' on all over Ireland, ma'am. as what they goes on with; a very black, terrible family, ma'am."

In the course of the ensuing fortnight, nearly all the families within three miles round, who had any pretensions to gentility, had visited the new proprietors of Tipsy Hall. The Moynehans had never before received so much attention, or had to digest so large a quantity of civil flattery. The Tobins were almost the only family that might have been expected, and yet did not make their appearance. Never, for a considerable time, was there so thorough a revolution effected in any establishment as in that of Tipsy Hall. During the ensuing two years, the mansion hardly knew itself; every thing was done in order; the traces of a sober and careful management were visible in all quarters. They did not here consider it a part of hospitality to make their guests get drunk at their table, and it was remarked by Rick Lillis, that it was the first time since the foundation stone of the building

had been laid that two successive years had rolled over the roof of Tipsy Hall, without its being possible for any body to say with truth that he had seen a human being "tossicated" within its walls, or a tradesman leave the door with his bill unpaid.

Notwithstanding all that Mrs. Moynehan could do to prevent such an occurrence, her husband became acquainted with the Tobins and relished their acquaintance. Their wit, their fun, their show of good nature and of hospitality, could not fail to win some favour from one who really was what they affected to be. There are many persons whose very virtues, or at least dispositions for virtue, are often sources of strong temptation to themselves. Mr. Moynehan's frank and unsuspecting nature, and social temperament were to him occasions of imminent danger. The Tobins talked so pleasantly, and so good-humouredly, and so good-naturedly, that he found it impossible not to like their company. Of the justice of this opinion, Mrs. Moynehan could not form any correct idea, for as there were no females amongst the family at Castle Tobin, she had never set her foot within its precincts. Her opinion, at first so unfavourable, became something more tolerant, however, when, after several months had passed, she could not recollect that her husband had once returned home with any symptom of those excesses about him, which she had been taught to apprehend at Castle Tobin.

In another way, however, their acquaintance was not so advantageous. On two or three occasions, old Mr. Tobin had found it necessary to trespass on his friend Moynehan's purse, to an amount already rather embarrassing; and with what the latter could not help thinking the best intentions in the world, these moneys

had never been repaid. Mrs. Moynehan, however, as soon as she understood what had taken place, was determined to provide against a recurrence of the same misfortune. She entered upon the subject one morning at the breakfast table, and after a severe lecture on the injustice he was committing towards their child, as well as those who had better claims on his assistance, obliged him to "make a vow" that he never again would lend money to the Tobins without her concurrence. He did so, and all was peace for some time after.

All hitherto was well with Mr. Moynehan. He had a property, moderate, it is true, but to which his industry was daily adding something; a wife who knew Buchan's Domestic Medicine, in the country phrase, from cover to cover, and in whose eyes he was, without exception, the greatest man in Ireland; a promising boy, acknowledged on all hands to be the "living image" of himself, and a tenantry who looked up to him for assistance and protection, and were never disappointed. He rose at morning with the sun, dressed himself briskly, was not ashamed to go down on his knees to return thanks for the past, and petition for the future; nor did he think hinself a whit the worse for never omitting this duty either at night or morning. He kept a hospitable board; a door "that opened with a latch;" a bed for the traveller; a warm fire-side and a wholesome dinner for the humble mendicant. When he had discharged his duties his conscience was at rest, and if any of his neighbours at such a time sought to make amends for their own delinquencies by lecturing him, he would listen in silence, contented with having done what other people only seemed to talk about.

This life of tranquillity and goodness, however, was doomed to meet with a singular reverse. The fiend,

> ——grown wiser than of yore,
> Who tempts by making rich, not making poor.

put it into the head of some official functionary of the state to appoint Mr. Moynehan a collector of assessed taxes in his district, and into Mr. Moynehan's to accept it. What the publicans were in the ancient Roman provinces, the tax-collectors were at a certain period in "our own green isle;" that is to say persons well paid for taking pains to make their own fortunes. A few years before, the proprietor of Tipsy Hall might have thought such a situation not worthy of his acceptance, but a considerable alteration had taken place in the affairs of that establishment. It was therefore with no little satisfaction that Mr. Moynehan received the appointment, wholly ignorant as he was of the innumerable risks by which it was attended. He had heretofore been honest, and he did not see why a man might not be an honest tax-gatherer as well as an honest farmer. Accordingly he set about the duties of his new office with alacrity.

An eminent statesman, some years since, when about to announce the intention of government to repeal the assessed taxes in Ireland, assigned as one of the motives which influenced ministers in coming to such a resolution—"that they were found to fall very heavy upon those country gentlemen *who were kind enough to pay them*." Mr.Moynehan found few of his neighbours so disposed. It was true, nothing could be more frank and hospitable than the manner in which

they all received him when he came to their houses. They loaded him with attentions. The best bed in the house and the best wine in the cellar were at his service. They had company to meet him, and they had a thousand little things which he might want, and which they would find an opportunity to send him. But few articles liable to king's taxes could he find in their possession. They had no windows—no hearths—no cows—no carriages; all the wealth which on the previous evening, had been displayed with so much munificence, had dwindled on the following morning into absolute poverty. Mr. Moynehan was thunderstruck—but he could not help himself. His predecessors in office, he was told, had pursued a certain line of conduct, and he must not make himself singular. On one occasion his preciseness was near involving him in a serious affair. There was no carriage, he was told; and as he knew that truth towards a tax-gatherer was not here regarded with much scrupulosity, he asked to see the coach-house. The gentleman bowed in assent, but signified at the same time that he considered such conduct as an impeachment of his veracity. Mr. Moynehan did not persist, and he was favoured in a few days with a cordial salute from this veracious gentleman as he passed him in a dashing cabriolet. It was indeed a thing almost impossible (so irresistible is the influence of bad example) to hold the office and to keep the hands untainted—

And things impossible can't be,
And never, never come to pass.

Temptation effected for Mr. Moynehan what it has effected for millions. It wrought his fall. Bribes were

poured in upon him from all quarters. One supplied his table—one his manger—another his bin—a fourth his cellar—a hundred his pantry—Every house in the country had a convivial board, a comfortable chamber, and a blazing fire for the tax-gatherer. The least he felt to be expected for these civilities was (like the unjust steward) where one owed a hundred bushels to the state, to take his pen and write down fifty, or perhaps not a fifth of that, and it often happened that even that fifth remained unpaid.

Those who have once enjoyed the peace of a pure conscience, cannot find repose in its opposite. Neither the influence of an example that seemed almost universal, nor the stunted maxims of convenience by which the tax-gatherer sought to satisfy his mind, could make his new life happy. "What signifies it when the loss is divided amongst so many that they can't feel it?"—"Sure every body is doing it."—"What good would it do to have one out of a thousand go against all the rest?" such were the arguments by which at moments of reflection he resisted the warnings of conscience, but which could not wholly silence its reproaches. We grieve to relate the issue. When peace of mind is lost, men generally seek to supply its place by false excitement, and so did Mr. Moynehan. He found it easier to divert his attention from the consideration of his evil ways, than to take up a vigorous resolution and amend them! Accordingly, Moynehan, the pattern of sobriety and decorum to his neighbourhood, fell by degrees into habits of vulgar dissipation. He seldom now returned sober to his home. His rational hours were hours of hurry, and fretfulness, and impatience, and he now was only mirthful when reason had been drowned in whiskey punch.

It must not be supposed, however, that this course was deliberately chosen by Mr. Moynehan; on the contrary there was scarcely a morning on which he did not renew his determination of altering his life, and scarce an evening after which this determination did not require a renewal.

"Say no more, Mary, say no more," he said, after Mrs. Moynehan had given utterance to one of her customary morning counsels; "I tell you this is the last night I will ever dine away from home."

"You have often said that."

"Well, I will fulfil it now."

"Take my advice, Edmond, and do not dine to-night at Castle Tobin. You know that you no longer leave that house in the condition that you ought. The place and the company would overcome all the resolutions that were ever made. Oh, my dear husband, you are putting an end to all our happiness, and, what is worse, you are securing your own destruction. Do, Edmond, be guided at last, by one who loves you better than ever the Tobins did. Do not continue to destroy our comfort and the hopes of our poor child; I wish we had never left our little cottage on the Shannon side; I wish we never heard of this estate, that has brought sin and ruin to our doors. Will you not grant me this request, my dear husband? Will you not look to yourself before it is too late? You dare not think of continuing such a life, and how can you tell what time may be given you for amending it."

"Say no more, now, Mary,—say no more."

"But I must say more, Edmond, until I have your promise. I am more than ever anxious on this morning, for I had the most dreadful dreams last night, about you and the Tobins."

"Pooh, pooh, nonsense."

"It may be so, and I trust it is so; but I can't help thinking of it. I thought that they made you stay to dine at Castle Tobin, and that after making you drunk they were murdering you in a private room, while you cried out to them to give you time for repentance, but they refused it." As she said this, she cast herself weeping upon her husband's neck.

"What folly, my dear!" exclaimed Moynehan in an angry tone. "I wonder you could pay attention to such silly thoughts; to talk in that manner of the Tobins! some of the best fellows breathing, and the warmest friends I have."

"If they were your real friends," said Mrs. Moynehan, "they would not do so much as they are doing to bring about your ruin. We were happy until we knew them. Listen to me, Edmond. You have already done us grievous injury—to me and to your child, and, worst of all, to yourself. Stop where you are, and go no farther on the road to ruin. Begin this instant, by resolving not to go to-night to Castle Tobin, and by keeping that good resolution."

"But I promised Tobin, my dear."

"Break that promise, and come home," said Mrs. Moynehan. "If you expect to change your whole plan of life without meeting any difficulties, or without being obliged to use any violence to your own wishes, or to those of others, you are mistaken, I can assure you. Make this one effort resolutely, and the next will be easy."

"Pooh, my dear; is it not a great deal better to keep this one promise, since I have made it, and to-morrow, and for the future, to take care to make no promise at all?"

"It is not," said Mrs. Moynehan. "Every new sin makes the bad habit twice as strong; you will find it harder to refuse promising to-morrow, than you do to break the promise you have made to-day. Remain at home this evening, Edmond, and begin what you dare not think of leaving unbegun for ever."

The tax-gatherer paused to meditate. Reform and be at peace! A happy prospect; but how enormous was the mountain of guilt that now lay between him and his past condition. All that he had ever pilfered from the public purse must be restored. That awful word "Restitution," had more of terror in it than all besides. What! condemn himself to poverty and want for all future life, in order to refund the thousands at the embezzlement of which he had connived! Why, two long lives, spent in the closest economy, would not enable him to repay one half the amount. Still, justice confronted him with her immutable countenance; it must be done, or he was lost for ever.

May one be pardoned and retain the offence?

He struggled with the uncomfortable conviction; and while he did so, the prospect of Mr. Tobin's jovial board, the pleasant laughing faces and inspiring cheer by which it was to be enlivened, came before him, and the words "lost for ever!" died away on the horizon of his thought with a faint and feeble echo.

While he was deliberating, the hour arrived for his departure,

"No," he said to his wife, "I cannot, and I will not, break my promise of dining with Tobin; but this is the last evening I will ever dine away from home. Mind now—I have said it, and you shall find that I will keep my word."

Mrs. Moynehan said no more, but a look of agony told her disappointment. On entering the hall he found a number of people assembled at his levee as usual.

" My master's compliments, Sir, with a pair of young turkeys, for Mrs. Moynehan."

" My master's compliments, Sir, with a bag of oats."

" My master's compliments, Sir, an' he has the grass o' the cow ready now, that he was talkin' of."

"My master's compliments, Sir———"

And a dozen other presents, which there was no refusing. The messengers were dismissed with suitable answers, and the state was defrauded of a fresh portion of its revenue. Open-eyed, Mr. Moynehan consented to the peculation of some fifty or sixty pounds additional from his Majesty's exchequer. And his only apology was custom. Every body did it! Devouring custom!

But all was now ready for his departure, and Mrs. Moynehan's deeper anxieties were swallowed up in providing for his personal comfort.

"Remember, Edmond, if any thing *should* oblige you to spend the night at Castle Tobin, to look well to the sheets. You remember the last night you slept there that you were near bringing home your death of cold. If you just hold the sheet that way to your cheek for half a minute, (taking a corner of her apron to suit the action to the word,) you can tell at once whether it is damp or not. Here's the Opodeldoc—and the thing for the tooth-ache.—Nelly! Nel—ly!"

"Goin', goin', ma,am."

" Where's the comforter?"

" Tis in the pocket o' the masther's *loody*, ma'am."

"That terrible stumbling mare! I don't know how you can trust your life to her. But you men absolutely don't know what fear is. Nelly! Nel—ly!"

"Goin', ma'am, goin'!"

"Where's the child?"

"Masther Mun, where are you, sir? Don't you hear yourself callin'?"

The child was brought out to receive his father's customary parting caress. Many further additions were made to those

> ——lengthened sage advices
> The husband fra the wife despises,

before the tax-gatherer mounted his horse and rode away. Trotting briskly down the avenue which led to the high road, a few hours' easy riding brought him to the district in which his business for the day was principally cast. It is not necessary to follow him through the detail of all his occupations. He collected a tolerable sum at the houses of the neighbouring gentry, and in disregard of Mrs. Moynehan's "counsels sweet," took the road to Castle Tobin.

For a long time after they had left the main road, he was accompanied by Rick Lillis, who still filled the same situation in the employment of Mr. Moynehan, that Faustulus did in that of the Latin monarch. The evening had a menacing look, and both occasionally glanced at the gathering masses of vapour over head without venturing to exchange their apprehensions. At length, the following conversation arose between them.

"Masther."

"Well, Rick?"

"Will you tell me, sir, if you plase, how much

money you may have about you at this pras'nt moment?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Oh, for rasons o' my own."

"I have near five hundred pounds,"

"'Tis a dale o' money," said Rick.

"It is, indeed."

"This is a lonesome road, masther."

"'Tis, Rick."

"An' do you mane to come back this way to night from Castle Tobin, sir?"

"If I should not be prevailed upon to remain for the night.

Rick looked dissatisfied.

"'Twas but a poor choice," said he, "between the bog and the cliff. I'm not over satisfied, master, about the *propriety* of your having so much money about you late at night, an goin' such a lonesome road. Sure you know, sir, 'twouldn't be wishin' to you for a dale, you lost that money to night."

"Twould not *be wishing* to me, Rick, for near five hundred pounds,"

"Ayah, it's no joke at all, masther, nor no laughin' matther either. I declare I don't like the thoughts of it, at all. I tell you there's bad boys about these mountains. I'd just as soon expect that one o' them lads would let a handful o' money that way pass him by, as I would to see a cat left alone with a pail o' milk, an' to have no call to it."

"Don't you know, Rick, that in the reign of Brian Boroimhe, a young lady travelled on foot through Ireland, with a gold ring on the top of a long wand, to show that there was no such thing as a rogue, in the whole island?"

—

"Why then, sir, *sonuher* to the bit of that lady ever set foot in these mountains, or if she did, it's more than she could do these times. Be said by me, sir an' go home safe an' sound with your money, while you have it."

"There is no danger, Rick," said his master, "for if I should not choose to encounter the midnight journey, I can take a bed at Castle Tobin.'

"Why then, I'll tell you my mind out o' the face," said Rick; "that's a plan I don't like one bit betther than the other. The Lord forgive us, 'tisn't in my way, nor any one else's, to be spakin' ill o' those that arn't *convanient* to defind themselves; but there's rasons for what I say. I'd be very unfond, if I had it, to pass a night at Castle Tobin with such a sum o' money as that. Them Tobins have a bad report in the counthry: they're needy, bould, daarin, young men (an' heaven forgive me if I belies 'em,) that would a'most rob a priest. I declare, I'd rather of the two take the road itself, bad as it is. An' see, along with that, the night is threat'nin'."

Mr. Moynehan could not help feeling struck, in spite of himself, with the double warning that was given him by both his wife and servant. The reports of robberies, and even worse, among these lonesome hills were not unfrequent; and it would, he knew, be certain and total ruin to him and his family to lose such a sum as he at present held in his saddle-bags. Such, however, is the infatuation of habit, that he could not resist the temptation of spending a jovial evening with the Tobins, renewing, nevertheless, his determination not to suffer any persuasion to lead him, on this night at least, beyond the bounds of perfect moderation. It was true he felt some uncomfortable

twinges of conscience when he recollected certain immutable truths which he was in the habit of hearing more frequently than he heeded their significance; such as that *he who wills the cause, wills the effect*, and that *he who would fly the fault must fly the temptation*, and that *it is impossible to court the occasion and avoid the consequence ;* with other maxims of the kind, which, when they pressed in too troublesome a manner upon his recollection, he strove to banish by putting spurs to his mare, or entering into further conversation with Rick Lillis, as he strove to keep pace with his master.

By this time the night had begun to put its menaces into execution. The wind, now risen high, came howling up the mountain road behind them, and rustling in the fields of rushes and bog myrtle which skirted the lonesome track. The clouds, with outline faintly visible in the gathering darkness, drove rapidly over head, as if scared by some terrific power rising far behind on the horizon. Large drops of rain gave warning of the approaching deluge, and both travellers fastened a few additional buttons, and put their horses to a quicker pace. Before the storm had burst in all its terror, they had reached a crossway where it had been arranged that Lillis should take the homeward road, while Mr, Moynehan continued his route to Castle Tobin.

CHAPTER VI.

It is necessary that we anticipate the arrival of the tax-gatherer, in order to give with all the brevity consistent with clearness of narrative, an account of the company who awaited him.

There was, in the first place, Mr. Tobin, the first of the family who had made his appearance in the country and who had built the Castle to which he gave his family name. This castle, it should be stated, was no castle at all, but a plain house, dignified with that sounding name, from its occupying what was once the site of a strong-hold of the old Earls of Desmond. Busy and malicious tongues asserted that Mr. Tobin had left his native country charged with the crime of Marmion, but nothing positive was ever known upon the subject.

One of his first acts was not calculated to conciliate the good will of the country people. In order to procure materials for the building, he took down the remaining walls of an old monastery, which stood at a little distance, rather than, at a slight increase of expense, be at the pains of drawing stones from a neighbouring quarry. And it was told of him as an instance of retributive justice, than in giving directions respecting the shaping of one of those stones, a splinter flew off, and, striking him in the right eye, deprived him for ever of the benefit of that organ.

There was one peculiarity in the site chosen for the edifice which is worth observing. It was so constructed that both the principal sitting-room and bed room were in no less than three different counties, so that in case a bailiff should make his way unexpectedly into

either apartment, Mr. Tobin, by shifting his chair from one side of the parlour fire-place to another, could plead an illegal caption, or if invaded at his dressing table, might jump into bed and defy the law and its officer together.

He had two sons, who were not blessed with an equal share of the parental affection. The idea had got into the heads of Mr. Tobin and his lady that the eldest boy was not their son, but a changeling, and the unhappy child was a sufferer to this wretched prejudice. They made him do the work of a menial in their kitchen, while the second was elevated to the place and privileges of the first born. It was perhaps fortunate for the elder, in some respects, as he became the only amiable member of his family. Wisdom, like grief says somebody, is an affection of the mind, and not a thing to be taught by lectures. It was so the elder Tobin learnt it, but the unkindness of his friends affected his health, and he died young.

He was much missed at Castle Tobin, but the wicked preference of the parents was not left without some punishment Young Tobin grew up to be a fine young man, and fought, and hunted, and drank, and gambled, and showed himself in every way a real son of his father, and no changeling whatsoever. And accordingly the father doted on him.

One morning, say the historians of the neighbourhood, Mr. Tobin saw his son going out at a very early hour. He asked him where he was going, and the young man answered carelessly "*no where,* only up the mountains to fight a duel." Whether through recklessness, or that he disbelieved the young scapegrace, the father is reported to have recommended him to " take the greyhounds with him, and that he might

have a very pretty course when it was over." The son adopted the suggestion, but there was no occasion for the dogs. He was brought home, in less than two hours after, a corpse, to Castle Tobin.

It was on the death of his wife, which followed soon after, that old Tobin adopted Frank, his nephew, to whom, as he was one of the company on this occasion, it is necessary that we direct our attention for a little time.

Frank Tobin had the misfortune of being

"A self-willed imp, a grandame's child."

and was left for his education altogether to the system of society in which he grew up. As to restraint, he never knew what it was to have his wishes contradicted in a single instance, in which it was physically possible to comply with them. His grandmamma, it should be known, was a great lady, and had spent many years abroad, where she had picked up several notions which it was very hard to understand. She hated any thing that people were used to. Nothing would do for her either in the way of ribands or principles except it was spick-and-span new. If it were possible to administer nourishment at the ears, Mrs. Tobin never would have wished to see the mouth employed for that purpose; and one would think to hear her speak that it was mere prejudice made all mankind persevere in walking erect instead of creeping on all-fours. In a word, good Mrs. Tobin was rather a charlatan in her notions about educating children, and master Frank Tobin was not five years old before he began to turn her foible to his own account; for none are more quicksighted than children in perceiving whether the individual intrusted with their instruction is a quack or a person of com-

mon sense. Though not altogether an ill-natured child, he became, from Mrs. Tobin's system of passive compliance, one of the greatest pests and tyrants that ever plagued a household. His father and mother, who had never travelled, did not altogether relish Mrs. Tobin's plans, but they were afraid to interfere His grandmother was rich, and they thought she would make Frank her heir.

But she died and disappointed them, as Frank had disappointed her. And what was now to be done? Here was Frank, a fine gentleman, too proud to take any situation, and too poor to do without it. His mode of life was now somewhat curious. He used to spend a great part of the day fishing, or shooting, or coursing, and the produce of his sport he forwarded to the different families in the neighbourhood with whom he was connected by affinity or by liking. He could glaze windows, and cement broken china, and mend old furniture, and tune pianos, and play a little on the flute, and execute sundry little offices of that kind, which made him a welcome visiter at the houses of most of his country friends. And if he had confined his accomplishments to such matters as these, all would have been well; but it was far otherwise. Although very good-humoured at a convival meeting, and capable of singing a hearty song and passing a merry joke, he was plagued with an unfortunate temper, which was continually involving him in disputes. He had, however, by some means got the name of an humourist, and his last adventure was circulated as regularly in his own circle as the last *bon mot* of a legal functionary in our own day. There was scarce an Assize or Quarter Sessions at which Frank Tobin had not to answer some score of charges for assault and battery. A child

of liberty, Frank could not, from his boyhood, endure any system of human law, which he conceived wholly unnecessary for the maintenance of society. All law and government, he used to say, *was a job;* a mere trick, intended for the purpose of putting money into the pockets of lawyers, and throwing impediments in the way of young fellows who were "inclined for fun." It was all an invention of roguish attorneys and counsellors. This theoretical antipathy to the entire system was not without its practical effects; for Frank Tobin visited severely, on the persons of the individual professors, when they happened to fall in his way, his abstract dislike of the profession. His highest game, however, in this way, were the bailiffs and tipstaffs, who were sent to apprehend him for his misdemeanors, or at best some Special Sessions Attorney, and with these he waged perpetual and implacable war.

He was first recommended to the notice of his uncle by a characteristic incident. He was sauntering one day through the mountains in the neighbourhood of Castle Tobin, when he saw a countryman at a little distance walking to and fro upon a field and looking very disconsolate.

"Well, my good man," said Frank, "what's the matter with you?"

"Ah, plase your honour, I'm destroyed. I have a *latificat* again' that man over, an' I don't know from Adam how will I take him."

He pointed to a house about twenty yards distant. On the half door, which was closed, rested the muzzle of a blunderbuss, and behind sat the proprietor, quietly seated in his chair, and seeming to wait the first hostile movement on the part of his adversary. Having ascertained from the man that the case was one of pecu-

liar hardship, Frank Tobin, who was a kind of knight errant in a small way, and quite as ready to encounter danger in another's behalf as in his own, determined to accost him. He bade the man continue to walk up and down while he went to seek assistance. He had not gone far before he met one of his own companions.

"Tom," said he, "have you got a stick?"

"I have, sir."

"Do you see that house over?"

"I do, sir."

"Well, go round and stand o' one side the back door and when you see a man running out there, knock him down."

"I will, sir."

Away went Tom, while Frank, slipping close along the front of the house laid both hands upon the muzzle of the blunderbuss and affectually secured it. The fellow, as he had anticipated, ran for the back door, where Tom, with great punctuality knocked him down. Both then delivered their prisoner into the hands of the man who had got what he called the "latificat," while Frank said—

"That's the way to do business, my lad, and not to be looking for any of your latitats nor rattle-traps neither. If you take my advice, you never will have any call to the law. It would be long before one of your three-and-nine-penny schemers would show you how to serve that bit of paper after you had got it."

It happened that the man was a tenant of his uncle, who, on hearing of the affair, took Frank under his patronage, which he still continued to afford him, with some restraint, however, on his favourite inclinations, as Mr. Tobin's character obliged him to maintain some

degree of decorum towards his old foes, a circumstance which many thought would prey upon his health.

Besides these were Will Buffer, so named for his prodigious strength of limb and wonderful agility of muscle, which almost enabled him to realise the fables of Fleetfoot in the fairy tale; and Mr. Dungan Frank's old tutor, whom his grandmother had engaged for no other reasons according to their humble neighbours, who are often as shrewd as their superiors, than that "he was just as cracked as she was herself." He had some strange notions about the pronunciation of the letter C, which had gone against him all through life, but which he would rather die than surrender.

Such were the principal individuals of the company whom Mr. Moynehan was asked to meet to night at Castle Tobin.

He was received with a tumult of delight, Frank Tobin undertaking, when they had sat down, to make him acquainted with the people in the room.

"That's Will Buffer, sitting near my uncle. Did you ever meet Will Buffer before? He's one of the ablest fellows in Ireland. I saw him lift a deal table with his teeth. He can somerset over his horse. You never saw such a smart fellow. He can run like the wind."

"And who is that next your father?"

"That! Oh, that's Tom Goggin. You'll soon know who Tom Goggin is. He's a great wit. You never saw a fellow tell such stories, nor say such good things as Tom. He'd make you split your sides laughing, listening to him."

There was something in the appearance of Tom Goggin and the Buffer which Mr. Moynehan did not altogether relish, nor was his prejudice removed by the

manners of both in the course of the evening. The Buffer was one of those characters occasionally to be met in the Ireland of that day—rare, we believe, in our own. He had just enough of the gentleman in his appearance to form a convenient mask for the bully, which was his real character. With an appearance of hotheaded impetuosity, he had underneath a fund of low and selfish cunning. He knew perfectly to whom he might be rude, and in what quarter his ignorant contradictions might be hurled with impunity; but no one had ever caught him playing off the bully towards any one who was capable of affording him a dinner, and bed, or from whom he might at any time calculate upon a seasonable loan of money. With such persons he was content to be a good-humoured and unresisting but, a degree of servility for which he compensated to his wounded pride by unprovoked and invariable insolence to all those individuals from whom he expected nothing, because they had nothing to afford. Incapable either by any natural or acquired superiority of mind of attracting the attention of a well-educated circle, he usually opened his conversation by a direct contradiction of the last speaker; always provided the last speaker were not a person from whom he had anything to hope for.

Nor was the wit in the least degree more prepossessing. Tom Goggin's forte was a horse-laugh; it was almost all that he could do in the way of social communion, and accordingly his single faculty was put to frequent use. He might be said to have laughed his way through life. Whenever he said what he meant for a good thing, he chorused the effort with a hearty laugh, and his companions had gradually fallen into the habit of joining him, until at length he got the repu-

tation of a wit. Probably his hearers thought no one had a better right to know what a joke was worth than the man who had made it. But Tom Goggin's faculty of laughing served him in many other ways. It was just as useful to him in applauding another's joke, as in procuring sympathy for his own. If Tom had injured your reputation, and that you remonstrated with him about it, he laughed until it became almost impossible to avoid joining him. If he had purloined your great coat or umbrella by way of joke, and you reclaimed your property, he would laugh, and laugh and laugh until you gave up all hope of getting an answer from him. If you were fool enough to lose temper, and set about chastising him, Tom would still laugh, and it was ten to one, if you were not on your guard, but he would have the whole country laughing at you too.

Notwithstanding all this fun, there was something, as we have said, in Tom's countenance which the tax-gatherer did not relish. There was more, he thought, of meanness, than of either good-humour or good-nature, in all this laughter, and whilst he observed the half-knowing leer which he sent around the room as he gave vent to one of his good things, he felt less inclined to laugh, than to exclaim with honest Dogberry, "Friend, hold thy peace; I do not like thy look, I promise thee."

The evening, nevertheless, rolled pleasantly away, and the tax-gatherer was tempted more than once to overstep the bounds which he had prescribed to himself on leaving home. For a long time, however, he restrained himself, nor was it until late that habit and the occasion overcame his prudence. It was observed that when he had done so, although he soon entered

fully and even wildly into the revel spirit of the night there was something strange and peculiar in his manner during the whole evening. He was fitful in his mirth, and his loudest and most boisterous bursts of hilarity were succeeded by long fits of absence and absorbing silence, as if he were on the eve of some enterprise in which the fortunes of his life were interested.

The truth was, that the recollection of his gold, the warnings of his wife and Rick, and his prejudice against the new guests, to whom he had to-night been introduced, made Moynehan anxious to see the money safe at Tipsy Hall. Accordingly, about midnight, and in the midst of a wild bacchanalian uproar, he astonished his host and bottle-companions by suddenly rising, and declaring his intention of going home. Never did a proposition excite more general indignation. Never had so pleasant a party been so unexpectedly broken up. Tom Goggin had never been so happy; Will Buffer had given three somersets, and kicked the ceiling with his heels, and Ned Stokes, a capital fellow, who was at every party because he knew how to sing a comic song, was just going to give them "The Irish Schoolmaster. He had actually begun—

> Misther Byrne was a man
> Of a very grate big knollidge,
> An' behind a quickset hedge
> In a bog he kept his college—

when the tax-gatherer rose. Everybody strove to dissuade him.

"Why, 'tis blowing a perfect storm," said Mr. Tobin.

"And that mountain road," exclaimed Frank " where robberies are as common as—as—anything."

"I—ca—can't help it—I must be home to-night," exclaimed Moynehan, endeavouring to resist the rising delirium that was already making inroads on his reason and affecting an air of great industry and seriousness. "I have some accounts to make up that must be ready for the post to-morrow."

"If you have any loose cash about you, sir," said Goggin, rolling his eye around the room, and winking on the company, "I'd advise you to let me take care of it for you."

In the burst of laughter which followed this effusion Mr. Moynehan left the room, followed by the Tobins, who continued in vain to represent to him, with all the force of language and of argument, which the glass had left them, the dangers of a solitary journey through the mountains at so late an hour. It was in vain likewise, that the wind dashed in the door as soon as the latch was raised, with such force, as to extinguish all the lights they had brought into the hall, and almost to destroy the already tottering equilibrium of the tax-gatherer. He seemed determined to make up by obstinacy for the deficiency of argument, and resolved, at all events, to undertake the journey. Buttoning up his great coat to his chin, and shaking the hands of his companions and his host with vehement cordiality, he sprung upon his mare, and with a wild halloo, dashed forward through the stormy night gloom. For some minutes the revellers stood to hear the shout repeated, and the tramp of the horses' hoofs growing fainter in the distance, until it had ceased to reach their ears. Soon after the company broke up, the Buffer and Tom Goggin riding off together.

The next morning the tax-gatherer's horse was found, without a rider, at a little distance from his house, and the saddle cloth and bridle had the marks of blood. The truth was at once disclosed to the perplexed and agonised widow, for so she was already deemed. Mrs. Moynehan acted on the occasion with more firmness and resignation than might have been expected from her. She caused the most thorough search to be made along the line of roads, and through the fields and bogs that lay between their house and Castle Tobin. Every bog-hole was dragged, and every corner ransacked, but in vain. A woman of strong mind and deep affections, the shock to Mrs. Moynehan was proportionably violent.

"Look, Edmond," she said, holding up the bloody housing, and gazing with agony on her orphan child as he entered her apartment, "Look at all that is left us of your father."

The boy stared for a moment as if at a loss to comprehend her meaning.

"My dear child," said the widow, "let what is our ruin, be at least your warning. Your father, who left home yesterday in perfect health, will never now return to us again. He has been murdered on his road."

The boy turned pale and red by turns, as he looked from the saddle-cloth to his mother's countenance, and said at last in a whisper—

"By whom, mother?"

"Heaven only can tell that, and he who did it," said the widow—"Oh, it was an evil day for us all when he accepted that situation—Till then he was happy, good, and virtuous—he made all happy round him. But now—"

At these words, and at the recollection of the altered

life which her husband had been leading during his latter years, the unhappy woman swooned away, and was conveyed to her apartment. Years rolled away, and the circumstances attending the disappearance of the tax-gatherer, remained enveloped in darkness as deep as that in which he had set out on his last journey. A proclamation was issued from Dublin Castle commencing with the usual—"Whereas some evil-minded person or persons, &c.;" and offering a reward of two hundred guineas for the detection of the murderer, but in vain. Whether he had been struck by lightning, stifled in a bog, torn to pieces (as some sage fair ones hinted) by evil spirits, or destroyed by beings no less malignant of his own form and species, were questions that exhausted speculation and remained unsolved. The broken-hearted widow sought some consolation for the terrible stroke, in devoting herself to the education of her son, whom she determined to bring up in the strictest principles of religion and virtue.

CHAPTER VII.

About fifteen years before this period, there stood, within a hundred paces of the outskirts of B——, a house of moderate size, of which no living eye has seen a trace. It was tenanted by an humble barber of the name of O'Berne. Beside the dwelling stood a lofty elder, in which the magpie and the goldfinch built their nests. Behind was a garden, stocked with heads of cabbage, some rows of gooseberry and currant trees, with a few wall-flowers and marigolds of flaming yellow. A handsome pole, rising obliquely from the

doorway, and bearing at its summit a tuft of hair that streamed upon the wind, announced to passengers the vocation of the owner. On either side of the entrance, two small plots sprinkled with the commonest flowers, and fringed with rows of London pride or bachelor's buttons, gave grace and fragrance to the decent tenement. The thievish sparrow reared his noisy brood beneath the eaves, and at evening the robin would often sing his short and plaintive song amongst the elder boughs.

The house of the barber on Saturday evenings afforded a lounge to many of the neighbouring villagers. Here, while O'Berne stropped his razors, or tucked a snow-white napkin under the grisly chin of some unwashed artisan, the many who waited to undergo a similar operation would lean against the well-scoured dresser, or take a hay-bottomed chair near the door, discussing politics, foreign and domestic, circulating the easy jest, or listening to the piquant anecdote. Amongst these persons there were few subjects on which the opinion of O'Berne had not considerable weight; and few ventured to interrupt the current of his speech, while, as he raised the mollient foam, he would reveal to his wondering hearers the designs of many a potentate and minister, who fondly deemed them a secret to the world.

The barber, as it was generally said, had migrated to this village from the south-western town of Bantry. It was in the tenth year of his only son, Godfrey, this removal took place. Soon after, chance threw the latter in the way of a singular education. One evening, during the first year of their residence in B——, the barber was busy, as usual, in preparing his shop for the customers who generally dropped in when the bu-

siness of the day was over. While thus engaged, an old gentleman entered, a white-haired venerable looking man, but with eyebrows black as coal, and something in the expression of his dry and shrivelled features that was unaccountably repulsive and forbidding. It was not that he was morose, for his countenance wore a continual smile, and he seemed ever on the watch for something to jest about; but sternness itself would have been more agreeable than his uncordial mirth. It was a dry and heartless levity, not genuine good humour; and evidently indulged in, rather for the gratification of his own vanity than from a desire of affording pleasure to others. Seeing little Godfrey playing on the floor, he began to question him, and was so much entertained with the thoughtful solemnity of his answers, that he proposed, if the barber would allow it, to take him into the household. O'Berne feared to miss an offer of patronage which promised so much advantage to his son, and promised with many expressions of gratitude, to take him to the gentleman's house on the following day.

The mansion was situated in a lonely and barren heath, about seven miles from the village. It was a bare, wild looking edifice, occupying the centre of an enclosure (it could hardly be called a demesne,) on which not a single branch of foliage was to be seen, east or west, north or south, that could qualify in the least degree the natural dreariness of the place. The first impression of the scene sunk down like lead upon the mind of the younger Godfrey. A peasant, whom they overtook upon the road, and from whom they made inquiries respecting the proprietor, told them "that very little was known about him at all in them parts; that he had no one livin' with him, only an

ould woman that used to dress his food and do the kitchen work, and that it was said he was a foreigner: but he was livin' there a good long while, and nothing was ever known to his disparagement."

They found the old gentleman within. Seeing little Godfrey rather low-spirited at the prospect before him, he took him into the library, which was pretty wel-furnished, and took some pains to reconcile him to his new abode.

Here young Godfrey remained for six years, during which time his only companions, except when he went to spend a day at his father's, were the proprietor of the mansion, the old woman, and, far more entertaining and interesting to him than either, the books which burthened the shelves of the small library. Reading likewise was the constant occupation of his master, Seldom did he favour Godfrey with any conversation, and when he did, it was in such a brief and half-sneering style, that the latter did not lament his general taciturnity. Never had he heard of a man who lived so isolated—so entirely centred in himself—as his new master. Nor while he secluded himself from all ordinary intercourse with the world in which he lived, was it for the purpose of devoting himself with more freedom to the concerns of another; for Godfrey never observed in his master any of those actions or expressions, by which men are accustomed to intimate their recollections of a higher allegiance than any they owe on earth. His patronage, however, and the leisure which he here enjoyed, enabled Godfrey O'Berne to lay up a store of information, which, though nearly useless, and in some points worse than useless, from want of method, was far more extensive than was usual in his station. The sudden death of his patron depriv-

ed him unexpectedly of those brilliant hopes to which his father looked forward with a sanguine eye. The recluse was found one morning in his bed a corpse, and Godfrey was recalled to the paternal threshold, as much in mystery with respect to the character and history of his late master as when first he entered his house.

In about a year after, the elder O'Berne himself being struck with his death sickness, sent for his son, who was at this time the only living member of his family. The latter, who was on a visit at the house of a friend in the neighbouring city, came without loss of time to receive the dying injunctions of his only parent. He found the latter seated in the arm-chair which was usually allotted to his customers, apparently awaiting the last stroke of death, and surrounded by a numerous crowd of relatives and friends. On seeing his son approach, he bade one of the men, who stood near him, to unfix the pole, which was made fast at the front door, and to bring it into the house. His wishes being complied with he took the pole in his right hand, causing it to stand erect upon the floor at his side, and addressed his son in the following words :—

" This painted pole, Godfrey, is one o' the most ancient marks of our profession. It signifies that stick which, when the barber and the surgeon were the same used to be held in their hands by the customers and worked this way, to make the blood come freer from the vein. This riband that's tied at the top signifies the bandage, and this stripe o' red paint that goes coiling down the pole, the blood, as it were, flowing from the arm. This pole, Godfrey, has stood at my door, winter and summer, for five and forty years. I

never possessed a half-penny but what it brought me, and I never wished for an estate beyond it. If you are satisfied with it, you are as rich as an emperor; if not, the riches of an emperor would not make you so. Keep it then, and be contented with it, and you will be happy."

So saying, he placed the pole in the hand of his son, and soon after gave up the ghost. The latter interred the remains of his parent with all demonstrations of filial respect and piety, and entered presently afterwards upon the business and possessions he had left behind him.

The younger Godfrey O'Berne had always been looked upon in his neighbourhood as a kind of oddity. Tall and ungainly in his figure, in his manner abrupt and sheepish, he was to far the greater number of his companions a subject of jest and ridicule rather than admiration. There was, however, another circumstance which counteracted the effect of Godfrey's manner and appearance. He was a great student, and from various sources had contrived to amass a quantity of knowledge in a mind of no ordinary force.

Were we to take opinions on the cause of O'Berne's reserve and awkwardness, it is probable that we should find a great variety. Some would call it pride—some sensibility—some modesty—and some, by way of being wiser than all the rest, might say "it was a mixture of all these." Whatever was the cause, the young barber, unlike his fellow in the Arabian Nights, was reserved and meditative. He courted no friendships, sought no society, and seemed even impatient of that which he could not avoid. Still he bore in mind his father's dying counsel, and, while he courted solitude

as much as possible, he gave no one any actual reason to complain of him.

The young barber felt a want which none of us, in whatever rank or station we may be placed, have failed to experience at some portion of our lives—the want of mental sympathy. There was no one in the village who shared his information, or who could understand his thoughts on any subject, and it was not contempt, but the actual difference of mind that made him unwilling to mingle in societies where he could find nothing of considerable interest to him. It so happened that the train of his reading was one peculiarly adapted to foster such contemplative habits. The works which fell into his hands related principally to moral and metaphysical subjects, and the barber, who had an acute, intelligent spirit, was deeply caught by the profound and absorbing disquisitious which those books contained. How could he who had been all the preceding evening engaged in arduous endeavours to comprehend the reasonings of various philosophers on the connexion of mind with matter, and the mysterious manner in which both seem blended in the human individual, be expected on the following day to take an active interest in the labours of a mechanical vocation, or in the vulgar sports that made the village echo near his dwelling? There is no fact, however, more notorious than the possibility of uniting an extensive knowledge of, and the liveliest interest in, moral studies with a very inferior course of moral practice. The pleasure which Godfrey took in such pursuits as we have described was one of a purely intellectual character ; the heart had little or nothing to do with it. He pleased himself with the noble exercise which the subject afforded to the faculties of his understanding,

and thought little of deducing rules of practice from the sublime and immutable truths which he contemplated. Satisfied to let his imagination roam through the boundless sea of being, he bestowed comparatively little thought on the necessity of fulfilling with exactness, the part allotted to himself in the universal scheme, and used the light afforded him, rather for the gratification of an active spirit than for the direction of his course through life. His silence, however, and his habits of application, produced a strong impression of his learning on the rustics in his neighbourhood, and they looked on him as one of the profoundest scholars in the world.

There lived at this time in B————, a family of the name of Renahan, who were looked upon as amongst the leading denizens of the place. Mary, the eldest daughter of the house, was, in her seventeenth year, considered one of the wonders of the village. Her beauty was the subject of praise amongst the young, and her genuine piety and modesty amongst the old. Of the former, all had not the opportunity of judging, for Mary Renahan (who was too humble to aspire to the magnificence of a bonnet) took care never to appear unhooded in the public streets; and he who by any chance had seen her countenance, was accustomed to tell it as an adventure worth recording to his companions in the evening. Mary was rich, cheerful, and handsome; it was therefore the subject of general amazement, when the rumour spread that she was about to become the bride of the poor, the melancholy, and the ungainly Godfrey O'Berne.

Such, however, was the truth. Let who will divine the cause, the gay and gentle Mary Renahan gave up, without hesitation, her liberty and her affections into

the hand of one who was regarded by the rest of her companions either with ridicule or fear.

From the day of his marriage, Godfrey O'Berne seemed to have renounced his speculative habits, and became pratically industrious. He was attentive to his business, and began to laugh and jest with his customers in such a manner as to remind them of his father. To him belonged the economy of the basin and the strop, the scissors and the curling iron. His part it was to amuse the minds, while he trimmed the whiskers of his customers; and to enlighten the interior of the heads that came beneath his hand, while he reduced the outside to the standard of fashion and of grace. The regulation of the domestic department was committed exclusively to the management of Mrs. O'Berne, who was as attentive to the minor affairs of the little establishment as she was to the happiness and comfort of her lord. An over rigid economy, however, was not the fault of either master or mistress; and while custom increased, and comforts multiplied, the case was exactly the reverse with the hundred pounds which the latter had brought her husband as a dowry, and which they had set apart at first, in order that it might perform for their eldest daughter the same good office which it had done for Mrs. O'Berne.

Still all was gay and happy at the barber's. As a husband and a father he had more than the average share of happiness, and less than the average share of care. His wife seemed well contented with the portion of enjoyment which their means afforded her; and his three children were promising in mind and frame. Mortimer, the eldest, could already make a decent "pot hook" in his copy-book, and the others knew as much

of letters as Cadmus himself at twice their age, or as Charlemagne is said to have done while he was shaking Europe from the Baltic to the Alps.

Occasionally, in the long summer evenings, Godfrey would take down his violin, on which he was a tolerable proficient, and, in the absence of professional employment, enliven the house with some old national air, to which his wife would sometimes add the melody of a tolerable voice. More frequently they would devote the evening to a walk through the village, where their decent appearance attracted general notice. Indeed they were not without being censured for over daintiness of dress by some of those sharp-eyed individuals, who, when they can discover nothing to ridicule in a neighbour's meanness, had rather find the contrary fault than let him pass unwounded.

Nor were these the only annoyances from which the comforts of the barber received a slight alloy. That class of young persons inhabiting the purlieus of most towns and villages, who are emphatically distinguished by the epithet of "*the blackguards*," seemed, with that mischievous instinct which enables men to distinguish what is ludicrous in human avocations, to have marked out O'Berne for their special amusement. Sometimes they would snatch a new toy or wedge of bread from the hands of his children as they stood gaping at the open door; at others, they chalked uncivil nick-names on his pannels; or else (and this was the unkindest cut of all) a whole gang of them would watch an opportunity when he and his wife were walking in all their finest through the village on a Sunday evening, and set up in full chorus the popular ballad:—

Mullins the barber grew so grand,
He listed in the Sligo band;
Mullins the barber grew so great,
He knocked his nose against the gate, &c.

But notwithstanding these unavoidable mortifications, peace still abode on the household of O'Berne, and the tranquillity of his mind received no wordly shock that could bear an instant's comparison with the sum of his enjoyments.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was on Saturday evening, and the shop was thronged, as usual, with a crowd of hairy heads and chins, as rough as hedge-hogs with the stubble of the week. On the operating chair sat Molony, the blacksmith, the napkin tucked beneath his massive jaws, and his chin already white from ear to ear, adding a two fold grimness to the smoke and ashes that encased the upper portion of his countenance. A thoughtful silence for some time prevailed, while the eyes of all watched with a lazy admiration the skill with which the barber's razor flew along the blacksmith's spacious jaws, demolishing, at every stroke, a long flourishing harvest, and leaving behind it a fair and glossy surface At length, Mac Namara the carpenter, who was one of the village dandies, and waited to have his hair brought into form, broke silence as follows:

"Well, of all de tings dat ever was done to me, dat's de last I could ever bear—to have anoder man shave me. Not meanin' de laste asparagement to Mr. O'Berne, nor to his profession eider—but de iday of anoder man

takin' me be de nose, an' sweepin' a razhure up me troat, is what I never could abide de toughts o'doin'."

"When you have a beard at all, Tom Mac," said O'Reilly the cooper, taking a pipe from his mouth, and looking over his shoulder at the speaker, "it may come to your turn to talk of shaving it."

"Surely, surely, Ned. Well den, it's come to your turn to talk of it, any way, and to do it—for I declare dere isn't a chin in B——— stands more in need o' de razure."

"Thrue for you, Tom. There's this difference betune you an' me, that you shave to get a beard, an' I shave to get rid of it."

The conversation dropped, but there was a portion of it which was not forgotten. A weak imagination is easily impressed. With all his learning and capacity, it was long before O'Berne could get rid of the horrid idea which was suggested by the carpenter's random words. His mind, though well enough supplied with knowledge, was not subdued to any wholesome discipline; and such minds are often the prey of every wandering fancy. From time to time he would start as the foolish thought suggested itself to his imagination, and shudder, as if the carpenter's words showed any thing more than an extravagant caprice.

Still these were weaknesses known only to himself, and his general prosperity continued unabated. Most minds, as well as bodies, have their peculiar constitution, and their peculiar ailment, or "idiosyncrasy," which it requires the hand of a nice and delicate counsellor to deal with. Instead of despising the crowd of morbid thoughts, which arising like clouds, would gradually overshadow his whole imagination, as he dwelt on those expressions of the carpenter, O'Berne encouraged, ex-

amined, and brooded on them, until at length they communicated something like a settled tinge to his whole character. Could such individuals be brought to understand how much of misery they might avoid by a moderate degree of habitual and generous self-restraint, the world would be spared a great deal of woe, and more, perhaps, of crime.

To this state of mind an accidental circumstance added a prodigious force. At a little distance from B———, there resided a family, of the name of Danaher, hovering between the frontiers of gentility and of that rank to which the O'Bernes belonged. They lived in an equivocal looking house which they dignified with the title of Rath Danaher, held a pew at the chapel, and were looked upon as a kind of "half-quality." As they were near relations of Mrs. O'Berne, the latter and her husband were occasionally guests at the Rath, and contributed on festival days to make the evening pass merrily away. At this period the clouds of superstition still rested like a gloomy fog upon the minds of the poorer peasantry (as they do in all countries where education is retarded), nor were there wanting some in the rank immediately above them who participated in their credulity. In all such fancies, the Danahers were, from first to last, profoundly versed. They wore charms and spells; they never began a journey, or a new piece of work, on a Saturday; they kept no pigeons about the house; they would not hurt a weasel for the world; they always took off their hats when a cloud of dust went by them on the road; they read "dhrame-books" and consulted fortune-tellers, and practised numberless rites of the most absurd and unmeaning kind. Night after night, when the fire blazed cheerfully upon the hearth, it was their wont to gather

round it in a circle, and interchange their gloomy tales of supernatural agency, while even the youngest members of the group were suffered to drink, undisturbed, at the foul and soul-empoisoning stream, that flowed from the hag-ridden imaginations of the story-tellers. Ghosts, fairies, witches, murderers, and demons, glided with a horrid and hair-stiffening influence through all their narratives, and when the listeners retired for the night, it was to hurry to their beds with alarmed and shuddering nerves, and to supply the frightful fancies of their waking moments by still more frightful dreams.

One evening, while a conversation of this kind proceeded at the fireside of Rath-Danaher, the O'Bernes were of the company. Godfrey, surprised at the extent to which they carried their superstitious credulity, undertook to disabuse them of their fears. He talked learnedly of the nature of spirit and of matter,—of second causes, and of the absurdity of supposing that the divine Being would suffer the ordinary laws of nature to be violated on occasions so fantastical and useless.

"I do not know how to make you understand," said he, "that such an event could not happen without a direct infraction of the present order of things, which is a miracle to be wrought by the hand of Omnipotence alone. That it may happen, as He who made the law can alter it, I do not offer to deny; but to believe that it does commonly happen, and without cause or meaning, is to turn the exception into the rule. Spirit, as it is an immaterial substance, has neither colour, nor sound, nor smell, nor any quality which can make it perceptible to our senses. Granting that they exist in myriads around us, it is still impossible, according to

the ordinary laws of nature, that they can do us either physical injury or physical good. What communion they may hold with the mind, as that is likewise immaterial, has nothing to say to the purpose. It is possible they may suggest either good or evil to the soul (as religion even teaches us they do); but that, without supposing a miracle, they can pinch the body, black and blue, transport it from place to place, afright the senses with extraordinary sights and sounds is, against the common order of nature. The Deity must clothe them with material faculties before they can produce material effects."

"Well, Mr O'Berne," said Robert Danaher, a young man, who having attended a course of surgical lectures in Dublin, conceived himself entitled to his share of authority on metaphysical questions, and who was, moreover, perhaps the only person present who understood half what the barber said—"I do not know that any miracle at all is necessary to the purpose. It is an undisputed fact, that spirit does act on matter. The Deity, who is a pure spirit, sustains all things, both material and the contrary, in their daily courses—and we know that in the human being, the mind directs and regulates the movements of the body at its pleasure. Why may not the spirit, separated from its clay, possess the same influence over the matter that surrounds it which it once held over that with which it was united in the human frame? For my part, as it is a mystery to me by what means my will directs my arm to extend or to contract itself, I would not presume to say that the same spiritual will, when separated by death from this frame of flesh and blood, may not possess a similar influence over the wind that moans by my window, the candle that is burning on my table,

or the silent air that favours my midnight slumbers. I know not how the effect is produced in the one case any more than in the other; but when I know that the one effect does take place, I should be far from asserting that it would require an infraction of the natural harmony to produce the other."

"Ye may talk as ye will," said Kitty Danaher, "but fractions or no fractions, the spirits are abroad as regular as the sun goes down. Our John can tell you that, on a market night last year, after selling some cattle in New Auburn, he was mounting his horse at the door of the Harp and Shamrock, when three times, one after another, he fell over on the other side, without one near (that he could see) to give him a shove, and the poor old mare standing as quiet as a lamb."

O'Berne, who supposed that there might be reasons for John's unsteadiness after leaving the Harp and Shamrock, apart from outward agents, either spiritual or material, was not so much struck by this example, as he was by the argument which it seemed intended to illustrate. He remained for a long time silent, while each of the family in turn poured out some fearful tale of supernatural agency in order to subdue his incredulity. They did not, however, succeed in convincing him. He continued to express his contempt for the ridiculous legends that they sought to thrust upon him, admitting only the possibility of such appearances, as formed their leading subject.

"I can assure you of one circumstance, at all events," said Mrs. Danaher, "which took place beneath this very roof. Mr. Andrew Finucane the apothecary, to whom Robert served his time, was speaking one night, as you are, of the folly of believing in such stories, when we all warned him to be careful of what he said,

as he did not know the moment he might have reason to change his mind. He laughed, but when he woke next morning he found himself lying with his head where his heels ought to be."

This tale brought on a fresh torrent of similar anecdotes. The evening passed away, and the barber and his wife returned home. It was in some weeks after, that the former, returning late from the neighbouring city, was obliged to take a bed for the night at an inn on the roadside. The stillness of the night and the loneliness of the place, for it was situate in one of those dreary flats which the road traversed on its way to the western coast, and tenanted only by an old woman and her son, brought to his recollection the discourse which had passed in his presence at Rath Danaher. The instinct of the supernatural is one, which perhaps nobody, except some conscience-seared criminal, whose heart is hard to every natural feeling, can ever wholly lay aside. It is implanted in us for the best of purposes, and though we may abuse it, as we do the best emotions, to our ruin, it is not the less intended for our good. O'Berne, though he had his weakness, was by no means superstitious; yet he could not avoid bearing testimony in his own heart to the existence of the universal instinct as he gazed through his small window upon the wide and starlit heath that lay before it, and which was, in itself, a prospect sufficient to have awakened lonesome and mealancholy thoughts. Still feeling a contempt for such terrors as those which preyed upon the household of Rath Danaher, he confessed, however, a sufficient degree of nervousness to lock the door of his sleeping room inside, and to make fast the window, to make "assurance doubly sure." He then knelt down, as usual, prayed with somewhat

more than usual earnestness, and went to rest. His s'eep was sound and dreamless as the sleep of a weary man is wont to be, but a surprise awaited him in the morning which made him almost doubt the evidence of his senses. On opening his eyes, he was astonished to perceive that the window which, when he went to rest, stood behind the head of his bed, and a little at the side, stood now directly opposite, as if it had made a circuit of the chamber in the night! He rose, and his perplexity increased. He found himself now lying with his feet towards the head of the bed, the pillow and all the bed furniture being reversed in the same way, and even his silver watch still lying as he had placed it under the bolster, but having participated in the general change of position. His astonishment was excessive. The bed had no appearance of the disturbance which such a change might be expected to make. It even seemed as if he had slept without motion through the night; and but that his recollection of the contrary was distinct, he would have been persuaded that the whole must be an error of his own. The door was locked, and the window fastened, as he had left them, but in no place could he find his clothes, which he had laid on the proceeding night upon the chair at his bedside. After thoroughly searching the room without success, he was about to summon the people of the house, in order to make inquiries from them, when his eye fell upon the old portmanteau which he had brought with him from home. It seemed more full than it had been when he took it off his horse on the proceeding eve. He opened it. Wonder on wonder! There was the suit folded, brushed, and made up with an exactness that was admirable! Every article was in its place, and every buckle made fast with just the proper degree of

tightness. The barber was perfectly bewildered. The mysterious agent, whose prerogative he had disputed in the case of Mr. Andrew Finnucane, had sought an opportunity of vindicating, in his case also, the slighted power that was allotted him. So would the Danahers have construed the story, and for that reason, the barber determined for the present to say nothing of the circumstance to them, or to any body else.

For many months the circumstance continued unexplained, and its impression, from the very force of constant thinking on it, began to grow faint on the barber's mind. Again there was a party at Rath Danaher, and again the barber and his wife were of the number of the guests. The conversation on this evening happened to turn on the superstition of the Fetch, or warning spirit which shows itself, say the country people, in the likeness of some person doomed to die at some short period before his death.* Numberless instances were related of such appearances, and again Mr. O'Berne expressed his total incredulity. In a fortnight after, as he was passing through B——, he was met by Mr. Guerin, (the father of Peter Guerin, whose exploits at " the great House," the reader will find in another volume). He was surprised to see that Mr. Guerin, with whom he was always on the most friendly terms, now passed him by with an offended air. Nor did he make his appearance as usual on Saturday evening at the barber's shop, in order to have his beard and hair made decent for the ensuing Sabbath. A neighbour solved the mystery.

* Our friend Mr. Barnes O'Hara, has given such celebrity to this superstition, that there is no need of a more particular description.

" Why, Mr. O'Berne said he, " Peter Guerin says there's no spakin' to you now, you're grown so grand.

" I had much the same complaint to make of himself," replied the barber. " He wouldn't speak to me in the street when I saluted him."

" That's dhroll !" said the peace-maker. It's the very account he gives o' you. He says that he was standin' at his shop doore th' other morning about six o'clock, just afther day brake, an' that you walked by, lookin' him straight in the face, an' without ever takin' any notice, although he axed you how you was as plain as could be."

The instant the man had concluded his account, O'Berne recollected the recent conversation at Rath Danaher. He had not, he knew, for years before been in B ——, or any where outside his own door at so early an hour as six in the morning; and he had not the slightest recollection of the rencontre, to which Mr. Guerin referred. What was it then, that the latter had seen ? The Danahers would have found a ready answer, and in spite of himself he felt a creeping through his nerves as he remembered the prediction with which the appearance was supposed to be associated. He had sufficient promptitude of mind, however to keep his secret from transpiring.

,, Mr. Guerin may be sure," said he, " that he is the last man in B—— I would think of treating in that way. I have no recollection whatever of passing him by at any time in that manner, and I'm sure I never had the least idea of doing such a thing."

The village Mr. Harmony, who received this explanation, lost no time in conveying it to the proper quarter, and peace was re-established between the barber and his friend, In spite of himself, some occasional qualms

respecting the state of his health, would cross the mind of the former, and this new adventure gave threefold strength to that already related. As time rolled by, however, and he found his bodily vigour undiminished, his courage rose, and he began to make inquiry respecting the nature of the superstition. It was then he learned for the first time, that the appearance, when seen early in the morning, was supposed *to predict a long life to the individual whose semblance is assumed.*

There is no time when one is more inclined to admit the truth of a supernatural prediction that when it coincides exactly with one's own desire. The barber would not directly admit, even to himself, that his incredulity was shaken in the least degree, but it was certain that his repugnance to conviction in this instance was not so vivid as in the former.

Half a year had passed away, before the spirit which had tormented him at the lonely inn on the roadside, took any pains to confirm the impression which had been made by its first essay. It happened one night that the barber slept at Rath Danaher, where he had turned in from a violent storm of rain and wind. The chamber which was allotted to him commanded a lonely prospect of the river and distant mountains, and the barber was forcibly reminded of the adventures of the last night he had spent away from home. In the same manner as he had done on the former night, he fastened the door and window-frame, before he went to rest. Whether it was owing to a growing doubt of the reality of such appearances, or a state of bodily indisposition, it was a long time now before he could sleep. When he did so, however, his sleep, as usual, was sound and dreamless.

After midnight, he awoke with a sense of cold. The bed-clothes had all disappeared! Nothing but the grey striped tick remained upon the bedstead, and on that he lay, exposed to the sharp cold of a November night. By the aid of some embers which still were burning on the hearth, he was enabled to light a small candle, which he had extinguished on going to rest. He searched the room, but the fugitive bed-clothes were nowhere to be seen. It was impossible that this could be a trick of any human being. The door and window were fast as he had left them, and even if it were possible for any body to have got in, the fact that he should have been thus annoyed, at two different houses of which no one member perhaps knew even the existence of the other, was in itself incredible. He was on the point once more of giving up the search, when his attention was directed to an old oak press which stood in a corner of the room; it was locked, but the key was in the lock. The barber opened it, and could scarcely believe his eyes; there lay the objects of his search, folded and laid upon the shelves with as much order and exactness as if they had never left the draper's counter. The barber was thunderstricken. He felt no terror, but he was stunned to the very soul; he walked, he struck his breast, he moved the candle to and fro, in order to be satisfied that it was not all a dream. But nothing could change the facts, and with a bewildered mind he laid the clothes upon the bed again, and passed the remainder of the night in troubled and interrupted slumbers.

In the meantime, perplexities of a less metaphysical kind began to darken on the fortunes of the barber; and in common with his species he felt in his turn the influence of those inferior causes to which for its own

wise ends all-curbing Providence seems often to abandon human interests. A handsome house had been erected on the opposite side of the road, about halfway between the barber's dwelling and the village, and speculation was exhausted as to its probable use; some said it was intended for a toll-house, others for a shrine of Bacchus. Before the point could be decided a typhus fever confined O'Berne to his apartment and his bed, from which he was unable to rise during the space of a summer month. During this time (the first period of affliction which they had ever known,) his wife attended him with a tenderness and care that excited in his mind a deeper sentiment of affection and respect towards her than he had ever felt before. What heart, be it high or low, that ever yielded to affection, has not like that of the poor barber, experienced, either in its bitterness or in its censolation, the truth so delightfully sung since then by our national poet?

> When we first see the charms of our youth pass us by,
> Like a leaf on the stream that will never return,
> When our cup which had sparkled with pleasure so high
> First tastes of the *other*—the dark flowing urn.
> Then, then is the moment affection can sway,
> With a depth and a tenderness joy never knew;
> Love nursed among pleasures is faithless as they,
> But the love born of sorrow, like sorrow is true.

Nor was the gratitude of O'Berne on first making this discovery, in its happier sense, less tender or less true that he was but a village barber.

On the first day of his convalescence, a new, and it must be confessed, an unwelcome surprise awaited the invalid. Walking with difficulty to the low window, where his wife had placed a chair, he looked out with

strange and altered eyes upon the healthy active world, that still continued its career of growth, of bloom, and of decay, unchanging in design, though for ever varying in effects. The sun still smote the ripening grain ; the fresh wind shook the boughs ; the noisy carmen rattled by to market, and the smaller birds, which least of Nature's children seem known to sickness or to pain, fluttered with vigorous wing and frequent twitter about the leaves, and amid the branches of the rustling elder.

But there was one sight, which from the moment when it first had caught the barber's eye, diverted him from every other thought. The new house, above alluded to, had been completed and inhabited during his illness, and it was with astonishment and dismay, he perceived that the inmate was no other than a rival barber. He could not without anxiety contemplate the superior splendour displayed by this new competitor. The front of the house was handsomely dashed; the pole, exceeding at least by half the size of O'Berne's, was surmounted by a gilded ball that shone like another sun, while close beneath was fastened a long banner of hair that flouted the winds as if anticipating triumph. Above the lintel of the door was a sign board, executed in metropolitan style, which announced the proprietors, (for it seemed to be a partnership,) as "Fitzgerald and O'Hanlon, late from Paris and Dublin, professors of hair-cutting and perfuming," &c.

"Mary," said the convalescent to his wife, as he surveyed this great display, "why didn't you tell me there was a new barber set up since I lay down?"

"I didn't think of it," replied the wife, "what matter can it be to us?"

"I'm afraid time will show us that," said O'Berne. "Wasn't Ireland big enough without their coming to

plant themselves, and their pole, over-right my very door?"

"What signifies themselves and their great pole?" replied the wife. "You have your custom made, and the neighbours will stand by you, I'll engage."

"That's not the way of the world," replied the barber, "and I'd be a fool if I thought it would be the way with me; there are some I know I can count upon. There's the blacksmith, because he has no capers that way, and he says no one knows the sweep of his jaws but myself; he'll stick to me; and there's my third cousin, Pat Sheehy, the weaver, will stay by me for blood's sake; and a few more friends I may be sure of; and perhaps others that will be honest, as some will be rogues, without expecting it; but the rest, you'll find, will have their notions. The golden ball will draw many an eye away, and where the eye goes the chin and head will follow. But where's the use of talking?"

The event even outstripped the anticipations of the barber. The time lost by his own illness, and that of his wife, who fell ill of the same disease immediately on his recovery, accellerated a catastrophe which he had too much cause to fear. The villagers were unwilling to frequent a house which had now for two months been the seat of contagion. Party spirit also lent its influence to the success of the new comers, and O'Berne lost many a head and chin to political differences.

In fine, before the lapse of many years, extreme and squalid misery descended on the dwelling of the barber. By degrees, retrenchment followed retrenchment until what once were necessaries, assumed the character of luxuries, too costly to be thought of. The barber and his wife no longer appeared abroad, except

when it could not be avoided, and at length that day was one of joy to the family which saw them supplied with a bare sufficiency of food.

From circle to circle, however, they descended in the region of adversity, nor had they yet arrived at the depths of the abyss. The rent of their tenement ran into arrear, and they were menaced more than once with an ejectment. This was the only event which began to strike a real gloom into the mind of the barber, already weakened by misfortune, and the effects of sickness. While it startled every affection of his heart, it awoke in all its force (as the heart in its alarm will often do) the full power of an imagination that prosperity had lulled into comparative inaction.

The barber, though he had received the same education, did not use it to the same advantage as his wife. It perplexed, while it soothed him, to observe the serenity with which his wife sustained the adverse change in their circumstances. She, who had sacrificed so much for him, did not even seem to be conscious that she had made any sacrifice whatever. Her wealthy relatives were now all scattered and burthened with their own separate claims, and could do nothing to assist the barber. Still, in their distress, her concern seemed all for her husband and her children. The sea is not more necessarily agitated by the sighing of the winter winds, than is a generous and religious bosom by the accents of distress and sorrow in a fellow being. So natural, so free from effort or reluctance, appeared the affectionate concern with which the gentle Mary exerted herself to alleviate the sufferings of her husband and her children.

At different times her gentle uncomplaining conduct produced varying effects upon her husband's mind.

Sometimes, when his reflections took a gloomy turn, the clear angelic serenity of her looks would, with an influence like that of gentle music, subdue his discontent, and restore his thoughts to calmness and to order; at others, when he beheld her sharing in their common want, and remembered what she was, when she resigned abundance and respectability to unite her earthly lot to his, his anguish far exceeded what it was when he thought only of his own privations.

"We are worse off now," he said to her, one summer evening, as they sat before the open window which looked upon their little orchard, and watched the crows winging high above them to the distant wood, "our case is worse than that of even the animals that are left without reason. The face of the round world is free to them; from the worm to the eagle all are well provided for. The crow has his nest upon the bough, and the hare has her form in the furze, and their food is ready for them at morning in the fields, or by the river, for no trouble but the pains of seeking it. In the water, in the air, or on the earth, food, clothing and a home, are ready found for all. The goldfinch has his painted feathers, and the robin his grain of seed, while our poor babes are perishiug with cold and hunger."

"For every pain we bear with true patience in this life," said his wife "we shall receive an age of glory and of happiness in the next

"Yet who would murmur at a Providence that is inscrutable," resumed O'Berne, in a fit of sombre musing; "if men would only do their duty by each other? But it is not, and it never will be so. They say that if you take a young bird unfledged from the nest, and set it down alone in some field far away,

where the parents cannot find it, and leave it there and watch it, they say there is no bird that passes, of whatever kind, and hears its lonesome chirp, that will not bring it a worm, or a mouthful of some other food, until it gets strength to shift for itself. But men, men must have laws to force them even to do so much as will keep the breath of life within the lips of their own kind."

"All is well," said Mary, "while we keep our own fidelity. Let the storm blow as it will, let all our prospects and our possessions go to ruin, all still is well while heaven is not offended. Let us keep our hands unstained, and in His name who distributed suffering and joy, let the worst that will befal us. It is not want nor plenty that can either give or take away our peace of mind. To be contented with the will heaven, and to strive to put it into practice, is always in our power and if we are not so disposed in our distress, we may be certain that we should not be so under any change whatever. Let us preserve our innocence, and all is well."

"You are very easily contented," said the barber with an angry look. "What were your thoughts, two months since, when the fire seized on the grocer's house next door, and we saw, with our own eyes, the remains of an unhappy infant dug out of the ruins.

"I will tell you, Godfrey, what I thought," replied his wife, "I trembled for myself when I beheld it. He, said I, who has created the world so fair, and filled it with so many blessings, who has made that beautiful sun, and those millions of shining stars, and who daily and hourly shows his goodness and his mercy in new acts of kindness to his creatures; he too it is who has permitted that sinless child to perish by a frightful

death. Let me therefore take the warning, and beware in what condition I fall into his hands, for if he thus afflicts the innocent and good on earth, what should be done with us? I speak to you in this way, dear Godfrey, because I see you are beginning to sink in spirits. Beware, my dear, dear, husband; it is in our moments of gloom and melancholy, as well as in those of thoughtless gaiety, that the enemy of our souls endeavours to seduce us into crime or madness."

As she said these words she laid her hand caressingly upon her husband's shoulder. Moved by the action as well as by the words with which it was accompanied, O'Berne was softened, and melted slowly into tears.

"Read to me," said he, "and it may be better."

His wife complied, and taking from the drawer a copy of the scriptures, began to read a portion of the New Testament. Godfrey listened, and it semed to him as if he had never heard the words before For several days after he became totally absorbed in the perusal of the volume; the profound wisdom of its counsels, the majestic simplicity of its narrative, and the stupendous nature of the events which it recorded, the heartfelt spirit of prayer with which it was pervaded, the terrible solemnity of its warnings, the melting tenderness of its promises, and the striking nature of the examples by which both were illustrated, made a deep and strong impression on the mind of the village philosopher. It seemed to him as if he never before had heard how all things were first called into existence; how murder entered first into the world, which, until then, was the abode of love and happiness. He there heard the Deity delivering his law to man, amid the lightnings and the thunders of Mount Sinai; he saw in the fate of Eli and his sons, an example of the divine justice against

neglectful parents; he dwelt with enchantment on the mystical beauties of the story of Ruth, and the marriage of Rebecca: and he traced with astonishment and awe, the tremendous and affecting history of the origin, the fall, and restoration of his species, detailed in language worthy of a subject so sublime. He read and it astonished him to think how mechanical till now had been the nature of his feelings and his practise. What, was he then one of those who really believed that the Divinity himself had come on earth to teach his creatures, both by word and by example, the real nature of moral goodness? to overthrow the worldly error which ascribed to human pride the honours due to virtue, and to introduce modesty, humility, patience, and mildness, to the same rank in human estimation which they had ever held in the divine, and which men till then accorded to false glory, ambition, revenge, and haughtiness of soul?

The philosophic barber, however, while he wondered how little hitherto he had felt the real nature of the character he professed in society, rather revolved these wonders in his intellect than let them sink into his heart. His imagination became deeply impressed, and he brooded by day and dreamed by night on what he had been studying, until his whole mind became absorbed with the one engrossing subject. To change the heart, it is not sufficient that the mind should be excited. To create a spirit of tenderness and love is of far greater importance in the way of virtue, than to captivate the fancy or amaze the understanding.

The impatience, therefore, with which he bore the increasing perplexity in his affairs, was not in any permanent degree diminished. A week of extreme misery and privation, was closed by a formal ejectment from

the house in which he lived. We pledge ourselves not to the truth of the events of a few days and nights immediately succeeding, but relate them as they are told in the neighbourhood, reserving all comment to the conclusion of the tale. It was a Friday evening, and the family were to give up possession before twelve on the following Monday. With a mind weakened by distress and apprehension, the barber spent the day pacing alone from room to room of the little dwelling, like one distracted in his thoughts.

"If it be true," said he, striking his forehead with a burst of anger,—"if it be true, that immaterial things can hourly, as young Danaher asserted, exert an influence over what is passable and material, why will they not interfere to serve as well as to perplex and to annoy us? Why will not that power, whatever it may have been, that visited me for my discomfort in that lonely inn, and at Rath Danaher, present itself again for my assistance, at a time when human aid has left me at my last extremity?"

His wife, who overheard those words was afraid that her husband's misfortunes were beginning to affect his reason.

"Remember," she said, "that apart from human aid, we have but one source of power to which we can apply."

"I would apply to ANY," cried her husband with a burst of frenzy, from whatever source assistance comes, I am ready to receive it."

Saying this, he rushed from the room. The fit of passion having passed away, he was able to reflect with more distinctness on the nature of what he had said, and his imagination froze at the thought that it was possible he might yet be taken at his word. Terror,

in addition to the former excitement, now seized upon his nerves, and unfitted him for any settled thought. He could only wait in hopeless silence the passing of the shocking gloom that seized upon his mind, without knowing how to quicken its departure.

In this mood, say the storytellers, he retired to rest. The chamber in which he slept looked out upon the orchard, at the door of which, some evenings before, the conversation already recorded had taken place between the barber and his wife. The bed was so placed that the former could see as he lay down, on a moonlight night, a considerable portion of the orchard and the country lying far beyond it. Such a night was that of which we speak; it was between one and two o'clock, and in mid winter; when after a few hours' slumber, the view of the orchard, with its moonlight paths, crossed by the sharply defined shadows of the trees, came slowly on his sight through the uncurtained window.

For a time as he looked out upon the scene, the barber could not tell if he were waking or asleep, so indistinct and floating was the consciousness that existed in his mind. All doubt however ceased, or rather he ceased to question what his actual condition was, when he beheld a figure dressed in a grotesque suit of black, advancing through the trees and approaching the windows with a slow but steady pace. An unaccounable influence held the barber motionless, until the stranger approached so near that his singular drapery almost appeared to touch the glass. It seemed to the former as if an iron hand were laid upon his breast and pressed him to the bed. The moonlight falling on the back of the figure prevented him from seeing with distinctness what the features were of this unknown intru-

der, but the sense of horror which his presence excited was almost insupportable. After a little time the figure slowly raised one hand, and retiring a little from the window, waved it gracefully as a sign for Godfrey to arise and follow. The sequel is gathered from Godfrey's own indistinct recollection of what took place. He could not, he said, resist the summons: he got up like one under the influence of some necromantic power, hastily drew on his clothes, and proceeding to the window opened the sash and stepped out into the orchard. The figure retired, still turning at intervals, and beckoning with one hand until they had passed into the open country.

On a sloping hill at the eastern side of the village stood a grove of firs, shadowing a tract of soil which once had been a burying-ground, but in which no interment had taken place for centuries before. Tradition only, and the half obliterated remains that were sometimes dug out of the soil, supplied the history of its former uses, for neither monument nor grave stone had for a long period been discernable upon the slope. Near the borders of this sombre grove it was that O'Berne beheld the figure pause, and seem to wait his arrival. Still moved by the same irresistible influence the barber pressed forward up the slope, fixing his eye upon the stranger, and even eager for the conference, which he anticipated with a dizzy sense of terror. Nor were his wonder and his awe diminished, when on turning round to address him, the stranger revealed the countenance and figure of his old master!

CHAPTER IX.

We pursue the barber's narrative as he is said to have delivered it.

"You said,"(the stranger slowly and calmly enunciated each syllable, like one who utters words of the last importance,)—"that you were ready to receive assistance from ANY source. I am one who have both the will and the power to afford it."

"And who are you?" the barber would have said in turn, but his jaws, locked fast as if by a fit of tetanus, refused to articulate the words, His guide, however, seemed to understand his thought.

"Who I am," said he, with a voice so inexpressively mournful that it penetrated to the hearer's soul,—"is of no importance to your present views or mine. Let it be enough for you to know, and for me to tell you, that I can procure you the assistance you require. Speak therefore, and tell what thou wouldst have."

The barber replied at once :—

"Food for my family and a certain home. They are miserable. If thou canst secure them sustenance and shelter thou shalt have my gratitude."

"I require it not," replied the figure with a smile of subtle scorn. "I seek not love but service. I have it in my power to do all and more for thee than thou requirest, but no one offers wages without requiring a return. I offer them to relieve you from your present difficulty, but it is on one condition."

"Name it," cried the barber.

"It is a simple one," replied the spirit. "Those who are at war do not use to pay the servants of their

Enemy. You must be one of us, if you would receive our aid."

"What! become like you an open enemy to the divinity?"

"Become like us."

"There is no step in crime or in calamity," replied the barber, "beyond an express and formal hatred of the Deity. I dare not accept of the condition."

"Remain then as thou art and serve in wretchedness," replied the fiend. "He whom thou servest has abandoned thee to want and woe. Continue if thou wilt to worship a neglectful master instead of one who is willing to repay thee with abundance."

"It may be," said the barber, "that he does but try my patience and my loyalty. This life is short—he may be bounteous in the next."

"Feed on that painted hope if thou wilt." replied the fiend, and see if it will satisfy thy present misery. Did he not tell thee likewise that whosoever should forsake all things for Him in this world should receive an hundred-fold even in the present life?"

"Aye," said the barber with a sigh, "but he meant in the sweets of a good conscience, which is a treasure beyond all that kings or emperors enjoy."

"Well," said the spirit, "be content with that, if thou prefer it. If thou accept my offer happiness and peace and plenty shall surround thee for the term of thy mortal life, if not affliction, trouble and necessity."

"For my mortal life perhaps," replied the barber, "but how shall it be after?"

"Why," said the fiend, "thou wouldst not look to be better than thy master."

Godfrey was silent, and the spirit after a pause, resumed:

"To-morrow thou shalt have the choice of misery or joy. I do not press thee to decide at once. Whenever the extremity may be at hand, my power will not be distant."

With these strange words he vanished, and the barber returned to his dwelling. Of his adventures on the way home, or the manner in which he obtained an entrance into his own house, he had no recollection. On the following morning he found himself in his bed as usual, but could remember nothing of what took place from the moment of the spirit's disappearance. There was no corroborating signs in the position of his dress, or in the state of the window, that bore testimony to the reality of his midnight excursion; and he would have been inclined, notwithstanding the regular train of the occurrences, and the vivid impression he retained of what had passed, to pronounce the whole a dream, if it were not that the two former mysterious events which had befallen him, left his reason far more open to an admission of supernatural agency.

The day which followed was the same in which, as set forth in a preceding portion of this narrative, Mr. Moynehan the tax-gatherer, left home to dine at Castle Tobin. It was a trying one to Godfrey, on more than one account. Not one of the inmates of the dwelling had tasted food since they arose, and at night the cries of the younger children rent the father's breast. To complete the dreariness and discomfort of the scene, the night was gusty and full of showers, and the sound of the inclement weather breaking against the doors and windows seemed to give promise

of the destitution which awaited them when they should no longer own the shelter of a roof.

Emaciated even more by wasting thoughts than by the want of necessary food, the barber sat in the chair, which now but rarely held a customer, attending in silence (if he attended at all,) to the consolatory expressions that were now and then addressed to him by his wife, and weaving vain conjectures on the future.

"Talk you of comfort?" he said, looking backward on the latter with a ghastly smile. "Have you the wallet ready, then? and the wattle and tin can? and the slate and voster for Mortimer to study in the dyke on summer days, when we all sit down together by the roadside in the shade, away from the dust of the horses' feet and the carriage wheels, while we ask the gentlefolks for charity as they roll by? not forgetting the linen caps for the girls, and all the beggar's furniture? Have you all that ready, since you talk of comfort?"

"Even if it came to that," replied his wife, with a tone of slight severity mingled with affection, "I trust we all have resignation to endure it."

"It would be less a burthen to my mind," said the barber, "that you had asked me 'why I brought you to this misery?' rather than to hear you speak so kindly, And why, why did I do so? Why did I not leave you where I found you, happy and prosperous in your father's house?"

At this moment one of the younger children which had crept from its pallet of straw, took Godfrey by the coat, and looking up with a pallid face and crying accent said:—

"Father, Ellen is hungry."

If those who make themselves miserable about

fancied evils, could know the pangs that rent the heart of O'Berne at this instant, it is probable they would look upon their own condition with a more contented eye. In the agony of his soul the unhappy man bent down his head, and half murmured beween his teeth:—

"If the opportunity now were offered me again, I would not, I think, reject it,"

He had scarcely framed these words in his own mind, when the tramp of horse's hoofs was heard approaching the door, and soon after a lond knocking with a whip handle made the panel echo through the house.

"Hollo! ho! ho! Who's within? Open, I say! O'Berne where are you? Are your razors ready?"

> "They have got a new method of shaving,
> They have got a new method of shaving—
> Oh, I wouldn't lie under that razor,
> For all that lies under the sun.

"O'Berne, I say! Godfrey, bring out the light!"

"'Tis Mr. Moynehan the tax-gatherer's voice," said Mary.

"And drunk," added the barber.

"May heaven forgive him!"

"Why—O'Berne, I say! Are you asleep, or dead? Open! open the door!

> "Over the mountain and over the moor,
> Barefoot and wretched I wander forlorn,
> My father is dead, and my mother is poor,
> And I weep for the days that will never return.
> Pity, kind gentlefolks——

"Come—come—barber, this is no joke."

The door was opened, and Mr. Moynehan made his appearance, wrapped in a dark frieze travelling coat, which glistened with rain, as did the fresh and well-nurtured countenance of the owner. In one hand he held the bridle of his horse, which seemed inclined to follow him into the house.

"How are you? how are you?" said the tax-gatherer, as he staggered forwards,—"no compliments at all at present, do you see? I'm come to stay the night with you, for 'tis rather late and windy."

"You have chosen but a poor house for your lodging, sir," said the barber.

"No matter for that; many a better fellow often slept in a worse. So that you find a dry corner for my horse, you may put myself any where, do you see?"

"Mortimer," said the barber, "take the gentleman's horse round to the little cow-house, and see him well rubbed for the night."

"And hark you?" said the tax-gatherer, setting his arms "akimbo," and endeavouring to keep his balance while he gazed on Mortimer, "before you do so, my young hero, give me that portmanteau that's fastened behind the saddle. That's right," he added, as the boy complied, "King George would have a crow to pluck with me if I let anything happen to them. And hark in your ear—another thing—I took a glass too much at Castle Tobin? no matter—a set of rogues—They have their reasons for tempting me to exceed."

"Mary," said the barber, "put the children to bed, and shut the door."

"Good night, Mrs. O'Berne—good night—And hark you—Mrs. O'Berne, I see you're shocked to see me as I am, but 'tis my weakness, that and a little tender

heartedness about the making out of an inventory—I confess it—if an honest hospitable country gentleman, sends me in a good-natured sort of way, a sack of corn for that poor animal abroad, and then omits all mention of his own neat riding nag, I haven't the heart to charge him with it. Good Mrs. O'Berne, I protest to you, there is not a single four-wheeled carriage, nor a gig, nor a riding horse in the whole neighbourhood of B———. Those are all phantoms that we meet every day upon the roads—phantoms Madam—I have the best authority for it—the word of the owners themselves—all ghosts of greyhounds—ghosts of pointers, ghosts of spaniels, terriers, servants, and all. Oh, Mrs. O'Berne, there's nothing in the island but ghosts and rogues! There's that attorney—no matter who—he's an honest fellow to be sure, and keeps a capital bottle of whiskey; he had the assurance last week, after putting blank—blank—blank—against horses, carriages, and servants, to turn about as he handed me the paper, and offer me a ride in his own curricle as far as the village. And I protest to you the ghost of a curricle carried us both uncommonly well. As for the great men of the county, I can't for the life of me tell how they manage with two hearths and six windows. There's a place that shall be nameless—I don't say 'tis Castle Tobin now, where I can count four-and-twenty windows as I ride up the avenue; but on entering I cannot persuade Tob—the owner I mean, that it is more than quarter the number. Assessed taxes! assessed rogues and swindlers! But good night, these things must not continue—Pray for me,—your prayers I think, are heard. As for that husband of yours—he deals in witchcraft."

"Who, I?" cried the barber, starting from a fit of gloomy musing.

"Ha, ha, ha! observe how he starts. Look at him, Mrs. O'Berne. I would not trust my life with that fellow across the street."

Godfrey gathered his brows and looked darkly on the ground.

"Look at him," continued the tax-gatherer, laying his hand on Mrs. O'Berne's arm, and pointing with the other to her husband, who, in an attitude of ghastly anger, looked backward in his face. "There are men who go through life straight, like the handle of my whip; and there are others that, like the lash, will take any crooked bend you give it. Look at him how he eyes the portmanteau!"

Again the barber started.

"Ha, ha! Come, come, O'Berne, I bid but jest. You must learn to take a joke."

Mrs. O'Berne retired, and the tax-gatherer remained with her husband in the kitchen. During the foregoing conversation, a dreadful struggle had been taking place within the mind of the latter. The gold! Mr. Moynehan, in his random jest, had harped his thought aright. That portmanteau would secure his family for ever against all fear of indigence. Terrified by the workings of his own breast, and desirous to remove a temptation which he feared might grow too strong for his already flickering virtue, he approached the tax-gatherer and said, with a hoarse and mournful energy of voice and manner:—

"Mr. Moynehan, it is as your friend I advise you to return home to night. There are evil minds abroad, hearts weakened by affliction, and unable to resist the deadly thoughts that want and melancholy whisper to

them in the silence of the night. Be wise, therefore, and return to your house at once,"

"Return to my house!" cried the tax-gatherer, setting both his hands upon his sides, and looking on the barber with a stare of high defiance, "And who are you, sir, that order me to return to my house? I shall stay where I am, sir, and you may frown and grind your teeth as you will, sir, but I shall not be ordered off by you. And I will tell you more, I'll have myself shaved to night; so get your apparatus ready on the instant."

"To night!" said O'Berne, "pray do not say to night. It is already one o'clock."

But Mr. Moynehan, like many who have not a perfect possession of their reason, was obstinate. He insisted on being shaved, and took his seat in the centre of the room, while the barber, with trembling knees, and a mind shaken to its foundation by its own internal struggles, prepared the implements necessary to the task that was allotted him.

"These things must have an end, O'Berne," the tax-gatherer resumed, as he loosened his neck-cloth and laid it on the back of the chair. "I cannot continue long to lead this life—'tis bad—'tis wicked—'tis unchristian. My good lady is for ever lecturing me about it, and I believe she's right. I promised her this morning that this should be the last time I would ever dine from home again, and I am resolved to keep my word, I am resolved to——"

Here he began to grow drowsy as he sat, and continued nodding in his chair. while he spoke in interrupted sentences—

"Yes—she's right—the women are right after all about these matters—they are more doc—do—docile-

well!—I'll mend. She hinted that I might begin too late—but no—to-morrow morning will be time enough—to night it would be late indeed—Cas—Ca—Castle To—Tob—Tobin—farewell—I'll mend—I'll—re—form—I'll—I'll—To morrow I'll begin—I'll——"

He dropped his head upon his breast and fell fast asleep. The storm had now subsided, and the moon by fits, as on the preceding night, gleamed brightly on the hearth. The barber opened the door, which looked into the orchard. The picture was one which might have made a spectator tremble, if there had been a spectator there. O'Berne, with his worn and haggard countenance, standing at the open door, and looking with wild eyes and ghastly teeth into the moonlit orchard. The tax-gatherer sleeping, with his neck-cloth laid aside, and his head hanging back in the profound repose of drunkenness—the hour late—the night favourable—and the instruments, which might as readily be made to serve the purposes of destruction as of utility, lying open on the barber's table. Let us close the scene upon this horrible tableau.

CHAPTER X.

In less than two hours after she had first retired to rest, the sleep of Mrs. O'Berne, which had been disturbed by frightful dreams, was altogether broken by the sound of a foot-step in her room. Looking up, she beheld her husband, with an end of candle lighted in his hand, looking pale and terrified. In answer to her question, he said, that the tax-gatherer had not yet retired to rest. She fell asleep again and did not wake till morning. Her husband then informed her, that

Mr. Moynehan, notwithstanding all his persuasions, had insisted on leaving the house on the preceding night, and taking the road to his own residence, which was well known to be infested by foot-pads. But he had good news also for her ear. Before leaving the house, he had lent him a sum which would be more than sufficient to re-establish them in all their former comfort. But this was to be kept a secret.

There was something in the manner of her husband, as he gave her this account, which perplexed and pained her. It was not gloomy, as before, but unequally and fitfully joyous. He laughed and his laughter was broken by a spasmodic action of the frame, as if a searing iron had suddenly been applied to a part of it. Mrs. O'Berne now feared, from many things her husband said, that the unexpected generosity of the tax-gatherer might produce an effect as dangerous to her husband's mind as his previous poverty.

In the evening, while Mary sat musing on what had passed, her husband, who had gone out on business, suddenly entered the house with a hurried and agitated look.

"I was right," said he "in warning Mr. Moynehan not to take that road last night."

"Why so?"

"His horse was found this morning near the village, but without a rider."

Mrs. O'Berne clasped her hands with a silent gesture of affright.

"I tell you truth—and there was blood upon the saddle-cloth—blood, Mary."

"He was murdered, then?"

"Why so—who told you that? How do you know it?"

"What else does it look like? What else do they think of it?"

"Think! Oh, they think as you do—but it is all conjecture."

"Let him have perished as he may," said Mary, hurried onward by the dreadful tidings into an energy unusual to her disposition, "it is certain at least that he has perished. O fearful Providence! It was a heart of stone that took him in his fit of sin!"

"Be charitable, wife," said the barber angrily.

"I should be so, indeed. I thank you for the counsel. If he was murdered, then, may heaven forgive his murderer!"

"Pray for him," said the barber, "but not that way. Perhaps the wretch was crazed with want or hunger—perhaps he was strongly tempted—and that when ruin was threatening him on one side and the temptation assailed him on the other—and the opportunity—and the silence—and the night—perhaps he could not hold his hand—but what of that?—Our children shall not starve, at all events—I have the gold—the gold."

And he laughed with a shocking levity.

"Yes, we have reason to rejoice," replied his wife, with calmness—"but the widow—the poor widow! To night, while the wind is howling about her house, how lonesome is her heart, and low within her! They had one child, a boy; and she is often looking at him, now, and asking herself if the story can be true—Oh, wretched man! Had he, who did the deed, no wife, no family, to care for, when he made a widow and an orphan at a blow? And all for a little dross!"

"Well—well," said the barber, hurriedly, "perhaps he means to pay it back again as soon as he can, and to lay the bones in consecrated ground. What more

can the poor wretch do now? Oh, wife, they say such money is easily earned, but he who did it knows better."

"To night," continued Mary, following up her own train of thought, "while the servants are whispering in the kitchen, she is lying on her bed, with the child close by her, and listening to every fresh account they bring her of her loss. To see a husband, or a wife, go calmly to their doom—to tend them in their last sickness—to read them holy lessons—to pray for them aloud when they are dying or when they are dead—that's happiness to what she feels to night, although when you were sick I thought it would be misery. She must not even know that he lies in holy ground."

"But perhaps he shall in time. Let us talk no more of this, to-night, at least."

"Aye, Godfrey, it is best; blood will speak, if it should burst the grave for it."

There was a cobbler in B———, who, like our barber, could scarcely obtain as many half-pence by his awl, as might procure him a sufficiency of the cheapest food. Yet however he was enabled to procure the means, the fellow was a habitual drunkard. It was his practice when intoxicated, to take his post at the village cross, and, putting his hands under his leather apron, to commence a string of vociferous abuse against all the inhabitants of the place, without exception. The out-pouring usually continued five or six hours without intermission, from exordium to peroration, greatly to the scandal of the regular inhabitants, and to the entertainment of the little urchins of the place who gathered round him in a circle, in order to chorus his monologue with their shrill hurras. Yet, at other times, the unfortunate wretch could be as decent and

well conducted as any individual in the place, and he might have been, as the world goes, an estimable character, if the fascination of strong drink had not an influence over him which it appeared almost impossible for him to resist.

Within a fortnight after the occurrence just related, it happened that this cobbler was sitting at work in his miserable hut, and singing, as he made his lapstone ring, when he was surprised to see the barber cross his threshold. The latter having closed the door behind him, and shoved in the bolt, approached the man of patches with a serious countenance.

"Shanahan," said he, "I have something serious to say to you, and it may be for your advantage, provided you promise to keep it secret."

"Sacret, Mr. O'Berne? As to keepin' a sacret, providin' its nothin' agin law or conscience, I'll keep a sacret with any man brathin', though 'tis I says it, that oughtn't."

"It is not against law or conscience. Listen then. For three nights successively, within the last fortnight, I dreamed of money in a certain place, that I will name to you, provided you promise to assist me in obtaining it."

"Assist you! I'll engage I will so, an welcome An' is this what you call something sarious to say to me? Now I call it something pleasant—an' joyful—an' delightful!" exclaimed the cobbler, springing from his seat, as he completed the climax.—"Come away, an' let us lay hands on it at once."

"No—no—" said the barber, "not so fast. The search must be made at night. I will call on you myself about eleven o'clock and be ready to come with me. I have not even mentioned it to my wife, for fear she

might have some scruples about using the money. The spot is not far distant, though lonesome enough. I will tell you where it is when I come at night."

O'Berne was true to his appointment; and on this night it was, that in the presence of the cobler, he dug up in a lonesome ruin, within less than a quarter of a mile of the vllIage, that treasure, for the possession of which he accounted to his wife in a very different manner. A moderate portion of the prize easily bribed the cobbler to keep silence, until it should suit O'Berne's convenience to call on him to give testimony of the manner in which he had obtained the money.

Soon after, the barber and his family left the neighbourhood of B———, where they were not heard again of for more than a score of years.

CHAPTER XI.

YOUNG Edmund Moynehan was brought up with all the care that could possibly be bestowed on the education of a child. He was carefully preserved, in his early years, from all access of superstition. He heard none of those garrulous tales which too often haunt the nursery, and bespeak future victims to weakness of mind, almost in the very cradle. In the mean time, the true spirit of religion was deeply impressed upon his heart; and his practice was the more fervent in proportion as it was more enlightened. He grew apace, and in time inherited the office which had proved so fatal to his father. He exercised it, however, in a very different manner. He took no bribes, and he allowed no false returns. The astonishment which such a line of conduct excited about B———

was proportioned to the novelty of the provocation. Almost every tax-payer joined in abuse of Edmund Moynehan. Many called him a mean, exact, prying fellow; and a few of the more fiery gentry even talked of "calling him out;" but he did not alter his course, and they found themselves under the necessity of being as exact as himself. In all other respects, he was what his father had been in his earlier and happier days.

He had reached his three and twentieth year without meeting any adventure out of the ordinary course of rural life, in the rank in which he moved. He yet retained a strong recollection of his parent, and he felt, without the least emotion of revenge, a strong desire to investigate the mystery of his disappearance.

One evening, he was standing at the window of the small parlour which looked out (for he now occupied the dwelling first owned by his father,) on the waters of the Shannon. Although the sun shone bright, a westerly gale drove fiercely along the surface of the stream, and confined the fishing craft to their moorings by the windward beach. The narrow-pinioned fishers hovering above the broken waves, by their screams and rapid motion added much to the interest of the scene. Occasionally a bulky cormorant flew with outstretched neck along the surface of the bay, while the pleasure boat (which Moynehan sometimes used in his days of leisure,) tossed and tugged at her anchor by the shore.

Living, notwithstanding his occupation, in comparative solitude, with few objects to interest his thoughts in any remarkable degree, it is not surprising that young Moynehan often dwelt with undiminished interest upon the mystery of his father's fate. That

violence, and human violence, had been employed in his destruction, he entertained no doubt. Of greater enterprise and firmness than his father had been, he only wanted footing for the inquiry, and the total absence of this was what often lay heavy at his heart.

A portrait of his father, rudely finished, yet with sufficient resemblance to correspond with his recollection of the original, was suspended against the wall. Oppressed with the reflections which crowded on his mind, as he gased on the familiar features, he left the house and hurried to the strand, where he paced for some time in silence along the margin of the water. His boatman was employed in repairing the keel of a small skiff, which was used as a kind of tender on the pleasure boat. Near him, Rick Lillis, grown grey with years, and somewhat bowed by care, was leaning against a huge block of stone, and observing the boatman at work.

"The young masther looks as if he was put out a little," said the boatman.

"Ah, little admiration he should," replied the old herdsman. "It is fourteen years and better now since we lost the auld one. Many's the time since I repented that I didn't go with him that night, or make him go with me. But when a man's hour's come they say the world wouldn't put it off. I might well know them hills were no place for any one to be thravelling at night, let alone such a night as that; but he wouldn't be said by me. I hard of a thing happening among them hills before, that was enough to make any body look about him before he'd venture among 'em late at night."

"What was that?"

"I'll tell you. You know Jerry Lacey, the pedler,

that used to go through the counthry formerly sellin' ribbons, an' rings, an' snuff-boxes, an' things that way, at the great houses an' places along the road?"

"You mean him that has a shop now overright where O'Berne the barber lived formerly at B—— ?',

"I do—the very man. He was thravellin' from Cork, an' he took the conthrary way through the same mountains that my masther (rest his sowl!) an' myself went that night. Well, if he did, it come late upon him, an' he turned off the road, thinkin' to make a short cut, an' he lost his way in the mountains, an' it was midnight before he met a human christian, or one ha'p'orth. 'What'll become o' me at all, I wondher,' says Jerry; 'twas the misforthinate hour I ever turned off o' you, for one road,' says he. Well, on he went, an' in place o' comin' to any place, 'tis lonesomer an' lonesomer the road was gettin' upon him, till at last he hard a *nize*, as it were, o' somebody hammerin' at a little distance. So he med towards the *nize*. Well, 'tisn't long till he comes to a little lonesome cabin without e'er a windy in front, and a rish light burnin' within, an' the doore half open, an' the ugliest man ever you see sittin' upon a stool in the middle of the floore, and he havin' a tinker's anvil on his lap, an" he makin' saucepans.

"'Bless all here,' says Jerry, pushing in the door.

"The little man made him no answer, only looked up sthraight in his face, an' tould him to come in an shet the doore.

"'An' what do you want now?' says the little tinker, when Jerry done what be bid him.

"'Shelter, then, for the night, plase your lordship,' says Jerry, thinkin' it betther to be civil.

"'Take a sate by the fire,' says the tinker, 'an' we'll see what's to be done.'

"'That your reverence may lose nothin' by it,' says Jerry, dhrawin' a chair. 'Them that give the sthranger shelter in this world, won't be left without it themselves in the next.'

"Well, there they sat. There was a pot boiling over the fire, an' it had a smell o' mait, which, I'll be bail, Jerry wasn't sorry to find. So afther a while, the tinker went out, as he said, to dig a handful o' pzaties. to have with the mait, an' tould Jerry for his life not to touch one ha'p'orth about the place, an' above all things, not to look into the pot, for if he'd daar do it, the mutton 'ud be spiled. Well, hardly was he outside the doore, when Jerry was a'most ready to faint, wantin' to know what was in the pot. So as there was ne'er a windee, and the doore fast shet, he thought he'd take one dawny peep. 'Never welcome himself an' his pot,' says Jerry, 'if he hadn't to say any thing about it, sure I wouldn't care one bane what was in it. I'm kilt from it, for a pot,' says he, 'fixin' his two eyes upon it. I won't look at it at all,' says he, ''tis up at the dhresser I'll look, an' I'll whistle the Humours o Glin, an' who knows but I'd shkame away the thoughts of it till himself 'ud come in.' So he turned his back to the fire, and began whistling. ''Tis bilin' greatly, whatsomever it is,' says he by an' by. 'Ah sure what hurt is there in one peep? How will he ever find it out? A likely story indeed, that the mutton 'ud be spiled by one look. He's an ould rogue, that's what he is, an' I'll have a peep in spite o' the Danes.' So he went to the fire-side, and he *ruz* the lid. There was a great steam, an' the wather bilin' tantivity. "I'm in dhread o' my life,' says Jerry. 'What'll I do at all,

if he pins me in the fact? No matther, here goes any way,' an' he struck down a fleshfork into the wather. Well, I'll go bail he opened his eyes wide enough, when he drew up upon the points o' the fork a collop of a man's hand——"

"Eyeh, Rick, howl!"

"I'm only tellin' you the story as I hard it myself. Sure I wasn't by."

"Do you mane to persuade me a thing o' that kind ever happened?"

"Can't you hear my story? what do I know only as I hear? 'Well,' says Jerry, an' he lookin' at his prize, 'here's a state,' says he; 'here's purty work; what in the world will become o' me, now at all,' says he, 'I'll let down the pot-lid any way.'

"Well, hardly all was right, when the tinker come in."

"'Did you look in the pot?' says he.

"'Oh, my lord,' says Jerry, "what for 'ud I be lookin' in it?'

"'Are you hungry?'

"'Not much, my lord.'

"'Will you take a cup o' the broth?'

"Well, Jerry thought he'd dhrop, when he hard him axin' him to take a cup o' the broth."

"'Not any, we're obleest to your reverence,' says he, bowin' very polite.

"'What'll you do then?' says the tinker.

"'I'll stay as I am, with your lordship's good will.'

"'There's a bed within, in the room, there; may-be you like to take a stretch on it?'

"'Why then, I believe I will, plase your reverence,' says Jerry, 'as I'm tired.'

"So he took his pack, an' away with him into the

room, as if he was walkin' into the mouth of a tiger. He didn't like to go to bed, although there was the nicest bedstead in a corner, with white dimity curtains, an' a fine soft tick, an' the room nately boorded' an' soundid' as if there was a kitchen under it. So he rowled himself in his great coat, an' sat down in a corner waitin' to see what 'ud happen, bein' in dhread he'd fall asleep, if he sthretched upon the bed. The moon was shinin' in the windee, when about twelve o'clock, as sure as you're standin' there, he tould my father, he seen the bed sinkin' in the ground. Oh, his heart was below in his shoe! 'Wasn't it the good thought o' me,' says he, 'not to go to bed? I declare to my heart,' says he, 'I'll make a race while he's below!' So out he started, an I'll engage 'tis long till he was caught goin' through the mountains at night again."

"Dear knows, that's a wondherful story," said the boatman. "But asy! what boat is that, I wondher, runnin' in for the little creek? Some *jot*, or another may be dhruv in by the wind, an' she comin' in from Cove."

On nearer approach, however, the vessel seemed too small to answer this conjecture. She was a little cutter, of about ten or twelve tons burthen, with snow white sails, close-reefed, and drenched to the peak with spray. Casting anchor near the shore, a small boat was lowered from the stern, into which two persons entered, and proceeded to land. On reaching the shore, one left the boat, while the other, pushing off into the breakers, which even here ran high, returned to the cutter. The stranger, who remained, was a man deeply "declined into the vale of years," wrapped in an old plaid cloak, and wearing a cap of seal-skin. He

stooped much, and walked with so much difficulty, that but for a stick, on which he leaned, it would have been impossible for him to have maintained his upright position. Perceiving him about to take the road leading to the interior, young Moynehan approached, and politely asked him to his house for the night, as it was usual to do with any stranger who travelled in these lonely districts. The only inn, he informed him, at which he could obtain accommodation, was at such a distance that it would fatigue him extremely to reach it on foot that day. The same accommodation he offered for his boatman.

There was in the stranger's manner of accepting the courtesy, an air of deep humility and deprecation, that indicated habitual suffering. He trembled like one in a fit of palsy, and bowed low, supporting himself by grasping his stick with both hands while he murmured, forth his thanks. The same deep gratitude he showed for every trivial attention that was paid him on his entering the house. It seemed as if he thought the humblest attitude he could assume was far above his pretensions, and no exertions that either the widow or her son could make, were sufficient to draw him into free and unembarrassed conversation throughout the evening. He sat as far apart as possible from every individual that was present, bowed with the utmost respect at every word that was addressed to him, as if it were a favour of the last importance. Two or three times, Edmund Moynehan saw, or fancied he saw, the eyes of the stranger rest upon his features with an expression of inquiry, which however, instantly disappeared as soon their glances met. After Mrs. Moynehan had retired for the night, he endeavoured to lead

their guest into more familiar dialogue, and to invite him to confidence, by showing him an example.

"You must excuse my mother's retiring so early," said Edmund, "she always does so, since my father's death. We are rather a lonely family at present."

"Indeed, Sir?" said the stranger with a smile.

"You are probably new to this country?" asked Edmund.

"Indeed Sir, much the same. It is now so long since I left it, that I may well be called a stranger."

"Ah, then it is not likely that you are acquainted with our misfortune. I never like, of course, to allude to it, in the presence of my mother, but now that she is gone, it may furnish you with some kind of apology for the sorry entertainment you have met to night."

The stranger bowed low, but made no reply, and Edmund (who loved to talk of his father's unaccountable disappearance,) gave him a full detail of all the circumstances respecting it, which had come to his knowledge. The stranger seemed to listen with the deepest interest, but like one who was habituated to feelings of a still deeper kind than any which the narrative was calculated to excite, in the mind of an uninterested person.

"There are few circumstances attending my father's death," said Edmund, "supposing him to have perished, and indeed it would be idle to think otherwise, which are to my mind so painful as its suddenness. Even at this distance of time, and with my slight remembrance of my father, it is surprising to myself what slight circumstances will bring his fate, in all its force, upon my mind. The other day, I happened to be present in the cottage of a tenant, who lay in his death-sickness, endeavouring with all the power of his

heart and mind, to review and anticipate the coming judgment on the whole. When I saw him piously receiving the rites of his religion, and dying at last amid the audible prayers of his family, how keenly did the thought of my father's murder penetrate my soul, when I compare it with this peaceful parting!"

Edmund paused, but the stranger made no remark.

"Still," continued Edmund, "I would not exchange his lot with that of his murderer."

"No, no—oh, no," replied the stranger.

"To be sure," said Edmund, "I can but guess what the remorse attending such a crime should be, but even from conjecture, I wonder how a human being could prefer the custody of such a torturing secret, even to detection and ignominy."

"Hanging," said the stranger, "is such a horrid death."

"But can it, short as the anguish is, be anything so horrible as the remorse for such a deed?"

"Oh, no, I said not that," replied the stranger, "for sure I am—at least I think—that were the innocent truly to know what it is to feel remorse, they would never steep their hands in crime. But they know nothing of it—books—legends—all are painted flame to the fire of genuine remorse in a bosom that is capable of feeling it."

"If such be your opinion," said Edmund, "how do you account for the apparent indifference in which many live who are known to have perpetrated the most appalling crimes?"

"I know not," said the stranger; "that such is the fact appears indisputable, but I cannot account for it on natural reasons. Yet dreadful as it is to feel remorse, so far at least as one may guess, to do nothing

but tremble for the future, and nothing but shudder at the past; to lie on a restless bed and find no comfort in the daylight, nor in the sight of friends' faces or the hearing of familiar conversation; I should still prefer remorse in its most poignant form, to the dreadful insensibility that you describe."

"You, then," said Edmund, "would not be one of those who prefer remorse to reparation?"

"How can I answer you?" replied the stranger. "Death, certain death is a thing so terrible to contemplate with a steady eye."

"It would appear indeed," said Edmund, "as if there were persons who could find it easier to inflict than to endure it."

At this moment the stranger, who scarcely seemed to be in health during the whole conversation, complained of fatigue, and expressed a wish to go to rest. Edmund ordered a light, and the servant went before to prepare the room.

"There's no sin, I hope, Sir," said the old man, turning round with difficulty as he slowly walked towards the chamber door. "There's no sin after all, I hope, that may not meet forgiveness. Even you, Sir I am sure, could forgive the man who has injured you so nearly, provided he were humbly to beg forgiveness at your feet. How much more reasonably might he hope for mercy at its very source?"

"The difference is essential," answered Edmund. "I am far from feeling personal resentment against the author of my father's death. I do not mean to boast that I am free from even the first impulses of passions that are common to our nature, but as there are pangs that pierce too deep for tears—as there is bliss too exquisite for laughter—so also there are injuries that in

their very magnitude exclude all thought of self redress—that in a peculiar manner seem to make vengeance (as sure it is in every case) an usurpation of the divine prerogative."

The stranger retired, and Edmund soon after followed his example. He had not yet, however, closed his eyes, when the door opened, and a head was proruded into the apartment. It was that of old Rick Lillis.

"Whist! Misther Edmund!"

"Well, Rick?"

"Are you asleep, Sir?"

"How could I answer your call if I were?"

"Sure enough, Sir," said Rick, coming in and closing the door behind him. "Do you know that sthrange jettleman, Sir?"

"Not I. Do *you* know anything of him?"

"Oh, no, Sir, only I just stepped in to mention a dhroll thing I seen him doing that surprised me."

"Doing? When? Is he not in his room?"

"He was, Sir, an' I seen the candle shinin' there when I was walkin' down the lawn to go home for the night, but of a sudden it moved, an' out it come to the parlour. "I declare to my heart," says I, "I'll go back an' see what that lad wants out in the parlour again. So I crep up to the windee, an' I jest tuk off my hat this way an' peeped in, and sure there I seen him plain enough. An' what do you think was he doin', Sir?"

"How can I tell?"

"Sure enough. Well, he had the candle ruz up in his hand, an' he viewin' the pecthur—your poor father's pecthur this was—again the wall, an' if he did, afther viewin' it all over, he med towards the table, an'

down he sat, an' covered his face this way with his two hands for as good as a quarter of an hour; an when he done thinkin', or whatsomever he was doin' he ruz up again an' tuk out a little pocket book an' wrote something; but, just at that moment, it so happened that I hot the pane o' glass with the lafe o' my, hat unknownst, an' he started like a little robineen' which I did also, an' run for the bare life, round by the haggart an' in the kitchen doore in dhread o' my life he'd ketch me. An' that's my story."

"It 's curious," said Moynhan. "Were you able to learn from his boatman who they were?"

"Not a word, Sir. Many an offer I med, but it's no use for me."

On the following morning, to the astonishment of all the family, the stranger was nowhere to be found. The bed appeared as if it had been slept in, but there was no other trace remaining of their visitor. All inquiry was vain; and they ceased at length to speak of what had taken place.

CHAPTER XII.

What was more singular, the manner of the stranger's disappearance was as much a secret to himself as to any body else. He had gone to rest on the preceding night in the bed which was assigned to him, nor did he wake till after sunrise on the following morning. What then was his astonishment and terror to find himself fully dressed, wrapped in his cloak, and lying in a meadow on the roadside, within more than a mile from the river, and in sight of the village of B—— !

Ashamed, however, to return to his hostess and her son after so singular an adveuture, and not knowing how he could obtain credit for the truth, he pursued his way without interruption.

It happened in a few months after, that Edmund Moynehan returning late from a journey, called into Rath Danaher, where he was acquainted. In the course of the evening, the conversation turned upon a report then prevalent about B———, respecting a "haunted house" in the outskirts of the place, which had once, they said, been tenanted by a barber of the name of O'Berne, but in consequence of having got an ill-name, had for a long time continued uninhabited. The barber and his wife, they understood, had died abroad, but more than once of late, strange noises had been heard about the place at night, and one person in particular distinctly averred that he had seen the ghost of the barber himself, with a light in his hand, going through all his professional evolutions as if attending and entertaining customers. One or two, they said, on the strength of this report, had had the courage to sit up alone at night to question the phantom, but in vain for they had neither seen nor heard any thing supernatural.

So highly was Edmunds's curosity excited by this account, that he immediately formed the resolution to watch with Lillis for the appearance of the phantom. The moment he announced this determination, he became, as may be supposed, the hero of the company. All crowded about him describing the fearful nature of the sounds which had been heard, and advising him to give up the idea as rash and foolish. At one time, they said, steps as of hoofs iron-shod were heard resounding through the house; at another, whispers and sighs were audibly breathed in the very face of the listener; while

at other times, a heavy pace was heard descending the stairs, and at every landing place a leap that shook the walls to their foundation and made every door upon that story fly open as if burst by lighting.

It may be easily supposed that, of the two, Rick Lillis was not the more desirous to put this audacious experiment in execution. He was encouraged, however, on understanding that the boatman was to be of the party. On the following evening, the three set out together to the barber's house. The night was falling fast, but a bright crescent supplied the place of the declining day-light. The barber's house had all the appearance of a long deserted tenement. The windows were broken, the shutters shut, the little flower-plots overgrown with weeds, and the wood-work of the building crushed and worm-eaten. On entering the house, Rick and the boatman proceeded to make two large fires, one for themselves in an inner room the other for Edward Moynehan, in that which had heretofore served the purpose of a kitchen. In each there was a table laid with lights and materials for supper. In what had been the kitchen young Moynehan remained alone, having given directions to his two attendants, whatever they might see or hear, not to intrude on him uncalled. As this was the chamber which had especially the fame of being "haunted," Rick felt no inclination whatever to dispute his commands, and would even have been better pleased that the prohibition had been wholly unconditional.

Night had long fallen, and the two fellow-servants, encouraged by the absence of any thing which could give countenance to the awful rumours they had heard, began to converse with freedom, while they laid hands on the cheer which had been laid before them. Rick,

in the meantime, exerted all his eloquence and all his ghostly lore in labouring to shake the obstinate incredulity of his companion, who could and would admit no possibility of the truth of such a rumour.

"Tell me," he said, at last, in indignation, if you were to see it yourself would you believe it?"

"I would."

"Tis a wondher. An' you wont believe other people when they sees it. Don't they say many a time, that if a man buries money, or if he didn't pay his debts before he died, or wronged any body, he'll be troubled that way, an risin' ever an' always till ——"

He paused, for at this moment a noise was heard at the door of the room in which they sat. It opened and a sight appeared which froze the very heart of Rick, and even appalled for a time the incredulous mind of the boatman. A figure wearing a barber's apron, and bearing in its hands a basin and other professional implements, was seen distinctly to advance into the lighted room, and slowly moved towards where the watchers sat. Rick muttered a fervent ejaculation.

"I'll spake to it," said the boatman.

"A' Tim, eroo! Tim a-vourneen!"

"Do you mind his eyes?" said Tim.

"Blazin' like two coals o' fire," said Rick. "A' Tim, what'll become of us!—Oh, wisha, wisha!"

"I'll spake to it," said Tim.

"A' Tim, don't asthore! The less you say to it the betther, till the third time of it comin', an' if I wait for the third time, I'll give you leave to say my name isn't Rick Lillis."

The figure passed slowly by, and into the room in which young Moynehan sat. While this event pro-

ceeded, the latter was occupied with thoughts of an absorbing kind. The loneliness of the place and the purpose for which he had come thither, threw him naturally into a mood of melancholy reflection, and his thoughts gradually fixed themselves upon his father's story, which always occupied the deepest place in his mind. He regretted extremely that he had not taken greater pains to search after their strange guest, whose conduct respecting the portrait, together with his unceremonious departure, had indicated something more than an accidental interest. While he pursued these thoughts, the door of the inner room was opened, and it required all his presence of mind to enable him to maintain his resolution. The barber's ghost was there indeed before his eyes! One glance, however, at the old man's countenance was sufficient to re-assure him while at the same time it touched as if with an electric tangent the deepest feelings of his nature. The figure, differing only in attire, was that of the old man to whom they had given a night's lodging a short time before!

Edmund paused; he held his very breath with caution, while the figure, with dreamy eyes, and measured thoughtful action, set about the task which he seemed to have in hand. His motion, however, although soft, was not so noiseless as to intimate the presence of a spiritual being. He laid aside the basin, took out a razor which appeared covered with rust, and seemed to whet it for some moments. He then paused for a long time, and seemed to suffer under the infliction of some excruciating doubt.

"Thou shalt not steal!"—he said in a whisper—"that's true! But must our children perish?"

He paused, and Edmund lent his whole mind to listen.

"Mary!" continued the barber, "lay by that prayer book, and attend to me. Mary, I say! True—true! she is asleep—they are all asleep but he and I. Who'll find it out? None—none—there is no fear."

Here he set a chair and seemed as if watching the movements of another person.

"Honesty?" said he, still speaking in broken whispers, "what's that? Is it justice? That my babes should starve while he—besides—'tis public—the public money—a mere grain—a drop—Oh! all the gold! what a heap! what a heap of gold! Here's riches! Where's the evil! 'Tis nothing to the state, and we shall never want again."

It then suddenly appeared as if his thoughts had taken a wholly new direction, for he put on a hurried manner, and exclaimed with great rapidity, but yet in whispered accents—

"What's to be done?—He wakes! He will search the house and all will be discovered. I know it—the pear-tree in the orchard—Is it locked again, and the stones as heavy as the gold?—Thief?—hark! Who calls me thief?"

Here he shrunk upon himself with so much terror as to contract his figure to nearly half its usual height. "Oh, yes—all that is past! I can no longer look them in the face." Again his manner changed, and, sinking on his knees, he fixed his eyes upon the ground, as if arrested by some object of rivetting interest. "Who has done this?" he said in a whisper. "Quite stiff and cold! and the portmanteau gone! Oh, misery! what a night! how ill begun, and ended immeasurably worse—let him lie there awhile—we'll find a time to bury it. But

the gold! yes! yes!—the gold! the gold! the gold! We are safe at last—our children shall not starve."

Here he held up his hands as if in exultation, and burst into a loud and lengthened fit of laughter, while he hugged his arms close, as if they held a treasure, and his countenance was convulsed between delight and biting agony. After a little time, he started as if some new thought had struck him.

"The razor—" he said "the razor—where did I leave it?"

Edmund, however, had secured what he now considered the dumb but fatal witness of its owner's guilt. The distress of the sleeper seemed extreme at not finding it, but again his thoughts appeared to run into a new direction, and after muttering something more about the orchard and the pear-tree he advanced to the kitchen door and opened it. Edmund quickly followed, but the door was fast before he reached it, nor could all his strength or dexterity avail to open it. Conceiving the quantity of evidence hardly sufficient to take any decided step upon the instant, he waited until morning, when he hastened to lay the whole before a neighbouring magistrate. It was determined, in order, by the number of witnesses, to add as much as possible to the evidence already procured, to watch for another night in the deserted house, in the expectation of a second ghostly visit from its former owner. The police supplied by the magistrate were stationed in the garden, while Edmund, now without light or fire, awaited, in a secret corner of the kitchen, the appearance of him whom he strongly suspected to be his father's murderer. He was not disappointed. About midnight the barber came, but not, as on the preceding night, a walking sleeper. He entered wide awake—

wrapt in his cloak, and followed by a man whom Edmund easily recognised as the boatman who had spent the night with him at their house.

"You shall be well rewarded," said the barber, "but be secret. I will show you where the body lies that I told you of—but remember there are the deepest reasons for keeping secret the whole story of my friend's death, and though I wish to have him laid in holy ground, it would be evil and not good to have it talked of."

"Never fear," said the boatman, "only show the spot."

The barber accordingly led the way to the garden. Edmund followed to the pear-tree, at the root of which they dug up the soil, setting their spades in the direction indicated by the old man. In a short time he saw them raise from the earth the bones of a human figure, which they placed upon the ground. Closing in the grave, they took the cloth between them, and were in the act of retiring from the orchard, when Edmund advanced upon the path before them and commanded them to halt.

"Who's there?" exclaimed the Barber.

"The son of your victm," answered Edmund; "of him whom you murdered with this razor, and whose bones you are conveying hence—you are our prisoner."

The barber had scarcely heard these words when he sunk, overpowered by terror, at the feet of his accuser. The assistant, affrighted at what was said, was about to fly, when he was intercepted by the magistrate's police, who brought the whole party before that functionary on the following moruing. The latter, having heard the whole of the circumstances, was about

to issue a warrant of committal, when the barber, who had not said a word in his own defence during the whole of the proceedings, requested at length to be heard in explanation. His wish was instantly complied with, and the deepest silence and attention prevailed while he spoke as follows :—

"It will surprise you, Mr. Magistrate, and you, Mr. Moynehan, to learn, that notwithstanding all this weight of circumstance, I am not guilty of the offence with which you charge me. When I have proved my innocence, as I shall do, my case will furnish a strong instance of the fallibility of any evidence that is indirect in a case where human life is interested. All the circumstances are true—my extreme necessity—his midnight visit to my house—his disappearance on that night, accompanied by signs of violence—my subsequent increase of wealth—and the seeming revelation of my waking dream, as overheard by Mr. Moynehan—and yet I am not guilty of this crime. If you will have patience to listen, I will tell you how far my guilt extended, and where it stopt."

He then detailed the circumstances preceeding the nocturnal visit of the deceased tax-gatherer, disguising nothing of his poverty, nor the many temptations by which he was beset.

"Still," said he, "I tell you a simple truth when I assert that during the whole time of this visit, while he lay sleeping in his chair, and while I held the razor in my hand, so shocking a thought as that of taking a fellow-creature's life never once, even for an instant, crossed my mind. But there was another temptation which *did* suggest itself, and to which I did give way. The portmanteau, containing the money, lay on a chair near the window—he slept profoundly —I took

the key from his pocket—I removed the money, which was chiefly in gold and silver, and filling the two bags in which it was contained with small pebbles of about an equal weight, I replaced the portmanteau as it was before. I then awoke him with difficulty, and fearful of being discovered if he remained till morning, persuaded him to resume his journey.

"He had scarcely left the house when I found myself seized with an unaccountable terror at the idea of detection and ignominy. Accordingly, abstracting from the sum a few pieces of silver for present uses, I made fast the remainder in a bag, and hurried out into the air uncertain whither to direct my steps. I ran across the neighbouring fields with the design of seeking out some place of concealment for my treasure. An old ruin within a short distance of the village suggested itself as a favourable spot for my design, and thither accordingly I hastened. In an obscure corner of the building I deposited the money, and returned to my own house with a mind distracted by anxiety and remorse.

"On my way home, I heard voices, and the sound of horses' feet, in a field upon my right. I listened, and the words I caught seemed to be those of people who where exercising and leaping horses. Soon after, a horse without a rider left the field at full gallop. The sounds ceased, and in a short time I saw two horsemen gallopping from the place. Strange as it may seem, I have the proof of what I am about to state, and let it warn you, Sir, and all who are in power to weigh well the grounds on which they decide the guilt or innocence of the wretches whom they judge. I entered the field, and found there, lying at a distance from the ditch, the body of the tax-collector, newly

dead, with a dreadful wound upon the head, and the portmanteau gone! My first impulse—I know not wherefore— was to conceal the work of murder. Favoured by the night, which still continued stormy, I conveyed the body to my own orchard, where I gave it temporary interment in the spot from which I was last night detected in the act of seeing it removed. It would be vain to tell what poignancy this dreadful addition to the terrors of the night imparted to my remorse. I felt almost as if I had been myself the author of his destruction, and the apparent certainty, likewise, that the detection of the crime which I *had* committed, would be sufficient to convict me also in the eyes of all judges of that which I had *not*, made my life one protracted thought of fear and misery."

Here the barber related, with feelings of the deepest shame, the device which he had adopted of digging up the treasure in the presence of the cobbler, in order to throw a veil over the real origin of his new prosperity.

"Still," said he, "I could not be at rest amid the scenes which continually reminded me of that terrible event. The consciousness of meanness joined to guilt added the poignancy of self-contempt to the deeper anguish of remorse. I fled the country, and sought refuge in change of scene from my fears and my remembrances.

"But it was in vain. I could not find repose, for I carried my violated conscience still about me. Every new article I purchased for the use of my family—every fresh morsel of food that I lifted to my lips, seemed like a new and aggravated theft. I would at this time have given the whole world for a friend to whom I could confide the secret that destroyed me I thought of making a full disclosure to my wife, but

she was far too good and holy to be the depository of such a confidence.

"I entered into trade, and was successful, and in my success, for a time, I lost something of my inward agony. I will not weary you, gentlemen, by a long detail of the means by which I became acquainted with the names of the real perpetrators of the more heinous offence. They were two persons who dined in company with Mr, Moynehan at Castle Tobin, on the evening previous to his disappearance. One died in Ireland soon after the occurrence—the other, Willliam Cusack (commonly called Buffer,) died abroad, and left this written confession of their common guilt, which I obtained as you shall hear.

"The hand of Providence began to press upon my house. One member after another of my family dropped into the grave, until I remaiued alone in the world with my remorse for a companion. Misfortune humbled me—I sought relief at length at the right source, and revealed the whole to a clergyman who attended me in a dangerous illness. It was through his means that document came into my possession—and it is in fulfilment of his injunction that I have now come to the restitution of the money which I have so long retained."

Strange as the barber's defence appeared to Edmund and the magistrate, it was fully substantiated in the sequel by the testimony of the clergyman who had placed the confession, for his security, in the hands of O'Berne. The mode of his detection by Edmund Moynehan relieved the barber from an apprehension which had long sat next to his remorse upon his mind. This was the fancy that he had been haunted by an evil spirit who disturbed him in his sleep, and had on

one occasion engaged him in a fatal compact. It now appeared that himself, in his somnambulism, had performed all those feats which had so much perplexed him, and that his midnight excursion to the fir-grove was but a dream to which he never would have paid attention, but for the corroboration afforded to it, by the other mysterious occurrences. There was no prosecution instituted on the minor offence, and the barber continued long after to lead a penetential life in the neighbourhood. The house, however, has long been razed (as we have already mentioned) to the earth, and it is legend alone that preserves the memory of its situation amongst the neighbouring villagers.

THE BROWN MAN.

All sorts of cattle he did eat,
Some say he eat up trees,
And that the forest sure he would,
Devour up by degrees,
For houses and churches, were to him geese and turkeys,
He ate all and left none behind,
But some stones, dear Jack, which he could not crack,
Which on the hills you'll find.

Dragon of Wantley.

THE BROWN MAN.

THE common Irish expression of "the seven devils," does not, it would appear, owe its origin to the supernatural influences ascribed to that numeral, from its frequent associations with the greatest and most solemn occasions of theological history. If one were disposed to be fancifully metaphysical upon the subject, it might not be amiss to compare credulity to a sort of mental prism, by which the great volume of the light of speculative superstition is refracted in a manner precisely similar to that of the material, every day sun, the great refractor thus showing only *blue* devils to the dwellers in the good city of London, *orange* and *green* devils to the inhabitants of the sister (or rather step-daughter), island, and so forward until the seven component hues are made out, through the other nations of the earth. But what has this to do with the story? In order to answer that question, the story must be told.

In a lonely cabin, iu a lonely glen, on the shores of a lonely lough, in one of the most lonesome districts of

west Munster, lived a lone woman named Guare. She had a beautiful girl, a daughter named Nora. Their cabin was the only one within three miles round them every way. As to their mode of living, it was simple enough, for all they had was one little garden of white cabbage, and they had eaten that down to a few heads between them, a sorry prospect in a place where even a handful of *prishoc* weed was not to be had without sowing it.

It was a very fine morning in those parts, for it was only snowing and hailing, when Nora and her mother were sitting at the door of their little cottage, and laying out plans for the next day's dinner. On a sudden, a strange horseman rode up to the door. He was strange in more ways than one. He was dressed in brown, his hair was brown, his eyes were brown, his boots were brown, he rode a brown horse, and he was followed by a brown dog.

',I'm come to marry you Nora Guare," said the Brown Man.

"Ax my mother fust, if you plaise, sir," said Nora dropping him a curtsey.

"You'll not refuse, ma'am; said the Brown Man to the old mother, "I have money enough, and I'll make your daughter a lady, with servants at her call, and all manner of fine doings about her." And so saying, he flung a purse of gold into the widow's lap.

"Why then the heavens speed you and her together, take her away with you, and make much of her," said the old mother, quite bewildered with all the money.

"Agh, agh," said the Brown Man, as he placed her on his horse behind him without more ado. "Are you all ready now?"

"I am!" said the bride. The horse snorted, and

the dog barked, and almost before the word was out of her mouth, they were all whisked away out of sight. After travelling a day and a night, faster than the wind itself, the Brown Man pulled up his horse in the middle of the Mangerton mountain, in one of the most lonesome places that eye ever looked on.

"Here is my estate," said the Brown Man.

"A'then, is it this wild bog you call an estate?" said the bride.

"Come in, wife; this is my palace," said the bridegroom.

"What! a clay-hovel, worse than my mother's!"

They dismounted, and the horse and the dog disappeared in an instant, with a horrible noise, which the girl did not know whether to call snorting, barking, or laughing.

"Are you hungry?" said the Brown Man. "If so, there is your dinner."

"A handful of raw white-eyes,* and a grain of salt!"

"And when you are sleepy, here is your bed," he continued, pointing to a little straw in a corner, at sight of which Nora's limbs shivered and trembled again. It may be easily supposed that she did not make a very hearty dinner that evening, nor did her husband neither.

In the dead of the night, when the clock of Mucruss Abbey had just tolled one, a low neighing at the door, and a soft barking at the window were heard. Nora feigned sleep. The Brown man passed his hand over her eyes and face. She snored. "I'm coming," said he, and he arose gently from her side. In half an hour after she felt him by her side again. He was cold as ice.

* A kind of potato.

The next night the same summons came. The Brown Man rose. The wife feigned sleep. He returned cold. The morning came.

The next night came. The bell tolled at Mucruss, and was heard across the lakes. The Brown Man rose again, and passed a light before the eyes of the feigning sleeper. None slumber so sound as they who *will* not wake. Her heart trembled, but her frame was quiet and firm. A voice at the door summoned the husband.

"You are very long coming. The earth is tossed up, and I am hungry. Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! if you would not lose all."

"I'm coming!" said the Brown Man. Nora rose and followed instantly. She beheld him at a distance winding through a lane of frost-nipt sallow trees. He often paused and looked back, and once or twice retraced his steps to within a few yards of the tree, behind which she had shrunk. The moon-light, cutting the shadow close and dark about her, afforded the best concealment. He again proceeded, and she followed. In a few minutes they reached the old Abbey of Mucruss. With a sickening heart she saw him enter the church-yard. The wind rushed through the huge yew-tree and startled her. She mustered courage enough, however, to reach the gate of the church-yard and look in. The Brown Man, the horse, and the dog, were there by an open grave, eating something; and glancing their brown, fiery eyes about in every direction. The moon-light shone full on them and her. Looking down towards her shadow on the earth, she stared with horror to observe it move, although she was herself perfectly still. It waved its black arms, and motioned her back. What the feasters said, she

understood not, but she seemed still fixed in the spot. She looked once more on her shadow; it raised one hand, and pointed the way to the lane; slowly rising from the ground, and confronted her, it walked rapidly off in that direction. She followed as quickly as might be.

She was scarcely in her straw, when the door creaked behind, and her husband entered. He lay down by her side, and started.

"Uf! Uf!" said she, pretending to be just awakened, "how cold you are, my love!"

"Cold, inagh? Indeed you're not very warm yourself, my dear, I'm thinking."

"Little admiration I shouldn't be warm, and you laving me alone this way at night, till my blood is snow broth, no less."

"Umph!" said the Brown Man, as he passed his arm round her waist. "Ha! your heart is beating fast?"

"Little admiration it should. I am not well, indeed. Them pzaties and salt don't agree with me at all."

"Umph!" said the Brown Man.

The next morning as they were sitting at the breakfast-table together, Nora plucked up a heart, and asked leave to go to her mother. The Brown Man, who eat nothing, looked at her in a way that made her think he knew all. She felt her spirit die away within her.

"If you only want to see your mother," said he, "there is so occasion for your going home. I will bring her to you here. I didn't marry you to be keeping you gadding."

The Brown Man then went out and whistled for his dog and his horse. They both came; and in a very few minutes they pulled up at the old widow's cabin-door.

The poor woman was very glad to see her son-in-law, though she did not know what could bring him so soon.

"Your daughter sends her love to you, mother," says the Brown Man, the villian, "and she'd be obliged to you for a *loand* of a *shoot* of your best clothes, as she's going to give a grand party, and the dress-maker has disappointed her."

"To be sure and welcome," said the mother; and making up a bundle of the clothes, she put them into his hands.

"Whogh! whogh!" said the horse as they drove off "that was well done. Are we to have a meal of her?"

"Easy, ma-coppuleen, and you'll get your 'nough before night," said the Brown Man, "and you likewise, my little dog.

"Boh!" cried the dog, "I'm in no hurry—I hunted down a doe this morning that was fed with milk from the horns of the moon."

Often in the course of that day did Nora Guare go to the door, and cast her eye over the weary flat before it, to discern, if possible, the distant figures of her bridegroom and mother. The dusk of the second evening found her alone in the desolate cot. She listened to every sound. At length the door opened and an old woman, dressed in a new *jock,* and leaning on a staff, entered the hut. "O mother, are you come?" said Nora, and was about to rush into her arms, when the old woman stopped her.

"Whist! whist! my child!—I only stepped in before the man to know how you like him? Speak softly in dread he'd hear you—he's turning the horse loose in the swamp abroad, over.

"O mother, mother! such a story!"

"Whist! easy again—how does he use you?"

"Sorrow worse. That straw my bed, and them white-eyes—and bad ones they are—all my diet. And 'tisn't that same, only——"

"Whist! easy, again! He'll hear you, may be—Well?"

"I'd be easy enough only for his own doings. Listen, mother. The fust night, I came about twelve o'clock——"

"Easy, speak easy, eroo!"

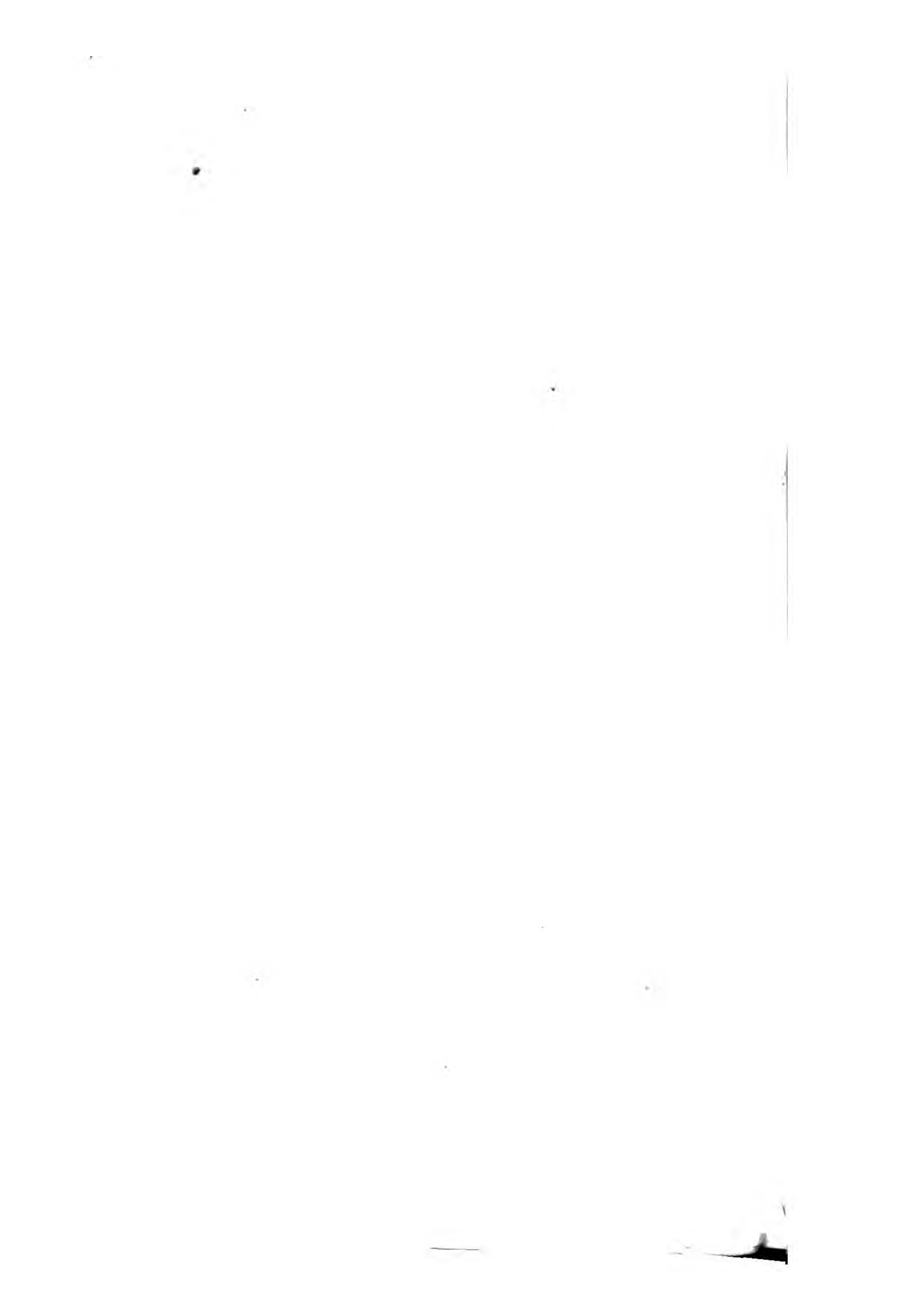
"He got up at the call of the horse and the dog, and staid out a good hour. He ate nothing next day. The second night, and the second day, it was the same story. The third——"

"Husht! husht! Well, the third night?"

"The third night I said I'd watch him. Mother, don't hold my hand so hard ——He got up, and I got up after him ——Oh, don't laugh, mother, for 'tis frightful——I followed him to Mucruss church-yard ——Mother, mother, you hurt my hand——I looked in at the gate—there was great moonlight there, and I could see every thing as plain as day."

"Well, darling—husht! softly! What did you see?"

"My husband by the grave, and the horse,——— Turn your head aside, mother, for your breath is very hot——and the dog and they eating.——Ah, you are not my mother!" shrieked the miserable girl, as the Brown Man flung off his disguise, and stood before her, grinning worse than a blacksmith's face through a horse collar. He just looked at her one moment, and then darted his long fingers into her bosom, from which the red blood spouted in so many streams. She was very soon out of all pain, and a merry supper the horse, the dog, and the Brown Man had that night by all accounts.



OWNEY AND OWNEY-NA-PEAK.

Aye, marry, sir, there's mettle in this young fellow;
What a sheep's look his elder brother has!

FLETCHER'S *Elder Brother.*

OWNEY AND OWNEY-NA-PEAK.

When Ireland had kings of her own—when there was no such thing as a coat made of red cloth in the country—when there was plenty in men's houses, and peace and quietness at men's doors (and that is a long time since)—there lived, in a village not far from the great city of Lumneach,* two young men, cousins: one of them named Owney, a smart, kind-hearted, handsome youth, with limb of a delicate form, and a very good understanding. His cousin's name was Owney, too, and the neighbours christened him Owney-na-peak (Owney of the nose,) on account of a long nose he had got—a thing so out of all proportion, that after looking at one side of his face, it was a smart morning's walk to get round the nose and take a view of the other (at least, so the people used to say). He was a stout able-bodied fellow, as stupid as a beaten hound, and he was, moreover, a cruel tyrant to his young cousin, with whom he lived in a kind of partnership.

* The present Limerick.

Both these were of an humble station. They were smiths—white-smiths—and they got a good deal of business to do from the lords of the court, and the knights, and all the grand people of the city. But one day young Owney was in town, he saw a great procession of lords and ladies, and generals, and great people among whom was the king's daughter of the court—and surely it is not possible for the young rose itself to be so beautiful as she was. His heart fainted at her sight, and he went home desperately in love, and not at all disposed to business.

Money, he was told, was the surest way of getting acquainted with the king, and so he began saving until he had put together a few *hogs*,* but Owney-na-peak finding where he had hid them, seized on the whole, as he used to do on all young Owney's earnings.

One evening young Owney's mother found herself about to die, so she called her son to her bed-side and said to him, "You have been a most dutiful good son, and 'tis proper you should be rewarded for it. Take this china cup to the fair—there is a fairy gift upon it—use your own wit—look about you, and let the highest bidder have it—and so, my white-headed boy, God bless you!"

The young man drew the little bed-curtain down over his dead mother, and in a few days after, with a heavy heart, he took his china cup, and set off to the fair of Garryowen.

The place was merry enough. The field that is called Gallows-green now, was covered with tents. There was plenty of wine (poteen not being known in these days, let alone *parliament*)—a great many handsome girls—and 'tis unknown all the *keoh* that was

* A *hog*, 1s. 1d.

with the boys and themselves. Poor Owney walked all the day through the fair, wishing to try his luck, but ashamed to offer his china cup among all the fine things that were there for sale. Evening was drawing on at last, and he was thinking of going home, when a strange man tapped him on the shoulder, and said, "My good youth, I have been marking you through the fair the whole day, going about with that cup in your hand, speaking to nobody, and looking as if you would be wanting something or another."

"I'm for selling it," said Owney.

"What is it you're for selling, you say?" said a second man, coming up, and looking at the cup.

"Why, then," said the first man, "and what's that to you, for a prying meddler, what do you want to know is it he's for selling?"

"Bad manners to you (and where's the use of my wishing you what you have already?) haven't I a right to ask the price of what's in the fair?"

"E'then, the knowledge o' the price is all you'll have for it," says the first. "Here, my lad, is a golden piece for your cup."

"That cup shall never hold drink or diet in your, house, please heaven," says the second, "here's two gold pieces for the cup, lad."

"Why, then, see this now—if I was forced to fill it to the rim with gold before I could call it mine, you shall never hold that cup between your fingers. Here, boy, do you mind me, give me that, once for all, and here's ten gold pieces for it, and say no more"

"Ten gold pieces for a china cup!" said a great lord of the court, that just rode up at that minute, "it must surely be a valuable article. Here, boy, here's twenty pieces for it, and give it to my servant."

"Give it to mine," cried another lord, of the party, "and here's my purse, where you will find ten more. And if any man offers another fraction for it to outbid that, I'll spit him on my sword like a snipe."

"I outbid him," said a fair young lady in a veil, by his side, flinging twenty golden pieces more on the ground.

There was no voice to out bid the lady, and young Owney, kneeling, gave the cup into her hands.

"Fifty gold pieces for a china cup!" said Owney to himself, as he plodded on home, "that was not worth two! Ah! mother, you knew that vanity had an open hand."

But as he drew near home, he determined to hide his money somewhere, knowing, as he well did, that his cousin would not leave him a single cross to bless himself with. So he dug a little pit, and buried all but two pieces, which he brought to the house. His cousin, knowing the business on which he had gone, laughed heartily when he saw him enter, and asked him what luck he had got with his punch-bowl?

"Not so bad, neither," says Owney. "Two pieces of gold is not a bad price for an article of old china,"

"Two gold pieces, Owney, honey! erra, let us see 'em, may be you would?" He took the cash from Owney's hand, and after opening his eyes in great astonishment at the sight of so much money, he put them into his pocket.

"Well, Owney, I'll keep them safe for you, in my pocket within. But tell us, may be you would, how come you to get such a *mort* o' money for an old cup o' painted chaney, that wasn't worth, may be, a fi'penny bit?"

"To get into the heart o' the fair, then, free and

easy, and to look about me, and to cry old china; and the first man that *come* up, he to ask me what is it I'd be asking for the cup, and I to say out bold, 'A hundred pieces of gold;' and he to laugh hearty, and we to huxter together till he beat me down to two, and there's the whole way of it all."

"Owney-na-peak made as if he took no note of this, but next morning early he took an old china saucer himself had in his cupboard, and off he set, without saying a word to any body, to the fair. You may easily imagine that it created no small surprise in the place, when they heard a great big fellow, with a china saucer in his hand, crying out, "A raal *chaney* saucer going for a hundred pieces of goold! raal chaney—who'll be buying?"

"Erra, what's that you're saying, you great gomeril?" says a man, coming up to hin and looking first at the saucer, and then in his face. "Is it thinking any body would go make a *muthaun* of himself to give the like for that saucer?" But Owney-na-peak had no answer to make, only to cry out, "Raal chaney! one hundred pieces of goold!"

A crowd soon collected about him, and finding he would give no account of himself, they all fell upon him, beat him within an inch of his life, and after having satisfied themselves upon him, they went their way laughing and shouting. Towards sunset he got up, and crawled home as well as he could, without cup or money. As soon as Owney saw him, he helped him into the forge, looking very mournful, although, if the truth must be told, it was to revenge himself for former good deeds of his cousin, that he set him about this foolish business.

"Come here, Owney, eroo," said his cousin, after he

had fastened the forge door, and heated two irons in the fire. "You child of mischief!" said he, when he had caught him, "you shall never see the fruits of your roguery again, for I will put out your eyes." And so saying, he snatched one of the red hot irons from the fire.

It was all in vain for poor Owney to throw himself on his knees, and ask mercy, and beg and implore forgiveness—he was weak, and Owney-na-peak was strong—he held him fast, and burned out both his eyes. Then taking him, while he was yet fainting from the pain, upon his back, he carried him off to the bleak hill of Knockpatrick,* a great distance, and there laid him under a tombstone, and went his ways. In a little time after, Owney came to himself.

"O sweet light of day! what is to become of me now?" thought the poor lad, as he lay on his back under the tomb, "is this to be the fruit of that unhappy present? Must I be dark for ever and ever? and am I never more to look upon that sweet countenance, that even in my blindness is not entirely shut out from me?" He would have said a great deal more in this way, and perhaps more pathetic still, but just then he heard a great mewing, as if all the cats in the world were coming up the hill together in one faction. He gathered himself up, and drew back under the stone, and remained quite still, expecting what would come next. In a very short time he heard all the cats purring and mewing about the yard, whisking over the tombstones, and playing all sorts of pranks among the the graves. He felt the tails of one or two brush his nose and well for him it was that they did not discover him there, as he afterwards found. At last—

* A hill in the west of the county of Limerick on the summit of which are the ruins of an old church, with a burying-ground still in use. The situation is exceedingly singular and bleak.

"Silence!" said one of the cats, and they were all as mute as so many mice in an instant. "Now all you cats of this great county, small and large, grey, red, yellow, black, brown, mottled, and white, attend to what I'm going to tell you in the name of your king, and the master of all the cats. The sun is down, and the moon is up, and the night is silent, and no mortal hears us, and I may tell you a secret. You know the king of Munsters's daughter?"

"O yes, to be sure, and why wouldn't we? Go on with your story," said all the cats together.

"I have heard of her for one," said a little dirty faced black cat, speaking after they had all done, "for I'm the cat that sits upon the hob of Owney and Owney-na-peak, the white-smiths, and I know many's the time young Owney does be talking of her, when he sits by the fire alone, rubbing me down, and planning how he can get into her father's court."

"Whist! you natural!" says the cat that was making the speech, "what do you think we care for your Owney, or Owney-na-Peak?"

"Murther, murther!" thinks Owney to himself, "did any body ever hear the aiqual of this?"

"Well, gentlemen," says the cat again, "what I have to say is this. The king was last week struck with blindness, and you all know well, how and by what means any blindness may be cured. You know there is no disorder that can ail mortal frame, that may not be removed by paying a round at the well of Barrygowen* yonder, and the king's disorder is such, that no other cure whatever can be had for it. Now

* The superstitious practice of paying rounds, with the view of healing diseases, at Barrygowen well, in the county of Limerick, is still continued, notwithstanding the exertions of the neighbouring Catholic priesthood, which have diminished, but not abolished it.

beware, don't let the secret pass one o' ye'r lips, for there's a great grandson of Simon Magus, that is coming down to try his skill, and he it is that must use the water, and marry the princess, who is to be given to any one so fortunate as to heal her father's eyes; and on that day, gentlemen, we are all promised a feast of the fattest mice that ever walked the ground." This speech was wonderfully applauded by all the cats and presently after the whole crew scampered off, jumping, and mewing, and purring, down the hill.

Owney, being sensible that they were all gone, came from his hiding place, and knowing the road to Barrygowen well, he set off, and groped his way out, and shortly knew, by the roaring of the waves,* rolling in from the point of Foynes, that he was near the place. He got to the well, aud making a round like a good Christian, he rubbed his eyes with the well-water, and looking up, saw day dawning in the east. Giving thanks, he jumped up on his feet, and you may say that Owney-na-Peak was much astonished on opening the door of the forge to find him there, his eyes as well or better than ever, and his face as merry as a dance.

"Well, cousin," said Owney, smiling, "you have done me the greatest service that one man can do another, you put me in the way of getting two pieces of gold," said he, showing two he had taken from his hiding place. "If you could only bear the pain of suffering me just to put out your eyes, and lay you in the same place as you laid me, who knows what luck you'd have?"

"No, there's no occasion for putting out eyes at all, but could not you lay me, just as I am, to-night, in

* Of the Shannon.

that place, and let me try my own fortune, if it be a thing you tell thruth, and what else could put the eyes in your head, after I burning them out with the irons ?"

"You'll know all that in time," says Owney stopping him in his speech, "for just at that minute, casting his eye towards the hob, he saw the cat sitting upon it. and looking very hard at him. So he made a sign to Owney-na-Peak to be silent, or talk of something else; at which the cat turned away her eyes, and began washing her face, quite simple, with her two paws, looking now and then sideways into Owney's face, just like a Christian. By and by, when she had walked out of the forge, he shut the door, after her, and finished what he was going to say, which made Owney-na-Peak still more anxious than before to be placed under the tombstone. Owney agreed to it very readily, and, just as they were done speaking, cast a glance towards the forge window, where he saw the imp of a cat, just with her nose and one eye peeping in through a broken pane. He said nothing, however, but prepared to carry his cousin to the place; where, towards night-fall, he laid him as he had been laid himself, snug under the tombstone, and went his way down the hill, resting in Shanagolden that night, to see what would come of it in the morning.

Owney-na-Peak had not been more than two or three hours or so, lying down, when he heard the very same noises coming up the hill, that had puzzled Owney the night before. Seeing the cats enter the churchyard, he began to grow very uneasy, and strove to hide himself as well as he could, which was tolerably well too, all being covered by the tombstone, excepting part of the nose, which was so long that he could not get it to fit by any means. You may say to yourself,

that he was not a little surprised, when he saw the cats all assemble like a congregation going to hear mass, some sitting, some walking about, and asking one another after the kittens and the like, and more of them stretching themselves upon the tombstones, and waiting the speech of their commander.

Silence was proclaimed at length, and he spoke: "Now all you cats of this great county, small and large, grey, red, yellow, black, brown, mottled, or white, attend—"

"Stay! stay!" said a little cat with a dirty face, that just then came running into the yard. "Be silent, for there are mortal ears listening to what you say. I have run hard and fast to say that your words were overheard last night. I am the cat that sits upon the hob of Owney and Owney-na-Peak, and I saw a bottle of the water of Barrygowen hanging up over the chimbley this morning in their house."

In an instant all the cats began screaming, and mewing, and flying, as if they were mad, about the yard, searching every corner, and peeping under every tombstone. Poor Owney-na-Peak endeavoured as well as he could to hide himself from them, and began to thump his breast, and cross himself, but it was all in vain, for one of the cats saw the long nose peeping from under the stone, and in a minute they dragged him, roaring and bawling, into the very middle of the church-yard, where they flew upon him all together, and made *smithereens* of him, from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet.

The next morning very early, young Owney came to the church-yard, to see what had become of his cousin. He called over and over again upon his name, but there was no answer given. At last, entering

the place of tombs, he found his limbs scattered over the earth.

"So that is the way with you, is it?" said he, clasping his hands, and looking down on the bloody fragments, "why then, though you were no great things in the way of kindness to me, when your bones were together, that isn't the reason why I'd be glad to see them torn asunder this morning early." So gathering up all the pieces that he could find, he put them into a bag he had with him, and away with him to the well of Barrygowen, where he lost no time in making a round, and throwing them in, all in a heap. In an instant, he saw Owney-na-Peak as well as ever, scrambling out of the well, and helping him to get up; he asked him how he felt himself?

"Oh! is it how I'd feel myself you'd want to know," said the other, "easy and I'll tell you. Take that for a specimen!" giving him at the same time a blow on the head, which you may say was'nt long in laying Owney sprawling on the ground. Then without giving him a minute's time to recover, he thrust him into the very bag from which he had been just shook himself, resolving within himself to drown him in the Shannon at once, and put an end to him for ever,

Growing weary by the way, he stopped at a shebeen house *overright* Robertstown Castle, to refresh himself with a *morning,* before he'd go any further. Poor Owney did not know what to do when he came to himself, if it might be rightly called coming to himself, and the great bag tied up about him. His wicked cousin shot him down behind the door in the kitchen, and telling him he'd have his life surely if he stirred, he walked in to take something that's good in the little parlour.

Owney could not for the life of him avoid cutting a hole in the bag, to have a peep about the kitchen, and see whether he had no means of escape. He could see only one person, a simple looking man, that was counting his beads in the chimney-corner, and now and then striking his breast, and looking up as if he was praying greatly.

"Lord," says he, "only give me death, death, and a favourable judgment! I haven't any body now to look after, nor any body to look after me. What's a few tinpennies to save a man from want? Only a quiet grave is all I ask."

"Murther, murther!" says Owney to himself, "here's a man wants death and can't have it, and here am I going to have it, and, in troth, I don't want it at all, see." So, after thinking a little what he had best do, he began to sing out very merrily, but lowering his voice, for fear he should be heard in the next room:

"To him that tied me here,
Be thanks and praises given!
I'll bless him night and day,
For packing me to Heaven.
Of all the roads you'll name,
He surely will not lag,
Who takes his way to heaven,
By travelling in a bag!"

"To heaven, *ershishin*?"* said the man in the chimney-corner, opening his mouth and his eyes, "why then, you'd be doing a Christian turn, if you'd take a neighbour with you, that's tired of this bad and villanous world."

"You're a fool, you're a fool!" said Owney.

* Does he say?

"I know I am; at least so the neighbours always tell me—but what hurt? May-be I have a Christian soul as well as another; and fool or no fool, in a bag, or out of a bag, I'd be glad and happy to go the same road it is you are talking of."

After seeming to make a great favour of it, in order to allure him the more to the bargain, Owney agreed to put him into the bag instead of himself; and cautioning him against saying a word, he was just going to tie him, when he wes touched with a little remorse for going to have the innocent man's life taken: and seeing a slip of a pig that was killed the day before, in a corner, hanging up, the thought struck him that it would do just as well to put it in the bag in their place. No sooner said than done, to the great surprise of the natural, he popped the pig into the bag, and tied it up.

"Now," says he, "my good friend, go home, say nothing, but bless the name in heaven for saving your life; and you were as near losing it this morning, as ever man was that did'nt, now."

They left the house together. Presently out comes Owney-na-Peak, very hearty; and being so, he was not able to perceive the difference in the contents of the bag, but hoisting it upon his back, he sallied out of the house. Before he had gone far, he came to the rock of Foynes, from the top of which he flung his burthen into the salt waters.

Away he went home, and knocked at the door of the forge, which was opened to him by Owney. You may fancy him to yourself crossing and blessing himself over and over again, when he saw, as he thought, the ghost standing before him. But Owney looked very merry, and told him not to be afraid. "You did many

is the good turn in your life," says he, " but the equal of this never." So he up and told him that he found the finest place in the world at the bottom of the waters, and plenty of money ; see these four pieces for a specimen," showing him some he had taken from his own hiding hole, " what do you think of that for a story ?"

" Why then' that it's a dhroll one, no less ; sorrow bit av I wouldn't have a mind to try my luck in the same way ; how did you come home here before me that took the straight road, and didn't stop for so much as my *gusthah** since I left Knockpatrick ?"

" Oh, there's a short cut under the waters," said Owney. " Mind and only be civil while you're in Thierna-oge, and you'll make a sight o' money ?"

Well became Owney, he thrust his cousin into the bag, tied it about him, and putting it into a car that was returning after leaving a load of oats at a corn-store in the city, it was not long before he was at Foynes again. Here he dismounted, and going to the rock, he was, I am afraid, half inclined to start his burthen into the wide water, when he saw a small skiff making towards the point. He hailed her and, learned that she was about to board a great vessel from foreign parts, that was sailing out of the river. So he went with his bag on board, and making his bargain with the captain of the ship, he left Owney-na-Peak along with the crew, and never was troubled with him after, from that day to this.

As he was passing by Barrygowen well, he filled a bottle with the water ; and going home, he bought a fine suit of clothes with the rest of the money he had buried, and away he set off in the morning to the city

* Literally—*walk in.*

of Lumneach. He walked through the town, admiring every thing he saw, until he came before the palace of the king. Over the gates of this he saw a number of spikes, with a head of a man stuck upon each, grinning in the sunshine.

Not at all daunted, he knocked very boldly at the gate, which was opened by one of the guards of the palace. "Well! who are you, friend?"

"I am a great doctor that's come from foreign parts to cure the king's eye-sight. Lead me to his presence this minute."

"Fair and softly," said the soldier—"Do you see all those heads that are stuck up there? Your's is very likely to be keeping company by them, if you are so foolish as to come inside those walls. They are the heads of all the doctors in the land that came before you; and that's what makes the town so fine and healthy this time past, praised be heaven for the same!"

"Don't be talking, you great gomeril," says Owney, "only bring me to the king at once."

He was brought before the king. After being warned of his fate if he should fail to do all that he undertook, the place was made clear of all but a few guards, and Owney was informed once more, that if he should restore the king's eyes, he should wed with the princess; and have the crown after her father's death. This put him in great spirits, and after making a round upon his bare knees about the bottle, he took a little of the water, and rubbed it into the king's eyes. In a minute he jumped up from his throne and looked about him as well as ever. He ordered Owney to be dressed out like a king's son, and sent word to his daughter that she should receive him that instant for her husband.

You may say to yourself that the princess, glad as she was of her father's recovery, did not like this message: small blame to her, when it is considered that she had never set her eyes upon the man himself. However, her mind was changed wonderfully when he was brought before her, covered with gold and diamonds, and all sort of grand things. Wishing, however, to know whether he had as good a wit as he had a person, she told him that he should give her on the next morning, an answer to two questions, otherwise she would not hold him worthy of her hand. Owney bowed, and she put the questions as follows:

"What is that which is the sweetest thing in the world?"

"What are the three most beautiful objects in the creation?"

These were puzzling questions; but Owney, having a small share of brains of his own, was not long in forming an opinion upon the matter. He was very impatient for the morning; but it came just as slow and regular as if he were not in the world. In a short time he was summoned to the court-yard, where all the the nobles of the land were assembled, with flags waving, and trumpets sounding, and all manner of glorious doings going on. The princess was placed on a throne of gold near her father; and there was a beautiful carpet spread for Owney to stand upon while he answered her questions. After the trumpets were silenced, she put the first, with a clear sweet voice, and he replied:

"It's salt!" says he, very stout, out.

There was a great applause at the answer; and the princess owned, smiling, that he had judged right.

"But now," said she, "for the second. What are the three most beautiful things in the creation?"

"Why," answered the young man, "here they are. A ship in full sail—a field of wheat in ear—and——"

What the third most beautiful thing was, all the people didn't hear; but there was a great blushing and laughing among the ladies, and the princess, smiled, and nodded at him, quite pleased with his wit. Indeed, many said that the judges of the land themselves could not have answered better, had they been in Owney's place; nor could there be any where found a more likely or well-spoken young man. He was brought first to the king, who took him in his arms, and presented him to the princess. She could not help acknowledging to herself that his understanding was quite worthy of his handsome person. Orders being immediately given for the marriage to proceed, they were made one with all speed; and it is said that, before another year came round, the fair princess was one of the most beautiful objects in the creation.

THE VILLAGE RUIN.

THE VILLAGE RUIN.

The lake which washes the orchards of the village of ———, divides it from an abbey now in ruins, but associated with the recollection of one of those few glorious events which shed a scanty and occasional lustre on the dark and mournful tide of Irish history. At this foundation was educated, a century or two before the English conquest, Melcha, the beautiful daughter of O'Melachlin, a prince whose character and conduct even yet afford room for speculation to the historians of his country. Not like the maids of our degenerate days, who are scarce exceeded by the men in their effeminate vanity and love of ornament, young Melcha joined to the tenderness and beauty of a virgin the austerity and piety of a hermit. The simplest roots that fed the lowest of her father's subjects were the accustomed food of Melcha; a couch of heath refreshed her delicate limbs, and the lark did not arise earlier at morn to sing the praises of his Maker than did the daughter of O'Melachlin.

One subject had a large proportion of her thoughts, her tears and prayers—the misery of her afflicted

country, for she had not fallen on happy days for Ireland. Some years before her birth, a swarm of savages from the north of Europe had landed on the eastern coast of the island, and in-despite of the gallant resistance of her father, (who then possessed the crown) and of the other chiefs, succeeded in establishing their power throughout the country. Thorgills, the barbarian chief who had led them on, assumed the sovereignty of the conquered isle, leaving, however, to O'Melachlin the name and the insignia of royalty, while all the power of government was centred in himself. The history of tyranny scarcely furnishes a more appalling picture of devastation and oppressive cruelty than that which followed the success of this invasion. Monasteries were destroyed, monks slaughtered in the shelter of their cloisters; cities laid waste and burnt; learning almost exterminated, and religion persecuted with a virulence peculiar to the gloomy and superstitious character of the oppressors. Historians present a minute and affecting detail of the enormities which were perpetrated in the shape of taxation, restriction, and direct aggression. The single word TYRANNY, however, may convey an idea of the whole.

Astonished at these terrible events, O'Melachlin, though once a valiant general, seemed struck with some base palsy of the soul that rendered him insensible to the groans and tortures of his subjects, or to the barbarous cruelty of the monster who was nominally leagued with him in power. Apparently content with the shadow of dominion left him, and with the security afforded to those of his own household, he slept upon his duties as a king and as a man, and thirty years of misery rolled by without his striking a blow, or even to all appearance forming a wish for the deli-

verance of his afflicted country. It was not till he was menaced with the danger of sharing the affliction of his people that he endeavoured to remove it.

Such apathy it was which pressed upon the mind of Melcha, and filled her heart with shame and with affliction. A weak and helpless maid, she had, however, nothing but her prayers to bestow upon her country, nor were those bestowed in vain. At the age of fifteen, rich in virtue as in beauty, and in talent, she was recalled from those cloisters whose shadows still are seen at even-fall, reflected in the waters of the lake, to grace the phantom court of her degenerate father. The latter, proud of his child, gave a splendid feast in honour of her return, to which he was uot ashamed to invite the oppressor of his subjects, and the usurper of his own authority. The coarser vices are the usual concomitants of cruelty. Thorgills beheld the saintly daughter of his host with other eyes than those of admiration. Accustomed to mould the wishes of the puppet monarch to his own, he tarried not even the conclusion of the feast, but desiring the company of O'Melachlin on the green without the palace, he there disclosed to him, with the bluntness of a barbarian, and the insolence of a conqueror, his infamous wishes.

Struck to the soul at what he heard, O'Melachlin was deprived of the power of reply or utterance. For the first time since he had resigned to the invader the power which had fallen so heavy on the land, his feelings were awakened to a sense of sympathy, and self-interest made him pitiful. The cries of bereaved parents, to which till now his heart had been impenetrable as a wall of brass, found sudden entrance to its inmost folds, aud a responsive echo amid its tenderest strings. He sat for a time upon a bench close by, with

his forehead resting on his hand, and a torrent of tempestuous feelings rushing through his bosom.

"What sayest thou ?" asked the tyrant, after a long silence; "Shall I have my wish ? No answer! Hearest thou, slave ? What insolence keeps thee silent ?"

"I pray you, pardon me," replied the monarch, "I was thinking then of a sore annoyance that has lately bred about our castle. I mean that rookery yonder, the din of which even now confounds the music of our feast, and invades with its untimely harshness our cheering and most singular discourse. I would I had some mode of banishing that pest—I would I had some mode—I would I had."

"Ho! was that all the subject of thy thought ?" said Thorgills—"why, fool, thou never wilt be rid of them till thou hast burned the nests wherein they breed."

"I thank thee," answered the insulted parent, "I'll take thy counsel. I'll burn the nests. Will you walk into the house ?"

"What first of my request ?" said Thorgills. "Tell me that."

"If thou hadst asked of me," replied the king, "a favourite hobby for the chase, or a hound to guard thy threshold, thou wouldst not think it much to grant a week at least for preparing my heart to part with what it loved. How much more, when thy demand reaches to the child of my heart, the only offspring of a mother who died before she had beheld her offspring"

"A week, then, let it be," said Thorgills, looking with contempt upon the starting tears of the applicant.

"A week would scarce suffice," replied the monarch "to teach my tongue in what language it should communicate a destiny like this to Melcha."

"What time wouldst thou require, then?" cried the tyrant hastily.

"Thou seest," replied the king, pointing to the new moon, which showed its slender crescent above the wood-crowned hills that bounded in the prospect—"Before that thread of light that glimmers now upon the distant lake, like chastity on beauty, has fulfilled its changes, thou shalt receive my answer to this proffer."

"Be it so," said Thorgills; and the conversation ended. When the guests had all departed, the wretched monarch went into his oratory, where he bade one of his followers order Melcha to attend him. She found him utterly depressed, and almost incapable of forming a design. Having commanded the attendants to withdraw, he endeavoured, but in vain, to make known to the astonished princess the demand of the usurper. He remembered her departed mother, and he thought of her own sanctity, and more than all, he remembered his helpless condition, and the seeming impossibility of doing any thing within the time, to remove from his own doors the misery which had already befallen so many of his subjects, without meeting any active sympathy from him. Was this the form which he was to resign into a ruffian's hands? Was it for such an end he had instilled into her delicate mind the principles of early virtue, and of Chistian piety? By degrees, as he contemplated his situation, his mind was roused by the very nature of the exigency to devise the means of its removal. He communicated both to Melcha, and was not disappointed in her firmness With a zeal beyond her sex, she prepared to take a part in the desperate counsels of her father, and the still more desperate means by which he proposed to

put them into execution. Assembling the officers of his court, he made known to all, in the presence of his daughter, the flagrant insult which had been offered to their sovereign, and obtained the ready pledge of all to peril their existence in the furtherance of his wishes. He unfolded in their sight the green banner of their country, which had now for more than thirty years lain hid amongst the wrecks of their departed freedom, and while the memory of former glories shone warmly on their minds, through the gloom of recent shame and recent injuries, the monarch easily directed their enthusiasm to the point where he would have it fall, the tyranny of Thorgills and his countrymen.

On the following day, the latter departed for the capital, where he was to await the determination of his colleague. Accustomed to hold in contempt the imbecility of the conquered king, and hard himself at heart, he knew not what prodigious actions may take their rise from the impulse of paternal love. That rapid month was fruitful in exertion. Couriers were dispatched from the palace of O'Melachlin to many of those princes whose suggestions for the deliverance of the isle he had long since received with apathy or disregard. Plans were arranged, troops organised, and a general system of intelligence established throughout the island. It is easy to unite the oppresed against the oppressor. All seemed almost to anticipate the wishes of the sovereign, so suddenly his scheme was spread throughout the country. The moon rolled by, and by its latest glimmer a messenger was dispatched to the capital to inform the tyrant that O,Melachlin would send his daughter to meet him at whatever place he should appoint,

There was an island on the lake in Meath, in which

Thorgills had erected a lordly palace, surrounded by the richest woods, and affording a delicious prospect of the lake and the surrounding country. Hither the luxurious monarch directed that the daughter of O'Melachlin should be sent, together with her train of fifteen noble maidens of the court of O'Melachlin. The address of the latter in seeming to accede to the wishes of the tyrant, is preserved amongst the annals of the isle. It requested him to consider whether he might not find elsewhere some object more deserving of his favour than "that brown girl," and besought him to remember "whose father's child she was."

Far from being touched by this appeal, the usurper, on the appointed day, selected in the capital fifteen of the most dissolute and brutal of his followers, with whom he arrived at evening at the rendevouz. It was a portentous night for Ireland. Even to the eyes of the tyrant and his gang, half blinded as they were to all but their own hideous thoughts, there appeared something gloomy and foreboding in the stillness that brooded on the face of nature, and seemed even to pervade the manners of the people. The villages were silent as they passed, and there appeared in the greeting of the few they met upon the route an air of deep-seated and almost menacing intelligence.

Meantime, with feelings widely different, and an anxiety that even the greatness of the enterprise and the awakened spirit of heroism could not wholly subdue, O'Melachlin prepared himself for the painful task of bidding farewell to his beloved daughter. Melcha, already aware of his design, awaited with the deepest anxiety, yet mingled with a thrilling hope, the approach of the auspicious moment that was to crown her ardent and long-cherished wishes, or to dash them to the earth

for ever. Alone, in her royal father's oratory, she lay prostrate before the marble altar, and wet with floods of tears the solid pavement at its base. She prayed not like a frantic or a worldling, but like one who understood with a feeling mind the real miseries of her country, and knew that she addressed a power capable of removing them. The step of her father at the porch of the oratory aroused the princess from her attitude of devotion. She stood up hastily upon her feet, like one prepared for enterprise, and waited the speech of O'Melachlin. He came to inform her that all was ready for her departure, and conducted her into an adjoining chamber, that he might bid her farewell. The father and daughter embraced in silence and with tears. Believing from the error of the light that she looked pale as she stood before him, he took her hand and pressed it in an encouraging manner.

"Follow me," he said, "my child, and thou shalt see how little cause thou hast to fear the power of this Norwegian Holofernes."

The king conducted her into another room where stood fifteen young maidens, as it seemed, and richly attired.

"Thou seest these virgins, Melcha," said the monarch. "Their years are like thine own, but under every cloak is a warrior's sword, and they do not want a warrior's hand to yield it, for all that is woman of them is their dress. Dost thou think," he added tenderly, "that thou hast firmness for such a task as this?"

"I have no fear," replied his daughter, "He who put strength into the arm of Judith can give courage to the heart of Melcha."

They departed from the palace, where the anxious father remained a little longer, until the fast advancing

shades of night should enable him to put the first steps of his design into effect. As soon as the earliest stars began to glimmer on the woods of Meath, he took from its recess the banner which so long had rested idle and inglorious in his hall, and the brazen sword which was once the constant companion of his early successes and defeats, but which now had not left its sheath since he received a visionary crown from Thorgills. Girding the weapon to his side, he drew the blade with tears of shame and sorrow, imprinted a kiss upon the tempered metal, and hastened with reviving hope and energy to seek the troop who awaited him in the adjoining wood. Mounting in haste, they hurried along through forests and defiles which were in many places thronged with silent multitudes, armed, and waiting but the signal word to rush to action. They halted near the borders of the lake of Thorgills, where a number of currachs, or basket boats, were moored under shelter of the wood. After holding a council of war, and allotting to the several princes engaged, their parts in the approaching enterprize, O'Melachlin remained on the shore, casting from time to time an anxious eye to the usurper's isle, and awaiting the expected signal of his daughter.

The princess, in the mean time, pursued her hazardous journey to the abode of Thorgills. The sun had already set before they reached the shores of the lake which surrounded the castle of the tyrant, and the silver bow of the expiring moon was glimmering in its pure and tranquil waters. A barge, allotted by Thorgills for the purpose, was sent to convey them to the island, and they were welcomed with soft music at the entrance of the palace. The place was lonely, the guards were few, and the blind security of the monarch only equalled by his weakness. Besides, the revel spirit had de-

scended from the chieftain to his train, and most, even of those who were in arms, had incapacitated themselves for using them with any energy.

Melcha and her train were conducted by a half intoxicated slave to an extensive hall, where they were commanded to await the orders of the conqueror. The guide disappeared, and the princess prepared for the issue. In a little time the hangings at one side of the apartment were drawn back, and the usurper, accompanied by his ruffian band, made his appearance, hot with the fumes of intoxication, and staggering from the late debauch. The entrance of Thorgills was the signal for Melcha to prepare her part. All remained still while Thorgills passed from one to another of the silent band of maidens, and paused at length before the "brown girl," for whom O'Melachlin had besought his pity. A thrill of terror shot through the heart of Melcha as she beheld the hand of the wretch about to grasp her arm.

"Down with the tyrant!" she exclaimed in a voice that rung like a bugle call. "Upon him, warriors, in the name of Erin! Bind him, but slay him not!"

With a wild "Farrah!" that shook the roof and walls of the abhorred dwelling, the youths obeyed the summons of the heroine. The tornado bursts not sooner from the bosom of an eastern calm, than did the band of warriors from their delicate disguise at the sound of those beloved accents. Their swords for an instant gleamed unstained on high, but when next they rose into the air they smoked with the streaming gore of the oppressors. Struck powerless by the charge, the tyrant and his dissolute crew were disabled before they had even time to draw a sword. Thorgills was seized alive, and bound with their scarfs and bands, while the

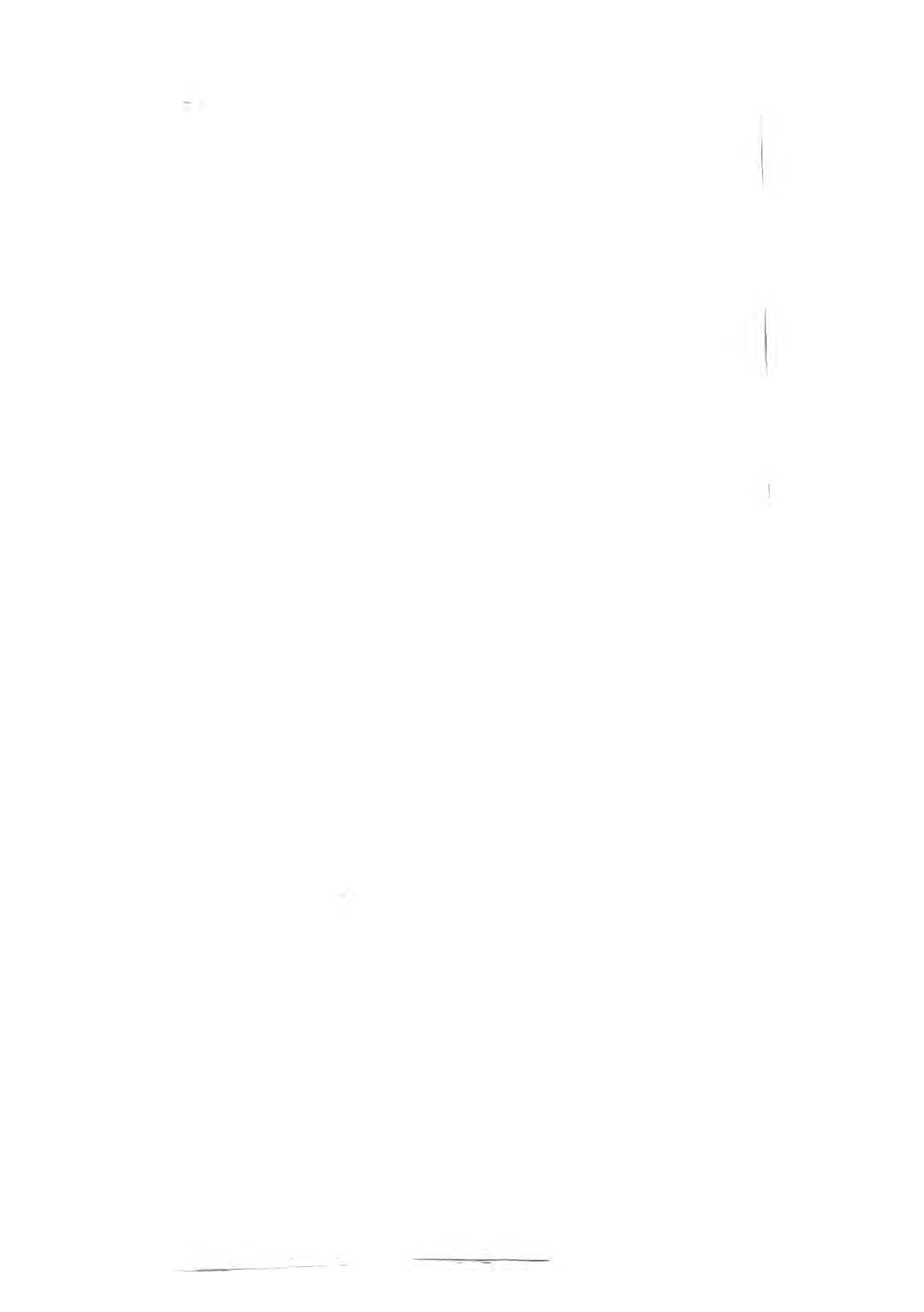
rest were hewed to pieces, without pity, on the spot. While this was done, the heroic Melcha, seizing a torch which burned in the apartment, rushed swiftly from the palace. The affrighted guards believing it to be some apparition, gave way as she approached, and suffered her to reach the borders of the lake, where she waved the brand on high, forgetting in the zeal of liberty her feminine character, and more resembling one of their own war-goddesses than the peaceful Christian maiden, whose prayers and tears, till now, had been her only weapons. Like a train to which a spark has been applied, a chain of beacon-fires sprang up from hill to hill of the surrounding country, amid the shouts of thousands grasping for the breath of freedom, and hailing that feeble light as its arising star. The boats of O'Melachlin, shooting like arrows from the surrounding shores, darkened the surface of the lake, and the foremost reached the isle before the guards of the tyrant, stupefied by wine and fear, had yet recovered courage to resist. They were an easy prey to O'Melachlin and his followers, nor was the enterprise, thus auspiciously commenced, permitted to grow cold, until the power of the invaders was destroyed throughout the isle, and Melcha had the happiness to see peace and liberty restored to her afflicted country. In the waters of that lake which so oft had borne the usurper to the lonely scene of his debaucheries, he was consigned amidst the acclamations of a liberated people to a nameless sepulchre, and the power he had abused once more reverted to its rightful owner. In one thing only did the too confiding islanders neglect to profit by the advice of Thorgills himself. *They did not burn the nests.* They suffered the strangers still to possess the sea-port towns and other important holds throughout the isle; an

imprudence, however, the effect of which did not appear till the reign of O'Malachlin was ended by his death.

The reader may desire to know what became of the beautiful heroic princess who had so considerable a share in the restoration of her country's freedom. As this had been the only earthly object of her wishes, even from childhood, with its accomplishment was ended all that she desired on earth. Rejecting the crowds of noble and wealthy suitors who ardently sought her hand, and preferring the solitude of her own heart to the splendours and allurements of a court, she besought her father, as a recompence for her ready compliance with his wishes, that he would allow her once more to retire into the convent in which she had received her education, to consume her days in the exercises of piety and virtue. Pained at her choice, the king however did not seek to thwart it, and after playing her brief but brilliant part upon the theatre of the world, she devoted in those holy shades her virgin love, and the residue of her days to heaven.

Such are the recollections that hallow the Village Ruin, and dignify its vicinity with the majesty of historical association. The peasantry choose the grave of the royal nun as the scene of their devotoins; and even those who look with contempt upon their humble piety and regard as superstition the religion of the buried princess, feel the genial current gush within their bosoms as they pass the spot at evening, and think upon her singleness of heart and her devoted zeal. Long may it be before feelings such as these shall be extinguished.

THE KNIGHT OF THE SHEEP.



THE KNIGHT OF THE SHEEP.

CHAPTER I.

In the days of our ancestors it was the custom, when a "strong farmer" had arrived at a certain degree of independence by his agricultural pursuits, to confer upon him a title in the Irish language, which is literally translated, "The Knight of the Sheep." Though not commonly of noble origin, these persons often exercised a kind of patriarchal sway, scarce less extensive than that of many a feudal descendant of the Butlers or the Geraldines.

In one of the most fertile town-lands in one of our inland counties, lived a person of this class, bearing the name of Bryan Taafe. No less than three spacious tenements acknowledged his sway, by the culture of which he had acquired, in the course of a long life, a quantity of wealth more than sufficient for any purpose to which he might wish to apply it.

Mr. Taafe had three sons, on whose education he had lavished all the care and expense which could have been expected from the most affectionate father in his walk of life. He had a great opinion of learning, and

had frequently in his mouth, for the instruction of his children, such snatches of old wisdom as "Learning is better than houses or land," and

> "A man without learning and wearing fine clothes,
> Is like a pig with a gold ring in his nose."

Accordingly, the best teachers that Kerry and Limerick could afford were employed to teach them the classics, mathematics, and such other branches of science and letters as were current in those parts. The two elder sons shewed a remarkable quickness in all their studies; but the youngest, though his favourite, disappointed both him and his instructors. So heavy was he at his book, that neither threats nor caresses could have any effect in making him arrive at any thing like proficiency. However, as it did not proceed from absolute indolence or obstinacy, his father was content to bear with his backwardness in this respect; although it, in some degree, diminished the especial affection with which he once regarded him.

One day as Mr. Taafe was walking in his garden, taking the air before breakfast in the morning, he called Jerry Fogarty, his steward, and told him he wanted to speak with him.

"Jerry," says Mr. Taafe, after they had taken two or three turns on the walk together, "I don't know in the world what'll I do with Garret."

"Why so, masther?"

"Ah, I'm kilt from him. You know yourself, what a great opinion I always had o' the learning. A man, in fact, isn't considhered worth spakin' to in these times that hasn't it. 'Tis for the same raison I went to so much cost and trouble to get schoolin' for them three boys; and to be sure as for Shamus and Guillaum I

haven't any cause to complain, but the world wouldn't get good o' Garret. It was only the other mornin' I asked him who was it discovered America, and the answer he made me was that he believed that it was Nebuchodonezzar."

"A' no?"

"'Tis as thrue as you're standin' there. What's to be done with a man o' that kind? Sure, as I often represented to himself, it would be a disgrace to me if he was ever to go abroad in foreign parts, or any place o' the kind, and to make such an answer as that to any gentleman or lady afther all I lost by him. Tisn't so with Shamus and Guillaum. There isn't many goin' that could thrace histhory with them boys. I'd give a dale, out o' regard for the poor woman that's gone, if Garret could come any way near 'em."

"I'll tell you what it is, masther," said Jerry. There's a dale that's not over bright at the book, an that would be very 'cute for all in their own minds. May be Master Garret would be one o' them, an' we not to know it. I remember myself one Motry Hierlohee, that not one ha'p'orth o' good could be got of him goin' to school, an' he turned out one of the greatest janiuses in the parish afther. There isn't his aiquals in Munsther now at a lamentation or the likes. Them raal janiuses does he always so full of their own thoughts, they can't bring themselves as it were to take notice of those of other people."

"Maybe you're right, Jerry," answered Mr. Taafe, "I'll take an opportunity of trying."

He said no more, but in a few days after he gave a great entertainment to all his acquaintances, rich and poor, that were within a morning's ride of his own house, taking particular care to have every one pre-

sent that had any name at all for "the learning." Mr. Taafe was so rich and so popular amongst his neighbours, that his house was crowded on the day appointed with all the scholars in the country, and they had no reason to complain of the entertainment they received from Mr. Taafe. Every thing good and wholesome that his sheep-walk, his paddock, his orchard, his kitchen-garden, his pantry, and his cellar, could afford, was placed before them in abundance; and seldom did a merrier company assemble together to enjoy the hospitality of an Irish farmer.

When the dinner was over, and the guests busily occupied in conversation, the Knight of the Sheep who sat at the head of the table, stood up with a grave air as if he were about to address something of importance to the company. His venerable appearance as he remained standing, a courteous smile shedding its light over his aged countenance, and his snowy hair, descending almost to his shoulders, occasioned a respectful silence amongst the guests, while he addressed them in the following words:—

"In the first place, gentlemen, I have to return you all thanks for giving me the pleasure of your company here to day, which I do with all my heart. And I feel the more honoured and gratified because I take it for granted you have come here, not so much from any personal feeling towards myself, but because you know that I have always endeavoured, so far as my poor means would enable me, to shew my respect for men of parts and learning. Well, then, here you are all met, grammarians, geometricians, arithmeticians, geographers, astronomers, philosophers, Latinists, Grecians, and men of more sciences than perhaps I ever heard the names of. Now there's no doubt learning is

a fine thing, but what good is all the learning in the world without what they call mother-wit to make use of it? An ounce o' mother-wit would buy an' sell a stone-weight of learning at any fair in Munsther. Now there are you all scholars, an' here am I a poor country farmer that hardly ever got more teaching than to read and write, and maybe a course of Voster, and yet I'll be bound I'll lay down a problem that maybe some o' ye wouldn't find it easy to make out."

At this preamble the curiosity of the company was raised to the highest degree, and the Knight of the Sheep resumed after a brief pause;

"At a farm of mine, about a dozen miles from this, I have four fields of precisely the same soil; one square, another oblong, another partly round, and another triangular. Now what is the reason, that while I have an excellent crop of white-eyes this year out of the square, the oblong, and the round field, not a single stalk would grow in the triangular one?"

This problem produced a dead silence amongst the guests, and all exerted their understandings to discover the solution, but without avail, although many of their conjectures shewed the deepest ingenuity. Some traced out a mysterious connexion between the triangular boundary and the lines of the celestial hemisphere; others said, probably from the shape of the field an equal portion of nutrition did not flow on all sides to the seed so as to favour its growth. Others attributed the failure to the effect of the angular hedges upon the atmosphere, which, collecting the wind, as it were, into corners, caused such an obstruction to the warmth necessary to vegetation that the seed perished in the earth. But all their theories were beside the mark.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Taafe, "ye're all too clever—that's the only fault I have to find with ye'r answers. Shamus," he continued, addressing his eldest son, "can you tell the raison?"

"Why, then, father," said Shamus, "they didn't grow there I suppose, because you didn't plant them there."

"You have it Shamus," said the knight; "I declare you took the ball from all the philosophers. Well, gentlemen, can any o' ye tell me, now, if you wished to travel all over the world from whom would you ask a passport?"

This question seemed as puzzling as the former. Some said the Great Mogul, others the Grand Signior, others the Pope, others the Lord Lieutenant, and some the Emperor of Austria; but we were wrong.

"What do you say, Guillaum?" asked the knight, addressing his second son.

"From Civility, father," answered Guillaum; for that's a gentleman that has acquaintances every where."

"You're right, Guillaum," replied the knight. "Well, I have one more question for the company. Can any one tell me in what country the women are the best housekeepers?"

Again the company exhausted all their efforts in conjecture, and the geographers shewed their learning by naming all the countries in the world, one after another, but to no purpose. The knight now turned with a fond look toward his youngest son.

"Garret," said he, "can you tell where the women are good housekeepers?"

Garret rubbed his forehead for awhile, and smiled, and shook his head, but could get nothing out of it.

"I declare to my heart, father," said he, "I can't

tell from Adam. Where the women are good housekeepers?—Stay a minute. May be," said he, with a knowing look," may be 'tis in America?"

"Shamus, do you answer," said the knight, in a disappointed tone.

"In the grave, father," answered Shamus; "for there they never gad abroad."

Mr. Taafe acknowledged that his eldest son had once more judged right; and the entertainments of the night proceeded without further interruption, until wearied with feasting and music, such of the company as could not be accommodated with beds, took their departure, each in the direction of his own home.

CHAPTER II.

On the following morning, in the presence of his household, Mr. Taafe made a present to his two eldest sons of one hundred pounds each, and was induced to bestow the same sum on Garret, although he by no means thought he deserved it after disgracing him as he had done before his guests. He signified to the young men at the same time, that he gave them the money as a free gift, to lay out in any way they pleased, and that he never should ask them to repay it.

After breakfast, the old knight, as usual, went to take a few turns in the garden.

"Well, Jerry," said he, when the steward had joined him according to his orders; "well, Jerry, Garret is no genius."

A groan from Jerry seemed to announce his acquiescence in this decision. He did not, however, resign all hope.

"With submission to your honour," said he, "I wouldn't call that a fair thrial of a man's parts. A man mightn't be able to answer a little *cran* o' that kind, an' to have more sense for all than those that would. Wait a while until you'll see what use he'll make o' the hundhred pounds, an' that'll shew his sinse betther than all the riddles in Europe."

Mr. Taafe acknowledged that Jerry's proposition was but reasonable; and, accordingly, at the end of a twelvemonth, he called his three sons before him and examined them one after another.

"Well, Shamus," said he, "what did you do with your hundred pounds?"

"I bought stock with it, father."

"Very good. And you, Guillaum?"

"I laid it out, father, in the intherest of a little farm westwards."

"Very well managed again. Well, Garret, let us hear what you did with the hundred pounds."

"I spent it, father," said Garret.

"Spent it! Is it the whole hundred pounds?"

"Sure, I thought you told us we might lay it out as we liked, sir?"

"Is that the raison you should be such a prodigal as to waste the whole of it in a year? Well, hear to me, now, the three o' ye, and listen to the raison why I put ye to these trials. I'm an ould man, my children; my hair is white on my head, an' its time for me to think of turning the few days that are left me to the best account. I wish to separate myself from the world before the world separates itself from me. For this cause I had resolved, these six months back, to give up all my property to ye three that are young an' hearty, an' to keep nothing for myself but a bed

under my old roof, an' a sate at the table and by the fire-place, an' so to end my ould days in peace an quiet. To you, Shamus, I meant to give the dairy-farm up in the mountains; the Corcasses and all the meadowing to you, Guillaum; and for you, Garret, I had the best of the whole,—that is the house we're living in, and the farm belonging to it. But for what would I give it to you, after what you just tould me? Is it to make ducks and drakes of it, as you did o' the hundhred pounds? Here, Garret," said he, going to a corner of the room and bringing out a small bag and a long hazel stick; "here's the legacy I have to leave you—that, an' the king's high road, an' my liberty to go wherever it best plases you. Hard enough I airned that hundhred pounds that you spent so aisily. And as for the farm I meant to give you, I give it to these two boys, an' my blessing along with it, since 'tis they that know how to take care of it."

At this speech the two elder sons cast themselves at their father's feet with tears of gratitude.

"Yes," said he, "my dear boys, I'm rewarded for all the pains I ever took with ye, to make ye industrious, and thrifty, and every thing that way. I'm satisfied, under Heaven, that all will go right with ye; but as for this boy I have nothing to say to him. Betther for me I never saw his face."

Poor Garret turned aside his head, but he made no attempt to excuse himself, nor to obtain any favour from his rigid father. After wishing them all a timid farewell, which was but slightingly returned, he took the bag and staff and went about his business.

His departure seemed to give little pain to his relatives. They lived merrily and prosperously, and even the old knight himself shewed no anxiety to know

what had become of Garret. In the meantime, the two elder sons got married; and Mr. Taafe, in the course of a few years, had the satisfaction to see his grandchildren seated on his knee.

We are often widely mistaken in our estimate of generosity. It may appear a very noble thing to bestow largely; but before we give it the praise of generosity, we must be sure that the motive is as good as the deed. Mr. Taafe began, in the course of time, to shew that his views in bestowing his property on his two sons were not wholly free from selfishness. They found it harder to please him now that they were masters of all, than when they were wholly dependant on his will. His jealousies and murmurs were interminable. There was no providing against them beforehand, nor any allaying them when they did arise. The consequence was, the young men, who never really felt any thing like the gratitude they had protested, began to consider the task of pleasing him altogether burdensome. In this feeling they were encouraged by their wives, who never ceased murmuring at the cost and trouble of entertaining him.

Accordingly one night, while the aged knight was murmuring at some inattention which was shewn him at table, Shamus and Guillaum Taafe walked into the room, determined to put an end for ever to his complaints.

"I'd like to know what would plaise you!" exclaimed Shamus. "I suppose you won't stop until you'll take house an' all from us, an' turn us out, as you did Garret, to beg from doore to doore?"

"If I did itself, Shamus," said the knight, looking at him for some moments with surprise, "I'd get no more than I gave."

"What good was your giving it," cried Guillaum, "when you won't let us enjoy it with a moment's comfort?

"Do you talk that way to me, too Guillaum? If it was poor Garret I had he wouldn't use me so."

"Great thanks he got from you for any good that was in him," cried one of the women.

"Let him take his stick and pack out to look for Garret," said the second woman, "since he is so fond of him."

The old knight turned and looked at the women.

"I don't wondher," said he, "at any thing I'd hear *ye* say. You never yet heard of any thing great or good, or for the public advantage, that a woman would have a hand in,—only mischief always. If you ask who made such a road, or who built such a bridge, or wrote such a great histhory, or did any other good action o' the kind, I'll engage 'tis seldom you'll hear that it is a woman done it; but if you ask who is it that set such and such a pair fightin', or who is it that caused such a *jewel*, or who is it that let out such a sacret, or ran down such a man's character, or occasioned such a war, or brought such a man to the gallows or caused diversion in such a family, or any thing o' that kind, then, I'll engage, you'll hear that a woman had some call to it. We needn't have recoorse to histhory to know ye'r doin's. 'Tis undher our eyes. 'Twas the likes o' ye two that burned Throy, an' made the King o' Leinsther rebel again' Brian Boru."

At this the two women pulled the caps off their heads, and set up such a screaming and shrieking as might be heard from thence to Cork.

"Oh, murther! murther!" says one of them, "was it for this I married you, to be compared to people o' that kind?"

"What raison has he to me," cried the other, "that he'd compare me to them that would rebel again' Brian Boru? Would I rebel again' Brian Boru, Shamus, a ra gal?"

"Don't heed him, a-vourneen, he's an ould man."

"Oh, vo! vo! if ever I thought the likes o' that would be said o' me, that I'd rebel again' Brian Boru!"

"There's no use in talkin', Guillaum," cried the second, who probably took the allusion to the fate of Troy as a slight on her own personal attractions; "there's no use in talkin', but I never'll stay a day undher your roof with any body that would say I'd burn Throy. Does he forget that ever he had a mother himself? Ah, 'tis a bad apple, that's what it is, that despises the three it sprung from."

"Well, I'll tell you what it is now," said the eldest son, "since 'tis come to that with you, that you won't let the women alone, I won't put up with it any more from you. I believe, if I didn't shew you the outside o' the doore, yon'd shew it to me before long. There, now, the world is free to you to look out for people that'll plaise you betther since you say we can't do it."

"A', Shamus, agra," said the old knight, looking at his son with astonishment; "is that my thanks afther all?"

"Your thanks for what?" cried Guillaum, "Is it for plasin' your own fancy? or for makin' our lives miserable ever since, an' to give crossness to the women?"

"Let him go look for Garret now," cried one of the women, "an' see whether they'll agree betther than they did before."

"Ah—Shamus—Guillaum—a chree," said the poor

old man, trembling with terror at sight of the open door, "let ye have it as ye will; I'm sorry for what I said, a'ra gal! Don't turn me out on the high road in my ould days! I'll engage, I never'll open my mouth again' one o' ye again the longest day I live. A,' Shamus, a-vich, it isn't long I have to stay wid ye. Your own hair will be as white as mine yet, plaise God, an' 'twouldn't be wishin' to you then for a dale that you shewed any disrespect to mine."

His entreaties, however, were all to no purpose. They turned him out, and made fast the door behind him.

Imagine an old man of sixty and upwards turned out on the high road on a cold and rainy night, the north wind beating on his feeble breast, and without the prospect of relief before him. For a time he could not believe that the occurrence was real; and it was only when he felt the rain already penetrating through his thin dress that he became convinced it was but too true.

"Well," said the old man, lifting up his hands as he crept out on the high road, "is this what all the teaching come to? Is this the cleverness? an' the learning? Well, if it was to do again! No matther, They say there's two bad pays in the world—the man that pays beforehand, an' the man that doesn't pay at all. In like manner, there's two kinds of people that wrong their lawful heirs—those that give them their inheritance before death, and those that will it away from them afther. What'll I do now at all? or where'll I turn to? a poor old man o' my kind that isn't able to do a sthroke o' work if I was ever so fain! An' the night gettin' worse an' worse! Easy!—Isn't that a light I see westwards?—There's no one, surely, ex-

cept an unnatural son or daughter that would refuse to give an old man shelter on such a night as this. I'll see if all men's heart's are as hard as my two sons."

He went to the house, which was situated at the distance of a quarter of a mile from that which he so lately looked on as his own. As he tottered along the dark and miry *borheen* which led to the cottage door, the barking of a dog inside aroused the attention of the inmates. Being already in bed, however, before he had arrived there, none of them were very willing to give admission to a stranger.

"Who's there?" cried the man of the house, as the old knight knocked timidly at the door. "Do you think we have nothing else to do at this time o' night but to be gettin' up an' openin' the doore to every sthroller that goes the road?"

"Ah! if you knew who it was you had there," said the knight, "you wouldn't be so slow of openin' the doore."

"Who is it I have there, then?"

"The Knight of the Sheep."

"The Knight of the Sheep! Oh, you born villyan! 'Twas your son Shamus that chated me out o' thirty good pounds by a horse he sould me at the fair o Killeedy—an animal that wasn't worth five! Go along this minute with you; or if you make me get up, 'tis to give you something that you wouldn't bargain for."

The poor old man hurried away from the door fearing that the farmer would be but too ready to put his threat into execution. The night was growing worse and worse. He knocked at another door; but the proprietor of this in like manner had suffered to

the extreme cleverness of Guillaum Taafe, and refused to give him shelter. The whole night was spent in going from door to door, and finding in every place where he applied that the great ability of his two sons had been beforehand with him in getting a bad name for the whole family. At last, as the morning began to dawn, he found himself unable to proceed further, and was obliged to lie down in a little paddock close to a very handsome farm-house. Here the coldness of the morning air and the keenness of his grief at the recollection of his children's ingratitude had such an effect upon him that he swooned away, and lay for a long time insensible upon the grass. In this condition he was found by the people of the house, who soon after came out to look after the bounds and do their usual farming work. They had the humanity to take him into the house, and to put him into a warm bed, where they used all proper means for his recovery.

When he had come to himself, they asked him who he was, and how he had fallen into so unhappy a condition. For a time the old knight was afraid to answer, lest these charitable people, like so many others, might have been at one time sufferers to the roguery of his two eldest sons, and thus be tempted to repent of their kindness the instant they had heard on whom it had been bestowed. However, fearing lest they should accuse him of duplicity in case they might afterwards learn the truth, he at length confessed his name.

"The Knight of the Sheep!" exclaimed the woman of the house, with a look of the utmost surprise and joy. "Oh, Tom, Tom!" she continued, calling out to her husband who was in another room. "A', come here, a-sthore, until you'll see Misther Taafe, the fa-

ther o' young Masther Garret, the darlin' that saved us all from ruin."

The man of the house came in as fast as he could run."

"Are you Garret Taafe's father?" said he, looking surprised at the old knight.

"I had a son of that name," said Mr. Taafe, "though all I know of him now is, that I used him worse than I would if it was to happen again."

"Well, then," said the farmer, "my blessing on that day that ever you set foot within these doores. The rose in May was never half so welcome, an' I'm betther plaised than I'll tell you that I have you undher my roof."

"I'm obliged to you," said the knight; "but what's the raison o' that?"

"Your son Garret," replied the man, "of a day when every whole ha'p'orth we had in the world was going to be canted for the rent, put a hand in his pocket an' lent us thirty pounds till we'd be able to pay him again, an' we not knowin' who in the world he was, nor he us, I'm sure. It was only a long time afther that we found it out by others in various parts that he served in like manner, and they tould us who he was. We never seen him since; but I'm sure it would be the joyful day to us that we'd see him coming back to get his thirty pounds."

When the old knight heard this, he felt as if somebody was running him through with a sword.

"And this," said he, "was the way poor Garret spent the hundhred pounds! Oh, murther! murther! my poor boy, what had I to do at all to go turn you adhrift as I done for no raison! I took the wrong for the right, an' the right for the wrong! No matther!

That's the way the whole world is blinded. That's the way death will shew us the differ of many a thing Oh, murther! Garret! Garret! What'll I do at all with the thoughts of it! An' them two villyans that I gave it all to, an' that turned me out afther in my ould days, as I done by you! No matther."

He turned in to the wall for fear the people would hear him groaning; but the remorse, added to all his other sufferings, had almost killed him.

In a little time the old knight began to recover something of his former strength under the care of his new acquaintances, who continued to shew him the most devoted attention. One morning the farmer came into his room with a lage purse full of gold in his hand, and said:

"I told you, sir, I owed your son thirty pounds; an' since he's not comin' to ax for it you're heartily welcome to the use of it until he does, an' I'm sure he would'nt wish to see it betther employed."

"No, no," replied Mr. Taafe, "I'll not take the money from you; but I'll borrow the whole purse for a week, an' at the end o' that time I'll return it safe to you."

The farmer lent him the purse, an' the knight waited for a fine day, when he set off again in the morning, and took the road leading to the dwelling from which he had been expelled. It was noon, and the sun was shining bright when he arrived upon the little lawn before the door. Sitting down in the sunshine by the kitchen-garden wall, he began counting the gold, and arranging it in a number of little heaps, so that it had a most imposing effect. While he was thus occupied, one of his young daughters-in law—the

same whose beauty had drawn upon her the unhappy allusion to the mischief-making spouse of Menelaus—happened to make her appearance at the front door, and, looking around, saw the old knight in the act of counting his gold in the sun shine. Overwhelmed with astonishment, she ran to her husband and told him what she had seen.

"Nonsense, woman!" said Shamus; "you don't mean to persuade me to a thing o' that kind."

"Very well;" replied the woman, "'m sure, if you don't believe me, 'tis asy for ye all to go an' see ye'rselves."

So they all went, and, peeping through the little window one afther another, were dazzled by the sight of so much gold.

"You done very wrong, Shamus," said Guillaum, "ever to turn out the ould father as you done. See, now, what we all lost by it. That's a part o' the money he laid by from year to year, an' we never'll see a penny of it."

At this they all felt the greatest remorse for the manner in which they had acted to the old man. However, they were not so much discouraged but that some of them ventured to approach and salute him. On seeing them draw nigh, he hastily concealed the gold, and returned their greeting with an appearance of displeasure. It was by much persuasion, and after many assurances of their regret for what had passed, that he consented once more to come and take up his abode beneath their roof, desiring at the same time that an ass and cart might be sent to the farmer's for a strong box which he had left there.

At the mention of a *strong box*, it may easily be imagined what were the sensations of his hearers. The

ass and cart were procured without delay; and, before evening, those grateful children, had the satisfaction to behold a heavy box of very promising dimensions deposited in a corner of the small chamber which was to be reserved for the future use of their aged parent.

In the meanwhile, nothing could exceed the attention which he now received from the young people. They seemed only unhappy when not occupied in contributing in some way to his comfort, and perceiving his remorse for the manner in which Garret had been treated, used all the means in their power to discover whither he had gone. But it is not always in this life that one false step can be retraced. The old knight was not destined to see his son again, and his grief at this disappointment had no slight effect in aggravating the infirmities of his old age.

At length, perceiving that he was near his end, he called his sons and daughters to his bedside, and addressed them in the following words:—

"Whatever cause I had once to complain of ye, Shamus and Guillaum, that's all past and gone now, and it is right that I should leave you some little remembrance for all the trouble I gave ye since my comin' home. Do you see that chest over there?"

"Ah, father! what chest?" cried the sons. "Don't be talkin' of it for a chest."

"Well, my good boys," said the knight, "my will is in that chest, so I need tell ye no more."

"Don't speak of it, father," said Shamus, "for as the Latin poet says:—

> 'Non possidentem multa vocaveris
> Recte beatum.'

Only as you're talkin' of it at all for a chest, where's the key, father?"

"Ah, Shamus!" said the knight, "you were always great at the Latin. The key is in my waistcoat pocket."

Soon after he expired, the two sons, impatient to inspect their treasure, could hardly wait until the old man ceased to breathe. While Shamus unlocked the box, Guillaum remained to keep the door fast.

"Well, Shamus," said his brother, "what do you find there?"

"A parcel of stones, Guillaum!"

"Nonsense, man! try what's undher 'em."

Shamus complied and found at the bottom of the box a rope with a running noose at the end, and a scroll of paper, from which Shamus read the following sentence aloud for the information of his brother :—

"THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF BRYAN TAAFE, COMMONLY CALLED THE KNIGHT OF THE SHEEP.

"*Imprimis.* To my two sons, Shamus and Guillaum, I bequeath the whole of the limestones contained in this box, in return for their disinterested love and care of me ever since the day they saw me counting the gold near the kitchen garden.

"Item. *I bequeath the rope herein contained for any father to hang himself who is so foolish as to give away his property to his heirs before his death.*"

"Well, Shamus," said Guillaum, the poor father laid out a dale on our education, but I declare all the taichin' he ever gave us was nothing to that."

THE ROCK OF THE CANDLE.

Soldiers.—Room, ho!—tell Antony, Brutus is ta'en.
Antony.— This is not Brutus, friends; but I assuse you,
A prize no less in worth. Keep this man safe,
Give him all kindness. I had rather have
Such men my friends than enimies.

Julius Cæsar.

THE ROCK OF THE CANDLE

REMEMBER ye not, my fair young friend, in one of those excursions which rendered the summer of the past year so sweet in the enjoyment, and so mournful in the recollection—remember ye not my having pointed out to your observation the ruined battlements of Carrigogunniel (the Rock of the Candle,) which shoot upward from a craggy hillock on the shannon side, within view of the ancient city of Limerick? I told you the legend from which the place originally derived its name—a legend, which I thought was distinguished (especially in the closing incident,) by a tenderness and delicacy of imagination, worthy of a Grecian origin. You, too, acknowledged the simple beauty of that incident; and your approval induces me to hope for that of the world.

On a misty evening in spring, when all the west is filled with a hazy sunshine, and the low clouds stoop and cling around the hill tops, there are few nobler spectacles to contemplate, than the ruins of Carrigo-

gunniel Castle. This fine building, which was dismantled by one of William's generals, stands on the very brink of a broken hill, which, toward the water, looks bare and craggy, but on the landward side slopes gently down, under a close and verdant cover of elms aud underwood. It is when seen from this side, standing high above the trees, and against the red and broken clouds that are gathered in the west, that the ruin assumes its most imposing aspect.

Such was the look it wore on the evening of an autumn day, when the village beauty, young Minny O'Donnell, put aside the woodbines from her window, and looked out upon the Rock. Her father's cottage was situated close to the foot of the hill, and the battlements seemed to frown downward upon it, with a royal and overtopping haughtiness.

"Hoo! murder, Minney honey, what is that you're doing? Looking out at the Rock at this hour, and the sun just going down behind the turret?"

"Why not, aunt?"

"Why not?—Do you remember nothing of the candle?

"Oh, I don't know what to thing of it; I am inclined to doubt the story very much; I have been listening to that frightful tale of the Death Light since I was born, and I have never seen it yet."

"You may consider yourself fortunate in that, child, and I advise you not to be too anxious to prove the truth of the story. I was standing by the side of poor young Dillon myself, on the very day of his marriage, when he looked out upon it through the wicket, and was blasted as if by a thunder-stroke. I never will forget the anguish of the dear young bride—it was heart breaking, to see her torn from his side when the

life had let him. Poor creature! her shrieks are piercing my ears at this very moment."

"That story terrifies me, aunt. Speak of it no more, and I will leave the window. I wonder if Cormac knows this story of the Fatal Candle.

The good old woman smiled knowingly on her pretty niece, as, instead of answering her half query, she asked—"Do you not expect him here before sunset?"

Minny turned hastily round, and seated herself opposite a small mirror, adorned by one of those highly carved frames which were popular at the toilets of our grandmamas. She did so with a double view, of completing her evening toilet, and at the same time screening herself from the inquisitive glances of her sharp old relative, while she continued the conversation.

"He promised to be here before," she replied; "but it is a long way."

"I hope he will not turn his eyes upon the Rock, if he should be detained after night-fall. I suspect, Minny, that his eyes will be wandering in another direction. I think he will be safe, after all."

"For shame, aunt Norry. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, an old woman of your kind to speak in that way. Come now, and tell me something funny, while I am dressing my hair, to put the recollection of that frightful adventure of the Candle out of my head. Would not that be a good figure for a Banthee?" she added, shaking out her long bright hair with one hand, in the manner which is often attributed to the warning spirit, and casting at the same time, a not indifferent glance at the mirror above mentioned.

"Partly indeed,—but the Banthee (meaning no offence at the same time,) is far from being so young or so blooming in the cheeks: and by all accounts, the

eyes tell a different story from yours—a story of death, and not of marriage. Merry would the Banthee be, that would be going to get young Mr. Cormac for a husband to-morrow morning early."

"I'll go look at the Rock again, if you continue to talk such nonsense."

"Oh, bubboo!—rest easy, darling—and I'll say nothing.—Well, what story is it I'm to be telling you?"

"Something funny."

"Oyeh, my heart is bothered with 'em for stories. I don't know what I'll tell you. Are 'you cute at all?"

"I don't know. Only middling, I believe."

"Well—I'll tell you a story of a boy that flogged Europe for 'cuteness—so that if you have a mind to be ready with an answer for every cross question that 'll be put to you, you can learn it after him;—a thing that may be useful to you one time or another, when the charge of the house is left in your hands."

"Well, let me hear it."

"I will, then, do that. Go on with your dress, and I'll have my story done before you are ready to receive Mr. Cormac."

So saying, she drew a stool near her neice, and leaning forward with her chin on her hand, commenced the following tale.

"There was a couple there, long ago, and they had a son that they didn't know rightly what was it they'd do with him, for they had not money to get him Latin enough for a priest, and there was only poor call for day labourers in the country. 'I'll tell you what I'll do, says the father, says he; 'I'll make a thief of him,' says he; 'sorrow a better trade there is going than the roguery—or more money-making for a boy that would be industrious.' 'Its true for you,' says the wife, mak-

ing answer to him; 'but where will you get a master for him, or who'll take him for an apprentice in such a business?' 'I'll tell you that,' says the husband to her again. 'I'll send him to Kerry. Sorrow better hand would you get at the business any where, than there are about the mountains there—and I'll be bound he'll come home to us a good hand at his business,' says he. Well and good, they sent off the boy to Kerry, and bound him for seven years to a thief that was well known in these parts, and counted a very clever man in his line. They heard no more of him for the seven years, nor hardly knew that they were out, when he walked in to them one morning, with his 'Save all here!' and took his seat at the table along with them— a fine, handsome lad, and mighty well spoken.

'Well, Mun,' says the father, 'I hope you're master o' your business?' 'Pretty well for that, father,' says he; 'wait till we can have a trial of it.' 'With all my heart,' says the father; 'and I hope to see that you haven't been making a bad use o' your time while you were away!' Well, the news ran among the neighbours, what a fine able thief Mun had come home, and the landlord himself came to hear of it, among the rest. So when the father went to his work the next morning, he made up to him, and—'Well,' says he, 'this is a queer thing I'm told about you, that you had your son bound to a thief in Kerry, and that he's come home to you a great hand at the business.' 'Passible, indeed, he tells me, sir,' says the father, quite proud in himself. 'Well, I'll tell you what it is,' says the gentleman; 'I have a fine horse in my stable, and I'll put a guard upon him to-night—and if your son be that great hand that he's reported to be, let him come and steal him out from among the people to-night—

and if he does, he shall have my daughter in marriage, and my estate, when I die,' says he. 'A great offer surely,' says the poor man. 'But if he fails,' says the gentleman, 'I'll prosecute him, and have him hanged, and you along with him, for serving his time to a thief; a thing that's clearly again all law,' says he. Well, 'tis unknown what a *whilliloo* the father set up when he heard this. 'O, murther, sir,' says he, 'and sure 'tis well, you know, that if a spirit itself was there he couldn't steal the horse that would be guarded that way—let alone my poor boy,' says he; 'and how will it be with us, or what did we ever do to you, sir, that you'd hang us that way?' 'I have my own reasons for it,' says the gentleman, 'and you'd better go home at once, and tell the boy about it, if you have a mind he should try his chance.' Well, the father went home, crying and bawling, as if all belonging to him were dead. 'E,' what ails you, father,' says the son, 'or what is it makes you be bawling that way?' says he. So he up and told him the whole business, how they were to be hanged the two of them, in the morning, if he wouldn't have the racer stolen. 'That beats Ireland,' says the son, 'to hang a man for *not* stealing a thing is droll, surely; but make your mind easy, father, my master would think no more of doing that than he would of eating a boiled potatoe.' Well, the old man was in great spirits when he heard the boy talk so stout, although he wasn't without having his doubts upon the business, for all that. The boy set to work when the evening drew on, and dressed himself like an old *bucaugh*,* with a tattered frieze coat about him, and stockings without any soles to 'em, with an old *caubean* of a straw hat upon the side of his head, and the tin can under his arm. 'Tis what he had in the tin can, I

* A lame man—idiomatically, beggar-man.

tell you, was a good sup of spirits, with a little poppy juice squeezed into it, to make them sleepy that would be after drinking it. Well and good, Minny, my child, he made towards the gentleman's house, and when he was passing the parlour window, he saw a beautiful young lady, as fair as a lily, and with a fine blush, entirely sitting and looking out about the country for herself. So he took off his hat, and turned out his toes, and made her a low bow, quite elegant. 'I declare to my heart,' says the young lady, speaking to her servant that stood behind her, 'I wouldn't desire to see a handsomer man than that.—If he had a better *shoot* of clothes upon him, he'd be equal to any gentleman, he's so slim and delicate,' And who was this but the gentleman's daughter all the while! Well, it's well became Mun, he went on to the stable door, and there he found the lads all watching the racer. I'll tell you the way they watched her. They had one upon her back, and another at her head, where she was tied to the manger, and a great number of them about the place, sitting down between her and the door. 'Save all here!' says Mun, putting in his head at the door; 'E', what are ye doing here, boys?' says he. So they up and told him they were guarding the racer, from a great Kerry thief they expected to be stealing her that night. 'Why then he'll be a smart fellow, if he gets her out of that,' says Mun, making as if he knew nothing. 'I'd be for ever obliged to ye, if ye'd let me light a pipe and sit down awhile with ye, and I'll do my part to make the company agreeable.' 'Why then,' says they, 'we have but poor treatment to offer you, for though there's plenty to eat here, we have nothing to drink—the master wouldn't allow us a ha'p'orth, in dread we'd get sleepy, and let the horse go.' 'Oh! the nourishment is all I want,' says

Mun, 'I'm no way dry at all.' Well and good, in he came, and he sat among them telling stories until past midnight, eating and laughing; and every now and then, when he'd stop in the story, he'd turn about and make as if he was taking a good drink out of the can. You seem to be very fond of that tin can, whatever you have in it;' says one of the men that was sitting near him. 'Oh, its no signify,' says Mun, shutting it up as if not anxious to share it. Well, they got the smell of it about the place, and 'tis little pleasure they took in the stories after, only every now and then throwing an eye at the can, and snuffing with their noses, like pointers when game is in the wind. ''Tisn't any spring water you'd have in that, I believe, says one of them. You're welcome to try it,' says Mun, 'only I thought you might have some objection in regard of what you said when I came in.' 'None in the world,' says they. So he filled a few little noggins for 'em, and for the man on the horse, and the man near the manger, and they all drank until they slept like troopers. When they were all fast, up got the youth, and he drew on a pair of worsted stockings over every one of the horse's legs, so they wouldn't make any noise, and he got a rope and fastened the man I tell you was upon the racer's back, by the shoulders, up to the rafters, when he drew the horse from under him, and left him hanging fast asleep. Well became him, he led the horse out of the stable, and had him home at his father's while a cat would be shaking his ears, and made up comfortably in a little out-house. 'Well,' says the old man, when he woke in the morning and saw the horse stolen—'if it was an angel was there,' says he, 'he couldn't do the business cleverer than that.' And the same thing he said to the landlord, when he met him in the field the same morning. 'It's true for you, indeed,'

said the gentleman, 'nothing could be better done, and I'll take it as an honour if your son and yourself will give me your company at dinner to-day, and I'll have the pleasure of introducing him to my daughter.' 'E', is it me dine at your honour's table?' says the old man, looking down at his dress. ''Tis just,' says the gentleman again,—'and I'll take no apology whatever.' Well and good, they made themselves ready, the two of them, and young Mun came riding upon the racer, covered all over with the best of wearables, and looking like a real gentleman. 'E,' what's that there, my child?' says the father, pointing to a gallows, that was planted right opposite the gentleman's hall door. 'I don't know—a gallows, I'm thinking,' says the son,—'sure 'tisn't to hang us he would be after asking us to his house, unless it be a thing he means to give us our dinner first and our *dessert* after, as the fashion goes,' says he. Well in with them, and they found the company all waiting, a power of ladies and lords, and great people entirely. 'I'm sorry to keep you waiting,' says Mun, making up to them, quite free and easy, 'but the time stole upon us.' 'You couldn't blame the time for taking after yourself,' says the gentleman. 'It's true, indeed,' says Mun, 'I stole many is the thing in my time, but there's one thing I'd rather thieve than all the rest—the good will o' the ladies,' says he, smiling, and looking round at them. 'Why then, I wouldn't trust you very far with that either,' says the young lady of the house. Well and good, they sat down and they eat their dinner, and after the cloth was removed, there was a covered dish laid upon the table. 'Well,' says the gentleman, 'I have one trial more to make of your wit—and I'll tell you what it is:—let me know what is it I have in this covered dish; and if you don't, I'll hang you and your father upon that

gallows over, for stealing my racer.' 'O, murther! d'ye hear this?' says the father—'and wasn't it your honour's bidding to steal her, or you'd hang us? Sure we're to be pitied with your honour,' says the poor old man. "Very well,' says the gentleman, 'I tell you a fact, and your only chance is to answer my question.' 'Well, sir,' says Mun, giving all up for lost, I have nothing to say to you—although far the fox may go, he'll be caught by the tail at last.' 'I declare you have it,' says the gentleman, uncovering the dish, and what should be in it only a fox's tail! Well, they gave it up to Mun, that he was the greatest rogue going, and the young lady married him upon the spot. They had the master's estate when he died; and if they didn't live happy, I wish that you and I may."

"Amen to that, aunt. Will you lay the mirror aside for a moment.—Ha! whose fault was that?"

"Oh, Minny, you have broken the mirror—O, my child! my child!"

Why so! It is not so valuable."

"Valuable! It is not the worth of the paltry glass, darling,—but don't you know it is *not good?* It is not lucky—and the night before your bridal, too!"

"I am very sorry for it," said the girl, bending a somewhat serious gaze on the shattered fragments of the antique looking-glass. Then, by a transition which it would require some knowledge of the maiden's history to account for, she said, "I wonder if Cormac was with the Knight, when he made the sally at the castle, yesterday."

The answer of the elderly lady was interrupted by the sound of several voices, in an outer apartment, exclaiming, "Cormac! Cormac! Welcome, Cormac! It is Cormac!"

" And it is Cormac ! echoed Minny, starting from her seat, and glancing at the spot where the mirror ought to have been—" You were right, aunt," she added, in a disappointed tone, as she bounded out of the room, " it was unlucky to break the mirror."

" It might for them that would want it," replied the old lady, following at a lively pace ; " but for you, I hope, it will bring nothing worse than the loss of it for this night."

She found Minny seated, with one hand clasped in those of a young soldier, dressed in the uniform of the White Knight, smiling and blushing with all the artlessness in the world. The young man wore a close fitting *truis*, which displayed a handsome form to the best advantage, and contrasted well with the loose and flowing drapery of his mantle. The *birrede* of green cloth, which had confined his hair, was laid aside ; and a leathern girdle appeared at his waist, which held a bright skene and pistol. The appearance of both figures—the expression of both countenances, secure of present, and confident of future happiness, formed a picture—

Which some would smile, and more perhaps would sigh at ;

A picture, which would bring back pleasing recollections enough to sweeten the temper of the sourest pair that Hymen ever disunited, and to move the spleen of the best-natured old bachelor that ever dedicated his hearth to Dian and solitude.

The evening proceeded as the eve of a bridal might be supposed to do, with its proportion of mirth and mischief. The lovers had been acquainted from childhood ; and every one who knew them felt an interest in their fortunes, and a share in the happiness which

they enjoyed. The sun had been already long gone down, when Minny, in compliance with the wish of her old aunt, sang the following words, to an air, which was only remarkable for its simplicity and tenderness :—

I.

I love my love in the morning,
For she, like morn is fair–
Her blushing cheek, its crimson streak,
Its clouds, her golden hair;
Her glance, its beam, so soft and kind;
Her tears, its dewy showers;
And her voice, the tender whispering wind
That stirs the early bowers.

II.

I love my love in the morning,
I love my love at noon;
For she is bright, as the lord of light,
Yet mild as autumn's moon:
Her beauty is my bosom's sun,
Her faith my fostering shade;
And I will love my darling one,
Till even sun shall fade.

III.

I love my love in the morning,
I love my love at even;
Her smile's soft play is like the ray
That lights the western heaven:
I loved her when the sun was high,
I loved her when he rose;
But, best of all, when evening's sigh
Was murmuring at its close.

The song was scarcely ended, when Minny felt her arm grasped with an unusual force by the young soldier. Turning round, in some alarm, she beheld a sight which filled her with fear and anxiety. Her lover sat erect in his chair, gazing fixedly on the open casement, through which a strong and whitish light shone full upon his face and person. It was an interlunar night,—and Minny felt at a loss to conjecture what the cause could be, of this extraordinary appearance.

"Minny," said her lover, "look yonder! I see a candle burning on the very summit of the rock above us! Although the wind is bending every tree upon the hill-side, the flame does not flicker or change in the slightest degree. Look on it!"

"Do not look!" exclaimed the old aunt, with a shrill cry—"May heaven be about us! do not glance at the window. It is the death-light!"

Minny clasped her hands, and sank back into her chair.

"Let some one close the window," said the young soldier, speaking in a faint tone, "I am growing ill—let some one close the window."

The old woman advanced cautiously toward the casement, and extending the handle af a broomstick, at the utmost stretch of her arm, was endeavouring to push the shutter to, when Minny, recovering from her astonishment, darted at her an indignant look, ran to the window, closed it, and left the room in darkness deeper than that of night.

"What was that strange light!" asked the young soldier, looking somewhat relieved.

With some hesitation, and a few prophetic groans and oscillations of the head, the old story-teller informed him that it was a light, whose appearance was com-

memorial with the rock itself, and that it usually foreboded considerable danger or misfortune, if not death, to any unhappy being on whom its beams might chance to fall. It appeared, indeed but rarely,—yet there never was an instance known, in which the indication proved fallacious.

The soldier recovered heart to laugh away the anxiety which had begun to creep upon the company; and, in a little time, the mirthful tone of the assemblage was fully restored. Lights, of a more terrestrial description than that which figured on the haunted rock, were introduced; songs were sung; jests echoed from lip to lip, and merry feet pattered against the earthen floor, to the air of the national *rinceadh fadha.* The merriment of the little party was at its highest point, when a galloping of horses, intermingled with a distant rolling of musketry, was heard outside the cottage.

"My fears were just!" exclaimed Cormac, stopping short in the dance, while he still retained the hand of his lovely partner; "the English have taken the castle, and the White Knight is flying for his life!"

His surmise was confirmed by the occurrence which instantly followed. The door was dashed back upon its hinges; and the White Knight, accompanied by two of his retainers, rushed into the house. The chieftain's face was pale and anxious, and his dress was bespattered with blood and mire. Three figures remained in a group near the door, as if listening for the sounds of pursuit; while the revellers hurried together like startled fawns, and gazed, with countenances indicative of strong interest or wild alarm, upon the baffled warriors.

"Cormac!" cried the Knight, perceiving the bridegroom among the company, "my good fellow, I missed

you in an unlucky hour. These English dogs have worried us from our hold, and are still hot upon our scent. I have only time to bid my stout soldiers farewell, and go to meet them,—for I will not have this happy floor stained with blood to night."

"That shall not be, Knight," exclaimed the bridegroom; "we will meet them, or fly together. You were my father's foster child."

"It is in vain—look there!" He laid bare his left arm, which was severely gashed on one side.—"They have had a taste of me already, and the bloodhounds will never tire till they have tracked me home. And yet, if I had only one day's space—Kavanagh and his followers are at Kilmallock, and the castle might be mine again before the moon rises to-morrow evening."

"Kavanagh at Kilmallock!" exclaimed Cormac. "Oh, my chieftain! what do you do here? Fly, while you have time, and leave us to deal with the foe."

"It were idle," repeated the Knight, "their horses are fresher than ours, and my dress would betray me."

"My mare will bear you safe, cried the young soldier, with a burst of enthusiasm; "and for your dress, take mine—and let me play the White Knight for once."

The chieftain's eyes brightened at the word, and a hope seemed to bloom out upon his cheek,—but a low sound of suppressed agony from the bride, checked it in the spring.

"No, Cormac," he said, "I will not be your murderer."

"There is no fear," said Cormac, warmly, "you will be back in time to prevent mischief; and if you remain, it will be only to see me share your fate. This is my only chance for life; for I will give the world leave to

cry shame upon my head, if ever I outlive my master."

"What says the bride?" inquired the Knight, bending on her a look of mingled pity and admiration.

"I will answer for her," said Cormac,—"she had rather be the widow of a true Irishman, than the wife of a false one."

"O, allilu! we'll all be murthered if you don't hurry," said the aunt. "What do you say, Minny, my child?"

"Cormac speaks the truth," replied the trembling girl, hanging, in her weakness, on his shoulder; "if there be no other way, I am content it should be so."

She was rewarded for this effort of heroism, by a fervent pressure of the hand from her betrothed; and the exchange of accoutrements was presently effected. The Knight mounted Cormac's mare, and prepared to depart.

"My gallant fellow," he said, holding out his hand to the generous bridegroom, "you do not mock the part you act, for nobility is stamped upon your soul. If you suffer for this, I have a vow, that I will never more wear any other garb than yours; for you are the knightlier of the two. Let me clasp your hand—than which a nobler never closed on gauntlet."

They joined hands in silence, and the chieftain galloped away with his retainers. When they were out of hearing, Cormac turned to his bride, and again pressing her hand, while he looked fixedly into her eyes, he said, "Now, Minny, you will show that you are fit for a soldier's wife. Go, with your aunt Norry, into your room. No one here will be molested, but those who are in arms for the Knight—and I will contrive to postpone any violence, for a day, at least."

"I will not leave you, Cormac," said Minny, speaking more firmly than she had done since the interruption

of the festivity; "I am somewhat more to you, than you are to the White Knight."

Cormac smiled, and seemed to acquiesce, for some time, in her wishes. He took his seat at the hearth with the bespattered garb and sullied weapon of the Knight and awaited in silence the approach of the pursuers, while Minny occupied a chair as near him as might be decorous, taking his new rank into consideration. They listened for a considerable time to the changeful rushing of the night wind among the trees that clothed the hill side—and the howling of the wolves, who were disturbed in their retreats by the sounds of combat. Those sounds, renewed after long intervals, and in an irregular manner, gradually approached more near; and they could plainly distinguish the trampling of horses' feet, over the beaten track that winded among the crags as far as the cottage door. Again, and with great eagerness, Cormac entreated his love to secure herself from the chances of their first encounter, by joining the family in the inner room: but she refused, in a resolute tone; and on persisting, she assumed an impatience, and even a desperation of manner, which shewed that her purpose was not to be shaken.

"Ask me not to leave you," she said: "any other command I am ready to obey. I will be silent—I will not shriek, nor murmur, even though——" she shuddered, aud let her head droop upon his hand. "I will not leave you Cormac. Whatever your fate shall be, I must remain to witness it. Do not doubt my firmness; only say that you will freely trust me, and I am ready for the worst that can happen. I feel that I can be calm, if you will only give me your confidence."

There are some spirits which, like the myrtle, require to be bruised and broken by affliction before their

sweetness can be discovered. The young bride of Cormac might now have exhibited an instance of this moral truth. So perfectly did her manner indicate the degree of self-possession which she promised to maintain, that Cormac yielded, without further argument, to her entreaty, and resumed his place at the fire-side.

Scarcely had he performed this movement when a loud knocking was again heard at the door; and immediately after, as if this slight ceremony were only used in mockery, the frail barrier was once more dashed inward on its hinges. A crowd of soldiers rushed into the apartment, and stopped short on seeing the bridegroom habited in the accoutrements of the White Knight, and standing in a posture of defence between his foes and the young girl, who seemed to be restrained, rather by her deference to his wishes, than by any personal apprehension, from pressing forward to his side.

"Stand back!" said Cormac, leveling his blade at the formost of the throng; "before you advance further say what it is you seek. The inmates of this house (all but one) are under the protection of the English law, and can only be molested at your great peril."

"If you be the White Knight, as your dress bespeaks you," returned an English officer, surrender your sword and person into our hands. It is only them we seek; and no one else shall be disturbed, further than to answer our claim of *bonaght bor:* rest and refreshment for our small troop until the morning breaks."

"I am not so thirsty of blood for the sake of shedding it merely," returned the pseudo knight, "that I would destroy a life of heaven's bestowing in a vain encounter. Here is my sword; although I am well aware, that in yielding it without a struggle, I do not

add a single one to my chances (if any I had) of safety in the hands of my Lord President."

"It would be dishonourable in me to deceive you," said the Englishman, "your ready, though late surrender, can avail you little. I have here the warrant, which commands that the execution of the rebel captain should not be deferred longer than six hours after his arrest. I am not disposed, however, to be more rigid than my instructions compel me to be, so that you may call the whole six hours your own, if you can find use for so much time in this world."

Cormac turned pale, and thought of Minny; but he dared not look at her. The poor girl endeavoured to support herself against the chair which her lover had left vacant, and retired a little, lest he should observe and participate in the agitation which this fatal announcement had occasioned.

"I thought it probable, said Cormac, with some hesitation, "that I might have had a day, at all events to prepare for my fate; but my Lord President is a pious man, and must be better aware than I, how much time a sinner under arms might require to collect his evidence for that last and fearful court marshal whose decision is irrevocable. A soldier's conscience, sir officer, is too often the only thing about him which he allows to gather rust. If I had been careful to preserve that as unsullied as my sword, I would not esteem your six hours so short a space as they now appear."

"The gift of grace, sir knight," said a solemn-looking sergeant, "is not like an earthly plant, which requires much time and toil to bring its blossom forth. Heard ye not of the graceless traveller, who, riding somewhat more than a Sabbath-day's journey on the seventh, was thrown from his horse and killed near a place of worship? The

congregation thought his doom was sealed for both worlds, and yet—

> Between the stirrup and the ground,
> Mercy he sought, and mercy found.

"Aye," said the captive—"there are some persons who look on this world as mere billeting quarters, and require no more time to prepare for the eternal route, than they might to brace up a havresac; but my memory is not so light of carriage. I remember to have heard at Mungharid, a Latin adage, which might shake the courage of any one who was inclined to rely venturously on his powers of spiritual dispatch—

> Unus erat—ne desperes:
> Unus tantum—ne presumas,

However, I shall be as far wide of the first peril, as I should wish to be of the last. Come, sirs, you forget your supper; leave me to my own thoughts, and pray respect this maiden, who will attend to your wants, while I rest."

"She seems as if she would more willingly omit that office," said the Englishman. "The maiden droops sorely for your misfortune, Knight."

"Poor girl!" Cormac exclaimed, venturing to look round upon her for the first time since his capture—"it is little wonder that she should wear a troubled brow. You have disturbed her bridal feast." Then taking her hand, and pressing it significantly while he spoke, he added—"Your husband was reckoned a true man; and I know him well enough to be convinced, that he would not place his heart in the keeping of an unworthy or a selfish love. I know, therefore, that you could not make him happier, than by acting on this occasion with that

firmness which he expects from you. Tell him, I knew better the value of life than to lament my fate—at least, for my own sake; and remember likewise, Minny (is not that your name?) if ever Cormac should, like me, be hurried off by an untimely stroke of fate—if ever"—he renewed the pressure of the hand, which he still held in his—"if ever you should see him led, as I must now be, to an early death, remember, my girl, that none but the craven-hearted are short lived on earth. A brave man, who had fulfilled all his duties, can never die untimely; but a coward would, though every hair were grey upon his brow.

He strove to withdraw his hand; but Minny, who felt as if he were tearing her heart away from her, held it fast between both hers, and pressed it with the grasp of a drowning person. Cormac felt, by the trembling and moistness of her hand, that she was on the point of placing all in danger, by bursting into a passion of grief. He lowered his voice to a tone of grave reproof—and said—

"Remember, Minny—let him not find that he has been deceived in you. That would be a worse stroke than the headsman's."

The forlorn girl collected all her strength, and felt the tumult that was rising in her breast subside, like the uproar of the Northern tempest, at the voice of the Reim-kennar. She let his hand go, and stood erect, while he passed on, followed by several of the party, into another room. Strange as sorrow had ever been to her bosom, she could not have anticipated, and was wholly incapable of supporting the dreadful desolation of spirit which came upon her after she was left alone. She remained for some time motionless, in the attitude of one who listens intently, until she heard the door of a small inner apart-

ment, into which he had been conducted, close upon her lover; and then, gathering her hands across her bosom, and walking slowly to the vacant chair, she sank down in a violent and hysterical excess of grief.

It is strange that the effusion of a few drops of a briny liquid at the eyes, should enable the soul to give more tranquil entertainment to a painful thought or feeling—but it is a fact, however, which Minny experienced, in common with all who have known what painful feelings are. She pictured to herself the probable nature of the fate which awaited her betrothed; and from the horror which she felt in the contemplation, proceeded to devise expedients for its prevention. This, however, appeared now to be a hopeless undertaking. The warrant of the Lord President must needs be executed within the time; and it was improbable that the White Knight could return before the expiration of the six hours. Would it be possible to contrive a scheme for his liberation? His guards were vigilant and numerous, and there was but one way by which he could return from the room—and that was occupied by sentinels. If Mun, or the Kerry thief, his master, were on the spot, of what a load might they relieve her heart! She would have given worlds to be mistress, for one night, of the roguery of the adept in aunt Nory's tale.

We shall leave her for the present, involved, like a bungling dramatist, in a labyrinth of ravelled plots and contrivances, while we shift the scene to the unfortunate hero of the night, who lay in his room, expecting the catastrophe with no very enviable sensations.

The soldiers had left him, to make the necessary preparations for his approaching fate, in darkness and solitude. He was now on the point of achieving a character, not without precedent in the history of his country—

namely, that of a martyr to his own heroic fidelity—and he was determined to bear his part like a warrior, to the last. Still, however, to a lover, conscious of being loved again—to a young man, with prospects so fair and present happiness so nearly perfect—to a bridegroom, snatched from the altar to the scaffold, at the very moment when he was about to become doubly bound to life, by a tie so holy and so dear—to such an one, though brave as a fiery heart and youthful blood could make him, it was impossible that death should not wear a grim and most unwelcome aspect. Neither is the man to be envied, whose nature could undergo so direful a change without emotion. True bravery consists, not in ignorance of, or insensibility to danger, but in the resolution which can meet and defy it, when duty renders such collision necessary. Fear, in common with all the other passions of our nature, has been given us for the purpose of exercising our reason, and acquiring a virtue by its subjugation; and the man (if any such ever lived) who is ignorant of the feeling, is a monster, and not a hero. The truly courageous man, is he who has a heart to feel what danger is, and a soul to triumph over that feeling, when it would tempt him to the neglect of any moral or religious obligation. Such was the temper of Cormac. He believed that he was performing his duty and did not even entertain a thought of any other line of conduct than that which he was pursuing—but this did not prevent his being deeply and bitterly conscious of the hardness of his fortunes, in this unlooked-for and untimely separation.

Exhausted by the intensity of his sensations, he had dropped for some time into a troubled and uneasy slumber, when the pressure of a soft hand upon his brow made him lift up his eyes, and raise himself upon his

elbow. He beheld Minny stooping over him, with a dim rushlight burning in one hand, while with the other she motioned him to express no surprise, and to preserve silence.

"Hush, hush!" she said, in a low whisper, "Cormac, are you willing to make an effort for liberty?"

He stared strangely upon her, and stood on his feet.

"What is the meaning of this, Minny; how came you here?"

"The soldiers have been merrier than they intended, and I drugged their drink for them. Slip off your brogs, and steal out in your *truis* only. They are now sleeping in the next room, and I have left them in the dark. Fear not their muskets; I have drenched the matchlocks for them. There are only two waking, who are on guard outside the door; and for these, we must even place our hopes in heaven, and take the chance of their bad markmanship. Ah, Cormac!—but there is no time to lose; come with me."

"My glorious heroine!" cried the astonished soldier, "I could not have thought this possible."

"Hush! your raptures will betray us."

"But whither do you intend to fly?"

"To the cavern on the western side of the hill, where Fitzgerald lay on the night of the great massacre at Adare Castle. Keep close to me, and I think it likely we shall pass the sleepers."

She extinguished the light; and both crept, with noiseless footsteps, into the adjoining room, which was the chamber of the heroic maiden herself. As they endeavoured to steal between the soldiers, who lay locked in slumber on the ground, Minny set her foot on some brittle substance, which cracked beneath her

weight, with a noise sufficient to awaken one of the soldiers.

"It is the mirror!" said Minny, to herself, "my aunt Norry's prophecy was but too correct, and my vanity has ruined every thing."

Still, however, her presence of mind did not forsake her. The soldier, turning suddenly round, laid hold of Cormac's *estaigh*, or mantle, and arrested his progress.

"Ho! ho!" he exclaimed, "who have we here?"

"Pr'y thee, let go my dress, master soldier," returned the young girl; "this freedom tallies not well with your sermon on Grace to the White Knight.—I doubt you for a solemn hypocrite."

"I knew you not, wench," replied the sergeant, letting Cormac's mantle fall; "or I would as soon have thought of clapping palms with Beelzebub, as of fingering any part of your Irish trumpery. Whither do ye travel, at this time of the night?"

"Even to kindle my rushlight, at our hearth-stone in the next room. Turn on your pallet, sergeant, and let me go, else you may be troubled with unholy dreams.

They passed on, and reached the outer room in safety.

"Now, Minny," said Cormac, "it is my turn to make a suggestion. Do you pass out, and await me at the stream that runs by the edge of the wood. The sentinels will suffer you to proceed, and the risk of detection will be lessened. Nay, never stop to dispute the point—its advantages are unquestionable."

Minny would not even trust herself with a farewell, before she obeyed the wishes of her lover. A few passing jests were all she had to encounter from the sentinels, and Cormac had the satisfaction to see her hurry

on, unmolested, in the direction of the stream. When he supposed a sufficient time had elapsed to enable her to reach the place of rendezvouz, he threw aside his mantle, and prepared to take the sentinels by surprise. The door stood open, and he could plainly see the two guards pacing to and fro in the moonlight. Pausing for a moment, he uplifted his clasped hands to heaven, and breathed a short and agitated prayer, of mingled hope and resignation. Then, summoning the resolution which never failed him in his need, he darted through the doorway, into the open air.

Astonishment and perplexity kept the sentinels motionless for some moments, and Cormac had fled a considerable distance, before they became sensible of the nature of the occurrence which had taken place. *Both* instantly discharged their pieces in the direction of the fugitive, and with loud shouts summoned their comrades to assist in the pursuit. The bullets tore up the earth on either side of Cormac, who could hear, as he hurried on, the execrations and uproar of the awakened troop, at finding their arms rendered incapable of service. He dashed onward toward the wood; and had the happiness, while the sounds of pursuit yet lingered far behind him, to discern the white dress of his betrothed fluttering in distinct relief, against the dark and shadowy foliage of the elm wood. Snatching her up in his arms, with as little difficully as a mother feels in supporting her infant, he hurried across the stream, and was quickly buried in the recesses of the wood.

The morning broke before they had reached the appointed place of concealment. It was one of those ancient receptacles for the noble dead, which were hollowed out of the earth in various parts of the country, and were frequently used, during the persecutions of

foreign invaders, as places of refuge and concealment for the persons and properties of the people. When they found themselves safely sheltered within the bosom of this close retreat, the customary effect of long restrained anxiety and sudden joy, was produced upon the lovers. They flung themselves, with broken exclamations of delight and affection, into each others arms, and remained for a considerable time incapable of acting or speaking with any degree of self-possession. The necessity, however, of providing for their safety during the ensuing day, recalled them to a more distinct perception of the difficulties of their situation, and suggested expedients for their alleviation or removal.

They ventured not beyond the precincts of their Druidical sojourn until the approach of evening, and even then it was but to look upon the sunlight, and hurry back again to their lurking-place, in greater anxiety than before. The English had discovered, and were fast approaching the mouth of their retreat.

Cormac, signifying to his bride that she should remain silent in the interior of the cave, drew his sword and stood near the entrance, just as the light became obscured by the persons of the party who were to enter. They paused for some time on hearing the voice of Cormac, who threatened to sacrifice the first person that should venture to place his foot inside the mouth of the recess. In a few moments after, the devoted pair were perplexed to hear the sound of stones and earth thrown together, as if to erect some building near the cave. Unable to form any conjecture as to the nature and object of this proceeding, they clung together, in silence and increased anxiety, awaiting the issue.

On a sudden, a strong whitish light streamed into the cavern, casting the dark and lengthened shadows of

the party who stood without, in sharp distinctness of outline, upon the broken rocks on the opposite side.

"Look there, Minny!" exclaimed the youth, "it is the moon-rise—and we may shortly look for the return of our chief."

"It cannot be, Cormac. The shadows would fall, in that case, to the westwards, and not to the south. It is a more fatal signal, it is the death-light of the Rock!"

Cormac paused for some moments. "Fatal it may be," he replied,—"but do you observe, Minny, that no part of its ghastly lustre has fallen upon us? It is shining bright upon our enemies. There is a promise in that, if there be in reality any supernatural meaning in the appearance."

Minny sighed anxiously, while she hung upon his arm—but made no answer to this cheering suggestion. The party outside continued their labour, and in a little time the light was only discernible, as if penetrating through small crevices at the entrance.

"What can they intend?" said Minny, after a pause of some minutes, during which the party outside maintained profound silence. "All merciful Heaven!" she continued, starting to her feet in renewed alarm,—"we are about to suffer the fate of Desmond's Kernes—they are going to suffocate us with fire!"

A dense volume of smoke, which rolled into the cavern through the crevices before-mentioned, confirmed this terrific conjecture. The practice, all barbarous as it was, had been frequently resorted to by the conquering party, in the subjugation of the inland districts of the island. Feeble as he had been rendered by fatigue, anxiety, and want of food, Cormac resolved to make a desperate effort to escape the horrible death which menaced them, and rushed, sword in hand, to the mouth of

the cave. But he was met by a mass of heated vapour, which deprived him of the power of proceeding, or even calling aloud to their destroyers. He tottered back to where he had left his bride, and sinking down on the earth beside her, felt a horrid sense of despair weigh down his energies, like cowardice. Again he arose, and attempted to force his way through the entrance, and again he was compelled to relinquish the effort. He cried aloud to them—offered to surrender—and entreated that they would at least have mercy on his companion. But no answer was returned—and the dreadful conclusion remained to be deduced, that, contented with having made the work of death secure, they had retired to a distance from the place.

With a sickening heart, eyes swollen and painful, and a reeling brain, Cormac once more resumed his place by the side of his betrothed. She had fallen into a kind of delirium, and extended her arms towards him with an expression of suffering, which made his heart ache more keenly than his own agonies.

"I want air, Cormac!—oh, Cormac, my love! take me home with you—take me into the green fields—for I am dying here.—Air, Cormac! air, for the love of heaven!"

"My own love, you shall have it—look up, and bear a good heart for two minutes, and we shall all be happy again."

"This place is horrible—it is like hell! It is hell! Are we living yet? I have been a sinner; and yet, I hoped, too, Cormac—I always hoped"—

"Hope yet, Minny, and you shall not hope in vain—keep your face near the earth, where the air is freest. Ha! listen to that. The White Knight is returned, and we are safe!"

A rolling of musketry, succeeded by yells, shouts, and cries of triumph and of anguish, was heard outside the cavern. Cormac and his bride stood erect once more; but poor Minny's strengh failed her in the effort, and she sank lifeless into the arms of her lover. In a few moments the mouth of the cavern was cleared; and a flood of the cool sweet air rushed, like a welcome to life and happiness, into the bosom of the sufferers. Recovering new vigour with this draught, Cormac staggered toward the entrance, and passed out into the open air, with his fainting bride on his shoulder, and a drawn sword in his right hand—presenting to the troop of liberators, who were gathered outside, a picture not unlike that of Theseus, bearing the beautiful queen of Dis from the descent of Avernus. His pale cheeks looking paler in the moonlight: his wild staring eyes, scattered hair, and military attire, contributed to render the resemblance still more striking.

The White Knight received him with open arms; but Cormac would hold no more lengthened communication, until his bride was restored to health and consciousness.

In this no great difficulty was encountered; and tradition says, that the White Knight was one of the merriest dancers at the bridal feast, which was given at the cottage in a few days after these occurrences.

I learned from a person curious in old legends, an account of the manner in which the "Candle on the Rock" was exorcised,—for it has not been seen for a long lapse of time. About two years after the marriage of Cormac and Minny, they were both seated, on a calm winter evening, in the room, which had been the scene of so much tumult and disaster on the occasion abovementioned. Minny was occupied in instructing a little

rosy child (whose property it was, my fair readers may perhaps conjecture), in the rudiments of locomotion; while Cormac—(young husbands *will* play the fool sometimes)—held out his arms to receive the daring adventurer, after his hazardous journey of no less than two yards, on foot, across the floor. The tyro-pedestrian had executed about half his undertaking without meeting with any accident worthy of commemoration, and lo! aunt Norry was bending over him, with a smile and a "*Ma gra hu!*" of overflowing affection, when an aged man presented himself at the open door, and solicited charity for the love of heaven!

Minny placed a small cake of griddle bread in the arms of the infant, and bade him take it to the stranger. The child tottered across the floor with his burthen, and deposited it in the hat of the poor pilgrim, who laid his withered hand on the glossy ringlets of the little innocent, and blessed him with much fervency. At that moment, the fatal light of the Rock streamed through the doorway, and bathed in its lustre the persons of the wayfarer and his guileless entertainer. The poor mother shrieked aloud, and was about to rush towards the child, when the pilgrim assuming, on a sudden, a lofty and majestic attitude, bade her remain where she stood, and suffer him to protect the child.

"I know," said he "the cause of your fear, and I hope to end it. The evil spirit who possesses that fatal signal, is as much under the control of the Almighty as the feeblest mortal amongst us; and if there be on earth a being who is exempt from the pernicious influence which the demon is permitted to exercise, surely the fiend may, with the chiefest security, be defied by innocence and charity."

Having thus said, he knelt down, with the child be-

tween him and the Rock, and commenced a silent prayer, while his clasped hands rested on the head of the infant, his long grey hair hung down upon his shoulders, and his clear blue eye was fixed upon the fatal Candle. As he prayed, the anxious parents observed the light grow fainter and fainter, and the shadows of the old man and child become less and less distinct, until at length the sallow hue of the pilgrim's countenance could scarcely be distinguished from the bloom that glowed upon the fresh cheeks of the infant. Before his prayer was ended, the light had disappeared altogether, and the child came running into the arms of its enraptured mother. When the first burst of joy had been indulged in, she looked up to thank the stranger; but he was nowhere to be seen!

The death-light has never since re-appeared upon the Rock, although it preserves the name which it received from that phantom. Cormac and Minny long continued to exercise the virtue of hospitality to which they owed so much in this instance; and, I am told, that the child became a bishop, in the course of time. This, surely, is good fortune enough to enable one to wind up a long story with credit; and I have only to conclude, after aunt Norry's favourite form, by wishing— IF THEY DIDN'T LIVE HAPPY, THAT YOU AND I MAY.

CONCLUSION.

By the time this last tale had drawn to its catastrophe, the narrator (the toothless hag before alluded to) found that she had been for a considerable time the sole admirer of her own romance. Alarmed by the increasing strength and harmony of the chorus with which the sleepers bore burthen to her tale, she raised her palsied head from beneath the covering she had drawn over it, and gazed upon the circle. The host and hostess sat upright in their lofty chairs, snoring as if it had been for a wager, at the same time that they maintained their attitudes with an unbending dignity that would have struck Cineas mute, while their friends lay scattered about the room in all directions; and some in very queer, comical postures indeed. As it was the tale, beyond all question, which had set them to sleep, so the cessation of the drowsy hum of the old woman's voice produced the contrary effect. The moment that perfect silence reigned around them, all rubbed their eyes, and woke. The first grey shimmer of a winter dawn stole in upon the revellers—the fowls began to ruffle their feathers upon the roost over the door—and the swinish citizens of a neighbouring piggery gave grunting salutation to the morn.

With hurried and wondering gestures, the guests entered upon the bustle of separation, and the coast was presently left clear of all but the goods folks of the house, and their guest, the chronicler of the evening.

Of late years, scenes like this have become rare in Ireland. Before the period of the year arrives, when ancient and revered custom reminds the peasant of the domestic jollities of his fathers, and of his own child-

hood, the horn of the Whiteboy, or the yell of the more ferocious Rockite, has startled the keepers of the land, and warned the inhabitants to prepare for "other than dancing measures." Without presuming, for an instant, to venture an opinion on the causes of the change, we may, at least, calculate on the reader's sympathy in expressing a hope that it may be of brief continuance: and that the time may not be very distant, when the Irish agriculturist may enjoy the domestic comforts which at many periods were known to his progenitors, and which are not denied to other nations in our own day—when

> "every man shall eat in safety
> Under his own *hedge*, what he plants; and sing
> The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours;'

when he can have his pit of potatoes, his reek of turf, his Sunday coat and brogues, his "three tinpennies' for the priest at Christmas and Easter; and his family fireside, and his collection of "popular tales" at "Holland-tide."

THE END.

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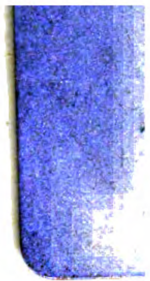

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