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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HANDY ANDY: A TALE OF IRISH LIFE.
VOLUME 1 ***



Andy Icing Champagne

The Collected Writings of SAMUEL LOVER



TREASURE TROVE EDITION

In Ten Volumes

Volume Three

The Collected Writings of SAMUEL LOVER

HANDY ANDY

A Tale of Irish Life

IN TWO VOLUMES • VOLUME ONE

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ADDRESS

I have been accused in certain quarters, of giving flattering portraits of my countrymen. Against this charge I may plead that, being a portrait-painter by profession, the habit of taking the best view of my subject, so long prevalent in my eye, has gone deeper, and influenced my mind:—and if to paint one's country in its gracious aspect has been a weakness, at least, to use the words of an illustrious compatriot,

"—the failing leans to virtue's side."

I am disinclined, however, to believe myself an offender in this particular. That I love my country dearly I acknowledge, and I am sure every Englishman will respect me the more for loving *mine*, when he is, with justice, proud of *his*—but I repeat my disbelief that I overrate my own.

The present volume, I hope, will disarm any cavil from old quarters on the score of national prejudice. The hero is a blundering fellow whom no English or other gentleman would like to have in his service; but still he has some redeeming natural traits: he is not made either a brute or a villain; yet his "twelve months' character," given in the successive numbers of this volume, would not get him a place upon advertisement either in "The Times" or "The Chronicle." So far am I clear of the charge of national prejudice as regards the hero of the following pages.

In the subordinate personages, the reader will see two "Squires" of different types—good and bad; there are such in all countries. And, as a tale cannot get on without villains, I have given some touches of villainy, quite sufficient to prove my belief in Irish villains, though I do not wish it to be believed that the Irish are *all villains*.

I confess I have attempted a slight sketch, in one of the persons represented, of a gentleman and a patriot;—and I conceive there is a strong relationship between the two. He loves the land that bore him—and so did most of the great spirits recorded in history. His own mental cultivation, while it yields him personal enjoyment, teaches him not to treat with contumely inferior men. Though he has courage to protect his honour, he is not deficient in conscience to feel for the consequences; and when opportunity offers the means of *amende*, it is embraced. In a word, I wish it to be believed that, while there are knaves, and fools, and villains in Ireland,—as in other parts of the world,—honest, intelligent, and noble spirits are there also.

I cannot conclude without offering my sincere thanks for the cordial manner in which my serial offering has been received by the public, and noticed by the critical press, whose valuable columns have been so often opened to it in quotation; and, when it is considered how large an amount of intellect is employed in this particular department of literature, the highest names might be proud of such recognition.

London, 1st December, 1842.

The reprinting of the foregoing address, attached to the First Edition, sufficiently implies that my feelings and opinions respecting my country and my countrymen remain unchanged. So far, enough said.

I desire, however, to add a few words to inform those who may, for the first time, read the story in this the Fourth Edition, that the early pages were written fifteen years ago, as a magazine article;—that the success of that article led to the continuation of the subject in other articles, and so on, till, eventually, twelve monthly numbers made up a book. A story thus originated could not be other than sketchy and desultory, and open to the captiousness of over-fastidious criticism: it was never meant to be a work of high pretension—only one of those easy trifles which afford a laugh, and require to be read in the same careless spirit of good humour in which they are written.

In such a spirit, I am happy to say, "Handy Andy" was read fourteen years ago, and has continued to be read ever since; and as this reprint, in a cheaper form, will open it to thousands of fresh readers, I give these few introductory words to propitiate in the future the kindly spirit which I gratefully remember in the past.

SAMUEL LOVER.

London, 26th July, 1854.

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

HANDY ANDY

CHAPTER I

Andy Rooney was a fellow who had the most singularly ingenious knack of doing everything the wrong way; disappointment waited on all affairs in which he bore a part, and destruction was at his fingers' ends; so the nickname the neighbours stuck upon him was Handy Andy, and the jeering jingle pleased them.

Andy's entrance into this world was quite in character with his after achievements, for he was nearly the death of his mother. She survived, however, to have herself clawed almost to death while her darling "babby" was in arms, for he would not take his nourishment from the parent fount unless he had one of his little red fists twisted into his mother's hair, which he dragged till he made her roar; while he diverted the pain by scratching her, till the blood came, with the other. Nevertheless, she swore he was "the loveliest and sweetest craythur the sun ever shined upon;" and when he was able to run about and wield a little stick, and smash everything breakable belonging to her, she only praised his precocious powers, and she used to ask, "Did ever any one see a darlin' of his age handle a stick so bowld as he did?"

Andy grew up in mischief and the admiration of his mammy; but, to do him justice, he never meant harm in the course of his life, and he was most anxious to offer his services on all occasions to those who would accept them; but *they* were only the persons who had not already proved Andy's peculiar powers.

There was a farmer hard by in this happy state of ignorance, named Owen Doyle, or, as he was familiarly called, *Owny na Coppal*, or, "Owen of the Horses," because he bred many of these animals, and sold them at the neighbouring fairs; and Andy one day offered his services to Owny when he was in want of some one to drive up a horse to his house from a distant "bottom," as low grounds by a river-side are called in Ireland.

"Oh, he's wild, Andy, and you'd never be able to ketch him," said Owny.

"Troth, an' I'll engage I'll ketch him if you'll let me go. I never seen the horse I couldn't ketch, sir," said Andy.

"Why, you little spridhogue, if he took to runnin' over the long bottom, it 'ud be more than a day's work for you to folly him."

"Oh, but he won't run."

"Why won't he run?"

"Bekaze I won't make him run."

"How can you help it?"

"I'll soother him."

"Well, you're a willin' brat, anyhow; and so go on, and God speed you!" said Owny.

"Just gi' me a wisp o' hay an' a han'ful iv oats," said Andy, "if I should have to coax him."

"Sartinly," said Owny, who entered the stable and came forth with the articles required by Andy, and a halter for the horse also.

"Now, take care," said Owny, "that you are able to ride that horse if you get on him."

"Oh, never fear, sir. I can ride owld Lanty Gubbins' mule betther nor any o' the boys on the common, and he couldn't throw me th' other day, though he kicked the shoes av him."

"After that you may ride anything," said Owny; and indeed it was true; for Lanty's mule, which fed on the common, being ridden sliily by all the young vagabonds in the neighbourhood, had become such an adept in the art of getting rid of his troublesome customers that it might well be considered a feat to stick on him.

"Now take great care of him, Andy, my boy," said the farmer.

"Don't be afear'd, sir," said Andy, who started on his errand in that peculiar pace which is elegantly called a "sweep's trot;" and as the river lay between Owny Doyle's and the bottom, and was too deep for Andy to ford at that season, he went round by Dinny Dowling's mill, where a small wooden bridge crossed the stream.

Here he thought he might as well secure the assistance of Paudeen, the miller's son, to help him in catching the horse; so he looked about the place until he found him, and telling him the errand on which he was going, said, "If you like to come wid me, we can both have a ride." This was temptation sufficient for Paudeen, and the boys proceeded together to the bottom, and they were not long in securing the horse. When they had got the halter over his head, "Now," said Andy, "give me a lift on him;" and accordingly, by Paudeen's catching Andy's left foot in both his hands clasped together in the fashion of a stirrup, he hoisted his friend on the horse's back; and as soon as he was secure there, Master Paudeen, by the aid of Andy's hand, contrived to scramble up after him; upon which Andy applied his heel to the horse's side with many vigorous kicks, and crying "hurrup!" at the same time, endeavoured to stimulate Owny's steed into something of a pace as he turned his head towards the mill.

"Sure arn't you going to crass the river?" said Paudeen.

"No, I'm going to lave you at home."

"Oh, I'd rather go up to Owny's, and it's the shortest way across the river."

"Yes, but I don't like."

"Is it afear'd that you are?" said Paudeen.

"Not I, indeed!" said Andy; though it was really the fact, for the width of the stream startled him, "but Owny told me to take grate care o' the baste, and I'm loath to wet his feet."

"Go 'long wid you, you fool! what harm would it do him? Sure he's neither sugar nor salt,

that he'd melt."

"Well, I won't anyhow," said Andy, who by this time had got the horse into a good high trot, that shook every word of argument out of Paudeen's body; besides, it was as much as the boys could do to keep their seats on Owny's Bucephalus, who was not long in reaching the miller's bridge. Here voice and halter were employed to pull him in, that he might cross the narrow wooden structure at a quiet pace. But whether his double load had given him the idea of double exertion, or that the pair of legs on each side sticking into his flanks (and perhaps the horse was ticklish) made him go the faster, we know not; but the horse charged the bridge as if an Enniskilliner were on his back, and an enemy before him; and in two minutes his hoofs clattered like thunder on the bridge, that did not bend beneath him. No, it did *not* bend, but it broke; proving the falsehood of the boast, "I may break, but I won't bend;" for, after all, the really strong may bend, and be as strong as ever: it is the unsound that has only the seeming of strength, which breaks at last when it resists too long.

Surprising was the spin the young equestrians took over the ears of the horse, enough to make all the artists of Astley's envious; and plump they went into the river, where each formed his own ring, and executed some comical "scenes in the circle," which were suddenly changed to evolutions on the "flying cord" that Dinny Dowling threw to the performers, which became suddenly converted into a "tight rope" as he dragged the *voltigeurs* out of the water; and for fear their blood might be chilled by the accident, he gave them an enormous thrashing with a *dry* end of the rope, just to restore circulation; and his exertions, had they been witnessed, would have charmed the Humane Society.

As for the horse, his legs stuck through the bridge, as though he had been put in a *chiroplast*, and he went playing away on the water with considerable execution, as if he were accompanying himself in the song which he was squealing at the top of his voice. Half the saws, hatchets, ropes, and poles in the parish were put in requisition immediately, and the horse's first lesson in *chiroplastic* exercise was performed with no other loss than some skin and a good deal of hair. Of course Andy did not venture on taking Owny's horse home; so the miller sent him to his owner, with an account of the accident. Andy for years kept out of Owny na Coppal's way; and at any time that his presence was troublesome, the inconvenienced party had only to say, "Isn't that Owny na Coppal coming this way?" and Andy fled for his life.

When Andy grew up to be what in country parlance is called "a brave lump of a boy," his mother thought he was old enough to do something for himself; so she took him one day along with her to the squire's, and waited outside the door, loitering up and down the yard behind the house, among a crowd of beggars and great lazy dogs, that were thrusting their heads into every iron pot that stood outside the kitchen door, until chance might give her "a sight o' the squire afore he wint out, or afore he wint in;" and after spending her entire day in this idle way, at last the squire made his appearance, and Judy presented her son, who kept scraping his foot, and pulling his forelock, that stuck out like a piece of ragged thatch from his forehead, making his obeisance to the squire, while his mother was sounding his praises for being the "handiest craythur alive—and so willin'—nothin' comes wrong to him."



Andy's introduction to the Squire

"I suppose the English of all this is, you want me to take him?" said the squire.

"Throth, an' your honour, that's just it—if your honour would be plazed."

"What can he do?"

"Anything, your honour."

"That means *nothing*, I suppose," said the squire.

"Oh, no, sir. Everything, I mane, that you would desire him to do."

To every one of these assurances on his mother's part Andy made a bow and a scrape.

"Can he take care of horses?"

"The best of care, sir," said the mother; while the miller who was standing behind the squire, waiting for orders, made a grimace at Andy, who was obliged to cram his face into his hat to hide the laugh, which he could hardly smother from being heard, as well as seen.

"Let him come, then, and help in the stables, and we'll see what we can do."

"May the Lord——"

"That'll do—there, now go."

"Oh, sure, but I'll pray for you, and——"

"Will you go?"

"And may the angels make your honour's bed this blessed night, I pray."

"If you don't go, your son shan't come."

Judy and her hopeful boy turned to the right about in double-quick time, and hurried down the avenue.

The next day Andy was duly installed into his office of stable-helper; and, as he was a good rider, he was soon made whipper-in to the hounds, for there was a want of such a functionary in the establishment; and Andy's boldness in this capacity soon made him a favourite with the squire, who was one of those rollicking boys on the pattern of the old school, who scorned the attentions of a regular valet, and let any one that chance threw in his way bring him his boots, or his hot water for shaving, or his coat, whenever it was

brushed. One morning, Andy, who was very often the attendant on such occasions, came to his room with hot water. He tapped at the door.

"Who's that?" said the squire, who had just risen, and did not know but it might be one of the women servants.

"It's me, sir."

"Oh—Andy! Come in."

"Here's the hot water, sir," said Andy, bearing an enormous tin can.

"Why, what the d——l brings that enormous tin can here? You might as well bring the stable bucket."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Andy, retreating. In two minutes more Andy came back, and, tapping at the door, put in his head cautiously, and said, "The maids in the kitchen, your honour, say's there's not so much hot water ready."

"Did I not see it a moment since in your hand?"

"Yes, sir; but that's not nigh the full o' the stable-bucket."

"Go along, you stupid thief! and get me some hot water directly."

"Will the can do, sir?"

"Ay, anything, so you make haste."

Off posted Andy, and back he came with the can.

"Where'll I put it sir?"

"Throw this out," said the squire, handing Andy a jug containing some cold water, meaning the jug to be replenished with the hot.

Andy took the jug, and the window of the room being open, he very deliberately threw the jug out. The squire stared with wonder, and at last said—

"What did you do that for?"

"Sure you *towld* me to throw it out, sir."

"Go out of this, you thick-headed villain!" said the squire, throwing his boots at Andy's head, along with some very neat curses. Andy retreated, and thought himself a very ill-used person.

Though Andy's regular business was "whipper-in," yet he was liable to be called on for the performance of various other duties: he sometimes attended at table when the number of guests required that all the subs should be put in requisition, or rode on some distant errand for the "mistress," or drove out the nurse and children on the jaunting-car; and many were the mistakes, delays, or accidents, arising from Handy Andy's interference in such matters;—but as they were seldom serious, and generally laughable, they never cost him the loss of his place, or the squire's favour, who rather enjoyed Andy's blunders.

The first time Andy was admitted into the mysteries of the dining-room, great was his wonder. The butler took him in to give him some previous instructions, and Andy was so lost in admiration at the sight of the assembled glass and plate, that he stood with his mouth and eyes wide open, and scarcely heard a word that was said to him. After the head man had been dinning his instructions into him for some time, he said he might go, until his attendance was required. But Andy moved not; he stood with his eyes fixed by a sort of fascination on some object that seemed to rivet them with the same unaccountable influence which the rattlesnake exercises over its victim.

"What are you looking at?" said the butler.

"Them things, sir," said Andy, pointing to some silver forks.

"Is it the forks?" said the butler.

"Oh, no, sir! I know what forks is very well; but I never seen them things afore."

"What things do you mean?"

"These things, sir," said Andy, taking up one of the silver forks, and turning it round and round in his hand in utter astonishment, while the butler grinned at his ignorance, and enjoyed his own superior knowledge.

"Well!" said Andy, after a long pause, "the devil be from me if ever I seen a silver spoon split

that way before!"

The butler gave a horse laugh, and made a standing joke of Andy's split spoon; but time and experience made Andy less impressed with wonder at the show of plate and glass, and the split spoons became familiar as "household words" to him; yet still there were things in the duties of table attendance beyond Andy's comprehension—he used to hand cold plates for fish, and hot plates for jelly, &c. But "one day," as Zanga says—"one day" he was thrown off his centre in a remarkable degree by a bottle of soda-water.

It was when that combustible was first introduced into Ireland as a dinner beverage that the occurrence took place, and Andy had the luck to be the person to whom a gentleman applied for some soda-water.

"Sir?" said Andy.

"Soda-water," said the guest, in that subdued tone in which people are apt to name their wants at a dinner-table.

Andy went to the butler. "Mr. Morgan, there's a gintleman——"

"Let me alone, will you?" said Mr. Morgan.

Andy manœuvred round him a little longer, and again essayed to be heard.

"Mr. Morgan!"

"Don't you see I'm as busy as I can be? Can't you do it yourself?"

"I dunna what he wants."

"Well, go ax him," said Mr. Morgan.

Andy went off as he was bidden, and came behind the thirsty gentleman's chair, with, "I beg your pardon, sir."

"Well!" said the gentleman.

"I beg your pardon, sir; but what's this you axed me for?"

"Soda-water."

"What, sir?"

"Soda-water: but, perhaps you have not any."

"Oh, there's plenty in the house, sir! Would you like it hot, sir?"

The gentleman laughed, and supposing the new fashion was not understood in the present company said, "Never mind."

But Andy was too anxious to please to be so satisfied, and again applied to Mr. Morgan.

"Sir!" said he.

"Bad luck to you!—can't you let me alone?"

"There's a gentleman wants some soap and wather."

"Some what?"

"Soap and wather, sir."

"Divil sweep you!—Soda-wather you mane. You'll get it under the side-board."

"Is it in the can, sir?"

"The curse o' Crum'll on you! in the bottles."

"Is this it, sir?" said Andy producing a bottle of ale.

"No, bad cess to you!—the little bottles."

"Is it the little bottles with no bottoms, sir?"

"I wish *you* wor in the bottom o' the say!" said Mr. Morgan, who was fuming and puffing, and rubbing down his face with a napkin, as he was hurrying to all quarters of the room, or, as Andy said, in praising his activity, that he was "like bad luck—everywhere."

"There they are!" said Mr. Morgan at last.

"Oh, them bottles that won't stand," said Andy; "sure them's what I said, with no bottoms to them. How'll I open it?—it's tied down."

"Cut the cord, you fool!"

Andy did as he was desired; and he happened at the time to hold the bottle of soda-water on a level with the candles that shed light over the festive board from a large silver branch, and the moment he made the incision, bang went the bottle of soda, knocking out two of the lights with the projected cork, which, performing its parabola the length of the room, struck the squire himself in the eye at the foot of the table: while the hostess at the head had a cold bath down her back. Andy, when he saw the soda-water jumping out of the bottle, held it from him at arm's length; every fizz it made, exclaiming, "Ow!—ow!—ow!" and, at last, when the bottle was empty, he roared out, "Oh, Lord!—it's all gone!"

Great was the commotion;—few could resist laughter except the ladies, who all looked at their gowns, not liking the mixture of satin and soda-water. The extinguished candles were relighted—the squire got his eye open again—and the next time he perceived the butler sufficiently near to speak to him, he said in a low and hurried tone of deep anger, while he knit his brow, "Send that fellow out of the room!" but, within the same instant, resumed his former smile, that beamed on all around as if nothing had happened.

Andy was expelled the *salle à manger* in disgrace, and for days kept out of the master's and mistress' way: in the meantime the butler made a good story of the thing in the servants' hall; and, when he held up Andy's ignorance to ridicule, by telling how he asked for "soap and water," Andy was given the name of "Suds," and was called by no other for months after.

But, though Andy's functions in the interior were suspended, his services in out-of-door affairs were occasionally put in requisition. But here his evil genius still haunted him, and he put his foot in a piece of business his master sent him upon one day, which was so simple as to defy almost the chance of Andy making any mistake about it; but Andy was very ingenious in his own particular line.

"Ride into the town and see if there's a letter for me," said the squire one day to our hero.

"Yes, sir."

"You know where to go?"

"To the town, sir."

"But do you know where to go in the town?"

"No, sir."

"And why don't you ask, you stupid thief?"

"Sure I'd find out, sir."

"Didn't I often tell you to ask what you're to do, when you don't know?"

"Yes, sir."

"And why don't you?"

"I don't like to be troublesome, sir."

"Confound you!" said the squire; though he could not help laughing at Andy's excuse for remaining in ignorance.

"Well," continued he, "go to the post-office. You know the post-office, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, where they sell gunpowder."

"You're right for once," said the squire; for his Majesty's postmaster was the person who had the privilege of dealing in the aforesaid combustible. "Go then to the post-office, and ask for a letter for me. Remember—not gunpowder, but a letter."

"Yis, sir," said Andy, who got astride of his hack, and trotted away to the post-office. On arriving at the shop of the postmaster (for that person carried on a brisk trade in groceries, gimlets, broadcloth, and linen-drapery,) Andy presented himself at the counter, and said, "I want a letter, sir, if you please."

"Who do you want it for?" said the postmaster, in a tone which Andy considered an aggression upon the sacredness of private life: so Andy thought the coolest contempt he could throw upon the prying impertinence of the postmaster was to repeat his question.

"I want a letter, sir, if you please."

"And who do you want it for?" repeated the postmaster.

"What's that to you?" said Andy.

The postmaster, laughing at his simplicity, told him he could not tell what letter to give him unless he told him the direction.

"The directions I got was to get a letther here—that's the directions."

"Who gave you those directions?"

"The masther."

"And who's your master?"

"What consarn is that o' yours?"

"Why, you stupid rascal! if you don't tell me his name, how can I give you a letter?"

"You could give it if you liked: but you're fond of axin' impident questions, bekase you think I'm simple."

"Go along out o' this! Your master must be as great a goose as yourself, to send such a messenger."

"Bad luck to your impidence," said Andy; "is it Squire Egan you dar to say goose to?"

"Oh, Squire Egan's your master, then?"

"Yes, have you anything to say agin it?"

"Only that I never saw you before."

"Faith, then you'll never see me agin if I have my own consint."

"I won't give you any letter for the squire, unless I know you're his servant. Is there any one in the town knows you?"

"Plenty," said Andy, "it's not every one is as ignorant as you."

Just at this moment a person to whom Andy was known entered the house, who vouched to the postmaster that he might give Andy the squire's letter. "Have you one for me?"

"Yes, sir," said the postmaster, producing one—"fourpence."

The gentleman paid the fourpence postage, and left the shop with his letter.

"Here's a letter for the squire," said the postmaster; "you've to pay me elevenpence postage."

"What 'ud I pay elevenpence for?"

"For postage."

"To the devil wid you! Didn't I see you give Mr. Durfy a letther for fourpence this minit, and a bigger letther than this? and now you want me to pay elevenpence for this scrap of a thing. Do you think I'm a fool?"

"No: but I'm sure of it," said the postmaster.

"Well you're welkum to be sure, sure;—but don't be delayin' me now: here's fourpence for you, and gi' me the letther."

"Go along, you stupid thief!" said the postmaster, taking up the letter, and going to serve a customer with a mouse-trap.

While this person, and many others were served, Andy lounged up and down the shop, every now and then putting in his head in the middle of the customers, and saying, "Will you gi' me the letther?"

He waited for above half an hour, in defiance of the anathemas of the postmaster, and at last left, when he found it impossible to get common justice for his master, which he thought he deserved as well as another man; for, under this impression, Andy determined to give no more than the fourpence.

The squire in the meantime was getting impatient for his return, and when Andy made his appearance, asked if there was a letter for him.

"There is, sir," said Andy.

"Then give it to me."

"I haven't it, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"He wouldn't give it to me, sir."

"Who wouldn't give it you?"

"That owld chate beyant in the town—wanting to charge me double for it."

"Maybe it's a double letter. Why the devil didn't you pay what he asked, sir?"

"Arrah, sir, why would I let you be chated? It's not a double letther at all: not above half the size o' one Mr. Durfy got before my face for fourpence."

"You'll provoke me to break your neck some day, you vagabond! Ride back for your life, you omadhaun; and pay whatever he asks, and get me the letter."

"Why, sir, I tell you he was sellin' them before my face for fourpence a-piece."

"Go back, you scoundrel! or I'll horsewhip you; and if you're longer than an hour, I'll have you ducked in the horse-pond!"

Andy vanished, and made a second visit to the post-office. When he arrived, two other persons were getting letters, and the postmaster was selecting the epistles for each, from a large parcel that lay before him on the counter; at the same time many shop customers were waiting to be served.

"I'm come for that letther," said Andy.

"I'll attend to you by-and-by."

"The masther's in a hurry."

"Let him wait till his hurry's over."

"He'll murther me if I'm not back soon."

"I'm glad to hear it."

While the postmaster went on with such provoking answers to these appeals for dispatch, Andy's eye caught the heap of letters which lay on the counter: so while certain weighing of soap and tobacco was going forward, he contrived to become possessed of two letters from the heap, and, having effected that, waited patiently enough till it was the great man's pleasure to give him the missive directed to his master.

Then did Andy bestride his hack, and in triumph at his trick on the postmaster, rattled along the road homeward as fast as the beast could carry him. He came into the squire's presence, his face beaming with delight, and an air of self-satisfied superiority in his manner, quite unaccountable to his master, until he pulled forth his hand, which had been grubbing up his prizes from the bottom of his pocket; and holding three letters over his head, while he said, "Look at that!" he next slapped them down under his broad fist on the table before the squire, saying—

"Well! if he did make me pay elevenpence, by gor, I brought your honour the worth o' your money anyhow!"

CHAPTER II

Andy walked out of the room with an air of supreme triumph, having laid the letters on the table, and left the squire staring after him in perfect amazement.

"Well, by the powers! that's the most extraordinary genius I ever came across," was the soliloquy the master uttered as the servant closed the door after him; and the squire broke the seal of the letter that Andy's blundering had so long delayed. It was from his law-agent on the subject of an expected election in the county, which would occur in case of the demise of the then sitting member;—it ran thus:

"DUBLIN, *Thursday*.

"MY DEAR SQUIRE,—I am making all possible exertions to have every and the earliest information on the subject of the election. I say the election,—because, though the seat of the county is not yet vacant, it is impossible but

that it must soon be so. Any other man than the present member must have died long ago; but Sir Timothy Trimmer has been so undecided all his life that he cannot at present make up his mind to die; and it is only by Death himself giving the casting vote that the question can be decided. The writ for the vacant county is expected to arrive by every mail, and in the meantime I am on the alert for information. You know we are sure of the barony of Ballysloughguthery, and the boys of Killanmaul will murder any one that dares to give a vote against you. We are sure of Knockdoughty also, and the very pigs in Glanamuck would return you; but I must put you on your guard on one point where you least expected to be betrayed. You told me you were sure of Neck-or-nothing Hall; but I can tell you you're out there; for the master of the aforesaid is working heaven, earth, ocean, and all the little fishes, in the other interest; for he is so over head and ears in debt, that he is looking out for a pension, and hopes to get one by giving his interest to the Honourable Sackville Scatterbrain, who sits for the Borough of Old Goosebery at present, but whose friends think his talents are worthy of a county. If Sack wins, Neck-or-nothing gets a pension—that's *poz*. I had it from the best authority. I lodge at a milliner's here:—no matter; more when I see you. But don't be afraid; we'll bag Sack, and distance Neck-or-nothing. But, seriously speaking, it's too good a joke that O'Grady should use you in this manner, who have been so kind to him in money matters: but, as the old song says, 'Poverty parts good company;' and he is so cursed poor that he can't afford to know you any longer, now that you have lent him all the money you had, and the pension *in prospectu* is too much for his feelings. I'll be down with you again as soon as I can, for I hate the diabolical town as I do poison. They have altered Stephen's Green—*ruined* it I should say. They have taken away the big ditch that was round it, where I used to hunt water-rats when a boy. They are destroying the place with their d—d improvements. All the dogs are well, I hope, and my favourite bitch. Remember me to Mrs. Egan, whom all admire.

"My dear squire, yours per quire,

"MURTOUGH MURPHY.

"*To Edward Egan, Esq., Merryvale.*"

Murtough Murphy was a great character, as may be guessed from his letter. He was a country attorney of good practice; good, because he could not help it—for he was a clever, ready-witted fellow, up to all sorts of trap, and one in whose hands a cause was very safe; therefore he had plenty of clients without his seeking them. For if Murtough's practice had depended on his looking for it, he might have made broth of his own parchment; for though to all intents and purposes a good attorney, he was so full of fun and fond of amusement, that it was only by dint of the business being thrust upon him he was so extensive a practitioner. He loved a good bottle, a good hunt, a good joke, and a good song, as well as any fellow in Ireland: and even when he was obliged in the way of business to press a gentleman hard—to hunt his man to the death—he did it so good-humouredly that his very victim could not be angry with him. As for those he served, he was their prime favourite; there was nothing they *could* want to be done in the parchment line, that Murtough would not find out some way of doing; and he was so pleasant a fellow, that he shared in the hospitality of all the best tables in the county. He kept good horses, was on every race-ground within twenty miles, and a steeple-chase was no steeple-chase without him. Then he betted freely, and, what's more, won his bets very generally; but no one found fault with him for that, and he took your money with such a good grace, and mostly gave you a *bon mot* in exchange for it—so that, next to winning the money yourself, you were glad it was won by Murtough Murphy.

The squire read his letter two or three times, and made his comments as he proceeded. "'Working heaven and earth to'—ha!—so that's the work O'Grady's at—that's old friendship, —foul!—foul! and after all the money I lent him, too;—he'd better take care—I'll be down on him if he plays false;—not that I'd like that much either:—but—let's see who's this coming down to oppose me?—Sack Scatterbrain—the biggest fool from this to himself;—the fellow can't ride a bit,—a pretty member for a sporting county! 'I lodge at a milliner's'—devil doubt you, Murtough; I'll engage you do. Bad luck to him!—he'd rather be fooling away his time in a back parlour, behind a bonnet shop, than minding the interests of the county. 'Pension'—ha!—wants it sure enough;—take care, O'Grady, or, by the powers, I'll be at you. You may baulk all the bailiffs, and defy any other man to serve you with a writ; but, by jingo! if I take the matter in hand, I'll be bound I'll get it done. 'Stephen's Green—big ditch—where I used to hunt water-rats.' Devil sweep you, Murphy, you'd rather be hunting water-rats any day than minding your business. He's a clever fellow for all that. 'Favourite bitch—Mrs. Egan.'—Aye! there's the end of it—with his bit o' po'thry, too! The devil!"

The squire threw down the letter, and then his eye caught the other two that Andy had purloined.

"More of that stupid blackguard's work!—robbing the mail—no less!—that fellow will be hanged some time or other. Egad, may be they'll hang him for this! What's best to be done? May be it will be the safest way to see whom they are for, and send them to the parties, and request they will say nothing: that's it."

The squire here took up the letters that lay before him, to read their superscriptions; and the first he turned over was directed to Gustavus Granby O'Grady, Esq., Neck-or-nothing Hall, Knockbotherum. This was what is called a curious coincidence. Just as he had been reading all about O'Grady's intended treachery to him, here was a letter to that individual, and with the Dublin post-mark too, and a very grand seal.

The squire examined the arms; and, though not versed in the mysteries of heraldry, he thought he remembered enough of most of the arms he had seen to say that this armorial bearing was a strange one to him. He turned the letter over and over again, and looked at it back and front, with an expression in his face that said, as plain as countenance could speak, "I'd give a trifle to know what is inside of this." He looked at the seal again: "Here's a—goose, I think it is, sitting on a bowl with cross-bars on it, and a spoon in its mouth: like the fellow that owns it, may be. A goose with a silver spoon in its mouth—well, here's the gable-end of a house, and a bird sitting on the top of it. Could it be Sparrow? There is a fellow called Sparrow, an under-secretary at the Castle. D—n it! I wish I knew what it's about."

The squire threw down the letter as he said, "D—n it!" but took it up again in a few seconds, and catching it edgewise between his forefinger and thumb, gave a gentle pressure that made the letter gape at its extremities, and then, exercising that sidelong glance which is peculiar to postmasters, waiting-maids, and magpies who inspect marrowbones, peeped into the interior of the epistle, saying to himself as he did so, "All's fair in war, and why not in electioneering?" His face, which was screwed up to the scrutinising pucker, gradually lengthened as he caught some words that were on the last turn-over of the sheet, and so could be read thoroughly, and his brow darkened into the deepest frown as he scanned these lines: "As you very properly and pungently remark, poor Egan is a spoon—a mere spoon." "Am I a spoon, you rascal?" said the squire, tearing the letter into pieces, and throwing it into the fire. "And so, *Misther* O'Grady, you say I'm a spoon!" and the blood of the Egans rose as the head of that pugnacious family strode up and down the room: "I'll spoon you, my buck!—I'll settle your hash! may be I'm a spoon you'll sup sorrow with yet!"

Here he took up the poker, and made a very angry lunge at the fire that did not want stirring, and there he beheld the letter blazing merrily away. He dropped the poker as if he had caught it by the hot end, as he exclaimed, "What the d—l shall I do? I've burnt the letter!" This threw the squire into a fit of what he was wont to call his "considering cap;" and he sat with his feet on the fender for some minutes, occasionally muttering to himself what he began with,—"What the d—l shall I do? It's all owing to that infernal Andy—I'll murder that fellow some time or other. If he hadn't brought it—I shouldn't have seen it, to be sure, if I hadn't looked; but then the temptation—a saint couldn't have withstood it. Confound it! what a stupid trick to burn it! Another here, too—must burn that as well, and say nothing about either of them:" and he took up the second letter, and, merely looking at the address, threw it into the fire. He then rang the bell, and desired Andy to be sent to him. As soon as that ingenious individual made his appearance, the squire desired him, with peculiar emphasis, to shut the door, and then opened upon him with—

"You unfortunate rascal!"

"Yis, your honour."

"Do you know that you might be hanged for what you did to-day?"

"What did I do, sir?"

"You robbed the post-office."

"How did I rob it, sir?"

"You took two letters that you had no right to."

"It's no robbery for a man to get the worth of his money."

"Will you hold your tongue, you stupid villain! I'm not joking: you absolutely might be hanged for robbing the post-office."

"Sure I didn't know there was any harm in what I done; and for that matter sure, if they're sitch wonderful value, can't I go back again wid 'em?"

"No, you thief! I hope you've not said a word to any one about it."

"Not the sign of a word passed my lips about it."

"You're sure?"

"Sartin!"

"Take care, then, that you never open your mouth to mortal about it, or you'll be hanged, as sure as your name is Andy Rooney."

"Oh! at that rate I never will. But may be your honour thinks I ought to be hanged?"

"No,—because you did not intend to do a wrong thing; but, only I have pity on you, I could hang you to-morrow for what you have done."

"Thank you, sir."

"I've burnt the letters, so no one can know anything about the business unless you tell on yourself: so remember,—not a word."

"Faith, I'll be dumb as the dumb baste."

"Go now; and once for all, remember you'll be hanged so sure as you ever mention one word about this affair."

Andy made a bow and a scrape, and left the squire, who hoped the secret was safe. He then took a ruminating walk round the pleasure-grounds, revolving plans of retaliation upon his false friend O'Grady; and having determined to put the most severe and sudden measure of the law in force against him, for the money in which he was indebted to him, he only awaited the arrival of Murtough Murphy from Dublin to execute his vengeance. Having settled this in his own mind, he became more contented, and said, with a self-satisfied nod of the head, "We'll see who's the spoon."

In a few days Murtough Murphy returned from Dublin, and to Merryvale he immediately proceeded. The squire opened to him directly his intention of commencing hostile law proceedings against O'Grady, and asked what most summary measures could be put in practice against him.

"Oh! various, various, my dear squire," said Murphy; "but I don't see any great use in doing so *yet*—he has not openly avowed himself."

"But does he not intend to coalesce with the order party?"

"I believe so—that is, if he's to get the pension."

"Well, and that's as good as done, you know; for if they want him, the pension is easily managed."

"I am not so sure of that."

"Why, they're as plenty as blackberries."

"Very true; but, you see, Lord Gobblestown swallows all the pensions for his own family; and there are a great many complaints in the market against him for plucking that blackberry-bush very bare indeed; and unless Sack Scatterbrain has swingeing interest, the pension may not be such an easy thing."

"But still O'Grady has shown himself not my friend."

"My dear squire, don't be so hot; he has not *shown* himself yet."

"Well, but he means it."

"My dear squire, you oughtn't to jump at a conclusion as you would at a twelve-foot drain or a five-bar gate."

"Well, he's a blackguard!"

"No denying it; and therefore keep him on your side if you can, or he'll be a troublesome customer on the other."

"I'll keep no terms with him;—I'll slap at him directly. What can you do that's wickedest?—latitat, capias—fee-faw-fum, or whatever you call it?"

"Halloo! squire, your overrunning your game: may be after all, he *won't* join the Scatterbrains, and——"

"I tell you it's no matter; he intended doing it, and that's all the same. I'll slap at him—I'll blister him!"

Murtough Murphy wondered at this blind fury of the squire, who, being a good-humoured and good-natured fellow in general, puzzled the attorney the more by his present manifest malignity against O'Grady. But *he* had not seen the turn-over of the letter: he had not seen "spoon,"—the real and secret cause of the "war-to-the-knife" spirit which was kindled in the

squire's breast.

"Of course, you can do what you please; but, if you'd take a friend's advice——"

"I tell you I'll blister him."

"He certainly *bled* you very freely."

"I'll blister him, I tell you, and that smart. Lose no time, Murphy, my boy: let loose the dogs of law on him, and harass him till he'd wish the d——I had him."

"Just as you like, but——"

"I'll have it my own way, I tell you; so say no more."

"I'll commence against him at once, then, as you wish it; but it's no use, for you know very well that it will be impossible to serve him."

"Let me alone for that! I'll be bound I'll find fellows to get the inside of him."

"Why, his house is barricaded like a jail, and he has dogs enough to bait all the bulls in the country."

"No matter: just send me the blister for him, and I'll engage I'll stick it on him."

"Very well, squire; you shall have the blister as soon as it can be got ready. I'll tell you when you may send over to me for it, and your messenger shall have it hot and warm for him. Good bye, squire."

"Good bye, Murphy!—lose no time."

"In the twinkling of a bedpost. Are you going to Tom Durfy's steeple-chase?"

"I'm not sure."

"I've a bet on it. Did you see the widow Flannagan lately? You didn't? They say Tom's pushing it strong there. The widow has money, you know, and Tom does it all for the love o' God; for you know, squire, there are two things God hates—a coward and a poor man. Now, Tom's no coward; and, that he may be sure of the love o' God on the other score, he's making up to the widow; and as he's a slashing fellow, she's nothing loth, and, for fear of any one cutting him out, Tom keeps as sharp a lookout after her as she does after him. He's fierce on it, and looks pistols at any one that attempts putting his *comether* on the widow, while she looks 'as soon as you plaze,' as plain as an optical lecture can enlighten the heart of man: in short, Tom's all ram's horns, and the widow all sheep's eyes. Good bye, squire." And Murtough put his spurs to his horse, and cantered down the avenue, whistling the last popular tune.

Andy was sent over to Murtough Murphy's for the law process at the appointed time; and as he had to pass through the village, Mrs. Egan desired him to call at the apothecary's for some medicine that was prescribed for one of the children.

"What'll I ax for, ma'am?"

"I'd be sorry to trust to you, Andy, for remembering. Here's the prescription; take care of it, and Mr. M'Garry will give you something to bring back; and mind, if it's a powder——"

"Is it gunpowdher, ma'am?"

"No—you stupid—will you listen? I say, if it's a powder, don't let it get wet as you did the sugar the other day."

"No, ma'am."

"And if it's a bottle, don't break it, as you did the last."

"No, ma'am."

"And make haste."

"Yis, ma'am;" and off went Andy.

In going through the village, he forgot to leave the prescription at the apothecary's and pushed on for the attorney's: there he saw Murtough Murphy, who handed him the law process, inclosed in a cover, with a note to the squire.

"Have you been doing anything very clever lately, Andy?" said Murtough.

"I don't know, sir," said Andy.

"Did you shoot any one with soda-water since I saw you last?"

Andy grinned.

"Did you kill any more dogs lately, Andy?"

"Faix, you're too hard on me, sir; sure I never killed but one dog, and that was an accident —"

"An accident!—curse your impudence, you thief! Do you think, if you killed one of the pack on purpose, we wouldn't cut the very heart o' you with our hunting whips?"

"Faith, I wouldn't doubt you, sir; but, sure, how could I help that divil of a mare runnin' away wid me, and thrampin' the dogs?"

"Why didn't you hold her, you thief?"

"Hould her, indeed!—you just might as well expect to stop fire among flax as that one."

"Well, be off with you now, Andy, and take care of what I gave you for the squire."

"Oh, never fear, sir," said Andy, as he turned his horse's head homewards. He stopped at the apothecary's in the village, to execute his commission for the "misthis." On telling the son of Galen that he wanted some physic "for one o' the childre up at the big house," the dispenser of the healing art asked *what* physic he wanted.

"Faith, I dunna what physic."

"What's the matter with the child?"

"He's sick, sir."

"I suppose so, indeed, or you wouldn't be sent for medicine, you're always making some blunder. You come here, and don't know what description of medicine is wanted."

"Don't I?" said Andy, with a great air.

"No, you don't, you omadhaun!" said the apothecary.

Andy fumbled in his pockets, and could not lay hold of the paper his mistress entrusted him with, until he had emptied them thoroughly of their contents upon the counter of the shop; and then, taking the prescription from the collection, he said, "So you tell me I don't know the description of the physic I'm to get. Now, you see, you're out; for *that's* the *description!*" and he slapped the counter impressively with his hand as he threw down the recipe before the apothecary.

While the medicine was in the course of preparation for Andy, he commenced restoring to his pockets the various parcels he had taken from them in hunting for the recipe. Now, it happened that he had laid them down close beside some articles that were compounded, and sealed up for going out, on the apothecary's counter: and as the law process which Andy had received from Murtough Murphy chanced to resemble in form another inclosure that lay beside it, containing a blister, Andy, under the influence of his peculiar genius, popped the blister into his pocket instead of the package which had been confided to him by the attorney, and having obtained the necessary medicine from M'Garry, rode home with great self-complacency that he had not forgot to do a single thing that had been entrusted to him. "I'm all right this time," said Andy to himself.

Scarcely had he left the apothecary's when another messenger alighted at its door, and asked "If Squire O'Grady's things *was* ready?"

"There they are," said the innocent M'Garry, pointing to the bottles, boxes, and *blister*, he had made up and set aside, little dreaming that the blister had been exchanged for a law process: and Squire O'Grady's own messenger popped into his pocket the legal instrument that it was as much as any seven men's lives were worth to bring within gunshot of Neck-or-nothing Hall.

Home he went, and the sound of the old gate creaking on its hinges at the entrance of the avenue awoke the deep-mouthed dogs around the house, who rushed infuriate to the spot to devour the unholy intruder on the peace and privacy of the patrician O'Grady; but they recognised the old grey hack and his rider, and quietly wagged their tails and trotted back, and licked their lips at the thoughts of the bailiff they had hoped to eat. The door of Neck-or-nothing Hall was carefully unbarred and unchained, and the nurse-tender was handed the parcel from the apothecary's, and re-ascended to the sick room with slippered foot as quietly as she could; for the renowned O'Grady was, according to her account, "as cross as two sticks;" and she protested, furthermore, "that her heart was grey with him."

Whenever O'Grady was in a bad humour, he had a strange fashion of catching at some word that either he himself, or those with whom he spoke, had uttered, and after often repeating

it, or rather mumbling it over in his mouth, as if he were chewing it, off he started into a canter of ridiculous rhymes to the aforesaid word, and sometimes one of these rhymes would suggest a new idea, or some strange association which had the oddest effect possible; and to increase the absurdity, the jingle was gone through with as much solemnity as if he were indulging in a deep and interesting reverie, so that it was difficult to listen without laughing, which might prove a serious matter when O'Grady was in one of the *tantarums*, as his wife used to call them.

Mrs. O'Grady was near the bed of the sick man as the nurse-tender entered.

"Here's the things for your honour, now," said she, in her most soothing tone.

"I wish the d—l had you and them!" said O'Grady.

"Gusty, dear!" said his wife. (She might have said stormy instead of gusty.)

"Oh! they'll do you good, your honour," said the nurse-tender, curtsying, and uncorking bottles, and opening a pill-box.

O'Grady made a face at the pill-box, and repeated the word "pills" several times, with an expression of extreme disgust. Pills—pills—kills—wills—ay—make your wills—make them—take them—shake them. When taken—to be well shaken—shew me that bottle."

The nurse-tender handed a phial, which O'Grady shook violently.

"Curse them all!" said the squire. "A pretty thing to have a gentleman's body made a perfect sink, for these blackguard doctors and apothecaries to pour their dirty drugs into—faugh! drugs—mugs—jugs!" he shook the phial again, and looked through it.

"Isn't it nice and pink, darlin'?" said the nurse-tender.

"Pink!" said O'Grady eying her askance, as if he could have eaten her. "Pink, you old besom, pink"—he uncorked the phial, and put it to his nose. "Pink—phew—!" and he repeated a rhyme to pink which would not look well in print.

"Now, sir, dear, there's a little blisther just to go on your chest—if you plaze."

"A *what?*"

"A warm plasther, dear."

"A *blister* you said, you old *divil!*"

"Well, sure its something to relieve you."

The squire gave a deep growl, and his wife put in the usual appeal of "Gusty, dear!"

"Hold you tongue, will you? How would *you* like it? I wish you had it on your—"

"Deed-an-deed, dear," said the nurse-tender.

"By the 'ternal war! if you say another word, I'll throw the jug at you!"

"And there's a nice dhrap o' gruel I have on the fire for you," said the nurse, pretending not to mind the rising anger of the squire, as she stirred the gruel with one hand, while with the other she marked herself with the sign of the cross, and said in a mumbling manner, "God presarve us! he's the most cantankerous Christian I ever kem across!"

"Shew me that infernal thing!" said the squire.

"What thing, dear?"

"You know well enough, you old hag!—that blackguard blister!"

"Here it is, dear. Now just open the *burst* o' your shirt, and let me put it an you."

"Give it into my hand here, and let me see it."

"Sartinly, sir;—but I think, if you'd let me just—"

"Give it to me, I tell you!" said the squire, in a tone so fierce that the nurse paused in her unfolding of the packet, and handed it with fear and trembling to the already indignant O'Grady. But it is only imagination can figure the outrageous fury of the squire when, on opening the envelope with his own hand, he beheld the law process before him. There, in the heart of his castle, with his bars, and bolts, and bull-dogs, and blunderbusses around him, he was served—absolutely served—and he had no doubt the nurse-tender was bribed to betray him.

A roar and a jump up in bed, first startled his wife into terror, and put the nurse on the

defensive.

"You infernal old strap!" shouted he, as he clutched up a handful of bottles on the table near him and flung them at the nurse, who was near the fire at the time: and she whipped the pot of gruel from the grate, and converted it into a means of defence against the phial-pelting storm.

Mrs. O'Grady rolled herself up in the bed-curtains while the nurse screeched "Murther!" and at last, when O'Grady saw that bottles were of no avail, he scrambled out of bed, shouting, "Where's my blunderbuss?" and the nurse-tender, while he endeavoured to get it down from the rack where it was suspended over the mantel-piece, bolted out of the door and ran to the most remote corner of the house for shelter.

In the meantime, how fared it at Merryvale. Andy returned with his parcel for the squire, and his note from Murtough Murphy, which ran thus:—

"MY DEAR SQUIRE,—I send you the *blister* for O'Grady as you insist on it; but I think you won't find it easy to serve him with it.—Your obedient and obliged,

"MURTOUGH MURPHY.

"*To Edward Egan, Esq., Merryvale.*"

The squire opened the cover, and when he saw a real instead of a figurative blister, grew crimson with rage. He could not speak for some minutes, his indignation was so excessive. "So," said he at last, "Mr. Murtough Murphy, you think to cut your jokes with me, do you? By all that's sacred, I'll cut such a joke on you with the biggest horsewhip I can find, that you'll remember it. '*Dear Squire, I send you the blister.*' Bad luck to your impudence! Wait till awhile ago—that's all. By this and that, you'll get such a blistering from me, that all the spermaceti in M'Garry's shop won't cure you."

CHAPTER III

Squire Egan was as good as his word. He picked out the most suitable horsewhip for chastising the fancied impertinence of Murtough Murphy; and as he switched it up and down with a powerful arm, to try its weight and pliancy, the whistling of the instrument through the air was music to his ears, and whispered of promised joy in the flagellation of the jocular attorney.

"We'll see who can make the sorest blister," said the squire.

"I'll back whalebone against Spanish flies any day. Will you bet, Dick?" said he to his brother-in-law, who was a wild, helter-skelter sort of fellow, better known over the country as Dick the Divil than Dick Dawson.

"I'll back your bet, Ned."

"There's no fun in that, Dick, as there is nobody to take it up."

"May be Murtough will. Ask him before you thrash him: you'd better."

"As for *him*" said the squire, "I'll be bound he'll back my bet after he gets a taste o' this;" and the horsewhip whistled as he spoke.

"I think he had better take care of his back than his bet," said Dick as he followed the squire to the hall-door, where his horse was in waiting for him, under the care of the renowned Andy, who little dreamed of the extensive harvest of mischief which was ripening in futurity, all from his sowing.

"Don't kill him quite, Ned," said Dick, as the squire mounted to his saddle.

"Why, if I went to horsewhip a gentleman, of course I should only shake my whip at him; but an attorney is another affair. And, as I'm sure he'll have an action against me for assault, I think I may as well get the worth of my money out of him, to say nothing of teaching him better manners for the future than to play off his jokes on his employers." With these words off he rode in search of the devoted Murtough, who was not at home when the squire reached his house; but as he was returning through the village, he espied him coming down the street in company with Tom Durfy and the widow, who were laughing heartily at some joke Murtough was telling them, which seemed to amuse him as much as his hearers.

"I'll make him laugh at the wrong side of his mouth," thought the squire, alighting and giving his horse to the care of one of the little ragged boys who were idling in the street. He approached Murphy with a very threatening aspect, and confronting him and his party so as to produce a halt, he said, as distinctly as his rage would permit him to speak, "You little insignificant blackguard, I'll teach you how you'll cut your jokes on *me* again; *I'll* blister you, my buck!" and laying hands on the astonished Murtough with the last word, he began a very smart horsewhipping of the attorney. The widow screamed, Tom Durfy swore, and Murtough roared, with some interjectional curses. At last he escaped from the squire's grip, leaving the lappel of his coat in his possession; and Tom Durfy interposed his person between them when he saw an intention on the part of the flagellator to repeat his dose of horsewhip.

"Let me at him, sir, or by——"

"Fie, fie, squire!—to horsewhip a gentleman like a cart-horse."

"A gentleman!—an attorney you mean."

"I say a gentleman, Squire Egan," cried Murtough fiercely, roused to gallantry by the presence of a lady, and smarting under a sense of injury and whalebone. "I'm a gentleman, sir, and demand the satisfaction of a gentleman. I put my honour into your hands, Mr. Durfy."

"Between his finger and thumb, you mean, for there's not a handful of it," said the squire.

"Well, sir," replied Tom Durfy, "little or much, I'll take charge of it. That's right, my cock," said he to Murtough, who notwithstanding his desire to assume a warlike air, could not resist the natural impulse of rubbing his back and shoulders which tingled with pain, while he exclaimed, "Satisfaction! satisfaction!"

"Very well," said the squire, "you name yourself as Mr. Murphy's friend?" added he to Durfy.

"The same, sir," said Tom. "Whom do you name as yours?"

"I suppose you know one Dick the Divil?"

"A very proper person, sir;—no better: I'll go to him directly."

The widow clung to Tom's arm, and looking tenderly at him, cried, "Oh, Tom, Tom, take care of your precious life!"

"Bother!" said Tom.

"Ah, Squire Egan, don't be so bloodthirsty!"

"Fudge, woman!" said the squire.

"Ah, Mr. Murphy, I'm sure the squire's very sorry for beating you."

"Divil a bit," said the squire.

"There, ma'am," said Murphy, "you see he'll make no apology."

"Apology!" said Durfy, "apology for a horsewhipping, indeed! Nothing but handing a horsewhip (which I wouldn't ask any gentleman to do), or a shot, can settle the matter."

"Oh, Tom! Tom! Tom!" said the widow.

"Ba! ba! ba!" shouted Tom, making a crying face at her. "Arrah, woman, don't be making a fool of yourself. Go in to the 'pothecary's, and get something under your nose to revive you: and let *us* mind our *own* business."

The widow with her eyes turned up, and an exclamation to Heaven, was retiring to M'Garry's shop, wringing her hands, when she was nearly knocked down by M'Garry himself, who rushed from his own door, at the same moment that an awful smash of his shop-window and the demolition of his blue and red bottles alarmed the ears of the bystanders, while their eyes were drawn from the late belligerent parties to a chase which took place down the street of the apothecary, roaring "Murder!" followed by Squire O'Grady with an enormous cudgel.

O'Grady, believing that M'Garry and the nurse-tender had combined to serve him with a writ, determined to wreak double vengeance on the apothecary, as the nurse had escaped him; and, notwithstanding all his illness and the appeals of his wife, he left his bed and rode to the village, to "break every bone in M'Garry's skin." When he entered the shop, the pharmacoplist was much surprised, and said, with a congratulatory grin at the great man, "Dear me, Squire O'Grady, I'm delighted to see you."

"Are you, you scoundrel!" said the squire, making a blow of his cudgel at him, which was fended off by an iron pestle the apothecary fortunately had in his hand. The enraged

O'Grady made a rush behind the counter, which the apothecary nimbly jumped over, crying, "Murder!" as he made for the door, followed by his pursuer, who gave a back-handed slap at the window-bottles *en passant*, and produced the crash which astonished the widow, who now joined her screams to the general hue and cry; for an indiscriminate chase of all the ragamuffins in the town, with barking curs and screeching children, followed the flight of M'Garry and the pursuing squire.

"What the divil is all this about?" said Tom Durfy, laughing. "By the powers! I suppose there's something in the weather to produce all this fun—though it's early in the year to begin thrashing, for the harvest isn't in yet. But, however, let us manage our little affair, now that we're left in peace and quietness, for the blackguards are all over the bridge after the hunt. I'll go to Dick the Divil immediately, squire, and arrange time and place."

"There's nothing like saving time and trouble on these occasions," said the squire. "Dick is at my house, I can arrange time and place with you this minute, and he will be on the ground with me."

"Very well," said Tom; "where is it to be?"

"Suppose we say the cross-roads, halfway between this and Merryvale? There's very pretty ground there, and we shall be able to get our pistols and all that ready in the meantime between this and four o'clock—and it will be pleasanter to have it all over before dinner."

"Certainly, squire," said Tom Durfy; "we'll be there at four. Till then, good morning, squire;" and he and his man walked off.

The widow, in the meantime, had been left to the care of the apothecary's boy, whose tender mercies were now, for the first time in his life, demanded towards a fainting lady; for the poor raw country lad, having to do with a sturdy peasantry in every-day matters, had never before seen the capers cut by a lady who thinks it proper, and delicate, and becoming, to display her sensibility in a swoon; and truly her sobs, and small screeches, and little stampings and kickings, amazed young gallipot. Smelling salts were applied;—they were rather weak, so the widow inhaled the pleasing odour with a sigh, but did not recover. Sal volatile was next put into requisition;—this was something stronger, and made her wriggle on her chair, and throw her head about with sundry "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" The boy, beginning to be alarmed at the extent of the widow's syncope, bethought himself of assafoetida; and, taking down a goodly bottle of that sweet-smelling stimulant, gave the widow the benefit of the whole jar under her nose. Scarcely had the stopper been withdrawn, when she gave a louder screech than she had yet executed, and exclaiming "Faugh!" with an expression of the most concentrated disgust, opened her eyes fiercely upon the offender, and shut up her nose between her forefinger and thumb against the offence, and snuffled forth at the astonished boy, "Get out o' that, you dirty cur! Can't you let a lady faint in peace and quietness? Gracious Heavens! would you smother me, you nasty brute? Oh, Tom, where are you?" and she took to sobbing forth "Tom! Tom!" and put her handkerchief to her eyes, to hide the tears that were *not* there, while from behind the corner of the cambric she kept a sharp eye on the street, and observed what was going on. She went on acting her part very becomingly, until the moment Tom Durfy walked off with Murphy; but then she could feign no longer, and jumping up from her seat, with an exclamation of "The brute!" she ran to the door, and looked down the street after them. "The savage!" sobbed the widow; "the hardhearted monster! to abandon me here to die—oh! to use me so—to leave me like a—like a"—(the widow was fond of similes)—"like an old shoe—like a dirty glove—like a—like I don't know what!" (the usual fate of similes). "Mister Durfy, I'll punish you for this—I will!" said the widow, with an energetic emphasis on the last word; and she marched out of the shop, boiling over with indignation, through which nevertheless, a little bubble of love now and then rose to the surface; and by the time she reached her own door, love predominated, and she sighed as she laid her hand on the knocker: "After all, if the dear fellow should be killed, what would become of me!—oh!—and that wretch, Dick Dawson, too—*two* of them. The worst of these merry devils is they are always fighting."

The squire had ridden immediately homewards, and told Dick Dawson the piece of work that was before them.

"And so he will have a shot at you, instead of an action?" said Dick. "Well there's pluck in that: I wish he was more of a gentleman, for your sake. It's dirty work, shooting attorneys."

"He's enough of a gentleman, Dick, to make it impossible for me to refuse him."

"Certainly, Ned," said Dick.

"Do you know, is he anything of a shot?"

"Faith, he makes very pretty snipe shooting; but I don't know if he has experience of the grass before breakfast."

"You must try and find out from some one on the ground; because, if the poor divil isn't a good shot, I wouldn't like to kill him, and I'll let him off easy—I'll give it to him in the pistol-arm, or so."

"Very well, Ned. Where are the flutes? I must look over them."

"Here," said the squire, producing a very handsome mahogany case of Rigby's best. Dick opened the case with the utmost care, and took up one of the pistols tenderly, handling it as delicately as if it were a young child or a lady's hand. He clicked the lock back and forward a few times; and, his ear not being satisfied at the music it produced, he said he should like to examine them: "At all events they want a touch of oil."

"Well, keep them out of the misthriss' sight, Dick, for she might be alarmed."

"Divil a taste," says Dick; "she's a Dawson, and there never was a Dawson yet that did not know men must be men."

"That's true, Dick. I would not mind so much if she wasn't in a delicate situation just now, when it couldn't be expected of the woman to be so stout; so go, like a good fellow, into your own room, and Andy will bring you anything you want."

Five minutes after, Dick was engaged in cleaning the duelling pistols, and Andy at his elbow, with his mouth wide open, wondering at the interior of the locks which Dick had just taken off.

"Oh, my heavens! but that's a quare thing, Misther Dick, sir," said Andy, going to take it up.

"Keep your fingers off it, you thief, do!" roared Dick, making a rap of the turnscrew at Andy's knuckles.

"Shure, I'll save you the trouble o' rubbin' that, Misther Dick, if you let me; here's the shabby leather."

"I wouldn't let your clumsy fist near it, Andy, nor your *shabby* leather, you villain, for the world. Go get me some oil."

Andy went on his errand, and returned with a can of lamp-oil to Dick, who swore at him for his stupidity; "The divil fly away with you!—you never do anything right; you bring me lamp-oil for a pistol."

"Well, sure I thought lamp-oil was the right thing for burnin'."

"And who wants to burn it, you savage?"

"Aren't you going to fire it, sir?"

"Choke you, you vagabond," said Dick, who could not resist laughing, nevertheless; "be off, and get me some sweet oil; but don't tell any one what it's for."

Andy retired, and Dick pursued his polishing of the locks. Why he used such a blundering fellow as Andy for a messenger might be wondered at, only that Dick was fond of fun, and Andy's mistakes were a particular source of amusement to him, and on all occasions when he could have Andy in his company he made him his attendant. When the sweet oil was produced, Dick looked about for a feather; but, not finding one, desired Andy to fetch him a pen. Andy went on his errand, and returned, after some delay, with an ink bottle.

"I brought you the ink, sir; but I can't find a pin."

"Confound your numskull! I didn't say a word about ink—I asked for a pen."

"And what use would a pin be without ink, now I ax yourself, Misther Dick?"

"I'd knock your brains out if you had any, you *omadhaun*! Go along, and get me a feather, and make haste."

Andy went off, and having obtained a feather, returned to Dick, who began to tip certain portions of the lock very delicately with oil.

"What's that for, Misther Dick, sir, if you plaze?"

"To make it work smooth."

"And what's that thing you're grazin' now, sir?"

"That's the tumbler."

"O Lord! a tumbler—what a quare name for it. I thought there was no tumbler but a tumbler for punch."

"That's the tumbler you would like to be cleaning the inside of, Andy."

"Thru for you, sir. And what's that little thing you have your hand on now, sir?"

"That's the cock."

"Oh, dear, a cock! Is there e'er a hin in it, sir?"

"No, nor a chicken either, though there *is* a feather."

"The one in your hand, sir, that you're grazin' it with?"

"No: but this little thing—that is called the feather-spring."

"It's the feather, I suppose, makes it let fly."

"No doubt of it, Andy."

"Well, there's some sinse in that name, then; but who'd think of sich a thing as a tumbler and a cock in a pistle? And what's that place that open and shuts, sir?"

"The pan."

"Well, there's sinse in that name too, bekase there's fire in the thing; and it's as nath'ral to say pan to that as to a fryin'-pan—isn't it, Misther Dick?"

"Oh! there was a great gunmaker lost in you, Andy," said Dick, as he screwed on the locks, which he had regulated to his mind, and began to examine the various departments of the pistol-case, to see that it was properly provided. He took the instrument to cut some circles of thin leather, and Andy again asked him for the name o' *that* thing?

"This is called the punch, Andy."

"So there is the punch as well as the tumbler, sir."

"Ay, and very strong punch it is, you see, Andy;" and Dick, struck it with his little mahogany mallet, and cut his patches of leather.

"And what's that for, sir?—the leather I mane."

"That's for putting round the ball."

"Is it for fear 't would hurt him too much when you shot him."

"You're a queer customer, Andy," said Dick, smiling.

"And what weeshee little balls thim is, sir."

"They are always small for duelling-pistols."

"Oh, then *thim* is jewellin' pistles. Why, musha, Misther Dick, is it goin' to fight a jule you are?" said Andy, looking at him with earnestness.

"No, Andy, but the master is; but don't say a word about it."

"Not a word for the world. The masther's goin' to fight! God send him safe out iv it! amin. And who is he going to fight, Misther Dick?"

"Murphy, the attorney, Andy."

"Oh, won't the masther disgrace himself by fightin' the 'torney?"

"How dare you say such a thing of your master?"

"I ax your pard'n, Misther Dick: but sure you know what I mane. I hope he'll shoot him."

"Why, Andy, Murtough was always very good to you, and now you wish him to be shot."

"Sure, why wouldn't I rather have him kilt more than the masther?"

"But neither may be killed."

"Misther Dick," said Andy, lowering his voice, "wouldn't it be an iligant thing to put two balls into the pistle instead o' one, and give the masther a chance over the 'torney?"

"Oh, you murdherous villain!"

"Arrah! why shouldn't the masther have a chance over him!—sure he has childre, and 'Torney Murphy has none."

"At any rate, Andy, I suppose you'd give the masther a ball additional for every child he has, and that would make eight. So you might as well give him a blunderbuss and slugs at once."

Dick loaded the pistol-case, having made all right, and desired Andy to mount a horse, carry

it by a back road out of the demesne, and wait at a certain gate he named until he should be joined there by himself and the squire, who proceeded at the appointed time to the ground.

Andy was all ready, and followed his master and Dick with great pride, bearing the pistol-case after them to the ground, where Murphy and Tom Durfy were ready to receive them; and a great number of spectators were assembled, for the noise of the business had gone abroad, and the ground was in consequence crowded.

Tom Durfy had warned Murtough Murphy, who had no experience as a pistol man, that the squire was a capital shot, and that his only chance was to fire as quickly as he could. "Slap at him, Morty, my boy, the minute you get the word; and if you don't hit him itself, it will prevent his dwelling on his aim."

Tom Durfy and Dick the Devil soon settled the preliminaries of the ground and mode of firing, and twelve paces having been marked, both the seconds opened their pistol-cases and prepared to load. Andy was close to Dick all the time, kneeling beside the pistol-case, which lay on the sod; and as Dick turned round to settle some other point on which Tom Durfy questioned him, Andy thought he might snatch the opportunity of giving his master "the chance" he suggested to his second. "Sure, if Misther Dick wouldn't like to do it, that's no reason I wouldn't," said Andy to himself, "and, by the powers! I'll pop in a ball *onknownst* to him." And, sure enough, Andy contrived, while the seconds were engaged with each other, to put a ball into each pistol before the barrel was loaded with powder, so that when Dick took up his pistols to load, a bullet lay between the powder and the touch-hole. Now, this must have been discovered by Dick, had he been cool: but he and Tom Durfy had wrangled very much about the point they had been discussing, and Dick, at no time the quietest person in the world, was in such a rage that the pistols were loaded by him without noticing Andy's ingenious interference, and he handed a harmless weapon to his brother-in-law when he placed him on his ground.

The word was given. Murtough, following his friend's advice, fired instantly—bang he went, while the squire returned but a flash in the pan. He turned a look of reproach upon Dick, who took the pistol silently from him, and handed him the other, having carefully looked to the priming after the accident which happened to the first.

Durfy handed his man another pistol also; and before he left his side, said in a whisper, "Don't forget—have the first fire."

Again the word was given. Murphy blazed away a rapid and harmless shot; for his hurry was the squire's safety, while Andy's murderous intentions were his salvation.

"D—n the pistol!" said the squire, throwing it down in a rage. Dick took it up with manifest indignation, and d—d the powder.

"Your powder's damp, Ned."

"No, it's not," said the squire, "it's you who have bungled the loading."

"Me!" said Dick, with a look of mingled rage and astonishment. "I bungle the loading of pistols! I, that have stepped more ground and arranged more affairs than any man in the country! Arrah, be aisy, Ned!"

Tom Durfy now interfered, and said for the present it was no matter, as, on the part of his friend, he begged to express himself satisfied.

"But it's very hard *we're* not to have a shot," said Dick, poking the touch-hole of the pistol with a pricker, which he had just taken from the case which Andy was holding before him.

"Why, my dear Dick," said Durfy, "as Murphy has had two shots, and the squire has not had the return of either, he declares he will not fire at him again; and, under these circumstances, I must take my man off the ground."

"Very well," said Dick, still poking the touch-hole, and examining the point of the pricker as he withdrew it.

"And now Murphy wants to know, since the affair is all over and his honour satisfied, what was your brother-in-law's motive in assaulting him this morning, for he himself cannot conceive a cause for it."

"Oh, be *aisy*, Tom."

"'Pon my soul it's true!"

"Why, he sent him a blister—a regular apothecary's blister—instead of some law process, by way of a joke, and Ned wouldn't stand it."

Durfy held a moment's conversation with Murphy, who now advanced to the squire, and begged to assure him there must be some mistake in the business, for that he had never committed the impertinence of which he was accused.

"All I know is," said the squire, "that I got a blister, which my messenger said you gave him."

"By virtue of my oath, squire, I never did it! I gave Andy an enclosure of the law process."

"Then it's some mistake that vagabond has made," said the squire. "Come here, you sir!" he shouted to Andy. Now Andy at this moment stood trembling under the angry eye of Dick the Devil, who, having detected a bit of lead on the point of the pricker, guessed in a moment Andy had been at work, and the unfortunate rascal, from the furious look of Dick, had a misgiving that he *had* made some blunder. "Why don't you come here when I call you?" said the squire. Andy laid down the pistol-case, and sneaked up to the squire. "What did you do with the letter Mr. Murphy gave you for me yesterday?"

"I brought it to your honour."

"No, you didn't," said Murphy. "You've made some mistake."

"Divil a mistake I made," answered Andy, very stoutly. "I wint home the minit you gev it to me."

"Did you go home direct from my house to the squire's?"

"Yis, sir, I did—I went direct home, and called at Mr. M'Garry's by the way for some physic for the childre."

"That's it!" said Murtough; "he changed my enclosure for a blister there; and if M'Garry has only had the luck to send the bit o' parchment to O'Grady, it will be the best joke I've heard this month of Sundays."

"He did! he did!" shouted Tom Durfy; "for don't you remember how O'Grady was after M'Garry this morning?"

"Sure enough," said Murtough, enjoying the double mistake. "By dad! Andy, you've made a mistake this time that I'll forgive you."

"By the powers o' war!" roared Dick the Devil; "I won't forgive him what he did now, though. What do you think?" said he, holding out the pistols, and growing crimson with rage, "may I never fire another shot, if he hasn't crammed a brace of bullets down the pistols before I loaded them; so no wonder you burned prime, Ned."

There was a universal laugh at Dick's expense, whose pride in being considered the most accomplished regulator of the duello was well known.

"Oh, Dick, Dick! you're a pretty second!" was shouted by all.

Dick, stung by the laughter, and feeling keenly the ridiculous position in which he was placed, made a rush at Andy, who, seeing the storm brewing, gradually sneaked away from the group, and when he perceived the sudden movement of Dick the Devil, took to his heels, with Dick after him.

"Hurra!" cried Murphy, "a race—a race! I'll bet on Andy—five pounds on Andy."

"Done!" said the squire: "I'll back Dick the Divil."

"Tare an' ouns!" roared Murphy, "how Andy runs! Fear's a fine spur."

"So is rage," said the squire. "Dick's hot-foot after him. Will you double the bet?"

"Done!" said Murphy.

The infection of betting caught the bystanders, and various gages were thrown and taken up upon the speed of the runners, who were getting rapidly into the distance, flying over hedge and ditch with surprising velocity, and, from the level nature of the ground, an extensive view could not be obtained, therefore Tom Durfy, the steeple-chaser, cried, "Mount, mount! or we'll lose the fun—into our saddles, and after them."

Those who had steeds took the hint, and a numerous field of horsemen joined in the pursuit of Handy Andy and Dick the Devil, who still maintained great speed. The horsemen made for a neighbouring hill, whence they could command a wider view; and the betting went on briskly, varying according to the vicissitudes of the race.

"Two to one on Dick—he's closing."

"Done! Andy will wind him yet."

"Well done—there's a leap! Hurra! Dick's down! Well done, Dick!—up again and going."

"Mind the next quickset hedge—that's a rasper, it's a wide gripe, and the hedge is as thick as a wall—Andy'll stick in it—mind him—well leaped, by the powers! Ha! he's sticking in the hedge—Dick'll catch him now. No, by jingo! he's pushed his way through—there, he's going

again on the other side. Ha! ha! ha! ha! look at him—he's in tatters! he has left half of his breeches in the hedge!"

"Dick is over now. Hurra! he has lost the skirt of his coat! Andy is gaining on him—two to one on Andy."

"Down he goes!" was shouted as Andy's foot slipped in making a dash at another ditch, into which he went head over heels, and Dick followed fast, and disappeared after him.

"Ride! ride!" shouted Tom Durfy; and the horsemen put their spurs into the flanks of their steeds, and were soon up to the scene of action. There was Andy, rolling over and over in the muddy bottom of a ditch, floundering in rank weeds and duck's meat, with Dick fastened on him, pummelling away most unmercifully, but not able to kill him altogether, for want of breath.

The horsemen, in a universal *screech* of laughter, dismounted, and disengaged the unfortunate Andy from the fangs of Dick the Devil, who was dragged out of the ditch much more like a scavenger than a gentleman.

The moment Andy got loose, away he ran again, with a rattling "Tally-ho!" after him, and he never cried stop till he earthed himself under his mother's bed in the parent cabin.

Murtough Murphy characteristically remarked, that the affair of the day had taken a very whimsical turn;—"Here are you and I, squire, who went out to shoot each other, safe and well, while one of the seconds has come off rather worse for the wear; and a poor devil, who had nothing to say to the matter in hand, good, bad, or indifferent, is nearly killed."

The squire and Murtough then shook hands, and parted friends half an hour after they had met as foes; and even Dick contrived to forget his annoyance in an extra stoup of claret that day after dinner—filling more than one bumper in drinking *confusion* to Handy Andy, which seemed a rather unnecessary malediction.

CHAPTER IV

After the friendly parting of the foes (*pro tempore*), there was a general scatter of the party who had come to see the duel: and how strange is the fact, that as much as human nature is prone to shudder at death under the gentlest circumstances, yet men will congregate to be its witnesses when violence aggravates the calamity! A public execution or a duel is a focus where burning curiosity concentrates; in the latter case, Ireland bears the palm for a crowd; in the former, the annals of the Old Bailey can *amply* testify. Ireland has its own interest, too, in a place of execution, but not in the same degree as England. They have been too used to hanging in Ireland to make it piquant: "*toujours perdrix*" is a saying which applies in this as in many other cases. The gallows, in its palmy days, was shorn of its terrors: it became rather a pastime. For the victim it was a pastime with a vengeance; for through it all time was past with him. For the rabble who beheld his agony, the frequency of the sight had blunted the edge of horror, and only sharpened that of unnatural excitement. The great school, where law should be the respected master, failed to inspire its intended awe;—the legislative lesson became a mockery; and death, instead of frowning with terror, grinned in a fool's cap from the scaffold.

This may be doubted now, when a milder spirit presides in the councils of the nation and on the bench; but those who remember Ireland not very long ago, can bear witness how lightly life was valued, or death regarded. Illustrative of this, one may refer to the story of the two basket-women in Dublin, who held gentle converse on the subject of an approaching execution.

"Won't you go see de man die to-morrow, Judy?"

"Oh no, darlin'," said Judy. (By-the-bye, Judy pronounced the *n* through her nose, and said "*do*.")

"Ah do, jewel," said her friend.

Judy again responded, "*Do*."

"And why won't you go, dear?" inquired her friend again.

"I've to wash de child," said Judy.

"Sure, didn't you wash it last week?" said her friend, in an expostulatory tone.

"Oh, well, I *won't* go," said Judy.

"Throth, Judy, you're ruinin' your health," said this soft-hearted acquaintance; "dere's a man to die to-morrow, and you won't come—augh!—you *dever* take *do* divarshin!"

And wherefore is it thus? Why should tears bedew the couch of him who dies in the bosom of his family, surrounded by those who love him, whose pillow is smoothed by the hand of filial piety, whose past is without reproach, and whose future is bright with hope? and why should dry eyes behold the duellist or the culprit, in whom folly or guilt may be the cause of a death on which the seal of censure or infamy may be set, and whose futurity we must tremble to consider? With more reason might we weep for the fate of either of the latter than the former, and yet we *do* not. And why is it so? If I may venture an opinion, it is that nature is violated: a natural death demands and receives the natural tribute of tears; but a death of violence falls with a stunning force upon the nerves, and the fountain of pity stagnates and will not flow.

Though there was a general scattering of the persons who came to see the duel, still a good many rode homeward with Murphy, who, with his second, Tom Durfy, beside him, headed the party, as they rode gaily towards the town, and laughed over the adventure of Andy and Dick.

"No one can tell how anything is to finish," said Tom Durfy; "here we came out to have a duel, and, in the end, it turned out a hunt."

"I am glad you were not in at *my* death, however," said Murphy, who seemed particularly happy at not being killed.

"You lost no time in firing, Murtough," said one of his friends.

"And small blame to me, Billy," answered Murphy; "Egan is a capital shot, and how did I know but he might take it into his head to shoot me?—for he's very hot when roused, though as good-natured a fellow in the main as ever broke bread; and yet I don't think, after all, he'd have liked to do me much mischief either; but, you see, he couldn't stand the joke he thought I played him."

"Will you tell us what it was?" cried another of the party, pressing forward, "for we can't make it out exactly, though we've heard something of it—wasn't it leeches you sent to him, telling him he was a blood-sucking villain?"

A roar of laughter from Murtough followed this question. "Lord, how a story gets mangled and twisted!" said he, as soon as he could speak. "Leeches! what an absurdity! No, it was ___"

"A bottle of castor oil, wasn't it, by way of a present of noyveau?" said another of the party, hurrying to the front to put forward *his* version of the matter.

A second shout of laughter from Murphy greeted this third edition of the story. "If you will listen to me, I'll give you the genuine version," said Murtough, "which is better, I promise you, than any which invention could supply. The fact is, Squire Egan is enraged against O'Grady, and applied to me to harass him in the parchment line, swearing he would blister him; and this phrase of blistering occurred so often, that when I sent him over a bit o' parchment, which he engaged to have served on my bold O'Grady, I wrote to him, 'Dear Squire, I send you the blister;' and that most ingenious of all blunderers, Handy Andy, being the bearer, and calling at M'Garry's shop on his way home, picked up from the counter a *real* blister, which was folded up in an inclosure, something like the process, and left the law-stinger behind him."

"That's grate!" cried Doyle.

"Oh, but you have not heard the best of it yet," added Murphy. "I am certain the bit of parchment was sent to O'Grady, for he was hunting M'Garry this morning through the town, with a cudgel of portentous dimensions—put that and that together."

"No mistake!" cried Doyle; "and divil pity O'Grady, for he's a blustering, swaggering, overbearing, ill-tempered—"

"Hillo, hillo, Bill!" interrupted Murphy, "you are too hard on the adjectives; besides, you'll spoil your appetite if you ruffle your temper, and that would fret me, for I intend you to dine with me to-day."

"Faith an' I'll do that same, Murtough, my boy, and glad to be asked, as the old maid said."

"I'll tell you what it is," said Murphy; "boys, you must all dine with me to-day, and drink long life to me, since I'm not killed."

"There are seventeen of us," said Durfy; "the little parlour won't hold us all."

"But isn't there a big room at the inn, Tom?" returned Murphy, "and not better drink in Ireland than Mrs. Fay's. What do you say, lads—one and all—will you dine with me?"

"Will a duck swim?" chuckled out Jack Horan, an oily veteran, who seldom opened his mouth but to put something into it, and spared his words as if they were of value; and to make them appear so, he spoke in apophthegms.

"What say you, James Reddy?" said Murtough.

"Ready, sure enough, and willing too!" answered James, who was a small wit, and made the aforesaid play upon his name at least three hundred and sixty-five times every year.

"Oh, we'll all come," was uttered right and left.

"Good men and true!" shouted Murphy; "won't we make the rafters shake, and turn the cellar inside out! Who! I'm in great heart to-day. But who is this powdhering up the road? By the powers! 't is the doctor, I think; 't is—I know his bandy hat over the cloud of dust."

The individual thus designated as *the* doctor now emerged from the obscurity in which he had been enveloped, and was received with a loud shout by the whole cavalcade as he approached them. Both parties drew rein, and the doctor, lifting from his head the aforesaid bandy hat, which was slouched over one eye, with a sinister droop, made a low obeisance to Murphy, and said, with a mock solemnity, "Your servant, sir—and so you're not killed?"

"No," said Murphy; "and you've lost a job, which I see you came to look for—but you're not to have the carving of me yet."

"Considering it's so near Michaelmas, I think you've had a great escape, signor," returned the doctor.

"Sure enough," said Murphy, laughing; "but you're late this time: so you must turn back, and content yourself with carving something more innocent than an attorney to-day—though at an attorney's cost. You must dine with me."

"Willingly, signor," said the doctor; "but pray don't make use of the word 'cost.' I hate to hear it out of an attorney's mouth—or *bill*, I should say."

A laugh followed the doctor's pleasantry, but no smile appeared upon *his* countenance; for though uttering quaint and often very good, but oftener very bitter, things, he never moved a muscle of his face, while others were shaking their sides at his sallies. He was, in more ways than one, a remarkable man. A massive head, large and rather protruding eyes, lank hair, slouching ears, a short neck, and broad shoulders, rather inclined to stooping, a long body, and short legs, slightly bowed, constituted his outward man; and a lemon-coloured complexion, which a residence of some years in the East Indies had produced, did not tend to increase his beauty. His mind displayed a superior intelligence, original views, contempt of received opinions, with a power of satire and ridicule, which rendered him a pleasing friend or a dangerous enemy, as the case might be; though, to say the truth, friend and foe were treated with nearly equal severity, if a joke or sarcasm tempted the assault. His own profession hated him, for he unsparingly ridiculed all stale practice, which his conviction led him to believe was inefficient, and he daringly introduced fresh, to the no small indignation of the more cut and dry portion of the faculty, for whose hate he returned contempt, of which he made no secret. From an extreme coarseness of manner, even those who believed in his skill were afraid to trust to his humour: and the dislike of his brother-practitioners to meet him superadded to this, damaged his interest considerably, and prevented his being called in until extreme danger frightened patients, or their friends, into sending for Dr. Growling. His carelessness in dress, too, inspired disgust in the fair portion of the creation: and "snuffy" and "dirty," "savage" and "brute," were among the sweet words they applied to him.

Nevertheless, those who loved a joke more than they feared a hit, would run the risk of an occasional thrust of the doctor's stiletto, for the sake of enjoying the mangling he gave other people; and such rollicking fellows as Murphy, and Durfy, and Dawson, and Squire Egan petted this social hedgehog.

The doctor now turned his horse's head, and joined the cavalcade to the town. "I have blown my Rosinante," said he; "I was in such a hurry to see the fun."

"Yes," said Murphy, "he smokes."

"And his master takes snuff," said the doctor, suiting the action to the word. "I suppose, signor, you were thinking a little while ago that the squire might serve an ejection on your vitality?"

"Or that in the trial between us I might get damages," said Murphy.

"There is a difference, in such case," said the doctor, "between a court of law and the court of honour; for in the former, the man is plaintiff before he gets his damages, while in the latter, it is after he gets his damages that he complains."

"I'm glad my term is not ended, however," said Murphy.

"If it had been," said the doctor, "I think you'd have had a long vacation in limbo."

"And suppose I had been hit," said Murphy, "you would have been late on the ground. You're a pretty friend!"

"It's my luck, sir," said the doctor; "I'm always late for a job. By-the-bye, I'll tell you an amusing fact of that musty piece of humanity, Miss Jinkins. Her niece was dangerously ill, and she had that licensed slaughterer from Killanmaul trying to tinker her up, till the poor girl was past all hope, and then she sends for me. She swore, some time ago, I shall never darken her doors; but when she began to apprehend that death was rather a darker gentleman than I, she tolerated my person. The old crocodile met me in the hall—by-the-bye, did you ever remark she's *like* a crocodile, only not with so pleasing an expression?—and wringing her hands she cried, 'Oh, doctor, I'll be bound to you forever!'—I hope not, thought I to myself. 'Save my Jemima, doctor, and there's nothing I won't do to prove my gratitude.' 'Is she long ill, ma'am?' said I. 'A fortnight, doctor.' 'I wish I had been called in sooner, ma'am,' says I—for, 'pon my conscience, Murphy, it is too ridiculous the way the people go on about me. I verily believe they think I can raise people out of their graves; and they call me in to repair the damages disease *and* the doctors have been making; and while the gentlemen in black silk stockings, with gold-headed canes, have been fobbing fees for three weeks, perhaps, they call in poor Jack Growling, who scorns Jack-a-dandyism, and *he* gets a solitary guinea for mending the bungling that cost something to the tune of twenty or thirty perhaps. And when I have plucked them from the jaws of death—regularly cheated the sexton out of them—the best word they have for me is to call me a pig, or abuse my boots, or wonder that the doctor is not more particular about his linen—the fools! But to return to my gentle crocodile. I was shown upstairs to the sick room, and there, sir, I saw the unfortunate girl, speechless, at the last gasp absolutely. The Killanmaul dandy had left her to die—absolutely given her up; and *then*, indeed, I'm sent for! Well, I was in a rage, and was rushing out of the house, when the crocodile way-laid me in the hall. 'Oh, doctor, won't you do something for my Jemima?' 'I can't, ma'am,' says I; 'but Mr. Fogarty can.' 'Mr. Fogarty!' says she. 'Yes, ma'am,' says I. 'You have mistaken my profession, Miss Jinkins—I'm a doctor, ma'am; but I suppose *you took me for an undertaker!*'"

"Well, you hit her hard, doctor," said Murphy.

"Sir, you might as well hit a rhinoceros," returned the doctor.

"When shall we dine?" asked Jack Horan.

"As soon as Mrs. Fay can let us have the eatables," answered Murphy; "and, by-the-bye, Jack, I leave the ordering of the dinner to you, for no man understands better how to do that same; besides, I want to leave my horse in my own stable, and I'll be up at the inn, after you, in a brace of shakes."

The troop now approached the town. Those who lived there rode to their own stables, and returned to the party at Mrs. Fay's: while they who resided at a distance dismounted at the door of the inn, which soon became a scene of bustle in all its departments from this large influx of guests; and the preparation for the dinner, exceeding in scale what Mrs. Fay was generally called upon to provide, except when the assizes, or races, or other such cause of commotion, demanded all the resources of her establishment, and more, if she had them. So the Dinnys, and the Tims, and the Mickeys, were rubbing down horses, cleaning knives, or drawing forth extra tables from their dusty repose; and the Biddys, and Judys, and Nellys, were washing up plates, scouring pans, and brightening up extra candlesticks, or doing deeds of doom in the poultry-yard, where an audible commotion gave token of the premature deaths of sundry supernumerary chickens.

Murphy soon joined his guests, grinning from ear to ear, and rubbing his hands as he entered.

"Great news, boys," said he; "who do you think was at my house, when I got home, but M'Garry, with his head bandaged up, and his whole body, as he declares, bearing black and blue testimony to the merciless attack of the bold O'Grady, against whom he swears he'll bring an action for assault and battery. Now, boys, I thought it would be great fun to have him here to dinner—it's as good as a play to hear him describe the thrashing—so I asked him to come. He said he was not in a fit state to dine out; but I egged him on by saying that a sight of him in his present plight would excite sympathy for him, and stir up public feeling against O'Grady, and that all would tell in the action, as most likely some of the present company might be on the jury, and would be the better able to judge how far he was entitled to damages, from witnessing the severity of the injury he had received. So he's coming; and mind, you must all be deeply affected at his sufferings, and impressed with the *powerful* description he gives of the same."

"Very scientific, of course," said old Growling.

"Extensively so," returned Murphy; "he laid on the Latin *heavy*."

"Yes—the fool!" growled the doctor: "he can't help sporting it even on me. I went into his

shop one day, and asked for some opium wine, and he could not resist calling it *vinum opii* as he handed it to me."

"We'll make him a martyr!" cried Durfy.

"We'll make him dhrunk!" said Jack Horan, "and that will be better. He brags that he never was what he calls 'inebriated' in his life; and it will be great fun to send him home on a door, with a note to his wife, who is proud of his propriety."

As they spoke, M'Garry entered, his head freshly bound up, to look as genteel as possible amongst the gentlemen with whom he was to have the honour of dining. His wife had suggested a pink ribbon, but M'Garry, while he acknowledged his wife's superior taste, said black would look more professional. The odd fellows to whom he had now committed himself, crowded round him, and, in the most exaggerated phrases, implied the high sense they entertained of *his* wrongs and O'Grady's aggression.

"Unprovoked attack!" cried one.

"Savage ruffian!" ejaculated another.

"What atrocity!" said a third.

"What dignified composure!" added a fourth, in an audible whisper, meant for M'Garry's ear.

"Gentlemen!" said the apothecary, flurried at the extreme attention of which he became the object; "I beg to assure you I am deeply—that is—this proof of—of—of—of symptoms—gentlemen—I mean sympathy, gentlemen—in short, I really—"

"The fact is," said Growling, "I see Mr. M'Garry is rather shaken in nerve—whether from loss of blood or—"

"I have lost a quantity of blood, doctor," said M'Garry; "much vascular, to say nothing of extra-vasated."

"Which, I'll state in my case," said Murphy.

"Murphy, don't interrupt," said Growling, who, with a very grave face, recommenced: "Gentlemen, from the cause already stated, I see Mr. M'Garry is not prepared to answer the out-pouring of feeling with which you have greeted him, and if I might be permitted—"

Every one shouted, "Certainly—certainly!"

"Then as I am permitted, I *will* venture to respond *for* Mr. M'Garry, and address you, as he *would* address you. In the words of Mr. M'Garry, I would say—Gentlemen—unaccustomed as I am"—Some smothered laughter followed this beginning; upon which the doctor, with a mock gravity, proceeded—

"Gentlemen, this interruption I consider to be an infringement on the liberty of the subject. I recommence, therefore, in the words of my honourable and wounded friend, and our honourable and wounded feelings, and say, as my friend would say, or, to speak classically, M'Garry *loquitur*"—

The apothecary bowed his head to the bit of Latin, and the doctor continued—

"Gentlemen—unaccustomed to public thrashing, you can conceive what my feelings are at the present moment, in mind and body. [*Bravo!*] You behold an outrage [*much confusion!*] Shall an exaggerated savagery like this escape punishment, and 'the calm, sequestered vale' (as the poet calls it) of private life be ravaged with impunity? [*Bravo, bravo!*] Are the learned professions to be trampled under foot by barbarian ignorance and brutality? No; I read in the indignant looks of my auditory their high-souled answers. Gentlemen, your sympathy is better than diachylon to my wounds, and this is the proudest day of my life."

Thunders of applause followed the doctor's address, and every one shook M'Garry's hand, till his bruised bones ached again. Questions poured upon him from all sides as to the nature and quantity of his drubbing, to all of which M'Garry innocently answered in terms of exaggeration, spiced with scientific phrases. Muscles, tendons, bones, and sinews, were particularised with the precision of an anatomical demonstration; he swore he was pulverised, and paralysed, and all the other lies he could think of.

"A large stick you say?" said Murphy.

"Sir! I never saw such a stick—'t was like a weaver's beam!"

"I'll make a note of that," said Murphy. "A weaver's beam—'t will tell well with a jury."

"And beat you all over?" said Durfy.

"From shoulder to flank, sir, I am one mass of welts and weals; the abrasures are extensive,

the bruises terrific, particularly in the lumbar region."

"What's that," asked Jack Horan.

"The lumbar region is what is commonly called the loins, sir."

"Not always," said the doctor. "It varies in different subjects: I have known some people whose *lumbar* region lay in the head."

"You laugh, gentlemen," said M'Garry, with a mournful smile; "but you *know* the doctor—he *will* be jocular." He then continued to describe the various other regions of his injuries, amidst the well-acted pity and indignation of the queer fellows who drew him out, until they were saturated, so far, with the fun of the subject. After which, Murphy, whose restless temperament could never let him be quiet for a moment, suggested that they should divert themselves before dinner with a badger-fight.

"Isn't one fight a day enough for you, signor?" said the doctor.

"It is not every day we get a badger, you know," said Murphy; "and I heard just now from Tim the waiter that there is a horse-dealer lately arrived at the stables here, who has a famous one with him, and I know Reilly the butcher has two or three capital dogs, and there's a wicked mastiff below stairs, and I'll send for my 'buffer,' and we'll have some spanking sport."

He led his guests then to the inn yard, and the horse-dealer, for a consideration, allowed his badger to wage battle: the noise of the affair spread through the town, while they were making their arrangements, and sending right and left for dogs for the contest; and a pretty considerable crowd soon assembled at the place of action, where the hour before dinner was spent in the intellectual amusement of a badger-fight.

CHAPTER V

The fierce yells of the badger-fight ringing far and wide, soon attracted a crowd, which continued to increase every minute by instalments of men and boys, who might be seen running across a small field by the road-side, close to the scene of action, which lay at the back of the inn; and heavy-caped and skirted frieze coats streamed behind the full-grown, while the rags of the gossoons^[1] fluttered in the race. Attracted by this evidence of "something going on," a horseman, who was approaching the town, urged his horse to speed, and turning his head towards a yawning double ditch that divided the road from the field, he gracefully rode the noble animal over the spanking leap.

The rider was Edward O'Connor; and he was worthy of his name—the pure blood of that royal race was in his heart, which never harboured a sentiment that could do it dishonour, and overflowed with feelings which ennoble human nature, and make us proud of our kind. He was young and handsome; and as he sat his mettled horse, no lady could deny that Edward O'Connor was the very type of the gallant cavalier. Though attached to every manly sport and exercise, his mind was of a refined order; and a youth passed amidst books and some of the loveliest scenery in Ireland had nurtured the poetic feeling with which his mind was gifted, and which found its vent in many a love-taught lyric, or touching ballad, or spirit-stirring song, whose theme was national glory. To him the bygone days of his country's history were dear, made more familiar by many an antique relic which hung around his own room in his father's house. Celt and sword, and spear-head of Phœnician bronze, and golden gorget, and silver bodkin, and ancient harp, and studded crosier, were there; and these time-worn evidences of arts, and arms, and letters flattered the affection with which he looked back on the ancient history of Ireland, and kept alive the ardent love of his country with which he glowed—a love too deep, too pure, to be likely to expire, even without the aid of such poetic sources of excitement. To him the names of Fitzgerald, and Desmond, and Tyrone, were dear; and there was no romantic legend of the humbler outlaws with which he was not familiar: and "Charley of the Horses," and "Ned of the Hill," but headed the list of names he loved to recall; and the daring deeds of bold spirits who held the hill-side for liberty, were often given in words of poetic fire from the lips of Edward O'Connor.

And yet Edward O'Connor went to see the badger-fight.

There is something inherent in man's nature, urging him to familiarise himself with cruelty: and, perhaps, without such a power of witnessing savage deeds, he would be unequal to the dominion for which he was designed. Men of the highest order of intellect the world has known have loved the chase. How admirably Scott displays this tendency of noble minds, in the meeting of Ellen with her father, when Douglas says—

"The chase I followed far;

"T is mimicry of noble war."

And the effect of this touch of character is heightened by Douglas in a subsequent scene—Douglas, who could enjoy the sport which ends in death, bending over his gentle child, and dropping tears of the tenderest affection—tears which

"Would not stain an angel's cheek."

Superadded to this natural tendency, Edward O'Connor had an additional motive. He lived amongst a society of sporting men, less cultivated than he was, whose self-esteem would have easily ignited the spark of jealousy if he had seemed to scorn the things which made their principal enjoyment, and formed the chief occupation of their lives; and his good sense and good heart (and there is an intimate connection between them) pointed out to him that, wherever your lot is cast, duty to yourself and others suggests the propriety of adapting your conduct to the circumstances in which you are placed (so long as morality and decency are not violated), and that the manifestation of one's own superiority may render the purchase too dear, by being bought at the terrible price of our neighbour's dislike. He, therefore, did not tell everybody he wrote verses: he kept the gift as secret as he could. If an error, however gross, on any subject, were made in his presence, he never took willing notice of it; or if circumstances obliged him to touch upon it, it was always done with a politeness and tact that afforded the blunderer the means of retreat. If some gross historical error, for instance, happened to be committed in a conversation *with himself* (and then only), he would set the mistake right, as a matter of conscience, but he would do so by saying there was a great similarity between the event spoken of and some other event. "I know what you are thinking of," he would say, "but you make a slight mistake in the dates; the two stories are very similar, and likely to mislead one."

But with all this modest reserve, did the least among his companions think him the less clever? No. It was shrewdly suspected he was a poet; it was well known he was highly educated and accomplished; and yet Edward O'Connor was a universal favourite, bore the character of being a "real fine fellow," and was loved and respected by the most illiterate of the young men of the country; who, in allusion to his extensive lore on the subject of the legendary heroes of the *romantic* history of Ireland, his own Christian name, and his immediate place of residence, which was near a wild mountain pass, christened him "Ned of the Hill."

His appearance amidst the crowd assembled to witness the rude sport was hailed with pleasure—varying from the humble but affectionate respect of the peasant, who cried "Long life to you, Misther O'Connor," to the hearty burst of equality, which welcomed him as "Ned of the Hill."

The fortune of the fight favoured the badger, who proved himself a trump; and Murphy appreciated his worth so highly that, when the battle was over, he would not quit the ground until he became his owner, at a high price to the horse-dealer. His next move was to *insist* on Edward O'Connor dining with him; and Edward, after many excuses to avoid the party he foresaw would be a drinking bout—of which he had a special horror, notwithstanding all his toleration—yielded to the entreaties of Murphy, and consented to be his guest, just as Tim the waiter ran up, steaming from every pore, to announce that the dinner was "ready to be sarved."

"Then sarve it, sir," said Murphy, "and sarve it right."

Off cantered Tim, steaming and snorting like a locomotive engine, and the party followed to the inn, where a long procession of dish-bearers was ascending the stairs to the big room, as Murphy and his friends entered.

The dinner it is needless to describe. One dinner is the same as another in the most essential points, namely, to satisfy hunger and slake consequent thirst; and whether beef and cabbage, and heavy wet, are to conquer the dragon of appetite, or your stomach is to sustain the more elaborate attack fired from the *batterie de cuisine* of a finished *artiste*, and moistened with champagne, the difference is only of degree in the fashion of the thing and the tickling of the palate: hunger is as thoroughly satisfied with the one as the other; and headaches as well manufactured out of the beautiful, bright, and taper glasses which bear the foam of France to the lip, as from the coarse, flat-bottomed tumblers of an inn that reek with punch. At the dinner there was the same tender solicitude on the part of the carvers as to "Where would you like it?" and the same carelessness on the part of those whom they questioned, who declared they had no choice, "but if there *was* a little bit near the shank," &c., or "if there was a liver wing to *spare*." By the way, some carvers there are who push an aspirant's patience too far. I have seen some who, after giving away both wings, and all the breast, two sidebones, and the short legs, meet the eager look of the fifth man on their left with a smile, and ask him, with an effrontery worthy of the Old Bailey, "Has he any choice?" and, at the same time, toss a drum-stick on the destined plate, or boldly attempt to divert his melancholy with a merry-thought. All this, and more, was there at Murtough Murphy's dinner, long memorable in the country from a frolic that wound up the evening, which soon began to warm, after the cloth was removed, into the sort of a thing commonly known by the

name of a jollification. But before the dinner was over, poor M'Garry was nearly pickled: Jack Horan, having determined to make him drunk, arranged a system of attack on M'Garry's sobriety which bade defiance to his prudence to withstand. It was agreed that every one should ask the apothecary to take wine; and he, poor innocent man! when gentlemen whom he had never had the honour to meet at dinner before addressed him with a winning smile, and said, "Mr. M'Garry, will you do me the *honour*?" could not do less than fill his glass every time; so that, to use Jack Horan's own phrase, the apothecary was "sewed up" before he had any suspicion of the fact; and, unused to the indications of approaching vinous excitement, he supposed it was the delightful society made him so hilarious, and he began to launch forth after dinner in a manner quite at variance with the reserve he usually maintained in the presence of his superiors, and talked largely. Now, M'Garry's principal failing was to make himself appear very learned in his profession; and every new discovery in chemistry, operation in surgery, or scientific experiment he heard of, he was prone to shove in, head and shoulders, in his soberest moments; but now that he was half-drunk, he launched forth on the subject of galvanism, having read of some recent wonderful effects produced on the body of a recent murderer who was hanged and given over to the College of Surgeons in Dublin. To impress the company still more with a sense of his learning, he addressed Growling on the subject, and the doctor played him off to advantage.

"Don't you think it very wonderful, doctor?" inquired M'Garry, speaking somewhat thickly.

"Very," answered the doctor, drily.

"They say, sir, the man—that is, the subject—when under the influence of the battery, absolutely twiddled his left foot, and raised his right arm."

"And raised it to some purpose, too," said the doctor; "for he raised a contusion on the Surgeon-General's eye, having hit him over the same."

"Dear me!—I did not hear that."

"It is true, however," said the doctor; "and that gives you an idea of the power of the galvanic influence, for you know the Surgeon-General is a powerful man, and yet he could not hold him down."

"Wonderful!" hiccupped M'Garry.

"But that's nothing to what happened in London," continued the doctor. "They experimented there the other day with a battery of such power, that the man who was hanged absolutely jumped up, seized a scalpel from the table, and making a rush on the assembled Faculty of London, cleared the theatre in less than no time; dashed into the hall; stabbed the porter who attempted to stop him; made a chevy down the south side of Leicester Square; and as he reached the corner, a woman, who was carrying tracts published by the Society for the Suppression of Vice, shrieked at beholding a man in so startling a condition, and fainted; he, with a presence of mind perfectly admirable, whipped the cloak from her back, and threw it round him, and scudding through the tortuous alleys which abound in that neighbourhood, made his way to the house where the learned Society of Noviomagians hold their convivial meetings, and, telling the landlord that he was invited there to dinner as a curiosity, he gained admittance, and, it is supposed, took his opportunity for escaping, for he has not since been heard of."

"Good Heaven!" gasped M'Garry; "and do you believe that, doctor?"

"Most firmly, sir! My belief is, that galvanism is, in fact, the original principle of vitality."

"Should we not rejoice, doctor," cried M'Garry, "at this triumph of science?"

"I don't think you should, Mister M'Garry," said the doctor, gravely; "for it would utterly destroy *your* branch of the profession: pharmacopologists, instead of compounding medicine, must compound with their creditors; they are utterly ruined. Mercury is no longer in the ascendent; all doctors have to do now is to carry a small battery about them, a sort of galvanic pocket-pistol, I may say, and restore the vital principle by its application."

"You are not serious, doctor?" said M'Garry, becoming *very* serious, with that wise look so peculiar to drunken men.

"Never more serious in my life, sir."

"That would be dreadful!" said M'Garry.

"*Shocking*, you mean," said the doctor.

"Leave off your confounded scientifics, there," shouted Murphy from the head of the table, "and let us have a song."

"I can't sing, indeed, Mister Murphy," said M'Garry, who became more intoxicated every moment; for he continued to drink, having overstepped the boundary which custom had

prescribed to him.

"I didn't ask you, man," said Murphy; "but my darling fellow, Ned here, will gladden our hearts and ears with a stave."

"Bravo!" was shouted round the table, trembling under the "thunders of applause" with which heavy hands made it ring again; and "Ned of the Hill!" "Ned of the Hill!" was vociferated with many a hearty cheer about the board that might indeed be called "festive."

"Well," said O'Connor, "since you call upon me in the name of Ned of the Hill, I'll give you a song under that very title. Here's Ned of the Hill's own shout;" and in a rich, manly voice he sang, with the fire of a bard, these lines:—

THE SHOUT OF NED OF THE HILL.[2]

I

The hill! the hill! with its sparkling rill,
And its dawning air so light and pure,
Where the morning's eye scorns the mist, that lie
On the drowsy valley and the moor.
Here, with the eagle, I rise betimes;
Here, with the eagle, my state I keep;
The first we see of the morning sun,
And his last as he sets o'er the deep,
And there, while strife is rife below,
Here from the tyrant I am free:
Let shepherd slaves the valley praise,
But the hill! the hill for me!

II

The baron below in his castle dwells,
And his garden boasts the costly rose;
But mine is the keep of the mountain steep,
Where the matchless wild flower freely blows.
Let him fold his sheep, and his harvest reap—
I look down from my mountain throne;
And I choose and pick of the flock and the rick,
And what is his I can make my own.
Let the valley grow in its wealth below,
And the lord keep his high degree;
But higher am I in my liberty—
The hill! the hill for me!

O'Connor's song was greeted with what the music-publishers are pleased to designate, on their title-pages, "distinguished applause;" and his "health and song" were filled to and drank with enthusiasm.

"Whose lines are those?" asked the doctor.

"I don't know," said O'Connor.

"That's as much as to say they are your own," said Growling. "Ned, don't be too modest—it is the worst fault a man can have who wants to get on in this world."

"The call is with you, Ned," shouted Murphy from the head of the table; "knock some one down for a song."

"Mr. Reddy, I hope, will favour us," said Edward, with a courteous inclination of his head towards the gentleman he named, who returned a very low bow, with many protestations that he would "do his best," &c.: "but after Mr. O'Connor, really,"—and this was said with a certain self-complacent smile, indicative of his being on very good terms with himself. Now, James Reddy wrote rhymes—bless the mark!—and was tolerably well convinced that, except Tom Moore (if he *did* except even him), there was not a man in the British dominions his equal at a lyric. He sang, too, with a kill-me-quite air, as if no lady could resist his strains; and to "give effect," as he called it, he began every stanza as loud as he could, and finished it in a gentle murmur—tailed it off very taper, indeed; in short, it seemed as if a shout had been suddenly smitten with consumption, and died in a whisper. And this, his style, he never varied, whatever the nature or expression of the song might be, or the sense to be expressed; but as he very often sang his own, there were seldom any to consider. This rubbish he had set to music by the country music-master, who believed himself to be a better composer than Sir John Stevenson, to whom the prejudices of the world gave the palm; and he eagerly caught at the opportunity which the verses and vanity of Reddy afforded him, of stringing his crotchets and quavers on the same hank with the abortive fruits of Reddy's muse, and the wretched productions hung worthily together.

Reddy, with the proper quantity of "hems and haws," and rubbing down his upper lip and chin with his forefinger and thumb, cleared his throat, tossed his nose into the air, and said he was going to give them "a little *classic* thing."

"Just look at the puppy!" snarled out old Growling to his neighbour: "he's going to measure us out some yards of his own fustian, I'm sure—he looks so pleased."

Reddy gave his last "a-hem!" and sang what he called

THE LAMENT OF ARIADNE

The graceful Greek, with gem-bright hair,
Her garments rent, and rent the air;

"What a tearing rage she was in!" said old Growling in an under-tone.

With sobs and sighs
And tearful eyes,
Like fountain fair of Helicon!

"Oh, thunder and lightning!" growled the doctor, who pulled a letter out of his pocket, and began to scribble on the blank portions of it, with the stump of a blunt pencil, which he very audibly sucked, to enable it to make a mark.

For ah, her lover false was gone!
The fickle brave,
And fickle wave,

"And pickled cabbage," said the doctor.

Combined to cheat the fickle fair.
O fickle! fickle! fickle!
But the brave should be true,
And the fair ones too—
True, true,
As the ocean's blue!
And Ariadne had not been,
Deserted there, like beauty's queen.
Oh, Adriadne!—adne!—adne!

"Beautiful!" said the doctor, with an approving nod at Reddy, who continued his song, while the doctor continued to write.

The sea-nymphs round the sea-girt shore
Mocked the maiden's sighs;
And the ocean's savage roar
Replies—
Replies—replies—replies, replies, replies.

(After the manner of "Tell me where is fancy bred.")

"Very original!" said the doctor.

With willow wand
Upon the strand.
She wrote, with trembling heart and hand,
"The brave should ne'er
Desert the fair."
But the wave the moral washed away,
Ah, well-a-day! well-a-day!
A-day!—a-day!—a-day!

Reddy smiled and bowed, and thunders of applause followed; the doctor shouted "Splendid!" several times, and continued to write and take snuff voraciously, by which those who knew him could comprehend he was bent on mischief.

"What a beautiful thing that is!" said one.

"Whose is it?" said another.

"A little thing of my own," answered Reddy, with a smile.

"I thought so," said Murphy. "By Jove, James, you *are* a genius!"

"Nonsense!" smiled the poet; "just a little classic trifle—I think *them* little classic allusions is pleasing in general—Tommy Moore is very happy in his classic allusions, you may remark—not that I, of course, mean to institute a comparison between so humble an individual as myself and Tommy Moore, who has so well been called 'the poet of all circles, and the idol of his own;' and if you will permit me, in a kindred spirit—I hope I *may* say the kindred spirit of a song—in that kindred spirit I propose *his* health—the health of Tommy Moore!"

"Don't say *Tommy!*" said the doctor, in an irascible tone; "call the man TOM, sir;—with all my heart, TOM MOORE!"

The table took the word from Jack Growling, and "Tom Moore," with all the honours of "hip and hurra!" rang round the walls of the village inn—and where is the village in Ireland *that* health has not been hailed with the fiery enthusiasm of the land whose lays he hath "wedded to immortal verse,"—the land which is proud of his birth, and holds his name in honour?

There is a magic in a great name; and in this instance that of Tom Moore turned the current from where it was setting, and instead of quizzing the nonsense of the fool who had excited their mirth, every one launched forth in praise of their native bard, and couplets from his favourite songs rang from lip to lip.

"Come, Ned of the Hill," said Murphy, "sing us one of *his* songs,—I know you have them all as pat as your prayers."

"And says them oftener," said the doctor, who still continued scribbling over the letter.

Edward, at the urgent request of many, sang that most exquisite of the melodies, "And doth not a meeting like this make amends?" and long rang the plaudits, and rapidly circulated the bottle, at its conclusion.

"We'll be the 'Alps in the sunset,' my boys," said Murphy; "and here's the wine to enlighten us! But what are *you* about there, doctor?—is it a prescription you are writing?"

"No. Prescriptions are written in Latin, and this is a bit of Greek I'm doing. Mr. Reddy has inspired me with a classic spirit, and if you will permit me, I'll volunteer a song [*bravo! bravo!*], and give you another version of the subject he has so beautifully treated—only mine is not so heart-breaking."

The doctor's proposition was received with cheers, and after he had gone through the mockery of clearing his throat, and pitching his voice after the usual manner of your would-be fine singers, he gave out, to the tune of a well-known rollicking Irish lilt, the following burlesque version of the subject of Reddy's song:—

LOVE AND LIQUOR

A Greek Allegory

I

Oh sure 't would amaze yiz
How one Misther Theseus
Desarted a lovely young lady of owld.
On a dissolute island,
All lonely and silent,
She sobbed herself sick as she sat in the cowl.
Oh, you'd think she was kilt,
As she roar'd with the quilt
Wrapp'd round her in haste as she jumped out of bed,
And ran down to the coast,
Where she looked like a ghost,
Though 't was *he* was departed—the vagabone fled
And she cried, "Well-a-day!
Sure my heart it is grey:
They're deceivers, them sojers, that goes on half-pay."

II

Whilst abusing the villain,
Came riding postilion
A nate little boy on the back of a baste,
Big enough, faith, to ate him,
But he lather'd and bate him,
And the baste to unsate him ne'er struggled the laste,
And an iligant car
He was dhrawing—by gar!
It was finer by far than a Lord Mayor's state coach,
And the chap that was in it
He sang like a linnet,

With a nate kag of whisky beside him to broach.
And he tipped now and then
Just a matter o' ten
Or twelve tumblers o' punch to his bold sarving-men.

III

They were dress'd in green livery,
But seem'd rather shivery,
For 't was only a trifle o' leaves that they wore;
But they caper'd away
Like the sweeps on May-day,
And shouted and tipp'd the tumblers galore.
A print of their masther
Is often in plaster
O' Paris, put over the door of a tap;
A fine chubby fellow,
Ripe, rosy, and mellow,
Like a peach that is ready to drop in your lap.
Hurrah! for brave Bacchus,
A bottle to crack us,
He's a friend of the people, like bowld Caius Gracchus.

IV

Now Bacchus perceiving
The lady was grieving,
He spoke to her civil, and tipp'd her a wink;
And the more that she fretted,
He soother'd and petted,
And gave her a glass her own health just to dhrink;
Her pulse it beat quicker,
The thrifle o' liquor
Enliven'd her sinking heart's cockles, I think;
So the MORAL is plain,
That if love gives you pain,
There's nothing can cure it like taking to dhrink!

Uproarious were the "bravos" which followed the doctor's impromptu; the glasses overflowed, and were emptied to his health and song, as laughing faces nodded to him round the table. The doctor sat seriously rocking himself in his chair backwards and forwards, to meet the various duckings of the beaming faces about him; for every face beamed, but one—and that was the unfortunate M'Garry's. He was most deplorably drunk, and began to hold on by the table. At last he contrived to shove back his chair and get on his legs; and making a sloping stagger towards the wall, contrived by its support to scramble his way to the door. There he balanced himself as well as he could by the handle of the lock, which chance, rather than design, enabled him to turn, and the door suddenly opening, poor M'Garry made a rush across the landing-place, and, stumbling against an opposite door, would have fallen, had he not supported himself by the lock of that also, which, again yielding to his heavy tugs, opened, and the miserable wretch making another plunge forward, his shins came in contact with the rail of a very low bed, and into it he fell head foremost, totally unable to rise, and, after some heavy grunts, he sank into a profound sleep.

In this state he was discovered soon after by Murphy, whose inventive faculty for frolic instantly suggested how the apothecary's mishap might be made the foundation of a good practical joke. Murtough went down-stairs, and procuring some blacking and red pickled cabbage by stealth, returned to the chamber where M'Garry now lay in a state of stupor, and dragging off his clothes, he made long dabs across his back with the purple juice of the pickle and Warren's paste, till poor M'Garry was as regularly striped as a tiger, from his shoulder to his flank. He then returned to the dinner-room, where the drinking bout had assumed a formidable character, and others, as well as the apothecary, began to feel the influence of their potations. Murphy confided to the doctor what he had done, and said that, when the men were drunk enough, he would contrive that M'Garry should be discovered, and then they would take their measures accordingly. It was not very long before his company were ripe enough for his designs, and then ringing the bell, he demanded of the waiter, when he entered, what had become of Mr. M'Garry. The waiter, not having any knowledge on the subject, was desired to inquire, and, a search being instituted, M'Garry was discovered by Mrs. Fay in the state Murphy had left him in. On seeing him, she was so terrified that she screamed, and ran into the dinner-room, wringing her hands, and shouting "Murder." A great commotion ensued, and a general rush to the bedroom took place, and exclamations of wonder and horror flew round the room, not only from the gentlemen of the dinner-party, but from the servants of the house, who crowded to the chamber on the first alarm, and helped not a little to increase the confusion.

"Oh! who ever see the like of it!" shouted Mrs. Fay. "He's kilt with the batin' he got! Oh, look

at him—black and blue all over! Oh, the murder it is! Oh, I wouldn't be Squire O'Grady for all his fort'n."

"Gad, I believe he's killed sure enough," said Murphy.

"What a splendid action the widow will have!" said Jack Horan.

"You forget, man," said Murphy, "this is not a case for action of damages, but a felony—hanging matter."

"Sure enough," said Jack.

"Doctor, will you feel his pulse?" said Murphy.

The doctor did as he was required, and assumed a very serious countenance. "'T is a bad business, sir—his wounds are mortifying already."

Upon this announcement, there was a general retreat from the bed, round which they had been crowding too close for the carrying on of the joke; and Mrs. Fay ran for a shovel of hot cinders, and poured vinegar over them, to fumigate the room.

"A very proper precaution, Mrs. Fay," said the doctor, with imperturbable gravity.

"That villainous smoke is choking me," said Jack Horan.

"Better that, sir, than have a pestilence in the house," said Growling.

"I'll leave the place," said Jack Horan.

"And I, too," said Doyle.

"And I," said Reddy; "'t is disgusting to a sensitive mind."

"Gentlemen!" said Murphy, shutting the door, "you must not quit the house. I must have an inquest on the body."

"An inquest!" they all exclaimed.

"Yes—an inquest."

"But there's no coroner here," said Reddy.

"No matter for that," said Murphy. "I, as the under-sheriff of the county, can preside at this inquiry. Gentlemen, take your places; bring in more lights, Mrs. Fay. Stand round the bed, gentlemen."

"Not too close," said the doctor. "Mrs. Fay, bring more vinegar."

Mrs. Fay had additional candles and more vinegar introduced, and the drunken fellows were standing as straight as they could, each with a candle in his hand, round the still prostrate M'Garry.

Murphy then opened on them with a speech, and called in every one in the house to ask did they know anything about the matter; and it was not long before it was spread all over the town, that Squire O'Grady had killed M'Garry, and that the coroner's inquest brought in a verdict of murder, and that the squire was going to be sent to jail.

This almost incredible humbug of Murphy's had gone on for nearly half an hour, when the cold arising from his want of clothes, and the riot about him, and the fumes of the vinegar, roused M'Garry, who turned on the bed and opened his eyes. There he saw a parcel of people standing round him, with candles in their hands, and countenances of drunken wonder and horror.

He uttered a hollow groan, and cried—

"Save us and keep us! where am I?"

"Retire, gentlemen," said the doctor, waving his hand authoritatively; "retire—all but the under-sheriff."

Murphy cleared the room, and shut the door, while M'Garry still kept exclaiming, "Save us and keep us! where am I? What's this? O Lord!"

"You're dead!" said Murphy; "and the coroner's inquest has just sat on you!"



An Irish Inquest

"Dead!" cried M'Garry, with a horrified stare.

"Dead!" repeated the doctor, solemnly.

"Are *you* not Doctor Growling?"

"You see the effect, Mr. Murphy," said the doctor, not noticing M'Garry's question—"you see the effect of the process."

"Wonderful!" said Murphy.

"Preserve us!" cried the bewildered apothecary. "How could I know you if I was dead, doctor? Oh, doctor dear, sure I'm not dead?"

"As a herring," said the doctor.

"Lord have mercy on me! Oh, Mr. Murphy, sure I'm not dead?"

"You're dead, sir," said Murphy; "the doctor has only galvanised you for a few moments."

"O Lord!" groaned M'Garry. "Doctor—indeed, doctor?"

"You are in a state of temporary animation," said the doctor.

"I do feel very odd, indeed," said the terrified man, putting his hands to his throbbing temples. "How long am I dead?"

"A week next Tuesday," said the doctor. "Galvanism has preserved you from decomposition."

M'Garry uttered a heavy groan, and looked up piteously at his two tormentors. Murphy, fearful the shock might drive him out of his mind, said, "Perhaps, doctor, you can preserve his life altogether: you have kept him alive so long?"

"I'll try," said Growling; "hand me that tumbler."

Murphy handed him a tumbler full of water, and the doctor gave it to M'Garry, and desired him to try and drink it; he put it to his lips and swallowed a little drop.

"Can you taste it?" asked the doctor.

"Isn't it water?" said M'Garry.

"You see how dull the nerves are yet," said Growling to Murphy; "that's aquafortis and assafoetida, and he can't taste it; we must give him another touch of the battery. Hold him up, while I go into the next room, and immerse the plates."

The doctor left the bed-room, and came back with a hot poker and some lemon-juice and water.

"Turn him gently round," said he to Murphy, "while I conduct the wires."

His order was obeyed; and giving M'Garry a touch of the hot poker, the apothecary roared

like a bull.

"That did him good!" said Growling. "Now try, can you taste anything?" and he gave him the lemon-juice and water.

"I taste a slight acid, doctor dear," said M'Garry, hopefully.

"You see what that last touch did," said Growling gravely; "but the palate is still feeble; that's nearly pure nitric."

"Oh, dear!" said M'Garry, "is it nitric?"

"You see his hearing is coming back too," said the doctor to Murphy. "Try, can he put his legs under him?"

They raised the apothecary from the bed; and when he staggered and fell forward, he looked horrified. "Oh, dear! I can't walk. I'm afraid I am—I am no more!"

"Don't despair," said the doctor; "I pledge my professional reputation to save you now, since you can stand at all, and your senses are partly restored. Let him lie down again; try, could he sleep——"

"Sleep!" said M'Garry, with horror; "perhaps never to awaken!"

"I'll keep up the galvanic influence—don't be afraid; depend upon me—there, lie down. Can you shut your eyes? Yes, I see you can: don't open them so fast. Try, can you keep them shut? Don't open them till I tell you—wait till I count two hundred and fifty. That's right—turn a little more round—keep your eyes fast; that's it. One—two—three—four—five—six—seven;" and so he went on, making a longer interval between every number, till the monotonous sound, and the closed eye of the helplessly drunken man, produced the effect desired by the doctor; and the heavy snoring of the apothecary soon bore witness that he slept.

We hope it is not necessary to assure our fair readers that Edward O'Connor had nothing to do with this scene of drunken absurdity. No: long before the evening's proceedings had assumed the character of a regular drinking bout, he had contrived to make his escape, his head only sufficiently excited to increase his sentimentality; so, instead of riding home direct, he took a round of some eight miles, to have a look at Merryvale, for there dwelt Fanny Dawson—the Darling Fanny Dawson, sister to Dick, whose devilry was more than redeemed in the family by the angelic sweetness of his lovely and sportive sister. For the present, however, poor Edward O'Connor was not allowed to address Fanny; but his love for her knew no abatement notwithstanding; and to see the place where she dwelt had for him a charm. There he sat in his saddle, at the gate, looking up the long line of old trees through which the cool moonlight was streaming; and he fancied that Fanny's foot had trodden that avenue perhaps a few hours before, and even *that* gave him pleasure: for to those who love with the fond enthusiasm of Edward O'Connor, the very vacancy where the loved one has been is sacred.

The horse pawed impatiently to be gone, and Edward reined him up with a chiding voice; but the animal continuing restless, Edward's apostrophes to his mistress, and warnings to his horse, made an odd mixture; and we would recommend gentlemen, after their second bottle, not to let themselves be overheard in their love-fits; for even as fine a fellow as Edward O'Connor is likely to be ridiculous under such circumstances.

"Oh, Fanny!" cried Edward, "my adored Fanny!"—then to his horse, "*Be quiet, you brute!—My love, my angel;—you devil, I'll thrash you, if you don't be quiet!*"—though separated from me, you are always present to mind; your bright eyes, your raven locks—*your mouth's as hard as a paving-stone, you brute!*—Oh, Fanny! if fate be ever propitious—should I be blessed with the divine possession of your charms, you should then know—*what a devil you are!*—you should then know the tenderest care. I'll guard you, caress you, fondle you—*I'll bury my spurs in you, you devil!*—Oh, Fanny! beloved one!—farewell—good night—a thousand blessings on you!—*and now go and be hanged to you!*" said he, bitterly, putting his spurs to his horse and galloping home.

When the doctor was satisfied that M'Garry was fast asleep, he and Murphy left the room, and locked the door. They were encountered on the lobby by several curious people, who wanted to know, "was the man dead?" The doctor shook his head very gravely, and said "Not quite;" while Murphy, with a serious nod, said "All over, I'm afraid, Mrs. Fay;" for he perceived among the persons on the lobby a servant of O'Grady's, who chanced to be in the town, and was all wonder and fright at the news of his master having committed murder. Murphy and the doctor proceeded to the dinner-room, where they found the drunken men wrangling about what verdict they should bring in, and a discursive dispute touching on "murder," and "manslaughter," and "accidental death," and "the visitation of God," mingled with noisy toasts and flowing cups, until any sagacity the company ever possessed was sacrificed to the rosy god.

The lateness of the hour, and the state of the company, rendered riding home impossible to most of them; so Mrs. Fay was called upon to prepare beds. The inn did not afford a sufficiency of beds to accommodate every gentleman with a single one, so a toss-up was resorted to, to decide who should sleep double. The fortune of war cast the unfortunate James Reddy upon the doctor, who, though one of the few who were capable of self-protection, preferred remaining at the inn to riding home some miles. Now James Reddy, though very drunk indeed, had sense enough left to dislike the lot that fate had cast him. To sleep with such a slovenly man as the doctor shocked James, who was a bit of a dandy. The doctor seemed perfectly contented with the arrangement; and as he bade Murphy "good night," a lurking devilment hung about his huge mouth. All the men staggered off, or were supported, to their various beds, but one—and he could not stir from the floor, where he lay hugging the leg of the table. To every effort to disturb him he replied with an imploring grunt, to "let him alone," and he hugged the leg of the table closer, exclaiming, "I won't leave you, Mrs. Fay!—my darling Mrs. Fay! rowl your arms round me, Mrs. Fay!"

"Ah, get up and go to bed, Misther Doyle," said Tim. "Sure the misthress is not here at all."

"I know she's not," said Doyle. "Who says a word against her?"

"Sure you're talkin' to her yourself, sir."

"Pooh, pooh, man!—you're dhrunk."

"Ah, come to bed, Misther Doyle!" said Tim, in an imploring tone. "Och sure, my heart's broken with you."

"Don't say your heart's broke, my sweet landlady—my darling Mrs. Fay! the apple of my eye you are."

"Nonsense, Misther Doyle."

"True as the sun, moon, and stars. Apple of my eye, did I say?—I'd give the apples of my eyes to make sauce for the cockles of your heart. Mrs. Fay, darling, don't be coy. Ha! I have you fast!" and he gripped the table closer.

"Well, you *are* dhrunk, Misther Doyle," said Tim.

"I hope my breath is not offensive from drink, Mrs. Fay," said Doyle, in an amatory whisper to the leg of the table.

"Ah, get out o' that, Misther Doyle," said Tim; accompanying the exclamation with a good shake, which somewhat roused the prostrate form.

"Who's there?"

"I want you to come to bed, sir;—eh, don't be so foolish, Misther Doyle. Sure you don't think the misthress would be rowlin' on the flure there wid you, as dhrunk as a pig——"

"Dare not wound her fame! Who says a word of Mrs. Fay?"

"Arrah, sure you're talkin' there about her this half-hour."

"False villain!—Whisht, my darling," said he to the leg of the table; "I'll never betray you. Hug me tight, Mrs. Fay!"

"Bad luck to the care I'll take any more about you," say Tim. "Sleep on the flure, if you like." And Doyle was left to pass the night in the soft imaginary delights of Mrs. Fay's mahogany embraces.

How fared it with James Reddy? Alas! poor James was doomed to a night of torment, the effects of which he remembered for many days after. In fact, had James been left to his choice, he would rather have slept with the house-dog than with the doctor; but he dreaded the consequences of letting old Jack perceive his antipathy; and visions of future chastisement from the doctor's satirical tongue awed him into submission to the present punishment. He sneaked into bed, therefore, and his deep potations ensured him immediate sleep, from which he awoke, however, in the middle of the night in torture, from the deep scratches inflicted upon him by every kick of old Growling. At last poor Reddy could stand it no longer, and the earliest hour of dawn revealed him to the doctor putting on his clothes, swearing like a trooper at one moment, and at the next apostrophising the genius of gentility. "What it is to have to do with a person that is not a gentleman!" he exclaimed, as he pulled on one leg of his trousers.

"What is the matter with you?" asked old Jack from the bed.

"The matter, sir, is, that I'm going."

"Is it at this hour! Tut, man, don't be a fool. Get into bed again."

"Never, sir, with *you* at least. I have seldom slept two in a bed, Dr. Growling, for my gentlemanly habits forbid it; but when circumstances have obliged me, it has been with gentlemen—*gentlemen*, doctor," and he laid a stress on the word—"gentlemen, sir, who cut their toe-nails. Sir, I am a serious sufferer by your coarse habits; you have scratched me, sir, nearly to death. I am one gore of blood——"

"Tut, man! 't was not my nails scratched you; it was only my spurs I put on going to bed, to keep you at a distance from me; you were so disgustingly drunk, my *gentleman!*—look there!" and he poked his leg out of bed, and there, sure enough, Reddy saw a spur buckled: and, dumb-founded at this evidence of the doctor's atrocity, he snatched up his clothes, and rushed from the room, as from the den of a bear.

Murphy twisted a beneficial result to M'Garry out of the night's riotous frolic at his expense; for, in the morning, taking advantage of the report of the inquest which he knew must have reached Neck-or-Nothing Hall, he made a communication to O'Grady, so equivocally worded that the Squire fell into the trap. The note ran as follows:—

"SIR,—You must be aware that your act of yesterday has raised a strong feeling in the country against you, and that so flagrant a violation of the laws cannot fail to be visited with terrible severity upon you: for, though your position in rank places you far above the condition of the unfortunate man on whom you wreaked your vengeance, you know, sir, that in the eye of the law you are equal, and the shield of justice protects the peasant as well as the prince. Under these circumstances, sir, considering the *awful consequences* of your ungoverned rage (which, I doubt not, now, you deplore), I would suggest to you by a timely offer of compromise, in the shape of a handsome sum of money—say two hundred pounds—to lull the storms which must otherwise burst on your devoted head, and save your name from dishonour. I anxiously await your answer, as proceedings must instantly commence, and the law take its course, unless Mrs. M'Garry can be pacified.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"MURTOUGH MURPHY.

"*To Gustavus Granby O'Grady, Esq.,
Neck-or-Nothing Hall.*"

O'Grady was thoroughly frightened; and strange as it may appear, did believe he could compromise for killing only a plebeian; and actually sent Murphy his note of hand for the sum demanded. Murtough posted off to M'Garry: he and his wife received him with shouts of indignation, and heaped reproaches on his head, for the trick he had played on the apothecary.

"Oh! Mither Murphy—never look me in the face again!" said Mrs. M'Garry, who was ugly enough to make the request quite unnecessary; "to send my husband home to me a beast!"

"Striped like a tiger!" said M'Garry.

"Blacking and pickled cabbage, Mither Murphy!" said the wife. "Oh fie, sir!—I did not think you could be so low."

"Galvanism!" said M'Garry, furiously. "My professional honour wounded!"

"Whisht, whisht, man!" said Murphy; "there's a finer plaister than any in your shop for the cure of wounded honour. Look at that!"—and he handed him the note for two hundred: "there's galvanism for you!"

"What *is* this?" said M'Garry, in amazement.

"The result of last night's inquest," said Murphy. "You have got your damages without a trial; so pocket your money, and be thankful."

The two hundred pounds at once changed the aspect of affairs. M'Garry vowed eternal gratitude, with protestations that Murphy was the cleverest attorney alive, and ought to be chief justice. The wife was equally vociferous in her acknowledgments, until Murtough, who, when he entered the house, was near falling a sacrifice to the claws of the apothecary's wife, was obliged to rush from the premises to shun the more terrible consequences of her embraces.

We have sat so long at our dinner, that we have almost lost sight of poor Andy, to whom we must now return. When he ran to his mother's cabin, to escape from the fangs of Dick Dawson, there was no one within: his mother being digging a few potatoes for supper from the little ridge behind her house, and Oonah Riley, her niece—an orphan girl who lived with her—being up to Squire Egan's to sell some eggs; for round the poorest cabins in Ireland you scarcely ever fail to see some ragged hens, whose eggs are never consumed by their proprietors, except, perhaps, on Easter Sunday, but sold to the neighbouring gentry at a trifling price.

Andy cared not who was out, or who was in, provided he could only escape from Dick; so without asking any questions, he crawled under the wretched bed in the dark corner, where his mother and Oonah slept, and where the latter, through the blessed influence of health, youth, and an innocent heart, had brighter dreams than attended many a couch whose downy pillows and silken hangings would more than purchase the fee-simple of any cabin in Ireland. There Andy, in a state of utter exhaustion from his fears, his race, and his thrashing, soon fell asleep, and the terrors of Dick the Devil gave place to the blessing of the profoundest slumber.

Quite unconscious of the presence of her darling Andy was the widow Rooney, as she returned from the potato ridge into her cabin; depositing a *skeough* of the newly dug esculent at the door, and replacing the spade in its own corner of the cabin. At the same moment Oonah returned, after disposing of her eggs, and handed the three pence she had received for them to her aunt, who dropped them into the deep pocket of blue striped tick which hung at her side.

"Take the pail, Oonah, *ma chree*, and run to the well for some wather to wash the pratees, while I get the pot ready for bilin' them; it wants scourin', for the pig was atin' his dinner out iv it, the craythur!"

Off went Oonah with her pail, which she soon filled from the clear spring; and placing the vessel on her head, walked back to the cabin with that beautiful erect form, free step, and graceful swaying of the figure, so peculiar to the women of Ireland and the East, from their habit of carrying weights upon the head. The potatoes were soon washed; and as they got their last dash of water in the *skeough*, whose open wicker-work let the moisture drain from them, up came Larry Hogan, who, being what is called a "civil-spoken man," addressed Mrs. Rooney in the following agreeable manner:—

"Them's purty pratees, Mrs. Rooney; God save you, ma'am!"

"Deed an' they are—thank you kindly, Mr. Hogan; God save you and yours too! And how would the woman that owns you be?"

"Hearty, thank you."

"Will you step in?"

"No, I'm obleeged to you—I must be aff home wid me; but I'll just get a coal for my pipe, for it wint out on me awhile agone with the fright."

"Well, I've heer'd quare things, Larry Hogan," said Oonah, laughing and showing her white teeth; "but I never heer'd so quare a thing as a pipe goin' out with the fright."

"Oh, how sharp you are!—takin' one up afore they're down."

"Not afore they're down, Larry; for you said it."

"Well, if I was down, you were down *on* me; so you are down too, you see. Ha, ha! And after all now, Oonah, a pipe is like a Christian in many ways: sure it's made o' clay like a Christian, and has the spark o' life in it, and while the breath is in it the spark is alive; but when the breath is out of it the spark dies, and then it grows cowl'd like a Christian; and isn't it a pleasant companion like a Christian?"

"Faix, some Christians isn't pleasant companions at all!" chimed in Mrs. Rooney, sententiously.

"Well, but they ought to be," said Larry; "and isn't a pipe sometimes cracked like a Christian, and isn't it sometimes choked liked a Christian?"

"Oh, choke you and your pipe together, Larry! will you never have done?" said the widow.

"The most improvinist thing in the world is smokin'," said Larry, who had now relit his pipe, and squatted himself on a three-legged stool beside the widow's fire. "The most improvinist in the world"—(paugh!)—and a parenthetical whiff of tobacco-smoke curled out of the corner of Larry's mouth—"is smokin': for the smoke shows you, as it were, the life o' man passin' away like a puff—(paugh!)—just like that; and the tibakky turns to ashes like his poor perishable body; for, as the song says—

"Tibakky is an Indian weed,
Alive at morn and dead at eve;
It lives but an hour,
Is cut down like a flower,
Think o' this when you're smoking tiba-akky!"

And Larry sung the ditty as he crammed some of the weed into the bowl of his pipe with his little finger.

"Why, you're as good as a sarmint this evenin', Larry," said the widow, as she lifted the iron pot on the fire.

"There's worse sarmints nor that, I can tell you," rejoined Larry, who took up the old song again—

"A pipe it larns us all this thing—
'T is fair without and foul within,
Just like a sowl begrim'd with sin.
Think o' this when you're smoking tiba-akky!"

Larry puffed away silently for a few minutes, and when Oonah had placed a few sods of turf round the pot in an upright position, that the flame might curl upward round them, and so hasten the boiling, she drew a stool near the fire, and asked Larry to explain about the fright.

"Why I was coming up by the cross-road there, when what should I see but a ghost——"

"A ghost!!!" exclaimed the widow and Oonah, with suppressed voices and distended mouth and eyes.

"To all appearance," said Larry; "but it was only a thing was stuck in the hedge to freken whoever was passin' by; and as I kem up to it there was a groan, so I started, and looked at it for a minit, or thereaway; but I seen what it was, and threwn a stone at it, for fear I'd be mistaken: and I heer'd titherin' inside the hedge, and then I knew 't was only devilment of some one."

"And what was it?" asked Oonah.

"'T was a horse's head, in throth, with an owld hat on the top of it, and two buck-briars stuck out at each side, and some rags hanging on them, and an owld breeches shakin' undher the head; 't was just altogether like a long pale-faced man, with high shouldhers and no body, and very long arms and short legs:—faith, it frightened me at first."

"And no wondher," said Oonah. "Dear, but I think I'd lose my life if I seen the like?"

"But sure," said the widow, "wouldn't you know that ghosts never appears by day?"

"Ay, but I hadn't time to think o' that, bein' taken short wid the fright—more betoken, 't was the place the murdher happened in long ago."

"Sure enough," said the widow. "God betune us and harm!" and she marked herself with the sign of the cross as she spoke; "and a terrible murdher it was," added she.

"How was it?" inquired Oonah, drawing her seat closer to her aunt and Larry.

"'T was a schoolmaster, dear, that was found dead on the road one mornin', with his head full of fractions," said the widow.

"All in jommethry," [3] said Larry.

"And some said he fell off the horse," said the widow.

"And more say the horse fell on him," said Larry.

"And again, there was some said the horse kicked him in the head," said the widow.

"And there was talk of shoe-aside," said Larry.

"The horse's shoe was it?" asked Oonah.

"No, *alanna*," said Larry; "shoe-aside is Latin for cutting your throat."

"But he didn't cut his throat," said the widow.

"But sure it's all one whether he done it wid a razhir on his throat, or a hammer on his head; it's shoe-aside all the same."

"But there was no hammer found, was there?" said the widow.

"No," said Larry, "but some people thought he might have hid the hammer afther he done it, to take off the disgrace of the shoe-aside."

"But wasn't there any life in him when he was found?"

"Not a taste. The crowner's jury sot on him, and he never said a word agin it, and if he was alive he would."

"And didn't they find anything at all?" said Oonah.

"Nothing but the vardict," said Larry.

"And was that what killed him?" said Oonah.

"No, my dear; 't was the crack in the head that killed him, however he kem by it; but the vardict o' the crowner was, that it was done, and that some one did it, and that they wor blackguards, whoever they wor, and persons onknown; and sure if they wor onknown then, they'd always stay so, for who'd know them afther doing the like?"

"Thru for you, Larry," said the widow; "but what was that to the murdher over at the green hills beyant?"

"Oh! that was the terriblest murdher ever was in the place, or nigh it: that was the murdher in earnest!"

With that eagerness which always attends the relation of horrible stories, Larry and the old woman raked up every murder and robbery that had occurred within their recollection, while Oonah listened with mixed curiosity and fear. The boiling over of the pot at length recalled them to a sense of the business that ought to be attended to at the moment, and Larry was invited to take share of the potatoes. This he declined; declaring, as he had done some time previously, that he must "be off home," and to the door he went accordingly; but as the evening had closed into the darkness of the night, he paused on opening it with a sensation he would not have liked to own. The fact was that, after the discussion of numerous nightly murders, he would rather have had daylight on the outside of the cabin; for the horrid stories that had been revived round the blazing hearth were not the best preparation for going a lonely road on a dark night. But go he should, and go he did; and it is not improbable that the widow, from sympathy, had a notion why Larry paused upon the threshold; for the moment he had crossed it, and that they had exchanged their "Good night, and God speed you," the door was rapidly closed and bolted. The widow returned to the fireside and was silent, while Oonah looked by the light of a candle into the boiling pot, to ascertain if the potatoes were yet done, and cast a fearful glance up the wide chimney as she withdrew from the inspection.

"I wish Larry did not tell us such horrid stories," said she, as she laid the rushlight on the table; "I'll be dhramin' all night o' them."

"Deed an' that's thru," said the widow; "I wish he hadn't."

"Sure you was as bad yourself," said Oonah.

"Troth, an' I b'lieve I was, child, and I'm sorry for it now: but let us ate our supper, and go to bed, in God's name."

"I'm afeared o' my life to go to bed!" said Oonah. "Wisha! but I'd give the world it was mornin'."

"Ate your supper, child, ate your supper," said her aunt, giving the example, which was followed by Oonah; and after the light meal, their prayers were said, and perchance with a little extra devotion, from their peculiar state of mind; then to bed they went. The rushlight being extinguished, the only light remaining was that shed from the red embers of the decaying fire, which cast so uncertain a glimmer within the cabin, that its effect was almost worse than utter darkness to a timid person; for any object within its range assumed a form unlike its own, and presented some fantastic image to the eye; and as Oonah, contrary to her usual habit, could not fall asleep the moment she went to bed, she could not resist peering forth from under the bed-clothes through the uncertain gloom, in a painful state of watchfulness, which became gradually relaxed into an uneasy sleep.

The night was about half spent when Andy began to awake; and as he stretched his arms, and rolled his whole body round, he struck the bottom of the bed above him in the action and woke his mother. "Dear me," thought the widow, "I can't sleep at all to-night." Andy gave another turn soon after, which roused Oonah. She started, and shaking her aunt, asked her, in a low voice, if it was she who kicked her, though she scarcely hoped an answer in the affirmative, and yet dared not believe what her fears whispered.

"No, *a cushla*," whispered the aunt.

"Did *you* feel anything?" asked Oonah, trembling violently.

"What do you mane, *alanna*?" said the aunt.

Andy gave another roll. "There it is again!" gasped Oonah; and in a whisper, scarcely above her breath, she added, "Aunt—there's some one under the bed!"

The aunt did not answer; but the two women drew closer together and held each other in their arms, as if their proximity afforded protection. Thus they lay in breathless fear for some minutes, while Andy began to be influenced by a vision, in which the duel, and the chase, and the thrashing were all enacted over again, and soon an odd word began to escape from the dream. "Gi' me the pist'l, Dick—the pist'l!"

"There are two of them!" whispered Oonah. "God be merciful to us! Do you hear him asking for the pistol?"

"Screech!" said her aunt.

"I can't," said Oonah.

Andy was quiet for some time, while the women scarcely breathed.

"Suppose we get up, and make for the door?" said the aunt.

"I wouldn't put my foot out of the bed for the world," said Oonah. "I'm afeard one o' them will catch me by the leg."

"Howld him! howld him!" grumbled Andy.

"I'll die with the fright, aunt! I feel I'm dyin'! Let us say our prayers, aunt, for we're goin' to be murdered!" The two women began to repeat with fervour their *aves* and *paternosters*, while at this immediate juncture, Andy's dream having borne him to the dirty ditch where Dick Dawson had pommelled him, he began to vociferate, "Murder, murder!" so fiercely, that the women screamed together in an agony of terror, and "Murder! murder!" was shouted by the whole party; for, once the widow and Oonah found their voices, they made good use of them. The noise awoke Andy, who had, be it remembered, a tolerably long sleep by this time: and he having quite forgotten where he had lain down, and finding himself confined by the bed above him, and smothering for want of air, with the fierce shouts of murder ringing in his ear, woke in as great a fright as the women in the bed, and became a party in the terror he himself had produced; every plunge he gave under the bed inflicted a poke or a kick on his mother and cousin, which was answered by the cry of "Murder!"

"Let me out—let me out, Misther Dick!" roared Andy. "Where am I at all? Let me out!"

"Help! help! murdher!" roared the women.

"I'll never shoot any one again, Misther Dick—let me up!"

Andy scrambled from under the bed, half awake, and whole frightened by the darkness and the noise, which was now increased by the barking of the cur-dog.

"Hie at him, Coaly!" roared Mrs. Rooney; "howld him! howld him!"

Now as this address was often made to the cur respecting the pig, when Mrs. Rooney sometimes wanted a quiet moment in the day, and the pig didn't like quitting the premises, the dog ran to the corner of the cabin where the pig habitually lodged, and laid hold of his ear with the strongest testimonials of affection, which polite attention the pig acknowledged by a prolonged squealing, that drowned the voices of the women and Andy together; and now the cocks and hens that were roosting on the rafters of the cabin were startled by the din, and the crowing and cackling and the flapping of the frightened fowls, as they flew about in the dark, added to the general uproar and confusion.

"A—h!" screamed Oonah, "take your hands off me!" as Andy, getting from under the bed, laid his hand upon it to assist him, and caught a grip of his cousin.

"Who are you at all?" cried Andy, making another claw, and catching hold of his mother's nose.

"Oonah, they're murdhering me!" shouted the widow.

The name of Oonah, and the voice of his mother, recalled his senses to Andy, who shouted, "Mother, mother! what's the matter?" A frightened hen flew in his face, and nearly knocked Andy down. "Bad cess to you," cried Andy, "what do you hit me for?"

"Who are you at all?" cried the widow.

"Don't you know me?" said Andy.

"No, I don't know you; by the vartue o' my oath, I don't; and I'll never swear again you, jintlemen, if you lave the place and spare our lives!"

Here the hens flew against the dresser, and smash went the plates and dishes.

"Oh, jintlemen dear, don't rack and ruin me that way; don't destroy a lone woman."

"Mother, mother, what's this at all? Don't you know your own Andy?"

"Is it you that's there?" cried the widow, catching hold of him.

"To be sure it's me," said Andy.

"You won't let us be murdered, will you?"

"Who'd murdher you?"

"Them people that's with you." Smash went another plate. "Do you hear that?—they're rackin' my place, the villains!"

"Divil a one's wid me at all!" said Andy.

"I'll take my oath there was three or four under the bed," said Oonah.

"Not one but myself," said Andy.

"Are you sure?" said his mother.

"Cock sure!" said Andy, and a loud crowing gave evidence in favour of his assertion.

"The fowls is going mad," said the widow.

"And the pig's distracted," said Oonah.

"No wonder! the dog's murdherin' him," said Andy.

"Get up, and light the rushlight, Oonah," said the widow: "you'll get a spark out o' the turf cendhers."

"Some o' them will catch me, maybe," said Oonah.

"Get up, I tell you!" said the widow.

Oonah now arose, and groped her way to the fireplace, where, by dint of blowing upon the embers and poking the rushlight among the turf ashes, a light was at length obtained. She then returned to the bed, and threw her petticoat over her shoulders.

"What's this at all?" said the widow, rising, and wrapping a blanket round her.

"Bad cess to the know I know!" said Andy.

"Look under the bed, Oonah," said the aunt.

Oonah obeyed, and screamed, and ran behind Andy. "There's another here yet!" said she.

Andy seized the poker, and, standing on the defensive, desired the villain to come out: the demand was not complied with.

"There's nobody there," said Andy.

"I'll take my oath there is," said Oonah; "a dirty blackguard, without any clothes on him."

"Come out, you robber!" said Andy, making a lunge under the truckle.

A grunt ensued, and out rushed the pig, who had escaped from the dog—the dog having discovered a greater attraction in some fat that was knocked from the dresser, which the widow intended for the dipping of rushes in; but the dog being enlightened to his own interest without rushlights, and preferring mutton fat to pig's ear, had suffered the grunter to go at large, while he was captivated by the fat. The clink of a three-legged stool the widow seized to the rescue was a stronger argument against the dog than he was prepared to answer, and a remnant of fat was preserved from the rapacious Coaly.

"Where's the rest o' the robbers?" said Oonah; "there's three o' them, I know."

"You're dhramin'," said Andy. "Divil a robber is here but myself."

"And what brought you here?" said his mother.



Andy's Welcome Home

"I was afeard they'd murdher me!" said Andy.

"Murdher!" exclaimed the widow and Oonah together, still startled by the very sound of the word. "Who do you mane?"

"Misther Dick," said Andy.

"Aunt, I tell you," said Oonah, "this is some more of Andy's blundhers. Sure Misther Dawson wouldn't be goin' to murdher any one; let us look round the cabin, and find out who's in it, for I won't be aisy until I look into every corner, to see there's no robbers in the place: for I tell you again, there was three o' them undher the bed."

The search was made, and the widow and Oonah at length satisfied that there were no midnight assassins there with long knives to cut their throats; and then they began to thank God that their lives were safe.

"But, oh! look at my chaynee!" said the widow, clasping her hands, and casting a look of despair at the shattered delf that lay around her; "look at my chaynee!"

"And what *was* it brought *you* here?" said Oonah, facing round on Andy, with a dangerous look, rather, in her bright eye. "Will you tell us that—what *was* it?"

"I came to save my life, I tell you," said Andy.

"To put us in dhread of ours, you mane," said Oonah. "Just look at the *omadhaun* there," said she to her aunt, "standin' with his mouth open, just as if nothin' happened, and he after frightening the lives out of us."

"Thru for you, *alanna*," said her aunt.

"And would no place sarve you, indeed, but undher our bed, you vagabone?" said his mother, roused to a sense of his delinquency; "to come in like a merodin' villain as you are, and hide under the bed, and frighten the lives out of us, and rack and ruin my place!"

"'T was Misther Dick, I tell you," said Andy.

"Bad scran to you, you unlucky hangin' bone thief!" cried the widow, seizing him by the hair, and giving him a hearty cuff on the ear, which would have knocked him down, only that Oonah kept him up by an equally well-applied box on the other.

"Would you murdher me?" shouted Andy, as he saw his mother lay hold of the broom.

"Aren't you afther frightenin' the lives out of us, you dirty, good-for-nothing, mischief-making ___"

On poured the torrent of abuse, rendered more impressive by a whack at every word. Andy roared, and the more he roared, the more did Oonah and his mother thrash him.

CHAPTER VII

"Love rules the camp, the court, the grove,
And men below and saints above:
For Love is Heaven, and Heaven is Love—"

So sang Scott. Quite agreeing with the antithesis of the last line, perhaps in the second, where he talks of men and saints, another view of the subject, or turn of the phrase, might have introduced sinners quite as successfully. This is said without the smallest intention of using the word *sinner*s in a questionable manner. Love, in its purest shape, may lead to sinning on the part of persons least interested in the question; for is it not a sin when the folly, or caprice, or selfishness of a third party or fourth makes a trio or quartette of that which nature undoubtedly intended for a duet, and so spoils it?

Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts—ay, and even cousins—sometimes put in their oar to disturb that stream which is troubled enough without their interference, and, as the Bard of Avon says,

"Never did run smooth."

And so it was in the case of Fanny Dawson and Edward O'Connor. A piece of innocent fun on the part of her brother, and blind pertinacity—indeed, downright absurdity—on her father's side, interrupted the intercourse of affection, which had subsisted silently for many a long day between the lovers, but was acknowledged, at last, with delight to the two whom it most concerned, and satisfaction to all who knew or held them dear. Yet the harmony of this sweet concordance of spirits was marred by youthful frolic and doting absurdity. This welding together of hearts in the purest fire of nature's own contriving was broken at a blow by a weak old man. Is it too much to call this *a sin*? Less mischievous things are branded with the name in the common-place parlance of the world. The cold and phlegmatic may not understand this; but they who *can* love know how bitterly every after-hour of life may be poisoned with the taint which hapless love has infused into the current of future years, and can believe how many a heart equal to the highest enterprise has been palsied by the touch of despair. Sweet and holy is the duty of child to parent; but sacred also is the obligation of those who govern in so hallowed a position. Their rule should be guided by justice; they should pray for judgment in their mastery.

Fanny Dawson's father was an odd sort of person. His ancestors were settlers in Ireland of the time of William the Third, and having won their lands by the sword, it is quite natural the love of arms should have been hereditary in the family. Mr. Dawson, therefore, had served many years as a soldier, and was a bit of a martinet, not only in military but all other affairs. His mind was of so tenacious a character, that an impression once received there became indelible; and if the Major once made up his mind, or indulged the belief, that such and such things were so and so, the waters of truth could never wash out the mistake—stubbornness had written them there with her own indelible marking-ink.

Now, one of the old gentleman's weak points was a museum of the most heterogeneous nature, consisting of odds and ends from all parts of the world, and appertaining to all subjects. Nothing was too high or too low: a bronze helmet from the plains of Marathon, which, to the classic eye of an artist, conveyed the idea of a Minerva's head beneath it, would not have been more prized by the Major than a cavalry cap with some bullet-mark of which *he could tell an anecdote*. A certain skin of a tiger he prized much, because the animal had dined on his dearest friend in one of the jungles of Bengal; also a pistol which he vouched for as being the one with which Hatfield fired at George the Third; the hammer with which Crawley (of Hessian-boot memory) murdered his landlady; the string which was on Viotti's violin when he played before Queen Charlotte; the horn which was *supposed* to be in the lantern of Guy Fawkes; a small piece of the coat worn by the Prince of Orange on his landing in England; and other such relics. But far above these, the Major prized the skeleton of a horse's head, which occupied the principal place in his museum. This he declared to be part of the identical horse which bore Duke Schomberg when he crossed the Boyne, in the celebrated battle so called; and with whimsical ingenuity, he had contrived to string some wires upon the bony fabric, which yielded a sort of hurdy-gurdy vibration to the strings when touched: and the Major's most favourite feat was to play the tune of the Boyne Water on the head of Duke Schomberg's horse. In short, his collection was composed of trifles from north, south, east, and west: some leaf from the prodigal verdure of India, or gorgeous shell from the Pacific, or paw of bear, or tooth of walrus; but beyond all teeth, one pre-eminently was valued—it was one of his own, which he had lost the use of by a wound in the jaw, received in action; and no one ever entered his house and escaped without hearing all about it, from the first shot fired in the affair by the skirmishers, to the last charge of the victorious cavalry. The tooth was always produced along with the story, together with the declaration, that every dentist who ever saw it protested it was the largest human tooth ever seen. Now some little sparring was not unfrequent between old Mr. Dawson and Edward, on the subject of their respective museums: the old gentleman "pooh-poohing" Edward's "rotten rusty rubbish," as he called it, and Edward defending, as gently as he could, his patriotic

partiality for natural antiquities. This little war never led to any evil results; for Edward not only loved Fanny too well, but respected age too much to lean hard on the old gentleman's weakness, or seek to reduce his fancied superiority as a collector; but the tooth, the ill-omened tooth, at last gnawed asunder the bond of friendship and affection which had subsisted between the two families for so many years.

The Major had paraded his tooth so often, that Dick Dawson began to tire of it, and for the purpose of making it a source of amusement to himself, he stole his father's keys, one day, and opening the cabinet in which his tooth was enshrined, he abstracted the grinder which nature had bestowed on the Major, and substituted in its stead a horse's tooth of no contemptible dimensions. A party some days after dined with the old gentleman, and after dinner the story of the skirmish turned up, as a matter of course, and the enormous size of the tooth wound up the tedious tale.

"Hadn't you better show it to them, sir?" said Dick, from the foot of the table.

"Indeed, then, I will," said the Major, "for it really is a curiosity."

"Let me go for it, sir," said Dick, well knowing he would be refused.

"No, no," answered his father, rising; "I never let any one go to my pet cabinet but myself;" and so saying he left the room, and proceeded to his museum. It has been already said, that the Major's mind was of that character, which once being satisfied of anything could never be convinced of the contrary; and having for years been in the habit of drawing his own tooth out of his own cabinet, the increased size of the one which he now extracted from it never struck him; so he returned to the dining-room, and presented with great exultation to the company the tooth Dick had substituted. It may be imagined how the people stared, when an old gentleman, and moreover a major, declared upon his honour, that a great horse's tooth was his own; but having done so, politeness forbade they should contradict him, more particularly at the head of his own table, so they smothered their smiles as well as they could, and declared it was the most wonderful tooth they ever beheld: and instead of attempting to question the fact, they launched forth in expressions of admiration and surprise, and the fable, instead of being questioned, was received with welcome, and made food for mirth. The difficulty was not to laugh; and in the midst of twisted mouths, affected sneezing, and applications of pocket-handkerchiefs to rebellious cachinnations, Dick, the maker of the joke, sat unmoved, sipping his claret with a serenity which might have roused the envy of a Red Indian.

"I think that's something like a tooth!" said Dick.

"Prodigious—wonderful—tremendous!" ran round the board.

"Give it to me again," said one.

"Let me look at it once more," said another.

"Colossal!" exclaimed a third.

"Gigantic!" shouted all, as the tooth made the circuit of the table.

The Major was delighted, and never remembered his tooth to have created such a sensation; and when at last it was returned to him, he turned it about in his own hand, and cast many fond glances at the monstrosity, before it was finally deposited in his waistcoat pocket. This was the most ridiculous part of the exhibition: to see a gentleman, with the use of his eyes, looking affectionately at a thumping horse's tooth, and believing it to be his own. Yet this was a key to the Major's whole character. A received opinion was with him unchangeable, no alteration of circumstances could shake it: *it was his tooth*. A belief or a doubt was equally sacred with him; and though his senses in the present case should have shown him it was a horse's tooth—no, it was a piece of himself—his own dear tooth.

After this party, the success which crowned his anecdote and its attendant relic made him fonder of showing it off; and many a day did Dick the Devil enjoy the astonishment of visitors as his father exhibited the enormous tooth as his own. Fonder and fonder grew the Major of his tooth and his story, until the unlucky day Edward O'Connor happened to be in the museum with a party of ladies, to whom the old gentleman was showing off his treasures with great effect and some pains; for the Major, like most old soldiers, was very attentive to the fair sex. At last the pet cabinet was opened, and out came the tooth. One universal exclamation of surprise arose on its appearance: "What a wonderful man the Major was to have such a tooth!" Just then, by an unlucky chance, Edward, who had not seen the Major produce the wonder from his cabinet, perceived the relic in the hand of one of the ladies at the extremity of the group, and, fancying it had dropped from the horse's head, he said—

"I suppose that is one of the teeth out of old Schomberg's skull."

The Major thought this an impertinent allusion to his political bias, and said, very sharply, "What do you mean by old Schomberg?"

"The horse's head, sir," replied Edward, pointing to the musical relic.

"It was of *my* tooth you spoke, sir, when you said 'old Schomberg,'" returned the Major, still more offended at what he considered Edward's evasion.

"I assure you," said Edward, with the strongest evidence of a desire to be reconciled in his voice and manner—"I assure you, sir, it was of *this* tooth I spoke;" and he held up the tooth the Major had produced as his own.

"I know it was, sir," said the Major, "and therefore I didn't relish your allusions to my tooth."

"*Your* tooth, sir?" exclaimed Edward, in surprise.

"Yes, sir, mine!"

"My dear sir," said Edward, "there is some mistake here; this is a horse's tooth."

"Give it to me, sir!" said the Major, snatching it from Edward. "You may think this very witty, Mr. O'Connor, but *I* don't; if my tooth is of superhuman size, I'm not to be called a horse for it, sir;—nor Schomberg, sir!—horse—ahem! better than ass, however."

While this brief but angry outbreak took place, the bystanders, of course, felt excessively uncomfortable; and poor Edward knew not what to do. The Major he knew to be of too violent a temper to attempt explanation for the present: so bowing to the ladies, he left the room, with that flushed look of silent vexation to which courteous youth is sometimes obliged to submit at the hands of intemperate age.

Neither Fanny nor Dick was at home when this occurred, so Edward quitted the house, and was forbidden to enter it afterwards. The Major suddenly entertained a violent dislike to Edward O'Connor, and hated even to hear his name mentioned. It was in vain that explanation was attempted; his self-love had received a violent shock, of which Edward had been the innocent means. In vain did Dick endeavour to make himself the peace-offering to his father's wounded consequence; in vain was it manifest that Fanny was grieved: the old Major persisted in declaring that Edward O'Connor was a self-sufficient jackanapes, and forbade most peremptorily that further intercourse should take place between him and his daughter; and she had too high a sense of duty, and he of honour, to seek to violate the command. But though they never met, they loved not the less fondly and truly; and Dick, grieved that a frolic of his should have interrupted the happiness of a sister he loved and a friend he valued, kept up a sort of communion between them by talking to Edward about Fanny, and to Fanny about Edward, whose last song was sure, through the good offices of the brother, to find its way into the sister's album, already stored with many a tribute from her lover's muse.

Fanny was a sweet creature—one of those choice and piquant bits of Nature's creation which she sometimes vouchsafes to treat the world with, just to show what she *can* do. Her person I shall not attempt to describe; for however one may endeavour to make words play the part of colour, lineament, voice, and expression—and however successfully—still a verbal description can never convey a true notion of personal charms; and personal charms Fanny had, decidedly; not that she was strictly beautiful, but, at times, nevertheless, eclipsing beauty far more regular, and throwing symmetry into the shade, by some charm which even they whom it fascinated could not define.

Her mind was as clear and pure as a mountain stream; and if at times it chafed and was troubled from the course in which it ran, the temporary turbulence only made its limpid depth and quietness more beautiful. Her heart was the very temple of generosity, the throne of honour, and the seat of tenderness. The gentlest sympathies dwelt in her soul, and answered to the slightest call of another's grief; while mirth was dancing in her eye, a word that implied the sorrow of another would bring a tear there. She was the sweetest creature in the world!

The old Major, used to roving habits from his profession, would often go on a ramble somewhere for weeks together, at which times Fanny went to Merryvale to her sister, Mistress Egan, who was also a fine-hearted creature, but less soft and sentimental than Fanny. She was of the dashing school rather, and before she became the mother of so large a family, thought very little of riding over a gate or a fence. Indeed, it was her high mettle that won her the squire's heart. The story is not long, and it may as well be told here—though a little out of place, perhaps; but it's an Irish story, and may therefore be gently irregular.

The squire had admired Letitia Dawson, as most of the young men of her acquaintance did—appreciated her round waist and well-turned ankle, her spirited eyes and cheerful laugh, and danced with her at every ball as much as any other fine girl in the country: but never seriously thought of her as a wife, until one day a party visited the parish church, whose old tower was often ascended for the fine view it commanded. At this time the tower was under repair, and the masons were drawing up materials in a basket, which, worked by rope and pulley, swung on a beam protruding from the top of the tower. The basket had just been lowered for a fresh load of stones, when Letitia exclaimed, "Wouldn't it be fine fun to get

into the basket, and be hauled up to the top of the tower?—how astonished the workmen would be to see a lady get out of it!"

"I would be more astonished to see a lady get into it," said a gentleman present.

"Then here goes to astonish you," said Letitia, laying hold of the rope and jumping into the basket. In vain did her friends and the workmen below endeavour to dissuade her; up she would go, and up she did go; and it was during her ascent that Egan and a friend were riding towards the church. Their attention was attracted by so strange a sight: and, spurring onward, Egan exclaimed, "By the powers! 't is Letty Dawson! Well done, Letty!—you're the right girl for my money! By Jove! if ever I marry, Letty's the woman." And sure enough she *was* the woman, in another month.

Now, Fanny would not have done the basket feat, but she had plenty of fun in her, notwithstanding; her spirits were light; and though, for some time, she felt deeply the separation from Edward, she rallied after a while, felt that unavailing sorrow but impaired the health of the mind, and, supported by her good sense, she waited in hopefulness for the time that Edward might claim and win her.

At Merryvale now all was expectation about the anticipated election. The ladies were making up bows of ribbon for their partizans, and Fanny had been so employed all the morning alone in the drawing-room; her pretty fingers pinching, and pressing, and stitching the silken favours, while now and then her hand wandered to a wicker-basket which lay beside her, to draw forth a scissors or a needlecase. As she worked, a shade of thought crossed her sweet face, like a passing cloud across the sun; the pretty fingers stopped—the work was laid down—and a small album gently drawn from the neighbouring basket. She opened the book and read; they were lines of Edward O'Connor's which she drank into her heart; they were the last he had written, which her brother had heard him sing and had brought her

THE SNOW

I

An old man sadly said,
"Where's the snow
That fell the year that's fled?—
Where's the snow?"
As fruitless were the task
Of many a joy to ask,
As the snow!

II

The hope of airy birth,
Like the snow,
Is stain'd on reaching earth,
Like the snow:
While 't is sparkling in the ray,
'T is melting fast away,
Like the snow!

III

A cold, deceitful thing
Is the snow,
Though it come on dove-like wing—
The false snow!
'T is but rain disguised appears;
And our hopes are frozen tears,
Like the snow!

A tear *did* course down Fanny's cheek as she read the last couplet; and closing the book and replacing it in the little basket, she sighed, and said, "Poor fellow!—I wish he were not so sad!"

CHAPTER VIII

Love is of as many patterns, cuts, shapes, and colours as people's garments; and the loves of Edward O'Connor and Fanny Dawson had very little resemblance to the tender passion which agitated the breast of the Widow Flanagan, and made Tom Durfy her slave. Yet the

widow and Tom demand the offices of the chronicler as well as the more elevated pair; and this our veracious history could never get on, if we exhausted all our energies upon the more engaging personages, to the neglect of the rest: your plated handles, scrolls, and mountings are all very well on your carriage, but it could not move without its plain iron bolts.

Now the reader must know something of the fair Mistress Flanagan who was left in very comfortable circumstances by a niggardly husband, who did her the favour to die suddenly one day, to the no small satisfaction of the pleasure-loving widow, who married him in an odd sort of a hurry, and got rid of him as quickly. Mr. Flanagan was engaged in supplying the export provision trade, which, every one knows, is considerable in Ireland; and his dealings in beef and butter were extensive. This brought him into contact with the farmers for many miles round, whom he met, not only every market-day at every market-town in the county, but at their own houses, where a knife and fork were always at the service of the rich buyer. One of these was a certain Mat Riley, who, on small means, managed to live, and rear a son and three bouncing, good-looking girls, who helped to make butter, feed calves, and superintend the education of pigs; and on these active and comely lasses Mr. Flanagan often cast an eye of admiration, with a view to making one of them his wife; for though he might have had his pick and choice of many fine girls in the towns he dealt in, he thought the simple, thrifty, and industrious habits of a plain farmer's daughter more likely to conduce to his happiness and *profit*—for in that principally lay the aforesaid happiness of Mr. Flanagan. Now, this intention of honouring one of the three Miss Rileys with promotion he never hinted at in the remotest degree, and even in his own mind the thought was mixed up with fat cattle and prices current; and it was not until a leisure moment one day, when he was paying Mat Riley for some of his farming produce, that he broached the subject thus:

"Mat." "Sir."

"I'm thinking o' marrying."

"Well, she'll have a snug house, whoever she is, Mither Flanagan."

"Them's fine girls o' yours."

Poor Mat opened his eyes with delight at the prospect of such a match for one of his daughters, and said they were "comely lumps o' girls, sure enough; but, what was better, they wor good."

"That's what I'm thinking," says Flanagan. "There's two ten-poun' notes, and a five, and one is six, and one is seven; and three tenpinnies is two-and-sixpence; that's twenty-seven poun' two-and-sixpence: eight-pence-ha'penny is the lot; but I haven't copper in my company, Mat."

"Oh, no matther, Mither Flanagan. And is it one o' my colleens you've been throwing the eye at, sir?"

"Yes, Mat, it is. You're askin' too much for them firkins?"

"Oh, Mither Flanagan, consider it's prime butther. I'll back my girls for making up a bit o' butther agen any girls in Ireland; and my cows is good, and the pasture prime."

"T is a farthing a poun' too high, Mat; and the market not lively."

"The butther is good, Mr. Flanagan; and not decenther girls in Ireland than the same girls, though I'm their father."

"I'm thinking I'll marry one o' them, Mat."

"Sure, an' it's proud I'll be, sir; and which o' them is it, maybe?"

"Faith, I don't know myself, Mat. Which do you think yourself?"

"Throth, myself doesn't know—they're all good. Nance is nice, and Biddy's biddable, and Kitty's cute."

"You're a snug man, Mat; you ought to be able to give a husband a trifle with them."

"Nothing worth *your* while, anyhow, Mither Flanagan. But sure one o' my girls without a rag to her back, or a tack to her feet, would be better help to an honest industerin' man than one o' your showy lantherumswash divils out of a town, that would spend more than she'd bring with her."

"That's throe, Mat. I'll marry one o' your girls, I think."

"You'll have my blessing, sir; and proud I'll be—and proud the girl ought to be—*that* I'll say. And suppose, now, you'd come over on Sunday, and take share of a plain man's dinner, and take your pick o' the girls—there's a fine bull goose that Nance towld me she'd have ready afther last mass; for Father Ulick said he'd come and dine with us."

"I can't, Mat; I must be in the canal boat on Sunday; but I'll go and breakfast with you tomorrow, on my way to Bill Mooney's, who has a fine lot of pigs to sell—remarkable fine pigs."

"Well, we'll expect you to breakfast, sir."

"Mat, there must be no nonsense about the wedding."

"As you please, sir."

"Just marry her off, and take her home. Short reckonings make long friends."

"Thru for you, sir."

"Nothing to give with the girl, you say?"

"My blessin' only, sir."

"Well, you must throw in that butther, Mat, and take the farthin' off."

"It's yours, sir," said Mat, delighted, loading Flanagan with "Good byes," and "God save yous," until they should meet next morning at breakfast.

Mat rode home in great glee at the prospect of providing so well for one of his girls, and told them a man would be there the next morning to make choice of one of them for his wife. The girls, very naturally, inquired who the man was; to which Mat, in the plenitude of patriarchal power, replied, "that was nothing to them;" and his daughters had sufficient experience of his temper to know there was no use in asking more questions after such an answer. He only added, she would be "well off that should get him." Now, their father being such a curmudgeon, it is no wonder the girls were willing to take the chance of a good-humoured husband instead of an iron-handed father; so they set to work to make themselves as smart as possible for the approaching trial of their charms, and a battle royal ensued between the sisters as to the right and title to certain pieces of dress which were hitherto considered a sort of common property amongst them, and of which the occasion of a fair, or a pattern,^[4] or market-day was enough to establish the possession, by whichever of the girls went to the public place; but now, when a husband was to be won, privilege of all sorts was pleaded, in which discussion there was more noise than sound reason, and so many violent measures to secure the envied *morceaux*, that some destruction of finery took place where there was none to spare; and, at last, seniority was agreed upon to decide the question; so that when Nance had the first plunder of the chest which held all their clothes in common, and Bidy made the second grab, poor Kitty had little left but her ordinary rags to appear in. But as, in the famous judgment on Ida's Mount, it is hinted that Venus carried the day by her scarcity of drapery, so did Kitty conquer by want of clothes: not that Love sat in judgment; it was Plutus turned the scale. But, to leave metaphor and classic illustration, and go back to Mat Riley's cabin—the girls were washing, and starching, and ironing all night, and the morning saw them arrayed for conquest. Flanagan came, and breakfasted, and saw the three girls. A flashy silk handkerchief which Nancy wore put her *hors de combat* very soon; she was set down at once, in his mind, as extravagant. Bidy might have had a chance if she had made anything like a fair division with her youngest sister; but Kitty had been so plundered, that her shabbiness won an easy victory over the niggard's heart: he saw in her "the making of a thrifty wife;" besides which, she was possibly the best looking, and certainly the youngest of the three; and there is no knowing how far old Flanagan might have been influenced by those considerations.

He spoke very little to any of the girls; but, when he was leaving the house, he said to the father, as he was shaking hands with him, "Mat, I'll do it;" and, pointing to Kitty, he added, "That's the one I'll have."

Great was the rage of the elder sisters, for Flanagan was notoriously a wealthy man; and when he quitted the house, Kitty set up such a shout of laughter, that her father and sisters told her several times "not to make a fool of herself." Still she laughed, and throughout the day sometimes broke out into sudden roars; and while her sides shook with merriment, she would throw herself into a chair, or lean against the wall, to rest herself after the fatigue of her uproarious mirth. Now Kitty, while she laughed at the discomfiture of her greedy sisters, also laughed at the mistake into which Flanagan had fallen; for, as her father said of her, she was, "cute," and she more than suspected the cause of Flanagan's choice, and enjoyed the anticipation of his disappointment, for she was fonder of dress than either Nancy or Bidy, and revelled in the notion of astonishing "the old niggard," as she called him; and this she did "many a time and oft." In vain did Flanagan try to keep her extravagance within bounds. She would either wheedle, reason, bully, or shame him into doing what she said "was right and proper for a snug man like him." His house was soon well furnished: she made him get her a jaunting car. She sometimes *would* go to parties, and no one was better dressed than the woman he chose for her rags. He got enraged now and then, but Kitty pacified him by soft words and daring inventions of her fertile fancy. Once, when he caught her in the fact of wearing a costly crimson silk gown, and stormed, she soothed him by telling him it was her old black one she had dyed; and this bouncer, to the great amusement

of her female friends, he loved to repeat, as a proof of what a careful contriving creature he had in Kitty. She was naturally quick-witted. She managed him admirably, deceived him into being more comfortable than ever he had been before, and had the laudable ambition of endeavouring to improve both his and her own condition in every way. She set about educating herself, too, as far as her notions of education went; and, in a few years after her marriage, by judiciously using the means which her husband's wealth afforded her of advancing her position in society, no one could have recognised in the lively and well-dressed Mrs. Flanagan the gawky daughter of a middling farmer. She was very good-natured, too, towards her sisters, whose condition she took care to improve with her own; and a very fair match for the eldest was made through her means. The younger one was often staying in her house, dividing her time nearly between the town and her father's farm, and no party which Mrs. Flanagan gave or appeared at went off without giving Bidy a chance to "settle herself in the world." This was not done without a battle now and then with old Flanagan, whose stinginess would exhibit itself upon occasion; but at last all let and hindrance to the merry lady ceased, by the sudden death of her old husband, who left her the entire of his property, so that, for the first time, his *will* was her pleasure.

After the funeral of the old man, the "disconsolate widow" was withdrawn from her own house by her brother and sister to the farm, which grew to be a much more comfortable place than when Kitty left; for to have remained in her own house after the loss of "her good man" would have been too hard on "the lone woman." So said her sister and her brother, though, to judge from the widow's eyes, she was not very heart-broken: she cried as much, no doubt, as young widows generally do after old husbands—and could Kitty be expected to do more?

She had not been many days in her widowhood, when Bidy asked her to drive into the town, where Bidy had to do a little shopping—that great business of ladies' lives.

"Oh, Bidy, dear, I must not go out so soon."

"'T will do you good, Kitty."

"I mustn't be seen, you know—'t wouldn't be right; and poor dear Flanagan not buried a week!"

"Sure, who'll see you? We'll go in the covered car, and draw the curtains close, and who'll be the wiser?"

"If I thought no one would see me!" said the widow.

"Ah, who'll see you?" exclaimed Bidy. "Come along—the drive will do you good."

The widow agreed; but when Bidy asked for a horse to put to the car, her brother refused, for the only horse not at work he was going to yoke in a cart that moment, to send a lamb to the town. Bidy vowed she would have a horse, and her brother swore the lamb should be served first, till Bidy made a compromise, and agreed to take the lamb under the seat of the car, and so please all parties.

Matters being thus accommodated, off the ladies set, the lamb tied neck and heels and crammed under the seat, and the curtains of the car ready to be drawn at a moment's notice, in case they should meet any one on the road; for "why should not the poor widow enjoy the fresh air as they drove along?" About half way to the town, however, the widow suddenly exclaimed—

"Bidy, draw the curtains!"

"What's the matter?" says Bidy.

"I see him coming after us round a turn o' the road!" and the widow looked so horrified, and plucked at the curtains so furiously, that Bidy, who was superstitious, thought nothing but Flanagan's ghost could have produced such an effect; and began to scream and utter holy ejaculations, until the sight of Tom Durfy riding after them showed her the cause of her sister's alarm.

"If that divil, Tom Durfy, sees me, he'll tell it all over the country, he's such a quiz; shove yourself well before the door there, Bidy, that he can't peep into the car. Oh, why did I come out this day!—I wish your tongue was cut out, Bidy, that asked me!"

In the meantime Tom Durfy closed on them fast, and began telegraphing Bidy, who, according to the widow's desire, had shoved herself well before the door.

"Pull up, Tim, pull up!" said the widow, from the inside of the car, to the driver, whom she thumped on the back at the same time to impress upon him her meaning; "turn about, and pretend to drive back. We'll let that fellow ride on," said she, quietly to Bidy.

Just as this manoeuvre was executed, up came Tom Durfy.

"How are you, Miss Riley?" said he, as he drew rein.

"Pretty well, thank you," said Biddy, putting her head and shoulders through the window, while the widow shrunk back into the corner of the car.

"How very sudden poor Mr. Flanagan's death was!—I was quite surprised."

"Yes, indeed," says Biddy. "I was just taking a little drive; good bye."

"I was very much shocked to hear of it," said Tom.

"'T was dreadful!" said Biddy.

"How is poor Mrs. Flanagan?" said Tom.

"As well as can be expected, poor thing! Good bye!" said Biddy, manifestly anxious to cut short the conference.

This anxiety was so obvious to Tom, who, for the sake of fun, loved cross-purposes dearly, that he determined to push his conversation further, just because he saw it was unwelcome.

"To be sure," continued he, "at his time of life——"

"Very true," said Biddy. "Good morning."

"And the season has been very unhealthy."

"Doctor Growling told me so yesterday," said Biddy; "I wonder you're not afraid of stopping in this east wind—colds are very prevalent. Good bye!"

Just now the Genius of Farce, who presides so particularly over all Irish affairs, put it into the lamb's head to bleat. The sound at first did not strike Tom Durfy as singular, they being near a high hedge, within which it was likely enough a lamb might bleat; but Biddy, shocked at the thought of being discovered in the fact of making her jaunting-cart a market-cart, reddened up to the eyes, while the widow squeezed herself closer into the corner.

Tom, seeing the increasing embarrassment of Biddy, and her desire to be off, still *would* talk to her, for the love of mischief.

"I beg your pardon," he continued, "just one moment more—I wanted to ask, was it not apoplexy, for I heard an odd report about the death?"

"Oh, yes," says Biddy; "apoplexy—good bye!"

"Did he speak at all?" asked Tom.

"*Baa!*" says the lamb.

Tom cocked his ears, Biddy grew redder, and the widow crammed her handkerchief into her mouth to endeavour to smother her laughter.

"I hope poor Mrs. Flanagan bears it well?" says Tom.

"Poor thing!" says Biddy, "she's inconsolable."

"*Baa-a!*" says the lamb.

Biddy spoke louder and faster, the widow kicked with laughing, and Tom then suspected whence the sound proceeded.

"She does nothing but cry all day!" says Biddy.

"*Baa-a-a!*" says the lamb.

The widow could stand it no longer, and a peal of laughter followed the lamb's bleat.

"What is all this?" said Tom, laying hold of the curtains with relentless hand, and, spite of Biddy's screams, rudely unveiling the sanctuary of sorrowing widowhood. Oh! what a sight for the rising—I beg their pardon, the sinking—generation of old gentlemen who take young wives did Tom behold! There was the widow lying back in the corner—she who was represented as inconsolable and crying all day—shaking with laughter, the tears, not of sorrow, but irrepressible mirth rolling down a cheek rosy enough for a bride.

Biddy, of course, joined the shout. Tom roared in an agony of delight. The very driver's risibility rebelled against the habits of respect, and strengthened the chorus; while the lamb, as if conscious of the authorship of the joke, put in a longer and louder "*Baa—a-a-a!!!*"

Tom, with all his devilment, had good taste enough to feel it was not a scene to linger on; so merely giving a merry nod to each of the ladies, he turned about his horse as fast as he

could, and rode away in roars of laughter.

When, in due course of time, the widow again appeared in company, she and Tom Durfy could never meet without smiling at each other. What a pleasant influence lies in mutual smiles! We love the lips which welcome us without words. Such sympathetic influence it was that led the widow and Tom to get better and better acquainted, and like each other more and more, until she thought him the pleasantest fellow in the county, and he thought her the handsomest woman:—besides, she had a good fortune.

The widow, conscious of her charms and her money, did not let Tom, however, lead the quietest life in the world. She liked, with the usual propensity of her sex, occasionally to vex the man she loved, and assert her sway over so good-looking a fellow. He, in his turn, played off the widow very well; and one unfailing source of mirthful reconciliation on Tom's part, whenever the widow was angry, and that he wanted to bring her back to good humour, was to steal behind her chair, and coaxingly putting his head over her fair shoulder, to pat her gently on her peachy cheek, and cry "*Baa!*"

CHAPTER IX

Andy was in sad disgrace for some days with his mother; but, like all mothers, she soon forgave the blunders of her son—and indeed mothers are well off who have not more than blunders to forgive. Andy did all in his power to make himself useful at home, now that he was out of place and dependent on his mother, and got a day's work here and there where he could. Fortunately the season afforded him more employment than winter months would have done. But the farmers soon had all their crops made up, and when Andy could find no work to be paid for, he began to cut the "scrap o' meadow," as he called it, on a small field of his mother's. Indeed, it was but a "scrap;" for the place where it grew was one of those broken bits of ground so common in the vicinity of mountain ranges, where rocks, protruding through the soil, give the notion of a very fine crop of stones. Now, this locality gave to Andy the opportunity of exercising a bit of his characteristic ingenuity; for when the hay was ready for "cocking," he selected a good thumping rock as the foundation for his haystack, and the superstructure consequently cut a more respectable figure than one could have anticipated from the appearance of the little crop as it lay on the ground; and as no vestige of the rock was visible, the widow, when she came out to see the work completed, wondered and rejoiced at the size of the haystack, and said, "God bless you, Andy, but you're the natest hand for putting up a bit o' hay I ever seen; throth, I didn't think there was the half of it in it!" Little did the widow know that the cock of hay was as great a cheat as a bottle of champagne—more than half bottom. It was all very well for the widow to admire her hay; but at last she came to sell it, and such sales are generally effected in Ireland by the purchaser buying "in the lump," as it is called, that is, calculating the value of the hay from the appearance of the stack as it stands, and drawing it away upon his own cars. Now, as luck would have it, it was Andy's early acquaintance, Owny na Coppal, bought the hay; and in consideration of the *lone woman*, gave her as good a price as he could afford—for Owny was an honest, open-hearted fellow, though he was a horse-dealer; so he paid the widow the price of her hay on the spot, and said he would draw it away at his convenience.

In a few days Owny's cars and men were sent for this purpose; but when they came to take the haystack to pieces, the solidity of its centre rather astonished them—and instead of the cars going back loaded, two had their journey for nothing, and went home empty. Previously to his men leaving the widow's field, they spoke to her on the subject, and said, "'Pon my conscience, ma'am, the centre o' your haystack was mighty heavy."

"Oh, indeed, it's powerful hay!" said she.

"Maybe so," said they; "but there's not much nourishment in that part of it."

"Not finer hay in Ireland!" said she.

"What's of it, ma'am," said they. "Faix, we think Mr. Doyle will be talkin' to you about it." And they were quite right; for Owny became indignant at being overreached, as he thought, and lost no time in going to the widow to tell her so. When he arrived at her cabin, Andy happened to be in the house; and when the widow raised her voice through the storm of Owny's rage, in protestations that she knew nothing about it, but that "Andy, the darlin', put the cock up with his own hands," then did Owny's passion gather strength.

"Oh! it's you, you vagabone, is it?" said he, shaking his whip at Andy, with whom he never had had the honour of a conversation since the memorable day when his horse was nearly killed. "So this is more o' your purty work! Bad cess to you! wasn't it enough for you to nigh-hand kill one o' my horses, without plottin' to chate the rest o' them?"

"Is it *me* chate them?" said Andy. "Throth, I wouldn't wrong a dumb baste for the world."

"Not he, indeed, Mither Doyle!" said the widow.

"Arrah, woman, don't be talkin' your balderdash to me," said Doyle; "sure you took my good money for your hay!"

"And sure I gave all I had to you—what more could I do?"

"Tare an' ouny, woman! who ever heerd of sich a thing as coverin' up a rock wid hay, and sellin' it as the rale thing?"

"'T was Andy done it, Mr. Doyle; hand, act, or part, I hadn't in it."

"Why, then, aren't you ashamed o' yourself?" said Owny Doyle, addressing Andy.

"Why would I be ashamed?" said Andy.

"For chatin'—that's the word, since you provoke me."

"What I done is not chatin'," said Andy. "I had a blessed example for it."

"Oh! do you hear this!" shouted Owny, nearly provoked to take the worth of his money out of Andy's ribs.

"Yes, I say a blessed example," said Andy. "Sure, didn't the blessed Saint Peter build his church upon a rock, and why shouldn't I build my cock o' hay on a rock?"

Owny, with all his rage, could not help laughing at the ridiculous conceit. "By this and that, Andy," said he, "you're always sayin' or doin' the quarest things in the counthry, bad cess to you!" So he laid his whip upon his little hack instead of Andy, and galloped off.

Andy went over the next day to the neighbouring town, where Owny Doyle kept a little inn and a couple of post-chaises (such as they were), and expressed much sorrow that Owny had been deceived by the appearance of the hay; "but I'll pay you the differ out o' my wages, Mither Doyle—in throth I will—that is, whenever I have any wages to get: for the Squire turned me off, you see, and I'm out of place at this present."

"Oh, never mind it," said Owny. "Sure, it was the widow woman got the money, and I don't begrudge it; and now that it's all past and gone, I forgive you. But tell me, Andy, what put such a quare thing into your head?"

"Why, you see," said Andy, "I didn't like the poor mother's pride should be let down in the eyes o' the neighbours; and so I made the weeshy bit o' hay look as dacent as I could—but, at the same time, I wouldn't chate any one for the world, Mither Doyle."

"Throth, I b'lieve you wouldn't, Andy; but, 'pon my sowl, the next time I go buy hay, I'll take care that Saint Pether hasn't any hand in it."

Owny turned on his heel, and was walking away with that air of satisfaction which men so commonly assume after fancying they have said a good thing, when Andy interrupted his retreat by an interjectional "Mither Doyle?"

"Well," said Owny, looking over his shoulder.

"I was thinkin', sir," said Andy.

"For the first time in your life, I b'lieve," said Owny: "and what was it you wor thinkin'?"

"I was thinkin' o' dhrivin' a chay, sir."

"And what's that to me?" said Owny.

"Sure I might dhrive one o' your chaises."

"And kill more o' my horses, Andy—eh? No, no, faix, I'm afeer'd o' you, Andy."



The Reward of Humanity

"Not a boy in Ireland knows dhrivin' betther nor me, any way," said Andy.

"Faix, it's any way and every way but the way you ought you'd dhrive, sure enough, I b'lieve: but, at all events, I don't want a post-boy, Andy—I have Micky Doolin, and his brother Pether, and them's enough for me.

"Maybe you'd be wantin' a helper in the stable, Misther Doyle?"

"No, Andy; but the first time I want to make hay to advantage, I'll send for you," said Owny, laughing, as he entered his house, and nodding at Andy, who returned a capacious grin to Owny's shrewd smile, like the exaggerated reflection of a concave mirror. But the grin soon subsided, for men seldom prolong the laugh that is raised at their own expense; and the corners of Andy's mouth turned down as his hand turned up to the back of his head, which he rubbed, as he sauntered down the street from Owny Doyle's.

It was some miles to Andy's home, and night over-took him on the way. As he trudged along in the middle of the road he was looking up at a waning moon and some few stars twinkling through the gloom, absorbed in many sublime thoughts as to their existence, and wondering what they were made of, when his cogitations were cut short by tumbling over something which lay in the middle of the highway; and on scrambling to his legs again, and seeking to investigate the cause of his fall, he was rather surprised to find a man lying in such a state of insensibility that all Andy's efforts could not rouse him. While he was standing over him, undecided as to what he should do, the sound of approaching wheels, and the rapid steps of galloping horses, attracted his attention; and it became evident that unless the chaise and pair which he now saw in advance were brought to pull up, the cares of the man in the middle of the road would be very soon over. Andy shouted lustily, but to his every "Halloo there!" the crack of the whip replied, and accelerated speed instead of a halt was the consequence; at last, in desperation, Andy planted himself in the middle of the road, and with out-spread arms before the horses, succeeded in arresting their progress, while he shouted "Stop!" at the top of his voice.

A pistol-shot from the chaise was the consequence of Andy's summons, for a certain Mr. Furlong, a foppish young gentleman, travelling from the castle of Dublin, never dreamed that a humane purpose could produce the cry of "Stop," on a *horrid Irish* road; and as he was reared in the ridiculous belief that every man ran a great risk of his life who ventured outside the city of Dublin, he travelled with a brace of loaded pistols beside him; and as he had been anticipating murder and robbery ever since nightfall, he did not await the demand for his "money or his life" to defend both, but fired away the instant he heard the word "Stop!" and fortunate it was for Andy that the traveller's hurry impaired his aim. Before he could discharge a second pistol, Andy had screened himself under the horses' heads; and recognising in the postilion his friend Micky Doolin, he shouted out, "Micky, jewel, don't let them be shootin' me!"

Now Micky's cares were quite enough engaged on his own account: for the first pistol-shot made the horses plunge violently, and the second time Furlong blazed away set the saddle-horse kicking at such a rate, that all Micky's horsemanship was required to preserve his seat; added to which, the dread of being shot came over him, and he crouched low on the grey's neck, holding fast by the mane, and shouting for mercy as well as Andy, who still kept roaring to Mick, "not to let them be shootin' him," while he held his hat above him, in the

fashion of a shield, as if that would have proved any protection against a bullet. "Who are you at all?" said Mick.

"Andy Rooney, sure."

"And what do you want?"

"To save the man's life."

The last words only caught the ear of the frightened Furlong; and as the phrase "his life" seemed a personal threat to himself, he swore a trembling oath at the postilion that he would shoot him if he did not *dwive* on, for he abjured the use of that rough letter, R, which the Irish so much rejoice in. "Dwive on, you wascal, dwive on!" exclaimed Mr. Furlong.

"There's no fear o' you, sir," said Micky, "it's a friend o' my own."

Mr. Furlong was not quite satisfied that he was therefore the safer.

"And what is it at all, Andy?" continued Mick.

"I tell you there's a man lying dead in the road here, and sure you'll kill him, if you dhrive over him."

"How could I kill him any more than he *is* kilt," says Mick, "if he's dead already?"

"Well, no matther for that," says Andy. "Light off your horse, will you, and help me to rise him?"

Mick dismounted, and assisted Andy in lifting the prostrate man from the centre of the road to the slope of turf which bordered its side. They judged he was not dead, however, from the warmth of the body; but that he should still sleep seemed astonishing, considering the quantity of shaking and kicking they gave him.

"I b'lieve it's drunk he is," said Mick.

"He gave a grunt that time," said Andy; "shake him again, and he'll spake."

To a fresh shaking the drunken man at last gave some tokens of returning consciousness, by making several winding blows at his benefactors, and uttering some half-intelligent maledictions.

"Bad luck to you, do you know where you are?" said Mick.

"Well!" was the drunken ejaculation.

"By this and that, it's my brother Pether," said Mick. "We wondhered what had kept him so late with the return shay, and this is the way it is. He tumbled off his horses, dhrunk: and where's the shay, I wondher? Oh, murdher! what will Misther Doyle say?"

"What's the weason you don't dwive on?" said Mr. Furlong, putting his head out of the chaise.

"It's one on the road here, your honour, almost killed."

"Was it wobbers?" asked Mr. Furlong.

"Maybe you'd take him into the shay wid you, sir?"

"What a wequest!—dwive on, sir!"

"Sure I can't lave my brother on the road, sir."

"*Your* bwother!—and you pwesume to put your bwother to wide with me? You'll put me in the debdest wage if you don't dwive on."

"Faith, then, I won't dhrive on and lave my brother here on the road."

"You rascally wappawee!" exclaimed Furlong.

"See, Andy," said Micky Doolan; "will you get up and dhrive him, while I stay with Pether?"

"To be sure I will," said Andy; "where is he goin'?"

"To the Squire's," said Mick; "and when you lave him there, make haste back, and I'll dhrive Pether home."

Andy mounted into Mick's saddle; and although the traveller "pwotested" against it, and threatened "pwoceedings" and "magistrates," Mick was unmoved in his brotherly love. As a last remonstrance, Furlong exclaimed, "And pewhaps this fellow can't wide, and don't know

the woad."

"Is it not know the road to the Squire's?—wow! wow!" said Andy. "It's I that'll rattle you there in no time, your honour."

"Well, wattle away then!" said the enraged traveller, as he threw himself back in the chaise, cursing all the postilions in Ireland.

Now, it was to Squire O'Grady's that Mr. Furlong wanted to go; but in the confusion of the moment the name of O'Grady never once was mentioned; and with the title of "Squire," Andy never associated another idea than that of his late master, Mr. Egan.

Mr. Furlong, it has been stated, was an official of Dublin Castle, and had been despatched on electioneering business to the country. He was related to a gentleman of the same name who held a lucrative post under government, and was well known as an active agent in all affairs requiring what in Ireland was called "Castle influence;" and this, his relative, was now despatched, for the first time, on a similar employment. By the way, while his name is before one, a little anecdote may be appropriately introduced, illustrative of the wild waggery prevailing in the streets of Dublin in those days.

Those days were the good old days of true virtue! When a bishop who had daughters to marry, would advance a deserving young curate to a good living, and, not content with *that* manifestation of his regard, would give him *one of his own children* for a wife! Those were the days when, the country being in danger, fathers were willing to sacrifice, not only their sons, but their daughters on the altar of patriotism! Do you doubt it?—unbelieving and selfish creatures of these degenerate times! Listen! A certain father waited upon the Irish Secretary, one fine morning, and in that peculiar strain which secretaries of state must be pretty well used to, descanted at some length on the devotion he had always shown to the government, and yet they had given him no *proof of their confidence*. The Secretary declared they had the highest sense of his merits, and that they had given him their entire confidence.

"But you have given me nothing else, my lord," was the answer.

"My dear sir, of late we have not had any proof of sufficient weight in our gift to convince you."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, my lord; there's a majority of the —— dragoons vacant."

"Very true, my dear sir; and if you *had* a child to devote to the service of your country, no one should have the majority sooner."

"Thank you, my lord," said the worthy man with a low bow; "then I *have* a child."

"Bless me, sir! I never heard you had a son."

"No, my lord, but I have a daughter."

"A daughter!" said my Lord Secretary, with a look of surprise; "but you forget, sir—this is a regiment—a *dragoon* regiment."

"Oh, she rides elegant," said her father.

"But, my dear sir—a woman?"

"Why shouldn't a woman do her duty, my lord, as well as a man, when the country is in danger? I'm ready to sacrifice my daughter," said the heroic man, with an air worthy of Virginius.

"My dear sir, this is really impossible; you *know* it's impossible."

"I know no such thing, my lord. But I'll tell you what I know: there's a bill coming on next week—and there are *ten friends of mine* who have not made up their minds yet."

"My dear sir," said the Lord Secretary, squeezing his hand with vehement friendship, "why place us in this dreadful difficulty? It would be impossible even to draw up the commission;—fancy, 'Major *Maria*,' or 'Major *Margery*'!"

"Oh, my lord," said my father quickly, "I have fancied all that long ago, and got a cure ready for it. My wife not having been blessed with boys, we thought it wise to make the girls ready for any chance that might turn up, and so we christened the eldest George, the second Jack, and the third Tom; which enables us to call them Georgina, Jacqueline, and Thomasine, in company, while the secret of their real names rests between ourselves and the parish register. Now, my lord, what do you say? I have George, Jack, and Tom—think of your *bill*!" The argument was conclusive, and the patriotic man got the majority of a cavalry corps, with perpetual leave of absence, for his daughter Jack, who would much rather have joined the regiment.

Such were the days in which our Furlong flourished; and in such days it will not be wondered at that a Secretary, when he had no place to give away, invented one. The old saying has it, that "Necessity is the mother of invention;" but an Irish Secretary can beat necessity hollow. For example—

A commission was issued, with a handsome salary to the commissioner, to make a measurement through all the streets of Dublin, ascertaining the exact distances from the Castle, from a furlong upwards: and for many a year did the commission work, inserting handsome stone slabs into walls of most ignorant houses, till then unconscious of their precise proximity or remoteness from the seat of government. Ever after that, if you saw some portly building, blushing in the pride of red brick, and perfumed with fresh paint, and saw the tablet recording the interesting fact thus—

FROM THE
CASTLE,
ONE FURLONG.

Fancy might suggest that the house rejoiced, as it were, in its honoured position, and did

—"look so fine, and smell so sweet,"

because it was under the nose of viceroyalty, while the suburbs revealed poor tatterdemalion tenements, dropping their slates like tears, and uttering their hollow sighs through empty casements, merely because they were "one mile two furlongs from the Castle." But the new stone tablet which told you so seemed to mock their misery, and looked like a fresh stab into their poor old sides; as if the rapier of a king had killed a beggar.

This very original measure of measurement was provocative of ridicule or indignation, as the impatient might happen to be infected; but while the affair was in full blow, Mr. Furlong, who was the commissioner, while walking in Sackville-street, one day, had a goodly sheet of paper pinned to his back by some—

—"sweet Roman hand,"

bearing, in large letters, the inversion of one of his own tablets,

ONE FURLONG
FROM THE
CASTLE.

and as he swaggered along in conscious dignity, he wondered at the shouts of laughter ringing behind him, and turned round occasionally to see the cause; but ever as he turned, faces were screwed up into seriousness, while the laughter rang again in his rear. Furlong was bewildered, and much as he was used to the mirthfulness of an Irish populace, he certainly *did* wonder what fiend of fun possessed them that day, until the hall porter of the secretary's office solved the enigma by respectfully asking would he not take the placard from his back before he presented himself. The Mister Furlong who is engaged in our story was the nephew of the man of measurement memory; and his mother, a vulgar woman, sent her son to England to be educated, that he might "pick up the ax'nt; 't was so jinteel, the English ax'nt!" And, accordingly, the youth endeavoured all he could to become *un*-Irish in everything, and was taught to believe that all the virtue and wisdom in Ireland was vested in the Castle and hangers-on thereof, and that the mere people were worse than savages.

With such feelings it was that this English Irishman, employed to open negotiations between the government and Squire O'Grady, visited the wilds of Ireland; and the circumstances attendant on the stopping of the chaise afforded the peculiar genius of Handy Andy an opportunity of making a glorious confusion, by driving the political enemy of the sitting member into his house, where, by a curious coincidence, a strange gentleman was expected every day on a short visit. After Andy had driven some time, he turned round and spoke to Mr. Furlong, through the pane of glass with which the front window-frame of the chaise was *not* furnished.

"Faix, you wor nigh shootin' me, your honour," said Andy.

"I should not wepwoach myself, if I had," said Mr. Furlong, "when you quied stop on the woad: wobbers always qui stop, and I took you for a wobber."

"Faix, the robbers here, your honour, never axes you to stop at all, but they stop you without axin', or by your lave, or wid your lave. Sure, I was only afeerd you'd dhrive over the man in the road."

"What was that man in the woad doing?"

"Nothin' at all, 'faith, for he wasn't able; he was dhrunk, sir."

"The postilion said he was his bwother."

"Yis, your honour, and he's a postilion himself—only he lost his horses and the shay—he got dhrunk, and fell off."

"Those wascally postilions often get dwunk, I suppose?"

"Oh, common enough, sir, particular now about the 'lection time; for the gentlemin is dhrivin' over the country like mad, right and left, and gives the boys money to dhrink their health, till they are killed a'most with the falls they get."

"Then postilions often fall on the woads here?"

"Throth, the roads is covered with them sometimes, when the 'lections comes an."

"What howwid immowality! I hope you're not dwunk?"

"Faix, I wish I was!" said Andy. "It's a great while since I had a dhrop; but it won't be long so, when your honour gives me something to dhrink your health."

"Well, don't talk, but dwive on."

All Andy's further endeavours to get "his honour" into conversation were unavailing; so he whipped on in silence till his arrival at the gate-house of Merryvale demanded his call for entrance.

"What are you shouting there for?" said the traveller; "cawn't you wing?"

"Oh, they understand the *shiloo* as well, sir;" and in confirmation of Andy's assurance, the bars of the entrance gates were withdrawn, and the post-chaise rattled up the avenue to the house.

Andy alighted, and gave a thundering tantara-ra at the door. The servant who opened it was surprised at the sight of Andy, and could not repress a shout of wonder. Here Dick Dawson came into the hall, and seeing Andy at the door, gave a loud halloo, and clapped his hands in delight—for he had not seen him since the day of the chase.

"An' is it there you are again, you unlucky vagabone?" said Dick; "and what brings you here?"

"I come with a jintleman to the masther, Misther Dick."

"Oh, it's the visitor, I suppose," said Dick, as he himself went out, with that unceremonious readiness so characteristic of the wild fellow he was, to open the door of the chaise for his brother-in-law's guest.

"You're welcome," said Dick; "come, step in—the servants will look to your luggage. James, get in Mr. —, I beg your pardon, but 'pon my soul, I forgot your name, though Moriarty told me."

"Mr. Furlong," gently uttered the youth.

"Get in the luggage, James. Come, sir, walk into the dinner-room: we haven't finished our wine yet." With these words Dick ushered in Furlong to the apartment where Squire Egan sat, who rose as they entered. "Mr. Furlong, Ned," said Dick.

"Happy to see you, Mr. Furlong," said the hearty Squire, who shook Furlong's hand in what Furlong considered a most savage manner. "You seem fatigued?"

"Vewy," was the languid reply of the traveller, as he threw himself into a chair.

"Ring the bell for more claret, Dick," said Squire Egan.

"I neveh dwink."

Dick and the Squire both looked at him with amazement, for in the friend of Moriarty they expected to find a hearty fellow.

"A cool bottle wouldn't do a child any harm," said the Squire. "Ring, Dick. And now, Mr. Furlong, tell us how you like the country."

"Not much, I pwotest."

"What do you think of the people?"

"Oh, I don't know:—you'll pawdon me, but—a—in short there are so many wags."

"Oh, there are wags enough, I grant; not funnier d—ls in the world."

"But I mean *wags*—tatters, I mean."

"Oh, rags. Oh, yes—why, indeed, they've not much clothes to spare."

"And yet these wetches are fweeholders, I'm told."

"Ay, and stout voters too."

"Well, that's all we wequire. By-the-bye, how goes on the canvass, Squire?"

"Famously."

"Oh, wait till I explain to you our plan of opeations from head-qwaters. You'll see how famously we shall wally at the hustings. These *Iwish* have no idea of tactics: we'll intwoduce the English mode—take them by supwise. We *must* unseat him."

"Unseat who?" said the Squire.

"That—a—Egan, I think you call him."

The Squire opened his eyes; but Dick, with the ready devilment that was always about him, saw how the land lay in an instant, and making a signal to his brother-in-law, chimed in with an immediate assent to Furlong's assertion, and swore that Egan would be unseated to a certainty. "Come, sir," added Dick, "fill one bumper at least to a toast I propose. Here's 'Confusion to Egan, and success to O'Grady.'"

"Success to O'Gwady," faintly echoed Furlong, as he sipped his claret. "These *Iwish* are so wild—so uncultivated," continued he; "you'll see how I'll supwise them with some of my plans."

"Oh, they're poor ignorant brutes," said Dick, "that know nothing: a man of the world like you would buy and sell them."

"You see, they've no finesse: they have a certain degwee of weadiness, but no depth—no weal finesse."

"Not as much as would physic a snipe," said Dick, who swallowed a glass of claret to conceal a smile.

"What's that you say about snipes and physic?" said Furlong; "what queer things you *Iwish* do say."

"Oh, we've plenty o' queer fellows here," said Dick; "but you are not taking your claret."

"The twuth is, I am fatigued—vewy—and if you'd allow me, Mr. O'Gwady, I should like to go to my woom; we'll talk over business to-mowwow."

"Certainly," said the Squire, who was glad to get rid of him, for the scene was becoming too much for his gravity. So Dick Dawson lighted Furlong to his room, and after heaping civilities upon him, left him to sleep in the camp of his enemies, and then returned to the dining-room, to enjoy with the Squire the laugh they were so long obliged to repress, and to drink another bottle of claret on the strength of the joke.

"What shall we do with him, Dick?" said the Squire.

"Pump him as dry as a lime-kiln," said Dick, "and then send him off to O'Grady—all's fair in war."

"To be sure," said the Squire. "Unseat me, indeed! he was near it, sure enough, for I thought I'd have dropped off my chair with surprise when he said it."

"And the conceit and impudence of the fellow," said Dick. "The ignorant *Iwish*—nothing will serve him but abusing his own countrymen! 'The ignorant Irish!'—oh, is that all you learn in Oxford, my boy?—just wait, my buck—if I don't astonish your weak mind, it's no matter!"

"Faith, he has brought his pigs to a pretty market here," said the Squire; "but how *did* he come here? how was the mistake made?"

"The way every mistake in the country is made," said Dick. "Handy Andy drove him here."

"More power to you, Andy," said the Squire. "Come, Dick, we'll drink Andy's health—this is a mistake on the right side."

And Andy's health *was* drunk, as well as several other healths. In short, the Squire and Dick the Devil were in high glee—the dining-room rang with laughter to a late hour; and the next morning a great many empty claret bottles were on the table—and a few on the floor.

CHAPTER X

Notwithstanding the deep potations of the Squire and Dick Dawson the night before, both were too much excited by the arrival of Furlong to permit their being laggards in the morning; they were up and in consultation at an early hour, for the purpose of carrying on prosperously the mystification so well begun on the Castle-agent.

"Now, first of all, Dick," said the Squire, "is it fair, do you think?"

"Fair!" said Dick, opening his eyes in astonishment. "Why who ever heard of any one questioning anything being fair in love, or war, or electioneering? To be sure, it's fair—and more particularly when the conceited coxcomb has been telling us how he'll astonish with his plans the poor ignorant Irish, whom he holds in such contempt. Now, let me alone, and I'll get all his plans out of him, turn him inside out like a glove, pump him as dry as a pond in the summer, squeeze him like a lemon—and let him see whether the poor ignorant *Iwish*, as he softly calls us, are not an overmatch for him at the finesse upon which he seems so much to pride himself."

"Egad! I believe you're right, Dick," said the Squire, whose qualms were quite overcome by the argument last advanced; for if one thing more than another provoked him, it was the impertinent self-conceit of presuming and shallow strangers, who fancied their hackneyed and cut-and-dry knowledge of the common-places of the world gave them a mental elevation above an intelligent people of primitive habits, whose simplicity of life is so often set down to stupidity, whose contentment under privation is frequently attributed to laziness, and whose poverty is constantly coupled with the epithet "ignorant." "A poor ignorant creature," indeed, is a common term of reproach, as if poverty and ignorance must be inseparable. If a list could be obtained of the *rich* ignorant people, it would be no flattering document to stick on the door of the temple of Mammon.

"Well, Ned," said Dick, "as you agree to *do* the Englishman, Murphy will be a grand help to us; it is the very thing he will have his heart in. Murtough will be worth his weight in gold to us; I will ride over to him and bring him back with me to spend the day here; and you, in the mean time, can put every one about the house on their guard not to spoil the fun by letting the cat out of the bag too soon; we'll *shake her* ourselves in good time, and maybe we won't have fun in the hunt!"

"You're right, Dick. Murphy is the very man for our money. Do you be off for him, and I will take care that all shall be right at home here."

In ten minutes more Dick was in his saddle, and riding hard for Murtough Murphy's. A good horse and a sharp pair of spurs were not long in placing him *vis-à-vis* with the merry attorney, whom he found in his stable-yard up to his eyes in business with some ragged country fellows, the majority of whom were loud in vociferating their praises of certain dogs; while Murtough drew from one of them, from time to time, a solemn assurance, given with many significant shakes of the head, and uplifting of hands and eyes, "that was the finest badger in the world!" Murtough turned his head on hearing the rattle of the horse's feet, as Dick the Devil dashed into the stable-yard, and with a view-halloo welcomed him.

"You're just in time, Dick. By the powers! we'll have the finest day's sport you've seen for some time."

"I think we shall," said Dick, "if you come with me."

"No; but you come with me," said Murtough. "The grandest badger-fight, sir."

"Pooh!" returned Dick; "I've better fun for you." He then told them of the accident that conveyed their political enemy into their toils; "and the beauty of it is," said Dick, "that he has not the remotest suspicion of the condition he's in, and fancies himself able to buy and sell all Ireland—horse-dealers and attorneys included."

"That's elegant!" said Murphy.

"He's come to enlighten us, Murtough," said Dick.

"And maybe, we won't return the compliment," said Murtough. "Just let me put on my boots. Hilloa, you Larry! saddle the grey. Don't you cut the pup's ears till I come home! and if Mr. Ferguson sends over for the draft of the lease, tell him it won't be ready till to-morrow. Molly! Molly! where are you, you old divil? Sew on that button for me—I forgot to tell you yesterday—make haste! I won't delay you a moment, Dick. Stop a minute, though. I say, Lanty Houligan—mind, on your peril, you old vagabone, don't let them fight that badger without me. Now, Dick, I'll be with you in the twinkling of a bedpost, and *do* the Englishman, and that smart! Bad luck to their conceit! they think we can do nothing regular in Ireland."

On his arrival at Merryvale and hearing how matters stood, Murtough Murphy was in a perfect agony of delight in anticipating the mystification of the kidnapped agent. Dick's intention had been to take him along with them on their canvass, and openly engage him in

all their electioneering movements; but to this Murphy objected, as running too great a risk of discovery. He recommended rather to engage Furlong in amusements which would detain him from O'Grady and his party, and gain time for their side; and get out of him all the electioneering plot of the other party, *indirectly*; but to have as little *real* electioneering business as possible. "If you do, Dick," said Murphy, "take my word, we shall betray ourselves somehow or other—he could not be so soft as not to see it; but let us be content to amuse him with all sorts of absurd stories of Ireland—and the Irish—tell him magnificent lies—astonish him with grand materials for a note-book, and work him up to publish—that's the plan, sir!"

The three conspirators now joined the family party, which had just sat down to breakfast; Dick, in his own jolly way, hoped Furlong had slept well.

"Vewy," said Furlong, as he sipped his tea with an air of peculiar *nonchalance* which was meant to fascinate Fanny Dawson, who, when Furlong addressed to her his first silly common-place, with his peculiar *non*-pronunciation of the letter R, established a lisp directly, and it was as much as her sister, Mrs. Egan, could do to keep her countenance, as Fanny went on slaughtering the S's as fast as Furlong ruined R's.

"I'll twouble you for a little mo' queam," said he, holding forth his cup and saucer with an affected air.

"Perhapth you'd like thum more theugar," lisped Fanny, lifting the sugar-tongs with an exquisite curl of her little finger.

"I'm glad to hear you slept well," said Dick to Furlong.

"To be sure he slept well," said Murphy; "this is the sleepest air in the world."

"The sleepest air?" returned Furlong, somewhat surprised. "That's vewy odd."

"Not at all, sir," said Murphy; "well known fact. When I first came to this part of the country, I used to sleep for two days together sometimes. Whenever I wanted to rise early, I was always obliged to get up the night before."

This was said by the brazen attorney, from his seat at a side-table, which was amply provided with a large dish of boiled potatoes, capacious jugs of milk, a quantity of cold meat and game. Murphy had his mouth half filled with potatoes as he spoke, and swallowed a large draught of milk as the stranger swallowed Murphy's lie.

"You don't eat potatoes, I perceive, sir," said Murphy.

"Not for bweakfast," said Furlong.

"Do you for thupper?" lisped Fanny.

"Never in England," he replied.

"Finest things in the world, sir, for the intellect," said Murphy. "I attribute the natural intelligence of the Irish entirely to their eating them."

"Oh, they are thometimes tho thleepy at the Cathtle," said Fanny.

"Weally!" said the exquisite, with the utmost simplicity.

"Fanny is very provoking, Mr. Furlong," said Mrs. Egan, who was obliged to say something with a smile, to avoid the laugh which continued silence would have forced upon her.

"Oh, no!" said the dandy, looking tenderly at Fanny; "only vewy agweable—fond of a little wepa'tee."

"They call me thatirical here," said Fanny, "only fanthy!" and she cast down her eyes with an exquisite affectation of innocence.

"By-the-bye, when does your post awive here—the mail I mean?" said Furlong.

"About nine in the morning," said the Squire.

"And when does it go out?"

"About one in the afternoon."

"And how far is the post town fwom your house?"

"About eight or nine miles."

"Then you can answer your letters by wetu'n of post?"

"Oh dear, no!" said the Squire; "the boy takes any letters that may be for the post the

following morning, as he goes to the town to look for letters."

"But you lose a post by that," said Furlong.

"And what matter?" said the Squire.

The official's notions of regularity were somewhat startled by the Squire's answer; so he pushed him with a few more questions. In reply to one of the last, the Squire represented that the post-boy was saved going twice a day by the present arrangement.

"Ay, but you lose a post, my dear sir," said Furlong, who still clung with pertinacity to the fitness of saving a post. "Don't you see that you might weceive your letter at half-past ten; well, then you'll have a full hour to wite you' answer; that's quite enough time, I should think, for you wetu'ning an answer."

"But, my dear sir," said Murtough Murphy, "our grand object in Ireland is *not* to answer letters."

"Oh!—ah!—hum!—indeed!—well, that's odd; how *vevy* odd you Iwish are!"

"Sure, that's what makes us such pleasant fellows," said Murtough. "If we were like the rest of the world, there would be nothing remarkable about us; and who'd care for us?"

"Well, Mr. Muffy, you say such queer things—weally."

"Ay, and I *do* queer things sometimes—don't I, Squire?"

"There's no denying it, Murphy."

"Now, Mr. O'Gwady," said Furlong, "had we not better talk over our election business?"

"Oh, hang business to-day!" said Murphy: "let's have some fishing: I'll show you such salmon-fishing as you never saw in your life."

"What do *you* say, Mr. O'Gwady?" said Furlong.

"Faith, I think we might as well amuse ourselves."

"But the election is weally of such consequence; I should think it would be a wema'kably close contest, and we have no time to lose; I should think—with submission——"

"My dear sir," said Murphy, "we'll beat them hollow: our canvass has been most prosperous; there's only one thing I'm afraid of."

"What's that?" said Furlong.

"That Egan has money; and I'm afraid he'll bribe high."

"As for bwibewy, neve' mind that," said Furlong, with a very wise nod of his head and a sagacious wink. "*We'll spend money too.* We're pwepawed for that: plenty of money will be advanced, for the gov'nment is weally anxious that Mr. Scatte'bwain should come in."

"Oh, then, all's right?" said Murphy. "But—whisper—Mr. Furlong—be cautious how you mention *money*, for there are sharp fellows about here, and there's no knowing how the wind of the word might put the other party on their guard, and, maybe, help to unseat our man upon a petition."

"Oh, let me alone," said Furlong. "I know a twick too many for that: let them catch me betwaying a secwet! No, no—*wather* too sharp for that!"

"Oh! don't suppose, my dear sir," said Murphy, "that I doubt your caution for a moment. I see, sir, in the twinkling of an eye, a man's character—always did—always could, since I was the height o' that;" and Murphy stooped down and extended his hand about two feet above the floor, while he looked up in the face of the man he was humbugging with the most unblushing impudence—"since I was the height o' that, sir, I had a natural quickness for discerning character; and I see you're a young gentleman of superior acuteness and discretion; but, at the same time, don't be angry with me for just hinting to you, that some of these Irish chaps are d——d rogues. I beg your pardon, Mrs. O'Grady, for saying d——n before a lady;" and he made a low bow to Mrs. Egan, who was obliged to leave the room to hide her laughter.

"Now," said Furlong, "suppose befo'e the opening of the poll, we should pwopose, as it were, with a view to save time, that the bwibery oath should not be administe'd on either side."

"That's an elegant idea!" said Murphy. "By the wig o' the chief justice—and that's a big oath—you're a janius, Misther Furlong, and I admire you. Sir, you're worth your weight in gold to us!"

"Oh, you flatte' me!—weally," said Furlong, with affected modesty, while he ran his fingers

through his Macassar-oiled ringlets.

"Well, now for a start to the river, and won't we have sport! You English-taught gentlemen have only one fault on the face of the earth—you're too fond of business—you make yourselves slaves to propriety—there's no fun in you."

"I beg pawdon—there," said Furlong, "we like fun in good time."

"Ay; but there's where we beat you," said Murphy, triumphantly; "the genuine home-bred Paddy makes time for fun sooner than anything else—we take our own way, and live the longer."

"Ah! you lose your time—though—excuse me; you lose your time, indeed."

"Well, 'divil may care,' as Punch said when he lost mass, 'there's more churches nor one,' says he, and that's the way with us," said Murphy. "Come, Dick, get the fishing-lines ready; heigh for the salmon-fishery! You must know, Misther Furlong, we fish for salmon with line here."

"I don't see how you could fish any other way," said the dandy, smiling at Murphy, as if he had caught him in saying something absurd.

"Ah, you rogue," said Murphy, affecting to be hit; "you're too sharp for us poor Irish fellows; but you know the old saying, 'An Irishman has leave to speak twice;' but, after all, it's no great mistake I've made: for when I say we fish for salmon with a line, I mean we don't use a rod, but a leaded line, the same as in sea-fishing."

"How vewy extwao'dinary! Why, I should think that impossible."

"And why should it be impossible?" said Murphy, with the most unabashed impudence. "Have not all nations habits and customs peculiar to themselves? Don't the English catch their fish by striking them under water with a long rough stick, and a little cur-whibble of a bone at the end of it?"

"Speawing them, you mean," said Furlong.

"Ay, you know the right name, of course; but isn't that quite as odd, or more so than our way here?"

"That's vewy twue indeed; but your sea-line fishing in a wiver, and for salmon, strikes me as vewy singular."

"Well, sir, the older we grow the more we learn. You'll see what fine sport it is; but don't lose any more time: let us be off to the river at once."

"I'll make a slight change in my dwess, if you please—I'll be down immediately;" and Furlong left the room.

During his absence, the Squire, Dick, and Murphy, enjoyed a hearty laugh, and ran over the future proceedings of the day.

"But what do you mean by this salmon-fishing, Murphy?" said Dick; "you know there never was a salmon in the river."

"But there will be to-day," said Murphy; "and a magnificent gudgeon will see him caught. What a spoon that fellow is!—we've got the bribery out of him already."

"You did that well, Murphy," said the Squire.

"Be at him again when he comes down," said Dick.

"No, no," said Murphy, "let him alone; he is so conceited about his talent for business, that he will be talking of it without our pushing him: just give him rope enough, and he'd hang himself; *we'll have the whole of their campaign out before the day is over.*"

CHAPTER XI

All men love to gain their ends; most men are contented with the shortest road to them, while others like by-paths. Some carry an innate love of triumph to a pitch of epicurism, and are not content unless the triumph be achieved in a certain way, making collateral passions accessories before or after the fact; and Murphy was one of the number. To him, a triumph without *fun* was beef without mustard, lamb without salad, turbot without lobster sauce. Now, to entangle Furlong in their meshes was not sufficient for him; to detain him from his

friends, every moment betraying something of their electioneering movements, though sufficiently ludicrous in itself, was not enough for Murrough!—he would make his captive a source of ridicule as well as profit, and while plenty of real amusements might have served his end, to divert the stranger for the day, this mock fishing-party was planned to brighten with fresh beams the halo of the ridiculous which already encircled the magnanimous Furlong.

"I'm still in the dark," said Dick, "about the salmon. As I said before, there never was a salmon in the river."

"But, as I said before," replied Murphy, "there will be to-day; and you must help me in playing off the trick."

"But what *is* this trick? Confound you, you're as mysterious as a chancery suit."

"I wish I was likely to last half as long," said Murphy.

"The trick!" said Dick. "Bad luck to you, tell me the trick, and don't keep me waiting, like a poor relation."

"You have two boats on the river?" said Murphy.

"Yes."

"Well, you must get into one with our victim: and I can get into the other with the salmon."

"But where's the salmon, Murphy?"

"In the house, for I sent one over this morning, a present to Mrs. Egan. You must keep away about thirty yards or so, when we get afloat, that our dear friend may not perceive the trick—and in proper time I will hook my dead salmon on one of my lines, drop him over the off-side of the boat, pass him round to the gun-wale within view of our intelligent castle customer, make a great outcry, swear I have a noble bite, haul up my fish with an enormous splash, and, affecting to kill him in the boat, hold up my salmon in triumph."

"It's a capital notion, Murphy, if he doesn't smoke the trick."

"He'll smoke the salmon sooner. Never mind, if I don't hoax him: I'll bet you what you like he's done."

"I hear him coming down-stairs," said the Squire.

"Then send off the salmon in a basket by one of the boys, Dick," said Murphy; "and you, Squire, may go about your canvass, and leave us in care of the enemy."

All was done as Murphy proposed, and, in something less than an hour, Furlong and Dick in one boat, and Murphy and his attendant *gossoon* in another, were afloat on the river, to initiate the Dublin citizen into the mysteries of this new mode of salmon-fishing.

The sport at first was slack, and no wonder; and Furlong began to grow tired, when Murphy hooked on his salmon, and gently brought it round under the water within range of his victim's observation.

"This is wather dull work," said Furlong.

"Wait awhile, my dear sir; they are never lively in biting so early as this—they're not set about feeding in earnest yet. Hilloa! by the Hokey I have him!" shouted Murphy. Furlong looked on with great anxiety, as Murphy made a well-feigned struggle with a heavy fish.

"By this and that, he's a whopper!" cried Murphy in ecstasy. "He's kicking like a two-year old. I have him, though, as fast as the rock o' Dunamase. Come up, you thief!" cried he, with an exulting shout, as he pulled up the salmon with all the splash he could produce; and suddenly whipping the fish over the side into the boat, he began flapping it about as if it were plunging in the death-struggle. As soon as he had affected to kill it, he held it up in triumph before the castle conjuror, who was quite taken in by the feint, and protested his surprise loudly.

"Oh! that's nothing to what we'll do yet. If the day should become a little more overcast, we'd have splendid sport, sir."

"Well, I could not have believed, if I hadn't seen it," said Furlong.

"Oh! you'll see more than that, my boy, before we've done with them."

"But I haven't got even a bite yet!"

"Nor I either," said Dick; "you're not worse off than I am."

"But how extwao'dinawy it is that I have not seen a fish wise since I have been on the wiver."

"That's because they see us watching them," said Dick. "The d—l such cunning brutes I ever met with as the fish in this river: now, if you were at a distance from the bank, you'd see them jumping as lively as grasshoppers. Whisht! I think I had a nibble."

"You don't seem to have good sport there," shouted Murphy.

"Vewy poo' indeed," said Furlong, dolefully.

"Play your line a little," said Murphy; "keep the bait lively—you're not up to the way of fascinating them yet."

"Why, no; it's wather *noo* to me."

"Faith!" said Murphy to himself, "it's new to all of us. It's a bran new invention in the fishing line. Billy," said he to the *gossoon*, who was in the boat with him, "we must catch a salmon again to *divart* that strange gentleman—hook him on, my buck."

"Yes, sir," said Billy, with delighted eagerness, for the boy entered into the fun of the thing heart and soul, and as he hooked on the salmon for a second haul, he interlarded his labours with such ejaculations as, "Oh, Misther Murphy, sir, but you're the funny jintleman. Oh, Misther Murphy, sir, how soft the stranger is, sir. The salmon's ready for ketchin' now, sir. Will you ketch him yet, sir?"

"Coax him round, Billy," said Murphy.

The young imp executed the manœuvre with adroitness; and Murphy was preparing for another haul, as Furlong's weariness began to manifest itself.

"Do you intend wemaining here all day? Do you know, I think I've no chance of any spo't."

"Oh, wait till you hook *one* fish, at all events," said Murphy; "just have it to say you killed a salmon in the new style. The day is promising better. I'm sure we'll have sport yet. Hilloa! I've another!" and Murphy began hauling in the salmon. "Billy, you rascal, get ready; watch him—that's it—mind him now!" Billy put out his gaff to seize the prize, and, making a grand swoop, affected to miss the fish. "Gaff him, you thief, gaff him!" shouted Murphy, "gaff him, or he'll be off."

"Oh, he's so lively, sir!" roared Billy; "he's a rogue, sir—he won't let me put the gaff undher him, sir—ow, he slipped away agin."

"Make haste, Billy, or I can't hold him."

"Oh, the thief!" said Billy; "one would think he was cotcht before, he's so up to it. Ha!—hurroo!—I have him now, sir." Billy made all the splash he could in the water as Murphy lifted the fish to the surface and swung him into the boat. Again there was the flopping and the riot, and Billy screeching, "Kill him, sir!—kill him, sir!—or he'll be off out o' my hands!" In proper time the fish *was* killed and shown up in triumph, and the imposture completed.

And now Furlong began to experience that peculiar longing for catching a fish, which always possesses men who see fish taken by others; and the desire to have a salmon of his own killing induced him to remain on the river. In the long intervals of idleness which occurred between the occasional hooking up of the salmon, which Murphy *did* every now and then, Furlong *would be talking* about business to Dick Dawson, so that they had not been very long on the water until Dick became enlightened on some more very important points connected with the election. Murphy now pushed his boat on towards the shore.

"You're not going yet?" said the anxious fisherman;—"do wait till I catch a fish!"

"Certainly," said Murphy: "I'm only going to put Billy ashore, and send home what we've already caught. Mrs. O'Grady is passionately fond of salmon."

Billy was landed, and a large basket in which the salmon had been brought down to the boat, was landed also—*empty*; and Murphy, lifting the basket as if it contained a considerable weight, placed it on Billy's head, and the sly young rascal bent beneath it, as if all the fish Murphy had pretended to take were really in it; and he went on his homeward way, with a tottering step, as if the load were too much for him.

"That boy," said Furlong, "will never be able to cawwy all those fish to the house."

"Oh, they won't be too much for him," said Dick. "Curse the fish! I wish they'd bite. That thief, Murphy, has had all the sport; but he's the best fisherman in the county, I'll own that."

The two boats all this time had been drifting down the river, and on opening a new reach of the stream, a somewhat extraordinary scene of fishing presented itself. It was not like Murphy's fishing, the result of a fertile invention, but the consequence of the evil destiny which presided over all the proceedings of Handy Andy. The fishing-party in the boats beheld another fishing-party on shore, with this difference in the nature of what they sought

to catch, that while they in the boats were looking for salmon, those on shore were seeking for a post-chaise; and as about a third part of a vehicle so called was apparent above the water, Furlong exclaimed with extreme surprise—

"Well, if it ain't a post-chaise!"

"Oh! that's nothing extraordinary," said Dick; "common enough here."

"How do you mean?"

"We've a custom here of running steeple-chases in post-chaises."

"Oh, thank you," said Furlong. "Come, that's *too* good."

"You don't believe it, I see," said Dick. "But you did not believe the salmon-fishing till you saw it."

"Oh, come now! How the deuce could you leap a ditch in a post-chaise?"

"I never said we leaped ditches; I only said we rode steeple-chases. The system is this:—You go for a given point, taking high road, by-road, plain, or lane, as the case may be, making the best of your way how you can. Now our horses in this country are celebrated for being good swimmers, so it's a favourite plan to shirk a bridge sometimes by swimming a river."

"But no post-chaise will float," said Furlong, regularly arguing against Dick's mendacious absurdity.

"Oh! we are prepared for that here. The chaises are made light, have cork bottoms, and all the solid work is made hollow; the doors are made water tight, and, if the stream runs strong, the passenger jumps out and swims."

"But that's not fair," said Furlong; "it alters the weight."

"Oh! it's allowed on both sides," said Dick, "so it's all the same. It's as good for the goose as the gander."

"I wather imagine it is much fitter for geese and ganders than human beings. I know I should wather be a goose on the occasion."

All this time they were nearing the party on shore, and as the post-chaise became more developed, so did the personages on the bank of the river: and amongst these Dick Dawson saw Handy Andy in the custody of two men, and Squire O'Grady shaking his fist in his face and storming at him. How all this party came there, it is necessary to explain. When Handy Andy had deposited Furlong at Merryvale, he drove back to pick up the fallen postilion and his brother on the road; but before he reached them, he had to pass a public-house—I say *had* to pass—but he didn't. Andy stopped, as every honourable postilion is bound to do, to drink the health of the gentleman who gives him the last half-crown: and he was so intent on "doing that same," as they say in Ireland, that Andy's driving became very equivocal afterwards. In short, he drove the post-chaise into the river; the horses got disentangled by kicking the traces (which were very willing to break) into pieces; and Andy, by sticking to the neck of the horse he rode, got out of the water. The horses got home without the post-chaise, and the other post-chaise and pair got home without a postilion, so that Owny Doyle was roused from his bed by the neighing of the horses at the gate of the inn. Great was his surprise at the event, as, half clad, and a candle in his hand, he saw two pair of horses, one chaise, and no driver, at his door. The next morning the plot thickened. Squire O'Grady came to know if a gentleman had arrived at the town on his way to Neck-or-Nothing Hall. The answer was in the affirmative. Then "Where was he?" became a question. Then the report arrived of the post-chaise being upset in the river. Then came stories of postilions falling off, of postilions being changed, of Handy Andy being employed to take the gentleman to the place; and out of these materials the story became current, that "an English gentleman was dthrownd in the river in a post-chaise." O'Grady set off directly with a party to have the river dragged, and near the spot encountering Handy Andy, he ordered him to be seized, and accused him of murdering his friend.

It was in this state of things that the boats approached the party on land, and the moment Dick Dawson saw Handy Andy, he put out his oars and pulled away as hard as he could. At the moment he did so, Andy caught sight of him, and pointing out Furlong and Dick to O'Grady, he shouted, "There he is!—there he is!—I never murdhered him? There he is!—stop him! Mither Dick, stop, for the love of God!"

"What's all this about?" said Furlong, in great amazement.

"Oh, he's a process-server," said Dick; "the people are going to drown him, maybe."

"To dwown him?" said Furlong, in horror.

"If he has luck," said Dick, "they'll only give him a good ducking; but we had better have nothing to do with it. I would not like you to be engaged in one of these popular riots."

"I shouldn't wellish it myself," said Furlong.

"Pull away, Dick," said Murphy; "let them kill the blackguard, if they like."

"But will they kill him weally?" inquired Furlong, somewhat horrified.

"Faith, it's just as the whim takes them," said Murphy; "but as we wish to be popular on the hustings, we must let them kill as many as they please."

Andy still shouted loud enough to be heard. "Misther Dick, they're goin' to murder me."

"Poo' w'etch!" said Furlong, with a very uneasy shudder.

"Maybe you'd think it right for us to land, and rescue him," said Murphy, affecting to put about the boat.

"Oh, by no means," said Furlong. "You're bettaw acquainted with the customs of the countwy than I am."

"Then we'll row back to dinner as fast as we can," said Murphy. "Pull away, my hearties!" and, as he bent to his oars, he began bellowing the Canadian Boat-Song, to drown Andy's roar, and when he howled—

"Our voices keep tune,"

there never was a more practical burlesque upon the words; but as he added—

"Our oars keep time,"

he seemed to have such a pleasure in pulling, and looked so lively and florid, that Furlong, chilled by his inactivity on the water, requested Murtough to let him have an oar, to restore circulation by exercise. Murtough complied; but the novice had not pulled many strokes, before his awkwardness produced that peculiar effect called "catching a crab," and a smart blow upon his chest sent him heels over head under the thwarts of the boat.

"Wha-wha-a-t's that?" gasped Furlong, as he scrambled up again.

"You only caught a crab," said Murtough.

"Good Heaven!" said Furlong, "you don't mean to say there are crabs as well as salmon in the wiver."

"Just as many crabs as salmon," said Murtough; "pull away, my hearty."

"Row, brothers, row—the stream runs fast,
The rapids are near, and the daylight's past!"

CHAPTER XII

The boats doubled round an angle in the river, and Andy was left in the hands of Squire O'Grady still threatening vengeance; but Andy, as long as the boats remained in sight, heard nothing but his own sweet voice shouting at the top of its pitch, "They're going to murder me!—Misther Dick, Misther Dick, come back for the love o' God!"

"What are you roaring like a bull for?" said the Squire.

"Why wouldn't I roar, sir? A bull would roar if he had as much rayson."

"A bull has more reason than ever you had, you calf," said the Squire.

"Sure there he is, and can explain it all to you," said Andy, pointing after the boats.

"Who is there?" asked the Squire.

"Misther Dick, and the jintleman that I dhruv there."

"Drove where?"

"To the Squire's."

"What Squire?"

"Squire Egan's, to be sure."

"Hold your tongue, you rascal; you're either drunk still, or telling lies. The gentleman I mean wouldn't go to Mister Egan's; he was coming to me."

"That's the jintleman I dhruv—that's all I know. He was in the shay, and was nigh shootin' me; and Micky Doolin stopped on the road, when his brother was nigh killed, and towld me to get up, for he wouldn't go no farther, when the jintleman objected——"

"What did the gentleman object to?"

"He objected to Pether goin' into the shay."

"Who is Peter?"

"Pether Doolin, to be sure."

"And what brought Peter Doolin there?"

"He fell off the horses——"

"Wasn't it Mick Doolin you said was driving but a moment ago?"

"Ay, sir, but that was th' other shay."

"What other chaise, you vagabond?"

"Th' other shay, your honour, that I never see at all, good or bad—only Pether."

"What diabolical confusion you are making of the story, to be sure! There's no use in talking to you here, I see. Bring him after me," said the Squire, to some of his people standing by. "I must keep him in custody till something more satisfactory is made out about the matter."

"Sure it's not makin' a presner of me you'd be?" said Andy.

"You shall be kept in confinement, you scoundrel, till something is heard of this strange gentleman. I'm afraid he's drowned."

"D——I a dhrowned. I dhruv him to Squire Egan's, I'll take my book oath."

"That's downright nonsense, sir. He would as soon go into Squire Egan's house as go to Fiddler's Green."^[5]

"Faith, then, there's worse places than Fiddler's Green," said Andy, "as some people may find out one o' these days."

"I think, boys," said O'Grady, to the surrounding countrymen, "we must drag the river."

"Dhrag the river if you plase," said Andy; "but, for the tendher mercy o' Heaven, don't dhrag me to jail! By all the crosses in a yard o' check, I dhruv the jintleman to Squire Egan's!—and there he was in that boat I showed you five minutes ago."

"Bring him after me," said O'Grady. "The fellow is drunk still, or forgets all about it; I must examine him again. Take him over to the hall, and lock him up till I go home."

"Arrah sure, your honour," said Andy, commencing an appeal.

"If you say another word, you scoundrel," said the Squire, shaking his whip at him, "I'll commit you to jail this minute. Keep a sharp eye after him, Molloy," were the last words of the Squire to a stout-built peasant, who took Andy in charge as the Squire mounted his horse and rode away.

Andy was marched off to Neck-or-Nothing Hall; and, in compliance with the Squire's orders, locked up in the justice-room. This was an apartment where the Squire, in his magisterial capacity, dispensed what he called justice, and what he possible meant to be such; but poor Justice coming out of Squire O'Grady's hands was something like the little woman in the song, who, having her petticoats cut short while she was asleep, exclaimed on her waking—

"As sure as I'm a little woman, this is none of I:"

only that Justice, in the present instance, did not doubt her identity from her nakedness, but from the peculiar dressing Squire O'Grady bestowed upon her—she was so muffled up in O'Gradyism that her own mother (who, by the same token, was Themis) wouldn't know her. Indeed, if I remember, Justice is worse off than mortals respecting her parentage; for while there are many people who do not know who were their fathers, poets are uncertain who was Justice's mother:—some say Aurora, some say Themis. Now, if I might indulge at this moment in a bit of reverie, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that it is the classic disposition of Ireland, which is known to be a very ancient country, that tends to make the

operations of Justice assimilate with the uncertainty of her birth; for her dispensations there are as distinct as if they were the offspring of two different influences. One man's justice is not another man's justice; which, I suppose, must arise from the difference of opinion as to who and what Justice is. Perhaps the rich people, who incline to power, may venerate Justice more as the child of Jupiter and Themis; while the unruly ones worship her as the daughter of Titan and Aurora; for undoubtedly the offspring of *Aurora* must be most welcome to "*Peep-o'-day boys*."

Well—not to indulge further in reverie—Andy, I say, was locked up in the justice-room; and as I have been making all these observations about Justice, a few words will not be thrown away about the room which she was supposed to inhabit. Then I must say Squire O'Grady did not use her well. The room was a cold, comfortless apartment, with a plastered wall and an earthen floor, save at one end, where a raised platform of boards sustained a desk and one high office-chair. No other seat was in the room, nor was there any lateral window, the room being lighted from the top, so that Justice could be in no way interested with the country outside—she could only contemplate her native heaven through the sky-light. Behind the desk were placed a rude shelf, where some "modern instances," and old ones too, were lying-covered with dust—and a gun-rack, where some carbines with fixed bayonets were paraded in show of authority; so that, to an imaginative mind, the aspect of the books and the fire-arms gave the notion of JUSTICE on the shelf, and LAW on the rack.

But, Andy thought not of these things; he had not the imagination which sometimes gives a prisoner a passing pleasure in catching a whimsical conceit from his situation, and, in the midst of his anxiety, anticipating the satisfaction he shall have in saying a good thing, even at the expense of his own suffering. Andy only knew that he was locked up in the justice-room for something he never did. He had only sense enough to feel that he was wronged, without the spirit to wish himself righted; and he sauntered up and down the cold, miserable room, anxiously waiting the arrival of "his honour, Squire O'Grady," to know what his fate might be, and wondering if they would hang him for upsetting a post-chaise in which a gentleman *had been* riding, rather than brooding future means of redress for his false imprisonment.

There was no window to look out of; he had not the comfort of seeing a passing fellow-creature—for the sight of one's kind *is* a comfort. He could not even behold the green earth and the freshness of nature, which, though all unconsciously, has still a soothing influence on the uncultivated mind; he had nothing but the walls to look at, and they were blank, save here and there that a burnt stick in the hand of one of the young O'Gradies emulated the art of a Sandwich Islander, and sketched faces as grotesque as any Pagan could desire for his idol; or figures after the old well-established school-boy manner, which in the present day is called Persian painting, "warranted to be taught in three lessons." Now, this bespeaks degeneracy in the arts; for, in the time we write of, boys and girls acquired the art without any lessons at all, and abundant proofs of this intuitive talent existed on the aforesaid walls. Napoleon and Wellington were fighting a duel, while Nelson stood by to see fair play, he having nothing better to do, as the battle of Trafalgar, represented in the distance, could, of course, go on without him. The anachronism of jumbling Buonaparte, Wellington, and Nelson together, was a trifle amongst the O'Gradies, as they were nearly as great proficient in history, ancient and modern, as in the fine arts. Amidst these efforts of genius appeared many an old rhyme, scratched with rusty nails by rustier policemen, while lounging in the justice-room during the proceedings of the great O'Grady, and all these were gone over again and again by Andy, till they were worn out, all but one—a rough representation of a man hanging.

This possessed a sort of fascination for poor Andy; for at last, relinquishing all others, he stood riveted before it, and muttered to himself, "I wondher can they hang me—sure it's no murder I done—but who knows what witnesses they might get? and these times they sware mighty hard; and Squire O'Grady has such a pack o' blackguards about him, sure he could get anything swore he liked. Oh, wirra! wirra! what'll I do at all! Faix! I wouldn't like to be hanged—oh! look at him there—just the last kick in him—and a disgrace to my poor mother into the bargain. Augh!—but it's a dirty death to die—to be hung up like a dog over a gate, or an old hat on a peg, just that-away;" and he extended his arm as he spoke, suspending his *caubeen*, while he looked with disgust at the effigy. "But sure they *can't* hang me—though now I remember Squire Egan towld me long ago I'd be hanged some day or other. I wondher does my mother know I'm tuk away—and Oonah, too, the craythur, would be sorry for me. Maybe, if my mother spoke to Squire Egan, his honour would say a good word for me:—though that wouldn't do; for him and Squire O'Grady's bitter inimies now, though they wor once good friends. Och hone! sure that's the way o' the world; and a cruel world it is—so it is. Sure 't would be well to be out of it a'most, and in a betther world. I hope there's no po'chaises in heaven!"

The soliloquy of poor Andy was interrupted by a low, measured sound of thumping, which his accustomed ear at once distinguished to be the result of churning; the room in which he was confined being one of a range of offices stretching backward from the principal building and next door to the dairy. Andy had grown tired by this time of his repeated contemplation of the rhymes and sketches, his own thoughts thereon, and his long confinement; and now the monotonous sound of the churn-dash falling on his ear, acted as a sort of *busho*,^[6] and

the worried and wearied Andy at last laid down on the platform and fell asleep to the bumping lullaby.

CHAPTER XIII

The sportsmen, having returned from their fishing excursion to dinner, were seated round the hospitable board of Squire Egan; Murphy and Dick in high glee, at still successfully hoodwinking Furlong, and carrying on their mystification with infinite frolic.

The soup had been removed, and they were in the act of enjoying the salmon, which had already given so much enjoyment, when a loud knocking at the door announced the arrival of some fresh guest.

"Did you ask any one to dinner, my dear?" inquired Mrs. Egan of her good-humoured lord, who was the very man to invite any friend he met in the course of the day, and forget it after.

"No, my dear," answered the Squire. "Did you, Dick?" said he.

Dick replied in the negative, and said he had better go and see who it was; for looks of alarm had been exchanged between him, the Squire, and Murphy, lest any stranger should enter without being apprised of the hoax going forward; and Dawson had just reached the dining-room door on his cautionary mission, when it was suddenly thrown wide open, and in walked, with a rapid step and bustling air, an active little gentleman dressed in black, who was at Mrs. Egan's side in a moment, exclaiming with a very audible voice and much *empressement* of manner—

"My dear Mrs. Egan, how do you do? I am delighted to see you. Took a friend's privilege, you see, and have come unbidden to claim the hospitality of your table. The fact is, I was making a sick visit to this side of my parish; and finding it impossible to get home in time to my own dinner, I had no scruple in laying yours under contribution."

Now this was the Protestant clergyman of the parish, whose political views were in opposition to those of Mr. Egan; but the good hearts of both men prevented political feeling from interfering, as in Ireland it too often does, with the social intercourse of life. Still, however, if Dick Dawson had got out of the room in time, this was not the man to assist them in covering their hoax on Furlong, and the scene became excessively ludicrous the moment the reverend gentleman made his appearance. Dick, the Squire, and Murphy, opened their eyes at each other, while Mrs. Egan grew as red as scarlet when Furlong stared at her in astonishment as the newcomer mentioned her name. She stammered out welcome as well as she could, and called for a chair for Mr. Bermingham, with all sorts of kind inquiries for Mrs. Bermingham and the little Berminghams—for the Bermingham manufactory in that line was extensive.

While the reverend gentleman was taking his seat, spreading his napkin and addressing a word to each round the table, Furlong turned to Fanny Dawson, beside whom he was sitting (and who, by-the-bye, could not resist a fit of laughter on the occasion), and said with a bewildered look—

"Did he not address *Madame* as Mistwess Egan?"

"Yeth," said Fanny, with admirable readiness; "but whithper." And as Furlong inclined his head towards her, she whispered in his ear, "You muthn't mind him—he's mad, poor man!—that is, a *little* inthane—and thinks every lady is Mrs. Egan. An unhappy pathion, poor fellow!—but *quite harmleth*."

Furlong uttered a very prolonged "Oh!" at Fanny's answer to his inquiry, and looked sharply round the table, for there was an indefinable something in the conduct of every one at the moment of Mr. Bermingham's entrance that attracted his attention, and the name "Egan," and everybody's *fidgetiness* (which is the only word I can apply), roused his suspicion. Fanny's answer only half satisfied him; and looking at Mrs. Egan, who could not conquer her confusion, he remarked "How *vewy* wed Mistwess O'Gwady gwew!"

"Oh! thee can't help bluthing, poor soul! when he thays 'Egan' to her, and thinks her his *furth* love."

"How *vewy* widiculous to be sure," said Furlong.

"Haven't you innothent mad people thumtimes in England?" said Fanny.

"Oh *vewy*" said Furlong, "but this appea's to me so wema'kably stwange an abbewation."

"Oh," returned Fanny, with quickness, "I thuppose people go mad on their ruling pathion, and the ruling pathion of the Irish, you know, is love."

The conversation all this time was going on in other quarters, and Furlong heard Mr. Bermingham talking of his having preached last Sunday in his new church.

"Suwely," said he to Fanny, "they would not pe'mit an insane gle'gyman to pweach?"

"Oh," said Fanny, almost suffocating with laughter, "he only *thinkth* he's a clergyman."

"How vewy dwoll you are!" said Furlong.

"Now you're only quithing me," said Fanny, looking with affected innocence in the face of the unfortunate young gentleman she had been quizzing most unmercifully the whole day.

"Oh, Miste' O'Gwady," said Furlong, "we saw them going to ddown a man to-day."

"Indeed!" said the Squire, reddening, as he saw Mr. Bermingham stare at his being called O'Grady; so, to cover the blot, and stop Furlong, he asked him to take wine.

"Do they often ddown people here?" continued Furlong, after he had bowed.

"Not that I know of," said the Squire.

"But are not the lowe' o'ders wather given to what Lo'd Bacon calls——"

"Who cares about Lord Bacon?" said Murphy.

"My dear sir, you supwise me!" said Furlong, in utter amazement. "Lord Bacon's sayings ——"

"Pon my conscience," said Murphy, "both himself and his sayings are very *rusty* by this time."

"Oh, I see, Miste' Muffy. You neve' will be sewious."

"Heaven forbid!" said Murphy—"at least at dinner, or *after* dinner. Seriousness is only a morning amusement—it makes a very poor figure in the evening."

"By-the-bye," said Mr. Bermingham, "talking of drowning, I heard a very odd story to-day from O'Grady. You and he, I believe," said the clergyman, addressing Egan, "are not on as good terms as you were."

At this speech Furlong did *rather* open his eyes, the Squire hummed and hawed, Murphy coughed, Mrs. Egan looked into her plate, and Dick, making a desperate rush to the rescue, asked Furlong which he preferred, a single or a double barrelled gun.

Mr. Bermingham, perceiving the sensation his question created, thought he had touched upon forbidden ground, and therefore did not repeat his question, and Fanny whispered Furlong that one of the stranger's mad peculiarities was mistaking one person for another; but all this did not satisfy Furlong, whose misgivings as to the real name of his host were growing stronger every moment. At last, Mr. Bermingham, without alluding to the broken friendship between Egan and O'Grady, returned to the "odd story" he had heard that morning about drowning.

"T is a strange affair," said he, "and our side of the country is all alive about it. A gentleman who was expected from Dublin last night at Neck-or-Nothing Hall, arrived, as it is ascertained, at the village, and thence took a post-chaise, since which time he has not been heard of; and as a post-chaise was discovered this morning sunk in the river, close by Ballysloughgutthery bridge, it is suspected the gentleman has been drowned either by accident or design. The postilion is in confinement on suspicion, and O'Grady has written to the Castle about it to-day, for the gentleman was a government agent."

"Why, sir," said Furlong, "that must be me!"

"*You*, sir!" said Mr. Bermingham, whose turn it was to be surprised now.

"Yes, sir," said Furlong, "I took a post-chaise at the village last night, and I'm an agent of the gove'ment."

"But you're not drowned, sir—and he was," said Bermingham.

"To be su'e I'm not ddowned; but I'm the pe'son."

"Quite impossible, sir," said Mr. Bermingham. "You can't be the person."

"Why, sir, do you expect to pe'suade me out of my own identity!"

"Oh," said Murphy, "there will be no occasion to prove identity till the body is found, and the

coroner's inquest sits; that's the law, sir—at least, in Ireland."

Furlong's bewildered look at the unblushing impudence of Murphy was worth anything. While he was dumb from astonishment, Mr. Bermingham, with marked politeness, said, "Allow me, sir, for a moment to explain to you. You see, it could not be you, for the gentleman was going to Mr. O'Grady's."

"Well, sir," said Furlong, "and here I am."

The wide stare of the two men as they looked at each other was killing; and while Furlong's face was turned towards Mr. Bermingham, Fanny caught the clergy-man's eye, tapped her forehead with the fore-finger of her right hand, shook her head, and turned up her eyes with an expression of pity, to indicate that Furlong was not quite right in his mind.

"Oh, I beg pardon, sir," said Mr. Bermingham. "I see it's a mistake of mine."

"There certainly is a vewy gweat mistake somewhere," said Furlong, who was now bent on a very direct question. "Pway, Miste' O'Gwady," said he, addressing Egan, "that is, if you *are* Miste' O'Gwady, will you tell me, *are* you Miste' O'Gwady?"

"Sir," said the Squire, "you have chosen to call me O'Grady ever since you came here, but my name is Egan."

"What!—the member for the county?" cried Furlong, horrified.

"Yes," said the Squire, laughing; "do you want a frank?"

"'T will save your friends postage," said Dick, "when you write to them to say you're safe."

"Miste' Wegan," said Furlong, with an attempt at offended dignity, "I conside' myself vewy ill used."

"You're the first man I ever heard of being ill used at Merryvale House," said Murphy.

"Sir, it's a gwievous w'ong!"

"What *is* all this about?" asked Mr. Bermingham.

"My dear friend," said the Squire, laughing—though, indeed, that was not peculiar to *him*, for every one round the table, save the victim, was doing the same thing (as for Fanny, she *shouted*),—"My dear friend, this gentleman came to my house last night, and *I* took him for a friend of Moriarty's, whom I have been expecting for some days. *He* thought, it appears, this was Neck-or-Nothing Hall, and thus a mutual mistake has arisen. All I can say is, that you are most welcome, Mr. Furlong, to the hospitality of this house as long as you please."

"But, sir, you should not have allowed me to wemain in you' house," said Furlong.

"That's a doctrine," said the Squire, "in which you will find it difficult to make an Irish host coincide."

"But you must have known, sir, that it was not my intention to come to your house."

"How could I know that, sir?" said the Squire, jocularly.

"Why, Miste' Wegan—you know—that is—in fact—confound it, sir!" said Furlong, at last, losing his temper, "you know I told you all about our electioneering tactics."

A loud laugh was all the response Furlong received to this outbreak.

"Well, sir," repeated he, "I pwotest it is extremely unfair."

"You know, my dear sir," said Dick, "we Irish are such *poor ignorant creatures*, according to your own account, that we can make no use of the knowledge with which you have so generously supplied us."

"You know," said the Squire, "we have no *real* finesse."

"Sir," said Furlong, growing sulky, "there is a certain finesse that is *fair*, and another that is *unfair*—and I pwotest against—"

"Pooh, pooh!" said Murphy. "Never mind trifles. Just wait till to-morrow, and I'll show you even better salmon-fishing than you had to-day."

"Sir, no consideration would make me wemain anothe' wower in this house."

Murphy screwed his lips together, puffed out something between a whistle and the blowing out of a candle, and ventured to suggest to Furlong he had better wait even a couple of hours, till he had got his allowance of claret. "Remember the adage, sir, '*In vino veritas*,' and we'll tell you all *our* electioneering secrets after we've had enough wine."

"As soon, Miste' Wegan," said Mr. Furlong, quite chapfallen, "as you can tell me how I can get to the house to which I *intended* to go, I will be weddy to bid you good evening."

"If you are determined, Mr. Furlong, to remain here no longer, I shall not press my hospitality upon you; whenever you decide upon going, my carriage shall be at your service."

"The soone' the bette', sir," said Furlong, retreating still further into a cold and sulky manner.

The Squire made no further attempt to conciliate him; he merely said, "Dick, ring the bell. Pass the claret, Murphy."

The bell was rung—the claret passed—a servant entered, and orders were given by the Squire that the carriage should be at the door as soon as possible. In the interim, Dick Dawson, the Squire, and Murphy, laughed as if nothing had happened, and Mrs. Egan conversed in an under-tone with Mr. Bermingham. Fanny looked mischievous, and Furlong kept his hand on the foot of his glass, and shoved it about something in the fashion of an uncertain chess-player, who does not know where to put the piece on which he has laid his finger.

The carriage was soon announced, and Mrs. Egan, as Furlong seemed so anxious to go, rose from table; and as she retired, he made her a cold and formal bow. He attempted a tender look and soft word to Fanny—for Furlong, who thought himself a *beau garçon*, had been playing off his attractions upon her all day, but the mischievously merry Fanny Dawson, when she caught the sheepish eye, and heard the mumbled gallantry of the Castle Adonis, could not resist a titter, which obliged her to hide her dimpling cheek and pearly teeth in her handkerchief, as she passed to the door. The ladies being gone, the Squire asked Furlong, would he not have some more wine before he went.

"No, thank you, Miste' Wegan," replied he, "after being twicked in the manner that a——"

"Mr. Furlong," said the Squire, "you have said quite enough about that. When you came into my house last night, sir, I had no intention of practising any joke upon you. You should have had the hospitality of an Irishman's house, without the consequence that has followed, had you not indulged in sneering at the Irishman's country, which, to your shame be it spoken, is *your own*. You vaunted your own superior intelligence and finesse over us, sir; and told us you came down to overthrow poor Pat in the trickery of electioneering movements. Under these circumstances, sir, I think what we have done is quite fair. We have shown you that you are no match for us in the finesse upon which you pride yourself so much; and the next time you talk of your countrymen, and attempt to undervalue them, just remember how you have been outwitted at Merryvale House. Good evening, Mr. Furlong, I hope we part without owing each other any ill-will." The Squire offered his hand, but Furlong drew up, and amidst such expletives as "weally," and "I must say," he at last made use of the word "atwocious."

"What's that you say?" said Dick. "You don't speak very plain, and I'd like to be sure of the last word you used."

"I mean to say that a——" and Furlong, not much liking the *tone* of Dick's question, was humming and hawing a sort of explanation of what "he meant to say," when Dick thus interrupted him—

"I tell you this, Mr. Furlong; all that has been done is my doing—I've humbugged you, sir, —*hum-bugged*. I've sold you—dead. I've pumped you, sir—all your electioneering bag of tricks, *bribery* and all, exposed; and now go off to O'Grady, and tell him how the poor ignorant Irish have *done* you; and see, Mr. Furlong," in a quiet under-tone, "if there's anything that either he or you don't like about the business, you shall have any satisfaction you like, and as often as you please."

"I shall *conside'* of that, sir," said Furlong, as he left the house, and entered the carriage, where he threw himself back in offended dignity, and soliloquised vows of vengeance. But the bumping of the carriage over a rough road disturbed the pleasing reveries of revenge, to awaken him to the more probable and less agreeable consequences likely to occur to himself for the blunder he had made; for, with all the puppy's self-sufficiency and conceit, he could not by any process of mental delusion conceal from himself the fact that he had been most tremendously *done*, and how his party would take it was a serious consideration. O'Grady, another horrid Irish squire—how should he face *him*? For a moment he thought it better to go back to Dublin, and he pulled the check-string—the carriage stopped—down went the front glass. "I say, coachman."

"I'm not the coachman, sir."

"Well, whoever you are——"

"I'm the groom only, sir; for the coachman was——"

"Sir, I don't want to know who you are, or about your affairs; I want you to listen to me —*cawn't* you listen?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then—dive to the village."

"I thought it was to the Hall I was to dhrive, sir."

"Do what you're told, sir—the village!"

"What village, sir?" asked Mat, the groom, who knew well enough, but from Furlong's impertinence did not choose to understand anything gratuitously.

"Why the village I came from yeste'day."

"What village was that, sir?"

"How stoopid you are!—the village the mail goes to."

"Sure the mail goes to all the villages in Ireland, sir."

"You pwovoking blockhead!—Good Heavens, how *stoopid* you Iwish are!—the village that leads to Dublin."

"Faith they all lead to Dublin, sir."

"Confound you—you must know!—the posting village, you know—that is, not the post town, if you know what a post town is."

"To be sure I do, sir—where they sell blankets, you mane."

"No—no—no! I want to go to the village where they keep post-chaises—now you know."

"Faix, they have po'chaises in all the villages here; there's no bettter accommodation for man or baste in the world than here, sir."

Furlong was mute from downright vexation, till his rage got vent in an oath, another denunciation of Irish stupidity, and at last a declaration that the driver *must* know the village.

"How would I know it, sir, when you don't know it yourself?" asked the groom; "I suppose it has a name to it, and if you tell me that, I'll dhrive you there fast enough."

"I cannot wemember your howwid names here—it is a Bal, or Bally, or some such gibbewish ___"

Mat would not be enlightened.

"Is there not Bal or Bally something?"

"Oh, a power o' Bailies, sir; there's Ballygash, and Ballyslash, and Ballysmish, and Ballysmash, and—" so went on Mat, inventing a string of Ballies, till he was stopped by the enraged Furlong.

"None o' them! none o' them!" exclaimed he, in a fury; "'t is something about 'dirt' or 'mud.'"

"Maybe 't would be *gutther*, sir," said Mat, who saw Furlong was near the mark, and he thought he might as well make a virtue of telling him.

"I believe you're right," said Furlong.

"Then it is Ballysloughgutthery you want to go to, sir."

"That's the name!" said Furlong, snappishly; "dive *there!*" and, hastily pulling up the glass, he threw himself back again in the carriage. Another troubled vision of what the secretary would say came across him, and, after ten minutes' balancing the question, and trembling at the thoughts of an official blowing up, he thought he had better even venture on an Irish squire; so the check-string was again pulled, and the glass hastily let down.

Mat halted. "Yes, sir," said Mat.

"I think I've changed my mind—dive to the Hall!"

"I wish you'd towld me, sir, before I took the last turn—we're nigh a mile towards the village now."

"No matte', sir!" said Furlong; "dive where I tell you."

Up went the glass again, and Mat turned round the horses and carriage with some difficulty in a narrow by-road.

Another vision came across the bewildered fancy of Furlong: the certainty of the fury of O'Grady—the immediate contempt as well as anger attendant on his being bamboozled—and the result at last being the same in drawing down the secretary's anger. This produced another change of intention, and he let down the glass for the third time—once more changed his orders as concisely as possible, and pulled it up again. All this time Mat was laughing internally at the bewilderment of the stranger, and as he turned round the carriage again he muttered to himself, "By this and that, you're as hard to dhrive as a pig; for you'll neither go one road nor th' other." He had not proceeded far, when Furlong determined to face O'Grady instead of the Castle, and the last and final order for another turnabout was given. Mat hardly suppressed an oath; but respect for his master stopped him. The glass of the carriage was not pulled up this time, and Mat was asked a few questions about the Hall, and at last about the Squire. Now Mat had acuteness enough to fathom the cause of Furlong's indecision, and determined to make him as unhappy as he could; therefore to the question of "What sort of a man the Squire was?" Mat, re-echoing the question, replied—"What sort of a man, sir?—'Faith, he's not a man at all, sir, he's the devil."

Furlong pulled up the glass, and employed the interval between Mat's answer and reaching the Hall in making up his mind as to how he should "face the devil."

The carriage, after jolting for some time over a rough road skirted by a high and ruinous wall, stopped before a gateway that had once been handsome, and Furlong was startled by the sound of a most thundering bell, which the vigorous pull of Mat stimulated to its utmost pitch; the baying of dogs which followed was terrific. A savage-looking gatekeeper made his appearance with a light—not in a lantern, but shaded with his tattered hat; many questions and answers ensued, and at last the gate was opened. The carriage proceeded up a very ragged avenue, stopped before a large rambling sort of building, which even moonlight could exhibit to be very much out of repair, and after repeated knocking at the door (for Mat knew *his* squire and the other squire were not friends now, and that he might be impudent), the door was unchained and unbarred, and Furlong deposited in Neck-or-Nothing Hall.

CHAPTER XIV

"Such is the custom of Branksome Hall."

Lay of the Last Minstrel.

NECK-OR-NOTHING HALL

CANTO I

Ten good nights and ten good days
It would take to tell thy ways,
Various, many, and amazing:
Neck-or-Nothing bangs all praising.
Wonders great and wonders small
Are found in Neck-or-Nothing Hall.

Racing rascals of ten a twain,
Who care not a rush for hail nor rain,
Messages swiftly to go or to come,
Or duck a taxman or harry a bum,^[7]
Or "clip a server,"^[8] did blithely lie
In the stable parlour next to the sky^[9]
Dinners, save chance ones, seldom had they,
Unless they could nibble their beds of hay;
But the less they got, they were hardier all—
'T was the custom of Neck-or-Nothing Hall.

ONE lord there sat in that terrible hall,
Two ladies came at his terrible call,—
One his mother and one his wife,
Each afraid of her separate life;
THREE girls who trembled—FOUR boys who shook
FIVE times a day at his lowering look,
SIX blunderbuses in goodly show,
SEVEN horse-pistols were ranged below,
EIGHT domestics, great and small,
In idlesse did nothing but curse them all;
NINE state beds, where no one slept—
TEN for family use were kept;
DOGS ELEVEN with bums to make free,

With a bold THIRTEEN[10] in the treasury—
(Such its numerical strength, I guess
It can't be more, but it may be less).
Tar-barrels new and feathers old
Are ready, I trow, for the caitiff bold
 Who dares to invade
 The stormy shade
 Of the grim O'Grade,
In his hunting hold.

When the iron tongue of the old gate bell
Doth summon the growling grooms from cell,
 Through cranny and crook
 They peer and they look,
With guns to send the intruders to heaven.[11]
But when passwords pass
That might "serve a mass,"[12]
Then bars are drawn and chains let fall,
And you get into Neck-or-Nothing Hall.

CANTO II

And never a doubt
 But when you are in,
 If you love a whole skin,
 I'll wager (and win)
You'll be glad to get out.

Dr. Growling's Metrical Romance.

The bird's-eye view which the doctor's peep from Parnassus has afforded, may furnish the imagination of the reader with materials to create in his own mind a vague yet not unjust notion of Neck-or-Nothing Hall; but certain details of the Hall itself, its inmates and its customs, may be desired by the matter-of-fact reader or the more minutely curious, and as the author has the difficult task before him of trying to please all tastes, something more definite is required.

The Hall itself was, as we have said, a rambling sort of structure. Ramifying from a solid centre, which gave the notion of a founder well to do in the world, additions, without any architectural pretensions to fitness, were *stuck* on here and there, as whim or necessity suggested or demanded, and a most incongruous mass of gables, roofs, and chimneys, odd windows and blank walls, was the consequence. According to the circumstances of the occupants who inherited the property, the building was either increased or neglected. A certain old bachelor, for example, who in the course of events inherited the property, had no necessity for nurses, nursery-maids, and their consequent suite of apartments; and as he never aspired to the honour of matrimony, the ball-room, the drawing-room, and extra bed-chambers were neglected; but being a fox-hunter, a new kennel and range of stables were built, the dining-room enlarged, and all the ready money he could get at spent in augmenting the plate, to keep pace with the racing-cups he won, and proudly displayed at his drinking-bouts; and when he died suddenly (broke his neck), the plate was seized at the suit of his wine-merchant; and as the heir next in succession got the property in a ruinous condition, it was impossible to keep a stud of horses along with a wife and a large family, so the stables and kennel went to decay, while the ladies and family apartments could only be patched up. When the house was dilapidated, the grounds about it, of course, were ill kept. Fine old trees were there, originally intended to afford shade to walks which were so neglected as to be no more walkable than any other part of the grounds—the vista of aspiring stems indicated where an avenue had been, but neither hoe nor rolling-stone had, for many a year, checked the growth of grass or weed. So much for the outside of the house: now for the inside.

That had witnessed many a thoughtless, expensive, headlong and irascible master, but never one more so than the present owner; added to which, he had the misfortune of being unpopular. Other men, thoughtless, and headlong, and irritable as he, have lived and had friends; but there was something about O'Grady that was felt, perhaps, more than it could be defined, which made him unpleasing—perhaps the homely phrase "cross-grained" may best express it, and O'Grady was essentially a cross-grained man. The estate, when he got it, was pretty heavily saddled, and the "galled jade" did not "wince" the less for his riding.

A good jointure to his mother was chargeable on the property, and this was an excuse on all occasions for the Squire's dilatory payment in other quarters. "Sir," he would say, "my mother's jointure is sacred—it is more than the estate can well bear, it is true, but it is a sacred claim, and I would sooner sacrifice my life, my *honour*, sir, than see that claim neglected!" Now all this sounded mighty fine, but his mother could never see her jointure regularly paid, and was obliged to live in the house with him: she was somewhat of an *oddity*, and had apartments to herself, and, as long as she was let alone, and allowed to read romances in quiet, did not complain; and whenever a stray ten-pound note *did* fall into her

hands, she gave the greater part of it to her younger grand-daughter, who was fond of flowers and plants, and supported a little conservatory on her grand-mother's bounty, she paying the tribute of a bouquet to the old lady when the state of her botanical prosperity could afford it. The eldest girl was a favourite of an uncle, and *her* passion being dogs, all the presents her uncle made her in money were converted into canine curiosities; while the youngest girl took an interest in the rearing of poultry. Now the boys, varying in age from eight to fourteen, had their separate favourites too—one loved bull-dogs and terriers, another game-cocks, the third ferrets, and the fourth rabbits and pigeons. These multifarious tastes produced strange results. In the house, flowers and plants, indicating refinement of taste and costliness, were strongly contrasted with broken plaster, soiled hangings, and faded paint; an expensive dog might be seen lapping cream out of a shabby broken plate; a never-ending sequence of wars raged among the dependent favourites, the bull-dogs and terriers chopping up the ferrets, the ferrets killing the game-cocks, the game-cocks killing the tame poultry and rabbits, and the rabbits destroying the garden, assisted by the flying reserve of pigeons. It was a sort of Irish retaliation, so amusingly exemplified in the nursery jingle—

The water began to quench the fire,
The fire began to burn the stick,
The stick began to beat the dog,
The dog began to bite the kid.

In the midst of all these distinct and clashing tastes, that of Mrs. O'Grady (the wife) must not be forgotten; her weak point was a feather bed. Good soul! anxious that whoever slept under her roof should lie softly, she would go to the farthest corner of the county to secure an accession to her favourite property—and such a collection of luxurious feather beds never was seen in company with such rickety bedsteads and tattered and mildewed curtains, in rooms uncarpeted, whose paper was dropping off the wall,—well might it be called paper-hanging indeed!—whose washing-tables were of deal, and whose delf was of the plainest ware, and even that minus sundry handles and spouts. Nor was the renowned O'Grady without his hobby, too. While the various members of his family were thwarting each other, his master-mischief was thwarting them all; like some wicked giant looking down on a squabble of dwarfs, and ending the fight by kicking them all right and left. Then *he* had *his* troop of pets too—idle blackguards who were slinging[13] about the place eternally, keeping up a sort of "cordon sanitaire," to prevent the pestilential presence of a bailiff, which is so catching, and turns to jail fever, a disease which had been fatal in the family. O'Grady never ventured beyond his domain except on the back of a fleet horse—there he felt secure; indeed, the place he most dreaded legal assault in was his own house, where he apprehended trickery might invade him: a carriage might be but a feint, and hence the great circumspection in the opening of doors.

From the nature of the establishment, thus hastily sketched, the reader will see what an ill-regulated jumble it was. The master, in difficulties, had disorderly people hanging about his place for his personal security; from these very people his boys picked up the love of dog-fights, cock-fights, &c.; and they, from the fights of their pets, fought amongst themselves, and were always fighting with their sisters; so the reader will see the "metrical romance" was not overcharged in its rhymes on Neck-or-Nothing Hall.

When Furlong entered the hall, he gave his name to a queer-looking servant with wild scrubby hair, a dirty face, a tawdry livery, worse for wear, which had manifestly been made for a larger man, and hung upon its present possessor like a coat upon a clothes-horse; his cotton stockings, meant to be white, and clumsy shoes, meant to be black, met each other half-way, and split the difference in a pleasing neutral tint. Leaving Furlong standing in the hall, he clattered up-stairs, and a dialogue ensued between master and man so loud that Furlong could hear the half of it, and his own name in a tone of doubt, with that of "Egan," in a tone of surprise, and that of his "sable majesty" in a tone of anger, rapidly succeeded one another; then such broken words and sentences as these ensued—"fudge!—humbug!—rascally trick!—eh!—by the hokey, they'd better take care!—put the scoundrel under the pump!"

Furlong more than half suspected it was to him this delicate attention was intended, and began to feel uncomfortable: he sharpened his ears to their keenest hearing, but there was a lull in the conversation, and he could ascertain one of the gentler sex was engaged in it by the ogre-like voice uttering, "Fudge, woman!—fiddle-de-dee!" Then he caught the words, "perhaps," and "gentleman," in a lady's voice; then out thundered "that rascal's carriage!—why come in that?—friend!—humbug!—rascal's carriage!—tar and feather him, by this and that!"

Furlong began to feel very uncomfortable; the conversation ended; down came the servant, to whom Furlong was about to address himself, when the man said, "He would be with him in a minit," and vanished; a sort of reconnoitering party, one by one, then passed through the hall, eyeing the stranger very suspiciously, any of them to whom Furlong ventured a word scurrying off in double-quick time. For an instant he meditated a retreat, and, looking to the door, saw a heavy chain across it, the pattern of which must have been had from Newgate. He attempted to unfasten it, and as it clanked heavily, the ogre's voice from up-

stairs bellowed, "Who the d—l's that opening the door?" Furlong's hand dropped from the chain, and a low growling went on up the staircase. The servant whom he first saw returned.

"I fear," said Furlong, "there is some misappwehension."

"A what, sir?"

"A misappwehension."

"Oh, no, sir! it's only a mistake the master thought you might be making; he thinks you mistuk the house, maybe, sir?"

"Oh, no—I *wather* think he mistakes me. Will you do me the favo'," and he produced a packet of papers as he spoke—"the favo' to take my cwedentials to Mr. O'Gwady, and if he throws his eye over these pape's—"

At the word "papers," there was a shout from above, "Don't touch them, you thief, don't touch them!—another blister,—ha! ha! By the 'ternal this and that, I'll have him in the horse-pond!" A heavy stamping overhead ensued, and furious ringing of bells; in the midst of the din, a very pale lady came down-stairs, and pointing the way to a small room, beckoned Furlong to follow her. For a moment he hesitated, for his heart misgave him; but shame at the thought of doubting or refusing the summons of a lady overcame his fear, and he followed to a little parlour, where mutual explanations between Mrs. O'Grady and himself, and many messages, questions, and answers, which she carried up and down stairs, at length set Furlong's mind at ease respecting his personal safety, and finally admitted him into the presence of the truculent lord of the castle—who, when he heard that Furlong had been staying in the enemy's camp, was not, it may be supposed, in a sweet temper to receive him. O'Grady looked thunder as Furlong entered, and eyeing him keenly for some seconds, as if he were taking a mental as well as an ocular measurement of him, he saluted him with —

"Well, sir, a pretty kettle of fish you've made of this. I hope you have not blabbed much about our affairs?"

"Why, I weally don't know—I'm not sure—that is, I won't be positive, because when one is thwown off his guard, you know—"

"Pooh, sir! a man should never be off his guard in an election. But how the d—l, sir, could you make such a thundering mistake as to go to the wrong house?"

"It was a howwid postilion, Miste' O'Gwady."

"The scoundrel!" exclaimed O'Grady, stamping up and down the room.

At this moment, a tremendous crash was heard; the ladies jumped from their seats; O'Grady paused in his rage, and his poor, pale wife exclaimed—

"'T is in the conservatory."

A universal rush was now made to the spot, and there was Handy Andy, buried in the ruins of flower-pots and exotics, directly under an enormous breach in the glass roof of the building. How this occurred a few words will explain. Andy, when he went to sleep in the justice-room, slept soundly for some hours, but awoke in the horrors of a dream, in which he fancied he was about to be hanged. So impressed was he by the vision, that he determined on making his escape if he could, and to this end piled the chair upon the desk, and the volumes of law books on the chair, and, being an active fellow, contrived to scramble up high enough to lay his hand on the frame of the sky-light, and thus make his way out on the roof. Then walking, as well as the darkness would permit him, along the coping of the wall, he approached, as it chanced, the conservatory; but the coping being loose, one of the flags turned under Andy's foot, and bang he went through the glass roof, carrying down in his fall some score of flower-pots, and finally stuck in a tub, with his legs upwards, and embowered in the branches of crushed geraniums and hydrangeas.

He was dragged out of the tub, amidst a shower of curses from O'Grady; but the moment Andy recovered the few senses he had, and saw Furlong, regardless of the anathemas of the Squire, he shouted out, "There he is!—there he is!" and rushing towards him, exclaimed, "Now, did I dhrowned you, sir,—did I? Sure, I never murdhered you!"

'T was as much as could be done to keep O'Grady's hands off Andy, for smashing the conservatory, when Furlong's presence made him no longer liable to imprisonment.

"Maybe he has a vote," said Furlong, anxious to display how much he was on the *qui vive* in election matters.

"*Have* you a vote, you rascal?"

"You may sarche me if you like, your honour," said Andy, who thought a vote was some sort of property he was suspected of stealing.

"You are either the biggest rogue or the biggest fool I ever met," said O'Grady. "Which are you now?"

"Whichever your honour plazes," said Andy.

"If I forgive you, will you stand by me at the election?"

"I'll stand anywhere your honour bids me," said Andy humbly.

"That's a thorough-going rogue, I'm inclined to think," said O'Grady, aside to Furlong.

"He looks more like a fool in my appwehension," was the reply.

"Oh, these fellows conceal the deepest roguery sometimes under an assumed simplicity. You don't understand the Irish."

"Und'stand!" exclaimed Furlong; "I pwonounce the whole countwy quite incompwhensible!"

"Well!" growled O'Grady to Andy, after a moment's consideration, "go down to the kitchen, you house-breaking vagabond, and get your supper!"

Now, considering the "fee, faw, fum" qualities of O'Grady, the reader may be surprised at the easy manner in which Andy slipped through his fingers, after having slipped through the roof of his conservatory; but as between two stools folks fall to the ground, so between two rages people sometimes tumble into safety. O'Grady was in a divided passion—first his wrath was excited against Furlong for *his* blunder, and just as that was about to explode, the crash of Andy's sudden appearance amidst the flower-pots (like a practical parody on "Love among the roses") called off the gathering storm in a new direction, and the fury sufficient to annihilate one, was, by dispersion, harmless to two. But on the return of the party from the conservatory, after Andy's descent to the kitchen, O'Grady's rage against Furlong, though moderated, had settled down into a very substantial dissatisfaction, which he evinced by poking his nose between his forefinger and thumb, as if he meditated the abstraction of that salient feature from his face, shuffling his feet about, throwing his right leg over his left knee, and then suddenly, as if that were a mistake, throwing his left over the right, thrumming on the arm of his chair, with his clenched hand, inhaling the air very audibly through his protruded lips, as if he were supping hot soup, and all the time fixing his eyes on the fire with a portentous gaze, as if he would have evoked from it a salamander.

Mrs. O'Grady in such a state of affairs, wishing to speak to the stranger, yet anxious she should say nothing that could bear upon immediate circumstances lest she might rouse her awful lord and master, racked her invention for what she should say; and at last, with "bated breath" and a very worn-out smile, faltered forth—

"Pray, Mr. Furlong, are you fond of shuttlecock?"

Furlong stared, and began a reply of "Weally, I *cawn't* say that——"

When O'Grady gruffly broke in with, "You'd better ask him, does he love teetotum."

"I thought you could recommend me the best establishment in the metropolis, Mr. Furlong, for buying shuttlecocks," continued the lady, unmindful of the interruption.

"You had better ask him where you can get mouse-traps," growled O'Grady.

Mrs. O'Grady was silent, and O'Grady, whose rage had now assumed its absurd form of tagging changes, continued, increasing his growl, like a *crescendo* on the double-bass, as he proceeded:—"You'd better ask, I think—mouse-traps—steel-traps—clap-traps—rat-traps—rattle-traps— rattle-snakes!"

Furlong stared, Mrs. O'Grady was silent, and the Misses O'Grady cast fearful sidelong glances at "Pa," whose strange irritation always bespoke his not being in what good people call a "sweet state of mind;" he laid hold of a tea-spoon, and began beating a tattoo on the mantel-piece to a low smothered whistle of some very obscure tune, which was suddenly stopped to say to Furlong, very abruptly—

"So Egan diddled you?"

"Why, he certainly, as I conceive, pwactised, or I might say, in short—he—a—in fact——"

"Oh, yes," said O'Grady, cutting short Furlong's humming and hawing; "oh, yes, I know—diddled you."

Bang went the spoon again, keeping time with another string of nonsense. "Diddled you—diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon—who was there?"

"A Mister Dawson."

"Phew!" ejaculated O'Grady with a doleful whistle; "Dick the devil! You are in nice hands! All

up with us—up with us—

Up, up, up,
And here we go down, down, down, down, derry down!

Oh, murder!" and the spoon went faster than before. "Any one else?"

"Mister Bermingham."

"Bermingham!" exclaimed O'Grady.

"A cle'gyman, I think," drawled Furlong.

"Bermingham!" reiterated O'Grady. "What business has he there, and be ——!" O'Grady swallowed a curse when he remembered he was a clergyman. "The enemy's camp—not his principles! Oh, Bermingham, Bermingham,—*Brimmagem*, *Brummagem*, Sheffield, Wolverhampton—Murder! Any one else? Was Durfy there?"

"No," said Furlong; "but there was an odd pe'son, whose name wymes to his—as you seem fond of wymes, Mister O'Gwady."

"What!" said O'Grady, quickly, and fixing his eyes on Furlong; "Murphy?"

"Yes. Miste' Muffy."

O'Grady gave a more doleful whistle than before, and banging the spoon faster than ever, exclaimed again, "Murphy!—then I'll tell you what it is; do you see that?" and he held up the spoon before Furlong, who, being asked the same question several times, confessed he *did* see the spoon. "Then I'll tell you what it is," said O'Grady again, "I wouldn't give you *that* for the election;" and, with a disdainful jerk, he threw the spoon into the fire, after which he threw himself back in his chair with an appearance of repose, while he glanced fiercely up at the ceiling, and indulged in a *very* low whistle indeed. One of the girls stole softly round to the fire and gently took up the tongs to recover the spoon; it made a slight rattle, and her father turned smartly round, and said, "Can't you let the fire alone?—there's coal enough on it; the devil burn 'em all—Egan, Murphy, and all o' them! What do you stand there for, with the tongs in your hands, like a hairdresser, or a stuck pig? I tell you, I'm as hot as a lime-kiln; go out o' that."

The daughter retired, and the spoon was left to its fate; the ladies did not dare to utter a word; O'Grady continued his gaze on the ceiling and his whistle; and Furlong, very uncomfortable and much more astonished, after sitting in silence for some time, thought a retreat the best move he could make, and intimated his wish to retire.

Mrs. O'Grady gently suggested it was yet early; which Furlong acknowledged, but pleaded his extreme fatigue after a day of great exertion.

"I suppose you were canvassing," said O'Grady, with a wicked grin.

"Ce'tainly not; they could sca'cely pwesume on such a thing as that, I should think, in *my* pwesence."

"Then what fatigued you?—eh?"

"Salmon-fishing, sir."

"What!" exclaimed O'Grady, opening his fierce eyes, and turning suddenly round. "Salmon-fishing! Where the d——l were you salmon-fishing?"

"In the wiver, close by here."

The ladies now all stared; but Furlong advanced a vehement assurance, in answer to their looks of wonder, that he had taken some very fine salmon indeed.

The girls could not suppress their laughter; and O'Grady, casting a look of mingled rage and contempt on the fisherman, merely uttered the ejaculation, "Oh, Moses!" and threw himself back in his chair; but starting up a moment after, he rang the bell violently. "What do you want, my dear?" said his poor wife, venturing to lift her eyes, and speaking in the humblest tone—"what do you want?"

"Some broiled bones!" said O'Grady, very much like an ogre; "I want something to settle my stomach after what I've heard, for, by the powers of ipecacuanha, 't is enough to make a horse sick—sick, by the powers!—shivering all over like a dog in a wet sack. I must have broiled bones and hot punch!"

The servant entered, and O'Grady swore at him for not coming sooner, though he was really expeditious in his answer to the bell.

"Confound your lazy bones; you're never in time."

"Deed, sir; I came the minit I heerd the bell."

"Hold your tongue!—who bid you talk? The devil fly away with you!—and you'll never go fast till he does. Make haste now—go to the cook—"

"Yes, sir."

"Curse you! can't you wait till you get your message? Go to the devil with you!—get some broiled bones—hot water and tumblers—don't forget the whisky—and pepper them well. Mind, hot—everything hot—screeching hot. Be off, now, and make haste—mind, make haste!"

"Yes, sir," said the servant, whipping out of the room with celerity, and thanking Heaven when he had the door between him and his savage master. When he got to the kitchen, he told the cook to make haste, if ever she made haste in her life, "for there's owld Danger up-stairs in the divil's temper, God bless us!" said Mick.

"Faix, he's always that," said the cook, scurrying across the kitchen for the gridiron.

"Oh! but he's beyant all to-night," said Mick; "I think he'll murther that chap up-stairs before he stops."

"Oh, wirra! wirra!" cried the cook; "there's the fire not bright, bad luck to it, and he wantin' a brile!"

"Bright or not bright," said Mick, "make haste I'd advise you, or he'll have your life."

The bell rang violently.

"There, do you hear him tatterin'?" said Mick, rushing up-stairs.

"I thought it was tay they wor takin'," said Larry Hogan, who was sitting in the chimney-corner, smoking.

"So they are," said the cook.

"Then I suppose, briled bones is genteel with tay?" said Larry.

"Oh, no; it's not for tay, at all, they want them; it's only owld Danger himself. Whenever he's in a rage, he ates briled bones."

"Faith, they are a brave cure for anger," said Larry; "I wouldn't be angry myself, if I had one."

Down rushed Mick, to hurry the cook—bang, twang! went the bell as he spoke. "Oh, listen to him!" said Mick: "for the tendher mercy o' Heaven, make haste!"

The cook transferred the bones from the gridiron to a hot dish.

"Oh, murther, but they're smoked!" said Mick.

"No matter," said the cook, shaking her red elbow furiously; "I'll smother the smoke with the pepper—there!—give them a good dab o' musthard now, and sarve them hot!"

Away rushed Mick, as the bell was rattled into fits again.

While the cook had been broiling bones for O'Grady below, he had been grilling Furlong for himself above. In one of the pauses of the storm, the victim ventured to suggest to his tormentor that all the mischief that had arisen might have been avoided, if O'Grady had met him at the village, as he requested of him in one of his letters. O'Grady denied all knowledge of such a request, and after some queries about certain portions of the letter, it became manifest it had miscarried.

"There!" said O'Grady; "there's a second letter astray; I'm certain they put my letters astray on purpose. There's a plot in the post-office against me; by this and that, I'll have an inquiry. I wish all the post-offices in the world were blown up; and all the postmasters hanged, postmaster-general and all—I do—by the 'ternal war, I do—and all the mail coaches in the world ground to powder, and the roads they go on into the bargain—devil a use in them but to carry bad news over the universe—for all the letters with any good in them are lost; and if there's a money enclosure in one, that's sure to be robbed. Blow the post-office, I say—blow it, and sink it!"

It was at this moment Mick entered with the broiled bones, and while he was in the room, placing glasses on the table, and making the necessary arrangements for making "screeching hot punch," he heard O'Grady and Furlong talking about the two lost letters.

On his descent to the kitchen, the cook was spreading a bit of supper there, in which Andy

was to join, he having just completed some applications of brown paper and vinegar to the bruises received in his fall. Larry Hogan, too, was invited to share in the repast; and it was not the first time, by many, that Larry quartered on the Squire. Indeed, many a good larder was opened to Larry Hogan; he held a very deep interest in the regards of all the female domestics over the country, not on the strength of his personal charms, for Larry had a hanging lip, a snub nose, a low forehead, a large ugly head, whose scrubby grizzled hair grew round the crown somewhat in the form of a priest's tonsure. Not on the strength of his gallantry, for Larry was always talking morality and making sage reflections, while he supplied the womankind with bits of lace, rolls of ribbon, and now and then silk stockings. He always had some plausible story of how they happened to come in his way, for Larry was not a regular pedlar; carrying no box, he drew his chance treasures from the recesses of very deep pockets contrived in various parts of his attire. No one asked Larry how he came by such a continued supply of natty articles, and if they had, Larry would not have told them; for he was a very "close" man, as well as a "civil-spoken," under which character he was first introduced to the reader on the memorable night of Andy's destructive adventure in his mother's cabin. Larry Hogan was about as shrewd a fellow as any in the whole country, and while no one could exactly make out what *he* was, or how he made the two ends of his year meet, he knew nearly as much of every one's affairs as they did themselves; in the phrase of the country, he was "as 'cute as a fox, as close as wax, and as deep as a draw-well."

The supper-party sat down in the kitchen, and between every three mouthfuls poor Mick could get, he was obliged to canter up-stairs at the call of the fiercely rung bell. Ever and anon, as he returned, he bolted his allowance with an ejaculation, sometimes pious, sometimes the reverse, on the hard fate of attending such a "born devil," as he called the Squire.

"Why he's worse nor ever, to-night," says the cook. "What ails him at all—what is it all about?"

"Oh, he's blackguardin' and blastin' away about that quare slink-lookin' chap, up-stairs, goin' to Squire Egan's instead of comin' here."

"That was a bit o' your handy work," said Larry, with a grim smile at Andy.

"And then," said Mick, "he's swearin' by all the murthers in the world agen the whole counthry, about some letthers was stole out of the post-office by somebody."

Andy's hand was in the act of raising a mouthful to his lips, when these words were uttered; his hand fell, and his mouth remained open. Larry Hogan had his eye on him at the moment.

"He swares he'll have some one in the body o' the jail," said Mick; "and he'll never stop till he sees them swing."

Andy thought of the effigy on the wall, and his dream, and grew pale.

"By the hokey," said Mick, "I never see him in sitch a tatterin' rage!"—bang went the bell again—"Ow, ow!" cried Mick, bolting a piece of fat bacon, wiping his mouth on the sleeve of his livery, and running up-stairs.

"Misses Cook, ma'am," said Andy, shoving back his chair from the table; "thank you, ma'am, for your good supper. I think I'll be goin' now."

"Sure, you're not done yet, man alive."

"Enough is as good as a feast, ma'am," replied Andy.

"Augh! sure the morsel you took is more like a fast than a feast," said the cook, "and it's not Lent."

"It's not lent, sure enough," said Larry Hogan, with a sly grin; "it's not *lent*, for you *gave* it to him."

"Ah, Misther Hogan, you're always goin' on with your conundherums," said the cook; "sure, that's not the lent I mane at all—I mane Good Friday Lent."

"Faix, every Friday is good Friday that a man gets his supper," said Larry.

"Well, you *will* be goin' on, Misther Hogan," said the cook. "Oh, but you're a witty man; but I'd rather have a yard of your lace, any day, than a mile o' your discourse."

"Sure, you ought not to mind my goin' *on*, when you're lettin' another man go *off*, that-a-way," said Larry, pointing to Andy, who, hat in hand, was quitting the kitchen.

"Faix an' he mustn't go," said the cook; "there's two words to that bargain;" and she closed the door, and put her back against it.

"My mother's expectin' me, ma'am," said Andy.

"Throth, if 't was your wife was expectin' you, she must wait a bit," said the cook; "sure you wouldn't leave the thirsty curse on my kitchen?—you must take a dhrop before you go; besides the dogs outside the place would ate you onless there was some one they knew along wid you: and sure, if a dog bit you, you couldn't dhrink wather afther, let alone a dhrop o' beer, or a thrifle o' sper'ts: isn't that thrue, Misther Hogan?"

"Indeed an' it is, ma'am," answered Larry; "no one can dhrink afther a dog bites them, and that's the rayson that the larn'd fackleties calls the disaise high-*dhry*—"

"High-dhry what?" asked the cook.

"That's what I'm thinkin' of," said Larry. "High-dhry—high-dhry—something."

"There's high-dhry snuff," said the cook.

"Oh, no—no, no, ma'am!" said Larry, waving his hand and shaking his head, as if unwilling to be interrupted in endeavouring to recall

"Some fleeting remembrance;"

"high-dhry—po—po—something about po; 'faith, it's not unlike popery," said Larry.

"Don't say popery," cried the cook; "it's a dirty word! Say Roman Catholic when you spake of the faith."

"Do you think *I* would undhervalue the faith?" said Larry, casting up his eyes. "Oh, Missis Mulligan, you know little of me; d' you think I would undhervalue what is my hope, past, present, and to come?—*what* makes our hearts light when our lot is heavy?—*what* makes us love our neighbour as ourselves?"

"Indeed, Misther Hogan," broke in the cook, "I never knew any one fonder of calling in on a neighbour than yourself, particularly about dinner-time—"

"What makes us," said Larry, who would *not* let the cook interrupt his outpouring of pious eloquence—"what makes us fierce in prosperity to our friends, and meek in adversity to our inimies?"

"Oh! Misther Hogan!" said the cook, blessing herself.

"What puts the leg undher you when you are in throuble? why, your faith: what makes you below desait, and above reproach, and on neither side of nothin'?" Larry slapped the table like a prime minister, and there was no opposition. "Oh, Missis Mulligan, do you think I would desaive or bethray my fellow-crayture? Oh, no—I would not wrong the child unborn,"—and this favourite phrase of Larry (and other rascals) was, and is, unconsciously, true; for people, most generally, must be born before they *can* be much wronged.

"Oh, Missis Mulligan," said Larry, with a devotional appeal of his eyes to the ceiling, "be at war with sin, and you'll be at paice with yourself!"

Just as Larry wound up his pious peroration, Mick shoved in the door, against which the cook supported herself, and told Andy the Squire said he should not leave the Hall that night.

Andy looked aghast.

Again Larry Hogan's eye was on him.

"Sure I can come back here in the mornin'," said Andy, who at the moment he spoke was conscious of the intention of being some forty miles out of the place before dawn, if he could get away.

"When the Squire says a thing, it must be done," said Mick. "You must sleep here."

"And pleasant dhrames to you," said Larry, who saw Andy wince under his kindly worded stab.

"And where must I sleep?" asked Andy, dolefully.

"Out in the big loft," said Mick.

"I'll show you the way," said Larry; "I'm goin' to sleep there myself to-night, for it would be too far to go home. Good night, Mrs. Mulligan—good night, Mickey—come along, Andy."

Andy followed Hogan. They had to cross a yard to reach the stables; the night was clear, and the waning moon shed a steady though not a bright light on the enclosure. Hogan cast a lynx eye around him to see if the coast was clear, and satisfying himself it was, he laid his hand impressively on Andy's arm as they reached the middle of the yard, and setting Andy's face right against the moonlight, so that he might watch the slightest expression, he paused for a

moment before he spoke; and when he spoke, it was in a low mysterious whisper—low, as if he feared the night breeze might betray it,—and the words were few, but potent, which he uttered; they were these—" *Who robbed the post-office?*"

The result quite satisfied Hogan; and he knew how to turn his knowledge to account. O'Grady and Egan were no longer friends; a political contest was pending; letters were missing; Andy had been Egan's servant; and Larry Hogan had enough of that mental chemical power, which, from a few raw facts, unimportant separately, could make a combination of great value.

Soon after breakfast at Merryvale the following morning, Mrs. Egan wanted to see the Squire. She went to his sitting-room—it was bolted. He told her, from the inside, he was engaged just then, but would see her by-and-by. She retired to the drawing-room, where Fanny was singing. "Oh, Fanny," said her sister, "sing me that dear new song of 'The Voices,' 't is so sweet, and must be felt by those who, like me, have a happy home."

Fanny struck a few notes of a wild and peculiar symphony, and sang her sister's favourite.

THE VOICE WITHIN

I

You ask the dearest place on earth,
Whose simple joys can never die;
'T is the holy pale of the happy hearth,
Where love doth light each beaming eye.
With snowy shroud
Let tempests loud
Around my old tower raise their din;—
What boots the shout
Of storms without,
While voices sweet resound within?
O dearer sound
For the tempests round,
The voices sweet within!

II

I ask not wealth, I ask not power;
But, gracious Heaven, oh grant to me
That, when the storms of Fate may lower,
My heart just like my home may be!
When in the gale
Poor Hope's white sail
No haven can for shelter win,
Fate's darkest skies
The heart defies
Whose still small voice is sweet within
O, heavenly sound,
'Mid the tempests round,
That voice so sweet within!

Egan had entered as Fanny was singing the second verse; he wore a troubled air, which his wife at first did not remark. "Is not that a sweet song, Edward?" said she. "No one ought to like it more than you, for your home is your happiness, and no one has a clearer conscience."

Egan kissed her gently, and thanked her for her good opinion, and asked her what she wished to say to him. They left the room.

Fanny remarked Egan's unusually troubled air, and it marred her music; leaving the piano, and walking to the window, she saw Larry Hogan walking from the house, down the avenue.

CHAPTER XV

If the morning brought uneasiness and distrust to Merryvale, it dawned not more brightly on Neck-or-Nothing Hall. The discord of the former night was not preparatory to harmony on the morrow, and the parties separating in ill-humour from the drawing-room were not likely to look forward with much pleasure to the breakfast-parlour. But before breakfast sleep was to intervene—that is, for those who could get it—and the unfortunate Furlong was not amongst the number. Despite the very best feather bed Mrs. O'Grady had selected for him from amongst her treasures, it was long before slumber weighed down his feverish eyelids;

and even then, it was only to have them opened again in some convulsive start of a troubled dream. All his adventures of the last four-and-twenty hours were jumbled together in strange confusion—now on a lonely road, while dreading the assaults of robbers, his course was interrupted not by a highwayman, but a river, whereon embarking, he began to catch salmon in a most surprisingly rapid manner, but just as he was about to haul in his fish it escaped from the hook, and the salmon, making wry faces at him, very impertinently exclaimed, "Sure, you wouldn't catch a poor, ignorant, Irish salmon?" He then snapped his pistols at the insolent fish—then his carriage breaks down, and he is suddenly transferred from the river to the road; thieves seize upon him and bind his hands, but a charming young lady with pearly teeth frees him from his bonds, and conducts him to a castle where a party is engaged in playing cards; he is invited to join, and as his cards are dealt to him he anticipates triumph in the game, but by some malicious fortune his trumps are transformed into things of no value, as they touch the board; he loses his money, and is kicked out when his purse has been emptied, and he escapes along a dark road pursued by his spoilers, who would take his life, and a horrid cry of "broiled bones," rings in his ears as he flies; he is seized and thrown into a river, where, as he sinks, shoals of salmon raise a chorus of rejoicing, and he wakes out of the agonies of dream-drowning to find himself nearly suffocated by sinking into the feathery depths of Mrs. O'Grady's pet bed. After a night passed in such troubled visions the unfortunate Furlong awoke unrefreshed, and, with bitter recollections of the past and mournful anticipations of the future, arose and prepared to descend to the parlour, where a servant told him breakfast was ready.

His morning greeting by the family was not of that hearty and cheerful character which generally distinguishes the house of an Irish squire; for though O'Grady was not so savage as on the preceding evening, he was rather gruff, and the ladies dreaded being agreeable when the master's temper blew from a stormy point. Furlong could not help regretting at this moment the lively breakfast-table at Merryvale, nor avoid contrasting to disadvantage the two Miss O'Gradys with Fanny Dawson. Augusta, the eldest, inherited the prominent nose of her father, and something of his upper lip too, beard included; and these, unfortunately, were all she was ever likely to inherit from him; and Charlotte, the younger, had the same traits in a moderated degree. Altogether, he thought the girls the plainest he had ever seen, and the house more horrible than anything that was ever imagined; and he sighed a faint fashionable sigh, to think his political duties had expelled him from a paradise to send him

"The other way—the other way!"

Four boys and a little girl sat at a side-table, where a capacious jug of milk, large bowls, and a lusty loaf were laid under contribution amidst a suppressed but continuous wrangle, which was going forward amongst the juniors; and a snappish "I will" or "I won't," a "Let me alone" or a "Behave yourself," occasionally was distinguishable above the murmur of dissatisfaction. A little squall from the little girl at last made O'Grady turn round and swear that, if they did not *behave* themselves, he'd turn them all out.

"It is all Goggy, sir," said the girl.

"No, it's not, you dirty little thing," cried George, whose name was thus euphoniously abbreviated.

"He's putting——" said the girl, with excitement.

"Ah, you dirty little——" interrupted Goggy, in a low, contemptuous tone.

"He's putting, sir——"

"Whisht! you young devils, will you?" cried O'Grady, and a momentary silence prevailed; but the little girl snivelled and put up her bib^[14] to wipe her eyes, while Goggy put out his tongue at her. Many minutes had not elapsed when the girl again whimpered—

"Call to Goggy, papa; he's putting some mouse's tails into my milk, sir."

"Ah, you dirty little tell-tale!" cried Goggy, reproachfully; "a tell-tale is worse than a mouse's tail."

O'Grady jumped up, gave Master Goggy a box on the ear, and then caught him by the aforesaid appendage to his head, and as he led him to the door by the same, Goggy bellowed lustily, and when ejected from the room howled down the passage more like a dog than a human being. O'Grady, on resuming his seat, told Polshee^[15] (the little girl) she was always getting Goggy a beating, and she *was* a little cantankerous cat and a dirty tell-tale, as Goggy said. Amongst the ladies and Furlong the breakfast went forward with coldness and constraint, and all were glad when it was nearly over. At this period, Mrs. O'Grady half filled a large bowl from the tea-urn, and then added to it some weak tea, and Miss O'Grady collected all the broken bread about the table on a plate. Just then Furlong ventured to "twouble" Mrs. O'Grady for a *leetle* more tea, and before he handed her his cup he would have emptied the sediment in the slop-basin, but by mistake he popped it into the large bowl of *miserable* Mrs. O'Grady had prepared. Furlong begged a thousand pardons, but Mrs.

O'Grady assured him it was of no consequence, *as it was only for the tutor!*

O'Grady, having swallowed his breakfast as fast as possible, left the room; the whole party soon followed, and on arriving in the drawing-room, the young ladies became more agreeable when no longer under the constraint of their ogre father. Furlong talked slip-slop common-places with them; they spoke of the country and the weather, and he of the city; they assured him that the dews were heavy in the evening, and that the grass was *so* green in that part of the country; he obliged them with the interesting information, that the Liffy ran through Dublin, but that the two sides of the city communicated by means of bridges—that the houses were built of red brick generally, and that the hall-doors were painted in imitation of mahogany; to which the young ladies responded, "La, how odd!" and added, that in the country people mostly painted their hall-doors green, to match the grass. Furlong admitted the propriety of the proceeding, and said he liked uniformity. The young ladies quite coincided in his opinion, declared they all were so fond of uniformity, and added that one of their carriage horses was blind. Furlong admitted the excellence of the observation, and said, in a very soft voice, that Love was blind also.

"Exactly," said Miss O'Grady, "and that's the reason we call our horse 'Cupid!'"

"How clever!" replied Furlong.

"And the mare that goes in harness with him—she's an ugly creature, to be sure, but we call her 'Venus.'"

"How dwell!" said Furlong.

"That's for uniformity," said Miss O'Grady.

"How good!" was the rejoinder.

Mrs. O'Grady, who had left the room for a few minutes, now returned and told Furlong she would show him over the house if he pleased. He assented, of course, and under her guidance went through many apartments; those on the basement story were hurried through rapidly, but when Mrs. O'Grady got him upstairs, amongst the bed-rooms, she dwelt on the excellence of every apartment. "This I need not show you, Mr. Furlong—'t is your own; I hope you slept well last night?" This was the twentieth time the question had been asked. "Now, here is another, Mr. Furlong; the window looks out on the lawn: so nice to look out on a lawn, I think, in the morning, when one gets up!—so refreshing and wholesome! Oh! you are looking at the stain in the ceiling, but we couldn't get the roof repaired in time before the winter set in last year; and Mr. O'Grady thought we might as well have the painters and slaters together in the summer—and the house does want paint, indeed, but we all hate the smell of paint. See here, Mr. Furlong," and she turned up a quilt as she spoke; "just put your hand into that bed; did you ever feel a finer bed?"

Furlong declared he never did.

"Oh, you don't know how to feel a bed!—put your hand into it—well, that way;" and Mrs. O'Grady plunged her arm up to the elbow into the object of her admiration. Furlong poked the bed, and was all laudation.

"Isn't it beautiful?"

"Cha'ming!" replied Furlong, trying to pick off the bits of down which clung to his coat.

"Oh, never mind the down—you shall be brushed after; I always show my beds, Mr. Furlong. Now, here's another;" and so she went on, dragging poor Furlong up and down the house, and he did not get out of her clutches till he had poked all the beds in the establishment. As soon as that ceremony was over, and that his coat had undergone the process of brushing, he wished to take a stroll, and was going forth, when Mrs. O'Grady interrupted him, with the assurance that it would not be safe unless some one of the family became his escort, for the dogs were very fierce—Mr. O'Grady was *so* fond of dogs, and *so* proud of a particular breed of dogs he had, so remarkable for their courage—he had better wait till the boys had done their Latin lesson. So Furlong was marched back to the drawing-room.

There the younger daughter addressed him with a message from her grandmamma, who wished to have the pleasure of making his acquaintance, and hoped he would pay her a visit. Furlong, of course, was "quite delighted," and "too happy," and the young lady, thereupon, led him to the old lady's apartment.

The old dowager had been a beauty in her youth—one of the belles of the Irish court, and when she heard "a gentleman from Dublin Castle" was in the house she desired to see him. To see any one from the seat of her juvenile joys and triumphs would have given her delight, were it only the coachman that had driven a carriage to a levee or drawing-room; she could ask him about the sentinels at the gate, the entrance-porch, and if the long range of windows yet glittered with lights on St. Patrick's night; but to have a conversation with an official from that seat of government and courtly pleasure was, indeed, something to make her happy.

On Furlong being introduced, the old lady received him very courteously, at the same time with a certain air that betokened she was accustomed to deference. Her commanding figure was habited in a loose morning wrapper, made of grey flannel; but while this gave evidence she studied her personal comfort rather than appearance, a bit of pretty silk handkerchief about the neck, very knowingly displayed, and a becoming ribbon in her cap showed she did not quite neglect her good looks; it did not require a very quick eye to see, besides, a small touch of rouge on the cheek which age had depressed, and the assistance of Indian ink to the eyebrow which time had thinned and faded. A glass filled with flowers stood on the table before her, and a quantity of books lay scattered about; a guitar—not the Spanish instrument now in fashion, but the English one of some eighty years ago, strung with wire and tuned in thirds—hung by a *blue ribbon* beside her; a corner cupboard, fantastically carved, bore some curious specimens of china on one side of the room; while, in strange discord with what was really scarce and beautiful, the commonest Dutch cuckoo-clock was suspended on the opposite wall; close beside her chair stood a very pretty little Japan table, bearing a looking-glass with numerous drawers framed in the same material; and while Furlong seated himself, the old lady cast a sidelong glance at the mirror, and her withered fingers played with the fresh ribbon.

"You have recently arrived from the Castle, sir, I understand."

"Quite wecently, madam—awived last night."

"I hope his Excellency is well—not that I have the honour of his acquaintance, but I love the Lord Lieutenant—and the aides-de-camps are so nice, and the little pages!—put a marker in that book," said she, in an under-tone, to her granddaughter, "page seventy-four—ah," she resumed in a higher tone, "that reminds me of the Honourable Captain Wriggle, who commanded a seventy-four, and danced with me at the Castle the evening Lady Legge sprained her ankle. By-the-bye, are there any seventy-fours in Dublin now?"

"I wather think," said Furlong, "the bay is not sufficiently deep for line-of-battle ships."

"Oh dear, yes! I have seen quantities of seventy-fours there; though, indeed, I am not quite sure if it wasn't at *Splithead*. Give me the smelling salts, Charlotte, love; mine does ache indeed! How subject the dear Duchess of Rutland was to headaches; you did not know the Duchess of Rutland?—no, to be sure, what am I thinking of? you're too young; but those were the charming days! You have heard, of course, the duchess's *bon mot* in reply to the compliment of Lord —, but I must not mention his name, because there was some scandal about them; but the gentleman said to the duchess—I must tell you she was Isabella, Duchess of Rutland—and he said, 'Isabelle *is a belle*,' to which the duchess replied, 'Isabelle *was a belle*.'"

"Vewy neat, indeed!" said Furlong.

"Ah! poor thing," said the dowager, with a sigh, "she was beginning to be a little *passée* then;" she looked in the glass herself, and added, "Dear me, how pale I am this morning!" and pulling out one of the little drawers from the Japan looking-glass, she took out a pot of rouge and heightened the colour on her cheek. The old lady not only heightened her own colour, but that of the witnesses—of Furlong particularly, who was *quite* surprised. "Why am I so very pale this morning, Charlotte love?" continued the old lady.

"You sit up so late reading, grandmamma."

"Ah, who can resist the fascination of the muses? You are fond of literature, I hope, sir?"

"Extwemely," replied Furlong.

"As a statesman," continued the old lady—to whom Furlong made a deep obeisance at the word "statesman"—"as a statesman, of course your reading lies in the more solid department; but if you ever *do* condescend to read a romance, there is the sweetest thing I ever met I am just now engaged in; it is called 'The Blue Robber of the Pink Mountain.' I have not come to the pink mountain yet, but the blue robber is the most perfect character. The author, however, is guilty of a strange forgetfulness; he begins by speaking of the robber as of the middle age, and soon after describes him as a young man. Now, how could a young man be of the middle age?"

"It seems a stwange inaccuwacy," lisped Furlong. "But poets sometimes pwesume on the pwivelege they have of doing what they please with their hewoes."

"Quite true, sir. And talking of heroes, I hope the Knights of St. Patrick are well—I do admire them so much!—'t is so interesting to see their banners and helmets hanging up in St. Patrick's Cathedral, that venerable pile!—with the loud peal of the organ—sublime—isn't it?—the banners almost tremble in the vibration of the air to the loud swell of the 'A-a-men!'—the very banners seem to wave 'Amen!' Oh, that swell is so fine!—I think they are fond of swells in the choir; they have a good effect, and some of the young men are so good looking!—and the little boys, too—I suppose they are choristers' children?"

The old lady made a halt, and Furlong filled up the pause by declaring, "He weally couldn't

say."

"I hope you admire the service at St. Patrick's?" continued the old lady.

"Ye-s, I think St. Paytwick's a vewy amusing place of wo'ship."

"Amusing," said the old lady, half offended. "Inspiring, you mean; not that I think the sermon interesting, but the anthem!—oh, the anthem, it is so fine!—and the old banners, those are my delight—the dear banners covered with dust!"

"Oh, as far as that goes," said Furlong, "they have impvoved the cathedwal vewy much, fo' they white-washed it inside, and put up *noo* banners."

"Whitewash and new banners!" exclaimed the indignant dowager; "the Goths! to remove an atom of the romantic dust! I would not have let a house-maid into the place for the world! But they have left the anthem, I hope?"

"Oh, yes; the anthem is continued, but with a small diffewence:—they used to sing the anthem befo' the se'mon, but the people used to go away afte' the anthem and neve' waited fo' the se'mon, and the bishop, who is pwoud of his pweaching, orde'ed the anthem to be postponed till afte' the se'mon."

"Oh, yes," said the old lady, "I remember, now, hearing of that, and some of the wags in Dublin saying the bishop was jealous of old Spray;[\[16\]](#) and didn't somebody write something called 'Pulpit versus Organloft'?"

"I cawn't say."

"Well, I am glad you like the cathedral, sir; but I wish they had not dusted the banners; I used to look at them all the time the service went on—they were so romantic! I suppose you go there every Sunday?"

"I go in the summe'," said Furlong; "the place is *so* cold in the winte'."

"That's true indeed," responded the Dowager, "and it's quite funny, when your teeth are chattering with cold, to hear Spray singing, 'Comfort ye, my people;' but, to be sure, *that* is almost enough to warm you. You are fond of music, I perceive?"

"Vewy!"

"I play the guitar—(citra—cithra—or lute, as it is called by poets). I sometimes sing, too. Do you know 'The lass with the delicate air'? a sweet ballad of the old school—my instrument once belonged to Dolly Bland, the celebrated Mrs. Jordan now—ah, there, sir, is a brilliant specimen of Irish mirthfulness—what a creature she is! Hand me my lute, child," she said to her granddaughter; and having adjusted the blue ribbon over her shoulder, and twisted the tuning-pegs, and thrummed upon the wires for some time, she made a prelude and cleared her throat to sing "The lass with the delicate air," when the loud whirring of the clock-wheels interrupted her, and she looked up with great delight at a little door in the top of the clock, which suddenly sprang open, and out popped a wooden bird.

"Listen to my bird, sir," said the old lady.

The sound of "cuckoo" was repeated twelve times, the bird popped in again, the little door closed, and the monotonous tick of the clock continued.

"That's my little bird, sir, that tells me secrets; and now, sir, you must leave me; I never receive visits after twelve. I can't sing you 'The lass with the delicate air' to-day, for who would compete with the feathered songsters of the grove? and after my sweet little warbler up there, I dare not venture: but I will sing it for you to-morrow. Good morning, sir. I am happy to have had the honour of making your acquaintance." She bowed Furlong out very politely, and as her granddaughter was following, she said, "My love, you must not forget some seeds for my little bird." Furlong looked *rather* surprised, for he saw no bird but the one in the clock; the young lady marked his expression, and as she closed the door she said, "You must not mind grandmamma; you know she is sometimes a little queer."

Furlong was now handed over to the boys, to show him over the domain; and they, young imps as they were, knowing he was in no favour with their father, felt they might treat him as ill as they pleased, and quiz him with impunity. The first portion of Furlong's penance consisted in being dragged through dirty stable-yards and out-houses, and shown the various pets of all the parties; dogs, pigeons, rabbits, weasels, et cætera, were paraded, and their qualities expatiated upon, till poor Furlong was quite weary of them, and expressed a desire to see the domain. Horatio, the second boy, whose name was abbreviated to Ratty, told him they must wait for Gusty, who was mending his spear. "We're going to spear for eels," said the boy; "did you ever spear for eels?"

"I should think not," said Furlong, with a knowing smile, who suspected this was intended to be a second edition of quizzing *à la mode de saumon*.

"You think I'm joking," said the boy, "but it's famous sport, I can tell you; but if you're tired of waiting here, come along with me to the milliner's, and we can wait for Gusty there."

While following the boy, who jumped along to the tune of a jig he was whistling, now and then changing the whistle into a song to the same tune, with very odd words indeed, and a burden of gibberish ending with "riddle-diddle-dow," Furlong wondered what a milliner could have to do in such an establishment, and his wonder was not lessened when his guide added, "The milliner is a queer chap, and maybe he'll tell us something funny."

"Then the milline' is a man?" said Furlong.

"Yes," said the boy, laughing; "and he does not work with needle and thread either."

They approached a small out-house as he spoke, and the sharp clinking of a hammer fell on the ear. Shoving open a rickety door, the boy cried, "Well, Fogy, I've brought a gentleman to see you. This is Fogy, the milliner, sir," said he to Furlong, whose surprise was further increased, when, in the person of the man called the milliner, he beheld a tinker.

"What a strange pack of people I have got amongst," thought Furlong.

The old tinker saw his surprise, and grinned at him. "I suppose it was a nate young woman you thought you'd see when he towld you he'd bring you to the milliner—ha! ha! ha! Oh, they're nate lads, the Master O'Gradys; divil a thing they call by the proper name, at all."

"Yes, we do," said the boy, sharply; "we call ourselves by our proper name. Ha! Fogy, I have you there."

"Divil a taste, as smart as you think yourself, Masther Ratty; you call yourselves gentlemen, and that's not your proper name."

Ratty, who was scraping triangles on the door with a piece of broken brick, at once converted his pencil into a missile, and let fly at the head of the tinker, who seemed quite prepared for such a result, for, raising the kettle he was mending, he caught the shot adroitly, and the brick rattled harmlessly on the tin.

"Ha!" said the tinker, mockingly, "you missed me, like your mammy's blessin'!" and he pursued his work.

"What a very odd name he calls you," said Furlong, addressing young O'Grady.

"Ratty," said the boy. "Oh, yes, they call me Ratty, short for Horatio. I was called Horatio after Lord Nelson, because Lord Nelson's father was a clergyman, and papa intends me for the Church."

"And a nate clargy you'll make," said the tinker.

"And why do they call you milline'?" inquired Furlong. The old man looked up and grinned, but said nothing.

"You'll know before long, I'll engage," said Ratty; "won't he, Fogy? You were with old Gran' to-day, weren't you?"

"Yes."

"Did she sing to you 'The lass with the delicate air'?" said the boy, putting himself in the attitude of a person playing the guitar, throwing up his eyes, and mimicking the voice of an old woman—

"So they call'd her, they call'd her,
The lass—the lass
With a delicate air,
De—lick-it—lick-it—lick-it
The lass with a de—lick-it air."

The young rascal made frightful mouths, and put out his tongue every time he said "lick-it," and when he had finished, asked Furlong, "Wasn't that the thing?" Furlong told him his grandmamma had been going to sing it, but this pleasure had been deferred till to-morrow.

"Then you did not hear it?" said Ratty.

Furlong answered in the negative.

"Och! murder! murder! I'm sorry I told you."

"Is it so vewy pa'ticula', then?" inquired Furlong.

"Oh, you'll find out that, and more too, if you live long enough," was the answer. Then turning to the tinker, he said, "Have you any milliner work in hand, Fogy?"

"To be sure I have," answered the tinker; "who has so good a right to know that as yourself? Throth, you've little to do, I'm thinkin', when you ax that idle question. Oh, you're nate lads! And would nothin' sarve you but brakin' the weathercock?"

"Oh, 't was such a nice cock-shot; 't was impossible not to have a shy at it," said Ratty, chuckling.

"Oh, you're nice lads!" still chimed in the tinker.

"Besides," said Ratty, "Gusty bet me a bull-dog pup against a rabbit, I could not smash it in three goes."

"Faix, an' he ought to know you bettther than that," said the tinker; "for you'd make a fair offer^[17] at anything, I think, but an answer to your schoolmasther. Oh, a nate lad you are—a nate lad!—a nice clargy you'll be, your *rivirince*. Oh, if you hit off the tin commandments as fast as you hit off the tin weathercock, it's a good man you'll be—an' if I never had a headache till then, sure it's happy I'd be!"

"Hold your prate, old Growly," said Ratty; "and why don't you mend the weathercock?"

"I must mend the kittle first—and a purty kittle you made of it!—and would nothing sarve you but the best kittle in the house to tie to the dog's tail? Ah, Masther Ratty, you're terrible boys, so yiz are!"

"Hold your prate, you old thief!—why wouldn't we amuse ourselves?"

"And huntin' the poor dog, too."

"Well, what matter!—he was a strange dog."

"That makes no differ in the *cruelty*."

"Ah, bother! you old humbug!—who was it blackened the rag-woman's eye?—ha! Foggy—ha! Foggy—dirty Foggy!"

"Go away, Masther Ratty, you're too good, so you are, your rivirince. Faix, I wondher his honour, the Squire, doesn't murdher you sometimes."

"He would, if he could catch us," replied Ratty, "but we run too fast for him, so divil thank him!—and you, too, Foggy,—ha, old Growly! Come along, Mr. Furlong, here's Gusty;—bad scran to you, Foggy!" and he slammed the door as he quitted the tinker.

Gustavus, followed by two younger brothers, Theodore and Godfrey (for O'Grady loved high-sounding names in baptism, though they got twisted into such queer shapes in family use), now led the way over the park towards the river. Some fine timber they passed occasionally; but the axe had manifestly been busy, and the wood seemed thinned rather from necessity than for improvement; the paths were choked with weeds and fallen leaves, and the rank moss added its evidence of neglect. The boys pointed out anything *they* thought worthy of observation by the way, such as the best places to find a hare, the most covered approach to the river to get a shot at wild ducks, or where the best young wood was to be found from whence to cut a stick. On reaching their point of destination, which was where the river was less rapid, and its banks sedgy and thickly grown with flaggers and bulrushes, the sport of spearing for eels commenced. Gusty first undertook the task, and, after some vigorous plunges of his implement into the water, he brought up the prey, wriggling between its barbed prongs. Furlong was amazed, for he thought this, like the salmon-fishing, was intended as a quiz, and, after a few more examples of Gusty's prowess, he undertook the sport; a short time, however, fatigued his unpractised arm, and he relinquished the spear to Theodore, or Tay, as they called him, and Tay shortly brought up his fish, and thus, one after another, the boys, successful in their sport, soon made the basket heavy.

Then, and not till then, they desired Furlong to carry it; he declared he had no curiosity whatever in that line, but the boys would not let him off so easy, and told him the practice there was, that every one should take his share in the day's sport, and as he could not catch the fish he should carry it. He attempted a parley, and suggested he was only a visitor; but they only laughed at him—said that might be a very good Dublin joke, but it would not pass in the country. He then attempted laughingly to decline the honour; but Ratty, turning round to a monstrous dog, which hitherto had followed them, quietly said, "Here! Bloodybones; here! boy! at him, sir!—make him do his work, boy!" The bristling savage made a low growl, and fixed his eyes on Furlong, who attempted to remonstrate; but he very soon gave *that* up, for another word from the boys urged the dog to a howl and a crouch, preparatory to a spring, and Furlong made no further resistance, but took up the basket amid the uproarious laughter of the boys, who continued their sport, adding every now and then to the weight of Furlong's load; and whenever he lagged behind, they cried out, "Come along, man-Jack!" which was the complimentary name they called him by for the rest of the day. Furlong thought spearing for eels worse sport than fishing for salmon, and was rejoiced when a turn homeward was taken by the party; but his annoyances were not yet ended. On their return,

their route lay across a plank of considerable length, which spanned a small branch of the river; it had no central support, and consequently sprang considerably to the foot of the passenger, who was afforded no protection from handrail, or even a swinging rope, and this rendered its passage difficult to an unpractised person. When Furlong was told to make his way across, he hesitated, and, after many assurances on his part that he could not attempt it, Gusty said he would lead him over in security, and took his hand for the purpose; but when he had him just in the centre, he loosed himself from Furlong's hold, and ran to the opposite side. While Furlong was praying him to return, Ratty stole behind him sufficiently far to have purchase enough on the plank, and began jumping till he made it spring too high for poor Furlong to hold his footing any longer; so squatting on the plank, he got astride upon it, and held on with his hands, every descending vibration of the board dipping his dandy boots in the water.

"Well done, Ratty!" shouted all the boys.

"Splash him, Tay!" cried Gusty. "Pull away, Goggy."

The three boys now began pelting large stones into the river close beside Furlong, splashing him so thoroughly, that he was wringing wet in five minutes. In vain Furlong shouted, "Young gentlemen! young gentlemen!" and, at last, when he threatened to complain to their father, they recommenced worse than before, and vowed they'd throw him into the stream if he did not promise to be silent on the subject; for, to use their own words, if they *were* beaten, they might as well duck him at once, and have the "worth of their licking." At last, a compromise being effected, Furlong stood up to walk off the plank. "Remember," said Ratty, "you won't tell we hoised[18] you?"

"I won't indeed," said Furlong and he got safe to land.

"But I will!" cried a voice from a neighbouring wood; and Miss O'Grady appeared, surrounded by a crowd of little pet-dogs. She shook her head in a threatening manner at the offenders, and all the little dogs set up a yelping bark, as if to enforce their mistress's anger. The snappish barking of the pets was returned by one hoarse bay from "Bloodybones," which silenced the little dogs, as a broadside from a seventy-four would dumbfounder a flock of privateers, and the boys returned the sister's threat by a universal shout of "Tell-tale!"

"Go home, tell-tale!" they all cried; and with an action equally simultaneous, they stooped one and all for pebbles, and pelted Miss Augusta so vigorously, that she and her dogs were obliged to run for it.

CHAPTER XVI

Having recounted Furlong's out-door adventures, it is necessary to say something of what was passing at Neck-or-Nothing Hall in his absence.

O'Grady, on leaving the breakfast-table, retired to his justice-room to transact business, a principal feature in which was the examination of Handy Andy, touching the occurrences of the evening he drove Furlong to Merryvale; for though Andy was clear of the charge for which he had been taken into custody, namely, the murder of Furlong, O'Grady thought he might have been a party to some conspiracy to drive the stranger to the enemy's camp, and therefore put him to the question very sharply. This examination he had set his heart upon; and reserving it as a *bonne bouche*, dismissed all preliminary cases in a very off-hand manner, just as men carelessly swallow a few oysters preparatory to dinner.

As for Andy, when he was summoned to the justice-room, he made sure it was for the purpose of being charged with robbing the post-office, and cast a sidelong glance at the effigy of the man hanging on the wall, as he was marched up to the desk where O'Grady sat in magisterial dignity; and, therefore, when he found it was only for driving a gentleman to a wrong house all the pother was made, his heart was lightened of a heavy load, and he answered briskly enough. The string of question and reply was certainly an entangled one, and left O'Grady as much puzzled as before whether Andy was stupid and innocent, or too knowing to let himself be caught—and to this opinion he clung at last. In the course of the inquiry, he found Andy had been in service at Merryvale; and Andy, telling him he knew all about waiting at table, and so forth, and O'Grady being in want of an additional man-servant in the house while his honourable guest, Sackville Scatterbrain, should be on a visit with him, Andy was told he should be taken on trial for a month. Indeed, a month was as long as most servants could stay in the house—they came and went as fast as figures in a magic lantern.

Andy was installed in his new place, and set to work immediately scrubbing up extras of all sorts to make the reception of the honourable candidate for the county as brilliant as possible, not only for the honour of the house, but to make a favourable impression on the

coming guest; for Augusta, the eldest girl, was marriageable, and to her father's ears "The Honourable Mrs. Sackville Scatterbrain" would have sounded much more agreeably than "Miss O'Grady."

"Well—who knows?" said O'Grady to his wife; "such things have come to pass. Furbish her up, and make her look smart at dinner—he has a good fortune, and will be a peer one of these days—worth catching. Tell her so."

Leaving these laconic observations and directions behind him, he set off to the neighbouring town to meet Scatterbrain, and to make a blow-up at the post-office about the missing letters. This he was the more anxious to do, as the post-office was kept by the brother of M'Garry, the apothecary; and since O'Grady had been made to pay so dearly for thrashing him, he swore eternal vengeance against the whole family. The post-master could give no satisfactory answer to the charge made against him, and O'Grady threatened a complaint to headquarters, and prophesied the postmaster's dismissal. Satisfied for the present with this piece of prospective vengeance, he proceeded to the inn, and awaited the arrival of his guest.

In the interim, at the Hall, Mrs. O'Grady gave Augusta the necessary hints, and recommended a short walk to improve her colour; and it was in the execution of this order that Miss O'Grady's perambulation was cut short by the pelting her sweet brothers gave her.

The internal bustle of the establishment caught the attention of the dowager, who contrived to become acquainted with its cause, and set about making herself as fascinating as possible; for though, in the ordinary routine of the family affairs, she kept herself generally secluded in her own apartments, whenever any affair of an interesting nature was pending, nothing could make her refrain from joining any company which might be in the house;—nothing;—not even O'Grady himself. At such times, too, she became strangely excited, and invariably executed one piece of farcical absurdity, of which, however, the family contrived to confine the exercise to her own room. It was wearing on her head a tin concern, something like a chimney-cowl, ornamented by a small weathercock, after the fashion of those which surmount church-steeple; this, she declared, influenced her health wonderfully, by indicating the variation of the wind in her stomach, which she maintained to be the grand ruling principle of human existence. She would have worn this head-dress in any company, had she been permitted, but the terrors of her son had sufficient influence over her to have this laid aside for a more seemly *coiffure* when she appeared at dinner or in the drawing-room; but while she yielded really through fear, she affected to be influenced through tenderness to her son's infirmity of temper.

"It is very absurd," she would say, "that Gustavus should interfere with my toilette; but, poor fellow, he's very queer, you know, and I *humour* him."

This at once explains why Master Ratty called the tinker "the milliner."

It will not be wondered at that the family carefully excluded the old lady from the knowledge of any exciting subject; but those who know what a talkative race children and servants are, will not be surprised that the dowager sometimes got scent of proceedings which were meant to be kept secret. The pending election, and the approaching visit of the candidate, somehow or other, came to her knowledge, and of course she put on her tin chimney-pot. Thus attired, she sat watching the avenue all day; and when she saw O'Grady return in a handsome travelling carriage with a stranger, she was quite happy, and began to attire herself in some ancient finery, rather the worse for wear, and which might have been interesting to an antiquary.

The house soon rang with bustle—bells rang, and footsteps rapidly paced passages, and pattered up and down stairs. Andy was the nimblest at the hall-door at the first summons of the bell; and, in a livery too short in the arms and too wide in the shoulders, he bustled here and there, his anxiety to be useful only putting him in everybody's way, and ending in getting him a hearty cursing from O'Grady.

The carriage was unpacked, and letter-boxes, parcels, and portmanteaus strewed the hall. Andy was desired to carry the latter to "the gentleman's room," and, throwing the portmanteau over his shoulder, he ran upstairs. It was just after the commotion created by the arrival of the *Honourable* Mr. Scatterbrain that Furlong returned to the house, wet and weary.

He retired to his room to change his clothes, and fancied he was now safe from further molestation, with an inward protestation that the next time the Master O'Grady caught him in their company, they might bless themselves; when he heard a loud sound of hustling near his door, and Miss Augusta's voice audibly exclaiming, "Behave yourself, Ratty!—Gusty, let me go!"—when, as the words were uttered, the door of his room was shoved open, and Miss Augusta thrust in, and the door locked outside.

Furlong had not half his clothes on. Augusta exclaimed, "Gracious me!"—first put up her hands to her eyes, and then turned her face to the door.

Furlong hid himself in the bed-curtains, while Ratty, the vicious little rascal, with a malicious laugh, said, "Now, promise you'll not tell papa, or I'll bring him up here—and then, how will you be?"

"Ratty, you wretch!" cried Augusta, kicking at the door, "let me out!"

"Not a bit, till you promise."

"Oh, fie, Maste' O'Gwady!" said Furlong.

"I'll scream, Ratty, if you don't let me out!" cried Augusta.

"If you screech, papa will hear you, and then he'll come up and kill that fellow there."

"Oh, don't squeam, Miss O'Gwady!" said Furlong, very vivaciously, from the bed-curtains; "don't squeam, pway!"

"I'm not squeamish, sir," said Miss Augusta; "but it's dreadful to be shut up with a man who has no clothes on him. Let me out, Ratty—let me out!"

"Well, will you tell on us?"

"No."

"Pon your honour?"

"Pon my honour, no! Make haste! Oh, if papa knew of this!"

Scarcely had the words been uttered, when the heavy tramp and gruff voice of O'Grady resounded in the passage, and the boys scampered off in a fright, leaving the door locked.

"Oh, what will become of me!" said the poor girl, with the extremity of terror in her look—a terror so excessive, that she was quite heedless of the dishabille of Furlong, who jumped from the curtains, when he heard O'Grady coming.

"Don't be fwightened, Miss O'Gwady," said Furlong, half frightened to death himself. "When we explain the affair——"

"Explain!" said the girl, gasping. "Oh, you don't know papa!"

As she spoke, the heavy tramp ceased at the door—a sharp tap succeeded, and Furlong's name was called in the gruff voice of the Squire.

Furlong could scarcely articulate a response.

"Let me in," said O'Grady.

"I am not dwessed, sir," answered Furlong.

"No matter," said the Squire; "you're not a woman."

Augusta wrung her hands.

"I'll be down with you as soon as I am dwessed, sir," replied Furlong.

"I want to speak to you immediately—and here are letters for you—open the door."

Augusta signified by signs to Furlong that resistance would be vain; and hid herself under the bed.

"Come in, sir," said Furlong, when she was secreted.

"The door is fastened," said O'Grady.

"Turn the key, sir," said Furlong.

O'Grady unlocked the door, and was so inconsistent a person, that he never thought of the impossibility of Furlong's having locked it, but, in the richest spirit of bulls, asked him if he always fastened his door on the outside. Furlong said he always did.

"What's the matter with you?" inquired O'Grady. "You're as white as the sheet there;" and he pointed to the bed as he spoke.

Furlong grew whiter as he pointed to that quarter.

"What ails you, man?—Aren't you well?"

"Wather fatigued—but I'll be bette' pwesently. What do you wish with me, sir?"

"Here are letters for you—I want to know what's in them—Scatterbrain's come—do you

know that?"

"No—I did not."

"Don't stand there in the cold—go on dressing yourself; I'll sit down here till you can open your letters: I want to tell you something besides." O'Grady took a chair as he spoke.

Furlong assumed all the composure he could; and the girl began to hope she should remain undiscovered, and most likely she would have been so lucky, had not the Genius of Disaster, with aspect malign, waved her sable wand, and called her chosen servant, Handy Andy, to her aid. He, her faithful and unfailing minister, obeyed the call, and at that critical juncture of time gave a loud knock at the chamber-door.

"Come in," said O'Grady.

Andy opened the door and popped in his head. "I beg your pardon, sir, but I kem for the jintleman's portmantle."

"What gentleman?" asked O'Grady.

"The Honourable, sir; I tuk his portmantle to the wrong room, sir; and I'm come for it now, bekase he wants it."

"There's no po'tmanteau here," said Furlong.

"O yis, sir," said Andy; "I put it undher the bed."

"Well, take it and be off," said O'Grady.

"No—no—no," said Furlong, "don't distu'b my woom, if you please, till I have done dwessing."

"But the Honourable is dhressing too, sir; and that's why he wants the portmantle."

"Take it, then," said the Squire.

Furlong was paralysed, and could offer no further resistance: Andy stooped, and lifting the valance of the bed to withdraw the portmanteau, dropped it suddenly, and exclaimed, "O Lord!"

"What's the matter?" said the Squire.

"Nothin', sir," said Andy, looking scared.

"Then take the portmanteau, and be hanged to you."

"Oh, I'll wait till the jintleman's done, sir," said Andy, retiring.

"What the devil is all this about?" said the Squire, seeing the bewilderment of Furlong and Andy. "What is it at all?" and he stooped as he spoke, and lifted the valance. But here description must end, and imagination supply the scene of fury and confusion which succeeded. At the first fierce volley of imprecation O'Grady gave vent to, Andy ran off and alarmed the family, Augusta screamed, and Furlong held for support by the bedpost, while, between every hurricane of oaths, O'Grady ran to the door, and shouted for his pistols, and anon returned to the chamber to vent every abusive epithet which could be showered on man and woman. The prodigious uproar soon brought the whole house to the spot; Mrs. O'Grady and the two spare girls amongst the first; Mat, and the cook, and the scullion, and all the housemaids in rapid succession; and Scatterbrain himself at last; O'Grady all the time foaming at the mouth, stamping up and down the room, shaking his fist at Furlong, and, after a volley of names impossible to remember or print, always concluding with the phrase, "Wait till I get my pistols!"

"Gusty, dear," said his trembling wife, "what is it all about?"

He glared upon her with his flashing eyes, and said, "Fine education you give your children, ma'am. Where have you brought up your daughters to go to, eh?"

"To church, my dear," said Mrs. O'Grady, meekly; for she being a Roman Catholic, O'Grady was very jealous of his daughters being reared staunch Protestants, and she, poor simple woman, thought that was the drift of his question.

"Church, my eye, woman!—Church, indeed!—'faith, she ought to have gone there before she came where I found her. Thunderan'ouns, where are my pistols?"

"Where *has* she gone to, my love?" asked the wife in a tremor.

"To the divil, ma'am. Is that all you know about it?" said O'Grady. "And you wish to know where she is?"

"Yes, love," said his wife.

"Then look under that bed, ma'am, and you'll see her without spectacles."

Mrs. O'Grady now gave a scream, and the girls and the housemaids joined in the chorus. Augusta bellowed from under the bed, "Mamma! mamma! indeed it's all Ratty—I never did it."

At this moment, to help the confusion, a fresh appearance made its way into the room; it was that of the Dowager O'Grady—arrayed in all the bygone finery of faded full-dress, and the tin chimney-pot on her head. "What is all this about?" she exclaimed, with an air of authority; "though my weathercock tells me the wind is nor'west, I did not expect such a storm. Is any one killed?"

"No," said O'Grady; "but somebody will be soon. Where are my pistols? Blood and fire! will nobody bring me my pistols?"

"Here they are, sir," said Handy Andy, running in.

O'Grady made a rush for the pistols, but his mother and his wife threw themselves before him, and Scatterbrain shoved Andy outside the room.

"Confound you, you numscull! would you give pistols into the hands of a frantic man?"

"Sure, he ax'd for them, sir."

"Go out o' this, you blockhead! Go and hide them somewhere, where your master won't find them."

Andy retired, muttering something about the hardness of a servant's case, in being scolded and called names for doing his master's bidding. Scatterbrain returned to the room, where the confusion was still in full bloom; O'Grady swearing between his mother and wife, while Furlong endeavoured to explain how the young lady happened to be in his room; and she kicking in hysterics amidst the maids and her sisters, while Scatterbrain ran to and fro between all the parties, giving an ear to Furlong, an eye to O'Grady, and smelling salts to his daughter.

The case was a hard one to a milder man than O'Grady—his speculation about Scatterbrain all knocked on the head, for it could not be expected *he* would marry the lady who had been found under another man's bed. To hush the thing up would be impossible, after the publicity his own fury had given to the affair. "Would she ever be married after such an affair was *éclaté*?" The question rushed into his head on one side, and the answer rushed in at the other, and met it with a plump "No!"—the question and answer then joined hands in O'Grady's mind, and danced down the middle to the tune of "Haste to the wedding!"

"Yes," he said, slapping his forehead, "she must be married at once." Then, turning to Furlong, he said, "You're not married, I hope?"

Furlong acknowledged he was not, though he regretted the moment he had made the admission.

"'T is well for you," said O'Grady, "for it has saved your life. You shall marry her, then!" He never thought of asking Furlong's acquiescence in the measure. "Come here, you baggage!" he cried to Augusta, as he laid hold of her hand, and pulled her up from her chair; "come here! I intended you for a better man; but since you *have* such a hang-dog taste, why, go to him!" And he shoved her over to Furlong. "There!" he said, addressing *him*, "take her, since you *will* have her. We'll speak of her fortune after."

The poor girl stood abashed, sobbing aloud, and tears pouring from her downcast eyes. Furlong was so utterly taken by surprise, that he was riveted to the spot where he stood, and could not advance a step towards his drooping intended. At this awkward moment, the glorious old dowager came to the rescue; she advanced, tin chimney-pot and all, and taking a hand of each of the principals in hers, she joined them together in a theatrical manner, and ejaculated, with a benignant air, "Bless you, my children!"

In the midst of the mingled rage, confusion, fright, and astonishment of the various parties present, there was something so exquisitely absurd in the old woman's proceeding, that nearly every one felt inclined to laugh; but the terror of O'Grady kept their risible faculties in check. Fate, however, decreed the finale should be comic; for the cook, suddenly recollecting herself, exclaimed, "Oh, murther! the goose will be burned!" and ran out of the room; a smothered burst of laughter succeeded, which roused the ire of O'Grady, who, making a charge right and left amongst the delinquents, the room was soon cleared, and the party dispersed in various directions, O'Grady's voice rising loud above the general confusion, as he swore his way down-stairs, kicking his mother's tin turban before him.

CHAPTER XVII

Canvassing before an election resembles skirmishing before a battle;—the skirmishing was over, and the arrival of the Honourable Sackville Scatterbrain was like the first gun that commences an engagement;—and now both parties were to enter on the final struggle.

A jolly group sat in Murphy's dining-parlour on the eve of the day fixed for the nomination. Hitting points of speeches were discussed—plans for bringing up voters—tricks to interrupt the business of the opposite party—certain allusions on the hustings that would make the enemy lose temper; and, above all, everything that could cheer and amuse the people, and make them rejoice in their cause.

"Oh, let me alone for *that* much," said Murtough. "I have engaged every piper and fiddler within twenty miles round, and divil a screech of a chanter^[19] or a scrape of catcut Scatterbrain can have for love or money—that's one grand point."

"But," said Tom Durfy, "he has engaged the yeomanry band."

"What of that?" asked Dick Dawson; "a band is all very well for making a splash in the first procession to the hustings, but what good is it in working out the details?"

"What do you call details?" said Durfy.

"Why, the popular tunes in the public-houses and in the tally-rooms, while the fellows are waiting to go up. Then the dances in the evening—Wow!—won't Scatterbrain's lads look mighty shy when they know the Eganites are kicking their heels to 'Moll in the Wad,' while *they* haven't a lilt to shake their bones to?"

"To be sure," said Murphy; "we'll have the deserters to our cause from the enemy's camp before the first night is over;^[20] wait till the girls know where the fiddles are—and won't they make the lads join us!"

"I believe a woman would do a good deal for a dance," said Doctor Growling; "they are immensely fond of saltatory motion. I remember, once in my life, I used to flirt with a little actress who was a great favourite in a provincial town where I lived, and she was invited to a ball there, and confided to me she had no silk stockings to appear in, and without them her presence at the ball was out of the question."

"That was a hint to you to buy the stockings," said Dick.

"No—you're out," said Growling. "She knew I was as poor as herself; but though she could not rely on my purse, she had every confidence in my taste and judgment, and consulted me on a plan she formed for going to the ball in proper twig. Now, what do you think it was?"

"To go in cotton, I suppose," returned Dick.

"Out, again, sir—you'd never guess it; and only a woman could have hit on the expedient; it was the fashion in those days for ladies in full dress to wear pink stockings, and she proposed *painting her legs!*"

"Painting her legs!" they all exclaimed.

"Fact, sir," said the doctor; "and she relied on me for telling her if the cheat was successful ___"

"And was it?" asked Durfy.

"Don't be in a hurry, Tom. I complied on one condition—namely, that I should be the painter."

"Oh, you villain!" cried Dick.

"A capital bargain!" said Tom Durfy.

"But not a safe covenant," added the attorney.

"Don't interrupt me, gentlemen," said the doctor. "I got some rose-pink accordingly, and I defy all the hosiers in Nottingham to make a tighter fit than I did on little Jinney; and a prettier pair of stockings I never saw."

"And she went to the ball?" said Dick.

"She did!"

"And the trick succeeded?" added Durfy.

"So completely," said the doctor, "that several ladies asked her to recommend her dyer to

them! So you see what a woman will do to go to a dance. Poor little Jinney!—she was a merry minx. By-the-bye, she boxed my ears that night, for a joke I made about the stockings. 'Jinney,' said I, 'for fear your stockings should fall down when you're dancing, hadn't you better let me paint a pair of garters on them?'"

The fellows laughed at the doctor's quaint conceit about the garters, but Murphy called them back to the business of the election.

"What next?" he said, "public-houses and tally-rooms to have pipers and fiddlers—ay—and we'll get up as good a march, too, as Scatterbrain, with all his yeomanry band;—think a cartfull of fiddlers would have a fine effect!"

"If we could only get a double-bass amongst them!" said Dick.

"Talking of double-basses," said the doctor, "did you ever hear the story of the sailor in an admiral's ship, who, when some fine concert was to be given on board——"

"Hang your concerts and stories!" said Murphy; "let us go on with the election."

"Oh, the doctor's story!" cried Tom Durfy and Dick Dawson together.

"Well, sir," continued the doctor, "a sailor was handing in, over the side, from a boat which bore the instruments from shore, a great lot of fiddles. When some tenors came into his hand he said those were real good-sized fiddles; and when a violoncello appeared, Jack, supposing it was to be held between the hand and the shoulder, like a violin, declared 'He must be a strapping chap that fiddle belonged to!' But when the double-bass made its appearance, 'My eyes and limbs!' cried Jack, 'I *would* like to see the chap as plays that!!!!'"

"Well, doctor, are you done?" cried Murphy; "for, if you are, now for the election. You say, Dick, Major Dawson is to propose your brother-in-law?"

"Yes."

"And he'll do it well, too; the Major makes a very good straightforward speech."

"Yes," said Dick; "the old cock is not a bad hand at it. But I have a suspicion he's going to make a greater oration than usual and read some long rigmarolish old records."

"That will never do!" said Murphy, "as long as a man looks Pat *in* the face, and makes a good rattling speech 'out o' the face,' Pat will listen to him; but when a lad takes to heavy readings, Pat grows tired. We must persuade the Major to give up the reading."

"Persuade *my* father!" cried Dick. "When did you ever hear of his giving up his own opinion?"

"If he could be prevailed on even to shorten——" said Murphy.

"Oh, leave him to me," said Dick, laughing; "I'll take care he'll not read a word."

"Manage that, Dick, and you're a jewel!"

"I will," said Dick. "I'll take the glasses out of his spectacles the morning of the nomination, and then let him read, if he can."

"Capital, Dick; and now the next point of discussion is——"

"Supper, ready to come up, sir," said a servant, opening the door.

"Then, that's the best thing we could discuss, boys," said Murphy to his friends—"so up with the supper, Dan. Up with the supper! Up with the Egans! Down with the Scatterbrains—hurrah!—we'll beat them gaily."

"Hollow!" said Durfy.

"Not hollow," said Dick; "we'll have a tussle for it."

"So much the better," cried Murphy; "I would not give a fig for an easy victory—there's no fun in it. Give me the election that is like a race—now one ahead, and then the other; the closeness calling out all the energies of both parties—developing their tact and invention, and, at last, the return secured by a large majority."

"But think of the glory of a large one," said Dick.

"Ay," added Durfy, "beside crushing the hope of a petition on the part of your enemy to pull down the majority."

"But think of Murphy's enjoyment," said the doctor, "in defending the seat, to say nothing of the bill of costs."

"You have me there, doctor," said Murphy; "a fair hit, I grant you; but see, the supper is on the table. To it, my lads; to it! and then a jolly glass to drink success to our friend Egan."

And glass after glass they did drink in all sorts and shapes of well-wishing toasts; in short, to have seen the deep interest those men took in the success of their friend, might have gladdened the heart of a philanthropist; though there is no knowing what Father Mathew, had he flourished in those times, might have said to their overflowing benevolence.

CHAPTER XVIII

The morning of nomination which dawned on Neck-or-Nothing Hall saw a motley group of O'Grady's retainers assembling in the stable-yard, and the out-offices rang to laugh and joke over a rude but plentiful breakfast—tea and coffee, there, had no place—but meat, potatoes, milk, beer, and whisky were at the option of the body-guard, which was selected for the honour of escorting the wild chief and his friend, the candidate, into the town. Of this party was the yeomanry-band of which Tom Durfy spoke, though, to say the truth, considering Tom's apprehensions on the subject, it was of slender force. One trumpet, one clarionet, a fife, a big drum, and a pair of cymbals, with a "*real nigger*" to play them, were all they could muster.

After clearing off everything in the shape of breakfast, the "musicianers" amused the retainers, from time to time, with a tune on the clarionet, fife, or trumpet, while they waited the appearance of the party from the house. Uproarious mirth and noisy joking rang round the dwelling, to which none contributed more largely than the trumpeter, who fancied himself an immensely clever fellow, and had a heap of cut-and-dry jokes at his command, and practical drolleries in which he indulged to the great entertainment of all, but of none more than Andy, who was in the thick of the row, and in a divided ecstasy between the "*blaky-moor's*" turban and cymbals and the trumpeter's jokes and music; the latter articles having a certain resemblance, by-the-bye, to the former in clumsiness and noise, and therefore suited to Andy's taste. Whenever occasion offered, Andy got near the big drum, too, and gave it a thump, delighted with the result of his ambitious achievement.

Andy was not lost on the trumpeter: "Arrah, maybe you'd like to have a touch at these?" said the joker, holding up the cymbals.

"Is it hard to play them, sir?" inquired Andy.

"Hard!" said the trumpeter; "sure they're not hard at all—but as soft and smooth as satin inside—just feel them—rub your fingers inside."

Andy obeyed; and his finger was chopped between the two brazen plates. Andy roared, the bystanders laughed, and the trumpeter triumphed in his wit. Sometimes he would come behind an unsuspecting boor, and give, close to his ear, a discordant bray from his trumpet, like the note of a jackass, which made *him* jump, and the crowd roar with merriment; or, perhaps, when the clarionet or the fife was engaged in giving the people a tune, he would drown either, or both of them, in a wild yell of his instrument. As they could not make reprisals upon him, he had his own way in playing whatever he liked for his audience; and in doing so indulged in all the airs of a great artist—pulling out one crook from another—blowing through them softly, and shaking the moisture from them in a tasty style—arranging them with a fastidious nicety—then, after the final adjustment of the mouth-piece, liping the instrument with an affectation exquisitely grotesque; but before he began he always asked for another drink.

"It's not for myself," he would say, "but for the thrumpet, the crayther; the divil a note she can blow without a dhrop."

Then, taking a mug of drink, he would present it to the bell of the trumpet, and afterwards transfer it to his own lips, always bowing to the instrument first, and saying, "Your health, ma'am!"

This was another piece of delight to the mob, and Andy thought him the funniest fellow he ever met, though he *did* chop his finger.

"Faix, sir, an' it is dhry work, I'm sure, playing the thing."

"Dhry!" said the trumpeter, "'pon my ruffles and tuckers—and that's a cambric oath—it's worse nor lime-burnin', so it is—it makes a man's throat as parched as pays."

"Who dar says pays?" cried the drummer.

"Howld your prate!" said the trumpeter, elegantly, and silenced all reply by playing a tune. As soon as it was ended, he turned to Andy and asked for a cork.

Andy gave it to him.

The man of jokes affected to put it into the trumpet.

"What's that for, sir?" asked Andy.

"To bottle up the music," said the trumpeter—"sure all the music would run about the place if I didn't do that."

Andy gave a vague sort of "ha, ha!" as if he were not quite sure whether the trumpeter was in jest or earnest, and thought at the moment that to play the trumpet and practical jokes must be the happiest life in the world. Filled with this idea, Andy was on the watch how he could possess himself of the trumpet, for could he get one blast on it, he would be happy: a chance at last opened to him; after some time, the lively owner of the treasure laid down his instrument to handle a handsome blackthorn which one of the retainers was displaying, and he made some flourishes with the weapon to show that music was not his only accomplishment. Andy seized the opportunity and the trumpet, and made off to one of the sheds where they had been regaling; and, shutting the door to secure himself from observation, he put the trumpet to his mouth and distended his cheeks near to bursting with the violence of his efforts to produce a sound; but all his puffing was unavailing for some minutes. At last a faint cracked squeak answered a more desperate blast than before, and Andy was delighted. "Everything must have a beginning," thought Andy, "and maybe I'll get a tune out of it yet." He tried again, and increased in power; for a sort of strangled screech was the result. Andy was in ecstasy, and began to indulge visions of being one day a trumpeter; he strutted up and down the shed like the original he so envied, and repeated some of the drolleries he heard him utter. He also imitated his actions of giving a drink to the trumpet, and was more generous to the instrument than the owner, for he really poured about half a pint of beer down its throat: he then drank its health, and finished by "bottling up the music," absolutely cramming a cork into the trumpet. Now Andy, having no idea the trumpeter made a sham of the action, made a vigorous plunge of a goodly cork into the throat of the instrument, and, in so doing, the cork went further than he intended: he tried to withdraw it, but his clumsy fingers, instead of extracting, only drove it in deeper—he became alarmed—and, seizing a fork, strove with its assistance to remedy the mischief he had done, but the more he poked, the worse; and, in his fright, he thought the safest thing he could do was to cram the cork out of sight altogether, and having soon done that, he returned to the yard, and laid down the trumpet unobserved.

Immediately after, the procession to the town started. O'Grady gave orders that the party should not be throwing away their powder and shot, as he called it, in untimely huzzas and premature music. "Wait till you come to the town, boys," said he, "and then you may smash away as hard as you can; blow your heads off, and split the sky."

The party of Merryvale was in motion for the place of action about the same time, and a merrier pack of rascals never was on the march. Murphy, in accordance with his preconceived notion of a "fine effect," had literally "a cart full of fiddlers;" but the fiddlers hadn't it all to themselves, for there was another cart full of pipers; and, by way of mockery to the grandeur of Scatterbrain's band, he had four or five boys with gridirons, which they played upon with pokers, and half a dozen strapping fellows carrying large iron tea-trays, which they whopped after the manner of a Chinese gong.

It so happened that the two roads from Merryvale and Neck-or-Nothing Hall met at an acute angle, at the same end of the town, and it chanced that the rival candidates and their retinues arrived at this point about the same time.

"There they are!" said Murphy, who presided in the cart full of fiddlers like a leader in an orchestra, with a shillelah for his *baton*, which he flourished over his head as he shouted, "Now give it to them, your souls!—rasp and lilt away, boys!—slate the gridirons, Mike!—smaddher the tay-tray, Tom!"

The uproar of strange sounds that followed, shouting included, may be easier imagined than described; and O'Grady, answering the war-cry, sung out to his band—"What are you at, you lazy rascals?—don't you hear *them* blackguards beginning?—fire away, and be hanged to you!" His rascals shouted, bang went the drum, and clang went the cymbals, the clarionet squeaked, and the fife tootled, but the trumpet—ah!—the trumpet—their great reliance—where was the trumpet? O'Grady inquired in the precise words, with a diabolical addition of his own. "Where the d— is the trumpet?" said he; he looked over the side of the carriage as he spoke, and saw the trumpeter spitting out a mouthful of beer which had run from the instrument as he lifted it to his mouth.

"Bad luck to you, what are you wasting your time there for?" thundered O'Grady in a rage; "why didn't you spit out when you were young, and you'd be a clean old man? Blow and be d — to you!"

The trumpeter filled his lungs for a great blast, and put the trumpet to his lips—but in vain; Andy had bottled his music for him. O'Grady, seeing the inflated cheeks and protruding eyes of the musician, whose visage was crimson with exertion, and yet no sound produced,

thought the fellow was practising one of his jokes upon him, and became excessively indignant; he thundered anathemas at him, but his voice was drowned in the din of the drum and cymbals, which were plied so vigorously, that the clarionet and fife shared the same fate as O'Grady's voice. The trumpeter could judge of O'Grady's rage from the fierceness of his actions only, and answered him in pantomimic expression, holding up his trumpet and pointing into the bell, with a grin of vexation on his phiz, meant to express something was wrong; but this was all mistaken by the fierce O'Grady, who only saw in the trumpeter's grins the insolent intention of jibing him.

"Blow, you blackguard, blow!" shouted the Squire. Bang went the drum.

"Blow—or I'll break your neck!" Crash went the cymbals.

"Stop your banging there, you ruffians, and let me be heard!" roared the excited man; but as he was standing up on the seat of the carriage, and flung his arms about wildly as he spoke, the drummer thought his action was meant to stimulate him to further exertion, and he banged away louder than before.

"By the hokey, I'll murder some o' ye!" shouted the Squire, who, ordering the carriage to pull up, flung open the door and jumped out, made a rush at the drummer, seized his principal drumstick, and giving him a bang over the head with it, cursed him for a rascal for not stopping when he told him; this silenced all the instruments together, and O'Grady, seizing the trumpeter by the back of the neck, shook him violently, while he denounced with fierce imprecations his insolence in daring to practise a joke on him. The trumpeter protested his innocence, and O'Grady called him a lying rascal, finishing his abuse by clenching his fist in a menacing attitude, and telling him to play.

"I can't, yer honour!"

"You lie, you scoundrel."

"There's something in the trumpet, sir."

"Yes, there's music in it; and if you don't blow it out of it——"

"I can't blow it out of it, sir."

"Hold your prate, you ruffian; blow this minute."

"Arrah, thry it yourself, sir," said the frightened man, handing the instrument to the Squire.

"D——n your impudence, you rascal; do you think I'd blow anything that was in your dirty mouth? Blow, I tell you, or it will be worse for you."

"By the vartue o' my oath, your honour——"

"Blow, I tell you!"

"By the seven blessed candles——"

"Blow, I tell you!"

"The trumpet is choked, sir."

"There will be a trumpeter choked, soon," said O'Grady, gripping him by the neck-handkerchief, with his knuckles ready to twist into his throat. "By this and that I'll strangle you, if you don't play this minute, you humbugger."

"By the Blessed Virgin, I'm not humbiggin' your honour," stammered the trumpeter with the little breath O'Grady left him.

Scatterbrain, seeing O'Grady's fury, and fearful of its consequences, had alighted from the carriage and came to the rescue, suggesting to the infuriated Squire that what the man said might be true. O'Grady said he knew better, that the blackguard was a notorious joker, and having indulged in a jest in the first instance, was now only lying to save himself from punishment; furthermore, swearing that if he did not play that minute he'd throw him into the ditch.

With great difficulty O'Grady was prevailed upon to give up the gripe of the trumpeter's throat; and the poor breathless wretch, handing the instrument to the clarionet-player, appealed to him if it were possible to play on it. The clarionet-player said he could not tell, for he did not understand the trumpet.

"You see there!" cried O'Grady. "You see he's humbugging, and the clarionet-player is an honest man."

"An honest man!" exclaimed the trumpeter, turning fiercely on the clarionet-player. "He's the biggest *villain* unchanged for sthrivin' to get me murdered, and refusin' the evidence for

me!" The man's eyes flashed fury as he spoke, and throwing his trumpet down, "Mooney!—by jakers, you're no man!" Clenching his fist as he spoke, he made a rush on the clarionet-player, and planted a hit on his mouth with such vigour, that he rolled in the dust; and when he rose, it was with such an upper lip that his clarionet-playing was evidently finished for the next week certainly.

Now the fifer was the clarionet-player's brother; and he, turning on the trumpeter, roared—
"Bad luck to you!—you did not sthrek him fair!"

But while in the very act of reprobating the foul blow, he let fly under the ear of the trumpeter, who was quite unprepared for it,—and he, too, measured his length on the road. On recovering his legs he rushed on the fifer for revenge, and a regular scuffle ensued among "the musicianers," to the great delight of the crowd of retainers, who were so well primed with whisky that a fight was just the thing to their taste.

In vain O'Grady swore at them, and went amongst them, striving to restore order, but they would not be quiet till several black eyes and damaged noses bore evidence of a busy five minutes having passed. In the course of "the scrimmage," Fate was unkind to the fifer, whose mouth-piece was considerably impaired; and "the boys" remarked, that the worst stick you could have in a crowd was a "whistling stick," by which name they designated the fifer's instrument.

At last, however, peace was restored, and the trumpeter again ordered to play by O'Grady.

He protested, again, it was impossible.

The fifer, in revenge, declared he was only humbugging the Squire.

Hereupon O'Grady, seizing the unfortunate trumpeter, gave him a more sublime kicking than ever fell to the lot of even piper or fiddler, whose pay^[21] is proverbially oftener in that article than the coin of the realm.

Having tired himself, and considerably rubbed down the toe of his boot with his gentlemanly exercise, O'Grady dragged the trumpeter to the ditch, and rolled him into it, there to cool the fever which burned in his seat of honour.

O'Grady then re-entered the carriage with Scatterbrain, and the party proceeded; but the clarionet-player could not blow a note; the fifer was not in good playing condition, and tootled with some difficulty; the drummer was obliged now and then to relax his efforts in making a noise that he might lift his right arm to his nose, which had got damaged in the fray, and the process of wiping his face with his cuff changed the white facings of his jacket to red. The negro cymbal-player was the only one whose damages were not to be ascertained, as a black eye would not tell on him, and his lips could not be more swollen than nature had made them. On the procession went, however; but the rival mob, the Eganites, profiting by the delay caused by the row, got ahead, and entered the town first, with their pipers and fiddlers, hurrahing their way in good humour down the street, and occupying the best places in the court-house before the arrival of the opposite party, whose band, instead of being a source of triumph, was only a thing of jeering merriment to the Eganites, who received them with mockery and laughter. All this by no means sweetened O'Grady's temper, who looked thunder as he entered the court-house with his candidate, who was, though a good-humoured fellow, a little put out by the accidents of the morning; and Furlong looked more sheepish than ever, as he followed his leaders.

The business of the day was opened by the high-sheriff, and Major Dawson lost no time in rising to propose, that Edward Egan, Esquire, of Merryvale, was a fit and proper person to represent the county in parliament.

The proposition was received with cheers by "the boys" in the body of the court-house; the Major proceeded, full sail, in his speech—his course aided by being on the popular current, and the "sweet voices" of the multitude blowing in his favour. On concluding (as "the boys" thought) his address, which was straightforward and to the point, a voice in the crowd proposed "Three cheers for the owld Major." Three deafening peals followed the hint.

"And now," said the Major, "I will read a few extracts here from some documents, in support of what I have had the honour of addressing to you." And he pulled out a bundle of papers as he spoke, and laid them down before him.

The movement was not favoured by "the boys," as it indicated a tedious reference to facts by no means to their taste, and the same voice that suggested the three cheers, now sung out—

"Never mind, Major—sure we'll take your word for it!"

Cries of "Order!" and "Silence!" ensued; and were followed by murmurs, coughs, and sneezes, in the crowd, with a considerable shuffling of hobnailed shoes on the pavement.

"Order!" cried a voice in authority.

"Order anything you please, sir!" said the voice in the crowd.

"Whisky!" cried one.

"Porter!" cried another.

"Tabakky!" roared a third.

"I must insist on silence!" cried the sheriff, in a very husky voice. "Silence!—or I'll have the court-house cleared."

"Faith, if you cleared your own throat it would be better," said the wag in the crowd.

A laugh followed. The sheriff felt the hit, and was silent.

The Major all this time had been adjusting his spectacles on his nose, unconscious, poor old gentleman, that Dick, according to promise, had abstracted the glasses from them that morning. He took up his documents to read, made sundry wry faces, turned the papers up to the light,—now on this side, and now on that,—but could make out nothing; while Dick gave a knowing wink at Murphy. The old gentleman took off his spectacles to wipe the glasses.

The voice in the crowd cried, "Thank you, Major."

The Major pulled out his handkerchief, and his fingers met where he expected to find a lens:—he looked very angry, cast a suspicious glance at Dick, who met it with the composure of an anchorite, and quietly asked what was the matter.

"I shall not trouble you, gentlemen, with the extracts," said the Major.

"Hear, hear," responded the genteel part of the auditory.

"I tould you we'd take your word, Major," cried the voice in the crowd.

Egan's seconder followed the Major, and the crowd shouted again. O'Grady now came forward to propose the Honourable Sackville Scatterbrain, as a fit and proper person to represent the county in parliament. He was received by his own set of vagabonds with uproarious cheers, and "O'Grady for ever!" made the walls ring. "Egan for ever!" and hurras, were returned from the Merryvalians. O'Grady thus commenced his address:—

"In coming forward to support my honourable friend, the Honourable Sackville Scatterbrain, it is from the conviction—the conviction—"

"Who got the conviction agen the potteen last sishin?" said the voice in the crowd.

Loud groans followed this allusion to the prosecution of a few little private stills, in which O'Grady had shown some unnecessary severity that made him unpopular. Cries of "Order!" and "Silence!" ensued.

"I say the conviction," repeated O'Grady fiercely, looking towards the quarter whence the interruption took place,—and if there is any blackguard here who dares to interrupt me, I'll order him to be taken out by the ears. I say, I propose my honourable friend, the Honourable Sackville Scatterbrain, from the conviction that there is a necessity in this county—"

"Faith, there is plenty of necessity," said the tormentor in the crowd.

"Take that man out," said the sheriff.

"Don't hurry yourself, sir," returned the delinquent, amidst the laughter of "the boys," in proportion to whose merriment rose O'Grady's ill-humour.

"I say there is a necessity for a vigorous member to represent this county in parliament, and support the laws, the constitution, the crown, and the—the—interests of the county!"

"Who made the new road?" was a question that now arose from the crowd—a laugh followed—and some groans at this allusion to a bit of jobbing on the part of O'Grady, who got a grand jury presentment to make a road which served nobody's interest but his own.

"The frequent interruptions I meet here from the lawless and disaffected show too plainly that we stand in need of men who will support the arm of the law in purging the country."

"Who killed the 'pothecary?" said a fellow, in a voice so deep as seemed fit only to issue from the jaws of death.

The question, and the extraordinary voice in which it was uttered, produced one of those roars of laughter which sometimes shake public meetings in Ireland; and O'Grady grew furious.

"If I knew who that gentleman was, I'd pay him!" said he.

"You'd better pay *them you know*," was the answer; and this allusion to O'Grady's notorious character of a bad payer, was relished by the crowd, and again raised the laugh against him.

"Sir," said O'Grady, addressing the sheriff, "I hold this ruffianism in contempt. I treat it, and the authors of it, those who no doubt have instructed them, with contempt." He looked over to where Egan and his friends stood, as he spoke of the crowd having had instruction to interrupt him.

"If you mean, sir," said Egan, "that I have given any such instructions, I deny, in the most unqualified terms, the truth of such an assertion."

"Keep yourself cool, Ned," said Dick Dawson, close to his ear.

"Never fear me," said Egan; "but I won't let him bully."

The two former friends now exchanged rather fierce looks at each other.

"Then why am I interrupted?" asked O'Grady.

"It is no business of mine to answer that," replied Egan; "but I repeat the unqualified denial of your assertion."

The crowd ceased its noise when the two Squires were seen engaged in exchanging smart words, in the hopes of catching what they said.

"It is a disgraceful uproar," said the sheriff.

"Then it is your business, Mister Sheriff," returned Egan, "to suppress it—not mine; they are quiet enough now."

"Yes, but they'll make a wow again," said Furlong, "when Miste' O'Gwady begins."

"You seem to know all about it," said Dick; "maybe *you* have instructed them."

"No, sir, I didn't instwuct them," said Furlong, very angry at being twitted by Dick.

Dick laughed in his face, and said, "Maybe that's some of your electioneering tactics—eh?"

Furlong got very angry, while Dick and Murphy shouted with laughter at him—"No, sir," said Furlong, "I don't welish the pwactice of such di'ty twicks."

"Do you apply the word 'dirty' to me, sir?" said Dick the Devil, ruffling up like a game-cock. "I'll tell you what, sir, if you make use of the word 'dirty' again, I'd think very little of kicking you—ay, or eight like you—I'll kick eight Furlongs one mile."

"Who's talking of kicking?" asked O'Grady.

"I am," said Dick, "do you want any?"

"Gentlemen! gentlemen!" cried the sheriff, "order! pray order! do proceed with the business of the day."

"I'll talk to you after about this!" said O'Grady, in a threatening tone.

"Very well," said Dick; "we've time enough, the day's young yet."

O'Grady then proceeded to find fault with Egan, censuring his politics, and endeavouring to justify his defection from the same cause. He concluded thus: "Sir, I shall pursue my course of duty; I have chalked out my own line of conduct, sir, and I am convinced no other line is the right line. Our opponents are wrong, sir—totally wrong—all wrong; and, as I have said, I have chalked out my own line, sir, and I propose the Honourable Sackville Scatterbrain as a fit and proper person to sit in parliament for the representation of this county."

The O'Gradyites shouted as their chief concluded; and the Merryvalians returned some groans, and a cry of "Go home, turncoat!"

Egan now presented himself, and was received with deafening and long-continued cheers, for he was really beloved by the people at large; his frank and easy nature, the amiable character he bore in all his social relations, the merciful and conciliatory tendency of his decisions and conduct as a magistrate, won him the solid respect as well as affection of the country.

He had been for some days in low spirits in consequence of Larry Hogan's visit and mysterious communication with him; but this, its cause, was unknown to all but himself, and therefore more difficult to support; for none but those whom sad experience has taught can tell the agony of enduring in secret and in silence the pang that gnaws a proud heart, which, Spartan like, will let the tooth destroy, without complaint or murmur.

His depression, however, was apparent, and Dick told Murphy he feared Ned would not be

up to the mark at the election; but Murphy, with a better knowledge of human nature, and the excitement of such a cause, said, "Never fear him—ambition is a long spur, my boy, and will stir the blood of a thicker-skinned fellow than your brother-in-law. When he comes to stand up and assert his claims before the world, he'll be all right!"

Murphy was a true prophet, for Egan presented himself with confidence, brightness, and good-humour on his open countenance.

"The first thing I have to ask of you, boys," said Egan, addressing the assembled throng, "is a fair hearing for the other candidate."

"Hear, hear," followed from the gentlemen in the gallery.

"And, as he's a stranger amongst us, let him have the privilege of first addressing you."

With these words he bowed courteously to Scatterbrain, who thanked him very much like a gentleman, and accepting his offer, advanced to address the electors. O'Grady waved his hand in signal to his body-guard, and Scatterbrain had three cheers from the ragamuffins.

He was no great thing of a speaker, but he was a good-humoured fellow, and this won on the Paddies; and although coming before them under the disadvantage of being proposed by O'Grady, they heard him with good temper:—to this, however, Egan's good word considerably contributed.

He went very much over the ground his proposer had taken, so that, bating the bad temper, the pith of his speech was much the same, quite as much deprecating the political views of his opponent, and harping on O'Grady's worn-out catch-word of "Having chalked out a line for himself," &c. &c. &c.

Egan now stood forward, and was greeted with fresh cheers. He began in a very Irish fashion; for, being an unaffected, frank, and free-hearted fellow himself, he knew how to touch the feelings of those who possess such qualities. He waited till the last echo of the uproarious greeting died away, and the first simple words he uttered were—

"Here I am, boys!"

Simple as these words were, they produced "one cheer more."

"Here I am, boys—*the same I ever was.*"

Loud huzzas and "Long life to you!" answered the last pithy words, which were sore ones to O'Grady, who, as a renegade, felt the hit.

"Fellow-countrymen, I come forward to represent you, and, however I may be unequal to *that* task, at least I will never *misrepresent* you."

Another cheer followed.

"My past life is evidence enough on *that* point; God forbid I were of the mongrel breed of Irishmen who speak ill of their own country. I never did it, boys, and I never will! Some think they get on by it, and so they do, indeed;—they get on as sweeps and shoe-blacks get on—they drive a dirty trade and find employment;—but are they respected?"

Shouts of "No!—no!"

"You're right!—No!—they are not respected—even by their very employers. Your political sweep and shoe-black is no more respected than he who cleans our chimneys or cleans our shoes. The honourable gentleman who has addressed you last confesses he is a stranger amongst you; and is *he*, a stranger, to be your representative? You may be civil to a stranger—it is a pleasing duty,—but he is not the man to whom you would give your confidence. You might share a hearty glass with a stranger, but you would not enter into a joint lease of a farm without knowing a little more of him; and if you would not trust a single farm with a stranger, will you give a whole county into his hands? When a stranger comes to these parts, I'm sure he'll get a civil answer from every man I see here,—he will get a civil 'yes' or a civil 'no' to his questions; and if he seeks his way, you will show him his road. As to the honourable gentleman who has done you the favour to come and ask you civilly, will you give him the county, you as civilly may answer 'No,' and *show him his road home again.* ('So we will.') As for the gentleman who proposed him, he has chosen to make certain strictures upon my views, and opinions, and conduct. As for views—there was a certain heathen god the Romans worshipped, called Janus; he was a fellow with two heads—and by-the-bye, boys, he would have been just the fellow to live amongst us; for when one of his heads was broken he would have had the other for use. Well, this Janus was called 'double-face,' and could see before and behind him. Now, *I'm no double-face*, boys; and as for seeing before and behind me, I can look back on the past and forward to the future, and *both* the roads are *straight ones.* (Cheers.) I wish every one could say as much. As for my opinions, all I shall say is, *I never changed mine;* Mr. O'Grady can't say as much."

"Sure there's a weathercock in the family," said the voice in the crowd.

A loud laugh followed this sally, for the old dowager's eccentricity was not *quite* a secret. O'Grady looked as if he could have eaten the whole crowd at a mouthful.

"Much has been said," continued Egan, "about gentlemen chalking out lines for themselves;—now, the plain English of this determined chalking of *their own* line is *rubbing out every other man's line*. (Bravo.) Some of these chalking gentlemen have lines chalked up against them, and might find it difficult to pay the score if they were called to account. To such, rubbing out other men's lines, and their own too, may be convenient; but I don't like the practice. Boys, I have no more to say than this, *We know and can trust each other!*"

Egan's address was received with acclamation, and when silence was restored, the sheriff demanded a show of hands; and a very fine show of hands there was, *and every hand had a stick in it*.

The show of hands was declared to be in favour of Egan, whereupon a poll was demanded on the part of Scatterbrain, after which every one began to move from the court-house.

O'Grady, in very ill-humour, was endeavouring to shove past a herculean fellow, rather ragged and very saucy, who did not seem inclined to give place to the savage elbowing of the Squire.

"What brings such a ragged rascal as you here?" said O'Grady, brutally; "you're not an elector."

"Yis, I am!" replied the fellow, sturdily.

"Why, *you* can't have a lease, you beggar."

"No, but maybe I have an article."[\[22\]](#)

"What is your article?"

"What is it?" retorted the fellow, with a fierce look at O'Grady. "Faith, it's a fine brass blunderbuss; *and I'd like to see the man would dispute the title.*"

O'Grady had met his master, and could not reply; the crowd shouted for the ragamuffin, and all parties separated, to gird up their loins for the next day's poll.

CHAPTER XIX

After the angry words exchanged at the nomination, the most peaceable reader must have anticipated the probability of a duel;—but when the inflammable stuff of which Irishmen are made is considered, together with the excitement and pugnacious spirit attendant upon elections in all places, the certainty of a hostile meeting must have been apparent. The sheriff might have put the gentlemen under arrest, it is true, but that officer was a weak, thoughtless, irresolute person, and took no such precaution; though, to do the poor man justice, it is only fair to say that such an intervention of authority at such a time and place would be considered on all hands as a very impertinent, unjustifiable, and discourteous interference with the private pleasures and privileges of gentlemen.

Dick Dawson had a message conveyed to him from O'Grady, requesting the honour of his company the next morning to "grass before breakfast!" to which, of course, Dick returned an answer expressive of the utmost readiness to oblige the Squire with his presence; and, as the business of the election was of importance, it was agreed they should meet at a given spot on the way to the town, and so lose as little time as possible.

The next morning, accordingly, the parties met at the appointed place, Dick attended by Edward O'Connor and Egan—the former in capacity of his friend; and O'Grady, with Scatterbrain for his second, and Furlong a looker-on: there were some straggling spectators besides, to witness the affair.

"O'Grady looks savage, Dick," said Edward.

"Yes," answered Dick, with a smile of as much unconcern as if he were going to lead off a country dance. "He looks as pleasant as a bull in a pound."

"Take care of yourself, my dear Dick," said Edward seriously.

"My dear boy, don't make yourself uneasy," replied Dick, laughing. "I'll bet you two to one he misses me."

Edward made no reply, but, to his sensitive and more thoughtful nature, betting at such a moment savoured too much of levity, so, leaving his friend, he advanced to Scatterbrain, and they commenced making the preliminary preparations.

During the period which this required O'Grady was looking down sulkily or looking up fiercely, and striking his heel with vehemence into the sod, while Dick Dawson was whistling a planxty and eyeing his man.

The arrangements were soon made, the men placed on their ground, and Dick saw by the intent look with which O'Grady marked him, that he meant mischief; they were handed their pistols—the seconds retired—the word was given, and as O'Grady raised his pistol, Dick saw he was completely covered, and suddenly exclaimed, throwing up his arm, "I beg your pardon for a moment."

O'Grady involuntarily lowered his weapon, and seeing Dick standing perfectly erect, and nothing following his sudden request for this suspension of hostilities, asked, in a very angry tone, why he had interrupted him. "Because I saw you had me covered," said Dick, "and you'd have hit me if you had fired that time: now fire away as soon as you like!" added he, at the same moment rapidly bringing up his own pistol to the level.

O'Grady was taken by surprise, and fancying Dick was going to blaze at him, fired hastily, and missed his adversary.

Dick made him a low bow, and fired in the air.

O'Grady wanted another shot, saying Dawson had tricked him, but Scatterbrain felt the propriety of Edward O'Connor's objection to further fighting, after Dawson receiving O'Grady's fire; so the gentlemen were removed from the ground and the affair terminated.

O'Grady, having fully intended to pink Dick, was excessively savage at being overreached, and went off to the election with a temper by no means sweetened by the morning's adventure, while Dick roared with laughing, exclaiming at intervals to Edward O'Connor, as he was putting up his pistols, "Did not I *do* him neatly?"

Off they cantered gaily to the high road, exchanging merry and cheering salutations with the electors, who were thronging towards the town in great numbers and all variety of manner, group, and costume, some on foot, some on horseback, and some on cars; the gayest show of holiday attire contrasting with the every-day rags of wretchedness; the fresh cheek of health and beauty making gaunt misery look more appalling, and the elastic step of vigorous youth outstripping the tardy pace of feeble age. Pedestrians were hurrying on in detachments of five or six—the equestrians in companies less numerous; sometimes the cavalier who could boast a saddle carrying a woman on a pillion behind him. But saddle or pillion were not an indispensable accompaniment to this equestrian duo, for many a "bare-back" *garran* carried his couple, his only harness being a halter made of a hay-rope, which in time of need sometimes proves a substitute for "rack and manger," for it is not uncommon in Ireland to see the *garran* nibbling the end of his bridle when opportunity offers. The cars were in great variety; some bore small kishes, [23] in which a woman and some children might be seen; others had a shake-down of clean straw to serve for cushions; while the better sort spread a feather-bed for greater comfort, covered by a patchwork quilt, the work of the "good woman" herself, whose own quilted petticoat vied in brightness with the calico roses on which she was sitting. The most luxurious indulged still further in some arched branches of hazel, which, bent above the car in the fashion of a booth, bore another coverlid, by way of awning, and served for protection against the weather; but few there were who could indulge in such a luxury as this of the "*chaise marine*," which is the name the contrivance bears, but why, Heaven only knows.

The street of the town had its centre occupied at the broadest place with a long row of cars, covered in a similar manner to the *chaise marine*, a door or a shutter laid across underneath the awning, after the fashion of a counter, on which various articles were displayed for sale; for the occasion of the election was as good as a fair to the small dealers, and the public were therefore favoured with the usual opportunity of purchasing uneatable gingerbread, knives that would not cut, spectacles to increase blindness, and other articles of equal usefulness.

While the dealers here displayed their ware, and were vociferous in declaring its excellence, noisy groups passed up and down on either side of these ambulatory shops, discussing the merits of the candidates, predicting the result of the election, or giving an occasional cheer for their respective parties, with the twirl of a stick or the throwing up of a hat; while from the houses on both sides of the street the scraping of fiddles, and the lilting of pipes, increased the mingled din.

But the crowd was thickest and the uproar greatest in front of the inn where Scatterbrain's committee sat, and before the house of Murphy, who gave up all his establishment to the service of the election, and whose stable-yard made a capital place of mustering for the tallies of Egan's electors to assemble ere they marched to the poll. At last the hour for opening the poll struck, the inn poured forth the Scatterbrains, and Murphy's stable-yard

the Eganites, the two bodies of electors uttering thundering shouts of defiance, as, with rival banners flying, they joined in one common stream, rushing to give their votes—for as for their *voices*, they were giving *them* most liberally and strenuously already. The dense crowd soon surrounded the hustings in front of the court-house, and the throes and heavings of this living mass resembled a turbulent sea lashed by a tempest:—but what sea is more unruly than an excited crowd?—what tempest fiercer than the breath of political excitement?

Conspicuous amongst those on the hustings were both the candidates, and their aiders and abettors on either side—O'Grady and Furlong, Dick Dawson and Tom Durfy for work, and Growling to laugh at them all. Edward O'Connor was addressing the populace in a spirit-stirring appeal to their pride and affections, stimulating them to support their tried and trusty friend, and not yield the honour of their county either to fears or favours of a stranger, nor copy the bad example which some (who ought to blush) had set them, of betraying old friends and abandoning old principles. Edward's address was cheered by those who heard it:—but being heard is not essential to the applause attendant on political addresses, for those who do not hear cheer quite as much as those who do. The old adage hath it, "Show me your company, and I'll tell you who you are;"—and in the spirit of the adage one might say, "Let me see the speech-maker, an' I'll tell you what he says." So when Edward O'Connor spoke, the boys welcomed him with a shout of "Ned of the Hill for ever!"—and knowing to what tune his mouth would be opened, they cheered accordingly when he concluded. O'Grady, on evincing a desire to address them, was not so successful;—the moment he showed himself, taunts were flung at him: but spite of this, attempting to frown down their dissatisfaction, he began to speak; but he had not uttered six words when his voice was drowned in the discordant yells of a trumpet. It is scarcely necessary to tell the reader that the performer was the identical trumpeter of the preceding day, whom O'Grady had kicked so unmercifully, who, in indignation at his wrongs, had gone over to the enemy; and having, after a night's hard work, disengaged the cork which Andy had crammed into his trumpet, appeared in the crowd ready to do battle in the popular cause.—"Wait," he cried, "till that savage of a baste of a Squire dares for to go for to spake!—won't I smother him!" Then he would put his instrument of vengeance to his lips, and produce a yell that made his auditors put their hands to their ears. Thus armed, he waited near the platform for O'Grady's speech, and put his threat effectually into execution. O'Grady saw whence the annoyance proceeded, and shook his fist at the delinquent, with protestations that the police should drag him from the crowd, if he dared to continue; but every threat was blighted in the bud by the withering blast of a trumpet, which was regularly followed by a peal of laughter from the crowd. O'Grady stamped and swore with rage, and calling Furlong, sent him to inform the sheriff how riotous the crowd were, and requested him to have the trumpeter seized.

Furlong hurried off on his mission, and after a long search for the potential functionary, saw him in a distant corner, engaged in what appeared to be an urgent discussion between him and Murtough Murphy, who was talking in the most jocular manner to the sheriff, who seemed anything but amused with his argumentative merriment. The fact was, Murphy, while pushing the interests of Egan with an energy unsurpassed, did it with all the utmost cheerfulness, and gave his opponents a laugh in exchange for the point gained against them, and while he defeated, amused them. Furlong, after shoving and elbowing his way through the crowd, suffering from heat and exertion, came *fussing* up to the sheriff, wiping his face with a scented cambric pocket-handkerchief. The sheriff and Murphy were standing close beside one of the polling-desks, and on Furlong's lispng out "Miste' Shewiff," Murphy, recognising the voice and manner, turned suddenly round, and with the most provoking cordiality addressed him thus, with a smile and a nod, "Ah! Mister Furlong, how d'ye do?—delighted to see you; here we are at it, sir, hammer and tongs—of course you are come to vote for Egan?"

Furlong, who intended to annihilate Murphy with an indignant repetition of the provoking question put to him, threw as much of defiance as he could in his namby-pamby manner, and exclaimed, "*I* vote for Egan!"

"Thank you, sir," said Murphy. "Record the vote," added he to the clerk.

There was loud laughter on one side, and anger as loud on the other, at the way in which Murphy had entrapped Furlong, and cheated him into voting against his own party. In vain the poor gull protested he never *meant* to vote for Egan.

"But you did it," cried Murphy.

"What the deuce have you done?" cried Scatterbrain's agent, in a rage.

"Of course, they know I wouldn't vote that way," said Furlong. "I *couldn't* vote that way—it's a mistake, and I pwotest against the twick."

"We've got the trick, and we'll keep it, however," said Murphy.

Scatterbrain's agent said 't was unfair, and desired the polling-clerk not to record the vote.

"Didn't every one hear him say, '*I vote for Egan*'?" asked Murphy.

"But he didn't mean it, sir," said the agent.

"I don't care what he meant, but I know he said it," retorted Murphy; "and every one round knows he said it; and as I mean what I say myself, I suppose every other gentleman does the same—down with the vote, Mister Polling-clerk."

A regular wrangle now took place between the two agents, amidst the laughter of the bystanders, whose merriment was increased by Furlong's vehement assurances he did not mean to vote as Murphy wanted to make it appear he had; but the more he protested, the more the people laughed. This increased his energy in fighting out the point, until Scatterbrain's agent recommended him to desist, for that he was only interrupting their own voters from coming up. "Never mind now, sir," said the agent, "I'll appeal to the assessor about that vote."

"Appeal as much as you like," said Murtough; "that vote is as dead as a herring to you."

Furlong, finding further remonstrance unavailing, as regarded his vote, delivered to the sheriff the message of O'Grady, who was boiling over with impatience, in the meantime, at the delay of his messenger, and anxiously expecting the arrival of sheriff and police to coerce the villainous trumpeter and chastise the applauding crowd, which became worse and worse every minute.

They exhibited a new source of provocation to O'Grady, by exposing a rat-trap hung at the end of a pole, with the caged vermin within, and vociferated "Rat, rat," in the pauses of the trumpet. Scatterbrain, remembering the hearing they gave him the previous day, hoped to silence them, and begged O'Grady to permit *him* to address them; but the whim of the mob was up, and could not be easily diverted, and Scatterbrain himself was hailed with the name of "Rat-catcher."

"You cotch him—and I wish you joy of him!" cried one.

"How much did you give for him?" shouted another.

"What did you bait your thrap with?" roared a third.

"A bit o' *treasury bacon*," was the answer from a stentorian voice amidst the multitude, who shouted with laughter at the apt rejoinder, which they reiterated from one end of the crowd to the other, and the cry of "treasury bacon" rang far and wide.

Scatterbrain and O'Grady consulted together on the hustings what was to be done, while Dick the Devil was throwing jokes to the crowd, and inflaming their mischievous merriment, and Growling looking on with an expression of internal delight at the fun, uproar, and vexation around him. It was just a dish to his taste and he devoured it with silent satisfaction.

"What the deuce keeps that sneaking dandy?" cried O'Grady to Scatterbrain. "He should have returned long ago." Oh! could he have only known at that moment, that his sweet son-in-law elect was voting against them, what would have been the consequence?

Another exhibition, insulting to O'Grady, now appeared in the crowd—a chimney-pot and weathercock, after the fashion of his mother's, was stuck on a pole, and underneath was suspended an old coat, turned inside out; this double indication of his change, so peculiarly insulting, was elevated before the hustings, amidst the jeers and laughter of the people. O'Grady was nearly frantic—he rushed to the front of the platform, he shook his fist at the mockery, poured every abusive epithet on its perpetrators, and swore he would head the police himself and clear the crowd. In reply, the crowd hooted, the rat-trap and weathercock were danced together after the fashion of Punch and Judy, to the music of the trumpet; and another pole made its appearance, with a piece of bacon on it, and a placard bearing the inscription of "Treasury bacon," all which Tom Durfy had run off to procure at a huckster's shop the moment he heard the waggish answer, which he thus turned to account.

"The military must be called out!" said O'Grady; and with these words he left the platform to seek the sheriff.

Edward O'Connor, the moment he heard O'Grady's threat, quitted the hustings also, in company with old Growling. "What a savage and dangerous temper that man has!" said Edward; "calling for the military when the people have committed no outrage to require such interference."

"They have poked up the bear with their poles, sir, and it is likely he'll give them a hug before he's done with them," answered the doctor.

"But what need of military?" indignantly exclaimed Edward. "The people are only going on with the noise and disturbance common to any election, and the chances are, that savage man may influence the sheriff to provoke the people, by the presence of soldiers, to some act which would not have taken place but for their interference; and thus they themselves originate the offence which they are forearmed with power to chastise. In England such

extreme measures are never resorted to until necessity compels them. How I have envied Englishmen, when, on the occasion of assizes, every soldier is marched from the town while the judge is sitting; in Ireland the place of trial bristles with bayonets! How much more must a people respect and love the laws, whose own purity and justice are their best safeguard—whose inherent majesty is sufficient for their own protection! The sword of justice should never need the assistance of the swords of dragoons; and in the election of their representatives, as well as at judicial sittings, a people should be free from military despotism."

"But, as an historian, my dear young friend," said the doctor, "I need not remind you, that dragoons have been considered 'good lookers-on' in Ireland since the days of Strafford."

"Ay!" said Edward; "and scandalous it is, that the abuses of the seventeenth century should be perpetuated in the nineteenth.^[24] While those who govern show, by the means they adopt for supporting their authority, that their rule requires undue force to uphold it, they tacitly teach resistance to the people, and their practices imply that the resistance is righteous."

"My dear Master Ned," said the doctor, "you're a patriot, and I'm sorry for you; you inherit the free opinions of your namesake 'of the hill,' of blessed memory; with such sentiments you may make a very good Irish barrister, but you'll never be an Irish judge—and as for a silk gown, 'faith you may leave the wearing of *that* to your wife, for stuff is all that will ever adorn your shoulders."

"Well, I would rather have stuff there than in my head," answered Edward.

"Very epigrammatic, indeed, Master Ned," said the doctor. "Let us make a distich of it," added he, with a chuckle; "for, of a verity, some of the K. C.'s of our times are but dunces. Let's see—how will it go?"

Edward dashed off this couplet in a moment—

"Of modern king's counsel this truth may be said,
They have *silk* on their shoulders, and *stuff* in their head."

"Neat enough," said the doctor; "but you might contrive more sting in it—something to the tune of the impossibility of making 'a silk purse out of a sow's ear,' but the facility of manufacturing silk gowns out of *bores'* heads."

"That's out of your bitter pill-box, Doctor," said Ned, smiling.

"Put it into rhyme, Ned—and set it to music—and dedicate it to the bar mess, and see how you'll rise in your profession! Good bye—I will be back again to see the fun as soon as I can, but I must go now and visit an old woman who is in doubt whether she stands most in need of me or the priest. It's wonderful, how little people think of the other world till they are going to leave this; and, with all their praises of heaven, how very anxious they are to stay out of it as long as they can."

With this bit of characteristic sarcasm, the doctor and Edward separated.

Edward had hardly left the hustings, when Murphy hurried on the platform and asked for him.

"He left a few minutes ago," said Tom Durfy.

"Well, I dare say he's doing good wherever he is," said Murtough; "I wanted to speak to him, but when he comes back send him to me. In the meantime, Tom, run down and bring up a batch of voters—we're getting a little ahead, I think, with the bothering I'm giving them up there, and now I want to push them with good strong tallies—run down to the yard, like a good fellow, and march them up."

Off posted Tom Durfy on his mission, and Murphy returned to the court-house.

Tom, on reaching Murphy's house, found a strange posse of O'Grady's party hanging round the place, and one of the fellows had backed a car against the yard gate which opened on the street, and was the outlet for Egan's voters. By way of excuse for this, the car was piled with cabbages for sale, and a couple of very unruly pigs were tethered to the shafts, and the strapping fellow who owned all kept guard over them. Tom immediately told him he should leave that place, and an altercation commenced; but even an electioneering dispute could not but savour of fun and repartee, between Paddies.

"Be off!" said Tom.

"Sure I can't be off till the market's over," was the answer.

"Well, you must take your car out o' this."

"Indeed now, you'll let me stay, Misther Durfy."

"Indeed I won't."

"Arrah! what harm?"

"You're stopping up the gate on purpose, and you must go."

"Sure your honour wouldn't spile my stand!"

"Faith, I'll spoil more than your stand, if you don't leave that."

"Not finer cabbage in the world."

"Go out o' that now, 'while your shoes are good,'" [25] said Tom, seeing he had none; for, in speaking of shoes, Tom had no intention of alluding to the word *choux*, and thus making a French pun upon the *cabbage*—for Tom did not understand French, but rather despised it as a jack-a-dandy acquirement.

"Sure, you wouldn't ruin my market, Misther Durfy."

"None of your humbugging—but be off at once," said Tom, whose tone indicated he was *very much in earnest*.

"Not a nicer slip of a pig in the market than the same pigs—I'm expectin' thirty shillin's apiece for them."

"Faith, you'll get more than thirty shillings," cried Tom, "in less than thirty seconds, if you don't take your dirty cabbage and blackguard pigs out o' that!"

"Dirty cabbages!" cried the fellow, in a tone of surprise.

The order to depart was renewed.

"Blackguard pigs!" cried Paddy, in affected wonder. "Ah, Masther Tom, one would think it was afther dinner you wor."

"What do you mean, you rap?—do you intend to say I'm drunk?"

"Oh no, sir! But if it's not afther dinner wid you, I think you wouldn't turn up your nose at bacon and greens."

"Oh, with all your joking," said Tom, laughing, "you won't find me a chicken to pluck for your bacon and greens, my boy; so, start!—vanish!—disperse!—my bacon-merchant."

While this dialogue was going forward, several cars were gathered round the place, with a seeming view to hem in Egan's voters, and interrupt their progress to the poll; but the gate of the yard suddenly opened, and the fellows within soon upset the car which impeded their egress, gave freedom to the pigs, who used their liberty in eating the cabbages, while their owner was making cause with his party of O'Gradyites against the outbreak of Egan's men. The affair was not one of importance; the numbers were not sufficient to constitute a good row—it was but a hustling affair, after all, and a slight scrimmage enabled Tom Durfy to head his men in a rush to the poll.

The polling was now prosecuted vigorously on both sides, each party anxious to establish a majority on the first day; and of course the usual practices for facilitating their own, and retarding their opponents' progress were resorted to.

Scatterbrain's party, to counteract the energetic movement of the enemy's voters and Murphy's activity, got up a mode of interruption seldom made use of, but of which they availed themselves on the present occasion. It was determined to put the oath of allegiance to all the Roman Catholics, by which some loss of time to the Eganite party was effected.

This gave rise to odd scenes and answers, occasionally:—some of the fellows did not know what the oath of allegiance meant; some did not know whether there might not be a scruple of conscience against making it; others, indignant at what they felt to be an insulting mode of address, on the part of the person who said to them, in a tone savouring of supremacy—"You're a Roman Catholic?"—would not answer immediately, and gave dogged looks and sometimes dogged answers; and it required address on the part of Egan's agents to make them overcome such feelings, and expedite the work of voting. At last the same herculean fellow who gave O'Grady the fierce answer about the *blunderbuss tenure* he enjoyed, came up to vote, and fairly bothered the querist with his ready replies, which, purposely, were never to the purpose. The examination ran nearly thus:—

"You're a Roman Catholic?"

"Am I?" said the fellow.

"Are you not?" demanded the agent.

"You say I am," was the answer.

"Come, sir, answer—What's your religion?"

"The throe religion."

"What religion is that?"

"My religion."

"And what's *your* religion?"

"My mother's religion."

"And what was your mother's religion?"

"*She tuk whisky in her tay.*"

"Come, now, I'll find you out, as cunning as you are," said the agent, piqued into an encounter of wits with this fellow, whose baffling of every question pleased the crowd.

"You bless yourself, don't you?"

"When I'm done with, I think I ought."

"What place of worship do you go to?"

"The most convaynient."

"But of what persuasion are you?"

"My persuasion is that you won't find it out."

"What is your belief?"

"My belief is that *you're* puzzled."

"Do you confess?"

"Not to you."

"Come! now I have you. Who would you send for if you were likely to die?"

"Doctor Growlin'."

"Not for the priest?"

"I must first get a messenger."

"Confound your quibbling!—tell me, then, what your opinions are—your conscientious opinions I mean."

"They are the same as my landlord's."

"And what are your landlord's opinions?"

"Faix, his opinion is, that I won't pay him the last half-year's rint; and I'm of the same opinion myself."

A roar of laughter followed this answer, and dumb-founded the agent for a time; but, angered at the successful quibbling of the sturdy and wily fellow before him, he at last declared, with much severity of manner, that he *must* have a direct reply. "I insist, sir, on your answering, at once, *are* you a Roman Catholic?"

"I am," said the fellow.

"And could not you say so at once?" repeated the officer.

"You never axed me," returned the other.

"I did," said the officer.

"Indeed, you didn't. You said I was a great many things, but you never *axed* me—you wor dhrivin' *crass* words and *cruked* questions at me, and I gev you answers to match them, for sure I thought it was manners to cut out my *behavior* on your patthern."

"Take the oath, sir."

"Where am I to take it to, sir?" inquired the provoking blackguard.

The clerk was desired to "swear him," without further notice being taken of his impertinent answer.

"I hope the oath is not *woighty*, sir, for my conscience is tindhher since the last *alibi* I swore."

The business of the interior was now suspended for a time by the sounds of fierce tumult which arose from without. Some rushed from the court-house to the platform outside, and beheld the crowd in a state of great excitement, beating back the police, who had been engaged in endeavouring to seize the persons and things which had offended O'Grady; and the police falling back for support on a party of military which O'Grady had prevailed on the sheriff to call out. The sheriff was a weak, irresolute man, and was over-persuaded by such words as "mob" and "riot," and breaches of the peace being *about to be* committed, if the ruffians were not checked beforehand. The wisdom of *preventive measures* was preached, and the rest of the hackneyed phrases were paraded, which brazen-faced and iron-handed oppressors are only too familiar with.

The people were now roused, and thoroughly defeated the police, who were forced to fly to the lines of the military party for protection; having effected this object, the crowd retained their position, and did not attempt to assault the soldiers, though a very firm and louring front was presented to them, and shouts of defiance against the "Peelers"^[26] rose loud and long.

"A round of ball cartridge would cool their courage," said O'Grady.

The English officer in command of the party, looking with wonder and reproach upon him, asked if *he* had the command of the party.

"No, sir;—the sheriff, of course;—but if I were in his place, I'd soon disperse the rascals."

"Did you ever witness the *effect* of a fusilade, sir?" inquired the officer.

"No, sir," said O'Grady, gruffly; "but I suppose I know pretty well what it is."

"For the sake of humanity, sir, I hope you do not, or I am willing to believe you would not talk so lightly of it; but it is singular how much fonder civilians are of urging measures that end in blood, than those whose profession is arms, and who know how disastrous is their use."

The police were ordered to advance again and seize the "ringleaders:" they obeyed unwillingly; but being saluted with some stones, their individual wrath was excited, and they advanced to chastise the mob, who again drove them back; and a nearer approach to the soldiers was made by the crowd in the scuffle which ensued.

"Now, will you fire?" said O'Grady to the sheriff.

The sheriff, who was a miserable coward, was filled with dread at the threatening aspect of the mob, and wished to have his precious person under shelter before hostilities commenced; so, with pallid lips, and his teeth chattering with fear, he exclaimed:—

"No! no! no!—don't fire—don't fire—don't be precipitate: besides, I haven't read the Riot Act."

"There's no necessity for firing, I should say," said the captain.

"I thought not, captain—I hope not, captain," said the sheriff, who now assumed a humane tone. "Think of the effusion of blood, my dear sir," said he to O'Grady, who was grinning like a fiend all the time—"the sacrifice of human life—I couldn't, sir—I can't, sir—besides, the Riot Act—haven't it about me—must be read, you know, Mister O'Grady."

"Not always," said O'Grady, fiercely.

"But the inquiry is always very strict after, if it is not, sir—I should not like the effusion of human blood, sir, unless the Riot Act was read, and the thing done regularly,—don't think I care for the d—d rascals a button, sir,—only the regularity, you know; and the effusion of human blood is serious, and the inquiry, too, without the Riot Act. Captain, would you oblige me to fall back a little closer round the court-house, and maintain the freedom of election? Besides, the Riot Act is up-stairs in my desk. The court-house must be protected, you know, and I just want to run up-stairs for the Riot Act; I'll be down again in a moment. Captain, do oblige me—draw your men a *leetle* closer round the court-house."

"I'm in a better position here, sir," said the captain.

"I thought you were under my command, sir," said the sheriff.

"Under your command to fire, sir, but the choice of position rests with me; and we are stronger where we are; the court-house is completely covered, and while my men are under

arms here, you may rely on it the crowd is completely in check without firing a shot."

Off ran the sheriff to the court-house.

"You're saving of your gunpowder, I see, sir," said O'Grady to the captain, with a sardonic grin.

"You seem to be equally sparing of your humanity, sir," returned the captain.

"God forbid I should be afraid of a pack of ruffians," said O'Grady.

"Or I of a single one," returned the captain, with a look of stern contempt.

There is no knowing what this bitter bandying of hard words might have led to, had it not been interrupted by the appearance of the sheriff at one of the windows of the court-house; there, with the Riot Act in his hand, he called out:—

"Now I've read it—fire away, boys—fire away!" and all his compunction about the effusion of blood vanished the moment his own miserable carcass was safe from harm. Again he waved the Riot Act from the window, and vociferated, "Fire away, boys!" as loud as his frog-like voice permitted.

"Now, sir, you're ordered to fire," said O'Grady to the captain.

"I'll not obey that order, sir," said the captain; "the man is out of his senses with fear, and I'll not obey such a serious command from a madman."

"Do you dare disobey the orders of the sheriff, sir?" thundered O'Grady.

"I am responsible for my act, sir," said the captain—"seriously responsible; but I will not slaughter unarmed people until I see further and fitter cause."

The sheriff had vanished—he was nowhere to be seen—and O'Grady as a magistrate had now the command. Seeing the cool and courageous man he had to deal with in the military chief, he determined to push matters to such an extremity that he should be forced, in self-defence, to fire. With this object in view he ordered a fresh advance of the police upon the people, and in this third affair matters assumed a more serious aspect; sticks and stones were used with more effect, and the two parties being nearer to each other, the missiles meant only for the police overshot their mark and struck the soldiers, who bore their painful situation with admirable patience.

"Now will you fire, sir?" said O'Grady to the officer.

"If I fire now, sir, I am as likely to kill the police as the people; withdraw your police first, sir, and then I will fire."

This was but reasonable—so reasonable, that even O'Grady, enraged almost to madness as he was, could not gainsay it; and he went forward himself to withdraw the police force. O'Grady's presence increased the rage of the mob, whose blood was now thoroughly up, and as the police fell back they were pressed by the infuriated people, who now began almost to disregard the presence of the military, and poured down in a resistless stream upon them.

O'Grady repeated his command to the captain, who, finding matters thus driven to extremity, saw no longer the possibility of avoiding bloodshed; and the first preparatory word of the fatal order was given, the second on his lips, and the long file of bright muskets flashed in the sun ere they should quench his light for ever to some, and carry darkness to many a heart and hearth, when a young and handsome man, mounted on a noble horse, came plunging and ploughing his way through the crowd, and, rushing between the half-levelled muskets and those who in another instant would have fallen their victims, he shouted in a voice whose noble tone carried to its hearers involuntary obedience, "Stop!—for God's sake, stop!" Then wheeling his horse suddenly round, he charged along the advancing front of the people, plunging his horse fiercely upon them, and waving them back with his hand, enforcing his commands with words as well as actions. The crowd fell back as he pressed upon them with fiery horsemanship unsurpassable by an Arab; and as his dark clustering hair streamed about his noble face, pale from excitement, and with flashing eyes, he was a model worthy of the best days of Grecian art—ay, and he had a soul worthy of the most glorious times of Grecian liberty!

It was Edward O'Connor.

"Fire!" cried O'Grady again.

The gallant soldier, touched by the heroism of O'Connor, and roused by the brutality of O'Grady beyond his patience, in the excitement of the moment, was urged beyond the habitual parlance of a gentleman, and swore vehemently, "I'll be *damned* if I do! I wouldn't run the risk of shooting that noble fellow for all the magistrates in your county."

O'Connor had again turned round, and rode up to the military party, having heard the word

"fire!" repeated.

"For mercy's sake, sir, don't fire, and I pledge you my soul the crowd shall disperse."

"Ay!" cried O'Grady, "they won't obey the laws nor the magistrates; but they'll listen fast enough to a d——d rebel like you."

"Liar and ruffian!" exclaimed Edward. "I'm a better and more loyal subject than you, who provoke resistance to the laws you should make honoured."

At the word "liar," O'Grady, now quite frenzied, attempted to seize a musket from a soldier beside him; and had he succeeded in obtaining possession of it, Edward O'Connor's days had been numbered; but the soldier would not give up his firelock, and O'Grady, intent on immediate vengeance, then rushed upon Edward, and seizing him by the leg, attempted to unhorse him; but Edward was too firm in his seat for this, and a struggle ensued.

The crowd, fearing Edward was about to fall a victim, raised a fierce shout, and were about to advance, when the captain, with admirable presence of mind, seized O'Grady, dragged him away from his hold, and gave freedom to Edward, who instantly used it again to charge the advancing line of the mob, and drive them back.

"Back, boys, back!" he cried, "don't give your enemies a triumph by being disorderly. Disperse—retire into houses, let nothing tempt you to riot—collect round your tally-rooms, and come up quietly to the polling—and you will yet have a peaceful triumph."

The crowd, obeying, gave three cheers for "Ned-o'-the-Hill," and the dense mass, which could not be awed, and dreaded not the engines of war, melted away before the breath of peace.

As they retired on one side, the soldiers were ordered to their quarters on the other, while their captain and Edward O'Connor stood in the midst; but ere they separated, these two, with charity in their souls, waved their hands towards each other in token of amity, and parted, verily, in friendship.

CHAPTER XX

After the incidents just recorded, of course great confusion and excitement existed, during which O'Grady was forced back into the court-house in a state bordering on insanity. Inflamed as his furious passions had been to the top of their bent, and his thirst of revenge still remaining unslaked, foiled in all his movements, and flung back as it were into the seething cauldron of his own hellish temper, he was a pitiable sight, foaming at the mouth like a wild animal, and uttering the most horrid imprecations. On Edward O'Connor principally his curses fell, with denunciations of immediate vengeance, and the punishment of dismissal from the service was prophesied on oath for the English captain. The terrors of a court-martial gleamed fitfully through the frenzied mind of the raving Squire for the soldier; and for O'Connor, instant death at his own hands was his momentary cry.

"Find the rascal for me," he exclaimed, "that I may call him out and shoot him like a dog—yes, by ——, a dog—a dog; I'm disgraced while he lives—I wish the villain had three lives that I might take them all at once—all—all!" and he stretched out his hands as he spoke, and grasped at the air as if in imagination he clutched the visionary lives his bloodthirsty wishes conjured up.

Edward, as soon as he saw the crowd dispersed, returned to the hustings and sought Dick Dawson, that he might be in readiness to undertake, on his part, the arrangement of the hostile meeting, to which he knew he should be immediately called. "Let it be over, my dear Dick, as soon as possible," said Edward; "it's not a case in which delay can be of any service; the insult was mortal between us, and the sooner expiated by a meeting the better."

"Don't be so agitated, Ned," said Dick; "fair and easy, man—fair and easy—keep yourself cool."

"Dear Dick—I'll be cool on the ground, but not till then—I want the meeting over before my father hears of the quarrel; I'm his only child, Dick, and you know how he loves me!"

He wrung Dick's hand as he spoke, and his eye glistened with tenderness; but with the lightning quickness of thought all gentle feeling vanished as he saw Scatterbrain struggling his way towards him, and read in his eye the purport of his approach. He communicated to Edward his object in seeking him, and was at once referred to Dawson, who instantly retired with him and arranged an immediate meeting. This was easily done, as they had their pistols with them since the duel in the morning; and if there be those who think it a little too much of a good thing to have two duels in one day, pray let them remember it was election time,

and even in sober England that period often gives rise to personalities which call for the intervention of the code of honour. Only in Ireland the thing is sooner over. We seldom have three columns of a newspaper filled with notes on the subject, numbered from 1 to 25.^[27] Gentleman don't consider whether it is too soon or too late to fight, or whether a gentleman is perfectly entitled to call him out or not. The title in Ireland is generally considered sufficient in the *will* to do it, and few there would wait for the poising of a very delicately balanced scale of etiquette before going to the ground; they would be more likely to fight first, and leave the world to argue about the niceties after.

In the present instance a duel was unavoidable, and it was to be feared a mortal one, for deadly insult had been given on both sides.

The rumour of the hostile meeting flew like wildfire through the town, and when the parties met in a field about a quarter of a mile beyond the bridge, an anxious crowd was present. The police were obliged to be in strong force on the ground to keep back the people, who were not now, as an hour before, in the town, in uproarious noise and action, but still as death; not a murmur was amongst them; the excitement of love for the noble young champion, whose life was in danger for his care of *them*, held them spell-bound in a tranquillity almost fearful.

The aspect of the two principals was in singular contrast. On the one side a man burning for revenge, who, to use a common but terrible parlance, desired to "wash out the dishonour put upon him in blood." The other was there, regretting that cause existed for the awful arbitrament, and only anxious to defend his own, not take another's life. To sensitive minds the reaction is always painful of having insulted another, when the excitement is over which prompted it. When the hot blood which inflamed the brain runs in cooler currents, the man of feeling always regrets, if he does not reproach himself with, having urged his fellow-man to break the commandments of the Most High, and deface, perhaps annihilate, the form that was moulded in His image. The words "liar and ruffian" haunted Edward's mind reproachfully; but then the provocation—"rebel!"—no gentleman could brook it. Because his commiseration for a people had endeared him to them, was he to be called "*rebel*"? Because, at the risk of his own life, he had preserved perhaps scores, and prevented an infraction of the law, was he to be called "*rebel*"? He stood acquitted before his own conscience:—after all, the most terrible bar before which he can be called in *this* world.

The men were placed upon their ground, and the word to fire given. O'Grady, in his desire for vengeance, deliberately raised his pistol with deadly aim, and Edward was thus enabled to fire first, yet with such cool precision, that his shot took effect as he intended; O'Grady's arm was ripped up from the wrist to the elbow; but so determined was his will, and so firm his aim, that the wound, severe as it was, produced but a slight twitch in his hand, which threw it up slightly, and saved Edward's life, for the ball passed through his hat *just* above his head.

O'Grady's arm instantly after dropped to his side, the pistol fell from his hand, and he staggered, for the pain of the wound was extreme. His second ran to his assistance.

"It is only in the arm," said O'Grady, firmly, though his voice was changed by the agony he suffered; "give me another pistol."

Dick at the same moment was beside Edward.

"You're not touched," he said.

Edward coolly pointed to his hat.

"Too much powder," said Dick; "I thought so when his pistols were loaded."

"No," said Edward, "it was my shot; I saw his hand twitch."

Scatterbrain demanded of Dick another shot on the part of O'Grady.

"By all means," was the answer, and he handed a fresh pistol to Edward. "To give the devil his due," said Dick, "he has great pluck, for you hit him hard—see how pale he looks—I don't think he can hurt you much this time—but watch him well, my dear Ned."

The seconds withdrew; but with all O'Grady's desperate courage, he could not lift the pistol with his right arm, which, though hastily bound in a handkerchief, was bleeding profusely, and racked with torture. On finding his right hand powerless, such was his unflinching courage, that he took the pistol in his left; this of course impaired his power of aim, and his nerve was so shattered by his bodily suffering, that his pistol was discharged before coming to the level, and Edward saw the sod torn up close beside his foot. He then, of course, fired in the air. O'Grady would have fallen but for the immediate assistance of his friends; he was led from the ground and placed in a carriage, and it was not until Edward O'Connor mounted his horse to ride away, that the crowd manifested their feelings. Then three tremendous cheers arose; and the shouts of their joy and triumph reached the wounded man as he was driven slowly from the ground.

CHAPTER XXI

The Widow Flanagan had long ago determined that, whenever the election should take place, she would take advantage of the great influx of visitors that event would produce, and give a grand party. Her preparations were all made to secure a good muster of her country friends, when once the day of nomination was fixed; and after the election began, she threw out all her hooks and lines in every direction, to catch every straggler worth having, whom the election brought into the town. It required some days to do this; and it was not until the eve of the fifth, that her house was turned upside down and inside out for the reception of the numerous guests whose company she expected.

The toil of the day's election was over; the gentlemen had dined and refreshed themselves with creature comforts; the vicissitudes, and tricks, and chances of the last twelve hours were canvassed—when the striking of many a clock, or the consultation of the pocket-dial, warned those who were invited to Mrs. O'Flanagan's party, that it was time to wash off the dust of the battle-field from their faces, and mount fresh linen and cambric. Those who were pleased to call themselves "good fellows" declared for "another bottle;" the faint-hearted swore that an autograph invitation from Venus herself to the heathen Olympus, with nectar and ambrosia for tea and bread-and-butter, could not tempt them from the Christian enjoyment of a feather-bed after the fag of such a day; but the *preux chevaliers*—those who did deserve to win a fair lady—shook off sloth and their morning trousers, and taking to tights and activity, hurried to the party of the buxom widow.

The widow was in her glory; hospitable, she enjoyed receiving her friends,—mirthful, she looked forward to a long night of downright sport,—coquettish, she would have good opportunity of letting Tom Durfy see how attractive she was to the men,—while from the women her love of gossip and scandal (was there ever a lady in her position without it?) would have ample gratification in the accumulated news of the county of twenty miles round. She had but one *large* room at her command, and *that* was given up to the dancing; and being cleared of tables, chairs, and carpet, could not be considered by Mrs. Flanagan as a proper reception-room for her guests, who were, therefore, received in a smaller apartment, where tea and coffee, toast and muffins, ladies and gentlemen, were all smoking-hot together, and the candles on the mantel-piece trickling down rivulets of fat in the most sympathetic manner, under the influence of the gentle sighing of a broken pane of glass, which the head of an inquiring youth in the street had stove in, while flattening his nose against it in the hope of getting a glimpse of the company through the opening in the window-curtain.

At last, when the room could hold no more, the company were drafted off to the dancing-room, which had only long deal forms placed against the wall to rest the weary after the exertions of the jig. The aforesaid forms, by-the-bye, were borrowed from the chapel; the old wigsby who had the care of them for some time doubted the propriety of the sacred property being put to such a profane use, until the widow's arguments convinced him it was quite right, after she had given him a tenpenny-piece. As the dancing-room could not boast of a lustre, the deficiency was supplied by tin sconces hung against the wall; for ormolu branches are not expected to be plenty in the provinces. But let the widow be heard for herself, as she bustled through her guests and caught a critical glance at her arrangements: "What's that you're faulting now?—is it my deal seats without cushions? Ah! you're a *lazy Larry*, Bob Larkin. Cock you up with a cushion indeed! if you sit the less, you'll dance the more. Ah, Matty, I see you're eyeing my tin sconces there; well, sure they have them at the county ball, when candlesticks are scarce, and what would you expect grander from a poor lone woman? besides, we must have plenty of lights, or how could the beaux see the girls?—though I see, Harry Cassidy, by your sly look, that *you* think they look as well in the dark—ah! you *divil!*" and she slapped his shoulder as she ran past. "Ah! Mister Murphy, I'm delighted to see you; what kept you so late?—the election to be sure. Well, we're beating them, ain't we? Ah! the old country for ever. I hope Edward O'Connor will be here. Come, begin the dance; there's the piper and the fiddler in the corner as idle as a mile-stone without a number. Tom Durfy, don't ask me to dance, for I'm engaged for the next four sets."

"Oh! but the first to me," said Tom.

"Ah! yis, Tom, I was; but then, you know, I couldn't refuse the stranger from Dublin, and the English captain that will be there by-and-by; he's a nice man, too, and long life to him, wouldn't fire on the people the other day; I vow to the Virgin, all the women in the room ought to kiss him when he comes in. Ah, doctor! there you are; there's Mrs. Gubbins in the corner dying to have a chat with you; go over to her. Who's that *taazing* the piano there? Ah! James Reddy, it's *you*, I see. I hope it's in tune; 't is only four months since the tuner was here. I hope you've a new song for us, James. The tuner is so scarce, Mrs. Riley, in the country—not like Dublin; but we poor country people, you know, must put up with what we can get; not like you citizens, who has lashings of luxuries as easy as peas." Then, in a confidential whisper, she said, "I hope your daughter has practised the new piece well to-day, for I couldn't be looking after her, you know, to-day, being in such a bustle with my party; I was just like a dog in a fair, in and out everywhere; but I *hope* she's *perfect* in the piece;" then, still more confidentially, she added, "for *he's* here—ah! I *wish it was*, Mrs.

Riley;" then, with a nod and a wink, off she rattled through the room with a word for everybody.

The Mrs. Riley, to whom she was so confidential, was a friend from Dublin, an atrociously vulgar woman, with a more vulgar daughter, who were on a visit with Mrs. Flanagan. The widow and the mother thought Murtough Murphy would be a good speculation for the daughter to "cock her cap at" (to use their own phrase), and with this view the visit to the country was projected. But matters did not prosper; Murphy was not much of a marrying man; and if ever he might be caught in the toils of Hymen, some frank, joyous, unaffected, dashing girl would have been the only one likely to serve a writ on the jovial attorney's heart. Now, Miss Riley was, to use Murtough Murphy's own phrase, "a batch of brass and a stack of affectation," and the airs she attempted to play off on the country folk (Murphy in particular) only made her an object for his mischievous merriment; as an example, we may as well touch on one little incident *en passant*.

The widow had planned one day a walking party to a picturesque ruin, not far from the town, and determined that Murphy should give his arm to Miss Riley; for the party was arranged in couples, with a most deadly design on the liberty of the attorney. At the appointed hour all had arrived but Murphy; the widow thought it a happy chance, so she hurried off the party, leaving Miss Riley to wait and follow under his escort. In about a quarter of an hour he came, having met the widow in the street, who sent him back for Miss Riley. Now Murtough saw the trap which was intended for him, and thought it fair to make what fun he could of the affair, and being already sickened by various disgusting exhibitions of the damsel's affectation, he had the less scruple of "taking her down a peg," as he said himself.

When Murtough reached the house and asked for Miss Riley, he was ushered into the little drawing-room; and there was that very full-blown young lady, on a chair before the fire, her left foot resting on the fender, her right crossed over it, and her body thrown back in a reclining attitude, with a sentimental droop of the head over a greasy novel: her figure was *rather* developed by her posture, indeed more so than Miss Riley quite intended, for her ankles were not unexceptionable, and the position of her feet revealed rather more. A bonnet and green veil lay on the hearth-rug, and her shawl hung over the handle of the fire-shovel. When Murphy entered, he was received with a faint "How d' do?"

"Pretty well, I thank you—how are you?" said Murphy, in his rollicking tone.

"Oh! Miste' Murphy, you are so odd."

"Odd, am I—how am I odd?"

"Oh! *so* odd."

"Well, you'd better put on your bonnet and come walk, and we can talk of my oddity after."

"Oh, indeed, I *cawn't* walk."

"Can't walk!" exclaimed Murphy. "Why can't you walk? I was sent for you."

"Deed I cawn't."

"Ah, now!" said Murphy, giving her a little tender poke of his forefinger on the shoulder.

"Don't, Mister Murphy, *pray* don't."

"But why won't you walk?"

"I'm too delicate."

Murphy uttered a very long "Oh!!!!!"

"Deed I am, Miste' Murphy, though you may disbelieve it."

"Well—a nice walk is the best thing in the world for the health. Come along!"

"Cawn't indeed; a gentle walk on a terrace, or a shadowy avenue, is all very well—the Rotunda Gardens, for instance."

"Not forgetting the military bands that play there," said Murphy, "together with the officers of all the barracks in Dublin, clinking their sabres at their heels along the gravel walks, all for the small charge of a fi'penny bit."

Miss Riley gave a reproachful look and shrug at the vulgar mention of a "fi'penny bit," which Murphy purposely said to shock her "Brummagem gentility."

"How can you be so odd, Miste' Murphy?" she said. "I don't joke, indeed; a gentle walk—I repeat it—is all very well; but these horrid rough country walks—these *masculine* walks, I may say—are not consistent with a delicate frame like mine."

"A delicate frame!" said Murtough. "Faith, I'll tell you what it is, Miss Riley," said he, standing bolt upright before her, plunging his hands into his pockets, and fixing his eyes on her feet, which still maintained their original position on the fender—"I'll tell you what it is, Miss Riley; by the *virtue* of my oath, if your *other* leg is a match for the one I see, the *devil* a harm a trot from this to Dublin would do you!"

Miss Riley gave a faint scream, and popped her legs under her chair, while Murphy ran off in a shout of laughter, and joined the party, to whom he made no secret of his joke.

But all this did not damp Miss Riley's hopes of winning him. She changed her plan; and seeing he did not bow to what she considered the supremacy of her very elegant manners, she set about feigning at once admiration and dread of him. She would sometimes lift her eyes to Murtough with a languishing expression, and declare she never knew any one she was so afraid of; but even this double attack on his vanity could not turn Murphy's flank, and so a very laughable flirtation went on between them, he letting her employ all the enginery of her sex against him, with a mischievous enjoyment in her blindness at not seeing she was throwing away her powder and shot.

But to return to the party; a rattling country dance called out at once the energies of the piper, the fiddler, and the ladies and gentlemen, and left those who had more activity in their heads than their heels to sit on the forms in the background and exercise their tongues in open scandal of their mutual friends and acquaintances under cover of the music, which prevented the most vigorous talker from being heard further than his or her next-door neighbour. Dr. Growling had gone over to Mrs. Gubbins', as desired, and was buried deep in gossip.

"What an extraordinary affair that was about Miss O'Grady, doctor."

"Very, ma'am."

"In the man's bed she was, I hear."

"So the story goes, ma'am."

"And they tell me, doctor, that when her father, that *immaculate* madman—God keep us from harm!—said to poor Mrs. O'Grady, in a great rage, 'Where have you brought up your daughters to go to, ma'am?' said he; and she, poor woman, said, 'To church, my dear,' thinking it was the different religion the Saracen was after; so, says he, '*Church*, indeed! there's the church she's gone to, ma'am,' says he, turning down a quilted counterpane."

"Are you sure it was not Marseilles, ma'am?" said the doctor.

"Well, whatever it was, '*There's* the church she is in,' says he, pulling her out of the bed."

"Out of the bed?" repeated the doctor.

"Out of the bed, sir!"

"Then *her* church was in the Diocese of *Down*," said the doctor.

"That's good, docthor—indeed, that's good. 'She was caught in bed,' says I; and 'It's the diocese of *Down*,' says *you*: 'faith, that's good. I wish the diocese was your own; for you're funny enough to be a bishop, docthor, you lay howld of everything."

"That's a great qualification for a mitre, ma'am," said the doctor.

"And the poor young man that has got her is not worth a farthing, I hear, docthor."

"Then *he* must be the curate, ma'am; though I don't think it's a chapel of ease he has got into."

"Oh! what a tongue you have, docthor," said she, laughing; "faith you'll kill me."

"That's my profession, ma'am. I am a licentiate of the Royal College; but, unfortunately for me, my humanity is an overmatch for my science. Phrenologically speaking, my benevolence is large, and my destructiveness and acquisitiveness small."

"Ah, there you go off on another tack; and what a funny new thing that is you talk of!—that free knowledge or crow-knowledge, or whatever sort of knowledge you call it. And there's one thing I want to ask you about: there's a bump the ladies have, the gentlemen always laugh at, I remark."

"That's very rude of them, ma'am," said the doctor drily. "Is it in the anterior region, or the
—"

"Docthor, don't talk queer."

"I'm only speaking scientifically, ma'am."

"Well, I think your scientific discourse is only an excuse for saying impudent things; I mean the back of their heads."

"I thought so, ma'am."

"They call it—dear me, I forget—something—motive—motive—it's Latin—but I am no *scholar*, docthor."

"That's manifest, ma'am."

"But a lady is not bound to know Latin, docthor."

"Certainly not, ma'am—nor any other language except that of the eyes."

Now, this was a wicked hit of the doctor's, for Mrs. Gubbins squinted frightfully; but Mrs. Gubbins did not know that, so she went on.

"The bump I mean, docthor, is motive something—motive—motive—I have it!—motive-*ness*."

"Now, I know what you mean," said the doctor; "amativeness."

"That's it," said Mrs. Gubbins; "they call it number one, sometimes; I suppose amativeness is Latin for number one. Now, what does that bump mean?"

"Ah, madam," said the doctor, puzzled for a moment to give an explanation; but in a few seconds he answered, "That's a beautiful provision of nature. That, ma'am, is the organ which makes your sex take compassion on ours."[\[28\]](#)

"Wonderful!" said Mrs. Gubbins; "but how good nature is in giving us provision! and I don't think there is a finer provision county in Ireland than this."

"Certainly not, ma'am," said the doctor;—but the moment Mrs. Gubbins began to speak of provisions, he was sure she would get into a very solid discourse about her own farms; so he left his seat beside her and went over to Mrs. Riley, to see what fun could be had in that quarter.

Her daughter was cutting all sorts of barefaced capers about the room, "astonishing the natives," as she was pleased to say; and Growling was looking on in amused wonder at this specimen of vulgar effrontery, whom he had christened "The Brazen Baggage" the first time he saw her.

"You are looking at my daughter, sir," said the delighted mother.

"Yes, ma'am," said the doctor, profoundly.

"She's very young, sir."

"She'll mend of that, ma'am. We were young once ourselves."

This was not very agreeable to the mother, who dressed rather in a juvenile style.

"I mean, sir, that you must excuse any little awkwardness about her—that all arises out of timidity—she was lost with bashfulness till I roused her out of it—but now I think she is beginning to have a little self-possession."

The doctor was amused, and took a large pinch of snuff; he enjoyed the phrase "*beginning* to have a *little* self-possession" being applied to the most brazen baggage he ever saw.

"She's very accomplished, sir," continued the mother. "Mister Jew-val (Duval) taitches her dancin', and Musha Dunny-ai (Mons. Du Noyer)[\[29\]](#) French. Mither Low-jeer (Logier) hasn't the like of her in his academy on the pianya; and as for the harp, you'd think she wouldn't lave a sthring in it."

"She must be a treasure to her teachers, ma'am," said the doctor.

"Faith, you may well say *treasure*, it costs handfuls o' money; but sure, while there's room for improvement, every apartment must be attended to, and the vocal apartment is filled by Sir John—fifteen shillin's a lesson, no less."

"What silvery tones she ought to bring out, ma'am, at that rate!"

"Faith, you may say that, sir. It's coining, so it is, with them tip-top men, and ruins one a'most to have a daughter; every shake I get out of her is to the tune of a ten-poun' note, at least. You shall hear her by-and-by; the minit the dancin' is over, she shall sing you the 'Bewildhered Maid.' Do you know the 'Bewildhered Maid,' sir?"

"I haven't the honour of her acquaintance, ma'am," said the doctor.

The dancing *was* soon over, and the mother's threat put into execution. Miss Riley was led

over to the piano by the widow, with the usual protestations that she was hoarse. It took some time to get the piano ready, for an extensive clearance was to be made from it of cups and saucers, and half-empty glasses of negus, before it could be opened; then, after various thrummings and hummings and hawings, the "Bewildhered Maid" made her appearance in the wildest possible manner, and the final shriek was quite worthy of a maniac. Loud applause followed, and the wriggling Miss Riley was led from the piano by James Reddy, who had stood at the back of her chair, swaying backward and forward to the music, with a maudlin expression of sentiment on his face, and a suppressed exclamation of "B-u-tiful!" after every extra shout from the young lady.

Growling listened with an expression of as much dissatisfaction as if he had been drinking weak punch.

"I see you don't like that," said the widow to him, under her breath; "ah, you're too hard, doctor—consider she sung out of good-nature."

"I don't know if it was out of good-nature," said he; "but I am sure it was out of tune."



The Widow Flanagan's Party

James Reddy led back Miss Riley to her mamma, who was much delighted with the open manifestations of "the poet's" admiration.

"She ought to be proud, sir, of your *conjunction*, I'm sure. A poet like you, sir!—what beautiful rhymes them wor you did on the 'lection."

"A trifle, ma'am—a mere trifle—a little occasional thing."

"Oh! but them two beautiful lines—

"We tread the land that bore us
Our green flag glitters o'er us!"

"*They* are only a quotation, ma'am," said Reddy.

"Oh, like every man of true genius, sir, you try and undervalue your own work; but call them lines what you like, to my taste they are the most beautiful lines in the thing you done."

Reddy did not know what to answer, and his confusion was increased by catching old Growling's eye, who was chuckling at the *mal-a-propos* speech of the flourishing Mrs. Riley.

"Don't you sing yourself, sir?" said that lady.

"To be sure he does," cried the Widow Flanagan; "and he must give us one of his own."

"Oh!"

"No excuses; now, James!"

"Where's Duggan?" inquired the poetaster, affectedly; "I told him to be here to accompany me."

"I attend your muse, sir," said a miserable structure of skin and bone, advancing with a low bow and obsequious smile: this was the poor music-master, who set Reddy's rhymes to music as bad, and danced attendance on him everywhere.

The music-master fumbled over a hackneyed prelude to show his command of the instrument.

Miss Riley whispered to her mamma that it was out of one of her first books of lessons.

Mrs. Flanagan, with a seductive smirk, asked, "what he was going to give them?" The poet replied, "a little thing of his own—'Rosalie; or, the Broken Heart,'—sentimental, but rather sad."

The musical skeleton rattled his bones against the ivory in a very one, two, three, four symphony; the poet ran his fingers through his hair, pulled up his collar, gave his head a jaunty nod, and commenced:

ROSALIE;

OR, THE BROKEN HEART.

Fare thee—fare thee well—alas!
Fare—farewell to thee!
On pleasure's wings, as dew-drops fade,
Or honey stings the bee,
My heart is as sad as a black stone
Under the blue sea.
Oh, Rosalie! Oh, Rosalie!

As ruder rocks with envy glow,
Thy *coral* lips to see,
So the weeping waves more briny grow
With my salt tears for thee!
My heart is as sad as a black stone
Under the blue sea.
Oh, Rosalie! Oh, Rosalie!

After this brilliant specimen of the mysteriously-sentimental and imaginative school was sufficiently applauded, dancing was recommenced, and Reddy seated himself beside Mrs. Riley, the incense of whose praise was sweet in his nostrils. "Oh, you *have* a soul for poetry indeed, sir," said the lady. "I was bewildered with all your beautiful *idays*; that 'honey stings the bee' is a beautiful *iday*—so expressive of the pains and pleasures of love. Ah! I was the most romantic creature myself once, Mister Reddy, though you wouldn't think it now; but the cares of the world and a family takes the shine out of us. I remember when the men used to be making hats in my father's establishment—for my father was the most extensive hatter in Dublin—I don't know if you knew my father was a hatter; but you know, sir, manufactures must be followed, and that's no reason why people shouldn't enjoy po'thry and refinement. Well, I was going to tell you how romantic I was, and when the men were making the hats—I don't know whether you ever saw them making hats——"

Reddy declared he never did.

"Well, it's like the witches round the iron pot in *Macbeth*; did you ever see Kemble in *Macbeth*? Oh! he'd make your blood freeze, though the pit is so hot you wouldn't have a dhry rag on you. But to come to the hats. When they're making them, they have hardly any crown to them at all, and they are all with great sprawling wide flaps to them; well, the moment I clapt my eyes on one of them, I thought of a Spanish nobleman directly, with his slouched hat and black feathers like a hearse. Yes, I assure you, the broad hat always brought to my mind a Spanish noble or an Italian noble (that would do as well, you know), or a robber or a murderer, which is all the same thing."

Reddy could not conceive a hat manufactory as a favourable nursery for romance; but as the lady praised his song, he listened complacently to her hatting.

"And that's another beautiful iday, sir," continued the lady, "where you make the rocks jealous of each other—that's so beautiful to bring in a bit of nature into a metaphysic that way."

"You flatter me, ma'am," said Reddy; "but if I might speak of my own work—that is, if a man may *ever* speak of his own work——"

"And why not, sir?" asked Mrs. Riley, with a business-like air; "who has so good a right to speak of the work as the man who *done* it, and knows what's in it?"

"That's a very sensible remark of yours, ma'am, and I will therefore take leave to say, that the idea *I* am proudest of, is the *dark* and *heavy* grief of the heart being compared to a *black*

stone, and its *depth* of misery implied by the *sea*."

"Thru for you," said Mrs. Riley; "and the *blue* sea—ah! that didn't escape me; that's an elegant touch—the black stone and the blue sea; and black and blue, such a beautiful contrast!"

"I own," said Reddy, "I attempted, in that, the bold and daring style of expression which Byron has introduced."

"Oh, he's a fine *pote* certainly, but he's not moral, sir; and I'm afeard to let my daughter read such combustibles."

"But he's grand," said Reddy; "for instance—

'She walks in beauty like the night.'

How fine!"

"But how wicked!" said Mrs. Riley. "I don't like that night-walking style of poetry at all, so say no more about it; we'll talk of something else. You admire music, I'm sure."

"I adore it, ma'am."

"Do you like the piano?"

"Oh, ma'am! I could live under a piano."

"My daughter plays the piano beautiful."

"Charmingly."

"Oh, but if you heerd her play the harp, you'd think she wouldn't lave a sthring on it" (this was Mrs. Riley's favourite bit of praise); "and a beautiful harp it is, one of Egan's double action, all over goold, and cost eighty guineas; Miss Cheese chuse it for her. Do you know Miss Cheese? she's as plump as a partridge, with a voice like a lark; she sings elegant duets. Do you ever sing duets?"

"Not often."

"Ah! if you could hear Pether Dowling sing duets with my daughter! he'd make the hair stand straight on your head with the delight. Oh, he's a powerful singer! you never heerd the like; he runs up and down as fast as a lamplighter;—and the beautiful turns he gives; oh! I never heerd any one sing a second like Pether. I declare he sings a *second* to that degree *that you'd think it was the first*, and never at a loss for a shake; and then off he goes in a run that you'd think he'd never come back; but he *does* bring it back into the tune again with as nate a fit as a Limerick glove. Oh! I never heerd a singer like Pether!!!"

There is no knowing how much more Mrs. Riley would have said about "Pether," if the end of the dance had not cut her eloquence short by permitting the groups of dancers, as they promenaded, to throw in their desultory discourse right and left, and so break up anything like a consecutive conversation.

But let it not be supposed that all Mrs. Flanagan's guests were of the Gubbins and Riley stamp. There were some of the better class of the country people present; intelligence and courtesy in the one sex, and gentleness and natural grace in the other, making a society not to be ridiculed in the mass, though individual instances of folly and ignorance and purse-proud effrontery were amongst it.

But to Growling every phase of society afforded gratification; and while no one had a keener relish for such scenes as the one in which we have just witnessed him, the learned and the courteous could be met with equal weapons by the doctor when he liked.

Quitting the dancing-room, he went into the little drawing-room, where a party of a very different stamp was engaged in conversation. Edward O'Connor and the "dear English captain," as Mrs. Flanagan called him, were deep in an interesting discussion about the relative practices in Ireland and England on the occasions of elections and trials, and most other public events; and O'Connor and two or three listeners—amongst whom was a Mr. Monk, whose daughters, remarkably nice girls, were of the party—were delighted with the feeling tone in which the Englishman spoke of the poorer classes of Irish, and how often the excesses into which they sometimes fell were viewed through an exaggerated or distorted medium, and what was frequently mere exuberance of spirit pronounced and punished as riot.

"I never saw a people over whom those in authority require more good temper," remarked the captain.

"Gentleness goes a long way with them," said Edward.

"And violence never succeeds," added Mr. Monk.

"You are of opinion, then," said the soldier, "they are not to be forced?"

"Except to do what they like," chimed in Growling.

"That's a very *Irish* sort of coercion," said the captain, smiling.

"And therefore fit for Irishmen," said Growling; "and I never knew an intelligent Englishman yet, who came to Ireland, who did not find it out. Paddy has a touch of the pig in him—he won't be *driven*; but you may *coax* him a long way: or if you appeal to his reason—for he happens to *have* such a thing about him—you may persuade him into what is right if you take the trouble."

"By Jove!" said the captain, "it is not easy to argue with Paddy; the rascals are so ready with quip, and equivoque, and queer answers, that they generally get the best of it in talk, however fallacious may be their argument; and when you think you have Pat in a corner and escape is inevitable, he's off without your knowing how he slipped through your fingers."

When the doctor joined the conversation, Edward, knowing his powers, gave up the captain into his hands and sat down by the side of Miss Monk, who had just entered from the dancing-room, and retired to a chair in the corner.

She and Edward soon got engaged in a conversation particularly interesting to him. She spoke of having lately met Fanny Dawson, and was praising her in such terms of affectionate admiration, that Edward hung upon every word with delight. I know not if Miss Monk was aware of Edward's devotion in that quarter before, but she could not look upon the bland though somewhat sad smile which arched his expressive mouth, and the dilated eye which beamed as her praises were uttered, without being then conscious that Fanny Dawson had made him captive.

She was pleased, and continued the conversation with that inherent pleasure a woman has in touching a man's heart, even though it be not on her own account; and it was done with tact and delicacy which only women possess, and which is so refined that the rougher nature of man is insensible of its drift and influence, and he is betrayed by a net whose meshes are too fine for his perception. Edward O'Connor never dreamt that Miss Monk saw he was in love with the subject of their discourse. While they were talking, the merry hostess entered; and the last words the captain uttered fell upon her ear, and then followed a reply from Growling, saying that Irishmen were as hard to catch as quicksilver. "Ay, and as hard to keep as any other silver," said the widow; "don't believe what these wild Irish fellows tell you of themselves, they are all mad divils alike—you steady Englishmen are the safe men—and the girls know it. And 'faith, if you try them," added she, laughing, "I don't know any one more likely to have luck with them than yourself; for, 'pon my conscience, captain, we all doat on you since you would not shoot the people the other day."

There was a titter among the girls at this open avowal.

"Ah, why wouldn't I say it?" exclaimed she, laughing. "I am not a mealy-mouthed miss; sure *I* may tell truth; and I wouldn't trust one o' ye," she added, with a very significant nod of the head at the gentlemen, "except the captain. Yes—I'd trust one more—I'd trust Mister O'Connor; I think he really could be true to a woman."

The words fell sweetly upon his ear; the expression of trust in his faith at that moment, even from the laughing widow, was pleasing; for his heart was full of the woman he adored, and it was only by long waiting and untiring fidelity she could ever become his.

He bowed courteously to the compliment the hostess paid him; and she, immediately taking advantage of his acknowledgment, said that after having paid him such a pretty compliment he couldn't refuse her to sing a song. Edward never liked to sing in mixed companies, and was about making some objections, when the widow interrupted him with one of those Irish "Ah, now's," so hard to resist. "Besides, all the noisy pack are in the dancing-room, or indeed I wouldn't ask you; and here there's not one won't be charmed with you. Ah, look at Miss Monk, there—I know she's dying to hear you; and see all the ladies *hanging on your lips* absolutely. Can you refuse me after *that*, now?"

It was true that in the small room where they sat there were only those who were worthy of better things than Edward would have ventured on to the many; and filled with the tender and passionate sentiment his conversation with Miss Monk had awakened, one of those effusions of deep, and earnest, and poetic feeling which love had prompted to his muse rose to his lips, and he began to sing.

All were silent, for the poet singer was a favourite, and all knew with what touching expression he gave his compositions; but now the mellow tones of his voice seemed to vibrate with a feeling in more than common unison with the words, and his dark earnest eyes beamed with a devotion of which she who was the object might be proud.

I

How sweet is the hour we give,
 When fancy may wander free,
 To the friends who in memory live!—
 For then I remember thee!
 Then wing'd, like the dove from the ark,
 My heart, o'er a stormy sea,
 Brings back to my lonely bark
 A leaf that reminds of thee!

II

But still does the sky look dark,
 The waters still deep and wide;
 Oh! when may my lonely bark
 In peace on the shore abide?
 But through the future far,
 Dark though my course may be,
Thou art my guiding star!
 My heart still turns to thee.

III

When I see thy friends I smile,
 I sigh when I hear thy name;
 But they cannot tell the while
 Whence the smile or the sadness came;
 Vainly the world may deem
 The cause of my sighs they know:
 The breeze that stirs the stream
 Knows not the depth below.

Before the first verse of the song was over, the entrance to the room was filled with eager listeners, and, at its conclusion, a large proportion of the company from the dancing-room had crowded round the door, attracted by the rich voice of the singer, and fascinated into silence by the charm of his song. Perhaps after mental qualities, the most valuable gift a man can have is a fine voice; it at once commands attention, and may therefore be ranked in a man's possession as highly as beauty in a woman's.

In speaking thus of voice, I do not allude to the power of singing, but the mere physical quality of a fine voice, which in the bare utterance of the simplest words is pleasing, but, becoming the medium for the interchange of higher thoughts, is irresistible. Superadded to this gift, which Edward possessed, the song he sang had meaning in it which could reach the hearts of all his auditory, though its poetry might be appreciated by but few; its imagery grew upon a stem whose root was in every bosom, and the song that possesses this quality, whatever may be its defects, contains not only the elements of future fame, but of immediate popularity. Startling was the contrast between the silence the song had produced and the simultaneous clapping of hands outside the door when it was over; not the poor plaudit of a fashionable assembly, whose "bravo" is an attenuated note of admiration, struggling into a sickly existence and expiring in a sigh—applause of so suspicious a character, that no one seems desirous of owning it—a feeble forgery of satisfaction which people think it disgraceful to be caught uttering. The clapping was not the plaudits of high-bred hands, whose sound is like the fluttering of small wings, just enough to stir gossamer—but not the heart. No; such was not the applause which followed Edward's song; he had the outburst of heart-warm and unsophisticated satisfaction unfettered by chilling convention. Most of his hearers did not know that it was disgraceful to admit being too well pleased, and the poor innocents really opened their mouths and clapped their hands. Oh, fie! tell it not in Grosvenor-square.

And now James Reddy contrived to be asked to sing; the coxcomb, not content with his luck in being listened to before, panted for such another burst of applause as greeted Edward, whose song he had no notion was any better than his own; the puppy fancied his rubbish of the "black stone under the blue sea" partook of a grander character of composition, and that while Edward's "breeze" but "stirred the stream," he had fathomed the ocean. But a "heavy blow and great discouragement" was in store for Master James, for as he commenced a love ditty which he called by the fascinating title of "The Rose of Silence," and verily believed would have enraptured every woman in the room, a powerful voice, richly flavoured with the brogue, shouted forth outside the door, "*Ma'am, if you plaze, supper's sarved.*" The effect was magical; a rush was made to supper by the crowd in the doorway, and every gentleman in the little drawing-room offered his arm to a lady, and led her off without the smallest regard to Reddy's singing.

His look was worth anything as he saw himself thus unceremoniously deserted and likely soon to be left in sole possession of the room; the old doctor was enchanted with his

vexation; and when James ceased to sing, as the last couple were going, the doctor interposed his request that the song should be finished.

"Don't stop, my dear fellow," said the doctor; "that's the best song I have heard for a long time, and you must indulge me by finishing it—that's a gem."

"Why, you see, doctor, they have all gone to supper."

"Yes, and the devil choke them with it," said Growling, "for their want of taste; but never mind that: one judicious listener is worth a crowd of such fools, you'll admit; so sit down again and sing for me."

The doctor seated himself as he spoke, and there he kept Reddy, who he knew was very fond of a good supper, singing away for the bare life, with only one person for audience, and that one humbugging him. The scene was rich; the gravity with which the doctor carried on the quiz was admirable, and the gullibility of the coxcomb who was held captive by his affected admiration exquisitely absurd and almost past belief; even Growling himself was amazed, as he threw in a rapturous "charming" or "bravissimo," at the egregious folly of his dupe, who still continued singing, while the laughter of the supper-room and the inviting clatter of its knives and forks were ringing in his ear. When Reddy concluded, the doctor asked might he venture to request the last verse again; "for," continued he, "there is a singular beauty of thought and felicity of expression in its numbers, leaving the mind unsatisfied with but one hearing; once more, if you please."

Poor Reddy repeated the last verse.

"Very charming, indeed!" said the doctor.

"You really like it?" said Reddy.

"Like?" said the doctor—"sir, *like* is a faint expression of what I think of that song. Moore had better look to his laurels, sir!"

"Oh, doctor!"

"Ah, you know yourself," said Growling.

"Then that last, doctor—?" said Reddy, inquiringly.

"Is your most successful achievement, sir; there is a mysterious shadowing forth of something in it which is very fine."

"You like it better than the 'Black Stone'?"

"Pooh! sir; the 'Black Stone,' if I may be allowed an image, is but ordinary paving, while that 'Rose of Silence' of yours might strew the path to Parnassus."

"And is it not strange, doctor," said Reddy, in a reproachful tone, "that *them* people should be insensible to that song, and leave the room while I was singing it?"

"Too good for them, sir—above their comprehension."

"Besides, so rude!" said Reddy.

"Oh, my dear friend," said the doctor, "when you know more of the world, you'll find out that an appeal from the lower house to the upper," and he changed his hand from the region of his waistcoat to his head as he spoke, "is most influential."

"True, doctor," said Reddy, with a smile; "and suppose *we* go to supper now."

"Wait a moment," said Growling, holding his button. "Did you ever try your hand at an epic?"

"No, I can't say that I did."

"I wish you would."

"You flatter me, doctor; but don't you think we had better go to supper?"

"Ha!" said the doctor, "your own House of Commons is sending up an appeal—eh?"

"Decidedly, doctor."

"Then you see, my dear friend, you can't wonder at those poor inferior beings hurrying off to indulge their gross appetites, when a man of genius like you is not insensible to the same call. Never wonder again at people leaving your song for supper, Master James," said the doctor, resting his arm on Reddy, and sauntering from the room. "Never wonder again at the triumph of supper over song, for the Swan of Avon himself would have no chance against roast ducks."

Reddy smacked his lips at the word ducks, and the savoury odour of the supper-room which they approached heightened his anticipation of an onslaught on one of the aforesaid tempting birds; but, ah! when he entered the room, skeletons of ducks there were, but nothing more; the work of demolition had been in able hands, and the doctor's lachrymose exclamation of "the devil a duck!" found a hollow echo under Reddy's waistcoat. Round the room that deluded minstrel went, seeking what he might devour, but his voyage of discovery for any hot fowl was profitless; and Growling, in silent delight, witnessed his disappointment.

"Come, sir," said the doctor, "there's plenty of punch left, however; I'll take a glass with you, and drink success to your next song, for the last is all I could wish;" and so indeed it was, for it enabled him to laugh at the poetaster, and cheat him out of his supper.

"Ho, ho!" said Murtough Murphy, who approached the door; "you have found out the punch is good, eh? 'Faith it is that same, and I'll take another glass of it with you before I go, for the night is cold."

"Are you going so soon?" asked Growling, as he clinked his glass against the attorney's.

"Whisht!" said Murphy, "not a word,—I'm slipping away after Dick the Divil; we have a trifle of work in hand quite in his line, and it is time to set about it. Good bye, you'll hear more of it to-morrow—snug's the word."

Murphy stole away, for the open departure of so merry a blade would not have been permitted, and in the hall he found Dick mounting a large top-coat and muffling up.

"Good people are scarce, you think, Dick," said Murphy.

"I'd recommend you to follow the example, for the night is bitter cold, I can tell you."

"And as dark as a coal-hole," said Murphy, as he opened the door and looked out.

"No matter, I have got a dark lantern," said Dick, "which we can use when required; make haste, the gig is round the corner, and the little black mare will roll us over in no time."

They left the house quietly, as he spoke, and started on a bit of mischief which demands a separate chapter.

Footnotes

1 ([Return](#))

Boys.

2 ([Return](#))

The songs in this work are published by Duff and Hodgson, 65, Oxford Street.

3 ([Return](#))

Anything very badly broken is said by the Irish peasantry to be in "jommethry."

4 ([Return](#))

A half-holy, half-merry meeting, held at some certain place, on the day dedicated to the saint who is supposed to be the PATRON of the spot—hence the name "PATTERN."

5 ([Return](#))

Fiddler's Green is supposed to be situated on this (the cooler) side of the regions below.

6 ([Return](#))

A soft, monotonous chant the nurses sing to children to induce sleep.

7 ([Return](#))

A facetious phrase for bailiff, so often kicked.

8 ([Return](#))

Cutting off the ears of a process-server.

9 ([Return](#))

Hayloft.

10 ([Return](#))

A shilling, so called from its being worth thirteen pence in those days.

11 ([Return](#))

This is not the word in the MS.

12 ([Return](#))

Serving mass occupies about twenty-five minutes.

13 ([Return](#))

An Hibernicism, expressive of lounging laziness.

14 ([Return](#))

Pinafore.

15 ([Return](#))

Mary.

16 ([Return](#))

One of the finest tenors of the last century.

17 ([Return](#))

A "fair offer" is a phrase amongst the Irish peasantry, meaning a successful aim.

18 ([Return](#))

A vulgarism for "hoisted."

19 ([Return](#))

The principal tube of a bagpipe.

20 ([Return](#))

In those times elections often lasted many days.

21 ([Return](#))

Fiddlers' fare, or pipers' pay—more kicks than halfpence.

22 ([Return](#))

A name given to a written engagement between landlord and tenant, promising to grant a lease, on which registration is allowed in Ireland.

23 ([Return](#))

A large basket of coarse wicker-work, used mostly for carrying turf—*Anglice*, peat.

24 ([Return](#))

When Strafford's infamous project of the wholesale robbery of Connaught was put in practice, not being quite certain of his juries, he writes that he will send three hundred horse to the province during the proceedings, as "good lookers-on."

25 ([Return](#))

A saying among the Irish peasantry—meaning there is danger in delay.

26 ([Return](#))

The name given to the police by the people—the force being first established by Sir Robert Peel, then Mr. Peel, Secretary for Ireland.

27 ([Return](#))

Just such a lengthy correspondence had appeared in the London journals when the first edition of this book was published.

28 ([Return](#))

This very ingenious answer was really given by an Irish professor to an over-inquisitive lady.

29 ([Return](#))

My own worthy and excellent master, to whom I gladly pay this tribute of kindly remembrance.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HANDY ANDY: A TALE OF IRISH LIFE.
VOLUME 1 ***

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