The Project Gutenberg eBook of Humours of Irish Life, by Charles L. Graves

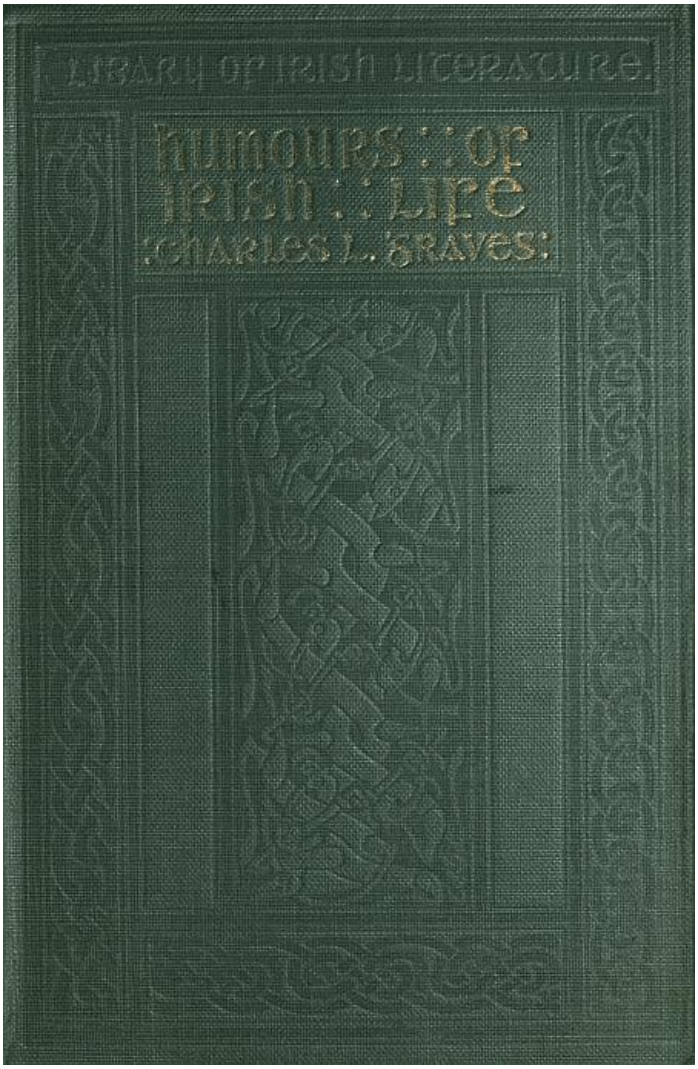
Title: Humours of Irish Life

Editor: Charles L. Graves

Release date: April 17, 2011 [EBook #35891]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Marius Masi, Chris Curnow and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive)



HUMOURS OF
: IRISH LIFE :

Drawn by] [*Geo. Morrow*

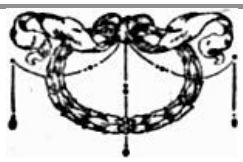
Frank Webber wins the wager

HUMOURS OF IRISH LIFE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY CHARLES L. GRAVES, M.A.

NEW YORK:
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

PRINTED BY THE
EDUCATIONAL COMPANY
OF IRELAND LIMITED
AT THE TALBOT PRESS
DUBLIN



Introduction.

THE first of the notable humorists of Irish life was William Maginn, one of the most versatile, as well as brilliant of Irish men of letters.

He was born in Cork in 1793, and was a classical schoolmaster there in early manhood, having secured the degree of LL.D. at Trinity College, Dublin, when only 23 years of age. The success in “Blackwood’s Magazine” of some of his translations of English verse into the Classics induced him, however, to give up teaching and to seek his fortunes as a magazine writer and journalist in London, at a time when Lamb, De Quincey, Lockhart and Wilson gave most of their writings to magazines.

Possessed of remarkable sparkle and finish as a writer, considering with what little effort and with what rapidity he poured out his political satires in prose and verse, and his rollicking magazine sketches, it was no wonder that he leaped into popularity at a bound. He was the original of the Captain Shandon of Pendennis and though Thackeray undoubtedly attributed to him a political venality of which he was never guilty, whilst describing him during what was undoubtedly the latter and least reputable period in his career, it is evident that he considered Maginn to be, as he undoubtedly was, a literary figure of conspicuous accomplishment and mark in the contemporary world of letters.

Amongst his satiric writings, his panegyric of Colonel Pride may stand comparison even with Swift’s most notable philippics; whilst his Sir Morgan O’Doherty was the undoubted ancestor of Maxwell’s and Lever’s hard drinking, practical joking Irish military heroes, and

frequently appears as one of the speakers in Professor Wilson's "Noctes Ambrosianae," of which the doctor was one of the mainstays.

Besides his convivial song of "St. Patrick," his "Gathering of the Mahonys," and his "Cork is an Eden for you, Love, and me," written by him as genuine "Irish Melodies," to serve as an antidote to what he called the finicking Bacchanalianism of Moore, he contributed, as Mr. D. J. O'Donoghue conclusively proves, several stories, including "Daniel O'Rourke," printed in this volume, to Crofton Croker's "Fairy Legends and Traditions of Ireland," first published anonymously in 1825—a set of Folk Tales full of a literary charm which still makes them delightful reading. For just as Moore took Irish airs, touched them up and partnered them with lyrics to suit upper class British and Irish taste, so Croker gathered his Folk Tales from the Munster peasantry with whom he was familiar and, assisted by Maginn and others, gave them exactly that form and finish needful to provide the reading public of his day with an inviting volume of fairy lore.

Carleton and the brothers John and Michael Banim, besides Samuel Lover, whose gifts are treated of elsewhere in this introduction, followed with what Dr. Douglas Hyde rightly describes as Folk Lore of "an incidental and highly manipulated type."

A more genuine Irish storyteller was Patrick Kennedy, twice represented in this volume, whose "Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celt" and "Fireside Stories of Ireland" were put down by him much as he heard them as a boy in his native county of Wexford, where they had already passed with little change in the telling from the Gaelic into the peculiar Anglo-Irish local dialect which is markedly West Saxon in its character.

His lineal successor as a Wexford Folklorist is Mr. P. J. McCall, one of whose stories, "Fionn MacCumhail and the Princess" we reproduce, and a woman Folk tale teller, Miss B. Hunt, adds to our indebtedness to such writers by her recently published and delightful *Folk Tales of Breffny* from which "McCarthy of Connacht" has been taken for these pages.

We have also the advantage of using Dr. Hyde's "The Piper and the Puca," a foretaste, we believe, of the pleasure in store for our readers in the volume of Folk Tales he is contributing to "Every Irishman's Library" under the engaging title of "Irish Saints and Sinners."

In a survey of the Anglo-Irish humorous novel of recent times, the works of Charles Lever form a convenient point of departure, for with all his limitations he was the first to write about Irish life in such a way as to appeal widely and effectively to an English audience. We have no intention of dwelling upon him at any length—he belongs to an earlier generation—but between him and his successors there are points both of resemblance and of dissimilarity sufficient to make an interesting comparison. The politics and social conditions of Lever's time are not those of the present, but the spirit of Lever's Irishman, though with modifications, is still alive to-day.

Lever had not the intensity of Carleton, or the fine humanity of Kickham, but he was less uncompromising in his use of local colour, and he was, as a rule, far more cheerful. He had not the tender grace or simplicity of Gerald Griffin, and never wrote anything so moving or beautiful as "The Collegians," which will form a special volume of this Library, but he surpassed him in vitality, gusto, exuberance and knowledge of the world.

Overrated in the early stages of his career, Lever paid the penalty of his too facile triumphs in his lifetime, and his undoubted talents have latterly been depreciated on political as well as artistic grounds. His heroes were drawn, with few exceptions, from the landlord class or their faithful retainers. The gallant Irish officers, whose Homeric exploits he loved to celebrate, held commissions in the British army. Lever has never been popular with Nationalist politicians, though, as a matter of fact no one ever exhibited the extravagance and recklessness of the landed gentry in more glaring colours. And he is anathema to the hierophants of the Neo-Celtic Renascence on account of his jocularity. There is nothing crepuscular about Lever; you might as well expect to find a fairy in a railway station.

Again, Lever never was and never could be the novelist of literary men. He was neither a scholar nor an artist; he wrote largely in instalments; and in his earlier novels was wont to end a chapter in a manner that rendered something like a miracle necessary to continue the existence of the hero: "He fell lifeless to the ground, the same instant I was felled to the earth by a blow from behind, and saw no more." In technique and characterisation his later novels show a great advance, but if he lives, it will be by the spirited loosely-knit romances of love and war composed in the first ten years of his literary career. His heroes had no

scruples in proclaiming their physical advantages and athletic prowess; Charles O'Malley, that typical Galway *miles gloriosus*, introduces himself with ingenuous egotism in the following passage:

> "I rode boldly with fox-hounds; I was about the best shot within twenty miles of us; I could swim the Shannon at Holy Island; I drove four-in-hand better than the coachman himself; and from finding a hare to cooking a salmon, my equal could not be found from Killaloe to Banagher."

The life led by the Playboys of the West (old style) as depicted in Lever's pages was one incessant round of reckless hospitality, tempered by duels and practical joking, but it had its justification in the family annals of the fire-eating Blakes and Bodkins and the records of the Connaught Circuit. The intrepidity of Lever's heroes was only equalled by their indiscretion, their good luck in escaping from the consequences of their folly, and their susceptibility. His womenfolk may be roughly divided into three classes; sentimental heroines, who sighed, and blushed and fainted on the slightest provocation; buxom Amazons, like Baby Blake; and campaigners or adventuresses. But the gentle, sentimental, angelic type predominates, and finds a perfect representative in Lucy Dashwood.

When Charles O'Malley was recovering from an accident in the hunting field, he fell asleep in an easy-chair in the drawing-room and was awakened by the "thrilling chords of a harp":

> "I turned gently round in my chair and beheld Miss Dashwood. She was seated in a recess of an old-fashioned window; the pale yellow glow of a wintry sun at evening fell upon her beautiful hair, and tinged it with such a light as I have often since then seen in Rembrandt's pictures; her head leaned upon the harp, and, as she struck its chords at random, I saw that her mind was far away from all around her. As I looked, she suddenly started from her leaning attitude, and, parting back her curls from her brow, she preluded a few chords, and then sighed forth, rather than sang, that most beautiful of Moore's melodies—
>
> 'She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps.'
>
> Never before had such pathos, such deep utterance of feeling, met my astonished sense; I listened breathlessly as the tears fell one by one down my cheek; my bosom heaved and fell; and when she ceased, I hid my head between my hands and sobbed aloud."

Lever's serious heroines, apart from the fact that they could ride, did not differ in essentials from those of Dickens, and a sense of humour was no part of their mental equipment. The hated rival, the dark-browed Captain Hammersly, was distinguished by his "cold air and repelling *hauteur*," and is a familiar figure in mid-Victorian romance. Lever's sentiment, in short, is old-fashioned, and cannot be expected to appeal to a Feminist age which has given us the public school girl and the suffragist. There is no psychological interest in the relations of his heroes and heroines; Charles's farewell to Lucy is on a par with the love speeches in "The Lyons Mail." There is seldom any doubt as to the ultimate reunion of his lovers; we are only concerned with the ingenuity of the author in surmounting the obstacles of his own invention. He was fertile in the devising of exciting incident; he was always able to eke out the narrative with a good story or song—as a writer of convivial, thrasonic or mock-sentimental verse he was quite in the first class—and in his earlier novels his high spirits and sense of fun never failed.

In his easy-going methods he may have been influenced by the example of Dickens—the Dickens of the "Pickwick Papers"—but there is no ground for any charge of conscious imitation, and where he challenged direct comparison—in the character of Mickey Free—he succeeded in drawing an Irish Sam Weller who falls little short of his more famous Cockney counterpart. For Lever was a genuine humorist, or perhaps we should say a genuine comedian, since the element of theatricality was seldom absent. The choicest exploits of that grotesque Admirable Crichton, Frank Webber, were carried out by hoaxing, disguise, or trickery of some sort. But the scene in which Frank wins his wager by impersonating Miss Judy Macan and sings "The Widow Malone" is an admirable piece of sustained fooling: admirable, too, in its way is the rescue of the imaginary captive in the Dublin drain. As a delineator of the humours of University life, Lever combined the atmosphere of "Verdant Green" with the sumptuous upholstery of Ouida. Here, again, in his portraits of dons and undergraduates Lever undoubtedly drew in part from life, but fell into his characteristic vice of exaggeration in his embroidery. Frank Webber's antics are amusing, but it is hard to swallow his amazing literary gifts or the contrast between his effeminate appearance and his dare-devil energy.

While "Lord Kilgobbin"—which ran as a serial in the "Cornhill Magazine" from October,

1870, to March, 1872—was not wholly free from Lever's besetting sin, it is interesting not only as the most thoughtful and carefully written of his novels, but on account of its political attitude. Here Lever proved himself no champion *à outrance* of the landlords, but was ready to admit that their joyous conviviality was too often attended by gross mismanagement of their estates. The methods of Peter Gill, the land steward, are shown to be all centred in craft and subtlety—"outwitting this man, forestalling that, doing everything by halves, so that no boon came unassociated with some contingency or other by which he secured to himself unlimited power and uncontrolled tyranny." The sympathy extended to the rebels of '98 is remarkable and finds expression in the spirited lines:—

"Is there anything more we can fight or can hate for?
The 'drop' and the famine have made our ranks thin.
In the name of endurance, then, what do we wait for?
Will nobody give us the word to begin?"

These must have been almost the last lines Lever ever wrote, unless we accept the bitter epitaph on himself:

"For sixty odd years he lived in the thick of it,
And now he is gone, not so much very sick of it,
As because he believed he heard somebody say,
'Harry Lorrequer's hearse is stopping the way.'"

The bitterness of the epitaph lies in the fact that it was largely true; he had exhausted the vein of rollicking romance on which his fame and popularity rested. For the rest the charge of misrepresenting Irish life is met by so judicious a critic as the late Dr. Garnett with a direct negative:—

> "He has not actually misrepresented anything, and cannot be censured for confining himself to the society which he knew; nor was his talent adapted for the treatment of such life in its melancholy and poetic aspects, even if these had been more familiar to him."

Of the humorous Irish novelists who entered into competition with Lever for the favour of the English-speaking public in his lifetime, two claim special notice—Samuel Lover and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. Lover has always been bracketed with Lever, whom he resembled in many ways, but he was overshadowed by his more brilliant and versatile contemporary. Yet within his limited sphere he was a true humorist, and the careless, whimsical, illogical aspects of Irish character have seldom been more effectively illustrated than by the author of 'Handy Andy,' and 'The Gridiron.' Paddy, as drawn by Lover, succeeds in spite of his drawbacks, much as Brer Rabbit does in the tales of Uncle Remus. His mental processes remind one of the story of the Hungarian baron who, on paying a visit to a friend after a railway journey, complained of a bad headache, the result of sitting with his back to the engine. When his friend asked, "Why did not you change places with your *vis-à-vis*?" the baron replied, "How could I? I had no *vis-à-vis*." Lover's heroes "liked action, but they hated work": the philosophy of thriftlessness is summed up to perfection in "Paddy's Pastoral":—

"Here's a health to you, my darlin',
Though I'm not worth a farthin';
For when I'm drunk I think I'm rich,
I've a featherbed in every ditch!"

For all his kindliness Lover laid too much stress on this happy-go-lucky fecklessness to minister to Irish self-respect. His pictures of Irish life were based on limited experience; in so far as they are true, they recall and emphasise traits which many patriotic Irishmen wish to forget or eliminate. An age which has witnessed the growth of Irish Agricultural Co-operation is intolerant of a novelist who for the most part represents his countrymen as diverting idiots, and therefore we prefer to represent him in this volume by "The Little Weaver," one of those mock heroic tales in which Irishmen have excelled from his day to that of Edmund Downey. No better example could be given of his easy flow of humour in genuine Hiberno-English or of his shrewd portraiture of such simple types of Irish peasant character.

The case of Le Fanu is peculiar. His best-known novels had no specially characteristic Irish flavour. But his sombre talent was lit by intermittent flashes of the wildest hilarity, and it was in this mood that the author of "Uncle Silas" and "Carmilla" wrote "The Quare

Gandher" and "Billy Malowney's Taste of Love and Glory," two of the most brilliantly comic extravaganzas which were ever written by an Irishman, and which no one but an Irishman could ever have written.

There is no Salic Law in letters, and since the deaths of Lever and Le Fanu the sceptre of the realm of Irish fiction has passed to women. But the years between 1870 and 1890 were not propitious for humorists, and the admirable work of the late Miss Emily Lawless, who had already made her mark in "Hurrish" before the latter date, does not fall within the present survey. The same remark applies to Mrs. Hartley, but there is a fine sense of humour in the delicate idylls of Miss Jane Barlow, twice represented in this volume.

By far the most widely read Irish novelist between 1880 and 1900 was the late Mrs. Hungerford, the author of "Molly Bawn" and a score of other blameless romances which almost rivalled "The Rosary" in luscious sentimentality. The scenes of her stories were generally laid in Ireland, and the stories themselves were almost invariably concerned with the courtship of lovely but impecunious maidens by eligible and affluent youths. No one in Mrs. Hungerford's novels ever seemed to have any work to do. The characters lived in a paradise of unemployment, and this possibly accounts for Mrs. Hungerford's immense popularity in America, where even the most indolent immigrants become infected with a passion for hard work. In the quality of gush she was unsurpassed, but her good nature and her frank delight in her characters made her absurdity engaging. Sentiment was her ruling passion; she did no more than scrape the surface of Irish social life; and she had no humour but good humour. But she had not enough of literary quality to entitle her work to rank beside that of the other women writers represented in this volume.

The literary partnership of Miss Edith Somerville and Miss Violet Martin—the most brilliantly successful example of creative collaboration in our times—began with "An Irish Cousin" in 1889. Published over the pseudonyms of "Geilles Herring" and "Martin Ross," this delightful story is remarkable not only for its promise, afterwards richly fulfilled, but for its achievement. The writers proved themselves the possessors of a strange faculty of detachment which enabled them to view the humours of Irish life through the unfamiliar eyes of a stranger without losing their own sympathy. They were at once of the life they described and outside it. They showed a laudable freedom from political partisanship; a minute familiarity with the manners and customs of all strata of Irish Society; an unerring instinct for the "sovran word;" a perfect mastery of the Anglo-Irish dialect; and an acute yet well-controlled sense of the ludicrous. The heroine accurately describes the concourse on the platform of a small country station as having "all the appearance of a large social gathering or *conversazione*, the carriages being filled, not by those who were starting, but by their friends who had come to see them off." When she went to a county ball in Cork she discovered to her dismay that all her partners were named either Beamish or Barrett:—

> "Had it not been for Willy's elucidation of its mysteries, I should have thrown away my card in despair. 'No; not *him*. That's *Long* Tom Beamish! It's *English* Tommy you've to dance with next. They call him English Tommy because, when his Militia regiment was ordered to Aldershot, he said he was 'the first of his ancestors that was ever sent on foreign service.'... I carried for several days the bruises which I received during my waltz with English Tommy. It consisted chiefly of a series of short rushes, of so shattering a character that I at last ventured to suggest a less aggressive mode of progression. 'Well,' said English Tommy confidentially, 'ye see, I'm trying to bump Katie,' pointing to a fat girl in blue. 'She's my cousin, and we're for ever fighting.'"

As a set-off to this picture of the hilarious informality of high life in Cork twenty-five years ago, there is a wonderful study of a cottage interior, occupied by a very old man, his daughter-in-law, three children, two terriers, a cat, and a half-plucked goose. The conversation between Willy Sarsfield—who foreshadows Flurry Knox in "Some Experiences of an Irish R.M." by his mingled shrewdness and *naiveté*—and Mrs. Sweeny is a perfect piece of realism.

> "Mrs. Sweeny was sitting on a kind of rough settle, between the other window and the door of an inner room. She was a stout, comfortable woman of about forty, with red hair and quick blue eyes, that roved round the cabin, and silenced with a glance the occasional whisperings that rose from the children. 'And how's the one that had the bad cough?' asked Willy, pursuing his conversation with her with his invariable ease and dexterity. 'Honor her name is, isn't it?'—'See, now, how well he remembers!' replied Mrs. Sweeny. 'Indeed, she's there back in the room, lyin' these three days. Faith, I think 'tis like the decline she have, Masther Willy.'—'Did you get the Doctor to her?' said Willy. 'I'll give you a ticket, if you haven't one.'—'Oh, indeed, Docthor Kelly's afther givin' her a bottle, but shure I wouldn't let her put it into her mouth at all. God-knows what'd be in it. Wasn't I afther throwin' a taste of

> it on the fire to thry what'd it do, and Phitz! says it, and up with it up the chimbley! Faith, I'd be in dread to give it to the child. Shure, if it done that in the fire, what'd it do in her inside? —'Well, you're a greater fool than I thought you were,' said Willy, politely.—'Maybe I am, faith,' replied Mrs. Sweeny, with a loud laugh of enjoyment. 'But, if she's for dyin', the crayture, she'll die aisier without thim thrash of medicines; and if she's for livin', 'tisn't thrusting to them she'll be. Shure, God is good, God is good——'—'Divil a betther!' interjected old Sweeny, unexpectedly. It was the first time he had spoken, and having delivered himself of this trenchant observation, he relapsed into silence and the smackings at his pipe."

But the tragic note is sounded in the close of "An Irish Cousin"—Miss Martin and Miss Somerville have never lost sight of the abiding dualism enshrined in Moore's verse "Erin, the tear and the smile in thine eyes"—and it dominates their next novel, "Naboth's Vineyard," published in 1891, a sombre romance of the Land League days. Three years later they reached the summit of their achievement in "The Real Charlotte," which still remains their masterpiece, though easily eclipsed in popularity by the irresistible drollery of "Some Experiences of an Irish R.M." To begin with, it does not rely on the appeal to hunting people which in their later work won the heart of the English sportsman. It is a ruthlessly candid study of Irish provincial and suburban life; of the squalors of middle-class households; of garrison hacks and "underbred, finespoken," florid squireens. But secondly and chiefly it repels the larger half of the novel-reading public by the fact that two women have here dissected the heart of one of their sex in a mood of unrelenting realism. While pointing out the pathos and humiliation of the thought that a soul can be stunted by the trivialities of personal appearance, they own to having set down Charlotte Mullen's many evil qualities "without pity." They approach their task in the spirit of Balzac. The book, as we shall see, is extraordinarily rich in both wit and humour, but Charlotte, who cannot control her ruling passion of avarice even in a death chamber, might have come straight out of the pages of the *Comédie Humaine*. Masking her greed, her jealousy and her cruelty under a cloak of loud affability and ponderous persiflage, she was a perfect specimen of the *fausse bonne femme*. Only her cats could divine the strange workings of her mind:

> "The movements of Charlotte's character, for it cannot be said to possess the power of development, were akin to those of some amphibious thing whose strong darting course under the water is only marked by a bubble or two, and it required almost an animal instinct to note them. Every bubble betrayed the creature below, as well as the limitations of its power of hiding itself, but people never thought of looking out for these indications in Charlotte, or even suspected that she had anything to conceal. There was an almost blatant simplicity about her, a humorous rough-and-readiness which, joined to her literary culture, proved business capacity, and her dreaded temper, seemed to leave no room for any further aspect, least of all of a romantic kind."

Yet romance of a sort was at the root of Charlotte's character. She had been in love with Roddy Lambert, a showy, handsome, selfish squireen, before he married for money. She had disguised her tenderness under a bluff *camaraderie* during his first wife's lifetime, and hastened Mrs. Lambert's death by inflaming her suspicions of Roddy's fidelity. It was only when Charlotte was again foiled by Lambert's second marriage to her own niece that her love was turned to gall, and she plotted to compass his ruin.

The authors deal faithfully with Francie FitzPatrick, Charlotte's niece, but an element of compassion mingles with their portraiture. Charlotte had robbed Francie of a legacy, and compounded with her conscience by inviting the girl to stay with her at Lismoyle. Any change was a god-send to poor Francie, who, being an orphan, lived in Dublin with another aunt, a kindly but feckless creature whose eyes were not formed to perceive dirt nor her nose to apprehend smells, and whose ideas of economy was "to indulge in no extras of soap or scrubbing brushes, and to feed her family on strong tea and indifferent bread and butter, in order that Ida's and Mabel's hats might be no whit less ornate than those of their neighbours." In this dingy household Francie had grown up, lovely as a Dryad, brilliantly indifferent to the serious things of life, with a deplorable Dublin accent, ingenuous, unaffected and inexpressibly vulgar. She captivates men of all sorts: Roddy Lambert, who lunched on hot beefsteak pie and sherry; Mr. Hawkins, an amorous young soldier, who treated her with a bullying tenderness and jilted her for an English heiress; and Christopher Dysart, a scholar, a gentleman, and the heir to a baronetcy, who was ruined by self-criticism and diffidence. Francie respected Christopher and rejected him; was thrown over by Hawkins, whom she loved; and married Roddy Lambert, her motives being "poverty, aimlessness, bitterness of soul and instinctive leniency towards any man who liked her." Francie had already exasperated Charlotte by refusing Christopher Dysart: by marrying Lambert she dealt a death-blow to her hopes and drove her into the path of vengeance.

But the story is not only engrossing as a study of vulgarity that is touched with pathos, of the vindictive jealousy of unsunned natures, of the cowardice of the selfish and the futility of the intellectually effete. It is a treasure-house of good sayings, happy comments, ludicrous incidents. When Francie returned to Dublin we read how one of her cousins, "Dottie, unfailing purveyor of diseases to the family, had imported German measles from her school." When Charlotte, nursing her wrath, went to inform the servant at Lambert's house of the return of her master with his new wife, the servant inquired "with cold resignation" whether it was the day after to-morrow:—

> "'It is, me poor woman, it is,' replied Charlotte, in the tone of facetious intimacy that she reserved for other people's servants. 'You'll have to stir your stumps to get the house ready for them.'—'The house is cleaned down and ready for them as soon as they like to walk into it,' replied Eliza Hackett, with dignity, 'and if the new lady faults the drawing-room chimbley for not being swep, the master will know it's not me that's to blame for it, but the sweep that's gone dhrilling with the Mileetia.'"

Each of the members of the Dysart family is hit off in some memorable phrase; Sir Benjamin, the old and irascible paralytic, "who had been struck down on his son's coming of age by a paroxysm of apoplectic jealousy "; the admirable and unselfish Pamela with her "pleasant anxious voice"; Christopher, who believed that if only he could "read the 'Field,' and had a more spontaneous habit of cursing," he would be an ideal country gentleman; and Lady Dysart, who was "a clever woman, a renowned solver of acrostics in her society paper, and a holder of strong opinions as to the prophetic meaning of the Pyramids." With her "a large yet refined bonhomie" took the place of tact, but being an Englishwoman she was "constitutionally unable to discern perfectly the subtle grades of Irish vulgarity." Sometimes the authors throw away the *scenario* for a whole novel in a single paragraph, as in this compressed summary of the antecedents of Captain Cursiter:

> "Captain Cursiter was 'getting on' as captains go, and he was the less disposed to regard his junior's love affairs with an indulgent eye, in that he had himself served a long and difficult apprenticeship in such matters, and did not feel that he had profited much by his experiences. It had happened to him at an early age to enter ecstatically into the house of bondage, and in it he had remained with eyes gradually opening to its drawbacks until, a few years before, the death of the only apparent obstacle to his happiness had brought him face to face with its realisation. Strange to say, when this supreme moment arrived, Captain Cursiter was disposed for further delay; but it shows the contrariety of human nature, that when he found himself superseded by his own subaltern, an habitually inebriated viscount, he committed the imbecility of horsewhipping him; and finding it subsequently advisable to leave his regiment, he exchanged into the infantry with the settled conviction that all women were liars."

Nouns and verbs are the bones and sinews of style; it is in the use of epithets and adjectives that the artist is shown; and Miss Martin and Miss Somerville never make a mistake. An episode in the life of one of Charlotte's pets—a cockatoo—is described as occurring when the bird was "a sprightly creature of some twenty shrieking summers." We read of cats who stared "with the expressionless but wholly alert scrutiny of their race"; of the "difficult revelry" of Lady Dysart's garden party when the men were in a hopeless minority and the more honourable women sat on a long bench in "midge-bitten dulness." Such epithets are not decorative, they heighten the effect of the picture. Where adjectives are not really needed, Miss Martin and Miss Somerville can dispense with them altogether and yet attain a deadly precision, as when they describe an Irish beggar as "a bundle of rags with a cough in it," or note a characteristic trait of Roddy Lambert by observing that "he was a man in whom jealousy took the form of reviling the object of his affections, if by so doing he could detach his rivals"—a modern instance of "displiceas aliis, sic ego tutus ero." When Roddy Lambert went away after his first wife's funeral we learn that he "honeymooned with his grief in the approved fashion." These felicities abound on every page; while the turn of phrase of the peasant speech is caught with a fidelity which no other Irish writer has ever surpassed. When Judy Lee, a poor old woman who had taken an unconscionable time in dying was called by one of the gossips who had attended her wake "as nice a woman as ever threw a tub of clothes on the hills," and complimented for having "battled it out well," Norry the Boat replied sardonically:—

> "Faith, thin, an' if she did die itself she was in the want of it; sure, there isn't a winther since her daughther wint to America that she wasn't anointed a couple of times. I'm thinking the people th' other side o' death will be throuncin' her for keepin' them waitin' on her this way."

Humour is never more effective than when it emerges from a serious situation. Tragedy

jostles comedy in life, and the greatest dramatists and romancers have made wonderful use of this abrupt alternation. There are many painful and diverting scenes in “The Real Charlotte,” but none in which both elements are blended so effectively as the story of Julia Duffy’s last pilgrimage. Threatened with eviction from her farm by the covetous intrigues of Charlotte, she leaves her sick bed to appeal to her landlord, and when half dead with fatigue falls in with the insane Sir Benjamin, to be driven away with grotesque insults. On her way home she calls in at Charlotte’s house, only to find Christopher Dysart reading Rossetti’s poems to Francie FitzPatrick, who has just timidly observed, in reply to her instructor’s remark that the hero is a pilgrim, “I know a lovely song called ‘The Pilgrim of Love’; of course, it wasn’t the same thing as what you were reading, but it was awfully nice, too.” This interlude is intensely ludicrous, but its cruel incongruity only heightens the misery of what has gone before and what follows.

“The Silver Fox,” which appeared in 1897, need not detain us long, though it is a little masterpiece in its way, vividly contrasting the limitations of the sport-loving temperament with the ineradicable superstitions of the Irish peasantry. Impartial as ever, the authors have here achieved a felicity of phrase to which no other writers of hunting novels have ever approached. Imagination’s widest stretch cannot picture Surtees or Mr. Nat Gould describing an answer being given “with that level politeness of voice which is the distilled essence of a perfected anger,” or comparing a fashionable Amazon with the landscape in such words as these:—

> “Behind her the empty window framed a gaunt mountain peak, a lake that frittered a myriad of sparkles from its wealth of restless silver, and the gray and faint purple of the naked wood beyond it. It seemed too great a background for her powdered cheek and her upward glances at her host.”

But the atmosphere of “The Silver Fox” is sombre, and a sporting novel which is at once serious and of a fine literary quality must necessarily appeal to a limited audience. The problem is solved to perfection in “Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.,” a series of loosely-knit episodes which, after running a serial course in the “Badminton Magazine,” were republished in book form towards the close of 1899. There is only one chapter to cloud the otherwise unintermittent hilarity of the whole recital. The authors have dispensed with comment, and rely chiefly on dialogue, incident, and their intimate and precise knowledge of horses, and horse-copers of both sexes. An interested devotion to the noble animal is here shown to be the last infirmity of noble minds, for old Mrs. Knox, with the culture of a *grande dame* and the appearance of a refined scarecrow, went cub-hunting in a bath chair. In such a company a young sailor whose enthusiasm for the chase had been nourished by the hirelings of Malta, and his eye for points probably formed on circus posters, had little chance of making a good bargain at Drumcurran horse fair:—

> “‘The fellow’s asking forty-five pounds for her,’ said Bernard Shute to Miss Sally; ‘she’s a nailer to gallop. I don’t think it’s too much.’—‘Her grandsire was the Mountain Hare,’ said the owner of the mare, hurrying up to continue her family history, ‘and he was the grandest horse in the four baronies. He was forty-two years of age when he died, and they waked him the same as ye’d wake a Christian. They had whisky and porther—and bread—and a piper in it.’—‘Thim Mountain Hare colts is no great things,’ interrupted Mr. Shute’s groom, contemptuously. ‘I seen a colt once that was one of his stock, and if there was forty men and their wives, and they after him with sticks, he wouldn’t lep a sod of turf.’—‘Lep, is it!’ ejaculated the owner in a voice shrill with outrage. ‘You may lead that mare out through the counthry, and there isn’t a fence in it that she wouldn’t go up to it as indepindent as if she was going to her bed, and your honour’s ladyship knows that dam well, Miss Knox.’—‘You want too much money for her, McCarthy,’ returned Miss Sally, with her air of preternatural wisdom. ‘God pardon you, Miss Knox! Sure a lady like you knows well that forty-five pounds is no money for that mare. Forty-five pounds!’ He laughed. ‘It’d be as good for me to make her a present to the gentleman all out as take three farthings less for her! She’s too grand entirely for a poor farmer like me, and if it wasn’t for the long, weak family I have, I wouldn’t part with her under twice the money.’—‘Three fine lumps of daughters in America paying his rent for him,’ commented Flurry in the background. ‘That’s the long, weak family.’”

The turn of phrase in Irish conversation has never been reproduced in print with greater fidelity, and there is hardly a page in the book without some characteristic Hibernianism such as “Whisky as pliable as new milk,” or the description of a horse who was a “nice, flippant jumper,” or a bandmaster who was “a thrifle fulsome after his luncheon,” or a sweep who “raised tallywack and tandem all night round the house to get at the chimbleys.” The narrative reaches its climax in the chapter which relates the exciting incidents of Lisheen races at second-hand. Major Yeates and his egregious English visitor Mr. Leigh Kelway, an earnest Radical publicist, having failed to reach the scene, are sheltering from

the rain in a wayside public-house where they are regaled with an account of the races by Slipper, the dissipated but engaging huntsman of the local pack of hounds. The close of the meeting was a steeplechase in which "Bocock's owld mare," ridden by one Driscoll, was matched against a horse ridden by another local sportsman named Clancy, and Slipper, who favoured Driscoll, and had taken up his position at a convenient spot on the course, thus describes his mode of encouraging the mare:

> "'Skelp her, ye big brute!' says I. 'What good's in ye that ye aren't able to skelp her?'... Well, Mr. Flurry, and gintlemen,... I declare to ye when owld Bocock's mare heard thim roars she stretched out her neck like a gandher, and when she passed me out she give a couple of grunts and looked at me as ugly as a Christian. 'Hah!' says I, givin' her a couple o' dhraws o' th' ash plant across the butt o' the tail, the way I wouldn't blind her, 'I'll make ye grunt!' says I, 'I'll nourish ye!' I knew well she was very frightful of th' ash plant since the winter Tommeen Sullivan had her under a sidecar. But now, in place of havin' any obligations to me, ye'd be surprised if ye heard the blaspheemious expressions of that young boy that was riding her; and whether it was over-anxious he was, turning around the way I'd hear him cursin', or whether it was some slither or slide came to owld Bocock's mare, I dunno, but she was bet up against the last obstackle but two, and before you could say 'Shnipes,' she was standin' on her two ears beyant in th' other field. I declare to ye, on the vartue of me oath, she stood that way till she reconnoithered what side Driscoll would fall, an' she turned about then and rolled on him as cosy as if he was meadow grass!' Slipper stopped short; the people in the doorway groaned appreciatively; Mary Kate murmured 'The Lord save us'—'The blood was druv out through his nose and ears,' continued Slipper, with a voice that indicated the cream of the narration, 'and you'd hear his bones crackin' on the ground! You'd have pitied the poor boy.'—'Good heavens!' said Leigh Kelway, sitting up very straight in his chair. 'Was he hurt, Slipper?' asked Flurry, casually. 'Hurt is it?' echoed Slipper, in high scorn, 'killed on the spot!' He paused to relish the effect of the *denouement* on Leigh Kelway. 'Oh, divil so pleasant an afthernoon ever you seen; and, indeed, Mr. Flurry, it's what we were all sayin', it was a great pity your honour was not there for the likin' you had for Driscoll.'"

Leigh Kelway, it may be noted, is the lineal descendant of the pragmatic English under-secretary in "Charles O'Malley," who, having observed that he had never seen an Irish wake, was horrified by the prompt offer of his Galway host, a notorious practical joker, to provide a corpse on the spot. But this is only one of the instances of parallelism in which the later writers though showing far greater restraint and fidelity to type, have illustrated the continuance of temperamental qualities which Lever and his forerunner Maxwell—the author of "Wild Sports of the West"—portrayed in a more extravagant form. On the other hand it would be impossible to imagine a greater contrast than that between Lever's thrasonical narrator heroes and Major Yeates, R.M., whose fondness for sport is allied to a thorough consciousness of his own infirmities as a sportsman. There is no heroic figure in "Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.," but the characters are all lifelike, and at least half-a-dozen—"Flurry" Knox, his cousin Sally, and his old grandmother, Mrs. Knox, of Aussolas, Slipper, Mrs. Cadogan, and the incomparable Maria—form as integral a part of our circle of acquaintance as if we had known them in real life. "The Real Charlotte" is a greater achievement, but the R.M. is a surer passport to immortality.

The further instalment of "Experiences," published a few years later did not escape the common lot of sequels. They were brilliantly written, but one was more conscious of the excellence of the manner than in any of their other works. The two volumes of short stories and sketches published in 1903 and 1906 under the titles of "All on the Irish Shore" and some "Irish Yesterdays" respectively show some new and engaging aspects of the genius of the collaborators. There is a chapter called "Children of the Captivity," in which the would-be English humorist's conception of Irish humour is dealt with faithfully—as it deserves to be. The essay is also remarkable for the passage in which they set down once and for all the true canons for the treatment of dialect. Pronunciation and spelling, as they point out, are, after all, of small account in its presentment:—

> "The vitalising power is in the rhythm of the sentence, the turn of phrase, the knowledge of idiom, and of, beyond all, the attitude of mind.... The shortcoming is, of course, trivial to those who do not suffer because of it, but want of perception of word and phrase and turn of thought means more than mere artistic failure, it means want of knowledge of the wayward and shrewd and sensitive minds that are at the back of the dialect. The very wind that blows softly over brown acres of bog carries perfumes and sounds that England does not know; the women digging the potato-land are talking of things that England does not understand. The question that remains is whether England will ever understand."

The hunting sketches in these volumes include the wonderful "Patrick Day's Hunt," which is a masterpiece in the high *bravura* of the brogue. Another is noticeable for a passage on

the affection inspired by horses. When Johnny Connolly heard that his mistress was driven to sell the filly he had trained and nursed so carefully, he did not disguise his disappointment:

> "'Well, indeed, that's too bad, miss,' said Johnny comprehendingly. 'There was a mare I had one time, and I sold her before I went to America. God knows, afther she went from me, whenever I'd look at her winkers hanging on the wall I'd have to cry. I never seen a sight of her till three years afther that, afther I coming home. I was coming out o' the fair at Enniscar, an' I was talking to a man an' we coming down Dangan Hill, and what was in it but herself coming up in a cart! An' I didn't look at her, good nor bad, nor know her, but sorra bit but she knew me talking, an' she turned into me with the cart. 'Ho, ho, ho!' says she, and she stuck her nose into me like she'd be kissing me. Be dam, but I had to cry. An' the world wouldn't stir her out o' that till I'd lead her on meself. As for cow nor dog nor any other thing, there's nothing would rise your heart like a horse!'"

And if horses are irresistible, so are Centaurs. That is the moral to be drawn from "Dan Russel the Fox," the latest work from the pen of Miss Somerville and Miss Martin, in which the rival claims of culture and foxhunting are subjected to a masterly analysis.

The joint authors of the "R.M." have paid forfeit for achieving popularity by being expected to repeat their first resounding success. Happily the pressure of popular demand has not impaired the artistic excellence of their work, though we cannot help thinking that if they had been left to themselves they might have given us at least one other novel on the lines of "The Real Charlotte." Their later work, again, has been subjected to the ordeal, we do not say of conscious imitation, but of comparison with books which would probably have never been written or would have been written on another plan, but for the success of the "R.M." To regard this rivalry as serious would be, in the opinion of the present writer, an abnegation of the critical faculty. But we have not yet done with Irish women humorists. Miss Eleanor Alexander, the daughter of the Poet Archbishop of Armagh and his poet wife has given us in her "Lady Anne's Walk," a volume of a *genre* as hard to define as it has been easy to welcome, at times delicately allusive, now daringly funny—an interblending of tender reminiscences and lively fancy, reminding us perhaps most of old Irish music itself with its sweet, strange and sudden changes of mood. Humorous contrasts of the kind will be found in the chapter entitled "Old Tummus and the Battle of Scarva," printed in these pages.

Another woman contestant for humorous literary honours was the late Miss Charlotte O'Conor Eccles, represented in this volume by the moving story of "King William." Her "Rejuvenation of Miss Semaphore" and "A Matrimonial Lottery" achieved popularity by their droll situations and exuberant fun, but her "Aliens of the West" contained work of much finer quality. She lets us behind the shutters of Irish country shop life in a most convincing manner, and the characters drawn from her Toomevara are as true to type as those of Miss Barlow. The disillusionment of Molly Devine "The Voteen," with her commonplace, not to say vulgar surroundings, on her return from the convent school with its superior refinements, her refusal to marry so-called eligible, but to her, repulsive suitors, encouraged by her mother and stepfather and her final resolve to become a nun in order to escape further persecution of the kind, is told with convincing poignancy. A variant of this theme is treated with even more power and pathos in "Tom Connolly's Daughter," a story which we should like to see reprinted in separate form as it sets one thinking furiously, and its general circulation might do much to correct the love and marriage relations between young people in provincial Ireland.

And yet a final name has to be added to the long roll of Irishwomen who have won distinction as writers of fiction, beginning with Miss Edgeworth whose Irish writings will receive separate treatment in a volume in "Every Irishman's Library" at the hands of Mr. Malcolm Cotter Seton. Championed by Canon Hannay himself, who furnishes a genial, whimsical, provocative introduction to her "The Folk of Furry Farm," Miss Purdon there describes what, from the point of view of romance, is a new part of Ireland, for West Leinster is a land more familiar to fox-hunters than to poets. Miss Purdon has plenty of independence, but it is not the frigid impartiality of the student who contemplates the vagaries and sufferings of human nature like a connoisseur or collector. She shows her detachment by giving us a faithful picture of Irish peasant society without ever once breathing a syllable of politics, or remotely alluding to the equipment and machinery of modern life. The *dramatis personæ* are all simple folk, most of them poor; the entire action passes within a radius of a few miles from a country village; and only on one occasion, and at second hand do we catch so much as a glimpse of "the quality." Throughout, Miss Purdon relies on the turn of the phrase to give the spirit of the dialect, and uses only a minimum of phonetic spelling.

That is the true and artistic method. But Miss Purdon is much more than a collector or

coiner of picturesque and humorous phrases. She has a keen eye for character, a genuine gift of description and a vein of pure and unaffected sentiment; indeed, her whole volume is strangely compounded of mirth and melancholy, though the dominant impression left by its perusal is one of confidence in the essential kindliness of Irish nature, and the goodness and gentleness of Irish women.

But so far, the only formidable competitor Miss Martin and Miss Somerville have encountered is the genial writer who chooses to veil his identity under the freakish pseudonym of “George A. Birmingham.” Canon Hannay—for there can be no longer any breach of literary etiquette in alluding to him by his real name—had already made his mark as a serious or semi-serious observer of the conflicting tendencies, social and political, of the Ireland of to-day before he diverged into the paths of fantastic and frivolous comedy. “The Seething Pot,” “Hyacinth,” and “Benedict Kavanagh” are extremely suggestive and dispassionate studies of various aspects of the Irish temperament, but it is enough for our present purpose to note the consequences of a request addressed to Canon Hannay by two young ladies somewhere about the year 1907 that he would “write a story about treasure buried on an island.” The fact is recorded in the dedication of “Spanish Gold,” his response to the appeal, and the first of that series of jocund extravaganzas which have earned for him the gratitude of all who regard amusement as the prime object of fiction.

The contrast between his methods and those of the joint authors discussed above is apparent at every turn. He maintains the impartiality which marked his serious novels in his treatment of all classes of the community, but it is the impartiality not of a detached and self-effacing observer, but of a genial satirist. His knowledge of the Ireland that he knows is intimate and precise, and is shown by a multiplicity of illuminating details and an effective use of local colour. But the co-operation of non-Irish characters is far more essential to the development of his plots than in the case of the novels of Miss Somerville and Miss Martin. The mainspring of their stories is Irish right through. Canon Hannay depends on a situation which might have occurred just as well in England or America, while employing the conditions of Irish life to give it a characteristic twist or series of twists. Even his most notable creation, the Reverend Joseph John Meldon, is too restlessly energetic to be an altogether typical Irishman, to say nothing of his unusual attitude in politics: “Nothing on earth would induce me to mix myself up with any party.” An Irishman of immense mental activity, living in Ireland, and yet wholly unpolitical is something of a freak. Again, while the tone of his books is admirably clean and wholesome, and while his frankly avowed distaste for the squalors of the problem novel will meet with general sympathy, there is no denying that his treatment of the “love interest” is for the most part perfunctory or even farcical. Again, in regard to style, he differs widely from the authors of the “R.M.” Their note is a vivid conciseness; his the easy charm of a flowing pen, always unaffected, often picturesque and even eloquent, never offending, but seldom practising the art of omission.

But it is ungrateful to subject to necessarily damaging comparisons an author to whom we owe the swift passage of so many pleasant hours. It might be hard to find the exact counterpart of “J.J.” in the flesh, but he is none the less an unforgettable person, this athletic, exuberant, unkempt curate, unscrupulous but not unprincipled, who lied fluently, not for any mean purpose, but for the joy of mystification, or in order to carry out his plans, or justify his arguments. His strange friendship with Major Kent, a retired English officer, a natty martinet, presents no difficulties on the principle of extremes meeting, and thus from the start we are presented with the spectacle of the reluctant but helpless Major, hypnotised by the persuasive tongue of the curate, and dragged at his heels into all sorts of grotesque and humiliating adventures, and all for the sake of a quiet life. For “J.J.’s” methods, based, according to his own account, on careful observation and a proper use of the scientific imagination, involve the assumption by his reluctant confederate of a succession of entirely imaginary roles.

But if “J.J.” was a trying ally, he was a still more perplexing antagonist, one of his favourite methods of “scoring off” an opponent being to represent him to be something other than he really was to third persons. When the process brings the curate and the Major into abrupt conflict with two disreputable adventurers, he defends resort to extreme methods on grounds of high morality. Burglary, theft and abduction become the simple duty of every well-disposed person when viewed as a necessary means of preventing selfish, depraved and fundamentally immoral people from acquiring wealth which the well-disposed might otherwise secure.

“J.J.’s” crowning achievement is his conquest of Mr. Willoughby, the Chief Secretary, by a masterly vindication of his conduct on the lines of Pragmatism: “a statement isn’t a lie if it proves itself in actual practice to be useful—it’s true.” “J.J.” only once meets his match—in

Father Mulcrone, the parish priest of Inishmore, who sums up the philosophy of government in his criticism of Mr. Willoughby's successor: "A fellow that starts off by thinking himself clever enough to know what's true and what isn't will do no good for Ireland. A simple-hearted innocent kind of man has a better chance."

Needless to say, the rival treasure-hunters, both of them rogues, are bested at all points by the two padres, while poetic justice is satisfied by the fact that the treasure falls into the adhesive hands of the poor islanders, and "J.J.'s" general integrity is fully re-established in the epilogue, where, transplanted to an English colliery village, he devotes his energies to the conversion of agnostics, blasphemers and wife-beaters.

The extravagance of the plot is redeemed by the realism of the details; by acute sidelights on the tortuous workings of the native mind, with its strange blending of shrewdness and innocence; by faithful reproductions of the talk of those "qui amant omnia dubitantius loqui" and habitually say "it might" instead of "yes." And there are delightful digressions on the subject of relief works, hits at the Irish-speaking movement, pungent classifications of the visitors to the wild West of Ireland, and now, and again, in the rare moments when the author chooses to be serious, passages marked by fine insight and sympathy. Such is the picture of Thomas O'Flaherty Pat, the patriarch of the treasure island:

> "An elderly man and five out of the nine children resident on the island stood on the end of the pier when Meldon and the Major landed. The man was clad in a very dirty white flannel jacket and a pair of yellowish flannel trousers, which hung in a tattered fringe round his naked feet and ankles. He had a long white beard and grey hair, long as a woman's, drawn straight back from his forehead. The hair and beard were both unkempt and matted. But the man held himself erect and looked straight at the strangers through great dark eyes. His hands, though battered and scarred with toil were long and shapely. His face had a look of dignity, of a certain calm and satisfied superiority. Men of this kind are to be met with here and there among the Connacht peasantry. They are in reality children of a vanishing race, of a lost civilisation, a bygone culture. They watch the encroachments of another race and new ideas with a sort of sorrowful contempt. It is as if understanding and despising what they see around them, they do not consider it worth while to try to explain themselves; as if, possessing a wisdom of their own, an æsthetic joy of which the modern world knows nothing, they are content to let both die with them rather than attempt to teach them to men of a wholly different outlook upon life."

The element of extravaganza is more strongly marked in the plot of "The Search Party," which deals with the kidnapping of a number of innocent people by an anti-militant anarchist who has set up a factory of explosives in the neighbourhood of Ballymoy. "J.J." does not appear *in propriâ personâ*, but most of his traits are to be found in Dr. O'Grady, an intelligent but happy-go-lucky young doctor. The most attractive person in the story, however, is Lord Manton, a genially cynical peer with highly original views on local government and the advantages of unpopularity. Thus, when he did not want Patsy Devlin, the drunken smith, to be elected inspector of sheep-dipping, he strongly supported his candidature for the following reasons:—

> "There's a lot of stupid talk nowadays about the landlords having lost all their power in the country. It's not a bit true. They have plenty of power, more than they ever had, if they only knew how to use it. All I have to do if I want a particular man not to be appointed to anything is to write a strong letter in his favour to the Board of Guardians or the County Council, or whatever body is doing the particular job that happens to be on hand at the time. The League comes down on my man at once, and he hasn't the ghost of a chance."

Excellent, too, is the digression on the comparative commonness of earls in Ireland, where untitled people tend to disappear while earls survive, though they are regarded much as ordinary people. Canon Hannay makes great play as usual with the humours of Irish officialdom, and his *obiter dicta* on the mental outlook of police officers are shrewd as well as entertaining. District-Inspector Goddard had undoubted social gifts, but he was an inefficient officer, being handicapped by indolence and a great sense of humour. There is something attractive, again, about Miss Blow, the handsome, resolute, prosaic young Englishwoman whose heroic efforts to trace her vanished lover are baffled at every turn. Everybody in Ballymoy told her lies, with the result that they seemed to her heartless and cruel when in reality they wished to spare her feelings. Others of the *dramatis personæ* verge on caricature, but the story has many exhilarating moments.

Exhilarating, too, is "The Major's Niece," which is founded on an extremely improbable *imbroglio*. So precise and business-like a man as Major Kent was not likely to make a mistake of seven or eight years in the age of a visitor especially when the visitor happened

to be his own sister's child. However, the initial improbability may be readily condoned in view of the entertaining sequel. "J.J." reappears in his best form, Marjorie is a most engaging tomboy, and the fun never flags for an instant. But much as we love "J.J.," we reluctantly recognise in "The Simpkins Plot" that you can have too much of a good thing, and that a man who would be a nuisance as a neighbour in real life is in danger of becoming a bore in a novel. At the same time the digressions and irrelevancies are as good as ever. It is pleasant to be reminded of such facts as that wedding cake is invariably eaten by the Irish post office officials, or to listen to Doctor O'Donoghue on the nutrition of infants:

> "You can rear a child, whether it has the whooping cough or not, on pretty near anything, so long as you give it enough of whatever it is you do give it."

Canon Hannay excels in the conduct of an absurd or paradoxical proposition, but he needs a word of friendly caution against undue reliance on the mechanism of the practical joke. Perhaps his English cure has demoralized "J.J.," but we certainly prefer him as he was in Inishgowlan, convinced by practical experience that he would rather do any mortal thing than try to mind a baby and make butter at the same time.

Of Canon Hannay's later novels, two demand special attention and for widely different reasons. In "The Red Hand of Ulster," reverting to politics—politics, moreover, of the most explosive kind—he achieved the well-nigh impossible in at once doing full justice to the dour sincerity of the Orange North, and yet conciliating Nationalist susceptibilities. In "The Inviolable Sanctuary," he has shown that a first-rate public-school athlete, whose skill in pastime is confined to ball games cuts a sorry figure alongside of a chit of a girl who can handle a boat. This salutary if humiliating truth is enforced not from any desire to further Feminist principles—Canon Hannay's attitude towards women betrays no belief in the equality of the sexes—but because he cannot be bothered with the sentimentality of conventional love-making. It may be on this account that he more than once assigns a leading role to an ingenuous young Amazon into whose ken the planet of love will not swim for another four or five years.

During the last thirty years the alleged decadence of Irish humour has been a frequent theme of pessimistic critics. Various causes have been invoked to account for the phenomenon, which, when dispassionately considered, amounted to this, that the rollicking novel of incident and adventure had died with Lever. So, for the matter of that, had novels of the "Frank Fairleigh" type, with their authors. The ascendancy of Parnell and the régime of the Land League did not make for gaiety, yet even these influences were powerless to eradicate the inherent absurdities of Irish life, and the authors of the "R.M." entered on a career which has been a triumphal disproval of this allegation as far back as 1889. At their best they have interpreted normal Irishmen and Irishwomen, gentle and simple, with unsurpassed fidelity and sympathy. But to award them the supremacy in this *genre* both as realists and as writers does not detract from the success won in a different sphere by Canon Hannay. His goal is less ambitious and aim is less unfaltering, but as an improvisor of whimsical situations and an ironic commentator on the actualities of Irish life he has invented a new form of literary entertainment which has the double merit of being at once diverting and instructive.

But as we believe this volume will sufficiently show, though these three novelists have so far transcended the achievements of contemporary writers on Irish life, they are being followed at no long distance by younger writers, for whom they have helped to find a public and in whose more mature achievements they may have to acknowledge a serious literary rivalry. We have dealt with the women writers to be found in this new group. It remains for us to criticise the work of the men who belong to it.

Mr. John Stevenson, otherwise Pat Carty, whose Rhymes have been so charmingly set to music by Sir Charles Stanford, and so delightfully sung by Mr. Plunket-Greene, possesses a whimsical gift, both in prose and verse, which gives fresh evidence of the awakening of an Ulster school of humorists. His "Boy in the Country" is descriptive of a child's companionship in the country with farmers and their wives and servants, his falling under the spell of a beautiful lady whose romance he assists like a true young cavalier, and his association with that formidable open-air imp, Jim, a little dare-devil poacher and hard swearer, who sailed his boats with strips cut from his shirt tails and could give a canting minister as good as he got, instead of cowering under his preachment. The manners and customs of the farming class in the "Nine Glens of Antrim" could not be more simply and humorously told, and when the author divagates into such sketches as "The Wise Woman and the Wise Man," and breaks into occasional verse faithfully descriptive of his natural surroundings, he is equally delightful.

Of course, he is not as old a craftsman as Mr. Shan Bullock, whose dry drollery has given the readers of his novels and stories so much pleasure, and whose serious purpose and close observation of Northern Irish character are so well recognised by all serious students of Irish life. He is represented in the volume by “The Wee Tea-Table,” a life-like sketch taken from his “Irish Pastorals.”

Mr. Frank Mathew, whose first literary work was his biography of his illustrious grand-uncle Father Mathew, has also written some admirable stories of Irish life, which appeared in “The Idler,” and have been collected in a volume called “At the Rising of the Moon.” “The Last Race,” by which he is represented in this volume, will give our readers a good taste of his graphic quality.

Mr. Padric Colum will speak for himself on Irish fiction in his introduction to an edition of Gerald Griffin’s “Collegians,” which is to form part of this series of Irish volumes. His finely distinctive literary style and intimate knowledge of Irish peasant life so clearly exhibited in his poems, plays and stories, is shown in these pages by that remarkable sketch of “Maelshaughlinn at the Fair,” written with the elemental abandon of Synge himself.

Finally, in absolute contrast with Mr. Colum’s idealistic work, comes the humorous realism of Lynn Doyle’s pictures of the Ulster Peasantry. But their efforts to over-reach one another, their love of poaching, and their marriage operations, afford the author of “Ballygullion” a congenial field for the display of his observation, his high spirits, and his genuine sense of the ridiculous. His comedy of “The Ballygullion Creamery Society” which fitly concludes this volume, is good, hearty, wholesome fun, and we only trust, in Ireland’s best interests, that its official stamp, a wreath of shamrocks and orange lilies—is not merely an unlikely if amiable suggestion, but is yet to have its counterpart in reality.

Preface.

The fiction of which this volume consists is in part fabulous in character, in part descriptive of actual Irish life upon its lighter side.

The Heroic stories and Folk-tales are, on chronological grounds, printed early in the book and are then followed by extracts from the writings of the Irish novelists of the first half and third quarter of the 19th Century—Maginn, Lever, Lover, and LeFanu.

Then come the writers who have made their mark in recent times, such as Miss Jane Barlow, the authors of “Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.,” and Canon Hannay, and lastly those of a new school amongst whom may be named Mr. Padraic Colum, “Lynn Doyle,” and Miss K. Purdon.

This may be said to be the general order of the contents of “Humours of Irish Life.” But where artistic propriety, suggesting contrasts of local colour and changes of subject, has called for it, a strict chronological sequence has been departed from; yet enough of it remains to enable the critic to observe what we believe to be a change for the better, both in the taste and technique of these Irish stories and sketches, as time has gone by.

It remains for us to express our cordial obligations to the following authors and publishers for the use of copyright material. To Messrs. Macmillan and Miss B. Hunt for the story of “McCarthy of Connacht,” from “Folk Tales of Breffny”; to Canon Hannay and Messrs. Methuen for chapters from “Spanish Gold” and “The Adventures of Dr. Whitty,” entitled “J. J. Meldon and the Chief Secretary,” and “The Interpreters”; to Mr. H. de Vere Stacpoole and Mr. Fisher Unwin for “The Meet of the Beagles,” from the novel of “Patsy”; to Miss O’Conor Eccles and Messrs. Cassell for “King William,” a story in the late Miss Charlotte O’Conor Eccles’s “Aliens of the West”; to Miss Eleanor Alexander and Mr. Edward Arnold for “Old Tummus and the Battle of Scarva,” from “Lady Anne’s Walk,” and to the same publisher and to Mr. John Stevenson for a chapter entitled “The Wise Woman” from “A Boy in the Country”; to Messrs. James Duffy and Sons for Kickham’s Story of “The Thrush and the Blackbird”; to Mr. William Percy French for “The First Lord Liftenant”; to Mr. Frank Mathew for “Their Last Race,” from his volume “At the rising of the Moon”; to Miss K. Purdon for a chapter entitled “The Game Leg,” from her novel “The Folk of Furry Farm,” and to its publishers, Messrs. James Nisbet and Co. Ltd.; to Dr. Douglas Hyde for his Folk-

tale of “The Piper and the Puca”; to Martin Ross and Miss E. Œ. Somerville and Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., for the use of two chapters—“Trinket’s Colt” and “The Boat’s Share”—from “Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.” and “Further Experiences of an Irish R.M.” respectively; to Mr. Shan Bullock for “The Wee Tea Table,” from his “Irish Pastorals”; to Miss Jane Barlow and Messrs. Hutchinson for “Quin’s Rick,” from “Doings and Dealings,” and for “A Test of Truth,” from “Irish Neighbours”; to Mr. Padraic Colum for his sketch “Maelshaughlinn at the Fair,” from his “A Year of Irish Life,” and to the publishers of the book, Messrs. Mills and Boon, Ltd.; to its author, “Lynn Doyle,” and its publishers, Maunsel & Co., for “The Ballygullion Creamery,” from “Ballygullion”; and to Mr. P. J. McCall and the proprietors of “The Shamrock” for the story “Fionn MacCumhail and the Princess.”

Finally, acknowledgment is due to the courtesy of the Proprietors and Editor of “The Quarterly Review” for leave to incorporate in the Introduction an article which appeared in the issue of that periodical for June, 1913.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
Daniel O’Rourke	*Dr. Maginn*	1
Adventures of Gilla na Chreck an Gour	*Patrick Kennedy*	9
The Little Weaver of Duleek Gate	*Samuel Lover*	18
Fionn MacCumhail and the Princess	*Patrick J. McCall*	30
The Kildare Pooka	*Patrick Kennedy*	38
The Piper and the Puca	*Douglas Hyde*	42
McCarthy of Connacht	*B. Hunt*	46
The Mad Pudding of Ballyboulteen	*William Carleton*	58
Frank Webber’s Wager	*Charles Lever*	72
Sam Wham and the Sawmont	*Sir Samuel Ferguson*	82
Darby Doyle’s Voyage to Quebec	*Thomas Ettingsall*	84
Bob Burke’s Duel	*Dr. Maginn*	92
Billy Maloney’s Taste of Love and Glory	*Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu*	105
A Pleasant Journey	*Charles Lever*	123
The Battle of Aughrim	*William Carleton*	131
The Quare Gander	*Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu*	139
The Thrush and the Blackbird	*Charles J. Kickham*	148
Their Last Race	*Frank Mathew*	154
The First Lord Liftinant	*William Percy French*	159
The Boat’s Share	*E. Œ. Somerville and Martin Ross*	167
“King William”	*Charlotte O’Conor Eccles*	179
Quin’s Rick	*Jane Barlow*	200
Maelshaughlinn at the Fair	*Padraic Colum*	213
The Rev. J. J. Meldon and the Chief Secretary	*George A. Birmingham*	220
Old Tummus and the Battle of Scarva	*Eleanor Alexander*	235
The Game Leg	*K. F. Purdon*	244
Trinket’s Colt	*E. Œ. Somerville and Martin Ross*	258
The Wee Tea Table	*Shan Bullock*	276
The Interpreters	*George A. Birmingham*	290
A Test of Truth	*Jane Barlow*	307
The Wise Woman	*John Stevenson*	314
The Meet of the Beagles	*H. de Vere Stacpoole*	324
The Ballygullion Creamery Society, Limited	*Lynn Doyle*	336

AUTHORS REPRESENTED

PAGE
Alexander, Eleanor 235
Barlow, Jane 200, 307
Birmingham, George A. 220, 290
Bullock, Shan 276
Carleton, William 58, 131
Colum, Padraic 213
Doyle, Lynn 336
Eccles, Charlotte O'Conor 179
Ettingsall, Thomas 84
Ferguson, Sir Samuel 82
French, William Percy 159
Hunt, B. 46
Hyde, Douglas 42
Kennedy, Patrick 9, 38
Kickham, Charles Joseph 148
Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan 105, 139
Lever, Charles 72, 123
Lover, Samuel 18
Maginn, Dr. 1, 92
Mathew, Frank 154
McCall, Patrick J. 30
Purdon, K. F. 244
Somerville, E. Œ. and Ross, Martin 167, 258
Stacpoole, H. de Vere 324
Stevenson, John 314

1

HUMOURS OF IRISH LIFE

Daniel O'Rourke.

From Crofton Croker's "Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland."

By Dr. Maginn (1793-1842).

People may have heard of the renowned adventures of Daniel O'Rourke, but how few are there who know that the cause of all his perils, above and below, was neither more nor less than his having slept under the walls of the Phooka's tower. I knew the man well: he lived at the bottom of Hungry Hill. He told me his story thus:—

"I am often axed to tell it, sir, so that this is not the first time. The master's son, you see, had come from beyond foreign parts; and sure enough there was a dinner given to all the people on the ground, gentle and simple, high and low, rich and poor. Well, we had everything of the best, and plenty of it; and we ate, and we drunk, and we danced. To make a long story short, I got, as a body may say, the same thing as tipsy almost. And so, as I was crossing the stepping-stones of the ford of Ballyasheenogh, I missed my foot, and souse I fell into the water. 'Death alive!' thought I, 'I'll be drowned now!' However, I began swimming, swimming, swimming away for dear life, till at last I got ashore, somehow or other, but never the one of me can tell how, upon a dissolute island.

"I wandered, and wandered about there, without knowing where I wandered, until at last I got into a big bog. The moon was shining as bright as day, or your lady's eyes, sir (with your pardon for mentioning her), and I looked east and west, and north and south, and every way, and nothing did I see but bog, bog, bog. I began to scratch me head, and sing the Ullagone—when all of a sudden the moon grew black, and I looked up, and saw something for all the world as if it was moving down between me and it, and I could not tell what it was. Down it came with a pounce, and looked at me full in the face; and what was it but an eagle? So he

2

looked at me in the face, and says he to me, ‘Daniel O’Rourke,’ says he, ‘how do you do?’ ‘Very well, I thank you sir,’ says I; ‘I hope you’re well’; wondering out of my senses all the time how an eagle came to speak like a Christian. ‘What brings you here, Dan?’ says he. ‘Nothing at all, sir,’ says I: ‘only I wish I was safe home again.’ ‘Is it out of the island you want to go, Dan?’ says he. ‘’Tis, sir,’ says I. ‘Dan,’ says he, ‘though it is very improper for you to get drunk on Lady-day, yet, as you are a decent, sober man, who ‘tends Mass well, and never flings stones at me or mine, nor cries out after us in the fields—my life for yours,’ says he, ‘so get on my back and grip me well for fear you’d fall off, and I’ll fly you out of the bog.’ ‘I am afraid,’ says I, ‘your honour’s making game of me; for who ever heard of riding horseback on an eagle before?’ ‘’Pon the honour of a gentleman,’ says he, putting his right foot on his breast, ‘I am quite in earnest: and so now either take my offer or starve in the bog—besides, I see that your weight is sinking the stone.’

“It was true enough, as he said, for I found the stone every minute going from under me. ‘I 3
thank your honour,’ says I, ‘for the loan of your civility; and I’ll take your kind offer.’ I therefore mounted upon the back of the eagle, and held him tight enough by the throat, and up he flew in the air like a lark. Little I knew the trick he was going to serve me. Up—up—up, dear knows how far he flew. ‘Why, then,’ said I to him—thinking he did not know the right road home—very civilly, because why? I was in his power entirely: ‘sir,’ says I, ‘please your honour’s glory, and with humble submission to your better judgment, if you’d fly down a bit, you’re now just over my cabin, and I could be put down there, and many thanks to your worship.’

“‘Arrah, Dan,’ said he, ‘do you think me a fool? Look down in the next field, and don’t you see two men and a gun? By my word it would be no joke to be shot this way, to oblige a drunken blackguard that I picked off a cowld stone in a bog.’ Well, sir, up he kept, flying, flying, and I asking him every minute to fly down, and all to no use. ‘Where in the world are you going, sir?’ says I to him. ‘Hold your tongue, Dan,’ says he: ‘mind your own business, and don’t be interfering with the business of other people.’

“At last where should we come to, but to the moon itself. Now, you can’t see it from this, but there is, or there was in my time, a reaping-hook sticking out of the side of the moon, this way’ (drawing the figure thus on the ground with the end of his stick).

“‘Dan,’ said the eagle, ‘I’m tired with this long fly; I had no notion ’twas so far.’ ‘And, my
lord, sir,’ said I, ‘who in the world axed you to fly so far—was it I? did not I beg, and pray, 4
and beseech you to stop half-an-hour ago?’ ‘There’s no use talking, Dan,’ says he; ‘I’m tired bad enough, so you must get off, and sit down on the moon until I rest myself.’ ‘Is it sit down on the moon?’ said I; ‘is it upon that little round thing, then? why, sure, I’d fall off in a minute, and be kilt and split, and smashed all to bits; you are a vile deceiver, so you are.’ ‘Not at all, Dan,’ said he; ‘you can catch fast hold of the reaping hook that’s sticking out of the side of the moon, and ‘twill keep you up.’ ‘I won’t, then,’ said I. ‘May be not,’ said he, quite quiet. ‘But if you don’t, my man, I shall just give you a shake, and one slap of my wing, and send you down to the ground, where every bone in your body will be smashed as small as a drop of dew on a cabbage-leaf in the morning.’ ‘Why, then, I’m in a fine way,’ said I to myself, ‘ever to have come along with the likes of you’; and so, giving him a hearty curse in Irish, for fear he’d know what I said, I got off his back, with a heavy heart, took hold of the reaping-hook, and sat down upon the moon, and a mighty cold seat it was, I can tell you that.

“When he had me fairly landed, he turned about on me, and said, ‘Good morning to you, Daniel O’Rourke,’ said he; ‘I think I’ve nicked you fairly now. You robbed me nest last year’ (’twas true enough for him, but how he found it out is hard to say), ‘and in return you are freely welcome to cool your heels dangling upon the moon like a cockthrow.’

“‘Is that all, and is this the way you leave me, you brute, you?’ says I. ‘You ugly, unnatural baste, and is this the way you serve me at last?’ ’Twas all to no manner of use; he spread out
his great, big wings, burst out laughing, and flew away like lightning. I bawled after him to 5
stop; but I might have called and bawled for ever, without his minding me. Away he went, and I never saw him from that day to this—sorrow fly away with him! You may be sure I was in a disconsolate condition, and kept roaring out for the bare grief, when all at once a door opened right in the middle of the moon, creaking on its hinges as if it had not been opened for a month before—I suppose they never thought of greasing ‘em, and out there walks—who do you think, but the man in the moon himself? I knew him by his bush.

“‘Good morrow to you, Daniel O’Rourke,’ says he; ‘how do you do?’ ‘Very well, thank your honour,’ said I. ‘I hope your honour’s well.’ ‘What brought you here, Dan?’ said he. So I told him how it was.

"'Dan,' said the man in the moon, taking a pinch of snuff, when I was done, 'you must not stay here.'

"'Indeed, sir,' says I, ''tis much against my will I'm here at all; but how am I to go back?' 'That's your business,' said he; 'Dan, mine is to tell you that you must not stay, so be off in less than no time.' 'I'm doing no harm,' says I, 'only holding on hard by the reaping-hook, lest I fall off.' 'That's what you must not do, Dan,' says he. 'Pray, sir,' says I, 'may I ask how many you are in family, that you would not give a poor traveller lodging; I'm sure 'tis not so often you're troubled with strangers coming to see you, for 'tis a long way.' 'I'm by myself, Dan,' says he; 'but you'd better let go the reaping hook.' 'And with your leave,' says I, 'I'll not let go the grip, and the more you bids me, the more I won't let go;—so I will.' 'You had better, Dan,' says he again. 'Why, then, my little fellow,' says I, taking the whole weight of 6
him with my eye from head to foot, 'there are two words to that bargain; and I'll not budge, but you may if you like.' 'We'll see how that is to be,' says he; and back he went, giving the door such a great bang after him (for it was plain he was huffed) that I thought the moon and all would fall down with it.

"Well, I was preparing myself to try strength with him, when back again he comes, with the kitchen cleaver in his hand, and without saying a word he gives two bangs to the handle of the reaping hook that was keeping me up, and whap! it came in two. 'Good morning to you, Dan,' says the spiteful little old blackguard, when he saw me cleanly falling down with a bit of the handle in my hand; 'I thank you for your visit, and fair weather after you, Daniel.' I had not time to make any answer to him, for I was tumbling over and over, and rolling, and rolling, at the rate of a fox-hunt. 'This is a pretty pickle,' says I, 'for a decent man to be seen at this time of night: I am now sold fairly.' The word was not out of my mouth when, whizz! what should fly by close to my ear but a flock of wild geese; all the way from my own bog of Ballyasheenogh, or else, how should they know me? The ould gander, who was their general, turning about his head, cried out to me, 'Is that you, Dan?' 'The same,' said I, not a bit daunted now at what he said, for I was by this time used to all kinds of bedevilment, and, besides, I knew him of ould. 'Good morrow to you,' says he, 'Daniel O'Rourke; how are you in health this morning?' 'Very well, sir,' says I, 'I thank you kindly,' drawing my breath, for I was mighty in want of some. 'I hope your honour's the same.' 'I think 'tis falling you are, 7
Daniel,' says he. 'You may say that, sir,' says I. 'And where are you going all the way so fast?' said the gander. So I told him how I had taken the drop, and how I came on the island, and how I lost my way in the bog, and how the thief of an eagle flew me up to the moon, and how the man in the moon turned me out. 'Dan,' said he, 'I'll save you: put out your hand and catch me by the leg, and I'll fly you home.'

"'Sweet is your hand in a pitcher of honey, my jewel,' says I, though all the time I thought within myself that I don't much trust you; but there was no help, so I caught the gander by the leg, and away I and the other geese flew after him as fast as hops.

"We flew, and we flew, and we flew, until we came right over the wide ocean. I knew it well, for I saw Cape Clear to my right hand, sticking up out of the water. 'Ah! my lord,' said I to the goose, for I thought it best to keep a civil tongue in my head, any way, 'fly to land if you please.' 'It is impossible, you see, Dan,' said he, 'for a while, because, you see, we are going to Arabia.' 'To Arabia!' said I; 'that's surely some place in foreign parts, far away. Oh! Mr. Goose: why, then, to be sure, I'm a man to be pitied among you.' 'Whist, whist, you fool,' said he, 'hold your tongue; I tell you Arabia is a very decent sort of place, as like West Carbery as one egg is like another, only there is a little more sand there.'

"Just as we were talking, a ship hove in sight, scudding so beautiful before the wind; 'Ah! then, sir,' said I, 'will you drop me on the ship if you please?' 'We are not fair over her,' said he. 'We are,' said I. 'We are not,' said he; 'If I dropped you now you would go splash into the sea.' 'I would not,' says I; 'I know better than that, for it is just clean under us, so let me 8
drop now, at once.' 'If you must, you must,' said he; 'there, take your own way,' and he opened his claw, and, 'deed, he was right—sure enough, I came down plump into the very bottom of the salt sea! Down to the very bottom I went, and I gave myself up then for ever, when a whale walked up to me, scratching himself after his night's sleep, and looked me full in the face, and never the word did he say, but, lifting up his tail, he splashed me all over again with the cold, salt water till there wasn't a dry stitch on my whole carcase; and I heard somebody saying—'twas a voice I knew, too—'Get up, you drunken brute, off o' that'; and with that I woke up, and there was Judy with a tub full of water which she was splashing all over me—for, rest her soul! though she was a good wife, she never could bear to see me in drink, and had a bitter hand of her own. 'Get up,' said she again: 'and of all places in the parish would no place sarve your turn to lie down upon but under the ould walls of Carrigaphooka? an uneasy resting I am sure you had of it.' And sure enough I had: for I was

fairly bothered out of my senses with eagles, and men of the moons, and flying ganders, and whales driving me through bogs, and up to the moon, and down to the bottom of the green ocean. If I was in drink ten times over, long would it be before I'd lie down in the same spot again, I know that."

9

Adventures of Gilla na Chreck an Gour.

(THE FELLOW IN THE GOAT SKIN).

From "Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts."

By Patrick Kennedy (1801-1873).

(Told in the Wexford Peasant Dialect.)

Long ago a poor widow woman lived down by the iron forge near Enniscorthy, and she was so poor, she had no clothes to put on her son; so she used to fix him in the ash-hole, near the fire, and pile the warm ashes about him; and, accordingly, as he grew up, she sunk the pit deeper. At last, by hook or by crook, she got a goat-skin and fastened it round his waist, and he felt quite grand, and took a walk down the street. So, says she to him next morning, "Tom, you thief, you never done any good yet, and you six-foot high, and past nineteen; take that rope and bring me a *bresna* from the wood." "Never say't twice, mother," says Tom; "here goes."

When he had it gathered and tied, what should come up but a big *joiant*, nine-foot high, and made a lick of a club at him. Well become Tom, he jumped a-one side and picked up a ram-pike; and the first crack he gave the big fellow he made him kiss the clod. "If you have e'er a prayer," says Tom, "now's the time to say it, before I make *brishe* of you." "I have no prayers," says the giant, "but if you spare my life I'll give you that club; and as long as you keep from sin you'll win every battle you ever fight with it."

Tom made no bones about letting him off; and as soon as he got the club in his hands he 10
sat down on the bresna and gave it a tap with the kippeen, and says, "Bresna, I had a great trouble gathering you, and run the risk of my life for you; the least you can do is to carry me home." And, sure enough, the wind of the word was all it wanted. It went off through the wood, groaning and cracking till it came to the widow's door.

Well, when the sticks were all burned Tom was sent off again to pick more; and this time he had to fight with a giant with two heads on him. Tom had a little more trouble with him—that's all; and the prayers *he* said was to give Tom a fife that nobody could help dancing to when he was playing it. *Begonies*, he made the big faggot dance home, with himself sitting on it. Well, if you were to count all the steps from this to Dublin, dickens a bit you'd ever arrive there. The next giant was a beautiful boy with three heads on him. He had neither prayers nor catechism no more nor the others; and so he gave Tom a bottle of green ointment that wouldn't let you be burned, nor scalded, nor wounded. "And now," says he, "there's no more of us. You may come and gather sticks here till little Lunacy Day in harvest without giant or fairy man to disturb you."

Well, now, Tom was prouder nor ten paycocks, and used to take a walk down the street in the heel of the evening; but some of the little boys had no more manners nor if they were Dublin jackeens, and put out their tongues at Tom's club and Tom's goat-skin. He didn't like that at all, and it would be mean to give one of them a clout. At last, what should come through the town but a kind of bellman, only it's a big bugle he had, and a huntsman's cap 11
on his head, and a kind of painted shirt. So this—he wasn't a bellman, and I don't know what to call him—bugleman, maybe—proclaimed that the King of Dublin's daughter was so melancholy that she didn't give a laugh for seven years, and that her father would grant her in marriage to whoever would make her laugh three times. "That's the very thing for me to try," says Tom; and so, without burning any more daylight, he kissed his mother, curled his club at the little boys, and set off along the yalla highroad to the town of Dublin.

At last Tom came to one of the City gates and the guards laughed and cursed at him instead of letting him through. Tom stood it all for a little time, but at last one of them—out of fun, as he said—drove his *bagnet* half an inch or so into his side. Tom did nothing but take

the fellow by the scruff of his neck and the waistband of his corduroys and fling him into the canal. Some ran to pull the fellow out, and others to let manners into the vulgarian with their swords and daggers; but a tap from his club sent them headlong into the moat or down on the stones, and they were soon begging him to stay his hands.

So at last one of them was glad enough to show Tom the way to the Palace yard; and there was the King and the Queen, and the princess in a gallery, looking at all sorts of wrestling and sword-playing, and *rinka-fadhas* (long dances) and mumming, all to please the princess; but not a smile came over her handsome face.

Well, they all stopped when they seen the young giant, with his boy's face and long, black hair, and his short, curly beard—for his poor mother couldn't afford to buy razhurs—and his 12
great, strong arms and bare legs, and no covering but the goat-skin that reached from his waist to his knees. But an envious, wizened *basthard* of a fellow, with a red head, that wished to be married to the princess, and didn't like how she opened her eyes at Tom, came forward, and asked his business very snappishly. "My business," says Tom, says he, "is to make the beautiful princess, God bless her, laugh three times." "Do you see all them merry fellows and skilful swordsmen," says the other, "that could eat you up without a grain of salt, and not a mother's soul of 'em ever got a laugh from her these seven years?" So the fellows gathered round Tom, and the bad man aggravated him till he told them he didn't care a pinch of snuff for the whole bilin' of 'em; let 'em come on, six at a time, and try what they could do. The King, that was too far off to hear what they were saying, asked what did the stranger want. "He wants," says the red-headed fellow, "to make hares of your best men." "Oh!" says the King, "if that's the way, let one of 'em turn out and try his mettle." So one stood forward, with sword and pot-lid, and made a cut at Tom. He struck the fellow's elbow with the club, and up over their heads flew the sword, and down went the owner of it on the gravel from a thump he got on the helmet. Another took his place, and another and another, and then half-a-dozen at once, and Tom sent swords, helmets, shields, and bodies rolling over and over, and themselves bawling out that they were kilt, and disabled, and damaged, and rubbing their poor elbows and hips, and limping away. Tom contrived not to kill anyone; and the princess was so amused that she let a great, sweet laugh out of her that was heard all over the yard. "King of Dublin," says Tom, "I've the quarter of your daughter." And the 13
King didn't know whether he was glad or sorry, and all the blood in the princess's heart run into her cheeks.

So there was no more fighting that day, and Tom was invited to dine with the royal family. Next day Redhead told Tom of a wolf, the size of a yearling heifer, that used to be *serenading* (sauntering) about the walls, and eating people and cattle; and said what a pleasure it would give the King to have it killed. "With all my heart," says Tom. "Send a jackeen to show me where he lives, and we'll see how he behaves to a stranger."

The princess was not well pleased, for Tom looked a different person with fine clothes and a nice green *birredh* over his long, curly hair; and besides, he'd got one laugh out of her. However, the King gave his consent, and in an hour and a half the horrible wolf was walking in the palace yard, and Tom a step or two behind, with his club on his shoulder, just as a shepherd would be walking after a pet lamb. The King and Queen and princess were safe up in their gallery, but the officers and people of the court that were *padrowling* about the great bawn, when they saw the big baste coming in gave themselves up, and began to make for doors and gates; and the wolf licked his chops, as if he was saying, "Wouldn't I enjoy a breakfast off a couple of yez!" The King shouted out, "O Gilla na Chreck an Gour, take away that terrible wolf and you must have all my daughter." But Tom didn't mind him a bit. He pulled out his flute and began to play like vengeance; and dickens a man or boy in the yard but began shovelling away heel and toe, and the wolf himself was obliged to get on his hind 14
legs and dance *Tatther Jack Walsh* along with the rest. A good deal of the people got inside and shut the doors, the way the hairy fellow wouldn't pin them; but Tom kept playing, and the outsiders kept shouting and dancing, and the wolf kept dancing and roaring with the pain his legs were giving him; and all the time he had his eyes on Redhead, who was shut out along with the rest. Wherever Redhead went the wolf followed, and kept one eye on him and the other on Tom, to see if he would give him leave to eat him. But Tom shook his head, and never stopped the tune, and Redhead never stopped dancing and bawling and the wolf dancing and roaring, one leg up and the other down, and he ready to drop out of his standing from fair tiresomeness.

When the princess seen that there was no fear of anyone being kilt, she was so divarted by the stew that Redhead was in that she gave another great laugh; and well become Tom, out he cried, "King of Dublin, I have two quarters of your daughter." "Oh, quarters or alls," says the King, "put away that divel of a wolf and we'll see about it." So Gilla put his flute in his

pocket, and, says he, to the baste that was sittin' on his currabingo ready to faint, "Walk off to your mountains, my fine fellow, and live like a respectable baste; and if ever I find you come within seven miles of any town—." He said no more, but spit in his fist, and gave a flourish of his club. It was all the poor divel wanted: he put his tail between his legs and took to his pumps without looking at man or mortial, and neither sun, moon, nor stars ever saw him in sight of Dublin again.

At dinner everyone laughed except the foxy fellow; and, sure enough, he was laying out how he'd settle poor Tom next day. "Well, to be sure!" says he, "King of Dublin, you are in 15
luck. There's the Danes moidhering us to no end. D—— run to Lusk wid 'em and if anyone can save us from 'em it is this gentleman with the goat-skin. There is a flail hangin' on the collar-beam in Hell, and neither Dane nor Devil can stand before it." "So," says Tom to the King, "will you let me have the other half of the princess if I bring you the flail?" "No, no," says the princess, "I'd rather never be your wife than see you in that danger."

But Redhead whispered and nudged Tom about how shabby it would look to reneague the adventure. So he asked him which way he was to go, and Redhead directed him through a street where a great many bad women lived, and a great many shibbeen houses were open, and away he set.

Well, he travelled and travelled till he came in sight of the walls of Hell; and, bedad, before he knocked at the gates, he rubbed himself over with the greenish ointment. When he knocked, a hundred little imps popped their heads out through the bars, and axed him what he wanted. "I want to speak to the big divel of all," says Tom; "open the gate."

It wasn't long till the gate was *thrune* open, and the Ould Boy received Tom with bows and scrapes, and axed his business. "My business isn't much," says Tom. "I only came for the loan of that flail that I see hanging on the collar-beam for the King of Dublin to give a thrashing to the Danes." "Well," says the other, "the Danes is much better customers to me; but, since you walked so far, I won't refuse. Hand that flail," says he to a young imp; and he winked the far-off eye at the same time. So, while some were barring the gates, the young 16
devil climbed up and took down the iron flail that had the handstaff and booltheen both made out of red-hot iron. The little vagabond was grinning to think how it would burn the hands off of Tom, but the dickens a burn it made on him, no more nor if it was a good oak sapling. "Thankee," says Tom; "now, would you open the gate for a body and I'll give you no more trouble." "Oh, tramp!" says Ould Nick, "is that the way? It is easier getting inside them gates than getting out again. Take that tool from him, and give him a dose of the oil of stirrup." So one fellow put out his claws to seize on the flail, but Tom gave him such a welt of it on the side of his head that he broke off one of his horns, and made him roar like a divil as he was. Well, they rushed at Tom, but he gave them, little and big, such a thrashing as they didn't forget for a while. At last says the ould thief of all, rubbing his elbows, "Let the fool out; and woe to whoever lets him in again, great or small."

So out marched Tom and away with him without minding the shouting and cursing they kept up at him from the tops of the walls. And when he got home to the big bawn of the palace, there never was such running and racing as to see himself and the flail. When he had his story told, he laid down the flail on the stone steps, and bid no one for their lives to touch it. If the King and Queen and princess made much of him before they made ten times as much of him now; but Redhead, the mean scruff-hound, stole over, and thought to catch hold of the flail to make an end of him. His fingers hardly touched it, when he let a roar out of him as if heaven and earth were coming together, and kept flinging his arms about and dancing that it was pitiful to look at him. Tom run at him as soon as he could rise, caught his 17
hands in his own two, and rubbed them this way and that, and the burning pain left them before you could reckon one. Well, the poor fellow, between the pain that was only just gone, and the comfort he was in, had the comicalest face that ever you see; it was such a mixerumgatherum of laughing and crying. Everyone burst out a-laughing—the princess could not stop no more than the rest—and then says Gilla, or Tom, "Now, ma'am, if there were fifty halves of you I hope you will give me them all." Well, the princess had no mock modesty about her. She looked at her father, and, by my word, she came over to Gilla, and put her two delicate hands into his two rough ones, and I wish it was myself was in his shoes that day!

Tom would not bring the flail into the palace. You may be sure no other body went near it; and when the early risers were passing next morning they found two long clefts in the stone where it was, after burning itself an opening downwards, nobody could tell how far.

But a messenger came in at noon and said that the Danes were so frightened when they heard of the flail coming into Dublin that they got into their ships and sailed away.

Well, I suppose before they were married Gilla got some man like Pat Mara of Tomenine to larn him the “principles of politeness,” fluxions, gunnery, and fortifications, decimal fractions, practice, and the rule-of-three direct, the way he’d be able to keep up a conversation with the royal family. Whether he ever lost his time larning them sciences, I’m not sure, but it’s as sure as fate that his mother never more saw any want till the end of her days.

18

The Little Weaver of Duleek Gate.

From “Legends and Stories of Ireland.”

By Samuel Lover (1791-1868.)

There was a waiver lived, wanst upon a time, in Duleek here, hard by the gate, and a very honest, industherous man he was. He had a wife, an’ av coorse, they had childre, and small blame to them, so that the poor little waiver was obleeged to work his fingers to the bone a’most to get them the bit and the sup, and the loom never standin’ still.

Well, it was one mornin’ that his wife called to him, “Come here,” says she, “jewel, and ate your brekquest, now that it’s ready.” But he never minded her, but wint an workin’. “Arrah, lave off slavin’ yourself, my darlin’, and ate your bit o’ brekquest while it is hot.”

“Lave me alone,” says he, “I’m busy with a pattern here that is brakin’ my heart,” says the waiver; “and antil I complate it and masther it intirely I won’t quit.”

“You’re as cross as two sticks this blessed morning, Thady,” says the poor wife; “and it’s a heavy handful I have of you when you are cruked in your temper; but, stay there if you like, and let your stirabout grow cowld, and not a one o’ me ‘ill ax you agin;” and with that off she wint, and the waiver, sure enough, was mighty crabbed, and the more the wife spoke to him the worse he got, which, you know, is only nath’ral. Well, he left the loom at last, and wint over to the stirabout and what would you think, but whin he looked at it, it was as black as a crow—for, you see, it was in the heighth o’ summer, and the flies lit upon it to that degree that the stirabout was fairly covered with them.

19

“Why, thin,” says the waiver, “would no place sarve you but that? and is it spyling my brekquest yiz are, you dirty bastes?” And with that, he lifted his hand, and he made one great slam at the dish o’ stirabout, and killed no less than three score and tin flies at the one blow, for he counted the carcases one by one, and laid them out an a clane plate for to view them.

Well, he felt a powerful sperit risin’ in him, when he seen the slaughter he done, at one blow; and not a sthroke more work he’d do that day, but out he wint and was fractious and impident to every one he met, and was squarin’ up into their faces and sayin’, “Look at that fist! that’s the fist that killed three score and tin at one blow—Whoo!”

With that all the neighbours thought he was crack’d, and the poor wife herself thought the same when he kem home in the evenin’, afther spendin’ every rap he had in dhrink, and swaggerin’ about the place, and lookin’ at his hand every minit.

“Indeed, an’ your hand is very dirty, sure enough, Thady, jewel,” says the poor wife. “You had betther wash it, darlin’.”

“How dar’ you say dirty to the greatest hand in Ireland?” says he, going to bate her.

“Well, it’s nat dirty,” says she.

“It is throwin away my time I have been all my life,” says he, “livin’ with you at all, and stuck at a loom, nothin’ but a poor waiver, when it is Saint George or the Dhraggin I ought to be, which is two of the siven champions of Christendom.”

20

“Well, suppose they christened him twice as much,” says the wife, “sure, what’s that to uz?”

“Don’t put in your prate,” says he, “you ignorant sthrap,” says he. “You’re vulgar, woman

—you’re vulgar—mighty vulgar; but I’ll have nothin’ more to say to any dirty, snakin’ thrade again—sorra more waivin’ I’ll do.”

“Oh, Thady, dear, and what’ll the children do then?”

“Let them go play marvels,” says he.

“That would be but poor feedin’ for them, Thady.”

“They shan’t want feedin’?” says he, “for it’s a rich man I’ll be soon, and a great man, too.”

“Usha, but I’m glad to hear it, darlin’—though I dunno how it’s to be, but I think you had betther go to bed, Thady.”

“Don’t talk to me of any bed, but the bed o’ glory, woman,” says he, lookin’ mortial grand. “I’ll sleep with the brave yit,” says he.

“Indeed, an’ a brave sleep will do you a power o’ good, my darlin,” says she.

“And it’s I that will be a knight!” says he.

“All night, if you plaze, Thady,” says she.

“None o’ your coaxin’,” says he. “I’m detarmined on it, and I’ll set off immediately, and be a knight arriant.”

“A what?” says she.

“A knight arriant, woman.”

“What’s that?” says she.

“A knight arriant is a rale gintleman,” says he; “going round the world for sport, with a soord by his side, takin’ whatever he plazes for himself; and that’s a knight arriant,” says he.

Well, sure enough he wint about among his neighbours the next day, and he got an owld kittle from one, and a saucepan from another, and he took them to the tailor, and he sewed him up a shuit o’ tin clothes like any knight arriant, and he borrowed a pot lid, and that he was very particular about, bekase it was his shield, and he went to a friend o’ his, a painter and glazier, and made him paint an his shield in big letthers:— 21

“I’M THE MAN OF ALL MIN,
THAT KILL’D THREE SCORE AND TIN
AT A BLOW.”

“When the people sees that,” says the waiver to himself, “the sorra one will dar for to come near me.”

And with that he towld the wife to scour out the small iron pot for him, “for,” says he, “it will make an illegent helmet;” and when it was done, he put it an his head, and his wife said, “Oh, murther, Thady, jewel; is it puttin’ a great, heavy, iron pot an your head you are, by way iv a hat?”

“Sartinly,” says he, “for a knight arriant should always have a weight on his brain.”

“But, Thady, dear,” says the wife, “there’s a hole in it, and it can’t keep out the weather.”

“It will be the cooler,” says he, puttin’ it an him; “besides, if I don’t like it, it is aisy to stop it with a wisp o’ sthraw, or the like o’ that.”

“The three legs of it look mighty quare, stickin’ up,” says she.

“Every helmet has a spike stickin’ out o’ the top of it,” says the waiver, “and if mine has three, it’s only the grandher it is.”

“Well,” says the wife, getting bitter at last, “all I can say is, it isn’t the first sheep’s head was dhress’d in it.”

“Your sarvint, ma’am,” says he; and off he set. 22

Well, he was in want of a horse, and so he wint to a field hard by, where the miller’s horse was grazin’, that used to carry the ground corn round the counthry. “This is the identical horse for me,” says the waiver; “he’s used to carryin’ flour and male, and what am I but the flower o’ shovelry in a coat o’ mail; so that the horse won’t be put out iv his way in the laste.”

So away galloped the waiver, and took the road to Dublin, for he thought the best thing he could do was to go to the King o' Dublin (for Dublin was a great place thin, and had a King iv its own). When he got to the palace courtyard he let his horse graze about the place, for the grass was growin' out betune the stones; everything was flourishin' thin in Dublin, you see. Well, the King was lookin' out of his dhrawin'-room windy, for divarshin, whin the waiver kem in; but the waiver pretended not to see him, and he wint over to the stone sate, undher the windy—for, you see, there was stone sates all round about the place, for the accommodation o' the people—for the King was a dacent obleeging man; well, as I said, the waiver wint over and lay down an one o' the seats, just undher the King's windy, and purtended to go asleep; but he took care to turn out the front of his shield that had the letthers an it. Well, my dear, with that the King calls out to one of the lords of his coort that was standin' behind him, howldin' up the skirt of his coat, accordin' to rayson, and, says he: "Look here," says he, "what do you think of a vagabone like that, comin' undher my very nose to sleep? It is thrue I'm a good king," says he, "and I 'commodate the people by havin' sates for them to sit down and enjoy the raycreation and contimplation of seein' me here, 23
lookin' out a' my dhrawin'-room windy, for divarsion; but that is no rayson they are to make a hotel o' the place, and come and sleep here. Who is it, at all?" says the King.

"Not a one o' me knows, plaze your majesty."

"I think he must be a furriner," says the King, "because his dhress is outlandish."

"And doesn't know manners, more betoken," says the lord.

"I'll go down and circumspect him myself," says the King; "folly me," says he to the lord, wavin' his hand at the same time in the most dignacious manner.

Down he wint accordingly, followed by the lord; and when he wint over to where the waiver was lying, sure the first thing he seen was his shield with the big letthers an it, and with that, says he to the lord, "This is the very man I want."

"For what, plaze your majesty?" says the lord.

"To kill the vagabone dhraggin', to be sure," says the King.

"Sure, do you think he could kill him," says the lord, "when all the stoutest knights in the land wasn't aiquil to it, but never kem back, and was ate up alive by the cruel desaiver?"

"Sure, don't you see there," says the king, pointin' at the shield, "that he killed three score and tin at one blow; and the man that done that, I think, is a match for anything."

So, with that, he wint over to the waiver and shuck him by the shouldher for to wake him, and the waiver rubbed his eyes as if just wakened, and the King says to him, "God save you," said he.

"God save you kindly," says the waiver, purtendin' he was quite unknownst who he was 24
spakin' to.

"Do you know who I am," says the king, "that you make so free, good man?"

"No, indeed," says the waiver, "you have the advantage o' me."

"To be sure, I have," says the king, moighty high; "sure, ain't I the King o' Dublin?" says he.

The waiver dhropped down on his two knees forninst the King, and, says he, "I beg your pardon for the liberty I tuk; plaze your holiness, I hope you'll excuse it."

"No offince," says the King; "get up, good man. And what brings you here?" says he.

"I'm in want of work, plaze your riverence," says the waiver.

"Well, suppose I give you work?" says the king.

"I'll be proud to sarve you, my lord," says the waiver.

"Very well," says the King. "You killed three score and tin at one blow, I understan'," says the King.

"Yis," says the waiver; "that was the last thrifle o' work I done, and I'm afraid my hand 'ill go out o' practice if I don't get some job to do at wanst."

"You shall have a job immediately," says the King. "It is not three score and tin or any fine thing like that; it is only a blaguard dhraggin that is disturbin' the counthry and ruinatin' my

tinanthry wid aitin' their powlthry, and I'm lost for want of eggs," said the King.

"Och, thin, plaze your worship," says the waiver, "you look as yellow as if you swallowed twelve yolks this minit."

"Well, I want this dhraggin to be killed," says the King. "It will be no trouble in life to you; 25
and I am sorry that it isn't betther worth your while, for he isn't worth fearin' at all; only I must tell you that he lives in the County Galway, in the middle of a bog, and he has an advantage in that."

"Oh, I don't value it in the laste," says the waiver, "for the last three score and tin I killed was in a soft place."

"When will you undhertake the job, thin?" says the King.

"Let me at him at wanst," says the waiver.

"That's what I like," says the King, "you're the very man for my money," says he.

"Talkin' of money," says the waiver, "by the same token, I'll want a thrifle o' change from you for my thravellin' charges."

"As much as you plaze," says the King; and with the word he brought him into his closet, where there was an owld stockin' in an oak chest, bursting wid goolden guineas.

"Take as many as you plaze," says the King; and sure enough, my dear, the little waiver stuffed his tin clothes as full as they could howld with them.

"Now I'm ready for the road," says the waiver.

"Very well," says the King; "but you must have a fresh horse," says he.

"With all my heart," says the waiver, who thought he might as well exchange the miller's owld garron for a betther.

And maybe it's wondherin' you are that the waiver would think of goin' to fight the dhraggin afther what he heerd about him, when he was purtendin' to be asleep, but he had no sich notion, all he intended was—to fob the goold, and ride back again to Duleek with his 26
gains and a good horse. But, you see, cute as the waiver was, the King was cuter still, for these high quality, you see, is great desaivers; and so the horse the waiver was an was learned on purpose; and sure, the minit he was mounted, away powdhered the horse, and the sorra toe he'd go but right down to Galway. Well, for four days he was goin' evermore, until at last the waiver seen a crowd o' people runnin' as if owld Nick was at their heels, and they shoutin' a thousand murdhers, and cryin'—"The dhraggin, the dhraggin!" and he couldn't stop the horse nor make him turn back, but away he pelted right forninst the terrible baste that was comin' up to him; and there was the most nefaarious smell o' sulphur, savin' your presence, enough to knock you down; and, faith, the waiver seen he had no time to lose; and so threwn himself off the horse and made to a three that was growin' nigh-hand, and away he clambered up into it as nimble as a cat; and not a minit had he to spare, for the dhraggin kem up in a powerful rage, and he devoured the horse body and bones, in less than no time; and then began to sniffle and scent about for the waiver, and at last he clapt his eye on him, where he was, up in the three, and, says he, "You might as well come down out o' that," says he, "for I'll have you as sure as eggs is mate."

"Sorra fut I'll go down," says the waiver.

"Sorra care I care," says the dhraggin; "for you're as good as ready money in my pocket this minit, for I'll lie undher this three," says he, "and sooner or later you must fall to my share;" and sure enough he sot down, and began to pick his teeth with his tail afther a heavy brekquest he made that mornin' (for he ate a whole village, let alone the horse), and he got 27
dhrowsy at last, and fell asleep; but before he wint to sleep he wound himself all round about the three, all as one as a lady windin' ribbon round her finger, so that the waiver could not escape.

Well, as soon as the waiver knew he was dead asleep, by the snorin' of him—and every snore he let out of him was like a clap o' thunder—that minit the waiver began to creep down the three, as cautious as a fox; and he was very nigh hand the bottom when a thievin' branch he was dipindin' an bruck, and down he fell right a top o' the dhraggin; but, if he did, good luck was an his side, for where should he fall but with his two legs right acrass the dhraggin's neck, and my jew'l, he laid howlt o' the baste's ears, and there he kept his grip, for the dhraggin wakened and endayvoured for to bite him, but, you see, by rayson the waiver was behind his ears he could not come at him, and, with that, he endayvoured for to

shake him off; but not a stir could he stir the waiver; and though he shuk all the scales an his body, he could not turn the scale agin the waiver.

"Och, this is too bad, intirely," says the dhraggin; "but if you won't let go," says he, "by the powers o' wildfire, I'll give you a ride that'll astonish your siven small senses, my boy"; and, with that, away he flew like mad; and where do you think he did fly?—he flew sthraight for Dublin. But the waiver, bein' an his neck, was a great disthress to him, and he would rather have had him an inside passenger; but, anyway, he flew till he kem slap up agin the palace o' the king; for, bein' blind with the rage, he never seen it, and he knocked his brains out—
that is, the small trifle he had, and down he fell spacheless. An' you see, good luck would 28
have it, that the King o' Dublin was looking out iv his dhrawin'-room windy, for divarshin, that day also, and whin he seen the waiver ridin' an the fiery dhraggin (for he was blazin' like a tar barrel) he called out to his coortyers to come and see the show.

"Here comes the knight arriant," says the King, "ridin' the dhraggin that's all a-fire, and if he gets into the palace, yiz must be ready wid the fire ingines," says he, "for to put him out."

But when they seen the dhraggin fall outside, they all run downstairs and scampered into the palace yard for to circumspect the curiosity; and by the time they got down, the waiver had got off o' the dhraggin's neck; and runnin' up to the King, says he—

"Plaze, your holiness, I did not think myself worthy of killin' this facetious baste, so I brought him to yourself for to do him the honour of decripitation by your own royal five fingers. But I tamed him first, before I allowed him the liberty for to dar' to appear in your royal prisince, and you'll oblige me if you'll just make your mark with your own hand upon the onruly baste's neck." And with that, the King, sure enough, dhrew out his swoord and took the head aff the dirty brute, as clane as a new pin.

Well, there was great rejoicin' in the coort that the dhraggin was killed; and says the King to the little waiver, says he—

"You are a knight arriant as it is, and so it would be no use for to knight you over agin; but I will make you a lord," says he "and as you are the first man I ever heer'd tell of that rode a dhraggin, you shall be called Lord Mount Dhraggin'," says he.

"And where's my estates, plaze your holiness?" says the waiver, who always had a sharp 29
look-out afther the main chance.

"Oh, I didn't forget that," says the King. "It is my royal pleasure to provide well for you, and for that rayson I make you a present of all the dhraggins in the world, and give you power over them from this out," says he.

"Is that all?" says the waiver.

"All!" says the king. "Why, you ongrateful little vagabone, was the like ever given to any man before?"

"I believe not, indeed," says the waiver; "many thanks to your majesty."

"But that is not all I'll do for you," says the king, "I'll give you my daughter, too, in marriage," says he.

Now, you see, that was nothin' more than what was promised the waiver in his first promise; for, by all accounts, the King's daughter was the greatest dhraggin ever was seen.

30

Fionn MacCumhail and the Princess.

From "The Shamrock."

By Patrick J. McCall (1861—).

(In Wexford Folk Speech.)

Wance upon a time, when things was a great'le betther in Ireland than they are at present, when a rale king ruled over the counthry wid four others undher him to look afther the craps an' other indhustries, there lived a young chief called Fan MaCool.

Now, this was long afore we gev up bowin’ and scrapin’ to the sun an’ moon an’ sich like raumash (nonsense); an’ signs an it, there was a powerful lot ov witches an’ Druids, an’ enchanted min an’ wimen goin’ about, that med things quare enough betimes for iverywan.

Well, Fan, as I sed afore, was a young man when he kem to the command, an’ a purty likely lookin’ boy, too—there was nothin’ too hot or too heavy for him; an’ so ye needn’t be a bit surprised if I tell ye he was the mischief entirely wid the colleens. Nothin’ delighted him more than to disguise himself wid an ould coatamore (overcoat) threwn over his showlder, a lump ov a kippeen (stick) in his fist and he mayanderin’ about unknownst, rings around the counthry, lookin’ for fun an’ foosther (diversion) ov all kinds.

Well, one fine mornin’, whin he was on the shaughraun, he was waumasin’ (strolling) about through Leinster, an’ near the royal palace ov Glendalough he seen a mighty throng ov grand lords and ladies, an’, my dear, they all dressed up to the nines, wid their jewels shinin’ like dewdrops ov a May mornin’, and laughin’ like the tinkle ov a deeshy (small) mountain strame over the white rocks. So he cocked his beaver, an’ stole over to see what was the matther. 31

Lo an’ behould ye, what were they at but houldin’ a race-meetin’ or faysh (festival)—somethin’ like what the quality calls ataleticks now! There they were, jumpin’, and runnin’, and coorsin’, an’ all soorts ov fun, enough to make the trouts—an’ they’re mighty fine leppers enough—die wid envy in the river benaith them.

The fun wint on fast an’ furious, an’ Fan, consaled betune the trumauns an’ brushna (elder bushes and furze) could hardly keep himself quiet, seein’ the thricks they wor at. Peepin’ out, he seen, jist forninst him on the other bank, the prencess herself, betune the high-up ladies ov the coort. She was a fine, bouncin’ geersha (girl) with gold hair like the furze an’ cheeks like an apple blossom, an’ she brakin’ her heart laughin’ an’ clappin’ her hands an’ turnin her head this a-way an’ that a-way, jokin’ wid this wan an’ that wan, an’ commiseratin’, moryah! (forsooth) the poor gossoons that failed in their leps. Fan liked the looks ov her well, an’ whin the boys had run in undher a bame up to their knees an’ jumped up over another wan as high as their chins, the great trial ov all kem on. Maybe you’d guess what that was? But I’m afeerd you won’t if I gev you a hundhred guesses! It was to lep the strame, forty foot wide!

List’nin’ to them whisperin’ to wan another, Fan heerd them tellin’ that whichever ov them could manage it wud be med a great man intirely ov; he wud get the Prencess Maynish in marriage, an’ ov coorse, would be med king ov Leinster when the ould king, Garry, her father, cocked his toes an’ looked up through the butts ov the daisies at the shky. Well, whin Fan h’ard this, he was put to a nonplush to know what to do! With his ould duds on him, he was ashamed ov his life to go out into the open, to have the eyes ov the whole wurruld on him, an’ his heart wint down to his big toe as he watched the boys makin’ their offers at the lep. But no one of them was soople enough for the job, an’ they kep on tumblin’, wan afther the other, into the strame; so that the poor prencess began to look sorryful whin her favourite, a big hayro wid a colyeen (curls) a yard long—an’ more betoken he was a boy o’ the Byrnes from Imayle—jist tipped the bank forninst her wid his right fut, an’ then twistin’, like a crow in the air scratchin’ her head with her claw, he spraddled wide open in the wather, and splashed about like a hake in a mudbank! Well, me dear, Fan forgot himself, an’ gev a screech like an aigle; an’ wid that, the ould king started, the ladies all screamed, an’ Fan was surrounded. In less than a minnit an’ a half they dragged me bould Fan be the collar ov his coat right straight around to the king himself. 32

“What ould geochagh (beggar) have we now?” sez the king, lookin’ very hard at Fan.

“I’m Fan MaCool!” sez the thief ov the wurruld, as cool as a frog.

“Well, Fan MaCool or not,” sez the king, mockin’ him, “ye’ll have to jump the sthrame yander for freckenin’ the lives clane out ov me ladies,” sez he, “an’ for disturbin’ our spoort ginerally,” sez he.

“An’ what’ll I get for that same?” sez Fan, lettin’ on (pretending) he was afeered.

“Me daughter, Maynish,” sez the king, wid a laugh; for he thought, ye see, Fan would be drowned. 33

“Me hand on the bargain,” sez Fan; but the owld chap gev him a rap on the knuckles wid his specktre (sceptre) an’ towld him to hurry up, or he’d get the ollaves (judges) to put him in the Black Dog pres’n or the Marshals—I forgets which—it’s so long gone by!

Well, Fan peeled off his coatamore, an’ threw away his bottheen ov a stick, an’ the

prencess seein' his big body an' his long arums an' legs like an oak tree, couldn't help remarkin' to her comrade, the craythur—

"Bedad, Cauth (Kate)," sez she, "but this beggarman is a fine bit of a bouchal (boy)," sez she; "it's in the arumy (army) he ought to be," sez she, lookin' at him agen, an' admirin' him, like.

So, Fan, purtendin' to be fixin' his shoes be the bank, jist pulled two lusmores (fox-gloves) an' put them anunder his heels; for thim wor the fairies' own flowers that works all soort ov inchantment, an' he, ov coorse, knew all about it; for he got the wrinkle from an ould lenaun (fairy guardian) named Cleena, that nursed him when he was a little stand-a-loney.

Well, me dear, ye'd think it was on'y over a little creepie (three-legged) stool he was leppin' whin he landed like a thrish jist at the fut ov the prencess; an' his father's son he was, that put his two arums around her, an' gev her a kiss—haith, ye'd hear the smack ov it at the Castle o' Dublin. The ould king groaned like a corncrake, an' pulled out his hair in hatfuls, an' at last he ordhered the bowld beggarman off to be kilt; but, begorrah, when they tuck off weskit an' seen the collar ov goold around Fan's neck the ould chap became 34
delighted, for he knew thin he had the commandher ov Airyun (Erin) for a son-in-law.

"Hello!" sez the king, "who have we now?" sez he, seein' the collar. "Begonny's," sez he, "you're no boccagh (beggar) anyways!"

"I'm Fan MaCool," sez the other, as impident as a cocksparra'; "have you anything to say agen me?" for his name wasn't up, at that time, like afther.

"Ay lots to say agen you. How dar' you be comin' round this a-way, dressed like a playacthor, takin' us in?" sez the king, lettin' on to be vexed; "an' now," sez he, "to annoy you, you'll have to go an' jump back agen afore you gets me daughter for puttin' on (deceiving) us in such a manner."

"Your will is my pleasure," sez Fan; "but I must have a word or two with the girl first," sez he, an' up he goes an' commences talkin' soft to her, an' the king got as mad as a hatther at the way the two were croosheenin' an' colloguin' (whispering and talking), an' not mindin' him no more than if he was the man in the moon, when who comes up but the Prence of Imayle, afther dryin' himself, to put his pike in the hay too.

"Well, avochal (my boy)," sez Fan, "are you dry yet?" an' the Prencess laughed like a bell round a cat's neck.

"You think yourself a smart lad, I suppose," sez the other; "but there's one thing you can't do wid all your prate!"

"What's that?" sez Fan. "Maybe not" sez he.

"You couldn't whistle and chaw oatenmale," sez the Prence ov Imayle, in a pucker. "Are you any good at throwin' a stone?" sez he, then.

"The best!" sez Fan, an' all the coort gother round like to a cock-fight. "Where'll we throw 35
to?" sez he.

"In to'ards Dublin," sez the Prence ov Imayle; an' be all accounts he was a great hand at cruistin (throwing).

"Here goes pink," sez he, an' he ups with a stone, as big as a castle, an' sends it flyin' in the air like a cannon ball, and it never stopped till it landed on top ov the Three Rock Mountain.

"I'm your masther!" sez Fan, pickin' up another clochaun (stone) an' sendin' it a few perch beyant the first.

"That you're not," sez the Prence ov Imayle, an' he done his best, an' managed to send another finger stone beyant Fan's throw; an' sure, the three stones are to be seen, be all the world, to this very day.

"Well, me lad," says Fan, stoopin' for another as big as a hill, "I'm sorry I have to bate you; but I can't help it," sez he, lookin' over at the Prencess Maynish, an' she as mute as a mouse watchin' the two big men, an' the ould king showin' fair play, as delighted as a child. "Watch this," sez he, whirlin' his arm like a windmill, "and now put on your spectacles," sez he; and away he sends the stone, buzzin' through the air like a peggin'-top, over the other three clochauns, and then across Dublin Bay, an' scrapin' the nose off ov Howth, it landed with a swish in the say beyant it. That's the rock they calls Ireland's Eye now!

“Be the so an’ so!” sez the king, “I don’t know where that went to, at all, at all! what direct did you send it?” sez he to Fan. “I had it in view, till it went over the say,” sez he.

“I’m bet!” sez the Prence ov Imayle. “I couldn’t pass that, for I can’t see where you put it, even—good-bye to yous,” sez he, turnin’ on his heel an’ makin’ off; “an’ may yous two be as happy as I can wish you!” An’ back he went to the butt ov Lugnaquilla, an’ took to fret, an I understand shortly afther he died ov a broken heart; an’ they put a turtle-dove on his tombstone to signify that he died for love; but I think he overstrained himself, throwin’, though that’s nayther here nor there with me story! 36

“Are you goin’ to lep back agen?” sez ould King Garry, wantin’ to see more sport; for he tuk as much delight in seein’ the like as if he was a lad ov twenty.

“To be shure I will!” sez Fan, ready enough, “but I’ll have to take the girl over with me this time!” sez he.

“Oh, no, Fan!” sez Maynish, afeered ov her life he might stumble an’ that he’d fall in with her; an’ then she’d have to fall out with him—“take me father with you,” sez she; an’ egonnys, the ould king thought more about himself than any ov them, an’ sed he’d take the will for the deed, like the lawyers. So the weddin’ went on; an’ maybe that wasn’t the grand blow-out. But I can’t stay to tell yous all the fun they had for a fortnit; on’y, me dear, they all went into kinks ov laughin’, when the ould king, who tuk more than was good for him, stood up to drink Fan’s health, an’ forgot himself.

“Here’s to’ards your good health, Fan MaCool!” sez he, as grand as you like—“an’ a long life to you, an’ a happy wife to you—an’ a great many ov them!” sez he, like he’d forgot somethin’.

Well, me dear, every one was splittin’ their sides like the p’yates, unless the prencess, an’ she got as red in the face as if she was churnin’ in the winther an’ the frost keepin’ the crame from crackin’; but she got over it like the maisles. 37

But I suppose you can guess the remainder, an’ as the evenin’s gettin’ forrard I’ll stop; so put down the kittle an’ make tay, an’ if Fan and the Prencess Maynish didn’t live happy together—that we may!

38

The Kildare Pooka.

From “Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts.”

By Patrick Kennedy.

Mr. H—— H——, when he was alive, used to live a good deal in Dublin, and he was once a great while out of the country on account of the “ninety-eight” business. But the servants kept on in the big house at Rath—all the same as if the family was at home. Well, they used to be frightened out of their lives, after going to their beds, with the banging of the kitchen door and the clattering of fire-irons and the pots and plates and dishes. One evening they sat up ever so long keeping one another in heart with stories about ghosts and that, when—what would have it?—the little scullery boy that used to be sleeping over the horses, and could not get room at the fire, crept into the hot hearth, and when he got tired listening to the stories, sorra fear him, but he fell dead asleep.

Well and good. After they were all gone, and the kitchen raked up, he was woke with the noise of the kitchen door opening, and the tramping of an ass in the kitchen floor. He peeped out, and what should he see but a big ass, sure enough, sitting on his curabingo and yawning before the fire. After a little he looked about him, and began scratching his ears as if he was quite tired, an’, says he, “I may as well begin first as last.” The poor boy’s teeth began to chatter in his head, for, says he, “Now he’s going to ate me”; but the fellow with the long ears and tail on him had something else to do. He stirred the fire, and then brought in a pail of water from the pump, and filled a big pot that he put on the fire before he went out. He then put in his hand—foot, I mean—into the hot hearth, and pulled out the little boy. He let a roar out of him with fright. But the pooka only looked at him, and thrust out his lower lip to show how little he valued him, and then he pitched him into his pew again. 39

Well, he then lay down before the fire till he heard the boil coming on the water, and maybe there wasn't a plate, or a dish, or a spoon on the dresser, that he didn't fetch and put into the pot, and wash and dry the whole bilin' of 'em as well as e'er a kitchen maid from that to Dublin town. He then put all of them up on their places on the shelves; and if he didn't give a good sweepin' to the kitchen, leave it till again. Then he comes and sits fornent the boy, let down one of his ears, and cocked up the other, and gave a grin. The poor fellow strove to roar out, but not a *dheeg* (sound) ud come out of his throat. The last thing the pooka done was to rake up the fire and walk out, giving such a slap o' the door, that the boy thought the house couldn't help tumbling down.

Well, to be sure, if there wasn't a hullabuloo next morning when the poor fellow told his story! They could talk of nothing else the whole day. One said one thing, another said another, but a fat, lazy scullery girl said the wittiest thing of all. "Musha," says she, "if the pooka does be cleaning up everything that way when we are asleep, what should we be slaving ourselves for doing his work?" "*Sha gu dheine*" (yes, indeed), says another, "them's the wisest words you ever said, Kauth; it's meeself won't contradict you."

40

So said, so done, not a bit of a plate or dish saw a drop of water that evening, and not a besom was laid on the floor, and everyone went to bed after sundown. Next morning everything was as fine as fine in the kitchen, and the Lord Mayor might eat his dinner off the flags. It was great ease to the lazy servants, you may depend, and everything went on well till a foolhardy gag of a boy said he would stay up one night and have a chat with the pooka. He was a little daunted when the door was thrown open and the ass marched up to the fire.

"And then, sir," says he, at last, picking up courage, "if it isn't taking a liberty, might I ax you who you are, and why you are so kind as to do a half a day's work for the girls every night?" "No liberty at all," says the pooka, says he: "I'll tell you and welcome. I was a servant in the time of Squire H——'s father, and was the laziest rogue that was ever clothed and fed, and done nothing for it. When my time came for the other world, this is the punishment was laid on me to come here and do all this labour every night, and then go out in the cold. It isn't so bad in the fine weather; but if you only knew what it was to stand with your head between your legs, facing the storm from midnight to sunrise on a bleak winter night." "And could we do anything for your comfort, my poor fellow?" says the boy. "Musha, I don't know," says the pooka: "but I think a good quilted frieze coat would help me to keep the life in me them long nights." "Why, then, in truth, we'd be the ungratefullest of people if we didn't feel for you."

To make a long story short, the next night the boy was there again; and if he didn't delight the poor pooka, holding a fine, warm coat before him, it's no matther! Betune the pooka and the man, his legs was got into the four arms of it, and it was buttoned down the breast and belly, and he was so pleased he walked up to the glass to see how he looked. "Well," says he, "it's a long lane that has no turning. I am much obliged to you and your fellow servants. You have made me happy at last. Good night to you."

41

So he was walking out, but the other cried, "Och! sure you're going too soon. What about the washing and sweeping?" "Ah, you may tell the girls that they must now get their turn. My punishment was to last till I was thought worthy of a reward for the way I done my duty. You'll see me no more." And no more they did, and right sorry they were for having been in such a hurry to reward the ungrateful pooka.

42

The Piper and the Puca.

From "An Sgeuluidhe Gaodhalach."

By Douglas Hyde (1860—).

In the old times there was a half-fool living in Dunmore, in the County Galway, and though he was excessively fond of music, he was unable to learn more than one tune, and that was the "Black Rogue." He used to get a deal of money from the gentlemen, for they used to get sport out of him. One night the Piper was coming home from a house where there had been a dance, and he half-drunk. When he came up to a little bridge that was by his mother's house, he squeezed the pipes on, and began playing the "Black Rogue." The Puca came

behind him, and flung him on his own back. There were long horns on the Puca, and the Piper got a good grip of them, and then he said:—

“Destruction on you, you nasty beast; let me home I have a tenpenny piece in my pocket for my mother, and she wants snuff.”

“Never mind your mother,” said the puca, “but keep your hold. If you fall you will break your neck and your pipes.” Then the Puca said to him, “Play up for me the ‘Shan Van Vocht.’”

“I don’t know it,” said the Piper.

“Never mind whether you do or you don’t,” said the Puca. “Play up, and I’ll make you know.”

The Piper put wind in his bag, and he played such music as made himself wonder.

“Upon my word, you’re a fine music-master,” says the Piper, then; “but tell me where you’re bringing me.”

“There’s a great feast in the house of the Banshee, on the top of Croagh Patric to-night,” says the Puca, “and I’m for bringing you there to play music, and, take my word, you’ll get the price of your trouble.” 43

“By my word, you’ll save me a journey, then,” says the Piper, “for Father William put a journey to Croagh Patric on me because I stole the white gander from him last Martinmas.”

The Puca rushed him across hills and bog and rough places, till he brought him to the top of Croagh Patric.

Then the Puca struck three blows with his foot, and a great door opened, and they passed in together into a fine room.

The Piper saw a golden table in the middle of the room, and hundreds of old women sitting round about it.

The old woman rose up and said, “A hundred thousand welcomes to you, you Puca of November. Who is this you have with you?”

“The best Piper in Ireland,” says the Puca.

One of the old women struck a blow on the ground, and a door opened in the side of the wall, and what should the Piper see coming out but the white gander which he had stolen from Father William.

“By my conscience, then,” says the Piper, “myself and my mother ate every taste of that gander, only one wing, and I gave that to Red Mary, and it’s she told the priest I stole his gander.”

The gander cleaned the table, and carried it away, and the Puca said, “Play up music for these ladies.”

The Piper played up, and the old women began dancing, and they danced till they tired. Then the Puca said to pay the Piper, and every old woman drew out a gold piece and gave it to him.

“By the tooth of Patric,” says he, “I’m as rich as the son of a lord.” 44

“Come with me,” says the Puca, “and I’ll bring you home.”

They went out then, and just as he was going to ride on the Puca, the gander came up to him and gave him a new set of pipes.

The Puca was not long until he brought him to Dunmore, and he threw the Piper off at the little bridge, and then he told him to go home, and says to him, “You have two things now that you never had before—you have sense and music.” The Piper went home, and he knocked at his mother’s door, saying, “Let me in, I’m as rich as a lord, and I’m the best Piper in Ireland.”

“You’re drunk,” says the mother.

“No, indeed,” says the Piper, “I haven’t drunk a drop.”

The mother let him in, and he gave her the gold pieces, and, “Wait, now,” says he, “till you hear the music I play.”

He buckled on the pipes, but instead of music there came a sound as if all the geese and ganders in Ireland were screeching together. He wakened all the neighbours, and they were all mocking him, until he put on the old pipes, and then he played melodious music for them; and after that he told them all he had gone through that night.

The next morning, when his mother went to look at the gold pieces, there was nothing there but the leaves of a plant.

The Piper went to the priest and told him his story, but the priest would not believe a word from him, until he put the pipes on him, and then the screeching of the ganders and the geese began. 45

“Leave my sight, you thief,” says the priest.

But nothing would do the Piper till he put the old pipes on him to show the priest that his story was true.

He buckled on his old pipes, and played melodious music, and from that day till the day of his death there was never a Piper in the County Galway was as good as he was.

46

M‘Carthy of Connacht.

From “Folk Tales of Breffny.”

By B. Hunt.

There was a fine young gentleman the name of M‘Carthy. He had a most beautiful countenance, and for strength and prowess there was none to equal him in the baronies of Connacht. But he began to dwine away, and no person knew what ailed him. He used no food at all and he became greatly reduced, the way he was not able to rise from his bed and he letting horrid groans and lamentations out of him. His father sent for three skilled doctors to come and find out what sort of disease it might be, and a big reward was promised for the cure.

Three noted doctors came on the one day and they searched every vein in young M‘Carthy’s body, but they could put no name on the sickness nor think of a remedy to relieve it. They came down from the room and reported that the disease had them baffled entirely.

“Am I to be at the loss of a son who is the finest boy in all Ireland?” says the father.

Now one of the doctors had a man with him who was a very soft-spoken person, and he up and says:

“Maybe your honours would be giving me permission to visit the young gentleman. I have a tongue on me is that sweet I do be drawing the secrets of the world out of men and women and little children.”

Well, they brought him up to the room and they left him alone with M‘Carthy. He sat down beside the bed and began for to flatter him. The like of such conversation was never heard before.

At long last he says, “Let your Lordship’s honour be telling—What is it ails you at all?” 47

“You will never let on to a living soul?” asks M‘Carthy.

“Is it that I’d be lodging an information against a noble person like yourself?” says the man.

With that, the young gentleman began telling the secrets of his heart.

“It is no disease is on me,” says he, “but a terrible misfortune.”

“’Tis heart scalded I am that you have either a sorrow or a sickness, and you grand to look on and better to listen to,” says the other.

“It is in love I am,” says M‘Carthy.

“And how would that be a misfortune to a fine lad like yourself?” asks the man.

“Let you never let on!” says M‘Carthy. “The way of it is this: I am lamenting for no lady who is walking the world, nor for one who is dead that I could be following to the grave. I have a little statue which has the most beautiful countenance on it that was ever seen, and it is destroyed with grief I am that it will never be speaking to me at all.”

With that he brought the image out from under his pillow, and the loveliness of it made the man lep off the chair.

“I’d be stealing the wee statue from your honour if I stopped in this place,” says he. “But let you take valour into your heart, for that is the likeness of a lady who is living in the world, and you will be finding her surely.”

With that he went down to the three doctors and the old man who were waiting below. For all his promises to young M‘Carthy, he told the lot of them all he was after hearing. The doctors allowed that if the gentleman’s life was to be saved he must be got out of his bed and sent away on his travels.

“For a time he will be hopeful of finding her,” says the oldest doctor. “Then the whole notion will pass off him, and he seeing strange lands and great wonders to divert him.”

The father was that anxious for the son’s recovery that he agreed to sell the place and give him a big handful of money for the journey.

“It is little I’ll be needing for myself from this out, and I an old man near ripe for the grave,” says he.

So they all went up to the room and told young M‘Carthy to rise from his bed and eat a good dinner, for the grandest arrangements out were made for his future and he’d surely meet the lady. When he seen that no person was mocking him he got into the best of humour, and he came down and feasted with them.

Not a long time afterwards he took the big handful of money and set out on his travels, bringing the statue with him. He went over the provinces of Ireland, then he took sea to England, and wandered it entirely, away to France with him next, and from that to every art and part of the world. He had the strangest adventures, and he seen more wonders than could ever be told or remembered. At the latter end he came back to the old country again, with no more nor a coin or two left of the whole great fortune of money. The whole time he never seen a lady who was the least like the wee statue; and the words of the old doctor were only a deceit for he didn’t quit thinking of her at all. M‘Carthy was a handsome young gentleman, and if it was small heed he had for any person he met it was great notice was taken of him. Sure it was a queen, no less, and five or six princesses were thinking long thoughts on himself.

The hope was near dead in his heart, and the sickness of grief was on him again when he came home to Ireland. Soon after he landed from the ship he chanced to come on a gentleman’s place, and it a fine, big house he never had seen before. He went up and inquired of the servants if he would get leave to rest there. He was given a most honourable reception, and the master of the house was well pleased to be entertaining such an agreeable guest. Now himself happened to be a Jew, and that is the why he did not ask M‘Carthy to eat at his table, but had his dinner set out for him in a separate room. The servants remarked on the small share of food he was using, it was scarcely what would keep the life in a young child; but he asked them not to make any observation of the sort. At first they obeyed him, yet when he used no meat at all on the third day, didn’t they speak with their master.

“What is the cause of it at all?” he says to M‘Carthy. “Is the food in this place not to your liking? Let you name any dish you have a craving for, and the cook will prepare it.”

“There was never better refreshment set before an emperor,” says M‘Carthy.

“It is civility makes you that flattering,” answers the Jew. “How would you be satisfied with the meat which is set before you when you are not able to use any portion of it at all?”

“I doubt I have a sickness on me will be the means of my death,” says M‘Carthy. “I had best be moving on from this place, the way I’ll not be rewarding your kindness with the botheration of a corpse.”

With that the master of the house began for to speak in praise of a doctor who was in those parts.

“I see I must be telling you what is in it,” says M‘Carthy. “Doctors have no relief for the sort of tribulation is destroying me.”

He brought out the statue, and he went over the whole story from start to finish. How he set off on his travels and was hopeful for a while; and how despair got hold of him again.

“Let you be rejoicing now,” says the Jew, “for it is near that lady you are this day. She comes down to a stream which is convenient to this place, and six waiting maids along with her, bringing a rod and line for to fish. And it is always at the one hour she is in it.”

Well, M‘Carthy was lepping wild with delight to hear tell of the lady.

“Let you do all I’m saying,” the Jew advises him. “I’ll provide you with the best of fishing tackle, and do you go down to the stream for to fish in it, too. Whatever comes to your line let you give to the lady. But say nothing which might scare her at all, and don’t follow after her if she turns to go home.”

The next day M‘Carthy went out for to fish; not a long time was he at the stream before the lady came down and the six waiting maids along with her. Sure enough she was the picture of the statue, and she had the loveliest golden hair ever seen.

M‘Carthy had the luck to catch a noble trout, and he took it off the hook, rolled it in leaves, and brought it to the lady, according to the advice of the Jew. She was pleased to accept the gift of it, but didn’t she turn home at once and the six waiting maids along with her. When she went into her own house she took the fish to her father. 51

“There was a noble person at the stream this day,” she says, “and he made me a present of the trout.”

Next morning M‘Carthy went to fish again, and he seen the lady coming and her six waiting maids walking behind her. He caught a splendid fine trout and brought it over to her; with that she turned home at once.

“Father,” says she, when she went in, “the gentleman is after giving me a fish which is bigger and better nor the one I brought back yesterday. If the like happens at the next time I go to the stream I will be inviting the noble person to partake of refreshment in this place.”

“Let you do as best pleases yourself,” says her father.

Well, sure enough, M‘Carthy got the biggest trout of all the third time. The lady was in the height of humour, and she asked would he go up to the house with her that day. She walked with M‘Carthy beside her, and the six waiting maids behind them. They conversed very pleasantly together, and at last he found courage for to tell her of how he travelled the world to seek no person less than herself.

“I’m fearing you’ll need to set out on a second journey, the way you will be coming in with some other one,” says she. “I have an old father who is after refusing two score of suitors who were asking me off him. I do be thinking I’ll not be joining the world at all, unless a king would be persuading himself of the advancement there is in having a son-in-law wearing a golden crown upon his head. The whole time it is great freedom I have, and I walking where it pleases me with six waiting maids along with me. The old man has a notion they’d inform him if I was up to any diversion, but that is not the way of it at all.” 52

“It is funning you are, surely,” says M‘Carthy. “If himself is that uneasy about you how would it be possible you’d bring me to the house to be speaking with him?”

“He is a kindly man and reasonable,” says she, “and it is a good reception you’ll be getting. Only let you not be speaking of marriage with me, for he cannot endure to hear tell of the like.”

Well, the old man made M‘Carthy welcome, and he had no suspicion the two were in notion of each other. But didn’t they arrange all unbeknownt to him, and plan out an elopement.

M‘Carthy went back to the Jew, and he told him all. “But,” says he, “I am after spending my whole great fortune of money travelling the territory of the world. I must be finding a good situation the way I’ll make suitable provision for herself.”

“Don’t be in the least distress,” says the Jew. “I did not befriend you this far to be leaving you in a bad case at the latter end. I’ll oblige you with the loan of what money will start you in a fine place. You will be making repayment at the end of three years when you have made your profit on the business.”

The young gentleman accepted the offer, and he fair wild with delight. Moreover, the Jew gave himself and the lady grand assistance at the elopement, the way they got safe out of it and escaped from her father, who was raging in pursuit.

M‘Carthy was rejoicing surely, and he married to a wife who was the picture of the statue. Herself was in the best of humour, too, for it was small delight she had in her own place, 53
roaming the fields or stopping within and six waiting maids along with her. A fine, handsome husband was the right company for her like. They bought a lovely house and farm of land with the money which was lent by the Jew; and they fixed all the grandest ever was seen. After a while M‘Carthy got a good commission to be an officer, the way nothing more in the world was needful to their happiness.

M‘Carthy and his lady had a fine life of it, they lacking for no comfort or splendour at all. The officer’s commission he had brought himself over to England from time to time, and the lady M‘Carthy would mind all until he was home. He saved up what money was superfluous, and all was gathered to repay the loan to the Jew only for a few pounds.

Well, it happened that M‘Carthy went to England, and there he fell in with a droll sort of a man, who was the best company. They played cards together and they drank a great power of wine. In the latter end a dispute came about between them, for they both claimed to have the best woman.

“I have a lady beyond in Ireland,” says M‘Carthy, “and she is an ornament to the roads when she is passing alone. But no person gets seeing her these times, and that is a big misfortune to the world.”

“What’s the cause?” asks the Englishman.

“I’d have a grief on me to think another man might be looking on her and I not standing by,” says M‘Carthy. “So she gives me that satisfaction on her promised word: all the time I do be away she never quits the house, and no man body is allowed within.”

The Englishman let a great laugh out of him at the words.

“You are simple enough!” says he. “Don’t you know rightly when you are not in it, herself 54
will be feasting and entertaining and going on with every diversion?”

M‘Carthy was raging at the impertinence of him, and he offered for to fight.

“What would that be proving?” says the Englishman. “Let you make a powerful big bet with myself that I will not be able for to bring you a token from your lady and a full description of her appearance.”

“I’ll be winning the money off you, surely!” says M‘Carthy.

“Not at all,” says the Englishman. “I’m not in the least uneasy about it, for I’m full sure it’s the truth I’m after speaking of how she does be playing herself in your absence.”

“You’ll find me in this place and you coming back.” says M‘Carthy. “Let you be prepared with the money to have along with you.”

The Englishman took ship to Ireland, and he came to the house of the lady M‘Carthy. Herself was in the kitchen making a cake, and she seen the man walking up to the door. Away she run to the parlour, and in the hurry she forgot the lovely pearl ring she took off her finger when she began at the cooking. Well, he found the door standing open, and he seen the ring on the kitchen table. It was easy knowing it was no common article would be in the possession of any one but the mistress of the house. What did the lad do, only slip in and put it in his pocket. With that the waiting maid came and asked his business, the lady M‘Carthy was after sending her down.

“Oh, no business at all,” says he. “But I am weary travelling and I thought I might rest at 55
this place.”

He began for to flatter the girl and to offer her bribes, and in the latter end he got her to speak. She told him all what the mistress of the house was like; how she had a mole under her right arm, and one on her left knee. Moreover she gave him a few long golden hairs she got out of the lady’s comb.

The Englishman went back to M‘Carthy, brought him the tokens, and demanded the payment of the bet. And that is the way the poor gentleman spent the money he had saved up for the Jew.

M‘Carthy sent word to his wife that he was coming home, and for her to meet him on the

ship. She put her grandest raiment upon her and started away at once. She went out to the ship and got up on the deck where she seen her husband standing. When she went over to him he never said a word at all, but he swept her aside with his arm the way she fell into the water. Then he went on shore full sure he had her drowned.

But there was another ship coming in, and a miller that was on her seen the lady struggling in the sea. He was an aged man, yet he ventured in after her and he saved the poor creature's life.

Well, the miller was a good sort of a man and he had great compassion for herself when she told him her story. She had no knowledge of the cause of her husband being vexed with her, and she thought it hard to believe the evidence of her senses that he was after striving to make away with her. The miller advised the lady M'Carthy to go on with the ship, which was sailing to another port, for maybe if she went home after the man he would be destroying her.

When the ship came into the harbour the news was going of a great lawsuit. 56

The miller heard all, and he brought word to the lady that M'Carthy was in danger of death.

"There are three charges against him," says the miller. "Your father has him impeached for stealing you away, and you not wishful to be with him: that is the first crime."

"That is a false charge," says she, "for I helped for to plan the whole elopement. My father is surely saying all in good faith, but it is a lie the whole time."

"A Jew has him accused for a sum of money he borrowed, and it was due for repayment: that is the second crime," says the miller.

"The money was all gathered up for to pay the debt," says the lady. "Where can it be if M'Carthy will not produce it?"

"The law has him committed for the murder of yourself: and that is the third crime," says the miller.

"And a false charge, too, seeing you saved me in that ill hour. I am thinking I'd do well to be giving evidence in a court of law, for it's maybe an inglorious death they'll be giving him," says she.

"Isn't that what he laid out for yourself?" asks the miller.

"It is surely, whatever madness came on him. But I have a good wish for him the whole time."

"If that is the way of it we had best be setting out," says he.

The lady and the miller travelled overland, it being a shorter journey nor the one they were after coming by sea. When they got to the court of law wasn't the judge after condemning M'Carthy; and it was little the poor gentleman cared for the sentence of death was passed on him. 57

"My life is bitter and poisoned on me," says he; "maybe the grave is the best place."

With that the lady M'Carthy stood up in the court and gave out that she had not been destroyed at all, for the miller saved her from the sea.

They began the whole trial over again, and herself told how she planned the elopement, and her father had no case at all. She could not tell why M'Carthy was wishful to destroy her, and he had kept all to himself at the first trial. But by degrees all was brought to light: the villainy of the Englishman and the deceit was practised on them by him and the servant girl.

It was decreed that the money was to be restored by that villain, and the Jew was to get his payment out of it.

The lady M'Carthy's father was in such rejoicement to see his daughter, and she alive, that he forgave herself and the husband for the elopement. Didn't the three of them go away home together and they the happiest people who were ever heard tell of in the world.

58

The Mad Pudding of Ballyboulteen.

By William Carleton (1794-1869).

“Moll Roe Rafferty, the daughter of ould Jack Rafferty, was a fine, young bouncin’ girl, large an’ lavish, wid a purty head of hair on her—scarlet—that bein’ one of the raisons why she was called Roe, or red; her arms and cheeks were much the colour of her hair, an’ her saddle nose was the purtiest thing of its kind that ever was on a face.

“Well, anyhow, it was Moll Rafferty that was the dilsy. It happened that there was a nate vagabone in the neighbourhood, just as much overburdened wid beauty as herself, and he was named Gusty Gillespie. Gusty was what they call a black-mouth Prosbytarian, and wouldn’t keep Christmas Day, except what they call ‘ould style.’ Gusty was rather good-lookin’, when seen in the dark, as well as Moll herself; anyhow, they got attached to each other, and in the end everything was arranged for their marriage.

“Now this was the first marriage that had happened for a long time in the neighbourhood between a Prodestant and a Catholic, and faix, there was of the bride’s uncles, ould Harry Connolly, a fairyman, who could cure all complaints wid a secret he had, and as he didn’t wish to see his niece married to sich a fellow, he fought bitterly against the match. All Moll’s friends, however, stood up for the marriage, barrin’ him, and, of coorse, the Sunday was appointed, as I said, that they were to be dove-tailed together.

“Well, the day arrived, and Moll, as became her, went to Mass, and Gusty to meeting, 59
afther which they were to join one another in Jack Rafferty’s, where the priest, Father McSorley was to slip up afther Mass to take his dinner wid them, and to keep Mister McShuttle, who was to marry them, company. Nobody remained at home but ould Jack Rafferty an’ his wife, who stopped to dress for dinner, for, to tell the truth, it was to be a great let-out entirely. Maybe if all was known, too, Father McSorley was to give them a cast of his office over and above the ministher, in regard that Moll’s friends were not altogether satisfied at the kind of marriage which McShuttle could give them. The sorrow may care about that—splice here, splice there—all I can say is that when Mrs. Rafferty was goin’ to tie up a big bag pudden, in walks Harry Connolly, the fairyman, in a rage, and shouts, ‘Blood and blunder-bushes, what are yez here for?’

“‘Arrah, why, Harry? Why, avick?’

“‘Why, the sun’s in the suds, and the moon in the high Horricks; there’s a clip-stick comin’ on, and there you’re both as unconsarned as if it was about to rain mether. Go out an’ cross yourselves three times in the name o’ the four Mandromarvins, for, as the prophecy says:—‘Fill the pot, Eddy, supernaculum—a blazin’ star’s a rare spectaculum.’ Go out, both of you, an’ look at the sun, I say, an’ ye’ll see the condition he’s in—off!’

“Begad, sure enough, Jack gave a bounce to the door, and his wife leaped like a two-year-ould, till they were both got on a stile beside the house to see what was wrong in the sky.

“‘Arrah, what is it, Jack?’ says she, ‘can you see anything?’

“‘No,’ says he, ‘sorra the full of my eye of anything I can spy, barrin’ the sun himself, that’s 60
not visible, in regard of the clouds. God guard us! I doubt there’s something to happen.’

“‘If there wasn’t, Jack, what’d put Harry, that knows so much, in that state he’s in?’

“‘I doubt it’s this marriage,’ says Jack. ‘Betune ourselves, it’s not over an’ above religious of Moll to marry a black-mouth, an’ only for—; but, it can’t be helped now, though you see it’s not a taste o’ the sun is willing to show his face upon it.’

“‘As to that,’ says his wife, winkin’ with both eyes, ‘if Gusty’s satisfied with Moll, it’s enough. I know who’ll carry the whip hand, anyhow; but in the manetime let us ax Harry within what ails the sun?’

“Well, they accordingly went in, and put this question to him, ‘Harry, what’s wrong, ahagur? What is it now, for if anybody alive knows ’tis yourself?’

“‘Ah,’ said Harry, screwin’ his mouth wid a kind of a dry smile, ‘The sun has a hard twist o’ the colic; but never mind that, I tell you, you’ll have a merrier weddin’ than you think, that’s all’; and havin’ said this, he put on his hat and left the house.

“Now, Harry’s answer relieved them very much, and so, afther callin’ to him to be back for dinner, Jack sat down to take a shough o’ the pipe, and the wife lost no time in tying up the

pudden, and puttin' it in the pot to be boiled.

"In this way things went on well enough for a while, Jack smokin' away an' the wife cookin' an' dressin' at the rate of a hunt. At last, Jack, while sittin', I said, contently at the fire, thought he could persave an odd dancin' kind of motion in the pot that puzzled him a good deal.

"'Katty,' says he, 'what in the dickens is in this pot on the fire?' 61

"'Nerra a thing but the big pudden. Why do you ax?' says she.

"'Why,' says he, 'if ever a pot tuk it into its head to dance a jig, this did. Thunder and sparbles, look at it!'

"Begad, and it was thrue enough; there was the pot bobbin' up an' down, and from side to side, jiggin' it away as merry as a grig; an' it was quite aisy to see that it wasn't the pot itself, but what was inside it, that brought about the hornpipe.

"'Be the hole o' my coat,' shouted Jack, 'there's somethin' alive in it, or it would niver cut sich capers!'

"'Begorra, there is, Jack; something sthrange entirely has got into it. Wirra, man alive, what's to be done?'

"Jist as she spoke the pot seemed to cut the buckle in prime style, and afther a spring that'd shame a dancin' masther, off flew the lid, and out bounced the pudden itself, hoppin' as nimble as a pea on a drum-head about the floor. Jack blessed himself, and Katty crossed herself. Jack shouted and Katty screamed. 'In the name of goodness, keep your distance; no one here injured you!'

"The pudden, however, made a set at him, and Jack lepped first on a chair, and then on the kitchen table, to avoid it. It then danced towards Katty, who was repatin' her prayers at the top of her voice, while the cunnin' thief of a pudden was hoppin' an' jiggin' it around her as if it was amused at her distress.

"'If I could get a pitchfork,' says Jack, 'I'd dale wid it—by goxty, I'd thry its mettle.'

"'No, no,' shouted Katty, thinkin' there was a fairy in it; 'let us spake it fair. Who knows 62
what harm it might do? Aisy, now,' says she to the pudden; 'aisy, dear; don't harm honest people that never meant to offend you. It wasn't us—no, in troth, it was ould Harry Connolly that bewitched you; pursue him, if you wish, but spare a woman like me!'

"The pudden, bedad, seemed to take her at her word, and danced away from her towards Jack, who, like the wife, believin' there was a fairy in it, an' that spakin' it fair was the best plan, thought he would give it a soft word as well as her.

"'Plase your honour,' said Jack, 'she only spakes the truth, an' upon my voracity, we both feels much obliged to you for your quietness. Faith, it's quite clear that if you weren't a gentleman pudden, all out, you'd act otherwise. Ould Harry, the rogue, is your mark; he's jist down the road there, and if you go fast you'll overtake him. Be my song, your dancin'-masther did his duty, anyway. Thank your honour! God speed you, and may you niver meet wid a parson or alderman in your thravels.'

"Jist as Jack spoke, the pudden appeared to take the hint, for it quietly hopped out, and as the house was directly on the roadside, turned down towards the bridge, the very way that ould Harry went. It was very natural, of coorse, that Jack and Katty should go and see how it intended to thravel, and as the day was Sunday, it was but natural too, that a greater number of people than usual were passin' the road. This was a fact; and when Jack and his wife were seen followin' the pudden, the whole neighbourhood was soon up and after it.

"'Jack Rafferty, what is it? Katty, ahagur, will you tell us what it manes?' 63

"'Why,' replied Katty, 'it's my big pudden that's bewitched, an' it's out hot pursuin'—here she stopped, not wishin' to mention her brother's name—'someone or other that surely put pishrogues (a fairy spell) an it.'

"This was enough; Jack, now seein' he had assistance, found his courage comin' back to him; so says he to Katty, 'Go home,' says he, 'an' lose no time in makin' another pudden as good, an' here's Paddy Scanlan's wife Bridget says she'll let you boil it on her fire, as you'll want our own to dress for dinner; and Paddy himself will lend me a pitchfork, for pursuin' to the morsel of that same pudden will escape, till I let the wind out of it, now that I've the neighbours to back an' support me,' says Jack.

“This was agreed to, an’ Katty went back to prepare a fresh pudden, while Jack an’ half the townland pursued the other wid spades, graips, pitchforks, scythes, flails, and all possible description of instruments. On the pudden went, however, at the rate of about six Irish miles an hour, an’ sich a chase was never seen. Catholics, Prodestants, and Prosbytarians were all afther it, armed, as I said, an’ bad end to the thing but its own activity could save it. Here it made a hop, there a prod was made at it, but off it went, and someone, as eager to get a slice at it on the other side, got the prod instead of the pudden. Big Frank Farrell, the miller, of Ballyboulteen, got a prod backwards that brought a hullabulloo out of him that you might hear at the other end of the parish. One got a slice of the scythe, another a whack of a flail, a third a rap of the spade, that made him look nine ways at wanst.

“‘Where is it goin’?’ asked one. ‘My life for you, it’s on its way to meeting. Three cheers for 64
it, if it turns to Carntaul!’ ‘Prod the sowl out of it if it’s a Prodestan,’ shouted the others; ‘if it turns to the left, slice it into pancakes. We’ll have no Prodestan’ puddens here.’

“Begad, by this time the people were on the point of begginnin’ to have a regular fight about it, when, very fortunately, it took a short turn down a little by-lane that led towards the Methodist praychin’-house, an’ in an instant all parties were in an uproar against it as a Methodist pudden. ‘It’s a Wesleyan,’ shouted several voices; ‘an’ by this an’ by that, into a Methodist chapel it won’t put a foot to-day, or we’ll lose a fall. Let the wind out of it. Come, boys, where’s your pitchforks?’

“The divil pursuin’ to the one of them, however, ever could touch the pudden, and jist when they thought they had it up against the gravel of the Methodist chapel, begad, it gave them the slip, and hops over to the left, clane into the river, and sails away before their eyes as light as an egg-shell.

“Now, it so happened that a little below this place the demesne wall of Colonel Bragshaw was built up to the very edge of the river on each side of its banks; and so, findin’ there was a stop put to their pursuit of it, they went home again, every man, woman, and child of them, puzzled to think what the pudden was at all, what it meant, or where it was goin’. Had Jack Rafferty an’ his wife been willin’ to let out the opinion they held about Harry Connolly bewitchin’ it, there is no doubt of it but poor Harry might be badly trated by the crowd, when their blood was up. They had sense enough, howaniver, to keep that to themselves, for 65
Harry, bein’ an ould bachelor, was a kind friend to the Raffertys. So, of coorse, there was all kinds of talk about it—some guessin’ this, an’ some guessin’ that—one party sayin’ the pudden was of their side, and another denyin’ it, an’ insisting it belonged to them, an’ so on.

“In the meantime, Katty Rafferty for ‘fraid the dinner might come short, went home and made another pudden much about the same size as the one that had escaped, an’ bringing it over to their next neighbour, Paddy Scanlan’s, it was put into a pot, and placed on the fire to boil, hopin’ that it might be done in time, espishilly as they were to have the ministher, who loved a warm slice of a good pudden as well as e’er a gentleman in Europe.

“Anyhow, the day passed; Moll and Gusty were made man an’ wife, an’ no two could be more lovin’. Their friends that had been asked to the weddin’ were saunterin’ about in the pleasant little groups till dinner-time, chattin’ an’ laughin’; but, above all things, sthrivin’ to account for the figaries of the pudden; for, to tell the truth, its adventures had now gone through the whole parish.

“Well, at any rate, dinner-time was drawin’ near, and Paddy Scanlan was sittin’ comfortably wid his wife at the fire, the pudden boilin’ before their eyes when in walks Harry Connolly in a flutter, shoutin’ ‘Blood and blunder-bushes, what are yez here for?’

“‘Arrah, why, Harry—why, avick?’ said Mrs. Scanlan.

“‘Why,’ said Harry, ‘the sun’s in the suds, an’ the moon in the high Horricks! Here’s a
clipstick comin’ on, an’ there you sit as unconsarned as if it was about to rain mether! Go 66
out, both of you, an’ look at the sun, I say, an’ ye’ll see the condition he’s in—off!’

“‘Ay, but, Harry, what’s that rowled up in the tail of your cothamore (big coat)?’

“‘Out wid yez,’ says Harry, ‘an’ pray against the clipstick—the sky’s fallin’!’

“Begad, it was hard to say whether Paddy or the wife got out first, they were so much alarmed by Harry’s wild, thin face and piercin’ eyes; so out they went to see what was wonderful in the sky, an’ kep lookin’ in every direction, but not a thing was to be seen, barrin’ the sun shinin’ down wid great good-humour, an’ not a single cloud in the sky.

“Paddy an’ the wife now came in laughin’ to scould Harry, who, no doubt, was a great wag in his way when he wished. ‘Musha, bad scran to you, Harry—’ and they had time to say no more, howandiver, for, as they were goin’ into the door, they met him comin’ out of it, wid a reek of smoke out of his tail like a limekiln.

“‘Harry,’ shouted Bridget, ‘my sowl to glory, but the tail of your cothamore’s afire—you’ll be burned. Don’t you see the smoke that’s out of it?’

“‘Cross yourselves three times,’ said Harry, without stoppin’ or even lookin’ behind him, ‘for as the prophecy says, Fill the pot, Eddy—’ They could hear no more, for Harry appeared to feel like a man that carried something a great deal hotter than he wished, as anyone might see by the liveliness of his motions, and the quare faces he was forced to make as he went along.

“‘What the dickens is he carryin’ in the skirts of his big coat?’ asked Paddy.

“‘My sowl to happiness, but maybe he has stolen the pudden,’ said Bridget, ‘for it’s known 67
that many a sthrange thing he does.’

“They immediately examined the pot, but found that the pudden was there, as safe as tuppence, an’ this puzzled them the more to think what it was he could be carryin’ about with him in the manner he did. But little they knew what he had done while they were sky-gazin’!

“Well, anyhow, the day passed, and the dinner was ready an’ no doubt but a fine gatherin’ there was to partake of it. The Prosbytarian ministher met the Methodist praycher—a divilish stretcher of an appetite he had, in throth—on his way to Jack Rafferty’s, an’ as he knew he could take the liberty, why, he insisted on his dining wid him; for, afther all, in thim days the clergy of all descriptions lived upon the best footin’ among one another not all at one as now—but no matther. Well, they had nearly finished their dinner, when Jack Rafferty himself axed Katty for the pudden; but jist as he spoke, in it came, as big as a mess-pot.

“‘Gentlemen,’ said he, ‘I hope none of you will refuse tastin’ a bit of Katty’s pudden; I don’t mane the dancin’ one that took to its thravels to-day, but a good, solid fellow that she med since.’

“‘To be sure we won’t,’ replied the priest. ‘So, Jack, put a thrifle on them three plates at your right hand, and send them over here to the clargy, an’ maybe,’ he said, laughin’—for he was a droll, good-humoured man—‘maybe, Jack, we won’t set you a proper example.’

“‘Wid a heart an’ a half, your riverence an’ gintlemen; in throth, it’s not a bad example 68
ever any of you set us at the likes, or ever will set us, I’ll go bail. An’ sure, I only wish it was betther fare I had for you; but we’re humble people, gintlemen, an’ so you can’t expect to meet here what you would in higher places.’

“‘Betther a male of herbs,’ said the Methodist praycher, ‘where pace is—’ He had time to go no further, however; for, much to his amazement, the priest an’ the ministher started up from the table, jist as he was going to swallow the first mouthful of the pudden, and, before you could say Jack Robinson, started away at a lively jig down the floor.

“At this moment a neighbour’s son came runnin’ in, and tould them that the parson was comin’ to see the new-married couple, an’ wish them all happiness; an’ the words were scarcely out of his mouth when he made his appearance. What to think he knew not, when he saw the ministher footin’ it away at the rate of a weddin’. He had very little time, however, to think; for, before he could sit down, up starts the Methodist praycher, an’, clappin’ his fists in his sides, chimes in in great style along wid him.

“‘Jack Rafferty,’ says he, and, by the way, Jack was his tenant, ‘what the dickens does all this mane?’ says he; ‘I’m amazed!’

“‘Then not a particle o’ me can tell you,’ says Jack; ‘but will your reverence jist taste a morsel o’ pudden, merely that the young couple may boast that you ait at their weddin’; ‘for sure, if you wouldn’t, who would?’

“‘Well,’ says he, to gratify them, I will; so, just a morsel. But, Jack, this bates Banagher,’ says he again, puttin’ the spoonful of pudden into his mouth; ‘has there been drink here?’

“‘Oh, the divil a spudh,’ says Jack, ‘for although there’s plenty in the house, faith, it 69
appears the gentlemen wouldn’t wait for it. Unless they tuck it elsewhere, I can make nothin’ o’ this.’

“He had scarcely spoken when the parson, who was an active man, cut a caper a yard

high, an' before you could bless yourself, the three clargy were hard at work dancin', as if for a wager. Begad, it would be unpossible for me to tell you the state the whole meetin' was in when they see this. Some were hoarse wid laughin'; some turned up their eyes wid wondher; many thought them mad; and others thought they had turned up their little fingers a thrifle too often.

"'Be Goxty, it's a burnin' shame,' said one, 'to see three black-mouth clargy in sich a state at this early hour!'" 'Thunder an' ounze, what's over them all?' says others; 'why, one would think they were bewitched. Holy Moses, look at the caper the Methodist cuts! An' as for the Recthor, who would think he could handle his feet at sich a rate! Be this, an' be that, he cuts the buckle, an' does the threblin' step aiquil to Paddy Horaghan, the dancin'-masther himself! An' see! Bad cess to the morsel of the parson that's not too hard at "Pease upon a Trancher," and it upon a Sunday, too! Whirroo, gintlemen, the fun's in yez, afther all—whish! more power to yez!'

"The sorra's own fun they had, an' no wondher; but judge of what they felt when all at once they saw ould Jack Rafferty himself bouncin' in among them, an' footin' it away like the best of them. Bedad, no play could come up to it, an' nothin' could be heard but laughin', shouts of encouragement, an' clappin' of hands like mad. Now, the minute Jack Rafferty left the chair, where he had been carvin' the pudden, ould Harry Connolly come over and claps himself down in his place, in ordher to send it round, of coorse; an' he was scarcely sated when who should make his appearance but Barney Hartigan, the piper. Barney, by the way, had been sent for early in the day, but, bein' from home when the message for him came, he couldn't come any sooner.

"'Begorra' says Barney, 'you're airly at the work, gintlemen! But what does this mane? But divel may care, yez shan't want the music, while there's a blast in the pipes, anyhow!' So sayin' he gave them "Jig Polthogue," and afther that, "Kiss my Lady" in his best style.

"In the manetime the fun went on thick and threefold, for it must be remembered that Harry, the ould knave, was at the pudden; an' maybe, he didn't sarve it about in double-quick time, too! The first he helped was the bride, and before you could say chopstick she was at it hard and fast, before the Methodist praycher, who gave a jolly spring before her that threw them all into convulsions. Harry liked this, and made up his mind soon to find partners for the rest; an', to make a long story short, barrin' the piper an' himself, there wasn't a pair of heels in the house but was busy at the dancin' as if their lives depended on it.

"'Barney,' says Harry, 'jist taste a morsel o' this pudden; divil the sich a bully of a pudden ever you ett. Here, your sowl! thry a snig of it—it's beautiful!'

"'To be sure I will,' says Barney. 'I'm not the boy to refuse a good thing. But, Harry, be quick, for you know my hands is engaged, an' it would be a thousand pities not to keep them in music, an' they so well inclined. Thank you, Harry. Begad, that is a fine pudden. But, blood an' turnips! what's this for?'

"The words was scarcely out of his mouth when he bounced up, pipes an' all, and dashed into the middle of the party. 'Hurroo! your sowls, let us make a night of it! The Ballyboulteen boys for ever! Go it, your reverence!—turn your partner—heel and toe, ministher. Good! Well done, again! Whish! Hurroo! Here's for Ballyboulteen, an' the sky over it!'

"Bad luck to sich a set ever was seen together in this world, or will again, I suppose. The worst, however, wasn't come yet, for jist as they were in the very heat' an' fury of the dance, what do you think comes hoppin' in among them but another pudden, as nimble an' merry as the first! That was enough; they had all heard of it—the ministhers among the rest—an' most of them had seen the other pudden, an' knew that there must be a fairy in it, sure enough. Well, as I said, in it comes, to the thick o' them; but the very appearance of it was enough. Off the three clergymen danced, and off the whole weddiners danced, afther them, everyone makin' the best of their way home, but not a sowl of them able to break out of the step, if they were to be hanged for it. Troth, it wouldn't lave a laff in you to see the parson dancin' down the road on his way home, and the ministher and Methodist praycher cuttin' the buckle as they went along in the opposite direction. To make short work of it, they all danced home at last wid scarce a puff of wind in them; and the bride an' bridegroom danced away to bed."

Frank Webber’s Wager.

From “Charles O’Malley.”

By Charles Lever (1806-1872).

I was sitting at breakfast with Webber, when Power came in hastily.

“Ha, the very man!” said he. “I say, O’Malley, here’s an invitation for you from Sir George to dine on Friday. He desired me to say a thousand civil things about his not having made you out, regrets that he was not at home when you called yesterday, and all that.”

“By the way,” said Webber, “wasn’t Sir George Dashwood down in the West lately? Do you know what took him there?”

“Oh,” said Power, “I can enlighten you. He got his wife west of the Shannon—a vulgar woman. She is now dead, and the only vestige of his unfortunate matrimonial connexion is a correspondence kept up with him by a maiden sister of his late wife’s. She insists upon claiming the ties of kindred upon about twenty family eras during the year, when she regularly writes a most loving and ill-spelled epistle, containing the latest information from Mayo, with all particulars of the Macan family, of which she is a worthy member. To her constant hints of the acceptable nature of certain small remittances the poor General is never inattentive; but to the pleasing prospects of a visit in the flesh from Miss Judy Macan, the good man is dead.”

“Then, he has never yet seen her?”

“Never, and he hopes to leave Ireland without that blessing?”

“I say, Power, and has your worthy General sent me a card for his ball?” 73

“Not through me, Master Frank. Sir George must really be excused in this matter. He has a most attractive, lovely daughter, just at that budding, unsuspecting age when the heart is most susceptible of impressions; and where, let me ask, could she run such a risk as in the chance of a casual meeting with the redoubted lady-killer, Master Frank Webber?”

“A very strong case, certainly,” said Frank; “but still, had he confided his critical position to my honour and secrecy, he might have depended on me; now, having taken the other line, he must abide the consequences. I’ll make fierce love to Lucy.”

“But how, may I ask, and when?”

“I’ll begin at the ball, man.”

“Why, I thought you said you were not going?”

“There you mistake seriously. I merely said that I had not been invited.”

“Then, of course,” said I, “Webber, you can’t think of going, in any case, on my account.”

“My very dear friend, I go entirely upon my own. I not only shall go, but I intend to have most particular notice and attention paid me. I shall be prime favourite with Sir George—kiss Lucy—”

“Come, come! this is too strong.”

“What do you bet I don’t? There, now, I’ll give you a pony a-piece, I do. Do you say done?”

“That you kiss Miss Dashwood, and are not kicked downstairs for your pains; are those the terms of your wager?” inquired Power.

“With all my heart. That I kiss Miss Dashwood, and am not kicked downstairs for my pains.”

“Then I say, done!” 74

“And with you, too, O’Malley?”

“I thank you,” said I, coldly; “I’m not disposed to make such a return for Sir George Dashwood’s hospitality as to make an insult to his family the subject of a bet.”

“Why, man, what are you dreaming of? Miss Dashwood will not refuse my chaste salute. Come, Power, I will give you the other pony.”

“Agreed,” said he. “At the same time, understand me distinctly—that I hold myself

perfectly eligible to winning the wager by my own interference; for, if you do kiss her, I'll perform the remainder of the compact."

"So I understand the agreement," said Webber, and off he went.

I have often dressed for a storming party with less of trepidation than I felt on the evening of Sir George Dashwood's ball. It was long since I had seen Miss Dashwood; therefore, as to what precise position I might occupy in her favour was a matter of great doubt in my mind, and great import to my happiness.

Our quadrille over, I was about to conduct her to a seat, when Sir George came hurriedly up, his face greatly flushed, and betraying every semblance of high excitement.

"Read this," said he, presenting a very dirty-looking note.

Miss Dashwood unfolded the billet, and after a moment's silence, burst out a-laughing, while she said, "Why, really, papa, I do not see why this should put you out much, after all. Aunt may be somewhat of a character, as her note evinces; but after a few days——',

"Nonsense, child; there's nothing in this world I have such a dread of as this—and to come 75
at such a time! O'Malley, my boy, read this note, and you will not feel surprised if I appear in the humour you see me."

I read as follows:—

"Dear brother,—When this reaches your hand I'll not be far off. I'm on my way up to town, to be under Dr. Dease for the ould complaint. Expect me to tea; and, with love to Lucy, believe me, yours in haste,

"Judith Macan.

"Let the sheets be well aired in my room; and if you have a spare bed, perhaps you could prevail upon Father Magrath to stop, too."

I scarcely could contain my laughter till I got to the end of this very free-and-easy epistle, when at last I burst forth in a hearty fit, in which I was joined by Miss Dashwood.

"I say, Lucy," said Sir George, "there's only one thing to be done. If this horrid woman does arrive, let her be shown to her room, and for the few days of her stay in town, we'll neither see nor be seen by anyone."

Without waiting for a reply he was turning away, when the servant announced, in his loudest voice, "Miss Macan."

No sooner had the servant pronounced the magical name than all the company present seemed to stand still. About two steps in advance of the servant was a tall, elderly lady, dressed in an antique brocade silk, with enormous flowers gaudily embroidered upon it. Her hair was powdered and turned back, in the fashion of fifty years before. Her short, skinny arms were bare, while on her hands she wore black silk mittens; a pair of green spectacles 76
scarcely dimmed the lustre of a most piercing pair of eyes, to whose effect a very palpable touch of rouge on the cheeks certainly added brilliancy. There she stood, holding before her a fan about the size of a modern tea-tray, while at each repetition of her name by the servant she curtseyed deeply.

Sir George, armed with the courage of despair, forced his way through the crowd, and taking her hand affectionately, bid her welcome to Dublin. The fair Judy, at this, threw her arms about his neck, and saluted him with a hearty smack, that was heard all over the room.

"Where's Lucy, brother? Let me see my little darling," said the lady, in a decided accent. "There she is, I'm sure; kiss me, my honey."

This office Miss Dashwood performed with an effort at courtesy really admirable; while, taking her aunt's arm, she led her to a sofa.

Power made his way towards Miss Dashwood, and succeeded in obtaining a formal introduction to Miss Macan.

"I hope you will do me the favour to dance next set with me, Miss Macan?"

"Really, Captain, it's very polite of you, but you must excuse me. I was never anything great in quadrilles: but if a reel or a jig——"

"Oh, dear aunt, don't think of it, I beg of you!"

“Or even Sir Roger de Coverley,” resumed Miss Macan.

“I assure you, quite equally impossible.”

“Then I’m certain you waltz,” said Power.

“What do you take me for, young man? I hope I know better. I wish Father Magrath heard you ask me that question; and for all your laced jacket——” 77

“Dearest aunt, Captain Power didn’t mean to offend you; I’m certain he——”

“Well, why did he dare to—(sob, sob)—did he see anything light about me, that he—(sob, sob, sob)—oh, dear! oh, dear! is it for this I came up from my little peaceful place in the West?—(sob, sob, sob)—General, George, dear; Lucy, my love, I’m taken bad. Oh, dear! oh, dear! is there any whiskey negus?”

After a time she was comforted.

At supper later on in the evening, I was deep in thought when a dialogue quite near me aroused me from my reverie.

“Don’t, now! don’t, I tell ye; it’s little ye know Galway, or ye wouldn’t think to make up to me, squeezing my foot.”

“You’re an angel, a regular angel. I never saw a woman suit my fancy before.”

“Oh, behave now. Father Magrath says——”

“Who’s he?”

“The priest; no less.”

“Oh! bother him.”

“Bother Father Magrath, young man?”

“Well, then, Judy, don’t be angry; I only means that a dragoon knows rather more of these matters than a priest.”

“Well, then, I’m not so sure of that. But, anyhow, I’d have you to remember it ain’t a Widow Malone you have beside you.”

“Never heard of the lady,” said Power. 78

“Sure, it’s a song—poor creature—it’s a song they made about her in the North Cork when they were quartered down in our county.”

“I wish you’d sing it.”

“What will you give me, then, if I do?”

“Anything—everything—my heart—my life.”

“I wouldn’t give a trauneen for all of them. Give me that old green ring on your finger, then.”

“It’s yours,” said Power, placing it gracefully upon Miss Macan’s finger; “and now for your promise.”

“Well, mind you get up a good chorus, for the song has one, and here it is.”

“Miss Macan’s song!” said Power, tapping the table with his knife.

“Miss Macan’s song!” was re-echoed on all sides; and before the luckless General could interfere, she had begun:—

“Did ye hear of the Widow Malone,
Ohone!
Who lived in the town of Athlone,
Alone?
Oh! she melted the hearts
Of the swains in them parts,
So lovely the widow Malone,
Ohone!
So lovely the Widow Malone.

“Of lovers she had a full score,
Or more;
And fortunes they all had galore,
In store;
From the Minister down
To the Clerk of the Crown,
All were courting the Widow Malone,
Ohone!
All were courting the Widow Malone.

“But so modest was Mrs. Malone,
’Twas known
No one ever could see her alone,
Ohone!
Let them ogle and sigh,
They could ne’er catch her eye,
So bashful the Widow Malone,
Ohone!
So bashful the Widow Malone.

“Till one Mr. O’Brien from Clare,—
How quare,
It’s little for blushing they care,
Down there,
Put his arm round her waist,
Gave ten kisses, at laste,—
‘Oh,’ says he, ‘you’re my Molly Malone,’
My own;
‘Oh,’ says he, ‘you’re my Molly Malone.’

“And the widow they all thought so shy,
My eye!
Ne’er thought of a simper or sigh;
For why?
But ‘Lucius,’ says she,
‘Since you’ve now made so free,
You may marry your Mary Malone,
Ohone!
You may marry your Mary Malone.’
“There’s a moral contained in my song,
Not wrong;
And, one comfort, it’s not very long,
But strong;
If for widows you die,
Larn to kiss, not to sigh,
For they’re all like sweet Mistress Malone,
Ohone!
Oh! they’re very like Mistress Malone.”

Never did song create such a sensation as Miss Macan’s.

“I insist upon a copy of ‘The Widow,’ Miss Macan,” said Power.

“To be sure; give me a call to-morrow—let me see—about two. Father Magrath won’t be at home,” said she, with a coquettish look.

“Where pray, may I pay my respects?”

Power produced a card and pencil, while Miss Macan wrote a few lines, saying, as she handed it—

“There, now, don’t read it here before all the people; they’ll think it mighty indelicate in me to make an appointment.”

Power pocketed the card, and the next minute Miss Macan’s carriage was announced.

When she had taken her departure, “Doubt it who will,” said Power, “she has invited me to

call on her to-morrow—written her address on my card—told me the hour she is certain of being alone. See here!" At these words he pulled forth the card, and handed it to a friend.

Scarcely were the eyes of the latter thrown upon the writing, when he said, "So, this isn't it, Power!"

"To be sure it is, man. Read it out. Proclaim aloud my victory."

Thus urged, his friend read:— 81

"Dear P.,—Please pay to my credit—and soon, mark ye—the two ponies lost this evening. I have done myself the pleasure of enjoying your ball, kissed the lady, quizzed the papa and walked into the cunning Fred Power.—Yours,

"Frank Webber.

"'The Widow Malone, Ohone!' is at your service."

82

Sam Wham and the Sawmont.

By Sir Samuel Ferguson (1810-1886).

"Knieving trouts" (they call it tickling in England) is good sport. You go to a stony shallow at night, a companion bearing a torch; then, stripping to the thighs and shoulders, wade in, grope with your hands under the stones, sods, and other harbourage, till you find your game, then grip him in your "knieve" and toss him ashore.

I remember, when a boy, carrying the splits for a servant of the family, called Sam Wham. Now, Sam was an able young fellow, well-boned and willing, a hard headed cudgel player, and a marvellous tough wrestler, for he had a backbone like a sea serpent—this gained him the name of the Twister and Twiner. He had got into the river, and with his back to me was stooping over a broad stone, when something bolted from under the bank on which I stood, right through his legs. Sam fell with a great splash on his face, but in falling jammed whatever it was against the stone. "Let go, Twister!" shouted I; "'Tis an otter, he will nip a finger off you." "Whist!" sputtered he, as he slid his hand under the water. "May I never read a text again if he isna a sawmont wi' a shoulther like a hog!" "Grip him by the gills, Twister," cried I. "Saul will I!" cried the Twiner; but just then there was a heave, a roll, a splash, a slap like a pistol-shot: down went Sam, and up went the salmon, spun like a shilling at a pitch-and-toss, six feet into the air. I leaped in just as he came to the water, but my foot 83
caught between two stones, and the more I pulled the firmer it stuck. The fish fell into the spot shallower than that from which he had leaped. Sam saw the chance, and tackled to again; while I, sitting down in the stream as best I might, held up my torch, and cried, "Fair play!" as, shoulder to shoulder, through, out, and about, up and down, roll and tumble, to it they went, Sam and the salmon. The Twister was never so twined before. Yet, through cross-buttocks and capsizes innumerable, he still held on; now haled through a pool; now haling up a bank; now heels over head; now head over heels; now, head over heels together, doubled up in a corner; but at last stretched fairly on his back, and foaming for rage and disappointment; while the victorious salmon, slapping the stones with its tail, and whirling the spray from its shoulders at every roll, came boring and snoring up the ford. I tugged and strained to no purpose; he flashed by me with a snort, and slid into deep water. Sam now staggered forward with battered bones and pilled elbows, blowing like a grampus, and cursing like nothing but himself. He extricated me, and we limped home. Neither rose for a week; for I had a dislocated ankle, and the Twister was troubled with a broken rib. Poor Sam! He had his brains discovered at last by a poker in a row, and was worm's meat within three months; yet, ere he died, he had the satisfaction of feasting on his old antagonist, who was man's meat next morning. They caught him in a net. Sam knew him by the twist in his tail.

84

Darby Doyle's Voyage to Quebec.

From "The Dublin Penny Journal," 1832.

By Thomas Ettingsall (17——1850).

I tuck the road one fine morning in May, from Inchegelagh, an' got up to the Cove safe an' sound. There I saw many ships with big broad boords fastened to ropes, every one ov them saying "The first vessel for Quebec." Siz I to myself, those are about to run for a wager; this one siz she'll be first, and that one siz she'll be first. I pitched on one that was finely painted. When I wint on boord to ax the fare, who shou'd come up out ov a hole but Ned Flinn, an ould townsman ov my own.

"Och, is it yoorself that's there, Ned?" siz I; "are ye goin' to Amerrykey?"

"Why, an' to be shure," sez he; "I'm *mate* ov the ship."

"Meat! that's yer sort, Ned," siz I; "then we'll only want bread. Hadn't I betther go and pay my way?"

"You're time enough," siz Ned; "I'll tell you when we're ready for sea—leave the rest to me, Darby."

"Och, tip us your fist," siz I; "you were always the broath of a boy; for the sake ov ould times, Ned, we must have a dhrop ov drink, and a bite to ate."

Many's the squeeze Ned gave my fist, telling me to leave it all to him, and how comfortable he'd make me on the voyage. Day afther day we spint together, waitin' for the wind, till I found my pockets begin to grow very light. At last, siz he to me, one day afther 85
dinner:—

"Darby, the ship will be ready for sea on the morrow—you'd betther go on boord an' pay your way."

"Is it jokin' you are, Ned?" siz I; "shure you tould me to leave it all to you."

"Ah! Darby," siz he, "you're for takin' a rise out o' me. But I'll stick to my promise; only, Darby, you must pay your way."

"O, Ned," says I, "is this the way you're goin' to threat me after all? I'm a rooin'd man; all I cou'd scrape together I spint on you. If you don't do something for me, I'm lost. Is there no place where you cou'd hide me from the captin?"

"Not a place," siz Ned.

"An' where, Ned, is the place I saw you comin' up out ov?"

"O, Darby, that was the hould where the cargo's stow'd."

"An' is there no other place?" siz I.

"Oh, yes," siz he, "where we keep the wather casks."

"An' Ned," siz I, "does anyone live down there?"

"Not a mother's soul," siz he.

"An' Ned," siz I, "can't you cram me down there, and give me a lock ov straw an' a bit?"

"Why, Darby," siz he (an' he look'd mighty pittyfull), "I must thry. But mind, Darby, you'll have to hide all day in an empty barrel, and when it comes to my watch, I'll bring you down some prog; but if you're diskiver'd, it's all over with me, an' you'll be put on a dissilute island to starve."

"O Ned," siz I, "leave it all to me."

When night cum on I got down into the dark cellar, among the barrels; and poor Ned every 86
night brought me down hard black cakes an' salt meat. There I lay snug for a whole month. At last, one night, siz he to me:—

"Now, Darby, what's to be done? we're within three days' sail ov Quebec; the ship will be overhauled, and all the passengers' names call'd over."

"An' is that all that frets you, my jewel," siz I; "just get me an empty meal-bag, a bottle, an' a bare ham bone, and that's all I'll ax."

So Ned got them for me, anyhow.

“Well, Ned,” siz I, “you know I’m a great shwimmer; your watch will be early in the morning; I’ll just slip down into the sea; do you cry out ‘There’s a man in the wather,’ as loud as you can, and leave all the rest to me.”

Well, to be sure, down into the sea I dropt without as much as a splash. Ned roared out with the hoarseness of a brayin’ ass—

“A man in the sea, a man in the sea!”

Every man, woman, and child came running up out of the holes, and the captain among the rest, who put a long red barrel, like a gun, to his eye—I thought he was for shootin’ me! Down I dived. When I got my head over the wather agen, what shou’d I see but a boat rowin’ to me. When it came up close, I roared out—

“Did ye hear me at last?”

The boat now run ‘pon the top ov me; I was gript by the scruff ov the neck, and dragg’d into it.

“What hard look I had to follow yees, at all at all—which ov ye is the masther?” says I.

“There he is,” siz they, pointin’ to a little yellow man in a corner of the boat. 87

“You yallow-lookin’ monkey, but it’s a’most time for you to think ov lettin’ me into your ship—I’m here plowin’ and plungin’ this month afther you; shure I didn’t care a thrawneen was it not that you have my best Sunday clothes in your ship, and my name in your books.”

“An’ pray, what is your name, my lad?” siz the captain.

“What’s my name! What i’d you give to know?” siz I, “ye unmannerly spalpeen, it might be what’s your name, Darby Doyle, out ov your mouth—ay, Darby Doyle, that was never afraid or ashamed to own it at home or abroad!”

“An’, Mr. Darby Doyle,” siz he, “do you mean to persuade us that you swam from Cork to this afther us?”

“This is more ov your ignorance,” siz I—“ay, an’ if you sted three days longer and not take me up, I’d be in Quebec before ye, only my purvisions were out, and the few rags of bank notes I had all melted into paste in my pocket, for I hadn’t time to get them changed. But stay, wait till I get my foot on shore; there’s ne’er a cottoner in Cork iv you don’t pay for leavin’ me to the marcy ov the waves.”

At last we came close to the ship. Everyone on board saw me at Cove but didn’t see me on the voyage; to be sure, everyone’s mouth was wide open, crying out, “Darby Doyle!”

“It’s now you call me loud enough,” siz I, “ye wouldn’t shout that way when ye saw me rowlin’ like a tub in a mill-race the other day fornenst your faces.” When they heard me say 88
that, some of them grew pale as a sheet. Nothin’ was tawked ov for the other three days but Darby Doyle’s great shwim from Cove to Quebec.

At last we got to Ammerykey. I was now in a quare way; the captain wouldn’t let me go till a friend of his would see me. By this time, my jewel, not only his friends came, but swarms upon swarms, starin’ at poor Darby. At last I called Ned.

“Ned, avic,” siz I, “what’s the meanin’ ov the boords acrass the stick the people walk on, and the big white boord up there?”

“Why, come over and read,” siz Ned. I saw in great big black letters:—

THE GREATEST WONDHER IN THE WORLD!!!
TO BE SEEN HERE,

A Man that beats out Nicholas the Diver!
He has swum from Cork to Amerrykey!!
Proved on oath by ten of the crew and twenty passengers.
Admittance Half a Dollar.

“Ned,” siz I, “does this mean your humble sarvint?”

“Not another,” siz he.

So I makes no more ado, than with a hop, skip, and jump, gets over to the captain, who was now talkin' to a yallow fellow that was afther starin' me out ov countenance.

"Ye are doin' it well," said I. "How much money have ye gother for my shwimmin'?"

"Be quiet, Darby," siz the captain, and he looked very much frickened. "I have plenty, an' I'll have more for ye iv ye do what I want ye to do."

"An' what is it, avic?" siz I.

"Why, Darby," siz he, "I'm afther houldin a wager last night with this gintleman for all the worth ov my ship, that you'll shwim against any shwimmer in the world; an', Darby, if ye don't do that, I'm a gone man." 89

"Augh, give us your fist," siz I; "did ye ever hear ov Paddies dishaving any man in the European world yet—barrin' themselves?"

"Well, Darby," siz he, "I'll give you a hundred dollars; but, Darby, you must be to your word, and you shall have another hundred."

So sayin', he brought me down to the cellar.

"Now, Darby," siz he, "here's the dollars for ye."

But it was only a bit of paper he was handin' me.

"Arrah, none ov yer tricks upon thravellers," siz I; "I had betther nor that, and many more ov them, melted in the sea; give me what won't wash out of my pocket."

"Well, Darby," siz he, "you must have the real thing."

So he reckoned me out a hundred dollars in goold. I never saw the like since the stockin' fell out ov the chimly on my aunt and cut her forred.

"Now, Darby," siz he, "ye are a rich man, and ye are worthy of it all."

At last the day came that I was to stand the tug. I saw the captain lookin' very often at me. At last—

"Darby," siz he, "are you any way cow'd? The fellow you have to shwim agenst can shwim down watherfalls an' catharacts."

"Can he, avic?" siz I; "but can he shwim up agenst them?"

An' who shou'd come up while I was tawkin' to the captain but the chap I was to shwim with, and heard all I sed. He was so tall that he could eat bread an' butther over my head—with a face as yallow as a kite's foot. 90

"Tip us the mitten," siz I, "mabouchal," siz I; "Where are we going to shwim to? What id ye think if we swum to Keep Cleer or the Keep ov Good Hope?"

"I reckon neither," siz he.

Off we set through the crowds ov ladies an' gintlemen to the shwimmin' place. And as I was goin' I was thript up by a big loomp ov iron struck fast in the ground with a big ring to it.

"What d'ye call that?" siz I to the captain, who was at my elbow.

"Why, Darby," siz he, "that's half an anchor."

"Have ye any use for it?" siz I.

"Not in the least," siz he; "it's only to fasten boats to."

"Maybee you'd give it to a body," siz I.

"An' welkim, Darby," siz he; "it's yours."

"God bless your honour, sir," siz I, "it's my poor father that will pray for you. When I left home the creather hadn't as much as an anvil but what was sthreeled away by the agint—bad end to them. This will be jist the thing that'll match him; he can tie the horse to the ring while he forges on the other part. Now, will ye obleege me by gettin' a couple ov chaps to lay it on my shoulder when I get into the wather, and I won't have to be comin' back for it afther I shake hands with this fellow."

Oh, the chap turned from yallow to white when he heard me say this. An' siz he to the

gintleman that was walkin' by *his* side—

"I reckon I'm not fit for the shwimmin' to-day—I don't feel *myself*." 91

"An', murdher an' Irish, if you're yer brother, can't you send him for yerself, an' I'll wait here till he comes. An' when will ye be able for the shwim, avic?" siz I, mighty complisant.

"I reckon in another week," siz he.

So we shook hands and parted. The poor fellow went home, took the fever, then began to rave. "Shwim up catharacts!—shwim to the Keep ov Good Hope!—shwim to St. Helena!—shwim to Keep Clear!—shwim with an anchor on his back!—oh! oh! oh!"

I now thought it best to be on the move; so I gother up my winners; and here I sit undher my own hickory threes, as independent as anny Yankee.

92

Bob Burke's Duel.

From "Tales from Blackwood."

By Dr. Maginn.

How Bob Burke, after Consultation with Wooden-Leg Waddy, Fought the Duel with Ensign Brady for the sake of Miss Theodosia MacNamara, Supposed Heiress to her Old Bachelor Uncle, Mick MacNamara of Kawleash.

"At night I had fallen asleep fierce in the determination of exterminating Brady; but with the morrow, cool reflection came—made probably cooler by the aspersion I had suffered. How could I fight him, when he had never given me the slightest affront? To be sure, picking a quarrel is not hard, thank God, in any part of Ireland; but unless I was quick about it, he might get so deep into the good graces of Dosy, who was as flammable as tinder, that even my shooting him might not be of any practical advantage to myself. Then, besides, he might shoot me; and, in fact, I was not by any means so determined in the affair at seven o'clock in the morning as I was at twelve o'clock at night. I got home, however, dressed, shaved, etc., and turned out. 'I think,' said I to myself, 'the best thing I can do, is to go and consult Wooden-Leg Waddy; and, as he is an early man, I shall catch him now.' The thought was no sooner formed than executed; and in less than five minutes I was walking with Wooden-Leg Waddy in his garden, at the back of his house, by the banks of the Blackwater.

"Waddy had been in the Hundred-and-First, and had seen much service in that distinguished corps. 93

"Waddy had served a good deal, and lost his leg somehow, for which he had a pension besides his half-pay, and he lived in ease and affluence among the Bucks of Mallow. He was a great hand at settling and arranging duels, being what we generally call in Ireland a judgmatical sort of man—a word which, I think, might be introduced with advantage into the English vocabulary. When I called on him, he was smoking his meerschaum, as he walked up and down his garden in an old undressed coat, and a fur cap on his head. I bade him good morning; to which salutation he answered by a nod, and a more prolonged whiff.

"'I want to speak to you, Wooden-Leg,' said I, 'on a matter which nearly concerns me,' to which I received another nod, and another whiff in reply.

"'The fact is,' said I, 'that there is an Ensign Brady of the 48th Quartered here, with whom I have some reason to be angry, and I am thinking of calling him out. I have come to ask your advice whether I should do so or not. He has deeply injured me, by interfering between me and the girl of my affection. What ought I to do in such a case?'

"'Fight him, by all means,' said Wooden-Leg Waddy.

"'But the difficulty is this—he has offered me no affront, direct or indirect—we have no quarrel whatever—and he has not paid any addresses to the lady. He and I have scarcely been in contact at all. I do not see how I can manage it immediately with any propriety. What then can I do now?'

“‘Do not fight him, by any means,’ said Wooden-Leg Waddy.

“‘Still, these are the facts of the case. He, whether intentionally or not, is coming between 94
me and my mistress, which is doing me an injury perfectly equal to the grossest insult. How should I act?’

“‘Fight him by all means,’ said Wooden-Leg Waddy.

“‘But then, I fear if I were to call him out on a groundless quarrel, or one which would appear to be such, that I should lose the good graces of the lady, and be laughed at by my friends, or set down as a dangerous and quarrelsome companion.’

“‘Do not fight him, by any means,’ said Wooden-Leg Waddy.

“‘Yet, as he is a military man, he must know enough of the etiquette of these affairs to feel perfectly confident that he has affronted me; and the opinion of the military man, standing, as of course, he does, in the rank and position of a gentleman, could not, I think, be overlooked without disgrace.’

“‘Fight him, by all means,’ said Wooden-Leg Waddy.

“‘But then, talking of gentlemen, I own he is an officer of the 48th, but his father is a fish-tackle seller in John Street, Kilkenny, who keeps a three-halfpenny shop, where you may buy everything from a cheese to a cheese-toaster, from a felt hat to a pair of brogues, from a pound of brown soap to a yard of huckaback towels. He got his commission by his father’s retiring from the Ormonde Interest, and acting as whipper-in to the sham freeholders from Castlecomer; and I am, as you know, of the best blood of the Burkes—straight from the De Burgos themselves—and when I think of that I really do not like to meet this Mr. Brady.’

“‘Do not fight him, by all means,’ said Wooden-Leg Waddy.

“‘Why,’ said I, ‘Wooden-Leg, my friend, this is like playing battledore and shuttlecock; 95
what is knocked forward with one hand is knocked back with the other. Come, tell me what I ought to do.’

“‘Well,’ said Wooden-Leg, taking the meerschaum out of his mouth, ‘in dubiis auspice, etc. Let us decide by tossing a halfpenny. If it comes down ‘head,’ you fight—if ‘harp’ you do not. Nothing can be fairer.’

“I assented.

“‘Which,’ said he, ‘is it to be—two out of three, as at Newmarket, or the first toss to decide?’

“‘Sudden death,’ said I, ‘and there will soon be an end of it.’

“Up went the halfpenny, and we looked with anxious eyes for its descent, when, unluckily, it stuck in a gooseberry bush.

“‘I don’t like that,’ said Wooden-Leg Waddy, ‘for it’s a token of bad luck. But here goes again.’

“Again the copper soared to the sky, and down it came—Head.

“‘I wish you joy, my friend’ said Waddy; ‘you are to fight. That was my opinion all along; though I did not like to commit myself. I can lend you a pair of the most beautiful duelling-pistols ever put into a man’s hand—Wogden’s, I swear. The last time they were out, they shot Joe Brown, of Mount Badger, as dead as Harry the Eight.’

“‘Will you be my second?’ said I.

“‘Why, no,’ replied Wooden-leg, ‘I cannot; for I am bound over by a rascally magistrate to keep the peace, because I nearly broke the head of a blackguard bailiff, who came here to serve a writ on a friend of mine, with one of my spare legs. But I can get you a second at 96
once. My nephew, Major Mug, has just come to me on a few days’ visit, and, as he is quite idle it will give him some amusement to be your second. Look up at his bedroom—you see he is shaving himself.’

“In a short time the Major made his appearance, dressed with a most military accuracy of costume. There was not a speck of dust on his well-brushed blue surtout—not a vestige of hair, except the regulation whiskers, on his closely-shaven countenance. His hat was brushed to the most glossy perfection—his boots shone in the jetty glow of Day and Martin. There was scarcely an ounce of flesh on his hard and weather-beaten face, and as he stood

rigidly upright, you would have sworn that every sinew and muscle of his body was as stiff as whipcord. He saluted us in military style, and was soon put in possession of the case. Wooden-Leg Waddy insinuated that there were hardly, as yet, grounds for a duel.

"'I differ,' said Major Mug, 'decidedly—the grounds are ample. I never saw a clearer case in my life, and I have been principal or second in seven-and-twenty. If I collect your story rightly, Mr. Burke, he gave you an abrupt answer in the field, which was highly derogatory to the lady in question, and impertinently rude to yourself?'

"'He certainly,' said I, 'gave me what we call a short answer; but I did not notice it at the time, and he has since made friends with the young lady.'

"'It matters nothing,' observed Major Mug, 'what you may think, or she may think. The business is now in my hands, and I must see you through it. The first thing to be done is to write him a letter. Send out for paper—let it be gilt-edged, Waddy,—that we may do the thing genteelly. I'll dictate, Mr. Burke, if you please.'

"And so he did. As well as I can recollect, the note was as follows:—

"'Spa-Walk, Mallow, June 3, 18—

"'Eight o'clock in the morning.

"'Sir,—A desire for harmony and peace, which has at all times actuated my conduct, prevented me, yesterday, from asking you the meaning of the short and contemptuous message which you commissioned me to deliver to a certain young lady of our acquaintance whose name I do not choose to drag into a correspondence. But, now that there is no danger of its disturbing anyone, I must say that in your desiring me to tell that young lady she might consider herself as d——d, when she asked you to tea after inadvertently riding over you in the hunting field, you were guilty of conduct highly unbecoming of an officer and a gentleman, and subversive of the discipline of the hunt. I have the honour to be, sir,

"'Your most obedient humble servant,
"'Robert Burke.

"'P.S.—This note will be delivered to you by my friend, Major Mug, of the 3rd West Indian; and you will, I trust, see the propriety of referring him to another gentleman without further delay.'

"'That, I think, is neat,' said the Major. 'Now, seal it with wax, Mr. Burke, with wax—and let the seal be your arms. That's right. Now direct it.'

"'Ensign Brady?'

"'No—no—the right thing would be, 'Mr. Brady, Ensign, 48th Foot,' but custom allows 'Esquire,' that will do.—'Thady Brady, Esquire, Ensign, 48th Foot, Barracks, Mallow.' He shall have it in less than a quarter of an hour.'

"The Major was as good as his word, and in about half-an-hour he brought back the result of his mission. The Ensign, he told us, was extremely reluctant to fight, and wanted to be off on the ground that he meant no offence, did not even remember having used the expression, and offered to ask the lady if she conceived for a moment he had any idea of saying anything but what was complimentary to her.

"'In fact,' said the Major, 'he at first plumply refused to fight; but I soon brought him to reason. 'Sir,' said I, 'you either consent to fight or refuse to fight. In the first case, the thing is settled to hand, and we are not called upon to inquire if there was an affront or not—in the second case, your refusal to comply with a gentleman's request is, of itself, an offence for which he has a right to call you out. Put it, then, on the grounds, you must fight him, it is perfectly indifferent to me what the grounds may be; and I have only to request the name of your friend, as I too much respect the coat you wear to think that there can be any other alternative.' This brought the chap to his senses, and he referred me to Captain Codd, of his own regiment, at which I felt much pleased, because Codd is an intimate friend of my own, he and I having fought a duel three years ago in Falmouth, in which I lost the top of this little finger, and he his left whisker. It was a near touch, he is as honourable a man as ever paced a ground; and I am sure that he will no more let his man off the field until business is done than I would myself.'

"I own," continued Burke, "I did not half relish this announcement of the firm purpose to our seconds; but I was in for it, and could not get back. I sometimes thought Dosy a dear

purchase at such an expense; but it was no use to grumble. Major Mug was sorry to say that there was a review to take place immediately at which the Ensign must attend, and it was impossible for him to meet me until the evening; 'but,' he added, 'at this time of the year it can be of no great consequence. There will be plenty of light till nine, but I have fixed seven. In the meantime you may as well divert yourself with a little pistol practice, but do it on the sly, as, if they were shabby enough to have a trial it would not tell well before the jury.'

"Promising to take a quiet chop with me at five, the Major retired, leaving me not quite contented with the state of affairs. I sat down and wrote a letter to my cousin, Phil Burdon, of Kanturk, telling him what I was about and giving directions what was to be done in the case of any fatal event. I communicated to him the whole story—deplored my unhappy fate in being thus cut off in the flower of my youth—left him three pairs of buckskin breeches—and repented my sins. This letter I immediately packed off by a special messenger, and then began a half-a-dozen others, of various styles of tenderness and sentimentality, to be delivered after my melancholy decease. The day went off fast enough, I assure you; and at five the Major, and Wooden-Leg Waddy, arrived in high spirits.

"'Here, my boy,' said Waddy, handing me the pistols, 'here are the flutes; and pretty music, I can tell you, they make.'

"'As for dinner,' said Major Mug, 'I do not much care; but, Mr. Burke, I hope it is ready, as 100
I am rather hungry. We must dine lightly, however, and drink not much. If we come off with flying colours, we may crack a bottle together by-and-by; in case you shoot Brady, I have everything arranged for our keeping out of the way until the thing blows over—if he shoots you, I'll see you buried. Of course, you would not recommend anything so ungenteel as a prosecution? No. I'll take care it shall appear in the papers, and announced that Robert Burke, Esq., met his death with becoming fortitude, assuring the unhappy survivor that he heartily forgave him, and wished him health and happiness.'

"'I must tell you,' said Wooden-Leg Waddy, 'it's all over Mallow and the whole town will be on the ground to see it. Miss Dosy knows of it, and she is quite delighted—she says she will certainly marry the survivor. I spoke to the magistrate to keep out of the way, and he promised that, though it deprived him of a great pleasure he would go and dine five miles off—and know nothing about it. But here comes dinner, let us be jolly.'

"I cannot say that I played on that day as brilliant a part with the knife and fork as I usually do, and did not sympathise much in the speculations of my guests, who pushed the bottle about with great energy, recommending me, however, to refrain. At last the Major looked at his watch, which he had kept lying on the table before him from the beginning of dinner—started up—clapped me on the shoulder, and declaring it only wanted six minutes and thirty-five seconds of the time, hurried me off to the scene of action—a field close by the castle.

"There certainly was a miscellaneous assemblage of the inhabitants of Mallow, all anxious 101
to see the duel. They had pitted us like game-cocks, and bets were freely taken as to the chances of our killing one another, and the particular spots. One betted on my being hit in the jaw, another was so kind as to lay the odds on my knee. The tolerably general opinion appeared to prevail that one or other of us was to be killed; and much good-humoured joking took place among them while they were deciding which. As I was double the thickness of my antagonist, I was clearly the favourite for being shot, and I heard one fellow near me say, 'Three to two on Burke, that he's shot first—I bet in tenpennies.'

"Brady and Codd soon appeared, and the preliminaries were arranged with much punctilio between our seconds, who mutually and loudly extolled each other's gentleman-like mood of doing business. Brady could scarcely stand with fright, and I confess that I did not feel quite as Hector of Troy, or the Seven Champions of Christendom are reported to have done on similar occasions. At last the ground was measured—the pistols handed to the principals—the handkerchief dropped—whiz! went the bullet within an inch of my ear—and crack! went mine exactly on Ensign Brady's waistcoat pocket. By an unaccountable accident, there was a five shilling piece in that very pocket, and the ball glanced away, while Brady doubled himself down, uttering a loud howl that might be heard half-a-mile off. The crowd was so attentive as to give a huzza for my success.

"Codd ran up to his principal, who was writhing as if he had ten thousand colics, and soon ascertained that no harm was done.

"'What do you propose,' said he to my second—'What do you propose to do, Major?' 102

"'As there is neither blood drawn nor bone broken,' said the Major, 'I think that shot goes

for nothing.’

“‘I agree with you,’ said Captain Codd.

“‘If your party will apologise,’ said Major Mug, ‘I’ll take my man off the ground.’

“‘Certainly,’ said Captain Codd, ‘you are quite right, Major, in asking the apology, but you know that it is my duty to refuse it.’

“‘You are correct, Captain,’ said the Major; ‘I then formally require that Ensign Brady apologise to Mr. Burke.’

“‘I, as formally, refuse it,’ said Captain Codd.

“‘We must have another shot then,’ said the Major.

“‘Another shot, by all means,’ said the Captain.

“‘Captain Codd,’ said the Major, ‘you have shown yourself in this, as in every transaction of your life, a perfect gentleman.’

“‘He who would dare to say,’ replied the Captain, ‘that Major Mug is not among the most gentleman-like men in the service, would speak what is untrue.’

“Our seconds bowed, took a pinch of snuff together, and proceeded to load the pistols. Neither Brady nor I were particularly pleased at these complimentary speeches of the gentlemen, and, I am sure, had we been left to ourselves, would have declined the second shot. As it was, it appeared inevitable.

“Just, however, as the process of loading was completing, there appeared on the ground my cousin Phil Purdon, rattling in on his black mare as hard as he could lick—

“‘I want to speak to the plaintiff in this action—I mean, to one of the parties in this duel. I want to speak to you, Bob Burke.’ 103

“‘The thing is impossible, sir,’ said Major Mug.

“‘Perfectly impossible, sir,’ said Codd.

“‘Possible or impossible is nothing to the question,’ shouted Purdon; ‘Bob, I must speak to you.’

“‘It is contrary to all regulation,’ said the Major.

“‘Quite contrary,’ said the Captain.

“Phil, however, persisted, and approached me: ‘Are you fighting about Dosy Mac?’ said he to me, in a whisper.

“‘Yes,’ I replied.

“‘And she is to marry the survivor, I understand?’

“‘So I am told,’ said I.

“‘Back out, Bob, then; back out, at the rate of a hunt. Old Mick MacNamara is married.’

“‘Married!’ I exclaimed.

“‘Poz,’ said he. ‘I drew the articles myself. He married his housemaid, a girl of eighteen; and,’ here he whispered.

“‘What,’ I cried, ‘six months!’

“‘Six months,’ said he, ‘an’ no mistake.’

“‘Ensign Brady,’ said I, immediately coming forward, ‘there has been a strange misconception in this business. I here declare, in presence of this honourable company, that you have acted throughout like a man of honour, and a gentleman; and you leave the ground without a stain on your character.’

“Brady hopped three feet off the ground with joy at the unexpected deliverance. He forgot all etiquette, and came forward to shake me by the hand.

“‘My dear Burke,’ said he, ‘it must have been a mistake: let us swear eternal friendship.’

“‘For ever,’ said I. ‘I resign you Miss Theodosia.’ 104

“‘You are too generous,’ he said, ‘but I cannot abuse your generosity.’

“‘It is unprecedented conduct,’ growled Major Mug. ‘I’ll never be second to a Pekin again.’

“‘My principal leaves the ground with honour,’ said Captain Codd, looking melancholy, nevertheless.

“‘Humph!’ grunted Wooden-Leg Waddy, lighting his meerschaum.

“The crowd dispersed much displeased, and I fear my reputation for valour did not rise among them. I went off with Purdon to finish a jug at Carmichael’s, and Brady swaggered off to Miss Dosy’s. His renown for valour won her heart. It cannot be denied that I sunk deeply in her opinion. On that very evening Brady broke his love, and was accepted. Mrs. Mac. opposed, but the red-coat prevailed.

“‘He may rise to be a general,’ said Dosy, ‘and be a knight, and then I will be Lady Brady.’

“‘Or, if my father should be made an earl, angelic Theodosia, you would be Lady Thady Brady,’ said the Ensign.

“‘Beautiful prospect!’ cried Dosy, ‘Lady Thady Brady! What a harmonious sound!’

“But why dally over the detail of my unfortunate loves? Dosy and the Ensign were married before the accident which had befallen her uncle was discovered; and if they were not happy, why, then, you and I may. They have had eleven children, and, I understand, he now keeps a comfortable eating-house close by Cumberland Basin, in Bristol. Such was my duel with Ensign Brady of the 48th.”

105

Billy Malowney’s Taste of Love and Glory.

From “The Purcell Papers.”

By Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-1873).

Let the reader fancy a soft summer evening, the fresh dews falling on bush and flower. The sun has just gone down, and the thrilling vespers of thrushes and blackbirds ring with a wild joy through the saddened air; the west is piled with fantastic clouds, and clothed in tints of crimson and amber, melting away into a wan green, and so eastward into the deepest blue, through which soon the stars will begin to peep.

Let him fancy himself seated upon the low mossy wall of an ancient churchyard, where hundreds of grey stones rise above the sward, under the fantastic branches of two or three half-withered ash-trees, spreading their arms in everlasting love and sorrow over the dead.

The narrow road upon which I and my companion await the tax-cart that is to carry me and my basket, with its rich fruitage of speckled trout, away, lies at his feet, and far below spreads an undulating plain, rising westward into soft hills, and traversed (every here and there visibly) by a winding stream which, even through the mists of evening, catches and returns the funeral glories of the skies.

As the eye traces its wayward wanderings, it loses them for a moment in the heaving verdure of white-thorns and ash, from among which floats from some dozen rude chimneys, mostly unseen, the transparent blue film of turf smoke. There we know, although we cannot see it, the steep old bridge of Carrickdrum spans the river; and stretching away far to the right the valley of Lisnamoe; its steeps and hollows, its straggling hedges, its fair-green, its tall scattered trees, and old grey tower, are disappearing fast among the discoloured tints and blaze of evening.

106

Those landmarks, as we sit listlessly expecting the arrival of our modest conveyance, suggest to our companion—a bare-legged Celtic brother of the gentle craft, somewhat at the wrong side of forty, with a turf-coloured caubeen, patched frieze, a clear brown complexion, dark-grey eyes and a right pleasant dash of roguery in his features—the tale, which, if the reader pleases, he is welcome to hear along with me just as it falls from the lips of our humble comrade.

His words I can give, but your own fancy must supply the advantages of an intelligent, expressive countenance, and what is, perhaps, harder still, the harmony of his glorious brogue, that, like the melodies of our own dear country, will leave a burden of mirth or of sorrow with nearly equal propriety, tickling the diaphragm as easily as it plays with the heart-strings, and is in itself a national music that, I trust, may never, never—scouted and despised though it be—never cease, like the lost tones of our harp, to be heard in the fields of my country, in welcome or endearment, in fun or in sorrow, stirring the hearts of Irishmen and Irish women.

My friend of the caubeen and naked shanks, then, commenced, and continued his relation, as nearly as possible, in the following words:—

Av coorse ye often heerd talk of Billy Malowney, that lived by the bridge of Carrickadrum. “Leumarinka” was the name they put on him, he was sich a beautiful dancer. An’ faix, it’s he 107
was the rale sportin’ boy, every way—killin’ the hares, and gaffin’ the salmons, an’ fightin’ the men, an’ funnin’ the women, and coortin’ the girls; an’, be the same token, there was not a colleen inside iv his jurisdiction but was breakin’ her heart wid the fair love iv him.

Well, this was all pleasand enough, to be sure, while it lasted; but inhuman beings is born to misfortune, an’ Bill’s divarshin was not to last always. A young boy can’t be continually coortin’ and kissin’ the girls (an’ more’s the pity) without exposin’ himself to the most eminent parril; an’ so signs an’ what should happen Billy Malowney himself, but to fall in love at last wid little Molly Donovan, in Coolamoe.

I never could ondherstand why in the world it was Bill fell in love wid her, above all the girls in the country. She was not within four stone weight iv being as fat as Peg Brallaghan; and as for redness in the face, she could not hould a candle to Judy Flaherty. (Poor Judy! she was my sweetheart, the darlin’, an’ coorted me constant, ever entil she married a boy of the Butlers; an’ it’s twenty years now since she was buried under the ould white-thorn in Garbally. But that’s no matther!).

Well, at any rate, Molly Donovan tuck his fancy an’ that’s everything! She had smooth brown hair—as smooth as silk—an’ a pair iv soft coaxin’ eyes—an’ the whitest little teeth you ever seen; an’, bedad, she was every taste as much in love wid himself as he was.

Well, now, he was raly stupid wid love: there was not a bit of fun left in him. He was good for nothin’ an airth bud sittin’ under bushes, smokin’ tobacky, and sighin’ till you’d wonder 108
how in the world he got wind for it all.

An’, bedad, he was an illigant scholar, moreover an’, so signs by, it’s many’s the song he made about her; an’ if you’d be walkin’ in the evening, a mile away from Carrickadrum, begorra you’d hear him singing out like a bull, all across the country, in her praises.

Well, ye may be sure, ould Tim Donovan and the wife was not a bit too well plased to see Bill Malowney coortin’ their daughter Molly; for, do ye mind, she was the only child they had, and her fortune was thirty-five pounds, two cows, and five illigant pigs, three iron pots, a skillet, an’ a trifle iv poultry in hand; and no one knew how much besides, whenever the Lord id be plased to call the ould people out of the way into glory!

So, it was not likely ould Tim Donovan id be fallin’ in love wid poor Bill Malowney as aisy as the girls did; for, barrin’ his beauty, an’ his gun, an’ his dhudheen, an’ his janious, the divil a taste of property iv any sort or description he had in the wide world!

Well, as bad as that was, Billy would not give in that her father and mother had the smallest taste iv a right to intherfare, good or bad.

“An’ you’re welcome to rafuse me,” says he, “whin’ I ax your lave,” says he; “an’ I’ll ax your lave,” says he, “whenever I want to coort yourselves,” says he; “but it’s your daughter I’m coortin’ at the present,” says he, “an’ that’s all I’ll say,” says he; “for I’d a soon take a doase of salts as be discoursin’ ye,” says he.

So it was a rale blazin’ battle betune himself and the ould people; an’, begorra, there was no soart iv blaguardin’ that did not pass betune them; an’ they put a solemn injection on 109
Molly again seein’ him or meetin’ him for the future.

But it was all iv no use. You might as well be pursuadin’ the birds agin flying, or sthrivin’ to coax the stars out of the sky into your hat, as be talking common sinse to them that’s fairly bothered and burstin’ wid love. There’s nothin’ like it. The toothache and colic together id compose you betther for an argyment than itself. It leaves you fit for nothin’ bud nansinse.

It’s stronger than whisky, for one good drop iv it will make you drunk for one year, and sick, begorra, for a dozen.

It’s stronger than the say, for it’ll carry you round the world an’ never let you sink, in sunshine or storm; an’, begorra, it’s stronger than Death himself, for it is not afeard iv him, bedad, but dares him in every shape.

Bud lovers has quarrels sometimes, and, begorra, when they do, you’d a’most imagine they hated one another like man and wife. An’ so, signs an’, Billy Malowney and Molly Donovan fell out one evening at ould Tom Dundon’s wake; an’ whatever came betune them, she made no more about it but just draws her cloak round her, and away wid herself and the sarvant-girl home again, as if there was not a corpse, or a fiddle, or a taste of divarsion in it.

Well, Billy Malowney follied her down the boreen, to try could he deludher her back again; but, if she was bitther before, she gave it to him in airnest when she got him alone to herself, and to that degree that he wished her safe home, short and sulky enough, an’ walked back again, as mad as the devil himself, to the wake, to pay respect to poor Tom Dundon.

Well, my dear, it was aisy seen there was something wrong wid Billy Malowney, for he 110
paid no attintion for the rest of the evening to any soart of divarsion but the whisky alone; an’ every glass he’d drink it’s what he’d be wishing the divil had the woman, an’ the worst iv bad luck to all soarts iv courting, until, at last, wid the goodness iv the sperits, an’ the badness iv his temper, an’ the constant flusthration iv cursin’, he grew all as one as you might say almost, saving your presince, bastely drunk!

Well, who should he fall in wid, in that childish condition, as he was deploying along the road almost as straight as the letter S, an’ cursin’ the girls, an’ roarin’ for more whisky, but the recruiting-sargent iv the Welsh Confusileers.

So, cute enough, the sargent begins to convarse him, an’ it was not long until he had him sitting in Murphy’s public-house, wid an elegant dandy iv punch before him, an’ the king’s money safe an’ snug in the lowest wrinkle of his breeches pocket.

So away wid him, and the dhrums and fifes playing, an’ a dozen more unforthunate bliggards just listed along with him, an’ he shakin’ hands wid the sargent, and swearin’ agin the women every minute, until, be the time he kem to himself, begorra, he was a good ten miles on the road to Dublin, an’ Molly and all behind him.

It id be no good tellin’ you iv the letters he wrote to her from the barracks there, nor how she was breaking her heart to go and see him just wanst before he’d go; but the father and mother would not allow iv it be no manes.

An’ so in less time than you’d be thinkin’ about it, the colonel had him polished off into a
rale elegant soger, wid his gun exercise, and his bagnet exercise, and his small sword, and 111
broad sword, and pistol and dagger, an’ all the rest, an’ then away wid him on board a man-a-war to furrin parts, to fight for King George agin Bonypart, that was great in them times.

Well, it was very soon in everyone’s mouth how Billy Malowney was batin’ all before him, astonishin’ the ginerals, and frightenin’ the inimy to that degree, there was not a Frinchman dare say parley voo outside of the rounds iv his camp.

You may be sure Molly was proud iv that same, though she never spoke a word about it; until at last news kem home that Billy Malowney was surrounded an’ murdered be the Frinch army, under Napoleon Bonypart himself. The news was brought by Jack Bryan Dhas, the pedlar, that said he met the corporal iv the regiment on the quay iv Limerick, an’ how he brought him into a public-house and thrated him to a naggin, and got all the news about poor Billy Malowney out iv him while they war dhrinkin’ it; an’ a sorrowful story it was.

The way it happened, accordin’ as the corporal tould him, was jist how the Dook iv Wellington detarmined to fight a rale tarin’ battle wid the Frinch, and Bonypart at the same time was aiqually detarmined to fight the divil’s own scrimmidge wid the British foorces.

Well, as soon as the business was pretty near ready at both sides, Bonypart and the general next undher himself gets up behind a bush, to look at their inimies through spy-glasses, and thry would they know any iv them at the distance.

“Bedad!” says the gineral, afther a divil iv a long spy, “I’d bet half a pint,” says he, “that’s Billy Malowney himself,” says he, “down there,” says he.

“Och!” says Bonypart, “do you tell me so?” says he—“I’m fairly heart-scalded with that 112

same Billy Malowney," says he; "an' I think if I wanst got shut iv him, I'd bate the rest of them aisy," says he.

"I'm thinking so myself," says the general, says he; "but he's a tough bye," says he.

"Tough!" says Bonypart, "he's the divil," says he.

"Begorra, I'd be better plased," says the gineral, says he, "to take himself than the Duke iv Willinton," says he, "an' Sir Edward Blakeney into the bargain," says he.

"The Duke of Wellinton and Gineral Blakeney," says Bonypart, "is great for planning, no doubt," says he; "but Billy Malowney's the boy for action," says he—"an' action's everything, just now," says he.

So with that Bonypart pushes up his cocked hat, and begins scratching his head, and thinking and considherin' for the bare life, and at last says he to the gineral:

"Gineral Commandher iv all the Foorces," says he, "I've hot it," says he: "ordher out the forlorn hope," says he, "an' give them as much powdher, both glazed and blasting," says he, "an' as much bullets, do ye mind, an' swan-dhrops an' chainshot," says he, "an' all soorts iv waipons an' combustables as they can carry; an' let them surround Bill Malowney," says he, "an' if they can get any soort iv an advantage," says he, "let them knock him to smithereens," says he, "an' then take him presner," says he; "an' tell all the bandmen iv the Frinch army," says he, "to play up 'Garryowen,' to keep up their sperits," says he, "all the time they're advancin'. And you may promise them anything you like in my name," says he; 113
"for, by my sowl, I don't think it's many iv them 'ill come back to throuble us," says he, winkin' at him.

So away with the gineral, an' he ordhers out the forlorn hope, an' tells the band to play, an' everything else, just as Bonypart desired him. An' sure enough whin Billy Malowney heerd the music where he was standin' taking a blast of the dhudheen to compose his mind for murdherin' the Frinchmen as usual, being mighty partial to that tune intirely, he cocks his ear a one side, an' down he stoops to listen to the music; but, begorra, who should be in his rare all the time but a Frinch grannideer behind a bush, and seeing him stooped in a convenient forum, bedad he let flies at him straight, and fired him right forward between the legs an' the small iv the back, glory be to God! with what they call (saving your presence) a bum-shell.

Well, Bill Malowney let one roar out iv him, an' away he rolled over the field iv battle like a slitther (as Bonypart and the Duke iv Wellington, that was watching the manoeuvres from a distance, both consayved) into glory.

An' sure enough the Frinch was overjoyed beyant all bounds, an' small blame to them—an' the Duke of Wellington, I'm toult, was never all out the same man sinst.

At any rate, the news kem home how Billy Malowney was murdhered by the Frinch in furrin parts.

Well, all this time, you may be sure, there was no want iv boys comin' to coort purty Molly Donovan; but one way ar another, she always kept puttin' them off constant. An' though her father and mother was nathurally anxious to get rid of her respickably, they did not like to 114
marry her off in spite iv her teeth.

An' this way, promising one while and puttin' it off another, she conthrived to get on from one Shrove to another, until near seven years was over and gone from the time when Billy Malowney listed for furrin sarvice.

It was nigh hand a year from the time whin the news iv Leum-a-rinka bein' killed by the Frinch came home, an' in place iv forgettin' him, as the saisins wint over, it's what Molly was growin' paler and more lonesome every day, antil the neighbours thought she was fallin' into a decline; and this is the way it was with her whin the fair of Lisnamoe kem round.

It was a beautiful evenin', just at the time iv the reapin' iv the oats, and the sun was shinin' through the red clouds far away over the hills iv Cahirmore.

Her father an' mother, an' the biys an' girls, was all away down in the fair, and Molly sittin' all alone on the step of the stile, listenin' to the foolish little birds whistlin' among the leaves—and the sound of the mountain-river flowin' through the stones an' bushes—an' the crows flyin' home high overhead to the woods iv Glinvarlogh—an' down in the glen, far away, she could see the fair-green iv Lisnamoe in the mist, an' sunshine among the grey rocks and threes—an' the cows an' horses, an' the blue frieze, an' the red cloaks, an' the

tents, an' the smoke, an' the ould round tower—all as soft an' as sorrowful as a dhrame iv ould times.

An' while she was looking this way, an' thinking iv Leum-a-rinka—poor Bill iv the dance, that was sleepin' in his lonesome glory in the fields of Spain—she began to sing the song he used to like so well in the ould times:

"Shule, shule, shule a-roon;"

an' when she ended the verse, what do you think but she heard a manly voice just at the other side iv the hedge, singing the last words over again! 115

Well she knew it; her heart fluttered up like a little bird that id be wounded, and then dhropped still in her breast. It was himself. In a minute he was through the hedge and standing before her.

"Leum!" says she.

"Mavourneen cuishla machree!" says he; and without another word they were locked in one another's arms.

Well, it id only be nansinse for me thryin' to tell ye all the foolish things they said, and how they looked in one another's faces, an' laughed, an' cried, an' laughed again; and how, when they came to themselves' and she was able at last to believe it was raly Billy himself that was there, actially holdin' her hand, and lookin' in her eyes the same way as ever, barrin' he was browner and boulder, an' did not, maybe, look quite as merry in himself as he used to do in former times—an' fondher for all, an' more lovin' than ever—how he tould her all about the wars wid the Frinchmen—an' how he was wounded, and left for dead in the field of battle, bein' shot through the breast, and how he was discharged, an' got a pinsion iv a full shillin' a day—and how he was come back to live the rest iv his days in the sweet glen iv Lisnamoe, an' (if only she'd consint) to marry herself in spite iv them all.

Well, ye may aisily think they had plinty to talk about, afther seven years without seeing one another; and so signs on, the time flew by as swift an' as pleasant as a bird on the wing, an' the sun wint down, an' the moon shone sweet, yet they didn't mind a ha'port about it, 116 but kept talkin an' whisperin', an' whisperin' an' talkin'; for it's wondherful how often a tinder-hearted girl will bear to hear a purty boy tellin' her the same story constant over an' over; ontil at last, sure enough, they heerd the ould man himself comin' up the boreen, singin' the "Colleen Rue"—a thing he never done barrin' whin he had a dhrop in; an' the misthress walkin' in front iv him an' two illigant Kerry cows he just bought in the fair, an' the sarvint biys dhriving them behind.

"Oh, blessed hour!" says Molly, "here's my father."

"I'll spake to him this minute," says Bill.

"Oh, not for the world," says she; "he's singin' the 'Colleen Rue,'" says she, "and no one dar raison with him," says she.

"An' where'll I go?" says he, "for they're into the haggard an top iv us," says he, "an' they'll see me iv I lep through the hedge," says he.

"Thry the pig-sty," says she, "mavourneen," says she, "in the name iv God," says she.

"Well, darlint," says he, "for your sake," says he, "I'll condescend to them animals," says he.

An' wid that he makes a dart to get in; bud, begorra, it was too late—the pigs was all gone home, and the pig-sty was as full as the Birr coach wid six inside.

"Och! blur-an'-agers," says he, "there is not room for a suckin'-pig," says he, "let alone a Christian," says he.

"Well, run into the house, Billy," says she, "this minute," says she, "an' hide yourself antil they're quiet," says she, "an' thin you can steal out," says she, "anknownst to them all," says she.

"I'll do your biddin'," says he, "Molly asthore," says he. 117

"Run in thin," says she, "an' I'll go an' meet them," says she.

So wid that away wid her, and in wint Billy, an' where did he hide himself bud in a little closet that was off iv the room where the ould man and woman slep'. So he closed the doore,

and sot down in an ould chair he found there convanient.

Well, he was not well in it when all the rest iv them comes into the kitchen, an' ould Tim Donovan singin' the "Colleen Rue" for the bare life, an' the rest i' them sthrivin' to humour him, an doin' exactly everything he bid them, because they seen he was foolish be the manes of the liquor.

Well, to be sure all this kep' them long enough, you may be sure, from goin' to bed, so that Billy could get no manner iv an advantage to get out iv the house, and so he sted sittin' in the dark closet in state, cursin' the "Colleen Rue," and wondhering to the divil whin they'd get the ould man into his bed. An', as if that was not delay enough, who should come in to stop for the night but Father O'Flaherty, of Cahirmore, that was buyin' a horse at the fair! An' av course, there was a bed to be med down for his Raverance, an' some other attintions; an' a long discoorse himself an' ould Mrs. Donovan had about the slaughter iv Billy Malowney, an' how he was buried on the field of battle; an' his Raverance hoped he got a dacent funeral, an' all the other convaniences iv religion. An' so you may suppose it was pretty late in the night before all iv them got to their beds.

Well, Tim Donovan could not settle to sleep at all at all, an' he kep' discoorsin' the wife about the new cows he bought, an' the strippers he sould, an' so on for better than an hour, ontil from one thing to another he kem to talk about the pigs, an' the poulthry, and at last, having nothing betther to discoorse about, he begun at his daughter Molly, an' all the heartscald she was to him be raisin iv refusin' the men. An' at last says he: 118

"I onderstand," says he, "very well how it is," says he. "It's how she was in love," says he, "wid that bliggard, Billy Malowney," says he, "bad luck to him!" says he; for by this time he was coming to his raison.

"Ah!" says the wife, says she, "Tim darlint, don't be cursin' them that's dead an' buried," says she.

"An' why would not I," says he, "if they desarve it?" says he.

"Whisht," says she, "an' listen to that," says she. "In the name of the Blessed Vargin," says she, "what is it?" says she.

An' sure enough what was it bud Bill Malowney that was dhroppin' asleep in the closet, an' snorin' like a church organ.

"Is it a pig," says he, "or is it a Christian?"

"Arra! listen to the tune iv it," says she; "sure a pig never done the like iv that," says she.

"Whatever it is," says he, "it's in the room wid us," says he. "The Lord be marciful to us!" says he.

"I tould you not to be cursin'," says she; "bad luck to you," says she, "for an ommadhaun!" for she was a very religious woman in herself.

"Sure, he's buried in Spain," says he; "an' it is not for one little innocent expression," says he, "he'd be comin' all that way to annoy the house," says he.

Well, while they war talkin,' Bill turns in the way he was sleepin' into an aisier imposture; and as soon as he stopped snorin' ould Tim Donovan's courage riz agin, and says he. 119

"I'll go to the kitchen," says he, "an' light a rish," says he.

An' with that away wid him, an' the wife kep' workin' the beads all the time, an' before they kem back Bill was snorin' as loud as ever.

"Oh! bloody wars—I mane the blessed saints above us!—that deadly sound," says he; "it's going on as lively as ever," says he.

"I'm as wake as a rag," says his wife, says she, "wid the fair anasiness," says she. "It's out iv the little closet it's comin'," says she.

"Say your prayers," says he, "an' hould your tongue," says he, "while I discoorse it," says he. "An' who are ye," says he, "in the name iv all the holy saints?" says he, givin' the door a dab iv a crusheen that wakened Bill inside.

"I ax," says he, "who you are?" says he.

Well, Bill did not rightly remember where in the world he was, but he pushed open the door, an' says he:

“Billy Malowney’s my name,” says he, “an’ I’ll thank ye to tell me a betther,” says he.

Well, whin Tim Donovan heard that, an’ actially seen that it was Bill himself that was in it, he had not strength enough to let a bawl out iv him, but he dhropt the candle out iv his hand, an’ down wid himself on his back in the dark.

Well, the wife let a screech you’d hear at the mill iv Killraghlin, an’—

“Oh,” says she, “the spirit has him, body an’ bones!” says she. “Oh, holy St. Bridget—oh 120
Mother iv Marcy—oh, Father O’Flaherty!” says she, screechin’ murdher from out iv her bed.

Well, Bill Malowney was not a minute rememberin’ himself, an’ so out wid him quite an’ aisy, an’ through the kitchen; bud in place iv the door iv the house, it’s what he kem to the door iv Father O’Flaherty’s little room, where he was jist wakenin’ wid the noise iv the screechin’ an’ battherin’; an’, bedad, Bill makes no more about it, but he jumps, wid one boult, clever an’ clane into his Raverance’s bed.

“What do ye mane, you uncivilised bliggard?” says his Raverance. “Is that a venerable way,” says he, “to approach your clargy?” says he.

“Hould your tongue,” says Bill, “an’ I’ll do ye no harum,” says he.

“Who are you, ye schoundhrel iv the world?” says his Raverance.

“Whisht!” says he, “I’m Bill Malowney,” says he.

“You lie!” says his Raverance—for he was frightened beyont all bearin’—an’ he makes bud one jump out iv the bed at the wrong side, where there was only jist a little place in the wall for a press, an’ his Raverance could not as much as turn in it for the wealth iv kingdoms. “You lie,” says he; “but for fear it’s the thruth you’re tellin’,” says he, “here’s at ye in the name iv all the blessed saints together!” says he.

An’ wid that, my dear, he blazes away at him wid a Latin prayer iv the strongest description, an’, as he said to himself afterwards, that was iv a nature that id dhrive the divil 121
himself up the chimley like a puff iv tobacky smoke, wid his tail betune his legs.

“Arra, what are ye sthrivin’ to say,” says Bill, says he; “if ye don’t hould your tongue,” says he, “wid your parly voo,” says he, “it’s what I’ll put my thumb on your windpipe,” says he, “an’ Billy Malowney never wint back iv his word yet,” says he.

“Thunder-an-owns,” says his Raverance, says he—seein’ the Latin took no infect on him, at all at all, an’ screechin’ that you’d think he’d rise the thatch up iv the house wid the fair fright—“an’ thundher and blazes, boys, will none of yes come here wid a candle, but lave your clargy to be choked by a spirit in the dark?” says he.

Well, be this time the sarvint boys and the rest iv them wor up an’ half dressed, an’ in they all run, one on top iv another, wid pitchforks and spades, thinkin’ it was only what his Raverance slep’ a dhrame iv the like, by means of the punch he was afther takin’ just before he rowl’d himself into the bed. But, begorra, whin they seen it was raly Billy Malowney himself that was in it, it was only who’d be foremost out agin, tumblin’ backways, one over another, and his Raverance roarin’ an’ cursin’ them like mad for not waitin’ for him.

Well, my dear, it was betther than half an hour before Billy Malowney could explain to them all how it raly was himself, for begorra they were all iv them persuadin’ him that he was a spirit to that degree it’s a wondher he did not give in to it, if it was only to put a stop to the argiment.

Well, his Raverance tould the ould people then there was no use in sthrivin’ agin the will iv Providence an’ the vagaries iv love united; an’ whin they kem to undherstand to a sartinty 122
how Billy had a shillin’ a day for the rest iv his days, begorra they took rather a likin’ to him, and considhered at wanst how he must hav riz out of all his nansinse entirely, or His gracious Majesty id never have condescinded to show him his countenance every day of his life on a silver shillin’.

An’ so, begorra, they never stopt till it was all settled—an’ there was not sich a weddin’ as that in the counthry sinst. It’s more than forty years ago, an’ though I was no more nor a gossoon meself, I remimber it like yesterday. Molly never looked so purty before, an’ Billy Malowney was plisant beyont all hearin’, to that degree that half the girls in it was fairly tarin’ mad—only they would not let on—they had not him to themselves in place iv her. An’ begorra, I’d be afeared to tell ye, because you would not believe me, since that blessid man Father Mathew put an ent to all soorts of sociality, the Lord reward him, how many gallons iv pottieen whisky was dhrank upon that most solemn and tindher occaison.

Pat Hanlon, the piper, had a faver out iv it; an' Neddy Shawn Heigue, mountin' his horse the wrong way, broke his collar-bone, by the manes iv fallin' over his tail while he was feelin' for his head; an' Payther Brian, the horse-docther, I am tould, was never quite right in the head ever afther; an' ould Tim Donovan was singin' the "Colleen Rue" night and day for a full week; an', begorra the weddin' was only the foundation iv fun, and the beginning iv divarsion, for there was not a year for ten years afther, an' more, but brought round a christenin' as regular as the sasins revarted.

123

A Pleasant Journey.

From the Confessions of Harry Lorrequer.

By Charles Lever.

I, Harry Lorrequer, was awaiting the mail coach anxiously in the Inn at Naas, when at last there was the sound of wheels, and the driver came into the room, a spectacle of condensed moisture.

"Going on to-night, sir," said he, addressing me; "severe weather, and no chance of its clearing—but, of course, you're inside."

"Why, there is very little doubt of that," said I. "Are you nearly full inside?"

"Only one, sir; but he seems a real queer chap; made fifty inquiries at the office if he could not have the whole inside for himself, and when he heard that one place had been taken—yours, I believe, sir,—he seemed like a scalded bear."

"You don't know his name, then?"

"No, sir, he never gave a name at the office, and his only luggage is two brown paper parcels, without any ticket, and he has them inside: indeed, he never lets them from him, even for a second."

Here the guard's horn sounded.

As I passed from the inn-door to the coach, I congratulated myself that I was about to be housed from the terrific storm of wind and rain that raged without.

"Here's the step, sir," said the guard; "get in, sir, two minutes late already."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said I, as I half fell over the legs of my unseen companion. "May I request leave to pass you?" While he made way for me for this purpose, I perceived that he 124
stooped down and said something to the guard, who, from his answer, had evidently been questioned as to who I was.

"And how did he get here if he took his place in Dublin?" asked the unknown.

"Came half an hour since, sir, in a chaise-and-four," said the guard, as he banged the door behind him, and closed the interview.

"A severe night, sir," said I.

"Mighty severe," briefly and half-crustily replied the unknown, in a strong Cork accent.

"And a bad road, too, sir," said I.

"That's the reason I always go armed," said the unknown, clinking at the same moment something like the barrel of a pistol.

Wondering somewhat at his readiness to mistake my meaning, I felt disposed to drop any further effort to draw him out, and was about to address myself to sleep as comfortably as I could.

"I'll just trouble ye to lean off that little parcel there, sir," said he, as he displaced from its position beneath my elbow one of the paper packages the guard had already alluded to.

In complying with this rather gruff demand one of my pocket pistols, which I carried in my breast-pocket, fell out upon his knee, upon which he immediately started, and asked,

hurriedly: “And are you armed, too?”

“Why yes,” said I laughingly; “men of my trade seldom go without something of this kind.”

“I was just thinking that same,” said the traveller with a half sigh to himself.

I was just settling myself in my corner when I was startled by a very melancholy groan. 125

“Are you ill, sir?” said I, in a voice of some anxiety.

“You may say that,” replied he, “if you knew who you were talking to; although, maybe, you’ve heard enough of me, though you never saw me till now.”

“Without having that pleasure even yet,” said I, “it would grieve me to think you should be ill in the coach.”

“Maybe it might. Did ye ever hear tell of Barney Doyle?” said he.

“Not to my recollection.”

“Then I’m Barney,” said he, “that’s in all the newspapers in the metropolis. I’m seventeen weeks in Jervis Street Hospital, and four in the Lunatic, and the sorra bit better, after all. You must be a stranger, I’m thinking, or you’d know me now.”

“Why, I do confess I’ve only been a few hours in Ireland for the last six months.”

“Aye, that’s the reason; I knew you would not be fond of travelling with me if you knew who it was.”

“Why, really, I did not anticipate the pleasure of meeting you.”

“It’s pleasure ye call it; then there’s no accountin’ for tastes, as Dr. Colles said, when he saw me bite Cusack Rooney’s thumb off.”

“Bite a man’s thumb off!”

“Aye,” said he, with a kind of fiendish animation, “in one chop, I wish you’d see how I scattered the consultation;—they didn’t wait to ax for a fee.”

“A very pleasant vicinity,” thought I. “And may I ask, sir,” said I, in a very mild and soothing tone of voice—“may I ask the reason for this singular propensity of yours?”

“There it is now, my dear,” said he, laying his hand upon my knee familiarly, “that’s just 126
the very thing they can’t make out. Colles says it’s all the cerebellum, ye see, that’s inflamed and combusted, and some of the others think it’s the spine; and more the muscles; but my real impression is, not a bit they know about it at all.”

“And have they no name for the malady?” said I.

“Oh, sure enough they have a name for it.”

“And may I ask——”

“Why, I think you’d better not, because, ye see, maybe I might be troublesome to ye in the night, though I’ll not, if I can help it; and it might be uncomfortable to you to be here if I was to get one of the fits.”

“One of the fits! Why, it’s not possible, sir,” said I, “you would travel in a public conveyance in the state you mention; your friends surely would not permit it?”

“Why, if they knew, perhaps,” slily responded the interesting invalid—“if they knew, they might not exactly like it; but ye see, I escaped only last night, and there’ll be a fine hubbub in the morning when they find I’m off; though I’m thinking Rooney’s barking away by this time.”

“Rooney barking!—why, what does that mean?”

“They always bark for a day or two after they’re bit, if the infection comes first from the dog.”

“You are surely not speaking of *hydrophobia*?” said I, my hair actually bristling with horror and consternation.

“Ain’t I?” replied he; “maybe you’ve guessed it, though.”

“And you have the malady on you at present?” said I trembling for the answer. 127

“This is the ninth day since I took to biting,” said he, gravely.

“And with such a propensity, sir, do you think yourself warranted in travelling in a public coach, exposing others——”

“You’d better not raise your voice that way. If I’m roused it’ll be worse for ye, that’s all.”

“Well, but, is it exactly prudent, in your present delicate state, to undertake a journey?”

“Ah,” said he, with a sigh, “I’ve been longing to see the fox-hounds throw off near Kilkenny; these three weeks I’ve been thinking of nothing else; but I’m not sure how my nerves will stand the cry; I might be troublesome.”

“Well,” thought I, “I shall not select that morning for my début in the field.”

“I hope, sir, there’s no river or watercourse in this road; anything else I can, I hope, control myself against; but water—running water particularly—makes me troublesome.”

Well knowing what he meant by the latter phrase, I felt the cold perspiration settling on my forehead as I remembered that we must be within about ten or twelve miles of a bridge, where we should have to pass a very wide river. I strictly concealed this fact from him, however. He now sank into a kind of moody silence, broken occasionally by a low, muttering noise, as if speaking to himself.

How comfortable my present condition was I need scarcely remark, sitting vis-à-vis to a lunatic, with a pair of pistols in his possession, who had already avowed his consciousness of 128
his tendency to do mischief, and his inability to master it—all this in the dark, and in the narrow limits of a mail-coach, where there was scarcely room for defence, and no possibility of escape. If I could only reach the outside of the coach I would be happy. What were rain and storm, thunder and lightning compared with the chance that awaited me here?—wet through I should inevitably be: but, then, I had not yet contracted the horror of moisture my friend opposite laboured under. Ha! what is that?—is it possible he can be asleep;—is it really a snore? Ah, there it is again;—he must be asleep, surely;—now, then, is my time, or never. I slowly let down the window of the coach, and, stretching forth my hand, turned the handle cautiously and slowly; I next disengaged my legs, and by a long, continuous effort of creeping, I withdrew myself from the seat, reached the step, when I muttered something very like thanksgiving to Providence for my rescue. With little difficulty I now climbed up beside the guard, whose astonishment at my appearance was indeed considerable.

Well, on we rolled, and very soon, more dead than alive, I sat a mass of wet clothes, like a morsel of black and spongy wet cotton at the bottom of a schoolboy’s ink-bottle, saturated with rain and the black dye of my coat. My hat, too, had contributed its share of colouring matter, and several long, black streaks coursed down my “wrinkled front,” giving me very much the air of an Indian warrior who had got the first priming of his war paint. I certainly must have been a rueful object, were I only to judge from the faces of the waiters as they gazed on me when the coach drew up at Rice and Walsh’s Hotel.

Cold, wet, and weary as I was, my curiosity to learn more of my late agreeable companion 129
was strong as ever within me. I could catch a glimpse of his back, and hurried after the great unknown into the coffee room. By the time I entered, he was spreading himself comfortably, *à l’Anglais*, before the fire, and displayed to my wandering and stupefied gaze the pleasant features of Dr. Finucane.

“Why, Doctor—Doctor Finucane,” cried I, “is it possible? Were you, then, really the inside in the mail last night?”

“Not a doubt of it, Mr. Lorrequer; and may I make bould to ask were you the outside?”

“Then what, may I beg to know, did you mean by your story about Barney Doyle, and the hydrophobia, and Cusack Rooney’s thumb—eh?”

“Oh!” said Finucane, “this will be the death of me. And it was you that I drove outside in all the rain last night? Oh, it will kill Father Malachi outright with laughing when I tell him.” And he burst out into a fit of merriment that nearly induced me to break his head with a poker.

“Am I to understand, then, Mr. Finucane, that this practical joke of yours was contrived for my benefit and for the purpose of holding me up to the ridicule of your acquaintances?”

“Nothing of the kind,” said Fin., drying his eyes, and endeavouring to look sorry and sentimental. “If I had only the least suspicion in life that it was you, I’d not have had the hydrophobia at all—and, to tell you the truth, you were not the only one frightened—you alarmed me, too.”

“I alarmed you! Why, how can that be?”

“Why, the real affair is this: I was bringing these two packages of notes down to my cousin Callaghan’s bank in Cork—fifteen thousand pounds, and when you came into the coach at Naas, I thought it was all up with me. The guard just whispered in my ear that he saw you look at the priming of your pistols before getting in. Well, when you got seated, the thought came into my mind that maybe, highwayman as you were, you would not like dying an unnatural death, more particularly if you were an Irishman; and so I trumped up that long story about the hydrophobia, and the gentleman’s thumb, and dear knows what besides; and, while I was telling it, the cold perspiration was running down my head and face, for every time you stirred I said to myself—Now he’ll do it. Two or three times, do you know, I was going to offer you ten shillings in the pound, to spare my life; and once, God forgive me, I thought it would not be a bad plan to shoot you by ‘mistake,’ do you perceive?” 130

“Why, I’m very much obliged to you for your excessively kind intentions; but, really, I feel you have done quite enough for me on the present occasion. But, come now, doctor, I must get to bed, and, before I go, promise me two things—to dine with us to-day at the mess, and not to mention a syllable of what occurred last night: it tells, believe me, very badly for both. So keep the secret; for if these fellows of ours ever get hold of it I may sell out, and quit the army;—I’ll never hear the end of it!”

“Never fear, my boy; trust me. I’ll dine with you, and you’re as safe as a church mouse for anything I’ll tell them; so now, you’d better change your clothes, for I’m thinking it rained last night.”

131

The Battle of Aughrim.

From “Anna Cosgrave,” an unpublished Novel.

By William Carleton.

Many of our readers will be surprised at what we are about to relate. Nay, what is more, we fear they will not yield us credence, but impute it probably to our own invention; whereas we beg to assure them that it is strictly and literally true. The period of the scene we are about to describe may be placed in the year 1806. At the time neither party feeling nor religious animosity had yet subsided after the ferment of the ’98 insurrection and the division between the Catholic and Protestant population was very strong and bitter. The rebellion, which commenced in its first principles among the northern Presbyterians and other Protestant classes in a spirit of independence and a love of liberty, soon, in consequence of the influence of some bigots, assumed the character of a civil war between the two religions,—the most internecine description of war that ever devastated a country or drenched it in blood.

A usual amusement at the time was to reproduce the “Battle of Aughrim,” in some spacious barn, with a winnowing-cloth for the curtain. This play, bound up with “The Siege of Londonderry,” was one of the reading-books in the hedge schools of that day, and circulated largely among the people of all religions: it had, indeed, a most extraordinary influence among the lower classes. “The Battle of Aughrim,” however, because it was written in heroic verse, became so popular that it was rehearsed at almost every Irish hearth, both Catholic and Protestant, in the north. The spirit it evoked was irresistible. The whole country became dramatic. To repeat it at the fireside in winter nights was nothing: the Orangemen should act it, and show to the whole world how the field of Aughrim was so gloriously won. The consequence was that frequent rehearsals took place. The largest and most spacious barns and kilns were fitted up, the night of representation was given out, and crowds, even to suffocation, as they say, assembled to witness the celebrated “Battle of Aughrim.” 132

At first, it was true, the Orangemen had it all to themselves. This, however, could not last. The Catholics felt that they were as capable of patronising the drama as the victors of Aughrim. A strong historic spirit awoke among them. They requested of the Orangemen to be allowed the favour of representing the Catholic warriors of the disastrous field, and, somewhat to their surprise, the request was immediately granted. The Orangemen felt that

there was something awkward and not unlike political apostasy in acting the part of Catholics in the play, under any circumstances, no matter how dramatic. It was consequently agreed that the Orangemen should represent the officers of the great man on whose name and title their system had been founded, and the Catholics should represent their own generals and officers under the name of St. Ruth, Sarsfield, and Colonel O'Neill. The first representation of this well-known play took place in the town of Au——. During the few weeks before the great night nothing was heard but incessant repetitions and rehearsals of the play.

The fact of this enactment of the play by individuals so strongly opposed to each other 133
both in religion and politics excited not only an unusual degree of curiosity, but some apprehension as to the result, especially when such language as this was heard:—

"We licked them before," said the Orangemen, "an' by japers, we'll lick them again. Jack Tait acts General Jingle, an' he's the boy will show them what chance a Papist has against a Prodestan!"

"Well, they bate us at Aughrim," said the Catholics, "but with Tam Whiskey at our head, we'll turn the tebles and lick them now."

Both parties on that night were armed with swords for the battle scene, which represented the result of the engagement. Unfortunately, when the scene came on, instead of the bloodless fiction of the drama they began to slash each other in reality, and had it not been for the interference of the audience there is no doubt that lives would have been lost. After this, swords were interdicted and staves substituted. The consequence, as might have been expected, was that heads were broken on both sides, and a general fight between Protestant and Catholic portions of the actors and the audience ensued.

In the meanwhile the dramatic mania had become an epidemic. Its fascination carried overt opposition before it. A new system was adopted. The Orange party was to be represented by staunch Catholics, all probably Ribbonmen, and the Catholics by the rankest and most violent Orangemen in the parish. This course was resorted to in order to prevent the serious quarrels with which the play generally closed. Such was the state which the dramatic affairs of the parish had reached when the occasion, a summer evening, arrived 134
that had been appointed by the herculean manager, John Tait, for the exhibition of "The Battle of Aughrim," in a large and roomy barn of a wealthy farmer named Jack Stuart, in the townland of Rark.

His house stood on a little swelling eminence beside which an old road ran, and into which the little green before the door sloped. The road, being somewhat lower, passed close to his outhouses, which faced the road, but in consequence of their positions a loft was necessary to constitute the barn, so that it might be level with the haggard on the elevation. The entrance to the barn was by a door in one of the gables, whilst the stable and cow-house, or byre as it was called, were beneath the loft, and had their door open to the road. This accurate description will be found necessary in order to understand what followed.

In preparing the barn for the entertainment, the principal embarrassment consisted in want of seats.

Necessity, however, is well-known to be the mother of invention; and in this case that fact was established at the expense of honest Jack Stuart. Five or six sacks of barley were stretched length-wise on that side of the wall which faced the road. Now, barley, although the juice of it makes many a head light, is admitted to be the heaviest of all grain. On the opposite side, next the haggard, the seats consisted of chairs and forms, some of them borrowed from the neighbours. The curtain (i.e., the winnowing-cloth) was hung up at the south end, and everything, so far as preparation went, was very well managed. Of course, it was unnecessary to say that the entertainment was free to such as could find room, for which there was many an angry struggle.

We have said that from an apprehension that the heroes on both sides might forget the 135
fiction and resort to reality by actual fighting, it had generally been arranged that the Catholic party should be represented by the Orangemen, and *vice versa*; and so it was in this instance. The caste of the piece was as follows:—

Baron de Ginckel (General of the English forces) Tom Whiskey.
(A perfect devil at the cudgels when sober, especially against an Orangeman.)

Marquis de Ruvigny Denis Shevlin.
(Ditto with Tom Whiskey as to fighting.)

General Talmash — Barney Broghan.
(A fighting Blacksmith.)

General Mackay — Dandy Delaney.
(At present on his keeping—but place of birth unknown.)

Colonels Herbert and Earles — Tom M'Roarkin, of Springstown, and Paddy Rafferty, of Dernascrobe.
(Both awfully bellicose, and never properly at peace unless when in a fight.)

The cast of the Catholic leaders was this:—

Monsieur St. Ruth (General of the Irish Forces) — Jacky Vengeance.
(An Orangeman who had lost a brother at the battle of Vinegar Hill, hence the nickname of Vengeance.)

Sarsfield — Big Jack Tait.
(Master of an Orange Lodge.)

(We know not how far the belief in Sarsfield's immense size is true to fact; but be this as it may, we have it from the tradition that he was a man of prodigious stature, and Jack was six feet four in height, and strong in proportion.)

136

General Dorrington — George Twin.
(Of Mallybarry, another man of prowess in party fights, and an Orangeman.)

Colonel Talbot — Lick-Papish Nelson.

Colonel Gordon O'Neill — Fighting Grimes.

Sir Charles Godfrey (a young English gentleman of fortune, in love with Colonel Talbot's Daughter, and volunteer in the Irish army) — Jemmy Lynch, the fighting tailor.
(He fought for his customers, whether Orange or Green, according as they came in his way.)

Jemima (Colonel Talbot's daughter) — Grasey (Grace) Stuart.
(A bouncing virago, at least twelve stone weight.)

Lucinda (wife of Colonel Herbert) — Dolly Stuart.
(Her sister, much of the same proportions.)

Ghost — Cooney Mullowney.
(Of the Bohlies, a townland adjoining.)

On the chairs and forms, being the seats of honour, were placed the Protestant portion of the audience, because they were the most wealthy and consequently the most respectable, at least in the eyes of the world—by which we mean the parish. On the barley-sacks were deposited the "Papishes," because they were then the poor and the downtrodden people, so that they and "the Prodestants" sat on opposite sides of the barn. There were no political watch-words, no "three cheers" for either this man or that, owing to the simple reason that no individual present had ever seen a theatre in his life. The only exception was that of an unfortunate flunkey, who had seen a play in Dublin, and shouted "up with the rag," for which, as it was supposed that he meant to turn the whole thing into ridicule, he was kicked out by the Ghost, who, by the way, was one of the stoutest fellows among them, and would have been allotted to a higher part were it not for the vileness of his memory.

137

At length the play commenced, and went on with remarkable success. The two batches of heroes were in high feather—King William's party (to wit, Tom Whiskey and his friends) standing accidentally on that side of the barn which was occupied by the barley-sacks and the Papishes, and the Catholic generals ranged with the Orange audience on the opposite side. It was now the Ghost's cue to enter from behind the winnowing-cloth, but before the apparition had time to appear, the prompter's attention was struck by a sudden sinking of the party on the sacks, which seemed rather unaccountable. Yet, as it did not appear to have been felt by the parties themselves, who were too much wrapped up in the play, it excited

neither notice nor alarm. At length the Ghost came out, dressed in a white sheet his face rendered quite spectral by flour. Sir Charles Godfrey, alias Jemmy Lynch, the tailor, had just concluded the following words, addressed to the Ghost himself, who in life it appeared had been his father:—

"Oh, I'll sacrifice
A thousand Romish sowls who, shocked with woe,
Shall, bound in shackles, fill the shades below."
Ghost.—"Be not so rash, wild youth——"

He had scarcely uttered the words when a noise like the "crack of doom" was heard: one-half of the barn-floor had disappeared! The Ghost made a step to approach Sir Charles, his son, when the last object we saw was his heels—his legs dressed in blue woollen stockings and his sturdy hinder parts cased in strong corduroys, in the act of disappearing in the abyss beneath. Down he and the others went, and were lodged in the cow-house below amid the warm manure. 138

The consternation, the alarm, the fright and terror among the safe and Protestant side of the audience, could not be described. But the disaster proved to be one of the most harmless for its nature that ever occurred, for it was only destructive to property. Not a single injury was sustained with the exception of that which befell the Ghost, who had his arm dislocated at the elbow. The accident now resumed a religious hue. The Catholics charged the others with the concoction of a Protestant plot, by putting them together on what they called the rotten side of the house. The wrangle became high and abusive, and was fast hastening into polemical theology, when the *dramatis personæ* offered to settle it in a peaceable way, by fighting out the battle on the green. It was the scene of terrible and strong confusion, so much so that all we can glean from our recollection is the image of a desperate personal conflict between the actors whose orange and green ribbons were soon flung off as false emblems of the principles which they had adopted only for the sake of ending the play in a peaceable manner.

139

The Quare Gander.

From "The Purcell Papers."

By Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

Terence Mooney was an honest boy and well-to-do—an' he rinted the biggest farm on this side iv the Galties, an' bein' mighty cute an' a sevare worker, it was small wonder he turned a good penny every harvest; but, unluckily, he was blessed with an ilegant large family iv daughters, an' iv coorse his heart was allamost bruck, strivin' to make up fortunes for the whole of them—an' there wasn't a conthrivance iv any sort of description for makin' money out iv the farm but he was up to. Well, among the other ways he had iv gettin' up in the world, he always kep' a power iv turkies, and all soarts iv poultry; an' he was out iv all raison partial to geese—an' small blame to him for that same—for twiste a year you can pluck them as bare as my hand—an' get a fine price for the feathers, and plenty of rale sizeable eggs—an' when they are too ould to lay any more, you can kill them, an' sell them to the gintlemen for goslings, d'ye see,—let alone that a goose is the most manly bird that is out. Well, it happened in the coorse iv time, that one ould gandher tuck a wondherful likin' to Terence, an' sorra a place he could go serenadin' about the farm, or lookin' afther the men, but the gandher id be at his heels, an' rubbin' himself agin his legs, and lookin' up in his face just like any other Christian id do; and the likes iv it was never seen, Terence Mooney an' the gandher wor so great. An' at last the bird was so engagin' that Terence would not allow it to be plucked any more; an' kept it from that time out for love an' affection; just all as one like one iv his children. But happiness in perfection never lasts long; an' the neighbours begin'd to suspect the nathur and intentions iv the gandher; an' some iv them said it was the divil, and more iv them that it was a fairy. Well Terence could not but hear something of what was sayin', and you may be sure he was not altogether aisy in his mind about it, an' from one day to another he was gettin' more ancomfortable in himself, until he detarmined to sind for Jer 140

Garvan, the fairy docthor in Garryowen, an' it's he was the ilegant hand at the business, and sorra a sperit id say a crass word to him, no more nor a priest; an' moreover, he was very great wid ould Terence Mooney, this man's father that was. So without more about it, he was sent for; an' sure enough, not long he was about it, for he kem back that very evening along wid the boy that was sint for him; an' as soon as he was there, an' tuk his supper, an' was done talkin' for a while, he bigined, of coorse, to look into the gandher. Well, he turned it this way an' that way, to the right and to the left, an' straight-ways, an' upside down, an' when he was tired handlin' it, says he to Terence Mooney:

"Terence," says he, "you must remove the bird into the next room," says he, "an' put a petticoat," says he, "or any other convaynience round his head," says he.

"An' why so?" says Terence.

"Becase," says Jer, says he.

"Becase what?" says Terence.

"Becase," says Jer, "if it isn't done—you'll never be aisy agin," says he, "or pusilanimous in your mind," says he; "so ax no more questions, but do my biddin," says he. 141

"Well," says Terence, "have your own way," says he.

An' wid that he tuk the ould gandher, and giv' it to one iv the gossoons.

"An' take care," says he, "don't smother the crathur," says he.

Well, as soon as the bird was gone, says Jer Garvan, says he, "Do you know what that ould gandher is, Terence Mooney?"

"Sorra a taste," says Terence.

"Well, then," says Jer, "the gandher is your own father," says he.

"It's jokin' you are," says Terence, turnin' mighty pale; "how can an ould gandher be my father?" says he.

"I'm not funnin' you at all," says Jer, "it's thrue what I tell you—it's your father's wandherin' sowl," says he, "that's naturally tuk pissession iv the ould gandher's body," says he; "I know him many ways, and I wondher," says he, "you do not know the cock iv his eye yourself," says he.

"Oh!" says Terence, "what will I ever do, at all, at all," says he; "it's all over wid me, for I plucked him twelve times at the laste," says he.

"That can't be helped now," says Jer, "it was a sevare act, surely," says he, "but it's too late to lamint for it now," says he; "the only way to prevint what's past," says he, "is to put a stop to it before it happens," says he.

"Thrue for you," says Terence, "but how did you come to the knowledge iv my father's sowl," says he, "bein' in the ould gandher?" says he.

"If I tould you," says Jer, "you would not understand me," says he, "without book-larnin' an' gasthronomy," says he; "so ax me no questions," says he, "an I'll tell you no lies; but b'lieve me in this much," says he, "it's your father that's in it," says he, "an' if I don't make him spake to-morrow mornin'," says he, "I'll give you lave to call me a fool," says he. 142

"Say no more," says Terence, "that settles the business," says he; "an' oh! is it not a quare thing," says he, "for a dacent, respictable man," says he, "to be walkin' about the counthry in the shape iv an ould gandher," says he; "and, oh, murdher, murdher! is it not often I plucked him," says he, "an' tundher and turf, might not I have ate him," says he; and wid that he fell into a could parspiration, savin' your prisince, an' was on the pint iv faintin' wid the bare notions iv it.

Well, whin he was come to himself agin, says Jerry, to him, quite an aisy—"Terence," says he, "don't be aggravatin' yourself," says he, "for I have a plan composed that'll make him spake out," says he, "an' tell what it is in the world he's wantin'," says he; "an' mind an' don't be comin' in wid your gosther an' to say agin anything I tell you," says he, "but jist purtind, as soon as the bird is brought back," says he, "how that we're goin' to sind him to-morrow mornin' to market," says he; "an' if he don't spake to-night," says he, "or gother himself out iv the place," says he, "put him into the hamper airly, and sind him in the cart," says he, "straight to Tipperary, to be sould for aitin'," says he, "along wid the two gossoons," says he; "an' my name isn't Jer Garvan," says he, "if he doesn't spake out before he's half

way,” says he; “an’ mind,” says he, “as soon as ever he says the first word,” says he, “that very minute bring him off to Father Crotty,” says he, “an’ if his Raverance doesn’t make him ratire,” says he, “into the flames of Purgathory,” says he, “there’s no vartue in my charms,” says he. 143

Well, wid that the ould gandher was let into the room agin, an’ they all begined to talk iv sindin’ him the nixt mornin’ to be sould for roastin’ in Tipperary, jist as if it was a thing andoubtingly settled; but not a notice the gandher tuk, no more nor if they wor spaking iv the Lord Liftenant; an’ Terence desired the boy to get ready the *kish* for the poulthry “an’ to settle it out wid hay soft and shnug,” says he, “for it’s the last jauntin’ the poor ould gandher ‘ill get in this world,” says he.

Well, as the night was getting late, Terence was growin’ mighty sorrowful an’ down-hearted in himself entirely wid the notions iv what was going to happen. An’ as soon as the wife an’ the crathurs war fairly in bed, he brought out some illigant potteen, an’ himself and Jer Garvan sot down to it, an’ the more anasy Terence got, the more he dhrank, and himself and Jer Garvan finished a quart betune them: it wasn’t an imparial though, an’ more’s the pity, for them wasn’t anvinted antil short since; but sorra a much matther it signifies any longer if a pint could hould two quarts, let alone what it does, sinst Father Mathew begin’d to give the pledge, an’ wid the blessin’ iv timperance to deginerate Ireland. An’ sure I have the medle myself; an’ it’s proud I am iv that same, for abstamiousness is a fine thing, although it’s mighty dhry.

Well, whin Terence finished his pint, he thought he might as well stop, “for enough is as good as a faste,” says he, “an’ I pity the vagabone,” says he, “that is not able to conthroul his liquor,” says he, “an’ to keep constantly inside iv a pint measure,” says he, an’ wid that he wished Jer Garvan a good night, an’ walked out iv the room. But he wint out the wrong door, being a trifle hearty in himself, an’ not rightly knowin’ whether he was standin’ on his head or his heels, or both iv them at the same time, an’ in place iv gettin’ into bed, where did he thrun himself but into the poulthry hamper, that the boys had settled out ready for the gandher in the mornin’; an’, sure enough, he sunk down snug an’ complate through the hay to the bottom; an’ wid the turnin’ an’ roulin’ about in the night, not a bit iv him but was covered up as snug as a lumper in a pittaty furrow before mornin’. 144

So wid the first light, up gets the two boys that war to take the sperit, as they consaved, to Tipperary; an’ they cotched the ould gandher, an’ put him in the hamper and clapped a good whisp iv hay on the top iv him, and tied it down sthrong wid a bit iv a coard, an med the sign iv the crass over him, in dhread iv any harum, an’ put the hamper up on the car, wontherin’ all the while what in the world was makin’ the ould burd so surprisin’ heavy.

Well, they wint along on the road towards Tipperary, wishin’ every minute that some iv the neighbours bound the same way id happen to fall in with them, for they didn’t half like the notions iv havin’ no company but the bewitched gandher, an’ small blame to them for that same. But, although they wor shakin’ in their skins in dhread iv the ould bird beginin’ to convarse them every minute, they did not let on to one another, bud kep’ singin’ and whistlin’, like mad to keep the dhread out iv their hearts. Well, afther they wor on the road betther nor half an hour, they kem to the bad bit close by Father Crotty’s, an’ there was one rut three feet deep at the laste; an’ the car got sich a wondherful chuck goin’ through it, that wakened Terence within the basket. 145

“Oh!” says he, “my bones is bruck wid yer thricks, what are ye doin’ wid me?”

“Did ye hear anything quare, Thady?” says the boy that was next to the car, turnin’ as white as the top iv a musharoon; “did ye hear anything quare soundin’ out iv the hamper?” says he.

“No, nor you,” says Thady, turnin’ as pale as himself, “it’s the ould gandher that’s gruntin’ wid the shakin’ he’s gettin’,” says he.

“Where have ye put me into,” says Terence, inside; “let me out,” says he, “or I’ll be smothered this minute,” says he.

“There’s no use in purtending,” says the boy; “the gandher’s spakin’, glory be to God!” says he.

“Let me out, you murdherers,” says Terence.

“In the name iv all the holy saints,” says Thady, “hould yer tongue, you unnatheral gandher,” says he.

“Who’s that, that dar call me nicknames,” says Terence inside, roaring wid the fair passion; “let me out, you blasphamious infiddles,” says he, “or by this crass, I’ll stretch ye,” says he.

“Who are ye?” says Thady.

“Who would I be but Terence Mooney,” says he, “It’s myself that’s in it, you unmerciful bliggards,” says he; “let me out, or I’ll get out in spite iv yez,” says he, “an’ I’ll wallop yez in arnest,” says he.

“It’s ould Terence, sure enough,” says Thady; “isn’t it cute the fairy docthor found him out,” says he.

“I’m on the p’int iv suffication,” says Terence; “let me out, I tell ye, an’ wait till I get at ye,” 146
says he, “for sorra a bone in your body but I’ll powdher,” says he; an’ wid that he bigined kickin’ and flingin’ in the hamper, and drivin’ his legs agin the sides iv it, that it was a wondher he did not knock it to pieces. Well, as the boys seen that, they skelped the ould horse into a gallop as hard as he could peg towards the priest’s house, through the ruts, an’ over the stones; an’ you’d see the hamper fairly flyin’ three feet in the air with the joultin’; so it was small wondher, by the time they got to his Raverance’s door, the breath was fairly knocked out iv poor Terence; so that he was lyin’ speechless in the bottom iv the hamper. Well, whin his Raverance kem down, they up an’ they tould him all that happened, an’ how they put the gandher into the hamper, an’ how he begined to spake, an’ how he confissed that he was ould Terence Mooney; and they axed his honour to advise them how to get rid iv the sperit for good an’ all. So says his Raverance, says he:

“I’ll take my booke,” says he, “an’ I’ll read some rale sthrong holy bits out iv it,” says he, “an’ do you get a rope and put it round the hamper,” says he, “an’ let it swing over the runnin’ wather at the bridge,” says he, “an’ it’s no matther if I don’t make the sperit come out iv it,” says he.

Well, wid that, the priest got his horse, an’ tuk his booke in undher his arum, an’ the boys follied his Raverance, ladin’ the horse, and Terence houldin’ his whisht, for he seen it was no use spakin’, an’ he was afeard if he med any noise they might thrait him to another gallop an’ finish him intirely. Well, as soon as they wur all come to the bridge the boys tuk the rope they had with them, an’ med it fast to the top iv the hamper an’ swung it fairly over the bridge; lettin’ it hang in the air about twelve feet out iv the wather; and his Raverance rode 147
down to the bank iv the river, close by, an’ begined to read mighty loud and bould intirely.

An’ when he was goin’ on about five minutes, all at onst the bottom iv the hamper kem out, an’ down wint Terence, falling splash dash into the wather, an’ the ould gandher a-top iv him; down they both wint to the bottom wid a souse you’d hear half-a-mile off; an’ before they had time to rise agin, his Raverance, wid a fair astonishment, giv his horse one dig iv the spurs, an’ before he knew where he was, in he went, horse and all, a-top iv them, an’ down to the bottom. Up they all kem agin together, gaspin’ an puffin’, an’ off down the current with them like shot, in undher the arch iv the bridge, till they kem to the shallow wather. The ould gandher was the first out, an’ the priest and Terence kem next, pantin’ an’ blowin’ an’ more than half dhrounded: an’ his Raverance was so freckened wid the dhroundin’ he got, and wid the sight iv the sperit, as he consaved, that he wasn’t the better iv it for a month. An’ as soon as Terence could spake, he said he’d have the life iv the two gossoons; but Father Crotty would not give him his will; an’ as soon as he got quieter they all endeavoured to explain it, but Terence consayved he went raly to bed the night before, an’ his Raverance said it was a mysthery, an’ swore if he cotched anyone laughin’ at the accident, he’d lay the horsewhip across their shoulders; an’ Terence grew fonder an’ fonder iv the gandher every day, until at last he died in a wondherful ould age, lavin’ the gandher afther him an’ a large family iv childer; an’ to this day the farm is rinted by one iv Terence Mooney’s lineal legitimate postariors.

148

The Thrush and the Blackbird.

By Charles Joseph Kickham (1828-1882).

A STRANGER meeting Sally Cavanagh, as she tripped along the mountain road, would consider her a contented and happy young matron, and might be inclined to set her down as a proud one; for Sally Cavanagh held her head rather high, and occasionally elevated it still higher with a toss which had something decidedly haughty about it. She turned up a short boreen for the purpose of calling upon the gruff blacksmith's wife, who had been very useful to her for some time before. The smith's habits were so irregular that his wife was often obliged to visit the pawn office in the next town, and poor Sally Cavanagh availed herself of Nancy Ryan's experience in pledging almost everything pledgeable she possessed. The new cloak, of which even a rich farmer's wife might feel proud, was the last thing left. It was a present from Connor, and was only worn on rare occasions, and to part with it was a sore trial.

Loud screams and cries for help made Sally Cavanagh start. She stopped for a moment, and then ran forward and rushed breathless into the smith's house. The first sight that met her eyes was our friend Shawn Gow choking his wife. A heavy three-legged stool came down with such force upon the part of Shawn Gow's person which happened to be the most elevated as he bent over the prostrate woman, that, uttering an exclamation between a grunt and a growl, he bounded into the air, and, striking his shins against a chair, tumbled 149
head over heels into the corner. When Shawn found that he was more frightened than hurt, and saw Sally with the three-legged stool in her hand, a sense of the ludicrous overcame him, and, turning his face to the wall, he relieved his feelings by giving way to a fit of laughter. It was of the silent, inward sort, however, and neither his wife nor Sally Cavanagh had any notion of the pleasant mood he was in. The bright idea of pretending to be "kilt" occurred to the overthrown son of Vulcan, and with a fearful groan he stretched out his huge limbs and remained motionless on the broad of his back.

Sally's sympathy for the ill-used woman prevented her from giving a thought to her husband. Great was her astonishment then when Nancy flew at her like a wild cat. "You kilt my husband," she screamed. Sally retreated backwards, defending herself as best she could with the stool. "For God's sake, Nancy, be quiet. Wouldn't he have destroyed you on'y for me?" But Nancy followed up the attack like a fury. "There's nothing the matter with him," Sally cried out, on finding herself literally driven to the wall. "What harm could a little touch of a stool on the back do the big brute?"

Nancy's feelings appeared to rush suddenly into another channel, for she turned round quickly, and kneeling down by her husband, lifted up his head. "*Och! Shawn, avourneen, machree*," she exclaimed, "won't you spake to me?" Shawn condescended to open his eyes. "Sally," she continued, "he's comin' to—glory be to God! Hurry over and hould up his head while I'm runnin' for somethin' to rewive him. Or stay, bring me the boulster."

The bolster was brought, and Nancy placed it under the patient's head; then, snatching 150
her shawl from the peg where it hung, she disappeared. She was back again in five minutes, without the shawl, but with half-a-pint of whiskey in a bottle.

"Take a taste av this, Shawn, an' 'twill warm your heart."

Shawn Gow sat up and took the bottle in his hand.

"Nancy," says he, "I believe, afther all, you're fond o' me."

"Wisha, Shawn, achora, what else'd I be but fond av you?"

"I thought, Nancy, you couldn't care for a divil that thrated you so bad."

"Och, Shawn, Shawn, don't talk that way to me. Sure, I thought my heart was broke when I see you sthretched there 'idout a stir in you."

"An' you left your shawl in pledge again to get this for me?"

"To be sure I did; an' a good right I had; an' sorry I'd be to see you in want of a dhrop of nourishment."

"I was a baste, Nancy. But if I was, this is what made a baste av me."

And Shawn Gow fixed his eyes upon the bottle with a look in which hatred and fascination were strangely blended. He turned quickly to his wife.

"Will you give in it was a blackbird?" he said.

"A blackbird," she repeated, irresolutely.

"Yes, a blackbird. Will you give in it was a blackbird?"

Shawn Gow was evidently relapsing into his savage mood.

“Well,” said his wife, after some hesitation, “’twas a blackbird. Will that plase you?”

“An’ you’ll never say ’twas a thrish agin?” 151

“Never. An’ sure, on’y for the speckles on the breast, I’d never say ’twas a thrish; but sure, you ought to know betther than me—an’—an’—’twas a blackbird,” she exclaimed, with a desperate effort.

Shawn Gow swung the bottle round his head and flung it with all his strength against the hob. The whole fireplace was for a moment one blaze of light.

“The Divil was in id,” says the smith, smiling grimly; “an’ there he’s off in a flash of fire. I’m done wid him, any way.”

“Well, I wish you a happy Christmas, Nancy,” said Sally.

“I wish you the same, Sally, an’ a great many av ‘em. I suppose you’re goin’ to first Mass? Shawn and me’ll wait for second.”

Sally took her leave of this remarkable couple, and proceeded on her way to the village. She met Tim Croak and his wife, Betty, who were also going to Mass. After the usual interchange of greetings, Betty surveyed Sally from head to foot with a look of delighted wonder.

“Look at her, Tim,” she exclaimed, “an’ isn’t she as young an’ as hearty as ever? Bad cess to me but you’re the same Sally that danced wid the master at my weddin’, next Thursday fortnight’ll be eleven years.”

“Begob, you’re a great woman,” says Tim.

Sally Cavanagh changed the subject by describing the scene she had witnessed at the blacksmith’s.

“But, Tim,” said she, after finishing the story, “how did the dispute about the blackbird come first? I heard something about it, but I forget it.”

“I’ll tell you that, then,” said Tim. “Begob, ay,” he exclaimed abruptly, after thinking for a 152
moment; “’twas this day seven years, for all the world—the year o’ the hard frost. Shawn Gow set a crib in his haggard the evenin’ afore, and when he went out in the mornin’ he had a hen blackbird. He put the *goulogue*[1] on her nick, and tuk her in his hand; and wud’ one *smulluck* av his finger knocked the life out av her; he walked in an’ threw the blackbird on the table.

“‘Oh, Shawn,’ siz Nancy, ‘you’re afther ketchin’ a fine thrish.’ Nancy tuk the bird in her hand an’ began rubbin’ the feathers on her breast. ‘A fine thrish,’ siz Nancy.

“‘’Tisn’t a thrish, but a blackbird,’ siz Shawn.

“‘Wisha, in throth, Shawn,’ siz Nancy, ‘’tis a thrish; do you want to take the sight o’ my eyes from me?’

“‘I tell you ’tis a blackbird,” siz he.

“‘Indeed, then, it isn’t, but a thrish,’ siz she.

“Anyway, one word borrowed another, an’ the end av it was, Shawn flailed at her an’ gev her the father av a batin’.

“The Christmas Day afther, Nancy opened the door an’ looked out.

“‘God be wud this day twelve months,’ siz she, ‘do you remimber the fine thrish you caught in the crib?’

“‘’Twas a blackbird,’ siz Shawn.

“‘Och,’ siz Nancy, beginnin’ to laugh, ‘that was a quare blackbird.’

“‘Whisht, now, Nancy, ’twas a blackbird,’ siz Shawn.

“‘Och,’ siz Nancy, beginnin’ to laugh, ‘that was the quare blackbird.’

“Wud that, one word borrowed another, an’ Shawn stood up an’ gev her the father av a 153
batin’.

“The third Christmas Day kem, an’ they wor in the best o’ good humour afther the tay, an’

Shawn, puttin' on his ridin'-coat to go to Mass.

"'Well, Shawn,' siz Nancy, I'm thinkin' av what an unhappy Christmas mornin' we had this day twelve months, all on account of the thrish you caught in the crib, bad cess to her.'

"''Twas a blackbird,' siz Shawn.

"'Wisha, good luck to you, an' don't be talkin' foolish,' siz Nancy; 'an' you're betther not get into a passion agin, on account av an ould thrish. My heavy curse on the same thrish,' siz Nancy.

"'I tell you 'twas a blackbird,' siz Shawn.

"'An' I tell you 'twas a thrish,' siz Nancy.

"'Wud that, Shawn took a *bunnaun* he had *saisonin'* in the chimley, and whaled at Nancy, an' gev her the father av a batin'. An' every Christmas morning from that day to this 'twas the same story, for as sure as the sun, Nancy'd draw down the thrish. But do you tell me, Sally, she's afther givin' in it was a blackbird?"

"She is," replied Sally.

"Begob," said Tim Croak, after a minute's serious reflection, "it ought to be put in the papers. I never h'ard afore av a wrong notion bein' got out av a woman's head. But Shawn Gow is no joke to dale wud, and it took him seven years to do id."

1 A forked stick

Their Last Race.

From "At the Rising of the Moon."

By Frank Mathew (1865—).

I.—The Faction Fight.

In the heart of the Connemara Highlands, Carrala Valley hides in a triangle of mountains. Carrala Village lies in the corner of it towards Loch Ina, and Aughavanna in the corner nearest Kylemore. Aughavanna is a wreck now: if you were to look for it you would see only a cluster of walls grown over by ferns and nettles; but in those remote times, before the Great Famine, when no English was spoken in the Valley, there was no place more renowned for wild fun and fighting; and when its men were to be at a fair, every able-bodied man in the countryside took his kippeen—his cudgel—from its place in the chimney, and went out to do battle with a good heart.

Long Mat Murnane was the king of Aughavanna. There was no grander sight than Mat smashing his way through a forest of kippeens, with his enemies staggering back to the right and left of him; there was no sweeter sound than his voice, clear as a bell, full of triumph and gladness, shouting, "Hurroo! whoop! Aughavanna for ever!" Where his kippeen flickered in the air his followers charged after, and the enemy rushed to meet him, for it was an honour to take a broken head from him.

But Carrala Fair was the black day for him. That day Carrala swarmed with men—fishers from the near coast, dwellers in lonely huts by the black lakes, or in tiny, ragged villages under the shadow of the mountains, or in cabins on the hill-sides—every little town for miles, by river or sea-shore or mountain built, was emptied. The fame of the Aughavanna men was their ruin, for they were known to fight so well that every one was dying to fight them. The Joyces sided against them; Black Michael Joyce had a farm in the third corner of the valley, just where the road through the bog from Aughavanna (the road with the cross by it) meets the high-road to Leenane, so his kin mustered in force. Now Black Michael, "Meehul Dhu," was long Mat's rival; though smaller, he was near as deadly in fight, and in dancing no man could touch him, for it was said he could jump a yard into the air and kick himself behind with his heels in doing it.

The business of the Fair had been hurried so as to leave the more time for pleasure, and

by five of the afternoon every man was mad for the battle. Why, you could scarcely have moved in Callanan's Field out beyond the churchyard at the end of the village, it was so packed with men—more than five hundred were there, and you could not have heard yourself speak, for they were jumping and dancing, tossing their caubeens, and shouting themselves hoarse and deaf—"Hurroo for Carrala!" "Whoop for Aughavanna!"

Around them a mob of women, old men and children, looked on breathlessly. It was dull weather, and the mists had crept half way down the dark mountain walls, as if to have a nearer look at the fight.

As the chapel clock struck five, Long Mat Murnane gave the signal. Down the village he came, rejoicing in his strength, out between the two last houses, past the churchyard and into Callanan's Field; he looked every inch a king; his kippeen was ready, his frieze coat was off, with his left hand he trailed it behind him holding it by the sleeve, while with a great 156
voice he shouted—in Irish—"Where's the Carrala man that dare touch my coat? Where's the cowardly scoundrel that dare look crooked at it?"

In a moment Black Michael Joyce was trailing his own coat behind him, and rushed forward, with a mighty cry "Where's the face of a trembling Aughavanna man?" In a moment their kippeens clashed; in another, hundreds of kippeens crashed together, and the grandest fight ever fought in Connemara raged over Callanan's Field. After the first roar of defiance the men had to keep their breath for the hitting, so the shout of triumph and the groan as one fell were the only sounds that broke the music of the kippeens clashing and clicking on one another, or striking home with a thud.

Never was Long Mat nobler; he rushed ravaging through the enemy, shattering their ranks and their heads; no man could withstand him; Red Callanan of Carrala went down before him; he knocked the five senses out of Dan O'Shaughran, of Earrennamore, that herded many pigs by the sedgy banks of the Owen Erriff; he hollowed the left eye out of Larry Mulcahy, that lived on the Devil's Mother Mountain—never again did Larry set the two eyes of him on his high mountain-cradle; he killed Black Michael Joyce by a beautiful swooping blow on the side of the head—who would have dreamt that Black Michael had so thin a skull.

For near an hour Mat triumphed, then suddenly he went down under foot. At first he was missed only by those nearest him, and they took it for granted that he was up again and fighting. But when the Aughavanna men found themselves outnumbered and driven back to 157
the village, a great fear came on them, for they knew that all Ireland could not outnumber them if Mat was to the fore. Then disaster and rout took them, and they were forced backwards up the street, struggling desperately, till hardly a man of them could stand.

And when the victors were shouting themselves dumb, and drinking themselves blind, the beaten men looked for their leader. Long Mat was prone, his forehead was smashed, his face had been trampled into the mud—he had done with fighting. His death was untimely, yet he fell as he would have chosen—in a friendly battle. For when a man falls under the hand of an enemy (as of any one who differs from him in creed or politics) revenge and black blood live after him; but he who takes his death from the kindly hand of a friend leaves behind him no ill-will, but only gentle regret for the mishap.

II. Their Last Race.

When the dead had been duly waked for two days and nights, the burying day came. All the morning long Mat Murnane's coffin lay on four chairs by his cabin, with a kneeling ring of dishevelled women keening round it. Every soul in Aughavanna and their kith and kin had gathered to do him honour. And when the Angelus bell rang across the valley from the chapel, the mourners fell into ranks, the coffin was lifted on the rough hearse, and the motley funeral—a line of carts with a mob of peasants behind, a few riding, but most of them on foot—moved slowly towards Carrala. The women were crying bitterly, keening like an Atlantic gale; the men looked as sober as if they had never heard of a wake, and spoke sadly of the dead man, and of what a pity it was that he could not see his funeral.

The Joyces, too, had waited, as was the custom, for the Angelus bell, and now Black 158
Michael's funeral was moving slowly towards Carrala along the other side of the bog. Before long either party could hear the keening of the other, for you know the roads grow nearer as they converge on Carrala. Before long either party began to fear that the other would be there first.

There is no knowing how it happened, but the funerals began to go quicker, keeping abreast; then still quicker, till the women had to break into a trot to keep up; then still quicker, till the donkeys were galloping, and till everyone raced at full speed, and the rival parties broke into a wild shout of “Aughavanna abu!” “Meehul Dhu for ever!”

For the dead men were racing—feet foremost—to the grave; they were rivals even in death. Never did the world see such a race, never was there such whooping and shouting. Where the roads met in Callanan’s Field the horses were abreast; neck and neck they dashed across the trampled fighting-place, while the coffins jogged and jolted as if the two dead men were struggling to get out and lead the rush; neck to neck they reached the churchyard, and the horses jammed in the gate. Behind them the carts crashed into one another, and the mourners shouted as if they were mad.

But the quick wit of the Aughavanna men triumphed, for they seized their long coffin and dragged it in, and Long Mat Murnane won his last race. The shout they gave then deafened the echo up in the mountains, so that it has never been the same since. The victors wrung one another’s hands; they hugged one another.

“Himself would be proud,” they cried, “if he hadn’t been dead!”

The First Lord Liftinant.

By William Percy French (1854—).

(As related by Andrew Geraghty, Philomath.)

“Essex,” said Queen Elizabeth, as the two of them sat at breakwhist in the back parlour of Buckingham Palace, “Essex, me haro, I’ve got a job that I think would suit you. Do you know where Ireland is?”

“I’m no great fist at jografy,” says his lordship, “but I know the place you mane. Population, three millions; exports, emigrants.”

“Well,” says the Queen, “I’ve been reading the Dublin Evening Mail and the Telegraft for some time back, and sorra one o’ me can get at the trooth o’ how things is goin’, for the leadin’ articles is as conthradictory as if they wor husband and wife.”

“That’s the way wid papers all the world over,” says Essex; “Columbus told me it was the same in Amerikay, when he was there, abusin’ and conthradictin’ each other at every turn—it’s the way they make their livin’. Thrubble you for an egg-spoon.”

“It’s addled they have me betune them,” says the Queen. “Not a know I know what’s goin’ on. So now, what I want you to do is to run over to Ireland, like a good fella, and bring me word how matters stand.”

“Is it me?” says Essex, leppin’ up off his chair. “It’s not in airnest ye are, ould lady. Sure it’s the hoight of the London saison. Every one’s in town, and Shake’s new fairy piece, ‘The Midsummer’s Night Mare,’ billed for next week.”

“You’ll go when ye’re tould,” says the Queen, fixin’ him with her eye, “if you know which side yer bread’s buttered on. See here, now,” says she, seein’ him chokin’ wid vexation and a slice o’ corned beef, “you ought to be as pleased as Punch about it, for you’ll be at the top o’ the walk over there as vice-regent representin’ me.”

“I ought to have a title or two,” says Essex, pluckin’ up a bit. “His Gloriosity the Great Panjandhrum, or the like o’ that.”

“How would His Excellency the Lord Liftinant of Ireland sthrike you?” says Elizabeth.

“First class,” cries Essex. “Couldn’t be betther; it doesn’t mean much, but it’s allitherative, and will look well below the number on me hall door.”

Well, boys, it didn’t take him long to pack his clothes and start away for the Island o’ Saints. It took him a good while to get there, though, through not knowin’ the road; but by means of a pocket compass and a tip to the steward, he was landed at last contagious to

Dalkey Island. Going up to an ould man who was sittin' on a rock, he took off his hat, and, says he—

"That's great weather we're havin'?"

"Good enough for the times that's in it," says the ould man, cockin' one eye at him.

"Any divarshun' goin on?" says Essex.

"You're a sthranger in these parts, I'm thinkin'," says the ould man, "or you'd know this was a 'band night' in Dalkey."

"I wasn't aware of it," says Essex; "the fact is," says he, "I only landed from England just this minute."

"Ay," says the ould man, bitterly, "it's little they know about us over there. I'll hould you," says he, with a slight thrimble in his voice, "that the Queen herself doesn't know there is to 161
be fireworks in the Sorrento Gardens this night." Well, when Essex heard that, he disrembered entirely he was sent over to Ireland to put down rows and ructions, and away wid him to see the fun and flirt wid all the pretty girls he could find. And he found plenty of them—thick as bees they wor, and each one as beautiful as the day and the morra. He wrote two letters home next day—one to Queen Elizabeth and the other to Lord Mountaigle, a playboy like himself. I'll read you the one to the Queen first:—

"Dame Sthreet, April 16th, 1599.

"Fair Enchantress,—I wish I was back in London, baskin' in your sweet smiles and listenin' to your melodious voice once more. I got the consignment of men and the post-office order all right. I was out all the mornin' lookin' for the inimy, but sorra a taste of Hugh O'Neill or his men can I find. A policeman at the corner o' Nassau Street told me they wor hidin' in Wicklow. So I am makin' up a party to explore the Dargle on Easter Monda'. The girls here are as ugly as sin, and every minute o' the day I do be wishin' it was your good-lookin' self I was gazin' at instead o' these ignorant scarecrows.

"Hopin' soon to be back in ould England, I remain, your lovin' subject

Essex."

"P.S.—I hear Hugh O'Neill was seen on the top o' the Donnybrook tram yesterday mornin'. If I have any luck the head'll be off him before you get this.

E."

162

The other letter read this way:—

"Dear Monty—This is a great place, all out. Come over here if you want fun. Divil such play-boys ever I seen, and the girls—oh! don't be talkin'—'pon me secret honour you'll see more loveliness at a tay and a supper ball in Rathmines than there is in the whole of England. Tell Ned Spenser to send me a love-song to sing to a young girl who seems to be taken wid my appearance. Her name's Mary, and she lives in Dunlary, so he oughtn't to find it hard. I hear Hugh O'Neill's a terror, and hits a powerful welt, especially when you're not lookin'. If he tries any of his games on wid me, I'll give him in charge. No brawlin' for your's truly

Essex."

Well, me bould Essex stopped for odds of six months in Dublin, purtendin' to be very busy subjugatin' the country, but all the time only losin' his time and money widout doin' a hand's turn, and doin' his best to avoid a ruction with "Fighting Hugh." If a messenger came to tell him that O'Neill was camping out on the North Bull, Essex would up stick and away for Sandycove, where, after draggin' the forty-foot hole, he'd write off to Elizabeth, saying that, "owing to their suparior knowledge of the country the dastard foe had once more eluded him."

The Queen got mighty tired of these letters, especially as they always ended with a request to send stamps by return, and told Essex to finish up his business and not be makin' a fool of himself.

“Oh, that’s the talk, is it,” says Essex; “very well, me ould sauce-box” (that was the name he had for her ever since she gev him the clip on the ear for turnin’ his back on her), “very well me ould sauce-box,” says he, “I’ll write off to O’Neill this very minute, and tell him to send in his lowest terms for peace at ruling prices.” 163

Well, the threaty was a bit of a one-sided one—the terms being—

1. Hugh O’Neill to be King of Great Britain.
2. Lord Essex to return to London and remain there as Viceroy of England.
3. The O’Neill family to be supported by Government, with free passes to all theatres and places of entertainment.
4. The London Markets to buy only from Irish dealers.
5. All taxes to be sent in stamped envelopes, directed to H. O’Neill, and marked “private.” Cheques crossed and made payable to H. O’Neill. Terms cash.

Well, if Essex had had the sense to read through this treaty he’d have seen it was of too graspin’ a nature to pass with any sort of a respectable sovereign, but he was that mad he just stuck the document in the pocket of his pot-metal overcoat, and away wid him hot foot for England.

“Is the Queen widin?” says he to the butler, when he opened the door o’ the palace. His clothes were that dirty and disorthered wid travellin’ all night, and his boots that muddy, that the butler was not for littin’ him in at the first go off, so says he, very grand; “Her Majesty is above stairs and can’t be seen till she’s had her breakwhist.”

“Tell her the Lord Liftinant of Ireland desires an interview,” says Essex.

“Oh, beg pardon, me lord,” says the butler, steppin’ to one side, “I didn’t know ’twas yourself was in it; come inside, sir; the Queen’s in the dhrawin’-room.” 164

Well, Essex leps up the stairs and into the dhrawin’-room wid him, muddy boots and all; but not a sight of Elizabeth was to be seen.

“Where’s your misses?” says he to one of the maids-of-honour that was dustin’ the chimbley-piece.

“She’s not out of her bed yet,” said the maid, with a toss of her head; “but if you write your message on the slate beyant, I’ll see”—but before she had finished, Essex was up the second flight and knockin’ at the Queen’s bedroom door.

“Is that the hot wather?” says the Queen.

“No, it’s me,—Essex. Can you see me?”

“Faith, I can’t,” says the Queen. “Hould on till I draw the bed-curtains. Come in now,” says she, “and say your say, for I can’t have you stoppin’ long—you young Lutharian.”

“Bedad, yer Majesty,” says Essex, droppin’ on his knees before her (the delutherer he was), “small blame to me if I am a Lutharian, for you have a face on you that would charm a bird off a bush.”

“Hould your tongue, you young reprobate,” says the Queen, blushin’ up to her curl-papers wid delight, “and tell me what improvements you med in Ireland.”

“Faith, I taught manners to O’Neill,” cries Essex.

“He had a bad masther then,” says Elizabeth, lookin’ at his dirty boots; “couldn’t you wipe yer feet before ye desthroyed me carpets, young man?”

“Oh, now,” says Essex, “is it wastin’ me time shufflin’ about on a mat you’d have me, when I might be gazin’ on the loveliest faymale the world ever saw.”

“Well,” says the Queen, “I’ll forgive you this time, as you’ve been so long away, but remimber in future that Kidderminster ain’t oilcloth. Tell me,” says she, “is Westland Row Station finished yet?” 165

“There’s a side wall or two wanted yet, I believe,” says Essex.

“What about the Loop Line?” says she.

“Oh, they’re gettin’ on with that,” says he, “only some people think the girders a disfigurement to the city.”

“Is there any talk about that esplanade from Sandycove to Dunlary?”

“There’s talk about it, but that’s all,” says Essex; “‘twould be an odious fine improvement to house property, and I hope they’ll see to it soon.”

“Sorra much you seem to have done, beyant spendin’ me men and me money. Let’s have a look at that treaty I see stickin’ out o’ your pocket.”

Well, when the Queen read the terms of Hugh O’Neill she just gev him one look, an’ jumpin’ from off the bed, she put her head out of the window, and called out to the policeman on duty—

“Is the Head below?”

“I’ll tell him you want him, ma’am,” says the policeman.

“Do,” says the Queen. “Hello,” says she, as a slip of paper dhropped out o’ the dispatches. “What’s this? ‘Lines to Mary.’ Ho! ho! me gay fella, that’s what you’ve been up to, is it?”

“Mrs. Brady
Is a widow lady,
And she has a charmin’ daughter I adore;
I went to court her
Across the water,
And her mother keeps a little candy-store.
She’s such a darlin’,
She’s like a starlin’,
And in love with her I’m gettin’ more and more,
Her name is Mary,
She’s from Dunlary;
And her mother keeps a little candy-store.”

“That settles it,” says the Queen. “It’s the gaoler you’ll serenade next.”

When Essex heard that, he thrimbled so much that the button of his cuirass shook off and rowled under the dhressin’-table.

“Arrest that man,” says the Queen, when the Head-Constable came to the door; “arrest that thrayter,” says she, “and never let me set eyes on him again.”

And, indeed, she never did, and soon after that he met with his death from the skelp of an axe he got when he was standin’ on Tower Hill.

The Boat’s Share.

From “Further Experiences of an Irish R.M.”

By E. Œ. Somerville and Martin Ross.

The affair on the strand at Hare Island ripened, with complexity of summonses and cross-summonses, into an imposing Petty Sessions case. Two separate deputations presented themselves at Shreelane, equipped with black eyes and other conventional injuries, one of them armed with a creelful of live lobsters to underline the argument. To decline the bribe was of no avail: the deputation decanted them upon the floor of the hall and retired, and the lobsters spread themselves at large over the house, and to this hour remain the nightmare of the nursery.

The next Petty Sessions day was wet; the tall windows of the Court House were grey and streaming, and the reek of wet humanity ascended to the ceiling. As I took my seat on the bench I perceived with an inward groan that the services of the two most eloquent solicitors in Skebawn had been engaged. This meant that Justice would not have run its course till heaven knew that dim hour of the afternoon, and that that course would be devious and difficult.

All the pews and galleries (any Irish court-house might, with the addition of a harmonium, pass presentably as a dissenting chapel) were full, and a line of flat-capped policemen stood like church-wardens near the door. Under the galleries, behind what might have answered to choir-stalls, the witnesses and their friends hid in darkness, which could, however, but partially conceal two resplendent young ladies, barmaids, who were to appear in a subsequent Sunday drinking case. I was a little late, and when I arrived Flurry Knox, supported by a couple of other magistrates, was in the chair, imperturbable of countenance as was his wont, his fair and delusive youthfulness of aspect unimpaired by his varied experiences during the war, his roving, subtle eye untamed by four years of matrimony. 168

A woman was being examined, a square and ugly country-woman, with wispy fair hair, a slow, dignified manner, and a slight and impressive stammer. I recognised her as one of the bodyguard of the lobsters. Mr. Mooney, solicitor for the Brickleys, widely known, and respected as “Roaring Jack,” was in possession of that much-enduring organ, the ear of the Court.

“Now, Kate Keohane!” he thundered, “tell me what time it was when all this was going on?”

“About duskish, sir. Con Brickley was slashing the f-fish at me mother the same time. He never said a word but to take the shtick and fire me dead with it on the sthrand. He gave me plenty of blood to dhrink, too,” said the witness, with acid decorum. She paused to permit this agreeable fact to sink in, and added, “his wife wanted to f-fashten on me the same time, an’ she havin’ the steer of the boat to sthrike me.”

These were not precisely the facts that Mr. Murphy, as solicitor for the defence, wished to elicit.

“Would you kindly explain what you mean by the steer of the boat?” he demanded, sparring for wind in as intimidating a manner as possible. The witness stared at him.

“Sure, ’tis the shtick, like, that they pulls here and there to go in their choice place.”

“We may presume that the lady is referring to the tiller,” said Mr. Mooney, with a facetious eye at the Bench. “Maybe now, ma’am, you can explain to us what sort of a boat is she?” 169

“She’s that owld that if it wasn’t for the weeds that’s holding her together she’d bursht up in the deep.”

“And who owns this valuable property?” pursued Mr. Mooney.

“She’s between Con Brickley and me brother, an the saine[1] is between four, an’ whatever crew does be in it should get their share, and the boat has a man’s share.”

I made no attempt to comprehend this, relying with well-founded confidence on Flurry Knox’s grasp of such enigmas.

“Was Con Brickley fishing the same day?”

“He was not, sir. He was at Lisheen Fair; for as clever as he is, he couldn’t kill two birds under one slat!”

Kate Keohane’s voice moved unhurried from sentence to sentence, and her slow, pale eyes turned for an instant to the lair of the witnesses under the gallery.

“And you’re asking the Bench to believe that this decent man left his business in Lisheen in order to slash fish at your mother?” said Mr. Mooney, truculently.

“B’lieve me, sorra much business he laves afther him wherever he’ll go!” returned the witness. “Himself and his wife had business enough on the sthrand when the fish was dividing, and it is then themselves put every name on me.”

“Ah, what harm are names!” said Mr. Mooney, dallying elegantly with a massive watch-chain.

“Come, now, ma’am! will you swear you got any ill-usage from Con Brickley or his wife?” He leaned over the front of his pew, and waited for the answer with his massive red head on one side. 170

“I was givin’ blood like a c-cow that ye’d shtab with a knife!” said Kate Keohane, with unshaken dignity. “If it was yourself that was in it ye’d feel the smart as well as me. My hand and word on it, ye would! The marks is on me head still, like the prints of dog-bites!”

She lifted a lock of hair from her forehead, and exhibited a sufficiently repellent injury. Flurry Knox leaned forward.

“Are you sure you haven’t that since the time there was that business between yourself and the post-mistress at Munig? I’m told you had the name of the post-office on your forehead where she struck you with the office stamp! Try, now, sergeant, can you read Munig on her forehead?”

The Court, not excepting its line of church-wardens, dissolved into laughter; Kate Keohane preserved an offended silence.

“I suppose you want us to believe,” resumed Mr. Mooney, sarcastically, “that a fine, hearty woman like you wasn’t defending yourself!” Then, with a turkey-cock burst of fury, “On your oath, now! What did you strike Honora Brickley with? Answer me that now! What had you in your hand?”

“I had nothing only the little rod I had after the ass,” answered Miss Keohane, with a child-like candour. “I done nothing to them; but as for Con Brickley, he put his back to the cliff and he took the flannel wrop that he had on him, and he threw it on the sthrand, and he said he would have blood, murdher, or f-fish!”

She folded her shawl across her breast, a picture of virtue assailed, yet unassailed. 171

“You may go down now,” said “Roaring Jack,” rather hastily, “I want to have a few words with your brother.”

Miss Keohane retired, without having moulted a feather of her dignity, and her brother Jer came heavily up the steps and on to the platform, his hot, wary, blue eyes gathering in the Bench and the attorneys in one bold, comprehensive glance. He was a tall, dark man of about five and forty, clean-shaved, save for two clerical inches of black whiskers, and in feature of the type of a London clergyman who would probably preach on Browning.

“Well, sir!” began Mr. Mooney, stimulatingly, “and are you the biggest blackguard from here to America?”

“I am not,” said Jer Keohane, tranquilly.

“We had you here before us not so very long ago about kicking a goat, wasn’t it? You got a little touch of a pound, I think?”

This delicate allusion to a fine that the Bench had thought fit to impose did not distress the witness.

“I did, sir.”

“And how’s our friend the goat?” went on Mr. Mooney, with the furious facetiousness reserved for hustling tough witnesses.

“Well, I suppose she’s something west of the Skelligs by now,” replied Jer Keohane with great composure.

An appreciative grin ran round the Court. The fact that the goat had died of the kick and been “given the cliff” being regarded as an excellent jest.

Mr. Mooney consulted his notes:

“Well, now, about this fight,” he said, pleasantly, “did you see your sister catch Mrs. Brickley and pull her hair down to the ground and drag her shawl off of her?” 172

“Well,” said the witness, airily, “they had a bit of a scratch on account o’ the fish. Con Brickley had the shteer o’ the boat in his hand, and says he, ‘is there any man here that’ll take the shteer from me?’ The man was dhrunk, of course,” added Jer charitably.

“Did you have any talk with his wife about the fish?”

“I couldn’t tell the words that she said to me!” replied the witness, with a reverential glance at the Bench, “and she over-right three crowds o’ men that was on the sthrand.”

Mr. Mooney put his hands in his pockets and surveyed the witness.

“You’re a very refined gentleman, upon my word! Were you ever in England?”

“I was, part of three years.”

“Oh, that accounts for it, I suppose!” said Mr. Mooney, accepting this lucid statement

without a stagger, and passing lightly on. “You’re a widower, I understand, with no objection to consoling yourself?”

No answer.

“Now, sir! Can you deny that you made proposals of marriage to Con Brickley’s daughter last Shraft?”

The plot thickened. Con Brickley’s daughter was my kitchen maid.

Jer Keohane smiled tolerantly. “Ah! that was a thing o’ nothing.”

“Nothing!” said Mr. Mooney, with a roar of a tornado. “Do you call an impudent proposal of marriage to a respectable man’s daughter nothing! That’s English manners, I suppose!” 173

“I was goin’ home one Sunday,” said Jer Keohane, conversationally, to the Bench, “and I met the gerr’l and her mother. I spoke to the gerr’l in a friendly way, and asked her why wasn’t she gettin’ marrid, and she commenced to peg stones at me and dhrew several blows of an umbrella on me. I had only three bottles of porther taken. There now was the whole of it.”

Mrs. Brickley, from the gallery, groaned heavily and ironically.

I found it difficult to connect these coquetries with my impressions of my late kitchenmaid, a furtive and touzled being, who, in conjunction with a pail and scrubbing brush, had been wont to melt round corners and into doorways at my approach.

“Are we trying a breach of promise?” interpolated Flurry; “if so, we ought to have the plaintiff in.”

“My purpose, sir,” said Mr. Mooney, in a manner discouraging to levity, “is to show that my clients have received annoyance and contempt from this man and his sister such as no parents would submit to.”

A hand came forth from under the gallery and plucked at Mr. Mooney’s coat. A red monkey face appeared out of the darkness, and there was a hoarse whisper, whose purport I could not gather. Con Brickley, the defendant, was giving instructions to his lawyer.

It was perhaps as a result of these that Jer Keohane’s evidence closed here. There was a brief interval enlivened by coughs, grinding of heavy boots on the floor, and some mumbling and groaning under the gallery.

“There’s great duck-shooting out on a lake on this island,” commented Flurry to me, in a whisper. “My grand-uncle went there one time with an old duck-gun he had, that he fired with a fuse. He was three hours stalking the ducks before he got the gun laid. He lit the fuse then, and it set to work spluttering and hissing like a goods-engine till there wasn’t a duck within ten miles. The gun went off then.” 174

This useful side-light on the matter in hand was interrupted by the cumbrous ascent of the one-legged Con Brickley to the witness-table. He sat down heavily, with his slouch hat on his sound knee, and his wooden stump stuck out before him. His large monkey face was immovably serious; his eye was small, light grey, and very quick.

McCaffery, the opposition attorney, a thin, restless youth, with ears like the handles of an urn, took him in hand. To the pelting cross-examination that beset him Con Brickley replied with sombre deliberation, and with a manner of uninterested honesty, emphasising what he said with slight, very effective gestures of his big, supple hands. His voice was deep and pleasant; it betrayed no hint of so trivial a thing as satisfaction when, in the teeth of Mr. McCaffery’s leading questions, he established the fact that the “little rod” with which Miss Kate Keohane had beaten his wife was the handle of a pitch-fork.

“I was counting the fish the same time,” went on Con Brickley, in his rolling basso profundissimo, “and she said, ‘Let the divil clear me out of the sthrand, for there’s no one else will put me out!’ says she.”

“It was then she got the blow, I suppose!” said McCaffery, venomously; “you had a stick yourself, I daresay?”

“Yes. I had a stick. I must have a stick,” (deep and mellow pathos was hinted at in the voice), “I am sorry to say. What could I do to her? A man with a wooden leg on a sthrand could do nothing!” 175

Something like a laugh ran at the back of the court. Mr. McCaffery’s ears turned scarlet

and became quite decorative. On or off a strand Con Brickley was not a person to be scored off easily.

His clumsy, yet impressive, descent from the witness stand followed almost immediately, and was not the least telling feature of his evidence. Mr. Mooney surveyed his exit with the admiration of one artist for another, and, rising, asked the Bench's permission to call Mrs. Brickley.

Mrs. Brickley, as she mounted to the platform, in the dark and nun-like severity of her long cloak, the stately blue cloth cloak that is the privilege of the Munster peasant woman, was an example of the rarely-blended qualities of picturesqueness and respectability. As she took her seat in the chair, she flung the deep hood back on her shoulders, and met the gaze of the court with her grey head erect; she was a witness to be proud of.

"Now, Mrs. Brickley," said "Roaring Jack," urbanely, "will you describe this interview between your daughter and Keohane."

"It was last Sunday in Shrove, your Worship, Mr. Flurry Knox, and gentlemen," began Mrs. Brickley nimbly, "meself and me little gerr'l was comin' from mass, and Mr. Jer Keohane came up to us and got on in a most unmannerable way. He asked me daughter would she marry him. Me daughter told him she would not, quite friendly like. I'll tell you no lie, gentlemen, she was teasing him with the umbrella the same time; an' he raised his 176
shtick and dhrew a sthroke on her in the back, an' the little gerr'l took up a small pebble of a stone and fired it at him. She put the umbrella up to his mouth, but she called him no names. But as for him, the names he put on her was to call her 'a nasty, long, slopeen of a proud thing, and a slopeen of a proud tinker.'"

"Very lover-like expressions!" commented Mr. Mooney, doubtless stimulated by the lady-like titters from the barmaids; "and had this romantic gentleman made any previous proposals for your daughter?"

"Himself had two friends over from across the water one night to make the match, a Sathurday it was, and they should land the lee side o' the island, for the wind was a fright," replied Mrs. Brickley, launching her tale with the power of easy narration that is bestowed with such amazing liberality on her class. "The three o' them had dhrink taken, an' I went to shlap out the door agin them. Me husband said then we should let them in, if it was a Turk itself, with the rain that was in it. They were talking in it then till near the dawning, and in the latther end all that was between them was the boat's share."

"What do you mean by 'the boat's share'?" said I.

"'Tis the same as a man's share, me worshipful gintleman," returned Mrs. Brickley, splendidly; "it goes with the boat always, afther the crew and the saine has their share got."

I possibly looked as enlightened as I felt by this exposition.

"You mean that Jer wouldn't have her unless he got the boat's share with her?" suggested Flurry.

"He said it over-right all that was in the house, and he reddening his pipe at the fire," 177
replied Mrs. Brickley, in full-sailed response to the helm. "'D'ye think,' says I to him, 'that me daughter would leave a lovely situation, with a kind and tendher masther, for a mean, hungry blagyard like yerself,' says I, 'that's livin' always in this backwards place!' says I."

This touching expression of preference for myself, as opposed to Mr. Keohane, was received with expressionless respect by the Court. Flurry, with an impassive countenance, kicked me heavily under cover of the desk. I said that we had better get on to the assault on the strand. Nothing could have been more to Mrs. Brickley's taste. We were minutely instructed as to how Katie Keohane drew the shawleen forward on Mrs. Brickley's head to stifle her; and how Norrie Keohane was fast in her hair. Of how Mrs. Brickley had then given a stroke upwards between herself and her face (whatever that might mean) and loosed Norrie from her hair. Of how she then sat down and commenced to cry from the use they had for her.

"'Twas all I done," she concluded, looking like a sacred picture, "I gave her a stroke of a pollock on them."

"As for language," replied Mrs. Brickley, with clear eyes, a little uplifted in the direction of the ceiling, "there was no name from heaven or hell but she had it on me, and wishin' the divil might burn the two heels off me, and the like of me wasn't in sivin parishes! And that was the clane part of the discoorse, yer Worships!"

Mrs. Brickley here drew her cloak more closely about her, as though to enshroud herself in her own refinement, and presented to the Bench a silence as elaborate as a drop scene. It implied, amongst other things, a generous confidence in the imaginative powers of her audience.

Whether or no this was misplaced, Mrs. Brickley was not invited further to enlighten the Court. After her departure the case droned on in inexhaustible rancour, and trackless complications as to the shares of the fish. Its ethics and its arithmetic would have defied the allied intellects of Solomon and Bishop Colenso. It was somewhere in that dead afternoon, when it was too late for lunch and too early for tea, that the Bench, wan with hunger, wound up the affair, by impartially binding both parties in sheaves "to the Peace."

1 A large net.

"King William."

From "Aliens of the West."

By Charlotte O'Conor Eccles.

Mrs. Macfarlane was a tall, thin, and eminently respectable woman of fifty, possessed of many rigid virtues. She was a native of the north of Ireland, and had come originally to Toomevara as maid to the Dowager Lady Dunanway. On the death of her mistress, whom she served faithfully for many years, Lord Dunanway offered to set her up in business, and at the time our story opens she had been for two years proprietress of the buffet, and made a decent living by it; for as Toomevara is situated on the Great Southern and Western Railway, a fair amount of traffic passes through it.

The stationmaster, familiarly known as "Jim" O'Brien, was Toomevara born, and had once been a porter on that very line. He was an intelligent, easy-going, yet quick-tempered man of pronounced Celtic type, with a round, good-natured face, a humorous mouth, shrewd, twinkling eyes, and immense volubility.

Between him and Mrs. Macfarlane the deadliest warfare raged. She was cold and superior, and implacably in the right. She pointed out Jim's deficiencies whenever she saw them, and she saw them very often. All day long she sat in her refreshment room, spectacles on nose, her Bible open before her, knitting, and rising only at the entrance of a customer. Jim had an uneasy consciousness that nothing escaped her eye, and her critical remarks had more than once been reported to him.

"The bitther ould pill!" he said to his wife. "Why, the very look ov her 'ud sour a crock o' crame. She's as cross as a bag ov weasels."

Jim was a Catholic and a Nationalist. He belonged to the "Laygue," and spoke at public meetings as often as his duties allowed. He objected to being referred to by Mrs. Macfarlane as a "Papish" and a "Rebel."

"Papish, indeed!" said he. "Ribbil, indeed! Tell the woman to keep a civil tongue in her head, or 'twill be worse for her."

"How did the likes ov her iver get a husban'?" he would ask, distractedly, after a sparring match. "Troth, an' 'tis no wondher the poor man died."

Mrs. Macfarlane was full of fight and courage. Her proudest boast was of being the granddaughter, daughter, sister, and widow of Orangemen.

She looked on herself in Toomevara as a child of Israel among the Babylonians, and felt that it behoved her to uphold the standard of her faith. To this end she sang the praises of the Battle of the Boyne with a triumph that aggravated O'Brien to madness.

"God Almighty help the woman! Is it Irish at all she is—or what? To see her makin' merry because a parcel o' rascally Dutchmen——! Sure, doesn't she know 'twas Irish blood they spilt at the Boyne? An' to see her takin' pride in it turns me sick, so it does. If she was English, now, I could stand it, but she callin' herself an Irishwoman—faith, she has the bad

dhrop in her, so she has, to be glad at her counthry's misforchins."

Jim's rage was the greater because Mrs. Macfarlane, whatever she said, said little or nothing to him. She passed him by with lofty scorn and indifference affecting not to see him; 181
and while she did many things that O'Brien found supremely annoying, they were things strictly within her rights.

Matters had not arrived at this pass all at once. The feud dated from Mrs. Macfarlane's having adopted a little black dog—a mongrel—on which she lavished a wealth of affection, and which, as the most endearing title she knew, she named "King William." This, of course, was nobody's concern save Mrs. Macfarlane's own, and in a world of philosophers she would have been allowed to amuse herself unheeded, but Jim O'Brien was not a philosopher.

Unlike most Irishmen, he had a great love for flowers. His garden was beautifully kept, and he was prouder of his roses than of anything on earth save his eldest daughter, Kitty, who was nearly sixteen. Picture, then, his rage and dismay when he one day found his beds scratched into holes and his roses uprooted by "King William," who had developed a mania for hiding away bones under Jim's flowers. O'Brien made loud and angry complaints to the dog's owner, which she received with unconcern and disbelief.

"Please, Mr. O'Brien," she said, with dignity, "don't try to put it on the puir wee dog. Even if yu *du* dislike his name, that's no reason for saying he was in your garden. He knows betther, so he does, than to go where he's not wanted."

After this it was open war between the stationmaster and the widow.

Under the windows of the refreshment room were two narrow flower-beds. These Jim took care never to touch, affecting to consider them the exclusive property of Mrs. Macfarlane. They were long left uncultivated, an eyesore to the stationmaster; but one day Kelly, the 182
porter, came to him with an air of mystery, to say that "th ould wan"—for by this term was Mrs. Macfarlane generally indicated—"was settin' somethin' in the beds beyant."

Jim came out of his office and walked up and down the platform with an air of elaborate unconsciousness. Sure enough, there was Mrs. Macfarlane gardening. She had donned old gloves and a clean checked apron, and, trowel in hand, was breaking up the caked earth, preparatory, it would seem, to setting plants.

"What the dickens is she doin'?" asked Jim, when he got back.

"Not a wan ov me knows," said Kelly. "She's been grubbin' there since nine o'clock."

From this time Mrs. Macfarlane was assiduous in the care of her two flower-beds. Every day she might be seen weeding or watering, and though Jim steadily averted his gaze, he was devoured by curiosity as to the probable results. What on earth did she want to grow? The weeks passed. Tiny green seedlings at last pushed their way through the soil, and in due course the nature of the plants became evident. Jim was highly excited, and rushed home to tell his wife.

"Be the hokey, Mary," he said, "'tis lilies she has there, an may I never sin, but it's my belief they're orange lilies, an' if they are, I'll root ev'ry wan ov thim out, if I die for it."

"Be quiet, now," said Mary. "How d'ye know they're lilies at all? For the love o' God keep her tongue off ov ye, an' don't be puttin' yersel' in her way."

"Whist, woman, d'ye think I'm a fool? 'Tis lilies th' are annyways, an' time'll tell if they're orange or not, but faith, if th'are, I won't shtand it.' I'll complain to the Boord." 183

"Sure the Boord'll be on her side, man. Don't yeh know the backin' she has? They'll say 'Why shouldn't she have orange lilies if she likes?'"

"Ah, Mary, 'tis too sinsible y'are inthirely. Have ye no sperrit, woman alive, to let her ride rough-shod over uz this way? 'Make a mouse o' yerself an' the cat'll ate ye,' 's a thrue saying. Sure, Saint Pether himself cuddn't shtand it, an' be the piper that played before Moses, I won't!"

"Ye misfortunit man, don't be dhrawin' down ructions on yer head. Haven't yeh childer to think about? An' don't be throublin' yerself over what she does. 'Tis plazin' her y'are whin she sees y're mad. Take no notice, man, an' p'raps she'll shtop."

"The divil fly away wid her for a bitther ould sarpint. The vinom's in her, sure enough. Why should I put up wid her, I'd like to know?"

"Ah, keep yer tongue between yer teeth, Jim. 'Tis too onprudent y'are. Not a worrd ye

dhrop but is brought back to her be some wan. Have sinse, man. You'll go sayin' that to Joe Kelly, an' he'll have it over the town in no time, an' some wan'll carry it to her."

"An' do ye think I care a thrawneen[1] for the likes ov her? Faith, not a pin. If you got yer way, Mary, ye'd have me like the man that was hanged for sayin' nothin'. Sure, I never did a hand's turn agin her, an' 'tis a low, mane thrick ov her to go settin' orange lilies over foreninst me, an' she knowin' me opinions."

"Faith, I'll not say it wasn't, Jim, if they *are* orange lilies; but sure, ye don't know rightly yet what th'are, an' in God's name keep quite till you do." 184

The days went by. The lilies grew taller and taller. They budded, they bloomed, and, sure enough, Jim had been in the right—orange lilies they proved to be.

"They'll mek a fine show for the twelfth of July, I'm thinkin'," said Mrs. Macfarlane, complacently, as she walked by her beds, swinging a dripping watering-pot.

At the time of the blossoming of the orange lilies, James O'Brien was not at home, having had to go some twenty miles down the line on official business. The obnoxious flowers took advantage of his absence to make a gay show. When he returned, as luck would have it Mrs. Macfarlane was away, and had shut up the refreshment room, but had not locked it. No one locks doors in Toomevara unless their absence is to be lengthy. She had left "King William" behind, and told Joe Kelly to take care of the dog, in case he should be lonely, for she had been invited to the wedding of an old fellow servant, the late butler at Lord Dunanway's, who was to be married that day to the steward's daughter.

All this Joe Kelly told the stationmaster on his return, but he did not say a word about the orange lilies, being afraid of an explosion, and, as he said, "detarmined not to meddle or make, but just to let him find it out himself."

For quite a time Jim was occupied over way-bills in his little office; but at last his attention was distracted by the long continued howling and yelping of a dog.

"Let the baste out, can't ye?" he at length said to Kelly. "I can't stand listening to um anny longer."

"I was afeared 'twas run over he might be, agin' she came back," said Kelly, "'an so I shut um up." 185

"Sure, there's no danger. There won't be a thrain in for the next two hours, an' if he was run over itself, God knows he'd be no loss. 'Tisn't meself 'ud grieve for um, th' ill-favoured cur."

"King William" was accordingly released.

When O'Brien had finished his task, he stood for a time at the office door, his hands crossed behind him, supporting his coat tails, his eyes fixed abstractedly on the sky. Presently he started for his usual walk up and down the platform, when his eye was at once caught by the flare of the stately rows of orange lilies.

"Be the Holy Poker!" he exclaimed. "But I was right. 'Tis orange th' are, sure enough. What'll Mary say now? Faith, 'tis lies they do be tellin' whin they say there's no riptiles in Ireland. That ould woman bangs Banagher, an' Banagher bangs the divil."

He stopped in front of the obnoxious flowers.

"Isn't it the murthering pity there's nothing I can plant to spite her. She has the pull over me entirely. Shamerogues makes no show at all—ye'd pass them unbeknownst—while orange lilies yeh can see a mile off. Now, who but herself 'ud be up to the likes o' this?"

At the moment he became aware of an extraordinary commotion among the lilies, and, looking closer, perceived "King William" in their midst, scratching as if for bare life, scattering mould, leaves, and bulbs to the four winds, and with every stroke of his hind legs dealing destruction to the carefully-tended flowers.

The sight filled Jim with sudden gladness.

"More power to the dog!" he cried, with irrepressible glee. "More power to um! Sure, he has more sinse than his missus. 'King William,' indeed, an' he rootin' up orange lilies! Ho, ho! Tare an' ouns! but 'tis the biggest joke that iver I hard in me life. More power to ye! Good dog!" 186

Rubbing his hands in an ecstasy of delight, he watched "King William" at his work of

devastation, and, regretfully be it confessed, when the dog paused, animated him to fresh efforts by thrilling cries of “Rats!”

“King William” sprang wildly hither and thither, running from end to end of the beds, snapping the brittle lily stems, scattering the blossoms.

“Be gum, but it’s great! Look at um now. Cruel wars to the Queen o’ Spain if iver I seen such shport! Go it, ‘King William!’ Smash thim, me boy! Good dog! Out wid them!” roared Jim, tears of mirth streaming down his cheeks. “Faith, ’tis mad she’ll be. I’d give sixpence to see her face. O Lord! O Lord! sure, it’s the biggest joke that iver was.”

At last “King William” tired of the game, but only when every lily lay low, and Mrs. Macfarlane’s carefully tended flower beds were a chaos of broken stalks and trampled blossoms.

As O’Brien, in high good humour, having communicated the side-splitting joke to Mary and Finnerty, was busy over his account books, Kelly came in.

“She’s back,” he whispered, “an she’s neither to hold nor to bind. I was watchin’ out, an’ sure, ’twas shtruck all of a hape she was whin she seen thim lilies; an’ now I’ll take me oath she’s goin’ to come here, for, begob, she looks as cross as nine highways.”

“Letter come,” chuckled O’Brien; “I’m ready forrer.”

At this moment the office door was burst open with violence, and Mrs. Macfarlane, in her best Sunday costume, bonnet, black gloves, and umbrella included, her face very pale save the cheek bones, where two bright pink spots burned, entered the room. 187

“Misther O’Brien,” she said in a high, stilted voice that trembled with rage, “will yu please to inform me the meanin’ o’ this dasthardly outrage?”

“Arrah, what outrage are ye talkin’ ov ma’am?” asked O’Brien, innocently. “Sure, be the looks ov ye I think somethin’ has upset ye entirely. Faith, ye’re lookin’ as angry as if you were vexed, as the sayin’ is.”

“Oh, to be sure. A great wonder, indeed, that I should be vexed. ‘Crabbit was that cause had!’” interrupted Mrs Macfarlane with a sneer. “You’re not decavin’ me, sir. I’m not takin in by yur pretinces, but if there’s law in the land, or justice, I’ll have it of yu.”

“Would ye mind, ma’am,” said O’Brien, imperturbably, for his superabounding delight made him feel quite calm and superior to the angry woman—“would ye mind statin’ in plain English what y’re talkin’ about for not a wan ov me knows?”

“Oh, yu son of Judas! Oh, yu deceivin’ wretch! As if it wasn’t yu that is afther desthroyin’ my flower-beds!”

“Ah, thin, it is y’r ould flower-beds y’re makin’ all this row about? Y’r dirty orange lilies’. Sure, ’tis clared out o’ the place they ought t’ve been long ago for weeds. ’Tis mesel’ that’s glad they’re gone, an’ so I tell ye plump an’ plain; bud as for me desthroyin’ them, sorra finger iver I laid on thim; I wouldn’t demane mesel’.”

“An’ if yu please, Misther O’Brien,” said Mrs. Macfarlane with ferocious politeness, “will yu kindly mintion, if yu did not do the job, who did?” 188

“Faith, that’s where the joke comes in,” said O’Brien, pleasantly. “’Twas the very same baste that ruinated me roses, bad cess to him, y’r precious pet, ‘King William’!”

“Oh! is it lavin’ it on the dog y’are, yu traitorous Jesuit! The puir wee dog that never harmed yu? Sure, ’tis only a Papist would think of a mane thrick like that to shift the blame.”

The colour rose to O’Brien’s face.

“Mrs. Macfarlane, ma’am,” he said, with laboured civility, “wid yer permission we’ll lave me religion out o’ this. Maybe, if ye say much more, I might be losin’ me timper wid ye.”

“Much I mind what yu lose,” cried Mrs. Macfarlane. “It’s thransported the likes o’ yu should be for a set o’ robbin’, murderin’, desthroyin’, thraytors.”

“Have a care, ma’am, how yer spake to yer betthers. Robbin’, deceivin’, murdherin’, desthroyin’, thraytors, indeed! I like that! What brought over the lot ov yez, Williamites an’ Cromwaylians an’ English an’ Scotch, but to rob, an’ desave, an’ desthroy, an’ murdher uz, an’ stale our land, an’ bid uz go to hell or to Connaught, an’ grow fat on what was ours before iver yez came, an’ thin jibe uz for bein’ poor? Thraytors! Thraytor yerself, for that’s

what the lot ov yez is. Who wants yez here at all?”

Exasperated beyond endurance, Mrs. Macfarlane struck at the stationmaster with her neat black umbrella, and had given him a nasty cut across the brow, when Kelly interfered, as well as Finnerty and Mrs. O’Brien, who rushed in, attracted by the noise. Between them 189
O’Brien was held back under a shower of blows, and the angry woman hustled outside, whence she retreated to her own quarters, muttering threats all the way.

“Oh, Jim, avourneen! ’tis bleedin’ y’are,” shrieked poor anxious Mary, wildly. “Oh, wirra, why did ye dhraw her on ye? Sure, I tould ye how ‘twould be. As sure as God made little apples she’ll process ye, an’ she has the quality on her side.”

“Letter,” said Jim; “much good she’ll get by it. Is it makin’ a liar ov me she’d be whin I tould her I didn’t touch her ould lilies? Sure, I’ll process her back for assaultin’ an’ battherin me. Ye all saw her, an’ me not touchin’ her, the calliagh!”[2]

“Begorra, ’tis thrue for him,” said Kelly. “She flagellated him wid her umbrelly, an’ sorra blow missed bud the wan that didn’t hit, and on’y I was here, an’ lit on her suddent, like a bee on a posy, she’d have had his life, so she would.”

Not for an instant did Mrs. Macfarlane forget her cause of offence, or believe O’Brien’s story that it was the dog that had destroyed her orange lilies. After some consideration she hit on an ingenious device that satisfied her as being at once supremely annoying to her enemy and well within the law. Her lilies, emblems of the religious and political faith that were in her, were gone; but she still had means to testify to her beliefs, and protest against O’Brien and all that he represented to her mind.

Next day, when the midday train had just steamed into the station, Jim was startled by hearing a wild cheer—

“Hi, ‘King William’! Hi, ‘King William’! Come back, ‘King William’! ‘King William,’ my darlin’, ‘King William’!”

The air rang with the shrill party cry, and when Jim rushed out he found that Mrs. 190
Macfarlane had allowed her dog to run down the platform just as the passengers were alighting, and was now following him, under the pretence of calling him back. There was nothing to be done. The dog’s name certainly was “King William,” and Mrs. Macfarlane was at liberty to recall him if he strayed.

Jim stood for a moment like one transfixed.

“Faith, I b’leeve ’tis the divil’s grandmother she is,” he exclaimed.

Mrs. Macfarlane passed him with a deliberately unseeing eye. Had he been the gate-post, she could not have taken less notice of his presence, as, having made her way to the extreme end of the platform, cheering her “King William,” she picked up her dog, and marched back in triumph.

Speedily did it become evident that Mrs. Macfarlane was pursuing a regular plan of campaign, for at the arrival of every train that entered the station that day, she went through the same performance of letting loose the dog and then pursuing him down the platform, waving her arms and yelling for “King William.”

By the second challenge Jim had risen to the situation and formed his counterplot. He saw and heard her in stony silence, apparently as indifferent to her tactics as she to his presence, but he was only biding his time. No sooner did passengers alight and enter the refreshment room, than, having just given them time to be seated, he rushed up, threw open the door of his enemy’s headquarters, and, putting in his cried, cried:—

“Take yer places, gintlemin immaydiately. The thrain’s just off. Hurry up, will yez? She’s away!”

The hungry and discomfited passengers hurried out, pell mell, and Mrs. Macfarlane was 191
left speechless with indignation.

“I bet I’ve got the whip hand ov her this time,” chuckled Jim, as he gave the signal to start.

Mrs. Macfarlane’s spirit, however, was not broken. From morning until night, whether the day was wet or fine, she greeted the arrival of each train with loud cries for “King William,” and on each occasion Jim retorted by bundling out all her customers before they could touch bite or sup.

The feud continued.

Each day Mrs. Macfarlane, gaunter, fiercer, paler, and more resolute in ignoring the stationmaster's presence, flaunted her principles up and down the platform. Each day did Jim hurry the departure of the trains and sweep off her customers. Never before had there been such punctuality known at Toomevara, which is situated on an easy-going line, where usually the guard, when indignant tourists point out that the express is some twenty minutes' late, is accustomed to reply,

"Why, so she is. 'Tis thrue for ye."

One day, however, Mrs. Macfarlane did not appear. She had come out for the first train, walking a trifle feebly, and uttering her war cry in a somewhat quavering voice. When the next came, no Mrs. Macfarlane greeted it.

Jim himself was perplexed, and a little aggrieved. He had grown used to the daily strife, and missed the excitement of retorting on his foe.

"Maybe 'tis tired of it she is," he speculated. "Time forrer. She knows now she won't have things all her own way. She's too domineerin' by half."

"What's wrong with the ould wan, sir?" asked Joe Kelly, when he met O'Brien. "She didn't 192
shtir out whin she hard the thrain."

"Faith, I dunno," said Jim. "Hatchin' more disturbance, I'll bet. Faith, she's like Conaty's goose, nivir well but whin she's doin' mischief. Joe," he said, "maybe y'ought to look in an' see if anythin' is wrong wid th' ould wan."

A moment more, and Jim heard him shouting, "Misther O'Brien, Misther O'Brien!" He ran at the sound. There, a tumbled heap, lay Mrs. Macfarlane, no longer a defiant virago, but a weak, sickly, elderly woman, partly supported on Joe Kelly's knee, her face ghastly pale, her arms hanging limp.

"Be me sowl, but I think she's dyin'," cried Kelly. "She just raised her head whin she saw me, an' wint off in a faint."

"Lay her flat, Joe; lay her flat."

"Lave her to me," he said, "an' do you run an' tell the missus to come here at wanst. Maybe she'll know what to do."

Mary came in to find her husband gazing in a bewildered fashion at his prostrate enemy, and took command in a way that excited his admiration.

"Here," said she, "give uz a hand to move her on to the seat. Jim, run home an' get Biddy to fill two or three jars wid boilin' wather, an' bring thim along wid a blanket. She's as cowld as death. Joe, fly off wid yeh for the docther."

"What docther will I go for, ma'am?"

"The first ye can git," said Mary, promptly beginning to chafe the inanimate woman's hands and loosen her clothes.

When the doctor came he found Mrs. Macfarlane laid on an impromptu couch composed of 193
two of the cushioned benches placed side by side. She was wrapped in blankets, had hot bottles to her feet and sides, and a mustard plaster over her heart.

"Bravo! Mrs. O'Brien," he said, "I couldn't have done better myself. I believe you have saved her life by being so quick—at least, saved it for the moment, for I think she is in for a severe illness. She will want careful nursing to pull her through."

"She looks rale bad," assented Mary.

"What are we to do with her?" said the doctor. "Is there no place where they would take her in?"

Mary glanced at Jim, but he did not speak.

"Sure, there's a room in our house," she ventured, after an awkward pause.

"The very thing," said the doctor, "if you don't mind the trouble, and if Mr. O'Brien does not object."

Jim made no answer, but walked out.

“He doesn’t, docther,” cried Mary. “Sure, he has the rale good heart. I’ll run off now, an’ get the bed ready.”

As they passed Jim, who stood sulkily at the door, she contrived to squeeze his hand. “God bless yeh, me own Jim. You’ll be none the worse forrit. ’Tis no time for bearin’ malice, an’ our Blessed Lady’ll pray for yeh this day.”

Jim was silent.

“’Tis a cruel shame she should fall on uz,” he said, when his wife had disappeared; but he offered no further resistance.

Borne on an impromptu stretcher by Jim, Joe, Finnerty, and doctor, Mrs. Macfarlane was carried to the stationmaster’s house, undressed by Mary, and put to bed in the spotlessly 194
clean, whitewashed upper room.

The cold and shivering had now passed off, and she was burning. Nervous fever, the doctor anticipated. She raved about her dog, about Jim, about the passengers, her rent, and fifty other things that made it evident her circumstances had preyed upon her mind.

Poor Mary was afraid of her at times; but there are no trained nurses at Toomevara, and, guided by Doctor Doherty’s directions, she tried to do her best, and managed wonderfully well.

There could be no doubt Jim did not like having the invalid in the house. But this did not prevent him from feeling very miserable. He became desperately anxious that Mrs. Macfarlane should not die, and astonished Mary by bringing home various jellies and meat extracts, that he fancied might be good for the patient; but he did this with a shy and hang-dog air by no means natural to him, and always made some ungracious speech as to the trouble, to prevent Mary thinking he was sorry for the part he had played. He replied with a downcast expression to all enquiries from outsiders as to Mrs. Macfarlane’s health, but he brought her dog into the house and fed it well.

“Not for her sake, God knows,” he explained; “but bekase the poor baste was frettin’ an’ I cudn’t see him there wid no wan to look to him.”

He refused, however, to style the animal “King William,” and called it “Billy” instead, a name which it soon learned to answer.

One evening, when the whitewashed room was all aglow with crimson light that flooded through the western window, Mrs. Macfarlane returned to consciousness. Mary was sitting 195
by the bedside, sewing, having sent out the children in charge of Kitty to secure quiet in the house. For a long time, unobserved by her nurse, the sick woman lay feebly trying to understand. Suddenly she spoke—

“What is the matter?”

Mary jumped.

“To be sure,” she said, laying down her needlework, “’tis very bad you were intirely, ma’am; but, thanks be to God, you’re betther now.”

“Where am I?” asked Mrs. Macfarlane, after a considerable pause.

“In the station house, ma’am. Sure, don’t ye know me? I’m Mary O’Brien.”

“Mary O’Brien—O’Brien?”

“Yis, faith! Jim O’Brien’s wife.”

“An’ this is Jim O’Brien’s house?”

“Whose else id it be? But there now, don’t talk anny more. Sure, we’ll tell, ye all about it whin y’re betther. The docthor sez y’re to be kep’ quiet.”

“But who brought me here?”

“Troth, ’twas carried in ye were, an’ you near dyin’. Hush up now, will ye? Take a dhrop o’ this, an’ thry to go to shleep.”

When Jim came into his supper his wife said to him, “That craythure upstairs is mad to get away. She thinks we begrudge her the bit she ates.”

Jim was silent. Then he said, “Sure, annythin’ that’s bad she’ll b’leeve ov uz.”

“But ye’ve nivir been up to see her. Shlip into the room now, an’ ax her how she’s goin’ on. Let bygones be bygones, in the name of God.”

“I won’t,” said Jim. 196

“Oh, yes, ye will. Sure, afther all, though ye didn’t mane it, ye’re the cause ov it. Go to her now.”

“I don’t like.”

“Ah, go. ’Tis yer place, an’ you sinsibler than she is. Go an’ tell her to shtay till she’s well. Faith, I think that undher all that way of hers she’s softher than she looks. I tell ye, Jim, I seen her cryin’ over the dog, bekase she thought ’twas th’ only thing that loved her.”

Half pushed by Mary, Jim made his way up the steep stair, and knocked at the door of Mrs. Macfarlane’s attic.

“Come in,” said a feeble voice, and he stumbled into the room.

When Mrs. Macfarlane saw who it was, a flame lit in her hollow eyes.

“I’m sorry,” she said, with grim politeness, “that yu find me here, Misther O’Brien; but it isn’t my fault. I wanted tu go a while ago, an’ your wife wouldn’t let me.”

“An’ very right she was; you’re not fit for it. Sure, don’t be talkin’ ov goin’ till ye’re better, ma’am,” said Jim, awkwardly. “Y’re heartily welcome for me. I come up to say—to say, I hope y’ll be in no hurry to move.”

“Yu’re very good, but it’s not to be expected I’d find myself easy under this roof, where, I can assure yu, I’d never have come of my own free will; an’ I apologise to yu, Misther O’Brien, for givin’ so much trouble—not that I could help myself.”

“Sure, ’tis I that should apologise,” blurted out Jim; “an’ rale sorry I am—though, maybe, ye won’t b’lieve me—that I ever dhruv the customers out.”

For a long time Mrs. Macfarlane did not speak. 197

“I could forgive that easier than your rootin’ up my lilies,” she said, in a strained voice.

“But that I never did. God knows an’ sees me this night, an’ He knows that I never laid a finger on thim. I kem out, an’ foun’ the dog there scrattin’ at thim, an’ if this was me last dyin’ worrd, ’tis thrue.”

“An’ ’twas really the wee dog?”

“It was, though I done wrong in laughin’ at him, an’ cheerin’ him on; but, sure, ye wouldn’t mind me whin I told ye he was at me roses, an’ I thought it sarved ye right, an’ that ye called him ‘King William’ to spite me.”

“So I did,” said Mrs. Macfarlane, and, she added, more gently, “I’m sorry now.”

“Are ye so?” said Jim, brightening. “Faith, I’m glad to hear ye say it. We was both in the wrong, ye see, an’ if you bear no malice, I don’t.”

“Yu have been very good to me, seein’ how I misjudged you,” said Mrs. Macfarlane.

“Not a bit ov it; an’ ’twas the wife anyhow, for, begorra, I was hardened against ye, so I was.”

“An’ yu’ve spent yer money on me, an’ I——”

“Sure, don’t say a worrd about id. I owed it to you, so I did, but, begorra, ye won’t have to complain ov wantin’ custom wanst yer well.”

Mrs. Macfarlane smiled wanly.

“No chance o’ that, I’m afraid. What with my illness an’ all that went before it, business is gone. Look at the place shut up this three weeks an’ more.”

“Not it,” said Jim. “Sure, sence y’ve been sick I put our little Kitty, the shlip, in charge of the place, an’ she’s made a power o’ money for ye, an’ she on’y risin’ sixteen, an’ havin’ to 198
help her mother an’ all. She’s a clever girl, so she is, though I sez it, an’ she ruz the prices all round. She couldn’t manage with the cakes, not knowin’ how to bake thim like yerself; but sure I bought her plenty ov biscuits at Connolly’s; and her mother cut her sandwidges, an’ made tay, an’ the dhrinks was all there as you left them, an’ Kitty kep’ count ov all she sould.”

Mrs. Macfarlane looked at him for a moment queerly then she drew the sheet over her face, and began to sob.

Jim, feeling wretchedly uncomfortable, crept downstairs.

“Go to the craythure, Mary,” he said. “Sure, she’s cryin’. We’ve made it up—an’ see here, let her want for nothin’.”

Mary ran upstairs, took grim Mrs. Macfarlane in her arms, and actually kissed her; and Mrs. Macfarlane’s grimness melted away, and the two women cried together for sympathy.

* * * * * * *

Now, as the trains come into Toomevara station, Jim goes from carriage to carriage making himself a perfect nuisance to passengers with well-filled luncheon baskets. “Won’t ye have a cup o’ tay, me lady? There’s plinty ov time, an’ sure, we’ve the finest tay here that you’ll get on the line. There’s nothin’ like it this side o’ Dublin; A glass o’ whiskey, sir? ’Tis on’y the best John Jameson that’s kep’, or sherry wine? Ye won’t be shtoppin’ agin annywheres that you’ll like it as well. Sure, if ye don’t want to get out—though there’s plinty o’ time—I’ll give the ordher an’ have it sent over to yez. Cakes, ma’am, for the little ladies? ’Tis a long journey, an’ maybe they’ll be hungry—an apples? Apples is mighty good for childher. She keeps fine apples if ye like thim.” 199

Mrs. Macfarlane has grown quite fat, is at peace with all mankind, takes the deepest interest in the O’Brien family, and calls her dog “Billy.”

---

1 A blade of grass.

2 Hag

200

Quin’s Rick.

From “Doings and Dealings.”

By Jane Barlow.

Clear skies and gentle breezes had so favoured Hugh Lennon’s harvesting that his threshing was all safely done by the first week in October, and as the fine weather still continued, he took his wife, according to promise, for a ten days’ stay at the seaside. Mrs. Hugh was rather young and rather pretty, and much more than rather short-tempered. The neighbours often remarked that they would not be in Hugh Lennon’s coat for a great deal—at times specifying very considerable sums.

From her visit to Warrenpoint, however, she returned home in high good humour, and ran gaily upstairs to remove her flowery hat, announcing that she would do some fried eggs, Hugh’s favourite dish, for their tea. Hence, he was all the more disconcerted when, as he followed her along the little passage, she suddenly wheeled round upon him, and confronted him with a countenance full of wrath. She had merely been looking for a moment out of the small end window, and why, in the name of fortune, marvelled Hugh, should that have put her in one of her tantrums? But it evidently had done so. “Saw you ever the like of that?” she demanded furiously, pointing through the window.

“The like of what at all?” said Hugh.

“Look at it,” said Mrs. Hugh, and drummed with the point of her umbrella on a pane.

Hugh looked, and saw, conspicuous at a short distance beyond their backyard, a portly rick of straw, which their neighbour, Peter Quin, had nearly finished building. A youth was tumbling himself about on top of it with much agility, and shouting “Pull!” at each floundering fall. “Sure,” said Hugh, “it’s nothing, only young Jim Quin leppin’ their rick.” 201

“I wisht he’d break every bone in his ugly body, then, while he’s at it,” declared Mrs. Hugh.

“It’s a quare wish to be wishin’ agin the poor, decent lad,” said her husband, “and he lepping plenty of ricks for ourselves before now.”

“And what call have they to be cocking up e’er a one there,” said Mrs. Hugh, “where there was never such a thing seen till this day?”

“Why wouldn’t they?” said Hugh. “It’s a handy place enough for a one, I should say, there on the bit of a headland.”

“How handy it is!” said his wife, “and it shutting out the gap in the fence on me that was the only glimpse I had into our lane.”

“Well, supposing it does, where’s the odds?” said Hugh. “There’s ne’er a much in the lane for anybody to be glimpsing at.”

“The greatest convenience in the world it was,” declared Mrs. Hugh, “to be able to see you crossing it of a morning, and you coming in from the lower field, the way I could put the bit of bacon down ready for the breakfast.”

“Musha, good gracious, woman alive, if that’s all’s ailing you, where’s the need to be so exact?” said Hugh.

“Exact, is it?” said Mrs. Hugh. “Maybe you’d like to have the whole of it melted away into grease with being set on the fire half an hour too soon. Or else you to be standing about open-mouthed under me feet, like a starving terrier, waiting till it’s fit to eat. That’s how it’ll 202
be, anyway, like it or lump it. And I used to be watching for old Matty Flanaghan going by with the post-bag, and the Keoghs coming back from early Mass—’twas as good as an extra clock for telling the time. But now, with that big lump of a thing stuck there, I might as well be shut up inside of any old prison. Them Quins done it a-purpose to annoy me, so they did. Sorra another raison had they, for what else ‘ud make them take and build it behind our backs? But put up with it is what I won’t do. Stepping over to them I’ll be this night, and letting them know how little I think of themselves and their mean tricks. And if I see old Peter, I’ll tell him you’ll have the law of him unless he gets it cleared away out of that to-morrow. Bedad will I; and yourself ‘ud say the same, if you had as much spirit in you as a moulting chicken.”

“Have sense, Julia,” Hugh remonstrated, wedging in a protest with difficulty. “Stop where you are, now, quiet and peaceable. It’s only making a show of yourself you’d be, running out that way raging about nothing What foolish talk have you about the man moving his rick, that he’s just after building? You might as well be bidding him move Knockrinkin over yonder; and he more betoken with his haggart bursting full this minyit. What annoyance is there in the matter, Julia woman? Sure in any case it won’t be any great while standing there, you may depend, and they bedding cattle with it, let alone very belike sending in cartloads of it every week to the market. Just content yourself and be aisy.”

But, as he had more than half expected, Hugh spoke to no purpose. His wife would not be said by him, and his expostulations, in fact, merely hastened her impetuous departure on her 203
visit to the Quins. She returned even more exasperated than she had set out, and from her report of the interview Hugh gathered that she had stormed with much violence, giving everybody “the height of abuse.” He was fain to console himself with the rather mortifying reflection that “the Quins knew well enough she did be apt to take up with quare nonsensical fantigues, that nobody minded.”

A hope that the morrow might find her more reasonable proved entirely vain, as many additional grievances, resented with increasing bitterness, had been evolved during the night. When Hugh went out to his work, he left her asserting, and believing, that the noise of the wind whistling round the rick hadn’t let her get a wink of sleep, and when he came in again he found her on the point of setting off to the police barracks that she might charge the Quins with having “littered her yard all over with wisps of straw blown off their hijjis old rick, till the unfortunate hens couldn’t see the ground under their feet.” This outrage, it appeared, had been aggravated by Micky Quinn, who remarked tauntingly, that “she had a right to feel herself obligated to them for doing her a fine piece of thatching”; and an interchange of similar rejoinders had taken place. On the present occasion Hugh was indeed able forcibly to stop her wild expedition by locking both the house doors. But as he knew that these strong measures could not be more than a temporary expedient, and as arguments were very bootless, he was at a loss to determine what he should do next. She had begun to drop such menacing hints about lighted matches and rags soaked in paraffin, that he felt loth to leave her at large within reach of those dangerous materials. Already it 204
had come to his knowledge that rumours were afloat in the village about how Mrs. Lennon

was threatening to burn down the Quin's rick. The truth was that she had said as much to several calling neighbours in the course of that day.

Hugh's perplexity was therefore not a little relieved when, early on the following morning, his wife's eldest married sister, Mrs. Mackay, from beyond Kilcraig, looked in on her way to market. Mrs. Mackay, an energetic person with a strong will regulated by abundant common sense, was one among the few people of whom her flighty sister Julia stood in awe. In this emergency her own observations, together with her brother-in-law's statements, soon showed her how matters stood, and she promptly decided what steps to take. "Our best plan," she said to Hugh apart, "is for Julia to come along home with me. She'll be out of the way there of aught to stir up her mind, and she can stop till she gets pacified again. 'Twill be no great while before she's glad enough to come back here, rick or no rick, you may depend; for we're all through-other up at our place the now, with one of the childer sick, and ne'er a girl kept. I'll give her plenty to do helping me, and it's much if she won't be very soon wishing she was at home in her own comfortable house. She doesn't know when she's well off, bedad," Mrs. Mackay added, glancing half enviously round the tidy little kitchen.

Hugh fell in with her views at once. The Mackays lived a couple of miles at the other side of Kilcraig, so that Julia would be safely out of harm's way, and he could trust her sister to keep her from doing anything disastrously foolish. So he cheerfully saw his wife depart, and
though her last words were a vehement asseveration that she would "never set foot next or 205
nigh the place again, as long as there did be two straws slanting together in Quin's dirty old rick," he confidently expected to see her there once more without much delay.

Up at the Mackay's struggling farmstead on the side of Knockrinkin, Mrs. Hugh found things dull enough. Internally the house was incommodious and crowded to uncomfortable excess, and its surroundings externally were desolate and lonesome. Mrs. Hugh remarked discontentedly that if the inside and outside of it were mixed together, they'd be better off, anyway, for room to turn round in, and quiet to hear themselves speak; but the operation appeared impracticable. Nor were the domestic tasks with which Mrs. Mackay provided her by any means to her taste, and her discontent continued. One evening, shortly after her arrival, she grew so tired of hearing the children squabble and squawl, that as soon as supper was over she slipped out at the back door into the soft-aired twilight. She proposed to wile away some time by searching the furzy, many-bouldered field for mushrooms and blackberries, but neither could she find, and in her quest she wandered a long way down the swarded slope, until she came to a low boundary wall. There she stopped, and stood looking across the valley towards a wooden patch beyond the village, which contained her own dwelling, as well as that of the hateful Quins. Her wrath against them burned more fiercely than ever at the reflection that they were clearly to blame for her present tedious exile. The thought of going home, she said to herself, she couldn't abide, by reason of their old rick.

Through the dusk, the darker mass of those trees loomed indistinctly like a stain on the 206
dimness, and Mrs. Hugh fancied that she could make out just the site of the Quin's rick—the best of bad luck to it. Why didn't some decent tramp take and sling a spark of a lighted match into it, and he passing by with his pipe? As she strained her eyes towards it, she suddenly saw on the very spot the glimmer of a golden-red light, glancing out among the shadowy trees. For a moment she was startled and half scared, but then she remembered that it would be nothing more than the harvest moon rising up big through the mist. Hadn't she seen it the night before looking the size of ten? This explanation, at least, half disappointed her, and she said to herself with dissatisfaction, watching the gleam waver and brighten, that it looked as red as fire, and she wished to goodness it was the same as it looked. "There'd be nothing aisier than setting the whole concern in a blaze standing so convanient to the road," she thought, while she gazed and gazed with tantalised vindictiveness over the low, tumble-down wall.

* * * * * * *

More than two hours later Mrs. Hugh Lennon came hurrying in at the Mackay's back-door. By this time it was dark night outside, and she found only Mrs. Mackay in the kitchen, for himself and the children had gone to bed.

"Where in the world have you been all the evening?" Mrs. Mackay inquired, with some indignation. "Leaving me with nobody to give me a hand with the childer or anything, and keeping me now waiting up till every hour of the night."

"Quin's rick's burnt down," burst out Mrs. Hugh, who evidently had not heard a word of
her sister's remonstrance. She looked excited and exultant; her hair was roughened by the 207

wind, and her skirts were bedraggled with a heavy dew brushed off tussocks and furze bushes. Mrs. Mackay eyed her with a start of vague suspicion.

“And who did you get that news from,” she said, “supposing it’s true?”

“Amn’t I after seeing it with me own eyes?” triumphed Mrs. Hugh. “Watching it blazing this long while down below there by Connolly’s fence. First of all I thought it was only the old moon rising, that would do us no good; but sure not at all, glory be! Burnt down to the ground it is, every grain of it; and serve them very right.”

“What took you trapesing off down there, might I ask?” inquired Mrs. Mackay, her scrutiny of her sister growing more mistrustful.

“Is it what took me?” said Mrs. Hugh. “I dunno rightly. Och, let me see; about getting some mushrooms I was, I believe, and blackberries.”

“A likely time of night it was to be looking for such things,” said Mrs. Mackay, “and a dale of them you got.”

“There isn’t a one in it; all of them’s as red as coals of fire yet, or else as green as grass—sure, what matter?” said Mrs. Hugh. “Anyway, I was took up with watching the baste of an old rick flaring itself into flitters; and a rale good job.”

“A job it is that you’re very apt to have raison to repent of,” Mrs. Mackay said severely, “if so be you had act or part in it.”

“Is it me?” Mrs. Hugh said, and laughed derisively. “Raving you are, if that’s your notion. A great chance I’d have to be meddling or making with it, and I stuck up here out of reach of 208
everything. I only wisht I’d been at our own place to get a better sight.”

“How can I tell what chances you have or haven’t, and you after running wild through the country for better than a couple of hours?” Mrs. Mackay said. “Plenty of time had you for the matter, to be skyting there and back twice over, if you was up to any sort of mischief; let alone going about talking and threatening, and carrying on, till everybody in the parish is safe to be of the opinion yourself was contriving it with whoever done it, supposing you didn’t do it all out. And it’s the quare trouble you might very aisy get yourself into for that same, let me tell you. There was a man at Joe’s place that got three years for being concerned in setting a light to a bit of an old shed, no size to speak of; so, if the next thing we see of you is walking off between a pair of police constables, yourself you’ll have to thank for it. I only hope poor Hugh won’t be blaming me for letting you out of me sight this evening.”

“Och, good luck to yourself and your pólis!” Mrs. Hugh said, defiantly. “It’s little I care who lit the old rick, and its little I care what any people’s troubling theirselves to think about it. I’d liefer be after doing it than not—so there’s for you. But what I won’t do is stop here listening to your fool’s romancing. So good-night to you kindly.”

With that Mrs. Hugh flounced clattering up the little steep stairs, and hurled herself like a compressed earthquake-wave into her bedroom. Mrs. Mackay, following her, stumped along more slowly. “Goodness forgive me for saying so,” she reflected, “but Julia’s a terrific woman to have any doings or dealings with. She’s not to hold or bind when she takes the notion, and the dear knows what she’s been up to now; something outrageous most likely. 209
The Lord Chief Justice himself couldn’t control her. Beyond me she is entirely.”

Nevertheless, her warnings were not without effect, and at their next interview, she found her sister in a meeker mood.

It was when Mrs. Mackay was in the cowhouse milking, before breakfast, that Julia appeared to her, hurrying in with a demeanour full of dismay. “Och, Bridgie, what will I do?” she said.

“What’s happint you now?” Bridgie replied, with a studied want of sympathy.

“I’m just after looking out of me window,” Julia said, “and there’s two of the pólis out of the barracks below standing at the roadgate, having great discoursing with Dan Molloy, and about coming into this place they are. Ne’er a bit of me knows what’s bringing them so outlandish early; but I’ll take me oath, Bridgie darlint, I’d nought to do, good or bad, with burning the rick. It might ha’ went on fire of itself. Hand nor part I hadn’t in it. So you might be telling them that to your certain knowledge I was up here the whole time, and sending them about their business—there’s a good woman.”

On further reflection Mrs. Mackay had already concluded that Julia probably was not

guilty of incendiarism; still, she considered her sister's alarmed state a favourable opportunity for a lesson on the expediency of behaving herself. Therefore she was careful to give no reassuring response.

"'Deed, now, I dunno what to say to it all," she declared, "and I couldn't take it on me conscience to go swear in a court of justice that I knew where you might be yesterday late. 210
More betoken there was the bad talk you had out of you about the Quins before you come here, that they'll be bringing up agin you now, you may depend. An ugly appearance it has, sure enough, the two of them coming over at this hour. As headstrong you are as a cross-tempered jennet; but if you'll take my advice you'll keep yourself out of their sight the best way you can, till I see what they want with you, and then if it's a warrant they've got, I might try persuade them to go look for you somewheres else. That's the best I can do, and, of course, I can't say whether they will or no, but maybe—"

For a wonder Mrs. Hugh did take this advice, and most promptly, rushing with a suppressed wail out of the cowhouse and into a shed close by, where she crouched behind a heap of hay, the first hiding-place that presented itself to her in her panic. She had spent a great part of the past night in meditation on her sister's alarming statements; and now the ominous arrival of the police put a finishing touch to her fright. How was she to escape from them, or to exculpate herself? Bridgie evidently either could or would do little or nothing. At this dreadful crisis in her affairs her thoughts turned longingly towards her own house down below, where there was Hugh, poor man, who would certainly have, somehow, prevented her from being dragged off to Athmoran gaol, even if he did believe her to have burnt the rick. Through the dusty shed window she saw two dark, flat-capped, short-caped figures sauntering up to the front door, whereupon with a sudden desperate impulse, she stole out, and fled down the cart-track along which they had just come. Getting a good start of them, 211
she said to herself, she might be at home again with Hugh before they could overtake her—and one of them, she added, as fat as a prize pig.

As Mrs. Hugh ran most of the road's two long miles, she was considerably out of breath when she came round a turn which brought into view an expected and an unexpected object. The one was Hugh walking out of his own gate, the other Quin's rick, still rearing its glistening yellow ridge into the sunshine.

"Well, now, Julia woman, and is it yourself?" Hugh said, as she darted across the road to him. "What's took you to be tearing along at that rate, and without so much as a shawl over your head?"

"Thinking I was to meet you before this—kilt I am, running all the way," she said, panting. "And I do declare there's the big rick in it yet."

Hugh's face fell. "Whethen now, if it's with the same old blathers you're come back," he said, in a disgusted tone, "there was no need for you to be in any such great hurry."

"Ne'er a word was I going to say agin it at all," said his wife, "and I making sure the constables would be after me every minyit for burning it down."

"What the mischief put that notion in your head?" said Hugh.

"I seen the blaze of a great fire down here last night," she said, "and I thought it would be Quin's rick, and they knowing I had some talk about it."

"Sure 'twas just the big heap of dead branches and old trunks," said Hugh, "that's lying at the end of the cow-lane ever since the big wind. It took and went on fire yesterday evening; raison good, there was a cartful of Wexford tinkers went by in the afternoon, and stopped to 212
boil their kettle close under it. A fine flare-up it made, and it as dry as tinder; but I'd scarce ha' thought you'd see it that far. Lucky it is the old sticks was fit for nothing much, unless some poor bodies may be at a loss for firewood this next winter. Come along in, Julia, and wet yourself a cup of tay. You'd a right to be tired trotting about that way. And as for the pólis, bedad, they'd have their own work cut out for them, if they was to be taking up everybody they heard talking foolish."

Not long after Mrs. Hugh had finished her cup, Mrs. Mackay arrived, alighting flurriedly from a borrowed seat on a neighbour's car.

"So it's home you ran, Julia," she said, sternly. "Well, now, I wonder you had that much sense itself. Looking for you high and low we were, after the pólis had gone, that only come to get the number of our chickens—counting the feathers on them next, I suppose they'll be—and all romancing it was about anything happening the rick. But frightened I was out of me wits, till little Joey said he seen you quitting out at the gate. So then I come along to see

what foolish thing you might be about doing next."

"She's likely to be doing nothing foolisher than giving you a cup of tay, Bridgie," Hugh interposed, soothingly. "And mightn't you be frying us a few eggs in the pan, Julia? Old Nan Byrne's just after bringing in two or three fresh ones she got back of the Quins' rick, where our hins do be laying."

"'Twill be a handy place for finding them in," Mrs. Hugh said, blandly. And both her experienced hearers accepted the remark as a sign that these hostilities were over.

213

Maelshaughlinn at the Fair.

From "My Irish Year."

By Padraic Colum.

It was about horses, women, and music, and, in the mouth of Maelshaughlinn, the narrative had the exuberance of the fair and the colour of a unique exploit. I found Maelshaughlinn alone in the house in the grey dawn succeeding his adventure. "This morning," he said, "I'm the lonesome poor fellow without father or mother, a girl's promise, nor my own little horse." He closed the door against a reproachful sunrise, and, sitting on a little three-legged stool, he told me the story.

Penitentially he began it, but he expanded with the swelling narrative. "This time last week," said Maelshaughlinn, "I had no thought of parting with my own little horse. The English wanted beasts for a war, and the farmers about here were coining money out of horseflesh. It seemed that the buyers were under a pledge not to refuse anything in the shape of a horse, and so the farmers made horses out of the sweepings of the knackers' yards, and took horses out of ha'penny lucky-bags and sold them to the English. Yesterday morning I took out my own little beast and faced for Arvach Fair. I met the dealer on the road. He was an Englishman, and above all nations on the face of the earth, the English are the easiest to deal with in regard of horses. I tendered him the price—it was an honest price, but none of our own people would have taken the offer in any reasonable way. An Irishman would have cursed into his hat, so that he might shake the curses out over my head. The 214
Englishman took on to consider it, and my heart went threshing my ribs. Then he gave me my price, paid me in hard weighty, golden sovereigns and went away, taking the little horse with him.

"I sat down on the side of a ditch to take a breath. Now you'll say that I ought to have gone back to the work, and I'll say that I agree with you. But no man can be wise at all times. Anyway, I was sitting on a ditch, with a lark singing over every foot of ground, and nothing before me but the glory of the day. A girl came along the road, and, on my soul, I never saw a girl walking so finely. 'She'll be a head above every girl in the fair,' said I, 'and may God keep the brightness on her head.' 'God save you, Maelshaughlinn,' said the girl. 'God save you, my jewel,' said I. I stood up to look after her, for a fine woman, walking finely, is above all the sights that man ever saw. Then a few lads passed, whistling and swinging their sticks. 'God give you a good day,' said the lads. 'God give you luck boys,' said I. And there was I, swinging my stick after the lads, and heading for the fair.

"'Never go into a fair where you've no business.' That's an oul' saying and a wise saying, but never forget that neither man nor immortal can be wise at all times. Satan fell from heaven, Adam was cast out of Paradise, and even your Uncle broke his pledge.

"When I came into the fair there was a fiddler playing behind a tinker's cart. I had a shilling to spend in the town, and so I went into Flynn's and asked for a cordial. A few most respectable men came in then, and I asked them to take a treat from me. Well, one drank, and another drank, and then Rose Heffernan came into the shop with her brother. Young 215
Heffernan sent the glasses round, and then I asked Rose to take a glass of wine, and I put down a sovereign on the counter. The fiddler was coming down the street, and I sent a young lad out to him with silver. I stood for a while talking with Rose, and I heard the word go round the shop concerning myself. It was soon settled that I had got a legacy. The people there never heard of any legacies except American legacies, and so they put my fortune

down to an uncle who had died, they thought, in the States. Now, I didn't want Rose to think that my money was a common legacy out of the States, so by half-words I gave them to understand that I had got my fortune out of Mexico. Mind you, I wasn't far out when I spoke of Mexico, for I had a grand-uncle who went out there, and his picture is in the house this present minute.

"Well, after the talk of a Mexican legacy went round, I couldn't take any treats from the people, and I asked everyone to drink again. I think the crowds of the world stood before Flynn's counter. A big Connachtman held up a Mexican dollar, and I took it out of his hand and gave it to Rose Heffernan. I paid him for it, too, and it comes into my mind now, that I paid him for it twice.

"There's not, on the track of the sun, a place to come near Arvach on the day of a fair. A man came along leading a black horse, and the size of the horse and the eyes of the horse would terrify you. There was a drift of sheep going by, and the fleece of each was worth gold. There were tinkers with their carts of shining tins, as ugly and quarrelsome fellows as ever beat each other to death in a ditch, and there were the powerful men, with the tight 216
mouths, and the eyes that could judge a beast, and the dark, handsome women from the mountains. To crown all, a piper came into the town by the other end, and his music was enough to put the blood like a mill-race through your heart. The music of the piper, I think, would have made the beasts walk out of the fair on their hind legs, if the music of the fiddler didn't charm them to be still. Grace Kennedy and Sheela Molloy were on the road, and Rose Heffernan was talking to them. Grace Kennedy has the best wit and the best discourse of any woman within the four seas, and she said to the other girls as I came up, 'Faith, girls, the good of the Mission will be gone from us since Maelshaughlinn came into the fair, for the young women must be talking about his coming home from the sermon.' Sheela Molloy has the softest hair and the softest eyes of anything you ever saw. She's a growing girl, with the spice of the devil in her. 'It's not the best manners,' said I, 'to treat girls to a glass across the counter, but come into a shop,' said I, 'and let me pay for your fancy.' Well, I persuaded them to come into a shop, and I got the girls to make Sheela ask for a net for her hair. They don't sell these nets less than by the dozen, so I bought a dozen nets for Sheela's hair. I bought ear-rings and brooches, dream-books and fortune books, buckles, and combs, and I thought I had spent no more money than I'd thank you for picking up off the floor. A tinker woman came in and offered to tell the girls their fortunes, and I had to cross her hand with silver.

"I came out on the street after that, and took a few turns through the fair. The noise and the crowd were getting on my mind, and I couldn't think, with any satisfaction, so I went 217
into Mrs. Molloy's, and sat for a while in the snug. I had peace and quiet there, and I began to plan out what I would do with my money. I had a notion of going into Clooney on Tuesday, and buying a few sheep to put on my little fields, and of taking a good craftsman home from the fair, a man who could put the fine thatch on my little house. I made up my mind to have the doors and windows shining with paint, to plant a few trees before the door, and to have a growing calf going before the house. In a while, I thought, I could have another little horse to be my comfort and consolation. I wasn't drinking anything heavier than ginger ale, so I thought the whole thing out quietly. After a while I got up, bid good-bye to Mrs. Molloy, and stood at the door to watch the fair.

"There was a man just before me with a pea and thimble, and I never saw a trick-of-the-loop with less sense of the game. He was winning money right and left, but that was because the young fellows were before him like motherless calves. Just to expose the man I put down a few pence on the board. In a short time I had fleeced my showman. He took up his board and went away, leaving me shillings the winner.

"I stood on the edge of the pavement wondering what I could do that would be the beating of the things I had done already. By this time the fiddler and the piper were drawing nigh to each other, and there was a musician to the right of me and a musician to the left of me. I sent silver to each, and told them to cease playing as I had something to say. I got up on a cart and shook my hat to get silence. I said, 'I'm going to bid the musicians play in the market square, and the man who gets the best worth out of his instrument will get a prize 218
from me.' The words were no sooner out of my mouth than men, women and children made for the market square like two-year-olds let loose.

"You'd like the looks of the fiddler, but the piper was a black-avis'd fellow that kept a troop of tinkers about him. It was the piper who said, 'Master, what's the prize to be?' Before I had time to think, the fiddler was up and talking. 'He's of the oul' ancient race,' said the fiddler, 'and he'll give the prizes that the Irish nobility gave to the musicians—a calf, the

finest calf in the fair, a white calf, with skin as soft as the fine mist on the ground, a calf that gentle that the smoothest field under him would look as rough as a bog.' And the fiddler was that lifted out of himself that he nearly lept over a cart. Somebody pushed in a young calf, and then I sat down on a stone, for there was no use in saying anything or trying to hear anything after that. The fiddler played first, and I was nearly taken out of my trouble when I heard him, for he was a real man of art, and he played as if he were playing before a king, with the light of heaven on his face. The piper was spending his silver on the tinkers, and they were all deep in drink when he began to play. At the first sound of the pipes an old tinker-woman fell into a trance. It was powerful, but the men had to tie him up with a straw rope, else the horses would have kicked the slates off the market-house roof. Nobody was quiet after that. There were a thousand men before me offering to sell me ten thousand calves, each calf whiter than the one before. There was one party round the fiddler and another party round the piper. I think it was the fiddler that won; anyway, he had the strongest backing, for they hoisted the calf on to a cart, and they put the fiddler beside it, and the two of them would have got out of the crowd, only the tinkers cut the traces of the yoke. I was saved by a few hardy men, who carried me through the market-house and into Flynn's by a back way, and there I paid for the calf.

219

"When I came out of Flynn's the people were going home quiet enough. I got a lift on Fardorrougha's yoke, and everybody, I think, wanted me to come to Clooney on Tuesday next. I think I'd have got out of Arvach with safety, only a dead-drunk tinker wakened up and knew me, and he gave a yell that brought the piper hot-foot after me. First of all, the piper cursed me. He had a bad tongue, and he put on me the blackest, bitterest curses you ever heard in your life. Then he lifted up the pipes, and he gave a blast that went through me like a spear of ice.

"The man that sold me the calf gave me a luck-penny back, and that's all the money I brought out of Arvach fair.

"Never go into the fair where you have no business."

220

The Rev. J. J. Meldon and the Chief Secretary.

From "Spanish Gold."

By George A. Birmingham (1865-).

The Chief Secretary lay back in Higginbotham's hammock-chair. There was a frown on his face. His sense of personal dignity was outraged by the story he had just heard. He had not been very long Chief Secretary of Ireland, and, though not without a sense of humour, he took himself and his office very seriously. He came to Ireland intending to do justice and show mercy. He looked forward to a career of real usefulness. He was prepared to be opposed, maligned, misunderstood, declared capable of every kind of iniquity. He did not expect to be treated as a fool. He did not expect that an official in the pay of one of the Government Boards would assume as a matter of course that he was a fool and believe any story about him, however intrinsically absurd. He failed to imagine any motive for the telling of such a story. There must, he assumed, have been a motive, but what it was he could not even guess.

Meldon entered the hut without knocking at the door.

"Mr. Willoughby, I believe," he said, cheerily. "You must allow me to introduce myself since Higginbotham isn't here to do it for me. My name is Meldon, the Rev. J. J. Meldon, B.A., of T.C.D."

The Chief Secretary intended to rise with dignity and walk out of the hut. He failed because no one can rise otherwise than awkwardly out of the depths of a hammock-chair.

221

"Don't stir," said Meldon, watching his struggles. "Please don't stir. I shouldn't dream of taking your chair. I'll sit on the corner of the table. I'll be quite comfortable, I assure you. How do you like Inishgowlan, now you are here? It's a nice little island, isn't it?"

Mr. Willoughby succeeded in getting out of his chair. He walked across the hut, turned his

back on Meldon, and stared out of the window.

“I came up here to have a chat with you,” said Meldon. “Perhaps you wouldn’t mind turning round; I always find it more convenient to talk to a man who isn’t looking the other way. I don’t make a point of it, of course. If you’ve got into the habit of keeping your back turned to people, I don’t want you to alter it on my account.”

Mr. Willoughby turned round. He seemed to be on the point of making an angry remark. Meldon faced him with a bland smile. The look of irritation faded in Mr. Willoughby’s face. He appeared puzzled.

“It’s about Higginbotham’s bed,” said Meldon, “that I want to speak. It’s an excellent bed, I believe, though I never slept in it myself. But,——”

“If there’s anything the matter with the bed,” said Mr. Willoughby severely, “Mr. Higginbotham should himself represent the facts to the proper authorities.”

“You quite misunderstand me. And, in any case, Higginbotham can’t move in the matter because he doesn’t, at present, know that there’s anything wrong about the bed. By the time he finds out, it will be too late to do anything. I simply want to give you a word of advice. 222
Don’t sleep in Higginbotham’s bed to-night.”

“I haven’t the slightest intention of sleeping in it.”

“That’s all right. I’m glad you haven’t. The fact is”—Meldon’s voice sank almost to a whisper—“there happens to be a quantity of broken glass in that bed. I need scarcely tell a man with your experience of life that broken glass in a bed isn’t a thing which suits everybody. It’s all right, of course, if you’re used to it, but I don’t suppose you are.”

Mr. Willoughby turned, this time towards the door. There was something in the ingenuous friendliness of Meldon’s face which tempted him to smile. He caught sight of Higginbotham standing white and miserable on the threshold. He made a snatch at the dignity which had nearly escaped him and frowned severely.

“I think, Mr. Higginbotham,” he said, “that I should like to take a stroll round the island.”

“Come along,” said Meldon. “I’ll show the sights. You don’t mind climbing walls, I hope. You’ll find the place most interesting. Do you care about babies? There’s a nice little beggar called Michael Pat. Any one with a taste for babies would take to him at once. And there’s a little girl called Mary Kate, a great friend of Higginbotham’s. She’s the granddaughter of old Thomas O’Flaherty Pat. By the way, how are you going to manage about Thomas O’Flaherty’s bit of land? There’s been a lot of trouble over that?”

Mr. Willoughby sat down again in the hammock-chair and stared at Meldon.

“Of course, it’s your affair, not mine,” said Meldon. “Still, if I can be of any help to you, you’ve only got to say so. I know old O’Flaherty pretty well, and I may say without boasting 223
that I have as much influence with him as any man on the island.”

“If I want your assistance I shall ask for it,” said Mr. Willoughby, coldly.

“That’s right,” said Meldon. “I’ll do anything I can. The great difficulty, of course, is the language. You don’t talk Irish yourself, I suppose. Higginbotham tells me he’s learning. It’s a very difficult language, highly inflected. I’m not very good at it myself. I can’t carry on a regular business conversation in it. By the way, what is your opinion of the Gaelic League?”

A silence followed. Mr. Willoughby gave no opinion of the Gaelic League. Meldon sat down again on the corner of the table and began to swing his legs. Higginbotham still stood in the doorway. Mr. Willoughby, with a bewildered look on his face, lay back in the hammock-chair.

“I see,” said Meldon, “that you’ve sent your yacht away. That was what made me think you were going to sleep in Higginbotham’s bed. I suppose she’ll be back before night.”

“Really——” began Mr. Willoughby.

Meldon replied at once to the tone in which the word was spoken.

“I don’t want to be asking questions. If there’s any secret about the matter you’re quite right to keep it to yourself. I quite understand that you Cabinet Ministers can’t always say out everything that’s in your mind. I only mentioned the steamer because the conversation seemed to be languishing. You wouldn’t talk about Thomas O’Flaherty Pat’s field, and you 224
wouldn’t talk about the Gaelic League, though I thought that would be sure to interest you. Now you won’t talk about the steamer. However, it’s quite easy to get on some other

subject. Do you think the weather will hold up? The glass has been dropping the last two days."

Mr. Willoughby struggled out of the hammock-chair again. He drew himself up to his full height and squared his shoulders. His face assumed an expression of rigid determination. He addressed Higginbotham:

"Will you be so good as to go up to the old man you spoke of——"

"Thomas O'Flaherty Pat," said Meldon. "That's the man he means, you know, Higginbotham."

"And tell him——" went on Mr. Willoughby.

"If you're to tell him anything," said Meldon, "don't forget to take someone with you who understands Irish."

"And tell him," repeated Mr. Willoughby, "that I shall expect him here in about an hour to meet Father Mulcrone."

"I see," said Meldon. "So that's where the yacht's gone. You've sent for the priest to talk sense to the old boy. Well, I dare say you're right, though I think we could have managed with the help of Mary Kate. She knows both languages well, and she'd do anything for me, though she is rather down on Higginbotham. It's a pity you didn't consult me before sending the steamer off all the way to Inishmore. However, it can't be helped now."

Higginbotham departed on his errand and shut the door of the hut after him. The Chief Secretary turned to Meldon.

"You've chosen to force your company on me this afternoon in a most unwarrantable manner." 225

"I'll go at once if you like," said Meldon. "I only came up here for your own good, to warn you about the state of Higginbotham's bed. You ought to be more grateful to me than you are. It isn't every man who'd have taken the trouble to come all this way to save a total stranger from getting his legs cut with broken glass. However, if you hunt me away, of course, I'll go. Only, I think, you'll be sorry afterwards if I do. I may say without vanity that I'm far and away the most amusing person on this island at present."

"As you are here," said Mr. Willoughby, "I take the opportunity of asking you what you mean by telling that outrageous story to Mr. Higginbotham. I'm not accustomed to having my name used in that way, and, to speak plainly, I regard it as insolence."

"You are probably referring to the geological survey of this island."

"Yes. To your assertion that I employed a man called Kent to survey this island. That is precisely what I refer to."

"Then you ought to have said so plainly at first, and not have left me to guess at what you were talking about. Many men couldn't have guessed, and then we should have been rambling at cross purposes for the next hour or so without getting any further. Always try and say plainly what you mean, Mr. Willoughby. I know it's difficult, but I think you'll find it pays in the end. Now that I know what's in your mind, I'll be very glad to thrash it out with you. You know Higginbotham, of course?"

"Yes."

"Intimately?" 226

"I met him this afternoon for the first time."

"Then you can't be said really to know Higginbotham. That's a pity, because without a close and intimate knowledge of Higginbotham, you're not in a position to understand that geological survey story. Take my advice and drop the whole subject until you know Higginbotham better. After spending a few days on the island in constant intercourse with Higginbotham you'll be able to understand the whole thing. Then you'll appreciate it. In the meanwhile, I'm sure you won't mind my adding, since we are on the subject,—and it was you who introduced it—that you ought not to go leaping to conclusions without a proper knowledge of the facts. I said the same thing this morning to Major Kent, when he insisted that you had come here to search for buried treasure."

Mr. Willoughby pulled himself together with an effort. He felt a sense of bewilderment and hopeless confusion. The sensation was familiar. He had experienced it before in the House of

Commons when the Irish members of both parties asked questions on the same subject. He knew that his only chance was to ignore side-issues, however fascinating, and get back at once to the original point.

"I'm willing," he said, "to listen to any explanation you have to offer; but I do not see how Mr. Higginbotham's character alters, or can alter, the fact that you told him what I can only describe as an outrageous lie."

"The worst thing about you Englishmen is that you have such blunt minds. You don't appreciate the lights and shades, the finer nuances, what I may perhaps describe as the 227
chiaroscuro of things. It's just the same with my friend Major Kent. By the way, I ought to apologise for him. He ought to have come ashore and called upon you this afternoon. It isn't a want of loyalty which prevented him. He's a strong Unionist and on principle he respects His Majesty's Ministers, whatever party they belong to. The fact is, he was a bit nervous about this geological survey business. He didn't know exactly how you'd take it. I told him that you were a reasonable man, and that you'd see the thing in a proper light, but he wouldn't come."

"Will you kindly tell me what is the proper light in which to view this extraordinary performance of yours?"

"Certainly. It will be a little difficult, of course, when you don't know Higginbotham, but I'll try."

"Leave Mr. Higginbotham out," said the Chief Secretary, irritably. "Tell me simply this: Were you justified in making a statement which you knew to be a baseless invention? How do you explain the fact that you told a deliberate—that you didn't tell the truth?"

"I've always heard of you as an educated man. I may assume that you know all about pragmatism."

"I don't."

"Well, you ought to. It's a most interesting system of philosophy quite worth your while to study. I'm sure you'd like it if you understand it. In fact, I expect you're a pragmatist already without knowing it. Most of us practical men are."

"I'm waiting for an explanation of the story you told Mr. Higginbotham."

"Quite right. I'm coming to that in a minute. Don't be impatient. If you'd been familiar with 228
the pragmatist philosophy it would have saved time. As you're not—though as Chief Secretary for Ireland I think you ought to be—I'll have to explain. Pragmatism may be described as the secularising of the Ritschlian system of theological thought. You understand the Ritschlian theory of value judgments, of course?"

"No, I don't." Mr. Willoughby began to feel very helpless. It seemed easier to let the tide of this strange lecture sweep over him than to make any effort to assert himself.

"Do you mind if I smoke?" he said. "I think I could listen to your explanation better if I smoked."

He took from his pocket a silver cigar-case.

"Smoke away," said Meldon. "I don't mind in the least. In fact, I'll take a cigar from you and smoke, too. I can't afford cigars myself, but I enjoy them when they're good. I suppose a Chief Secretary is pretty well bound to keep decent cigars on account of his position."

Mr. Willoughby handed over the case. Meldon selected a cigar and lit it. Then he went on—

"The central position of the pragmatist philosophy and the Ritschlian theology is that truth and usefulness are identical."

"Eh?"

"What that means is this. A thing is true if it turns out in actual practice to be useful, and false if it turns out in actual practice to be useless. I daresay that sounds startling to you at first, but if you think it over quietly for a while you'll get to see that there's a good deal in it."

Meldon puffed at his cigar without speaking. He wished to give Mr. Willoughby an 229
opportunity for meditation. Then he went on—

“The usual illustration—the one you’ll find in all the text-books—is the old puzzle of the monkey on the tree. A man sees a monkey clinging to the far side of a trunk of a tree—I never could make out how he did see it, but that doesn’t matter for the purposes of the illustration. He (the man) determines to go round the tree and get a better look at the monkey. But the monkey creeps round the tree so as always to keep the trunk between him and the man. The question is, whether, when he has gone round the tree, the man has or has not gone round the monkey. The older philosophers simply gave that problem up. They couldn’t solve it, but the pragmatist—”

“Either you or I,” said Mr. Willoughby, feebly, “must be going mad.”

“Your cigar has gone out,” said Meldon. “Don’t light it again. There’s nothing tastes worse than a relighted cigar. Take a fresh one. There are still two in the case and I shall be able to manage along with one more.”

“Would you mind leaving out the monkey on the tree and getting back to the geological survey story?”

“Not a bit. If it bores you to hear an explanation of the pragmatist theory of truth, I won’t go on with it. It was only for your sake I went into it. You can just take it from me that the test of truth is usefulness. That’s the general theory. Now apply it to this particular case. The story I told Higginbotham turned out to be extremely useful—quite as useful as I had any reason to expect. In fact, I don’t see that we could very well have got on without it. I 230
can’t explain to you just how it was useful. If I did, I should be giving away Major Kent, Sir Charles Buckley, Euseby Langton, and perhaps old Thomas O’Flaherty Pat; but you may take it that the utility of the story has been demonstrated.”

Mr. Willoughby made an effort to rally. He reminded himself that he was Cabinet Minister and a great man, that he had withstood the fieriest eloquence of Members for Munster constituencies, and survived the most searching catechisms of the men from Antrim and Down. He called to mind the fact that he had resolutely said “No” to at least twenty-five per cent. of the people who came to him in Dublin Castle seeking to have jobs perpetrated. He tried to realise the impossibility of a mere country curate talking him down. He hardened his heart with the recollection that he was in the right and the curate utterly in the wrong. He sat up as well as he could in the hammock-chair and said sternly—

“Am I to understand that you regard any lie as justifiable if it serves its purpose?”

“Certainly not,” said Meldon; “you are missing the whole point. I was afraid you would when you prevented me from explaining the theory of truth to you. I never justify lies under any circumstances whatever. The thing I’m trying to help you grasp is this: A statement isn’t a lie if it proves itself in actual practice to be useful—it’s true. There, now, you’ve let that second cigar go out. You’d better light that one again. I hate to see a man wasting cigar after cigar, especially when they’re good ones.”

Mr. Willoughby fumbled with the matches and made more than one attempt to relight the cigar.

“The reason,” Meldon went on, “why I think you’re almost certain to be a pragmatist is 231
that you’re a politician. You’re constantly having to make speeches, of course; and in every speech you must, more or less, say something about Ireland. When you are Chief Secretary the other fellow, the man in opposition who wants to be Chief Secretary but isn’t, gets up and says you are telling a pack of lies. That’s not the way he expresses himself, but it’s exactly what he means. When his turn comes round to be Chief Secretary, and you are in opposition, you very naturally say that he’s telling lies. Now, that’s a very crude way of talking. You are, both of you, as patriotic and loyal men, doing your best to say what is really useful. If the things you say turn out in the end to be useful, why, then, if you happen to be a pragmatist, they aren’t lies.”

Mr. Willoughby stuck doggedly to his point. Just so his countrymen, though beaten by all the rules of war, have from time to time clung to positions which they ought to have evacuated.

“A lie,” he said, “is a lie. I don’t see that you’ve made your case at all.”

“I know I haven’t, but that’s because you insist on stopping me. If you’ll allow me to go back to the man who went round the tree with the monkey on it——”

“Don’t do that, I can’t bear it.”

“Very well. I won’t. I suppose we may consider the matter closed now, and go on to talk of

something else."

"No. It's not closed," said Mr. Willoughby, with a fine show of spirited indignation. "I still want to know why you told Mr. Higginbotham that I sent Major Kent to make a geological survey of this island. It's all very well to talk as you've been doing, but a man is bound to tell the truth and not to deceive innocent people." 232

"Look here, Mr. Willoughby," said Meldon, "I've sat and listened to you calling me a liar half-a-dozen times, and I havn't turned a hair. I'm not a man with remarkable self-control, and I appreciate your point of view. You are irritated because you think you are not being treated with proper respect. You assert what you are pleased to call your dignity, by trying to prove that I am a liar. I've stood it from you so far, but I'm not bound to stand it any longer, and I won't. It doesn't suit you one bit to take up that high and mighty moral tone, and I may tell you it doesn't impress me. I'm not the British Public, and that bluff honesty pose isn't one I admire. All these platitudes about lies being lies simply run off my skin. I know that your own game of politics couldn't be played for a single hour without what you choose to describe as deceiving innocent people. Mind you, I'm not blaming you in the least. I quite give in that you can't always be blabbing out the exact literal truth about everything. Things couldn't go on if you did. All I say is, that, being in the line of life you are, you ought not to set yourself up as a model of every kind of integrity and come out here to an island, which, so far as I know, nobody ever invited you to visit, and talk ideal morality to me in the way you've been doing. Hullo! here's Higginbotham back again. I wonder if he has brought Thomas O'Flaherty Pat with him. You'll be interested in seeing that old man, even if you can't speak to him."

Higginbotham started as he entered the hut. He did not expect to find Meldon there. He was surprised to see Mr. Willoughby crumpled up, crushed, cowed in the depths of the hammock-chair, while Meldon, cheerful and triumphant, sat on the edge of the table swinging his legs and smoking a cigar. 233

"You'd better get that oil stove of yours lit, Higginbotham," said Meldon. "The Chief Secretary is dying for a cup of tea. You'd like some tea, wouldn't you, Mr Willoughby?"

"I would. I feel as if I wanted some tea. You won't say that I'm posing for the British Public if I drink tea, will you?"

It was Meldon who lit the stove, and busied himself with the cups and saucers. Higginbotham was too much astonished to assist.

"There's no water in your kettle," said Meldon. "I'd better run across to the well and get some. Or I'll go to Michael Pat's mother and get some hot. That will save time. When I'm there I'll collar a loaf of soda-bread and some butter if I can. I happen to know that she has some fresh butter because I helped her to make it."

Mr. Willoughby rallied a little when the door closed behind Meldon.

"Your friend," he said to Higginbotham, "seems to me to be a most remarkable man."

"He is. In college we always believed that if only he'd give his mind to it and taken some interest in his work, he could have done anything."

"I haven't the slightest doubt of it. He has given me a talking to this afternoon such as I haven't had since I left school—not since I left the nursery. Did you ever read a book on pragmatism?"

"No."

"You don't happen to know the name of the best book on the subject?" 234

"No, but I'm sure that Meldon—"

"Don't," said Mr. Willoughby. "I'd rather not start him on the subject again. Have you any cigars? I want one badly. I got no good of the two I half smoked while he was here."

"I'm afraid not. But your own cigar-case has one in it. It's on the table."

"I can't smoke that one. To put it plainly, I daren't. Your friend Meldon said he might want it. I'd be afraid to face him if it was gone."

"But it's your own cigar! Why should Meldon——"

"It's not my cigar. Nothing in the world is mine any more, not even my mind, or my morality, or my self-respect is my own. Mr. Meldon has taken them from me, and torn them

in pieces before my eyes. He has left me a nervous wreck of a man I once was. Did you say he was a parson?"

"Yes. He's curate of Ballymoy."

"Thank God, I don't live in that parish! I should be hypnotised into going to church every time he preached, and then——. Hush! Can he be coming back already? I believe he is. No other man would whistle as loud as that. If he begins to illtreat me again, Mr Higginbotham, I hope you'll try and drag him off. I can't stand much more."

235

Old Tummus and the Battle of Scarva.

From "Lady Anne's Walk."

By Eleanor Alexander.

I found old Tummus scuffling Lady Anne's walk; that is to say, he was busy looking pensively at the weeds as he leaned on his hoe. He never suddenly pretends to be at work when he is not at work, but always retains the same calm dignity of carriage. He too frankly despises his employers to admit that either his occasional lapses into action, or his more frequent attitude of storing his reserve force are any concern of theirs.

Gathering that he was graciously inclined for conversation by a not unfriendly glance which he cast in my direction after he had spat on the ground, I settled myself to listen.

"Do ye know what I'm goin' te tell ye?"

With this he generally prefaces his remarks. It is, however, merely rhetorical. He does not expect an answer; unless one were at least a minor prophet it would be impossible to give one, except in the negative. "Do ye know what I'm goin' te tell ye?" he repeated, gently, raising a weed with his hoe into what looked like a sitting position, where he held it as if he were supporting it in bed to receive its last communion. "There's not a hair's differ betwixt onny two weemen." I was speechless, and he continued: "There is thon boy o' mine, and though I say it that shouldn't, he's a fine boy, so he is, and no ways blate, and as brave a boy 236
as you'd wish for te see. From the time he was six year old he was that old-fashioned he wouldn't go to church without his boots was right jergers (creakers) that ye'd hear all over the church when he cum in a wee bit late: and he cud say off all the responses as bowld as brass. Did I no' learn him his releegion mesel, and bid him foller after him that has gone before?"

A solemn pause seemed only appropriate here, though I had my doubts.

"But whiles he tuk te colloque-in' with the wee fellers round the corner there in Irish street. That's so. But I soon quet him o' that. Says I te him: 'Do ye know what I'm goin' te tell ye? Me heart's broke with ye, so it is. I'll have no colloque-in' from onny boy o' mine, so I won't. Ye'll have no traffickin', no, nor passin' o' the time o' day with them that's not yer own sort, and that differs from the Reverend Crampsey; him and me and Johnston of Ballykilbeg, and the Great Example. What's that ye say? Who is the Great Example? Now! Now! Who wud it be, but him on the white horse?'"

This is not, as might be supposed, from the vision of the Apocalypse, but is easily recognised by those who are in the know, as an allusion to William of Orange, of "Glorious, pious, and immortal memory," who is always represented on a white horse.

"But," I argued, "he did traffic with those who disagreed with him; it is even said, you know, that when he came to England he subsidised the Pope."

Tummus appeared not to have heard this remark.

"As I was sayin', thon boy o' mine, he has a mind to get hisself marriet. So says I te him, 'There's not a hair's differ between onny two o' them.' Ye see, it's this way. He has the two 237
o' them courted down to the askin', and he's afeard that if he asks the wan he'll think long for the other, or maybe he'll think he'd sooner have had the other."

"He is not behaving well. He can't, of course, marry them both, and yet he has raised

hopes which *must* in one case be disappointed; he might break the poor girl's heart."

"Break her heart! Hoot. Blethers. Heart is it?"

"But," I interjected again, merely, of course, to make conversation, for I have many times and oft heard his opinion on the subject, and it is not favourable, "Don't you believe in love?"

Tummus had been twice married. His first wife was called Peggy-Anne, and only lived a year after her marriage. I try to persuade myself and him that this was the romance of his life, but it is up-hill work. The present Mrs. Thomas, who has been his wife for five-and-twenty-years, he always speaks of as "Thon widdy wumman." She was the relict of one John M'Adam, whose simple annal in this world seems to be, that he was the first husband of Tummus's second wife; for the other world, his successor considers that, owing to his theological views, he is certainly—well—not in heaven.

"Do I no believe in love? Why, wumman, dear, have I no seen it mesel? Sure, and I had an uncle o' me own, me own mother's brother, that was tuk that way, and what did he do? but went and got the whole o' Paul's wickedest Epistle off, so he did, and offered for te tell it till her, all at the wan sitting. Boys, oh! but he was the quare poet! And she got marriet on a boy out o' Ballinahone on him, and do ye know what I'm goin' te tell ye? he tuk to the hills and never did a hand's turn after." 238

"Surely, Thomas, you have been in love yourself, too, now, with Peggy-Anne, and your present wife? When you asked them to marry you, you had to pretend it anyhow. What did you say to them?"

"Is it me? Well it was this way; me and Peggy-Anne, we went the pair of us to Scarva on the twelfth. Did ever ye hear tell of the battle o' Scarva? I mind it well. I had a wheen o' cloves in me pocket, and Peggy-Anne she had a wee screw o' pepperment sweeties. Says I te her:

"'Peggy-Anne, wud ye conceit a clove?'

"And says she te me:

"'Tak a sweetie, Tummus!'

"And I went in the mornin' and giv in the names till the Reverend Crampsey; so I did."

After all, there are many worse ways of concluding the business, and few that would be more full of symbol. There is the mutual help; the inevitable "give and take" of married life; the strength and pungency of the manly clove; the melting sweetness of the maidenly peppermint; two souls united in the savour of both scents combined rising to heaven on the summer air.

I could not recall in the tale or history, or the varied reminiscences of married friends on this interesting topic, any manner of "proposal" more delicate and less ostentatious. Tummus graciously accepted my congratulations on his elegant good taste, but when I inquired about the preliminaries of his second alliance, he only shook his head and muttered, "Them widdies! Them widdies!"

In this there is almost a suggestion that, like Captain Cuttle, he was taken at a disadvantage, but one can scarcely credit it. It seems impossible that he would not have extricated himself with the inspired dexterity of a Sherlock Holmes, or the happy resource of a Stanley Weyman hero, from whatever dilemma. 239

"As I was sayin'," he resumed, "Did ever ye hear tell o' the battle o' Scarva?"

Of course I had heard of it. Who has not heard of the Oberammergau of the North? There, in a gentleman's prettily wooded park, on a large open meadow sloping down to a clear running brook, is yearly enacted a veritable Passion Play of the Battle of the Boyne.

"I suppose you have often seen it, Thomas."

"I have that; many and many's a time. But there was wan battle that bate all—do ye know what I'm goin' te tell ye? I would give a hundred pounds te see thon agin—so I wud. Boys, oh! it was gran'. There was me own aunt's nephew was King William, and him on the top of the beautifullest white horse ever ye seen, with the mane o' him tied with wee loops o' braid, or'nge and bleue. Himself had an or'nge scarfe on him and bleue feathers te his hat, just like one o' them for'n Princes, and his Field-marshal and Ginerals just the same, only not so gran'. And King James, they had a fine young horse for him that Dan Cooke bought off the Reverend Captain Jack in Moy Fair. But he set his ears back, and let a squeal out o' him, and

got on with quare maneuvers whenever Andy Wilson came near him, and Andy—that was King James—he says:

"'I am no used with horse exercise, and I misdoubt thon baste.'

"'But,' says Dan Cooke, 'up with ye sonny, and no more about it.'

"Well, with that Andy turned about, and, says he, 'I'll ride no blooded horse out of Moy. I'd sooner travel. I'll ride none, without I have me own mare that drawed me and hersel' and the childer out of Poyntzpass—so I won't.'

"With that the Field-marshals and the Ginerals and the Aiden-scampses away with them, and they found Andy's mare takin' her piece by the roadside, and not agreeable to comin' forbye. Howsumever she was coaxed along with an Aiden-scamp sootherin' her and complimentin' her: 'There's a daughter, and a wee jooel,' and a Field-marshal holdin' a bite o' grass in the front o' her, and a Gineral persuadin' her in the rare; and they got King James ontil her, and the two armies was drawed up on the banks o' the wee burn that stood for the Boyne Watter. Then they began, quite friendly and agreeable-ike, temptin' other.

"'Come on, ye thirsty tyrant ye,' says William.

"'Come on, ye low, mane usurper,' says James.

"'Come on ye heedious enemy to ceevil and releegious liberty, ye,' says William.

"'Come on, ye glorious, pious, and immortal humbug, ye,' says James.

"'Come on ye Glad-stone ye, and Parnell, and Judas, and Koran—and Dathan—and Abiram,' says William.

"'Come on ye onnatural parasite ye, and Crumwell, and Shadrach—and Mesech—and Abednego,' says James.

"'Come on ye auld Puseyite, and no more about it,' says William. With that he joined to go forrard, and James he should have come forrard fornenst him, but Andy's mare, she just planted the fore-feet o' her and stud there the same as she was growed in the ground. With that there was two of the Aiden-scampses come on, and of all the pullin' and haulin'! But de'il a toe would she budge, and all the boys began larfin', so they did, and William says, says he:

"'Come on till I pull the neck out o' ye.... Come on, me brave boy.... Fetch her a clip on the lug. Hit her a skelp behint. Jab her with yer knee, man alive. Och, come on, ye Bap, ye.'

"Well, the skin o' a pig couldn't stand that, and Andy, he was middlin' smart at a repartee, so 'Bap yersel',' says he, and with that he let a growl out o' him ye might have heared te Portadown. Ye never heared the like, nor what's more, Andy Wilson's mare, she never heared the like, and she just made the wan lep and landed in the strame fornenst William; then James he tuk a howlt o' William, and 'Bap yersel', says he; and with that he coped him off his gran' white horse, and he drooked him in the watter.

"Then there was the fine play, and the best divarsion ever ye seen. Some they were for William, and some they were for James, and every wan he up with his fut or his fist, or onny other weepon that come convenient, and the boys they were all bloodin' other, and murder and all sorts."

"I thought you were all friends at Scarva?"

"And so we were—just friends fightin' through other."

"Was any one hurt?"

"Was anyone hurted? Sure, they were just trailin' theirselves off the ground. Ye wud have died larfin'. There's Jimmy Hanlon was never his own man since, and I had me nose broke on me—I find it yet—and some says there was a wee girl from Tanderagee got herself killed."

"What became of William?"

"He was clean drowned."

"And King James?"

"He's in hell with Johnny M'Adam."

I tried to explain that I had not meant the King himself, but the actor in whom nature had been stronger than dramatic instinct, but Tummus either could not or would not dissociate

the two. He really was not attending to me: I had perceived for some time that his thoughts were wandering far from our conversation. Suddenly a spasm convulsed his features. With one hand he raised his hoe in the air like a tomahawk, disregarding the weed of his afternoon's toil, which was left limp and helpless on the gravel; with the other he grasped his side. I feared the old man was going to have a fit, but it was only uncontrollable laughter at some joke as yet hidden from me.

"Well, do ye know what I'm goin' te tell ye? I wud just allow William was a middlin' polished boy, so he was. He subsidised the Pope o' Rome, did he? Man, oh! Do ye tell me that? That bates all, and him goin' to take just twiste what he let on."

Old Tummus unquestionably was absolutely sober at the beginning of our interview, and had remained "dry" during it, but he now became gradually intoxicated with what had appeared to him to be his hero's splendid cunning. The thought of a genius which could overreach someone else in a bargain rose to his brain like champagne. He swayed on his feet; he ran his words into each other; he assumed a gaiety of manner and expression quite unusual to him.

I watched him lurch down the walk, and then pause on the bridge. He supported himself 243
by the wooden railing, which creaked as he swayed to and fro, and addressed the stream and the trees—

"Do ye know what I'm goin' to tell ye? I wud just allow he was a middlin' polished boy—so he was."

244

The Game Leg.

From "The Furry Farm."

By K. F. Purdon.

Heffernan's house at the Furry Farm stood very backwards from the roadside, hiding itself, you'd really think, from anyone that might be happening by. As if it need do that! Why, there was no more snug, well-looked-after place in the whole of Ardenoo than Heffernan's always was, with full and plenty in it for man and beast, though it wasn't to say too tasty-looking.

And it was terrible lonesome. There wasn't a neighbour within the bawl of an ass of it. Heffernan, of course, had always been used to it, so that he didn't so much mind; still, he missed Art, after he going off with little Rosy Rafferty. That was nigh hand as bad upon him as losing the girl herself. He had got to depend on Art for every hand's turn, a thing that left him worse, when he was without him. And he was very slow-going. As long as Julia was there, she did all, and Heffernan might stand to one side and look at her. And so he missed her now, more than ever; and still he had no wish to see her back, though even to milk the cows came awkward to him.

He was contending with the work one evening, and the calves in particular were leaving him distracted; above all, a small little white one that he designed for Rosy, when he'd have her Woman of the House at the Furry Farm. That calf, I needn't say, was not the pick of the bunch, but as Mickey thought to himself, a girl wouldn't know any better than choose a calf by the colour, and there would be no good wasting anything of value on her. At all events, it 245
would be "child's pig and Daddy's bacon" most likely with that calf. But sure, what matter! Rosy was never to have any call to it, or anything else at the Furry Farm.

Those calves were a very sweet lot, so that Mickey might have been feeling all the pleasure in life, just watching them, with their soft, little muzzles down in the warm, sweet milk, snorting with the pure enjoyment. But Mickey was only grousing to get done, and vexed at the way the big calves were shoving the little ones away, and still he couldn't hinder them. Art used to regulate them very simple by means of a little ash quick he kept, to slap the forward calves across the face when they'd get too impudent. But as often as Mickey had seen him do that, he couldn't do the same. The ash quick was so close to him that if it had been any nearer it would have bitten him. Stuck up in a corner of the bit of ruin that had once been Castle Heffernan it was. But it might as well have been in America for all the good it was to Mickey.

“I wish to God I was rid of the whole of yous, this minute!” says he to himself, and he with his face all red and steamy, and the milk slobbering out of the pail down upon the ground, the way the calves were butting him about the legs.

That very minute, he heard a sound behind him. He turned about, and, my dear! the heart jumped into his mouth, as he saw a great, immense red face, just peeping over the wall that shut in his yard from the boreen. That wall was no more than four feet high. Wouldn’t anyone think it strange to see such a face, only that far from the ground! and it with a 246
bushy, black beard around it, and big rolling eyes, and a wide, old hat cocked back upon it? You’d have to think it was something “not right”; an Appearance or Witchery work of some kind.

But, let alone that, isn’t there something very terrifying and frightful in finding yourself being watched, when you think you’re alone; and of all things, by a man? The worst of a wild beast wouldn’t put the same bad fear in your heart.

“Good evening, Mr. Heffernan,” says the newcomer, with a grin upon him, free and pleasant; “that’s a fine lot of calves you have there!”

Heffernan was so put about that he made no answer, and the man went on to say, “Is it that you don’t know me? Sure, you couldn’t forget poor old Hopping Hughie as simple as that!”

And he gave himself a shove, so that he raised his shoulders above the wall. A brave, big pair they were, too, but they were only just held up on crutches. Hughie could balance himself upon them, and get about, as handy as you please. But he was dead of his two legs.

“Oh, Hughie...!” says Heffernan, pretty stiff; “well, and what do you want here?”

“Och, nothing in life....”

“Take it, then, and let you be off about your business!” says Mickey, as quick as a flash, for once; and he that was proud when he had it said!

Hughie had a most notorious tongue himself, but he knew when to keep it quiet, and he thought it as good to appear very mild and down in himself now, so he said, “My business! sure, what word is that to say to a poor old fellah on chrutches! Not like you, Mr. Heffernan, 247
that’ll be off to the fair of Balloch to-morrow morning, bright and early, with them grand fine calves of yours. The price they’ll go! There isn’t the peel of them in Ardenoo!”

“Do you tell me that?” says Heffernan, that a child could cheat.

“That’s what they do be telling me,” says Hughie. He could build a nest in your ear, he was that cunning. He thought he saw a chance of getting to the fair himself, and a night’s lodging as well, if he managed right.

“I wish to goodness I could get them there, so,” says Mickey, “and hasn’t one to drive them for me!”

“Would I do?” says Hughie.

Heffernan looked at him up and down.

“Sure you’d not be able!”

“Whoo! me not able? Maybe I’m like the singed cat, better than I look! I’m slow, but fair and easy goes far in a day! Never you fear but I’ll get your calves to Balloch the same way the boy ate the cake, very handy....”

The simplest thing would have been for Heffernan to take and drive the calves himself. But he never had the fashion of doing such things. Anyway, it wouldn’t answer for the people to see a man with a good means of his own, like Mickey, turning drover that way.

So he thought again, while Hughie watched him, and then says he, “You’ll have to be off out of this before the stars have left the sky!”

“And why wouldn’t I?” says Hughie; “only give me a bit of supper and a shakedown for the night, the way I’ll be fresh for the road to-morrow.”

Hughie was looking to be put sitting down in the kitchen alongside Heffernan himself, and to have the settle-bed foreninst the fire to sleep in. But he had to content himself with the 248
straw in the barn and a plateful carried out to him. Queer and slow-going Heffernan might be, but he wasn’t thinking of having the likes of Hopping Hughie in his chimney-corner,

where he had often thought to see little Rosy Rafferty and she smiling at him.

Hughie took it all very contented. Gay and happy he was after his supper, and soon fell asleep on the straw, with his ragged pockets that empty that the divil could dance a hornpipe in them and not strike a copper there; while Mickey above in bed in his own house, with his fine farm and all his stock about him, calves and cows and pigs, not to speak of the money in the old stocking under the thatch ... Mickey couldn't sleep, only worrying, thinking was he right to go to sell the calves at all; and to be letting Hughie drive them!

"I had little to do," he thought, "to be letting him in about the place at all, and couldn't tell what divilment he might be up to, as soon as he gets me asleep! Hughie's terrible wicked, and as strong as a ditch! I done well to speak him civil, anyway. But I'll not let them calves stir one peg out of this with him! I'd sooner risk keeping them longer...."

There's the way he was going on, tossing and tumbling and tormenting himself, as if bed wasn't a place to rest yourself in and not be raking up annoyances.

So it wasn't till near morning that Mickey dozed off, and never wakened till it was more than time to be off to the fair.

Up he jumped and out to stop Hughie. But the yard was silent and empty. Hughie and the calves were gone.

Mickey was more uneasy than ever.

"A nice bosthoon I must be," he thought, "to go trust my good-looking calves to a k'nat like 249
Hughie! And he to go off without any breakfast, too...!"

Heffernan was a good warrant to feed man or beast. But he mightn't have minded about Hughie, that had plenty of little ways of providing for himself. His pockets would be like sideboards, the way he would have them stuck out with meat and eggs, and so on, that he would be given along the road. Hughie was better fed than plenty that bestowed food upon him.

Balloch, where the fair is held, is the wildest and most lonesome place in Ardenoo, with a steep, rough bit of road leading up to it, very awkward to drive along. Up this comes Heffernan, on his sidecar, driving his best, and in a great hurry to know where he would come on Hughie. He had it laid out in his own mind that sight nor light of his calves he never would get in this world again. So it was a great surprise to him to find them there before him, safe and sound. His heart lightened at that as if a mill-stone was lifted off it.

And the fine appearance there was upon them. Not a better spot in the fair-green than where Hughie had them, opposite a drink-tent where the people would be thronging most! And it was a choice spot for Hughie too. Happy and contented he was, his back against a tree, leaning his weight on one crutch and the other convenient to his hand.

"So there's where you are," says Hughie, a bit scornful. Sure it was a foolish remark to pass and the man there before him, as plain as the nose on your face. But Hughie was puzzled too by the look of relief he saw on Mickey's face. He understood nothing of what Heffernan was passing through. It's an old saying and a true one, "Them that has the world 250
has care!" but them that hasn't it, what do they know about it?

While Hughie was turning this over in his mind, Mickey was throwing an eye upon the calves, and then, seeing they were all right, he was bandying off with himself, when Hughie said, "Terrible dry work it is, driving stock along them dusty roads since the early morning," and he rubbed the back of his hand across his mouth with a grin.

At that, Mickey put his hand into his pocket and felt round about, and then pulled it out empty.

"I'll see you later, Hughie," says he, "I'll not forget you, never fear! Just let you wait here till I have the poor mare attended to that drew me here...."

So he went off to do this, and then into the drink-tent with him, the way he could be getting a sup himself. But no sign of he to give anything to Hughie. And there now is where Mickey made a big mistake.

He met up with a couple or three that he was acquainted with in the tent, and they began to talk of this thing and that thing, so that it was a gay little while before Mickey came out again.

When he did: "What sort is the drink in there, Mr. Heffernan?" says Hughie.

Now what Mickey had taken at that time was no more than would warm the cockles of his heart. So he looked quite pleasant and said, “Go in yourself, Hughie, and here’s what will enable you to judge it!”

And he held out a shilling to Hughie.

“A bird never yet flew upon the one wing, Mr. Heffernan!” said Hughie, that was looking to get another shilling, and that would be only his due for driving the calves.

Mickey said nothing one way or the other, only went off, and left Hughie standing there, 251
holding out his hand in front of him with the shilling in it, lonesome.

He that was vexed! He got redder in the face than ever, and gave out a few curses, till he remembered there wasn’t one to hear him. So he stopped and went into the tent and I needn’t say he got the best value he could there.

But all the time he was thinking how badly Heffernan was after treating him, putting him off without enough to see him through the fair even, let alone with a trifle in his pockets to help him on his rounds. He began planning how he could pay out Mickey.

He got himself back to the same spot, near the calves, to see what would happen. After a time, he saw Heffernan coming back, and little Barney Maguire with him. A very decent boy Barney was, quiet and agreeable; never too anxious for work, but very knowledgable about how things should be done, from a wake to a sheep-shearing. Heffernan always liked to have Barney with him at a fair.

The two of them stood near the calves, careless-like, as if they took no interest in them at all.

A dealer came up.

“How much for them calves? Not that I’m in need of the like,” says he.

“Nobody wants you to take them, so,” says Barney, “but the price is three pounds ... or was it guineas you’re after saying, Mr. Heffernan?”

Heffernan said nothing, and the dealer spoke up very fierce; “Three pounds! Put thirty shillings on them, and I’ll be talking to ye!”

Mickey again only looked at his adviser, and says Barney, “Thirty shillings! ’Tis you that’s 252
bidding wide, this day! May the Lord forgive you! Is it wanting a present you are of the finest calves in Ardenoo?”

Heffernan swelled out with delight at that; as if Barney’s word could make his calves either better or worse.

“Wasn’t it fifty-seven and sixpence you’re after telling me you were offered only yesterday, Mr. Heffernan,” says Barney, “just for the small ones of the lot?”

“Och! I dare say! don’t you?” says the dealer; “the woman that owns you it was that made you that bid, to save your word!”

Poor Mickey! and he hadn’t a woman at all! The dealer of course being strange couldn’t know that, nor why Hughie gave a laugh out of him.

But that didn’t matter. Mickey took no notice. A man that’s a bit “thick” escapes many a prod that another would feel sharp. So in all things you can see how them that are afflicted are looked after in some little way we don’t know.

The dealer looked at the calves again.

“Troth, I’m thinking it’s the wrong ones yous have here! Yous must have forgotten them fine three-pound calves at home!”

And Mickey began looking very anxiously at them, as he thought maybe he had made some mistake.

“Them calves,” says the dealer, slowly, “isn’t like a pretty girl, that everyone will be looking to get! And, besides, they’re no size! A terrible small calf they are!”

“Small!” said Barney, “It’s too big they are! And if they’re little itself, what harm! Isn’t a mouse the prettiest animal you might ask to see?”

“Ay, it is,” says the dealer, “but it’ll take a power of mice to stock a farm!” and off with him 253
in a real passion—by the way of.

But Barney knew better than to mind. The dealer came back, and at long last the calves were sold and paid for. Then the lucky-penny had to be given. Hard-set Barney was to get Heffernan to do that. In the end Mickey was so bothered over it that he dropped a shilling just where Hughie was standing leaning his weight on the one crutch as usual.

As quick as a flash, he had the other up, and made a kind of a lurch forward, as if to look for the money. But he managed to get the second crutch down upon the shilling, to hide it; and then he looked round about the ground as innocent as a child, as if he was striving his best to find the money for Mickey.

“Where should it be, at all, at all?” says Mickey; “bewitched it should be, to say it’s gone like that!”

And Heffernan, standing there with his mouth open, looked as if he had lost all belonging to him. Then he began searching about a good piece off from where the shilling fell.

“It’s not there you’ll get it!” said Barney, “sure you ought always look for a thing where you lost it!”

He went over to Hughie.

“None of your tricks, now! It’s you has Mr. Heffernan’s money, and let you give it up to him!”

“Is it me have it? Sure if I had, what would I do, only hand it over to the man that owns it!” says Hughie.

On the word, he let himself down upon the ground, and slithered over on top of the shilling.

But, quick and all as he was, Barney was quicker.

“Sure, you have it there, you vagabone, you! Give it up, and get off out of this with yourself!” 254

And he caught Hughie a clip on the side of the head that sent him sprawling on the broad of his back. And there, right enough, under him, was the shilling.

So Barney picked it up, and for fear of any other mistake, he handed it to the dealer.

“It’s an ugly turn whatever, to be knocking a poor cripple about that-a-way!” said the dealer, dropping the lucky-penny into his pocket.

“Ach, how poor he is, and let him be crippled, itself!” says Barney; “it’s easy seeing you’re strange to Ardenoo, or you’d not be compassionating Hughie so tender!”

No more was said then, only in the tent with them again to wet the bargain. Hughie gathered himself up. He was in the divil’s own temper. Small blame to him, too! Let alone the disappointment about the shilling, and the knock Barney gave him, the people all had a laugh at him. And he liked that as little as the next one. You’d think he’d curse down the stars out of the skies this time, the way he went on.

And it wasn’t Barney’s clout he cared about, half as much as Mickey’s meanness. It was that had him so mad. He felt he must pay Heffernan out.

He considered a bit; then he gave his leg a slap.

“I have it now!” he said to himself.

He beckoned two young boys up to him, that were striving to sell a load of cabbage plants they had there upon the donkey’s back, and getting bad call for them.

“It’s a poor trade yous are doing to-day,” said Hughie; “and I was thinking in meself yous should be very dry. You wouldn’t care to earn the price of a pint?”

“How could we?” says the boys. 255

“I’ll tell you! Do you see that car?” and Hughie pointed to where Heffernan had left his yoke drawn up, and the old mare cropping a bit as well as she could, being tied by the head; “well, anyone that will pull the linch-pin out of the wheel, on the far side of the car, needn’t be without tuppence to wet his whistle....” and Hughie gave a rattle to a few coppers he had left in his pocket.

“Yous’ll have to be smart about it, too,” said he, “or maybe whoever owns that car will have gone off upon it, afore yous have time to do the primest bit of fun that ever was seen

upon this fair green!”

“Whose is the car?”

“Och, if I know!” says Hughie; “but what matter for that? One man is as good as another at the bottom of a ditch! ay, and better. It will be the height of divarshin to see the roll-off they’ll get below there at the foot of the hill....”

“Maybe they’d get hurted!” said the boys.

“Hurted, how-are-ye!” says Hughie; “how could anyone get hurted so simple as that? I’d be the last in the world to speak of such a thing in that case! But if yous are afraid of doing it....”

“Afraid! that’s queer talk to be having!” says one of them, very stiff, for like all boys, he thought nothing so bad as to have “afraid” said to him; “no, but we’re ready to do as much as the next one!”

“I wouldn’t doubt yiz!” said Hughie; “h-away with the two of you, now! Only mind! don’t let on a word of this to any sons of man....”

Off they went, and Hughie turned his back on them and the car, and stared at whatever was going on the other end of the fair. He hadn’t long to wait, before Heffernan and Barney and the dealer came out of the drink-tent. Hughie took a look at them out of the corner of his eye. 256

“Ah!” he said to himself, “all ‘purty-well-I-thank-ye!’ after what they drank inside! But, wait a bit, Mickey Heffernan....”

The three men went over to where Heffernan’s car was waiting. The boys were gone. The other two men helped Mickey to get his yoke ready. Then he got up, and they shook hands a good many times. Heffernan chucked at the reins and started off.

Hughie was watching, and when he saw how steadily the old mare picked her way down the steep boreen, he began to be afraid he hadn’t hit on such a very fine plan at all. And if Mickey had only had the wit to leave it all to the poor dumb beast, she might have brought him home safe enough.

But nothing would to him, only give a shout and a flourish of the whip, half-way down the hill. The mare started and gave a jump. She was big and awk’ard, much like Mickey himself. Still it was no fault of her that, when she got to the turn, the wheel came off, and rolled away to one side. Down came the car, Mickey fell off, and there he lay, till some people that saw what was going on ran down the hill after him, and got the mare on to her feet, and not a scratch on her.

But poor Mickey! It was easy to see with half an eye that he was badly hurt.

“Someone will have to drive him home, whatever,” said Barney, coming up the hill to look for more help, after doing his best to get Mickey to stand up; and sure, how was he to do that, upon a broken leg? “A poor thing it is, too, to see how a thing of the kind could occur so simple! and a decent man like Heffernan to be nigh hand killed....” 257

“‘Deed, and he is a decent man!” said Hughie; “and why wouldn’t he? I’d be a decent man meself if I had the Furry Farm and it stocked....”

“He’s in a poor way now, in any case,” said Barney. “I doubt will he ever get over this rightly! That’s apt to be a leg to him all his life!”

“Well, and so, itself!” said Hughie; “haven’t I two of them lame legs? and who thinks to pity Hughie?”

“It’s another matter altogether, with a man like Mr. Heffernan,” said Barney; “what does the like of you miss, by not being able to get about, compared with a man that might spend his time walking a-through his cattle, and looking at his crops growing, every day in the week?”

“To be sure, he could be doing all that!” said Hughie, “but when a thing of this kind happens out so awkward, it’s the will of God, and the will of man can’t abate that!”

258

Trinket's Colt.

From "Some Experiences of an Irish R.M."

By E. Œ. Somerville and Martin Ross.

It was petty sessions day in Skebawn, a cold, grey day in February. A case of trespass had dragged its burden of cross-summonses and cross-swearing far into the afternoon, and when I left the bench my head was singing from the bellowings of the attorneys, and the smell of their clients was heavy upon my palate.

The streets still testified to the fact that it was market day, and I evaded with difficulty the sinuous course of carts full of soddenly screwed people, and steered an equally devious one for myself among the groups anchored round the doors of the public-houses. Skebawn possesses, among its legion of public-houses, one establishment which timorously, and almost imperceptibly, proffers tea to the thirsty. I turned in there, as was my custom on court days, and found the little dingy den, known as the Ladies' Coffee Room, in the occupancy of my friend Mr. Florence McCarthy Knox, who was drinking strong tea and eating buns with serious simplicity. It was a first and quite unexpected glimpse of that domesticity that has now become a marked feature in his character.

"You're the very man I wanted to see," I said, as I sat down beside him at the oilcloth covered table; "a man I know in England who is not much of a judge of character has asked me to buy him a four-year-old down here, and as I should rather be stuck by a friend than a dealer, I wish you'd take over the job."

Flurry poured himself out another cup of tea, and dropped three lumps of sugar into it in 259
silence.

Finally he said, "There isn't a four-year-old in this country that I'd be seen dead with at a pig fair."

This was discouraging, from the premier authority on horseflesh in the district.

"But it isn't six weeks since you told me you had the finest filly in your stables that was ever foaled in the County Cork," I protested; "what's wrong with her?"

"Oh, is it that filly?" said Mr. Knox, with a lenient smile; "she's gone these three weeks from me. I swapped her and £6 for a three-year-old Ironmonger colt, and after that I swapped the colt and £19 for that Bandon horse I rode last week at your place, and after that again I sold the Bandon horse for £75 to old Welply, and I had to give him back a couple of sovereigns luck-money. You see, I did pretty well with the filly after all."

"Yes, yes—oh, rather," I assented, as one dizzily accepts the propositions of a bimetallist; "and you don't know of anything else——?"

The room in which we were seated was closed from the shop by a door with a muslin-curtained window in it; several of the panes were broken, and at this juncture two voices, that had for some time carried on a discussion, forced themselves upon our attention.

"Begging your pardon for contradicting you, ma'am," said the voice of Mrs. McDonald, proprietress of the tea-shop, and a leading light in Skebawn Dissenting circles, shrilly tremulous with indignation, "if the servants I recommend you won't stop with you, it's no fault of mine. If respectable young girls are set picking grass out of your gravel, in place of their proper work, certainly they will give warning!"

The voice that replied struck me as being a notable one, well-bred and imperious. 260

"When I take a bare-footed slut out of a cabin, I don't expect her to dictate to me what her duties are!"

Flurry jerked up his chin in a noiseless laugh. "It's my grandmother!" he whispered. "I bet you Mrs. McDonald don't get much change out of her!"

"If I set her to clean the pig-sty I expect her to obey me," continued the voice in accents that would have made me clean forty pig-stys had she desired me to do so.

"Very well, ma'am," retorted Mrs. McDonald, "if that's the way you treat your servants, you needn't come here again looking for them. I consider your conduct is neither that of a lady nor a Christian!"

"Don't you, indeed?" replied Flurry's grandmother. "Well, your opinion doesn't greatly

distress me, for, to tell you the truth, I don't think you're much of a judge."

"Didn't I tell you she'd score?" murmured Flurry, who was by this time applying his eye to the hole in the muslin curtain. "She's off," he went on, returning to his tea. "She's a great character! She's eighty-three, if she's a day, and she's as sound on her legs as a three-year-old! Did you see that old shandrydan of hers in the street a while ago, and a fellow on the box with a red beard on him like Robinson Crusoe? That old mare that was on the near side, Trinket her name is—is mighty near clean bred. I can tell you her foals are worth a bit of money."

I had heard of old Mrs. Knox of Aussolas; indeed, I had seldom dined out in the neighbourhood without hearing some new story of her and her remarkable ménage, but it had not yet been my privilege to meet her. 261

"Well, now," went on Flurry, in his low voice, "I'll tell you a thing that's just come into my head. My grandmother promised me a foal of Trinket's the day I was one-and-twenty, and that's five years ago, and deuce a one I've got from her yet. You never were at Aussolas? No, you were not. Well, I tell you the place there is like a circus with horses. She has a couple of score of them running wild in the woods, like deer."

"Oh, come," I said, "I'm a bit of a liar myself——"

"Well, she has a dozen of them, anyhow, rattling good colts, too, some of them, but they might as well be donkeys for all the good they are to me or any one. It's not once in three years she sells one, and there she has them walking after her for bits of sugar, like a lot of dirty lapdogs," ended Flurry with disgust.

"Well, what's your plan? Do you want me to make her a bid for one of the lapdogs?"

"I was thinking," replied Flurry, with great deliberation, "that my birthday's this week, and maybe I could work a four-year-old colt of Trinket's she has out of her in honour of the occasion."

"And sell your grandmother's birthday present to me?"

"Just that, I suppose," answered Flurry, with a slow wink.

A few days afterwards a letter from Mr. Knox informed me that he had "squared the old lady, and it would be all right about the colt!" He further told me that Mrs. Knox had been good enough to offer me, with him, a day's snipe shooting on the celebrated Aussolas bogs, and he proposed to drive me there the following Monday, if convenient, to shoot the Aussolas snipe bog when they got the chance. Eight o'clock on the following Monday morning saw Flurry, myself, and a groom packed into a dog-cart, with portmanteaus, gun-cases, and two rampant red setters. 262

It was a long drive, twelve miles at least, and a very cold one. We passed through long tracts of pasture country, filled for Flurry, with memories of runs, which were recorded for me, fence by fence, in every one of which the biggest dog-fox in the country had gone to ground, with not two feet—measured accurately on the handle of the whip—between him and the leading hound; through bogs that imperceptibly melted into lakes, and finally down and down into a valley, where the fir-trees of Aussolas clustered darkly round a glittering lake, and all but hid the grey roofs and pointed gables of Aussolas Castle.

"There's a nice stretch of a demesne for you," remarked Flurry, pointing downwards with the whip, "and one little old woman holding it all in the heel of her fist. Well able to hold it she is, too, and always was, and she'll live twenty years yet, if it's only to spite the whole lot of us, and when all's said and done, goodness knows how she'll leave it!"

"It strikes me you were lucky to keep her up to her promise about the colt," said I.

Flurry administered a composing kick to the ceaseless strivings of the red setters under the seat.

"I used to be rather a pet with her," he said, after a pause; "but mind you, I haven't got him yet, and if she gets any notion I want to sell him I'll never get him, so say nothing about the business to her."

The tall gates of Aussolas shrieked on their hinges as they admitted us, and shut with a clang behind us, in the faces of an old mare and a couple of young horses, who, foiled in their break for the excitements of the outer world, turned and galloped defiantly on either side of us. Flurry's admirable cob hammered on, regardless of all things save his duty. 263

“He’s the only one I have that I’d trust myself here with,” said his master, flicking him approvingly with the whip; “there are plenty of people afraid to come here at all, and when my grandmother goes out driving, she has a boy on the box with a basket full of stones to peg at them. Talk of the dickens, here she is herself!”

A short, upright old woman was approaching, preceded by a white woolly dog with sore eyes and a bark like a tin trumpet; we both got out of the trap and advanced to meet the Lady of the Manor.

I may summarise her attire by saying that she looked as if she had robbed a scarecrow; her face was small and incongruously refined, the skinny hand that she extended to me had the grubby tan that bespoke the professional gardener, and was decorated with a magnificent diamond ring. On her head was a massive purple velvet bonnet.

“I am very glad to meet you, Major Yeates,” she said, with an old-fashioned precision of utterance; “your grandfather was a dancing partner of mine in old days at the Castle, when he was a handsome young aide-de-camp there, and I was—you may judge for yourself what I was.”

She ended with a startling little hoot of laughter, and I was aware that she quite realised the world’s opinion of her, and was indifferent to it.

Our way to the bogs took us across Mrs. Knox’s home farm, and through a large field in 264
which several young horses were grazing.

“There, now, that’s my fellow,” said Flurry, pointing to a fine-looking colt, “the chestnut with the white diamond on his forehead. He’ll run into three figures before he’s done, but we’ll not tell that to the ould lady!”

The famous Aussolas bogs were as full of snipe as usual, and a good deal fuller of water than any bogs I had ever shot before. I was on my day, and Flurry was not, and as he is ordinarily an infinitely better snipe shot than I, I felt at peace with the world and all men as we walked back, wet through, at five o’clock.

The sunset had waned and a big white moon was making the eastern tower of Aussolas look like a thing in a fairy tale or a play when we arrived at the hall door. An individual, whom I recognised as the Robinson Crusoe coachman, admitted us to a hall, the like of which one does not often see. The walls were panelled with dark oak up to the gallery that ran round three sides of it, the balusters of the wide staircase were heavily carved, and blackened portraits of Flurry’s ancestors on the spindle side, stared sourly down on their descendant as he tramped upstairs with the bog mould on his hobnailed boots.

We had just changed into dry clothes when Robinson Crusoe shoved his red beard round the corner of the door, with the information that the mistress said we were to stay for dinner. My heart sank. It was then barely half-past five. I said something about having no evening clothes, and having to get home early.

“Sure, the dinner’ll be in another half-hour,” said Robinson Crusoe, joining hospitably in the conversation; “and as for evening clothes—God bless ye!”

The door closed behind him. 265

“Never mind,” said Flurry, “I dare say you’ll be glad enough to eat another dinner by the time you get home,” he laughed. “Poor Slipper!” he added, inconsequently, and only laughed again when I asked for an explanation.

Old Mrs. Knox received us in the library, where she was seated by a roaring turf fire, which lit the room a good deal more effectively than the pair of candles that stood beside her in tall silver candlesticks. Ceaseless and implacable growls from under her chair indicated the presence of the woolly dog. She talked with confounding culture of the books that rose all round her to the ceiling; her evening dress was accomplished by means of an additional white shawl, rather dirtier than its congeners; as I took her in to dinner she quoted Virgil to me, and in the same breath screeched an objurgation at a being whose matted head rose suddenly into view from behind an ancient Chinese screen, as I have seen the head of a Zulu woman peer over a bush.

Dinner was as incongruous as everything else. Detestable soup in a splendid old silver tureen that was nearly as dark in hue as Robinson Crusoe’s thumb; a perfect salmon, perfectly cooked, on a chipped kitchen dish; such cut glass as is not easy to find nowadays; sherry that, as Flurry subsequently remarked, would burn the shell off an egg; and a bottle of port, draped in immemorial cobwebs, wan with age, and probably priceless. Throughout

the vicissitudes of the meal Mrs. Knox's conversation flowed on undismayed, directed sometimes at me—she had installed me in the position of friend of her youth, and talked to me as if I were my own grandfather—sometimes at Crusoe, with whom she had several heated arguments, and sometimes she would make a statement of remarkable frankness on the subject of her horse-farming affairs to Flurry, who, very much on his best behaviour, agreed with all she said, and risked no original remark. As I listened to them both, I remembered with infinite amusement how he had told me once that "a pet name she had for him was 'Tony Lumpkin,' and no one but herself knew what she meant by it." It seemed strange that she made no allusion to Trinket's colt or to Flurry's birthday, but, mindful of my instructions, I held my peace. 266

As, at about half-past eight, we drove away in the moonlight, Flurry congratulated me solemnly on my success with his grandmother. He was good enough to tell me that she would marry me to-morrow if I asked her, and he wished I would, even if it was only to see what a nice grandson he'd be for me. A sympathetic giggle behind me told me that Michael, on the back seat, had heard and relished the jest.

We had left the gates of Aussolas about half-a-mile behind, when, at the corner of a by-road, Flurry pulled up. A short, squat figure arose from the black shadow of a furze bush and came out into the moonlight, swinging its arms like a cabman, and cursing audibly.

"Oh, murdher, oh, murdher, Misther Flurry! What kept ye at all? 'Twould perish the crows to be waiting here the way I am these two hours—"

"Ah, shut your mouth, Slipper!" said Flurry, who, to my surprise, had turned back the rug and was taking off his driving coat, "I couldn't help it. Come on, Yeates, we've got to get out here."

"What for?" I asked, in not unnatural bewilderment.

"It's all right. I'll tell you as we go along," replied my companion, who was already turning to follow Slipper up the by-road. "Take the trap on, Michael, and wait at the River's Cross." He waited for me to come up with him, and then put his hand on my arm. "You see, Major, this is the way it is. My grandmother's given me that colt right enough, but if I waited for her to send him over to me I'd never see a hair of his tail. So I just thought that as we were over here we might as well take him back with us, and maybe you'll give us a help with him; he'll not be altogether too handy for a first go off." 267

I was staggered. An infant in arms could scarcely have failed to discern the fishiness of the transaction, and I begged Mr. Knox not to put himself to this trouble on my account, as I had no doubt I could find a horse for my friend elsewhere. Mr. Knox assured me that it was no trouble at all, quite the contrary, and that, since his grandmother had given him the colt, he saw no reason why he should not take him when he wanted him; also, that if I didn't want him he'd be glad enough to keep him himself; and, finally, that I wasn't the chap to go back on a friend, but I was welcome to drive back to Shreelane with Michael this minute, if I liked.

Of course, I yielded in the end. I told Flurry I should lose my job over the business, and he said I could then marry his grandmother, and the discussion was abruptly closed by the necessity of following Slipper over a locked five-barred gate.

Our pioneer took us over about half-a-mile of country, knocking down stone gaps where practicable, and scrambling over tall banks in the deceptive moonlight. We found ourselves at length in a field with a shed in one corner of it; in a dim group of farm buildings; a little way off a light was shining. 268

"Wait here," said Flurry to me in a whisper; "the less noise the better. It's an open shed, and we'll just slip in and coax him out."

Slipper unwound from his waist a halter, and my colleagues glided like spectres into the shadow of the shed, leaving me to meditate on my duties as Resident Magistrate, and on the questions that would be asked in the House by our local member when Slipper had given away the adventure in his cups.

In less than a minute three shadows emerged from the shed, where two had gone in. They had got the colt.

"He came out as quiet as a calf when he winded the sugar," said Flurry; "it was well for me I filled my pockets from grandmamma's sugar basin."

He and Slipper had a rope from each side of the colt's head; they took him quickly across a

field towards a gate. The colt stepped daintily between them over the moonlit grass; he snorted occasionally, but appeared on the whole amenable.

The trouble began later, and was due, as trouble often is, to the beguilements of a short cut. Against the maturer judgment of Slipper, Flurry insisted on following a route that he assured us he knew as well as his own pocket, and the consequence was, that in about five minutes I found myself standing on top of a bank hanging on to a rope, on the other end of which the colt dangled and danced, while Flurry, with the other rope, lay prone in the ditch, and Slipper administered to the bewildered colt's hindquarters such chastisement as could be ventured on.

I have no space to narrate in detail the atrocious difficulties and disasters of the short cut. 269
How the colt set to work to buck, and went away across a field, dragging the faithful Slipper, literally *ventre-à-terre*, after him, while I picked myself in ignominy out of a briar patch, and Flurry cursed himself black in the face. How we were attacked by ferocious cur dogs and I lost my eyeglass; and how, as we neared the river's Cross, Flurry espied the police patrol on the road, and we all hid behind a rick of turf, while I realised in fulness what an exceptional ass I was, to have been beguiled into an enterprise that involved hiding with Slipper from the Royal Irish Constabulary.

Let it suffice to say that Trinket's infernal offspring was finally handed over on the highroad to Michael and Slipper, and Flurry drove me home in a state of mental and physical overthrow.

I saw nothing of my friend Mr. Knox for the next couple of days, by the end of which time I had worked up a high polish on my misgivings, and had determined to tell him that under no circumstances would I have anything to say to his grandmother's birthday present. It was like my usual luck that, instead of writing a note to this effect, I thought it would be good for my liver to walk across the hills to Tory Cottage and tell Flurry so in person.

It was a bright, blustery morning, after a muggy day. The feeling of spring was in the air, the daffodils were already in bud, and crocuses showed purple in the grass on either side of the avenue. It was only a couple of miles to Tory Cottage, by the way across the hills; I walked fast, and it was barely twelve o'clock when I saw its pink walls and clumps of evergreens below me. As I looked down at it, the chiming of Flurry's hounds in the kennels 270
came to me on the wind; I stood still to listen, and could almost have sworn that I was hearing the clash of Magdalen bells, hard at work on May morning.

The path that I was following led downwards through a larch plantation to Flurry's back gate. Hot wafts from some hideous cauldron at the other side of a wall apprised me of the vicinity of the kennels and their *cuisine*, and the fir-trees round were hung with gruesome and unknown joints. I thanked heaven that I was not a master of hounds, and passed on as quickly as might be to the hall door.

I rang two or three times without response; then the door opened a couple of inches, and was instantly slammed in my face. I heard the hurried paddling of bare feet on oilcloth, and a voice, "Hurry, Bridgie, hurry! There's quality at the door!"

Bridgie, holding a dirty cap on with one hand, presently arrived and informed me that she believed that Mr. Knox was out about the place. She seemed perturbed, and she cast scared glances down the drive while speaking to me.

I knew enough of Flurry's habits to shape a tolerably direct course for his whereabouts. He was, as I had expected, in the training paddock, a field behind the stable-yard, in which he had put up practice jumps for his horses. It was a good-sized field with clumps of furze in it, and Flurry was standing near one of these with his hands in his pockets, singularly unoccupied. I supposed that he was prospecting for a place to put up another jump. He did not see me coming, and turned with a start as I spoke to him. There was a queer expression 271
of mingled guilt and what I can only describe as divilment in his grey eyes as he greeted me. In my dealings with Flurry Knox, I have since formed the habit of sitting tight, in a general way, when I see that expression.

"Well, who's coming next, I wonder!" he said, as he shook hands with me; "it's not ten minutes since I had two of your d——d peelers here searching the whole place for my grandmother's colt!"

"What!" I exclaimed, feeling cold all down my back; "do you mean the police have got hold of it?"

"They haven't got hold of the colt, anyway," said Flurry, looking sideways at me from

under the peak of his cap, with the glint of the sun in his eye. “I got word in time before they came.”

“What do you mean?” I demanded; “where is he? For Heaven’s sake don’t tell me you’ve sent the brute over to my place!”

“It’s a good job for you I didn’t,” replied Flurry, “as the police are on their way to Shreelane this minute to consult you about it. You!” He gave utterance to one of his short, diabolical fits of laughter. “He’s where they’ll not find him, anyhow. Ho! ho! It’s the funniest hand I ever played!”

“Oh, yes, it’s devilish funny, I’ve no doubt,” I retorted, beginning to lose my temper, as is the manner of many people when they are frightened; “but, I give you fair warning that if Mrs. Knox asks me any questions about it, I shall tell her the whole story.”

“All right,” responded Flurry; “and when you do, don’t forget to tell her how you flogged the colt out on to the road over her own bound’s ditch.”

“Very well,” I said, hotly, “I may as well go home and send in my papers. They’ll break me 272
over this—”

“Ah, hold on, Major,” said Flurry, soothingly, “it’ll be all right. No one knows anything. It’s only on spec’ the old lady sent the Bobbies here. If you’ll keep quiet it’ll all blow over.”

“I don’t care,” I said, struggling hopelessly in the toils; “if I meet your grandmother, and she asks me about it, I shall tell her all I know.”

“Please God you’ll not meet her! After all, it’s not once in a blue moon that she——” began Flurry. Even as he said the words his face changed. “Holy fly!” he ejaculated, “isn’t that her dog coming into the field? Look at her bonnet over the wall! Hide, hide, for your life!” He caught me by the shoulder and shoved me down among the furze bushes before I realised what had happened.

“Get in there! I’ll talk to her.”

I may as well confess that at the mere sight of Mrs. Knox’s purple bonnet my heart had turned to water. In that moment I knew what it would be like to tell her how I, having eaten her salmon, and capped her quotations, and drunk her best port, had gone forth and helped to steal her horse. I abandoned my dignity, my sense of honour; I took the furze prickles to my breast and wallowed in them.

Mrs. Knox had advanced with vengeful speed; already she was in high altercation with Flurry at no great distance from where I lay; varying sounds of battle reached me, and I gathered that Flurry was not—to put it mildly—shrinking from that economy of truth that the situation required.

“Is it that curby, long-backed brute? You promised him to me long ago, but I wouldn’t be 273
bothered with him.”

The old lady uttered a laugh of shrill derision. “Is it likely I’d promise you my best colt? And still more, is it likely that you’d refuse him if I did?”

“Very well, ma’am,” Flurry’s voice was admirably indignant. “Then I suppose I’m a liar and a thief.”

“I’d be more obliged to you for the information if I hadn’t known it before,” responded his grandmother with lightning speed; “if you swore to me on a stack of Bibles you knew nothing about my colt I wouldn’t believe you! I shall go straight to Major Yeates and ask his advice. I believe him to be a gentleman, in spite of the company he keeps!”

I writhed deeper into the furze bushes, and thereby discovered a sandy rabbit run, along which I crawled, with my cap well over my eyes, and the furze needles stabbing me through my stockings. The ground shelved a little, promising profounder concealment, but the bushes were very thick, and I had hold of the bare stem of one to help my progress. It lifted out of the ground in my hand, revealing a freshly-cut stump. Something snorted, not a yard away; I glared through the opening, and was confronted by the long, horrified face of Mrs. Knox’s colt, mysteriously on a level with my own.

Even without the white diamond on his forehead I should have divined the truth; but how in the name of wonder had Flurry persuaded him to couch like a woodcock in the heart of a furze brake? For a minute I lay as still as death for fear of frightening him, while the voices of Flurry and his grandmother raged on alarmingly close to me. The colt snorted, and blew 274

long breaths through his wide nostrils, but he did not move. I crawled an inch or two nearer, and after a few seconds of cautious peering I grasped the position. They had buried him!

A small sandpit among the furze had been utilised as a grave; they had filled him in up to his withers with sand, and a few furze bushes, artistically disposed round the pit had done the rest. As the depth of Flurry's guile was revealed, laughter came upon me like a flood; I gurgled and shook apoplectically, and the colt gazed at me with serious surprise, until a sudden outburst of barking close to my elbow administered a fresh shock to my tottering nerves.

Mrs. Knox's woolly dog had tracked me into the furze, and was now baying the colt and me with mingled terror and indignation. I addressed him in a whisper, with perfidious endearments, advancing a crafty hand towards him the while, made a snatch for the back of his neck, missed it badly, and got him by the ragged fleece of his hind-quarters as he tried to flee. If I had flayed him alive he could hardly have uttered a more deafening series of yells, but, like a fool, instead of letting him go, I dragged him towards me, and tried to stifle the noise by holding his muzzle. The tussle lasted engrossingly for a few seconds, and then the climax of the nightmare arrived.

Mrs. Knox's voice, close behind me, said, "Let go my dog this instant, sir! Who are you ——"

Her voice faded away, and I knew that she also had seen the colt's head.

I positively felt sorry for her. At her age there was no knowing what effect the shock might have on her. I scrambled to my feet and confronted her.

"Major Yeates!" she said. There was a deathly pause. "Will you kindly tell me," said Mrs. 275
Knox, slowly, "am I in Bedlam, or are you? And what is that?"

She pointed to the colt, and the unfortunate animal, recognising the voice of his mistress, uttered a hoarse and lamentable whinny. Mrs. Knox felt around her for support, found only furze prickles, gazed speechlessly at me, and then, to her eternal honour, fell into wild cackles of laughter.

So, I may say, did Flurry and I. I embarked on my explanation and broke down. Flurry followed suit and broke down, too. Overwhelming laughter held us all three, disintegrating our very souls. Mrs. Knox pulled herself together first.

"I acquit you, Major Yeates, I acquit you, though appearances are against you. It's clear enough to me you've fallen among thieves." She stopped and glowered at Flurry. Her purple bonnet was over one eye. "I'll thank you, sir," she said, "to dig out that horse before I leave this place. And when you've dug him out you may keep him. I'll be no receiver of stolen goods!"

She broke off and shook her fist at him. "Upon my conscience, Tony, I'd give a guinea to have thought of it myself!"

276

The Wee Tea Table.

From "Irish Pastorals."

By Shan Bullock (1865-).

Somewhere near the hill-hedge, with their arms bare, skirts tucked up, and faces peering from the depths of big sunbonnets, Anne Daly and Judy Brady were gathering the hay into long, narrow rows; one raking this side of a row, the other that, and both sweetening toil with laughter and talk. Sometimes Anne leaned on her rake and chattered for a while; now Judy said a word or two and ended with a titter; again, both bobbed heads and broke into merriment. I came nearer to them, got ready my rake, and began on a fresh row.

The talk was of a woman, of her and her absurdities.

"I've come to help you to laugh, Anne," said I. "What friend is this of yours and Judy's that you're stripping of her character?"

“The lassie,” said Anne, “we were talkin’ about is a marrit woman—one Hannah Breen be name—an’ she lives in a big house on the side of a hill over there towards the mountain. The husband’s a farmer—an easy-goin’, bull-voiced, good-hearted lump of a man, wi’ a good word for ould Satan himself, an’ a laugh always ready for iverything. But the wife, Hannah, isn’t that kind. Aw, ‘deed she isn’t. ’Tisn’t much good-speakin’ or laughin’ Hannah’ll be doin’; ’tisn’t herself’d get many cars to follow her funeral in these parts. Aw, no. ’Tisn’t milkin’ the cows, an’ makin’ the butter, an’ washin’ John’s shirts, an’ darnin’ his socks, an’ 277
mendin’ her own tatters, an’ huntin’ the chickens from the porridge-pot, Hannah was made for. Aw, no. It’s a lady Hannah must be, a real live lady. It’s step out o’ bed at eight o’clock in the mornin’, Hannah must do, an’ slither down to her tay an’ have it all in grandeur in the parlour; it’s sittin’ half the day she must be, readin’ about the doin’s o’ the quality, an’ the goin’s on o’ the world, an’ squintin’ at fashion-pictures, an’ fillin’ her mind wi’ the height o’ nonsense an’ foolery; it’s rise from the table in a tantrum she must do because John smacks his lips, an’ ates his cabbage wi’ his knife; it’s worry the poor man out o’ his mind she’d be after because he lies and snores on the kitchen table, an’ smokes up to bed, an’ won’t shave more’n once a week, an’ says he’d rather be hanged at once nor be choked up in a white shirt an’ collar o’ Sundays. An’ for herself—aw, now, it’d take me from this till sunset to tell ye about all her fooleries. If you’d only see her, Mr. John, stalkin’ in through the chapel gates, wi’ her skirts tucked up high enough to show the frillin’ on her white petticoat, an’ low enough to hide the big tear in it; an’ black kid gloves on her fists; an’ a bonnet on her wi’out a string to it; an’ light shoes on her; an’ a big hole in the heel o’ her stockin’; and her nose in the air; an’ her sniffin’ at us all just as if we were the tenants at the butter-show an’ herself My Lady come to prance before us all an’ make herself agreeable for five minutes or so.... Aw, Lord, Lord,” laughed Anne, “if ye could only see her, Mr. John.”

“An’ to see her steppin’ down Bunn Street,” Anne went on, as we turned at the hedge, and set our faces once more towards the river, “as if the town belonged to her—a ribbon 278
flutterin’ here, an’ a buckle shinin’ there, an’ a feather danglin’ another place—steppin’ along wi’ her butter-basket on her arm, an’ big John draggin’ at her heels, an’ that look on her face you’d expect to see on the face o’ the Queen o’ France walkin’ on a gold carpet, in goold slippers, to a goold throne! An’ to see the airs of her when someone’d spake; an’ to see the murderin’ look on her when someone’d hint at a drop o’whiskey for the good of her health; an’ to hear the beautiful talk of her to the butter-buyers—that soft an’ po-lite; an’ to see her sittin’ in the ould ramshackle of a cart goin’ home, as straight in the back an’ as stiff as a ramrod, an’ her face set like a plaster image, an’ her niver lettin’ her eye fall on John sittin’ beside her, an’ him as drunk an’ merry as a houseful o’ fiddlers! Aw, sure,” cried Anne, flinging up a hand, “aw, sure, it’s past the power o’ mortial tongue to tell about her.”

“Yours, Anne, makes a good attempt at the telling, for all that,” said I.

“Ach, I’m only bleatherin’,” said Anne. “If ye only knew her—only did.”

“Well, tell me all about her,” said I, “before your tongue gets tired.”

“Ah, sure, an’ I will,” replied she; “sure, an’ I’ll try me hand at it.”

“One day, then, sometime last summer, Hannah—beggin’ her ladyship’s pardon,” said Anne, a sudden note of scorn rasping in her voice, “but I meant Mrs. Breen—decks herself out, ties on her bonnet, pulls on her kid gloves, an’ steps out through the hall door. Down she goes, over the ruts an’ the stones, along the lane, turns down the main road; after a while comes to the house o’ Mrs. Flaherty—herself that told me—crosses the street, an’ 279
knocks po-lite on the door.

“‘Aw, is Mrs. Flaherty at home, this fine day?’ axes Hannah when the door opens, an’ wee Nancy put her tattered head between it an’ the post. ‘Is Mrs. Flaherty at home?’ says she.

“‘She is so,’ answers Nancy; ‘but she’d be out at the well,’ says the wee crature.

“‘I see,’ says Hannah, ‘I see. Then, if you please, when she comes back,’ says she, ‘would you be kindly handin’ her that, wi’ Mrs. Breen’s compliments’—an’ out of her pocket Hannah pulls a letter, gives it to Nancy, says good evenin’ to the wee mortial, gathers up her skirt, an’ steps off in her grandeur through the hens an’ ducks back to the road. Well, on she goes another piece, an’ comes to the house of Mary Dolan; an’ there, too, faith, she does the genteel an’ leaves another letter an’ turns her feet for the house of Mrs. Hogan; an’ at Sally’s she smiles, an’ bobs her head, an’ pulls another letter from her pocket, an’ leaves it at the door; then twists on her heel, turns back home an’ begins dustin’ the parlours, an’ arrangin’ her trumpery an’ readin’ bleather from the fashion papers.

“Very well, childer. Home Jane comes from the well, an’ there’s Nancy wi’ the letter in her

fist. ‘What the divil’s this?’ says Jane, an’ tears it open; an’ there, lo an’ behold ye, is a bit of a card—Jane swears ’twas a piece of a bandbox, but I’d be disbelievin’ her—an’ on it an invite to come an’ have tay with me bould Hannah, on the next Wednesday evenin’ at five o’clock p.m.—whativer in glory p.m. may be after meanin’; when Mary Dolan opens hers, there’s the same invite; an’ when Sally Hogan opens hers, out drops the same bit of a card 280
on the floor; an’ Sally laughs, an’ Mary laughs, an’ Jane laughs, an’ the three o’ them, what wi’ the quareness o’ the business, an’ the curiosity of them to see Hannah at her capers, put their heads together, an’ laughs again, an’ settles it that sorrow take them, but go they’ll go. An’ go they did. Aw, yis ... Aw, Lord, Lord,” laughed Anne, turning up her eyes. “Lord, Lord!”

“Aw, childer, dear,” giggled Judy, with a heaving of her narrow shoulders. “Aw, go they did!”

“Good girl, Anne,” said I, and slapped my leg “my roarin’ girl! Aw, an’ go they did, Judy—go they did.”

“Well, hearts alive,” Anne went on, “Wednesday evenin’ comes at last; an’ sharp at five o’clock up me brave Jane Flaherty steps along the lane, crosses the yard, an’ mindin’ her manners, knocks twice on Hannah’s back door—then turns, an’ wi’ the dog yelpin’ at her, an’ the gander hissin’ like a wet stick on a fire, waits like a beggarwoman on the step. But divil a one comes to the door; aw, not a one. An’ sorrow a soul budged inside; aw, not a soul. So round turns Jane, lifts her fist again, hits the door three thundering bangs, an’ looks another while at the gander. Not a budge in the door, not a move inside; so Jane, not to be done out of her tay, lifts the latch,—an’, sure as the sun was shinin’, but the bolt was shot inside. ‘Well, dang me,’ says Jane, an’ hits the door a kick, ‘but this is a fine way to treat company,’ says she, an’ rattles the latch, an’ shakes it. At last, in the divil of a temper, spits on the step, whips up her skirts, an’ cursin’ Hannah high up an’ low down, starts for home.

“She got as far as the bend in the lane, an’ there meets Mary Dolan.

“‘What’s up?’ axes Mary. ‘What’s floostered ye, Jane Flaherty? Aren’t ye goin’ to have your 281
tay, me dear?’ says Mary.

“‘Aw, may the first sup she swallows choke the breath in her,’ shouts Jane, an’ goes on to tell her story; an’ before she’d said ten words, up comes Sally Hogan.

“‘Am I too late?’ says Sally, ‘or am I too early?’ says she, ‘or what in glory ails the two o’ ye?’

“‘Ails?’ shouts Jane. ‘Ye may well say that, Sally Hogan. Ye may turn on your heel,’ says she, an’ begins her story again; an’ before she was half through it Sally laughs out, and takes Jane by the arm, an’ starts back to the house.

“‘Come away,’ says she; ‘come away an’ have your tay, Jane; sure, ye don’t know Hannah yet.’

“So back the three goes—but not through the yard. Aw, no. ’Twas through the wee green gate, an’ down the walk, an’ slap up to the hall door Sally takes them; an’ sure enough the first dab on the knocker brings a fut on the flags inside, an’ there’s Kitty, the servant girl, in her boots an’ her stockin’s, an’ her Sunday dress an’ a white apron on her, standin’ before them.

“‘Aw, an’ is that you, Kitty Malone,’ says Sally. ‘An’ how’s yourself, Kitty, me dear? An’ wid Mrs. Breen be inside?’ says she.

“‘She is so, Mrs. Hogan,’ answers Kitty, an’ bobs a kind of curtsy. ‘Wid ye all be steppin’ in, please?’

“‘Aw, the Lord’s sake,’ gasps Sally on the door step, at all this grandeur; ‘the Lord’s sake,’ says she, an’ steps into the hall; an’ in steps Mary Dolan, an’ in steps Jane Flaherty, an’ away the three o’ them goes at Kitty’s heels up to the parlour.... ‘Aw, heavenly hour,’ cried Anne, and turned up her eyes.

“Well, dears,” Anne went on, “in the three walks, bonnets an’ all, an’ sits them down along 282
the wall on three chairs, an’ watches Kitty close the door; then looks at each other in a puzzled kind o’ way, an’, after that, without openin’ a lip, casts their eyes about the room. ’Twas the funniest kind of a place, Jane allowed, that iver she dropped eyes on. There was a sheep-skin, lyin’ woolly side up, in front o’ the fireplace, an’ a calf-skin near the windy, an’ a dog’s skin over be the table, an’ the floor was painted brown about three fut all round the walls. There was pieces of windy-curtain over the backs o’ the chairs; there was a big fern growin’ in an ould drain-pipe in the corner; there was an ould straw hat o’ John’s stuffed full

o’ flowers an’ it hangin’ on the wall, an’ here an’ there, all round it an’ beside it were picters cut from the papers an’ then tacked on the plaster. Ye could hardly see the mantelshelf, Jane allowed, for all the trumpery was piled on it, dinglum-danglums of glass an’ chaney, an’ shells from the say, an’ a sampler stuck in a frame, an’ in the middle of all a picter of Hannah herself got up in all her finery. An’ there was books, an’ papers, an’ fal-lals, an’ the sorrow knows what, lyin’ about; an’ standin’ against the wall, facin’ the windy, was a wee table, wi’ a cloth on it about the size of an apron, an’ it wi’ a fringe on it, no less, an’ it spread skew-wise an’ lookin’ for all the world like a white ace o’ diamonds; an’ on the cloth was a tray wi’ cups an’ saucers, an’ sugar an’ milk, an’ as much bread an’ butter, cut as thin as glass, as you’d give a sick child for its supper.... ‘Aw, heavenly hour,’ cried Anne, ‘heavenly hour!’

“Aw, childer, dear,” cried Judy.

“Aw, woman alive,” said I. “Aw, Judy, dear.”

“Well, childer, the three looks at all, an’ looks at each other, an’ shifts on their chairs, an’ 283
looks at each other again, an’ says Mary Dolan at last:—

“‘We’re in clover, me dears,’ says she, ‘judgin’ be the spread beyont’—and she nods at the wee table.

“‘Ah that’il do for a start,’ says Sally Hogan; ‘but where in glory are we all to put our legs under that wee table? Sure it’l be an ojus squeeze.’

“‘It will so,’ says Jane Flaherty, ‘it will so. But isn’t it powerful quare o’ Hannah to keep us sittin’ here so long in our bonnets an’ shawls, an’ us dreepin’ wi’ the heat?’

“‘It’s the quarest hole I iver was put in,’ says Mary Dolan, ‘an’ if this is grandeur, give me the ould kitchen at home wi’ me feet on the hearth an’ me tay on a chair.... Phew,’ says Mary, an’ squints round at the windy, ‘phew, but it’s flamin’ hot! Aw,’ says she, an’ makes a dart from her chair, ‘dang me, but I’ll burst if I don’t get a mouthful o’ fresh air.’ An’ just as she had her hand on the sash to lift it, the door opens an’ in steps me darlin’ Hannah.

“‘Good evenin’, ladies all,” says Hannah, marchin’ in wi’ some kind of a calico affair, made like a shroud wi’ frills on it, hangin’ on her, ‘Good evenin’, ladies,’ says she, an’ wi’ her elbow cocked up in the air as if she was strivin’ to scrape it against the ceilin’, goes from one to another an’ shakes hands. ‘It’s a very pleasant afternoon’ (them was the words), says she, makin’ for a chair beside the wee table; ‘an’ I’m very pleased to see ye all,’ says she.

“‘Aw, an’ the same here,’ says Mary Dolan, in her free way, ‘the same here; an’ ojus nice
ye look in that sack of a calico dress, so ye do,’ says Mary, wi’ a wink at Jane Flaherty. ‘But 284
it’s meself’d feel obliged to ye if so be ye’d open the windy an’ give us a mouthful o’ fresh air,’ says Mary.

“An’ Hannah sits down in her shroud wi’ the frills on it, an’ smiles, an’ says she, ‘I’m rather delicate’ (them were the words) ‘this afternoon, Mrs. Dolan, an’ afeered o’ catchin’ cold; an’, forby that,’ says she, ‘the dust is so injurious for the parlour.’

“‘Aw, just so,’ answers Mary, ‘just so. Sure, I wouldn’t for worlds have ye spoil your parlour for the likes of us. But I’ll ax your leave, Mrs. Breen, seein’ ye don’t ax me yourself, to give me own health a chance,’ says she, ‘be throwin’ this big shawl off me shoulders.’

“‘But it’s afternoon tay, Mrs. Dolan,’ answers Hannah, in her cool way; ‘an’ it’s not fashionable at afternoon tay for ladies to remove—’

“‘Then afternoon tay be danged,’ says Mary, an’ throws the shawl off her across the back of her chair; ‘an’ it’s meself’ll not swelter for all the fashions in the world,’ says she, an’ pushes her bonnet back an’ lets it hang be the strings down her back. ‘Aw, that’s great,’ says she, wi’ a big sigh; an’ at that off goes Jane’s shawl an’ bonnet, an’ off goes Sally’s; an’ there the three o’ them sits, wi’ Hannah lookin’ at them disgusted as an ass at a field of thistles over a gate.... Aw, glory be,” cried Anne.

“Aw, me bould Anne,” cried Judy; “me brave girl.”

“Well, dears, Hannah sits her down, puts her elbow on a corner o’ the ace o’ diamonds, rests her cheek on her hand, an’ goes on talking about this and that. She hoped Mrs. Flaherty, an’ Mrs. Dolan, an’ Mrs. Hogan were well an’ prosperous; she hoped the crops 285
were turnin’ out well; she hoped all the childer were in the best o’ good health. Aw, like the Queen o’ Connaught Hannah talked, an’ smiled, an’ aired herself an’ her beautiful English, but sorrow a move did she make to shift her elbow off the wee table-cloth, an’ divil a sign or

smell o' tay was there to be seen. Aw, not a one. Ten minutes went, an' twenty, an' half an hour; an' at that, up Mary Dolan stretched her arms, gives a powerful big yawn, an', says she, 'Och, dear Lord,' says she, 'dear Lord, but the throat's dry in me! Och, och,' says she—an' with the hint up gets Hannah in her frilled shroud, crosses the calf-skin, opens the door, an' calls for Kitty. 'Yis, Mrs. Breen,' answers Kitty from the Kitchen. 'Serve tay,' calls Hannah; then closes the door an' steps back to her chair by the wee table.

"In about ten minutes, here comes me darlint Kitty, boots an' stockin's an' all; carries the taypot on a plate over to the table, an' plants it down slap in the middle o' the ace o' diamonds. Up jumps Hannah wi' a bounce.

"'What are you doin' Kitty?' says she, with a snap of her jaw, an' lifts the taypot, an' glares at the black ring it had made on her brand new cloth. 'D'ye see what you've done?' says she, pointin' her finger, 'stand back and mend your manners, ye ignorant little baggage, ye!'—

"'Yis, ma'am,' answers Kitty, an' stands back; then turns her head, when she gets to the calf-skin, an' winks at the three sittin' by the wall; an' out Mary Dolan bursts into a splutter of a laugh.

"'Aw, Lord,' says Mary, an' holds her ribs; 'aw, dear Lord,' says she. But Hannah, standin' pourin' tay into the wee cups, just kept her face as straight as if Mary was a dummy, an' in a minute she turns round to Kitty. 286

"'Hand the cups to the ladies,' says she, an' sits her down.

"Well, childer dear, Kitty steps from the calf-skin, lifts two cups an' saucers from the tray, carries them across the floor, an' offers one to Jane Flaherty, wi' this hand, an' t'other to Sally Hogan wi' that hand. An' Sally looks at the cup, an' then at Kitty; an' Jane looks at Kitty, an' then at the cup, an' says Sally:

"'Is it take it from ye you'd have me do, Kitty Malone?' says she.

"'It is so,' answers Kitty wi' a grin.

"'An' where in glory wid ye have me put it, Kitty Malone?' asks Sally an' looks here an' there. 'Sure—sure, there's no table next or near me,' says she.

"'It's afternoon tay, Mrs. Hogan,' says Hannah across the floor; 'an' at afternoon tay, tables aren't fashionable,' says she, an' grins to herself.

"'Well, thank God, Hannah Breen,' says Mary Dolan, 'that afternoon tay, as ye call it, has only come my way once in me life. Take the cup in your fist, Sally Hogan,' says Mary, 'an' if ye break it, bad luck go with it, an' if ye don't, you've been a lady for once in your life; an' when you're done, stick it there on the floor. I'm obliged to ye, Kitty Malone,' says Mary again, an' takes a cup; 'an' if so be I choke meself wi' the full o' this thimble wi' a handle on it,' says Mary, an' squints at the cup, 'you'll do me the favour to tell Pat I died a fool. An' if such things go well wi' afternoon tay, Kitty, agra, I'd trouble ye for a look at a spoon.' "... Aw, me bould Mary," cried Anne and laughed in her glee. "Ye were the girl for Hannah, so ye were."

"Aw, 'deed ay," cried Judy, and tittered most boisterously. "Aw, me brave Hannah." 287

"Then begins the fun, me dears. First of all, Sally Hogan, in trying to lift a bit o' bread an' butter from a plate that Kitty held before her, must spill her tay over her lap an' start screechin' that she was kilt. Then Mary Dolan must finish her cup at a gulp, an' forgettin' it was in Hannah's parlour she was at afternoon tay, an' not at home in the kitchen, must give the dregs a swirl an' sling them over her shoulder against the wall. Then Sally Hogan again, in tryin' to keep back a laugh at the tay leaves on the wall, an' the glare of Hannah across at them, must get a crumb in her throat an' bring the whole room to thump her on the back.

"Then Jane Flaherty gets a second cup wi' no sugar in it, an' makes a face like a monkey's, an' gives a big splutter, an' sets Kitty Malone off into a fit o' laughin'; an' Kitty sets Jane off, an' Jane sets Mary off, an' Mary sets Sally off; an' there sits Hannah in her calico shroud, beside the ace of diamonds, wi' a face on her like a child cuttin' its teeth, an' her arm out, an' her shoutin' for Kitty to take herself out o' the room. An' in the middle o' the whole hubbub the door opens, an' in tramps big John in his dirty boots, wi' his shirt-sleeves turned up, an' hay ropes round his legs, an' his hat on the back o' his head, an' his pipe in his mouth—in steps John, an' stands lookin' at them all.

"'Ho, ho,' roars John, an' marches across the calf-skin. 'What have we here? A tay party,' says he, 'as I'm a livin' sinner—an' me not to know a thing about it! Well, better late nor

niver,' says he, then turns an' looks at Hannah. 'Aw, how d'ye do, Mrs. Breen? says he, wi' a laugh. 'I hope I see ye well in your regimentals. An' how the blazes are the rest o' ye, me girls?' says he to the three along the wall. 'I'm glad to see ye all so hearty an' merry, so I am. But what in glory are ye all doin' over there, away from the table? Why don't ye sit an' have your tay like Christians?' says he. 'Come over, girls—come over this mortial minute,' says John,'an' I'll have a cup wi' ye meself, so I will.' 288

"Then Hannah rises in her calico shroud.

"'John,' says she, 'it's afternoon tay it'll be, an tables—'

"'Aw, sit ye down, Hannah,' shouts John, 'sit ye down, woman, an' be like another for once in a way.'

"'John,' says Hannah, again, an' looks knives an' forks at him, 'where's your manners the day?'

"'Aw, manners be danged,' roars John, an' throws his hat into the corner; 'give us a cup o' tay an' quit your nonsense. Come on, girls,' says he to the women, 'come over, an' have a cup in comfort wi' me here at the table.'

"'John!' says Hannah again, 'ye can't sit at this table; it's—it's too small,' says she.

"'Then pull it out from the wall,' roars John, 'pull it out and let us get round it. Come on,' says he, an' grips an end o' the table, 'give it a lift across the floor!'

"'No, no, John,' shouts Hannah, an' grips t'other end to keep it from goin'; 'ye mustn't, John!'

"'Out wi' it,' roars John again.

"'No, no,' shouts Hannah, 'ye can't—aw, ye can't—aw, ye mustn'—no, no, John!'

"'Aw, to glory wi' you an' it,' shouts John. 'Here let me at it meself!...'

"An' the next minute Hannah was screechin' in her shroud; an' there was a clatter o' crockery, like as if a bull had gone slap at a dresser; an' John was standin' like as if he was shot, in the middle of the floor; an' lyin' at his feet was the wee table, an' the ace of diamonds, an' the whole o' Hannah's cups an' saucers, an' the taypot, an' all, in a thousand pieces.... Aw, heart alive ... heart alive!..." 289

Anne leant upon her rake and bowed her head in laughter. Two minutes grace she had; then said I:

"What had happened, Anne?"

She looked at me. "Happened? Sure, the table was only an ould dressin'-table, an' had only three legs, an' was propped wi' the lame side against the wall; an' when John put it down in the middle of the floor—Aw, now," cried Anne, "that's enough, that's enough.... Aw, me sides—me sides."

"Aw, me sides—me sides," cried Judy, shaking below her big sun-bonnet. "Te-he!"

"Aw, women alive," cried I, sinking back on the hay. "Haw, haw!"

290

The Interpreters.

From "The Adventures of Dr. Whitty."

By George A. Birmingham.

At the end of January, after three weeks of violently stormy weather, the American barque, "Kentucky," went ashore at Carrigwee, the headland which guards the northern end of Ballintra. She struck first on some rocks a mile from the shore, drifted over them and among them, and was washed up, frightfully shattered, on the mainland. The captain and the crew were saved, and made their way into the town of Ballintra. They were dispatched thence to Liverpool, all of them, except one sailor, a forecastle hand, whose right leg had been broken

by a falling spar. This man was brought into Ballintra in a cart by Michael Geraghty, and taken to the workhouse hospital. He arrived in a state of complete collapse, and Dr. Whitty was sent for at once.

The sailor turned out to be a man of great strength and vigour. He recovered from the effects of the long exposure rapidly, had his leg set, and was made as comfortable as the combined efforts of the whole workhouse hospital staff could make him. Then it was noticed that he did not speak a word to anyone, and was apparently unable to understand a word that was said to him. The master of the workhouse, after a consultation with the matron and the nurse, came to the conclusion that he must be a foreigner. Dr. Whitty was sent for again and the fact reported to him.

“I was thinking,” said the master, “that you might be able to speak to him, doctor, so as he’d be able to understand what you said.” 291

“Well, I can’t,” said the doctor. “I’m not a professional interpreter, but I don’t see that it much matters whether you’re able to talk to him or not. Give him his food. He’ll understand the meaning of a cup of tea when it’s offered him, whatever language he’s accustomed to speak. That’s all you need care about. As a matter of fact, he’ll be just as well off without having you and the nurse and the matron sitting on the end of his bed and gossiping with him all day long.”

“What’s troubling me,” said the master, “is that I’ve no way of finding out what religion he is.”

“I don’t see,” said the doctor, “that his religion matters in the least to us. He’s not going to die.”

“I know that. But I have to enter his religion in the book. It’s the rule that the religion of every inmate of the house or the hospital must be entered, and I’ll get into trouble after if I don’t do it.”

“Well,” said the doctor, “there’s no use asking me about it. I can’t talk to him any better than you can, and there isn’t any way of telling by the feel of a man’s leg whether he’s a Catholic or a Protestant.”

“That may be,” said the master, who disliked this sort of flippant materialism, “but if I was to enter him down as a Catholic, and it turned out after that he was a Protestant, there’d be a row I’d never hear the end of; and if I was to have him down as a Protestant, and him being a Catholic all the time, there’d be a worse row.”

Dr. Whitty was a good-natured man, and was always ready to help anyone who was in a difficulty. He felt for the master of the workhouse. He also had a natural taste for solving difficult problems, and the question of the sailor’s religion attracted him. 292

“Tell me this, now,” he said. “Had he any kind of a Prayer Book or a religious emblem of any sort on him when you were taking the clothes off him?”

“Not one. I looked myself, and the nurse went through his pockets after. Barring a lump of ship’s tobacco and an old knife, there wasn’t a thing on him.”

“That’s not much use to us,” said the doctor. “I never heard of a religion yet that forbid the use of tobacco or objected to people carrying penknifes. If you’d found a bottle of whiskey on him, now, it might have helped us. We’d have known then that he wasn’t a Mohammedan.”

“What’ll I do at all?”

“I’ll tell you what it is,” said the doctor. “I’ll go round the town and I’ll collect all the people in it that can speak any language besides English. I’ll bring them up here and let them try him one by one. It’ll be a queer thing if we can’t find somebody that will be able to make him understand a simple question.”

Dr. Whitty called first at the Imperial Hotel, and had an interview with Lizzie Glynn.

“Lizzie,” he said, “you’ve had a good education at one of the most expensive convents in Ireland. Isn’t that a fact?”

“It is,” she said. “And I took a prize one time for playing the piano.”

“It’s not piano-playing that I expect from you now,” said the doctor, “but languages. You speak French, of course?”

"I learned it," said Lizzie, "but I wouldn't say I could talk it very fast."

"Never mind how slow you go," said the doctor, "so long as you get it out in the end. Are you good at German?" 293

"I didn't learn German."

"Italian?"

"There was one of the sisters that knew Italian," said Lizzie, "but it wasn't taught regular."

"Russian? Spanish? Dutch?"

Lizzie shook her head.

"That's a pity. Never mind. I'll put you down for French, anyway. I'll take you up with me to the workhouse hospital at six o'clock this evening. I want you to speak French to a man that's there, one of the sailors out of the ship that was wrecked."

"I mightn't be fit," said Lizzie, doubtfully.

"Oh, yes, you will. Just look up the French for religion before you start, and get off the names of the principal kinds of religion in that language. All you have to do is to ask the man, 'What is your religion?' and then understand whatever it is he says to you by the way of an answer."

Dr. Whitty next called on Mr. Jackson and explained the situation to him. The rector, rather unwillingly, offered French, and seemed relieved when he was told that that language was already provided for.

"I thought," said the doctor, "that you'd be sure to know Greek."

"I do," said the Rector, "but not modern Greek."

"Is there much difference?"

"I don't know. I fancy there is."

"Well, look here, come up and try the poor fellow with ancient Greek. I expect he'll understand it if you talk slowly. All we want to get out of him is whether he's a Protestant or 294
a Catholic."

"If he's a Greek at all," said the rector, "he'll probably not be either the one or the other."

"He's got to be one or the other while he's here. He can choose whichever happens to be the nearest thing to his own religion, whatever that is. Does Mrs. Jackson know Italian or Spanish?"

"No. I rather think she learned German at school, but I expect——"

"Capital. I'll put her down for German."

"I'm sure she's forgotten it now."

"Never mind. She can brush it up. There's not much wanted and she has till six o'clock this evening. I shall count on you both. Good-bye."

"By the way, doctor," said Mr. Jackson on the doorstep, "now I come to think of it, I don't believe there's a word in ancient Greek for Protestant."

"There must be. It's one of the most important and useful words in any language. How could the ancient Greeks possibly have got on without it?"

"There *isn't*. I'm perfectly sure there isn't."

"That's awkward. But never mind, you'll be able to get round it with some kind of paraphrase. After all, we can't leave the poor fellow without the consolations of religion in some form. Good-bye."

"And—and—Catholic in ancient Greek will mean something quite different, not in the least what it means now."

The doctor was gone. Mr. Jackson went back to his study and spent two hours wrestling with the contents of a lexicon. He arrived at the workhouse in the evening with a number of 295
cryptic notes, the words lavishly accented, written down on small slips of paper.

Father Henaghan was the next person whom Dr. Whitty visited. At first he absolutely

declined to help.

“The only language I could make any shift at speaking,” he said “is Latin. And that would be no use to you. There isn’t one sailor out of every thousand, outside of the officers of the Royal Navy, that would know six words of Latin.”

“They tell me,” said the doctor, “that there’s no great difference between Latin and Spanish or Italian. Anyone that knows the one will make a pretty good push at understanding the others.”

“Whoever told you that told you a lie,” said the priest; “and, anyway, I’m not going near that man until I’m sure he’s a Catholic.”

“Don’t be hard-hearted, Father. Think of the poor fellow lying there and not being able to tell any of us what religion he belongs to.”

“I’ll tell you why I won’t go,” said the priest. “There was one time when I was a curate in Dublin, I used to be attending one of the hospitals. People would be brought in suffering from accidents and dying, and you wouldn’t know what they were, Catholic and Protestant. I got into the way of anointing them all while they were unconcious, feeling it could do them no harm, even if they were Protestants. Well, one day I anointed a poor fellow that they told me was dying. What did he do but recover. It turned out then that he was a Protestant, and, what’s more, an Orangeman, and when he heard what was done he gave me all sorts of abuse. He said his mother wouldn’t rest easy in her grave when she heard of it, and more talk of the same kind.”

“This is quite a different sort of case,” said the doctor. “This man’s not dying or the least likely to die.” 296

“I’ll not go near him,” said the priest.

“I’m sorry to hear you say that, Father. The Rev. Mr. Jackson is coming up, and he’s prepared to ask the man what religion he is in ancient Greek—ancient Greek, mind you, no less. It wouldn’t be a nice thing to have it said about the town that the Protestant minister could talk ancient Greek and that you weren’t fit to say a few words in Latin. Come, now, Father Henaghan, for the credit of the Church say you’ll do it.”

This last argument weighed greatly with the priest. Dr. Whitty saw his advantage and pressed the matter home.

“I’ll put you down,” he said, “for Spanish and Italian.”

“You may put me down if you like, but I tell you he won’t know a word I speak to him.”

“Try him,” said the doctor.

“I’ll not be making a public fool of myself to please you,” said the priest. “If I do it at all I’ll have no one with me in the room at the time, mind that now.”

“Not a soul. You shall have him all to yourself. To tell you the truth, I expect everybody will feel the same as you do about that. The Rev. Mr. Jackson didn’t seem very keen on showing off his ancient Greek.”

Colonel Beresford, when Dr. Whitty called on him, confessed to a slight, a very slight, acquaintance with the Russian language.

“I took it up,” he said, “a long time ago when I was stationed in Edinburgh. There was a Russian scare on at the time and everybody thought there was going to be a war. I happened to hear that there were a couple of Russian medical students in the University, and I thought if I picked up a little of the language I might fall in for a staff appointment. I’ve nearly forgotten it all now, and I didn’t make any special study of religious terms at the time, but I’ll do the best I can for you. You’ve got all the other languages you say.” 297

“I think so. I have”—the doctor took a list from his pocket—“French, Miss Lizzie Glynn. She was educated at a first-rate convent, and speaks French fluently. Greek (ancient and modern), the Rev. Mr. Jackson. German and allied tongues, Mrs. Jackson. Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, Father Henaghan. That, with your Russian, makes a tolerably complete list.”

“I’d no idea,” said the colonel, “that we were such a polyglot in Ballintra. By the way, you haven’t got Norwegian.”

“No,” said the doctor, “I haven’t and when you come to think of it, a sailor is more likely to

be that, or a Swede, than any thing else. Can you speak it?”

“Not a word.”

“Do you happen to have a dictionary, Norwegian or Swedish, in the house?”

“No.”

“That’s a pity. I’d have tried to work it up a little myself if you had.”

“All I have,” said the Colonel, “is a volume of Ibsen’s plays.”

“Give me that,” said the Doctor, “and I’ll do my best.”

“It’s only a translation.”

“Never mind. I’ll pick up something out of it that may be useful. I have two hours before me. Do you mind lending it to me?” 298

Dr. Whitty went home with a copy of a translation of “Rosmersholm,” “Ghosts,” and “An Enemy of Society.”

At six o’clock the whole party of linguists assembled in the private sitting-room of the master of the workhouse. Dr. Whitty gave them a short address of an encouraging kind, pointing out that, in performing an act of charity they were making the best possible use of the education they had received. He then politely asked Mrs. Jackson if she would like to visit the foreigner first. She did not seem anxious to push herself forward. Her German, she confessed, was weak; and she hoped that if she was reserved until the last he might possibly recognise one of the other languages before her turn came. Everybody else, it turned out, felt very much as Mrs. Jackson did. In the end Dr. Whitty decided the order of precedence by drawing lots. The colonel, accepting loyally the decision of destiny, went first and returned with the news that the sailor showed no signs of being able to understand Russian. Lizzie Glynn went next, and was no more fortunate with her French.

“I’m not sure,” she said, “did I speak it right. But, right or wrong, he didn’t know a word I said to him.”

Mr. Jackson arranged his notes carefully and was conducted by the doctor to the ward. He, too, returned without having made himself intelligible.

“I knew I should be no use,” he said. “I expect modern Greek is quite different from the language I know.”

Father Henaghan’s Latin was a complete failure. He seemed irritated and reported very unfavourably of the intelligence of the patient. 299

“It’s my belief,” he said, “that the man’s mind’s gone. He must have got a crack on the head somehow, as well as breaking his leg, and had the sense knocked out of him. He looks to me like a man who’d understand well enough when you talked to him if he had his right mind.”

This view of the sailor’s condition made Mrs. Jackson nervous. She said she had no experience of lunatics, and disliked being brought into contact with them. She wanted to back out of her promise to ask the necessary question in German. In the end she consented to go, but only if her husband was allowed to accompany her. She was back again in five minutes, and said definitely that the man knew no German whatever.

“Now,” said the colonel, “it’s your turn, doctor. Go at him with your Norwegian.”

“The fact is,” said the doctor, “that, owing to the three plays you lent me being merely translations, I’ve only been able to get a hold of one Norwegian word. However, as it happens, it is an extremely useful word in this particular case. The Norwegian for a clergyman,” he said, triumphantly, “is ‘Pastor.’ What’s more, I’ve got a hold of the name of one of their clergy. If this man is a Norwegian, and has been in the habit of going to the theatre, I expect he’ll know all about Pastor Manders.”

“It’s clever of you to have fished that out of the book I lent you,” said the colonel. “But I don’t quite see how it will help you to find out whether our friend with the broken leg is a Protestant or a Roman Catholic.”

“It will help if it’s worked properly, if it’s worked the way I mean to work it, that is to say, if the man is a Norwegian, and I don’t see what else he can be.” 300

“He might be a Turk,” said Father Henaghan.

“No he couldn’t. I tried him with half a glass of whiskey this morn, and he simply lapped it up. If he had been a Turk the smell of it would have turned him sick. We may fairly assume that he is, as I say, a Norwegian, and if he is I’ll get at him. I shall want you, Father Henaghan, and you, Mr. Jackson, to come with me.”

“I’ve been twice already,” said Mr. Jackson. “Do you really think it necessary for me——”

“I shan’t ask you to speak another word of ancient Greek,” said the doctor. “You needn’t do anything except stand where I put you and look pleasant.”

He took the priest and the rector, seizing each by the arm, and swept them with him along the corridor to the ward in which the injured sailor lay. He set them one on each side of the bed, and stood at the foot of it himself. The sailor stared first at the priest and next at the rector. Then he looked the doctor straight in the face and his left eyelid twitched slightly. Dr. Whitty felt almost certain that he winked; but there was clearly no reason why he should wink with any malicious intent, so he put the motion down to some nervous affection.

“Pastor,” said the doctor, in a loud, clear tone, pointing to Father Henaghan.

The sailor looked vacantly at the priest.

“Pastor,” said the doctor again, indicating Mr. Jackson, with his finger.

The sailor turned his face and looked at Mr. Jackson, but there was no sign of intelligence on his face.

“Take your choice,” said the doctor; “you can have either one or the other. We don’t want 301
to influence you in the slightest, but you’ve got to profess a religion of some sort while you’re here, and these clergymen represent the only two kinds we have. One or other of them you must choose, otherwise the unfortunate master of this workhouse will get into trouble for not registering you. Hang it all! I don’t believe the fool knows a single word I’m saying to him.”

Again, the man’s eyelid, this time his right, eyelid, twitched.

“Don’t do that,” said the doctor; “it distracts your attention from what I’m saying. Listen to me now. Pastor Manders!” He pointed to the priest. “Pastor Manders!” He indicated the rector.

Neither Father Henaghan nor Mr. Jackson had ever read “Ghosts,” which was fortunate. If they had they might have resented the name which the doctor imposed on them. Apparently, the sailor did not know the play either. “Manders” seemed to mean no more to him than “Pastor” did.

“There’s no use our standing here all evening,” said Father Henaghan. “You told me to look pleasant, and I have—I haven’t looked so pleasant for a long time—but I don’t see that any good is likely to come of it.”

“Come on,” said the doctor. “I’ve done my best, and I can do no more. I’m inclined to think now that the man must be either a Laplander or an Esquimaux. He’d have understood me if he’d been a Dane, a Swede, a Norwegian, or even a Finn.”

“I told you, as soon as ever I set eyes on him,” said the priest, “that he was out of his mind. My own belief is, doctor, that if you give him some sort of a soothing draught, and get him 302
back into his right senses, he’ll turn out to be an Irishman. It’s what he looks like.”

Michael Geraghty, who had carted the injured sailor from the shipwreck, called on Dr. Whitty next day at breakfast-time.

“I hear,” he said, “that you had half the town up yesterday trying could they get a word out of that fellow that’s in the hospital with the broken leg.”

“I had. We spoke to him in every language in Europe, and I’m bothered if I know what country he belongs to at all. There wasn’t one of us he’d answer.”

“Did you think of trying him with the Irish?”

“I did not. Where would be the good? If he could speak Irish he’d be sure to be able to speak English.”

“Would you have any objection to my saying a few words to him, doctor?”

“Not the least in the world. If you’ve nothing particular to do, go up there and tell the master I sent you.”

An hour later Michael Geraghty re-appeared at the doctor's door. He was grinning broadly and seemed pleased with himself.

"Well, Michael, did you make him speak?"

"I didn't like to say a word to you, doctor, till I made sure for fear of what I might be bringing some kind of trouble on the wrong man; but as soon as ever I seen that fellow put into my cart beyond at Carrigwee, I said to myself: 'You're mighty like poor Affy Hynes that's gone, only a bit older. I took another look at him as we were coming along the road, and, says I, 'If Affy Hynes is alive this minute you're him. You'll recollect, doctor, that the 303
poor fellow couldn't speak at the time, by reason of the cold that was on him and the broken leg and all the hardships he'd been through. Well, looking at him off and on, till I got to the workhouse I came to be pretty near certain that it was either Affy Hynes or a twin brother of his; and Mrs. Hynes, the mother, that's dead this ten years, never had but the one son."

"And who was Affy Hynes?"

"It was before your time, of course, and before Father Henaghan was parish priest; but the colonel would know who I mean." Michael sank his voice to an impressive whisper. "Affy Hynes was the boy that the police was out after in the bad times, wanting to have him hanged on account of the way that the bailiff was shot. But he made off, and none of us ever knew where he went to, though they did say that it might be to an uncle of his that was in America."

"Did he murder the bailiff?"

"He did not; nor I don't believe he knew who did, though he might."

"Then what did he run away for?"

"For fear they'd hang him," said Michael Geraghty. "Amn't I just after telling you?"

"Go on," said the doctor.

"Well, when Affy came to himself after all the hardship he had it wasn't long before he found out the place he was in. 'It's Ballintra,' says he to himself, 'or it's mighty like it.' There did be a great dread on him then that the police would be out after him again, and have him took; and, says he, into himself like, so as no one would hear him, 'I'll let on I can't understand a word they say to me, so as they won't know my voice, anyway.' And so he did; 304
but he went very near laughing one time when you had the priest and the minister, one on each side of him, and 'Pastor,' says you——"

"Never mind that part," said the doctor.

"If it's displeasing to you to hear about it, I'll not say another word. Only, I'd be thankful if you'd tell me why you called the both of them Manders. It's what Affy was saying to me this minute: 'Michael,' says he, 'is Manders the name that's on the priest that's in the parish presently?' 'It is not,' says I, 'but Henaghan.' 'That's queer,' said he. 'Is it Manders they call the minister?' 'It is not,' I says; 'it's Jackson. There never was one in the place of the name of Manders, priest or minister.' 'That's queer,' says he 'for the doctor called both the two of them Manders.'"

"So he understood every word we said to him all the time?" said the doctor.

"Not the whole of it, nor near the whole," said Michael Geraghty. "He's been about the world a deal, being a sailor and he said he could make out what Miss Glynn was saying pretty well, and knew the minister's lady was talking Dutch, though he couldn't tell what she was saying, for it wasn't just the same Dutch as he'd been accustomed to hearing. The colonel made a middling good offer at the Russian. Affy was a year one time in them parts, and he knows; but he said he'd be damned if he could make any kind of a guess at what either the priest or the minister was at, and he told me to be sure and ask you what they were talking because he'd like to know."

"I'll go up and see him myself," said the doctor. 305

"If you speak the Irish to him he'll answer you," said Michael.

"I will, if he likes," said the doctor. "But why won't he speak English?"

"There's a sort of dread on him," said Michael Geraghty. "I think he'd be more willing to trust you if you'd speak to him in the Irish, it being all one to you. He bid me say to you, and it's a good job I didn't forget it, that if so be he's dying, you might tell Father Henaghan he's a Catholic, the way he'd attend on him; but if he's to live, he'd as soon no one but yourself

and me knew he was in the place."

Dr. Whitty went up to the workhouse, turned the nurse out of the ward, and sat down beside Affy Hynes.

"Tell me this now," he said, "why didn't you let me know who you were? I wouldn't have told on you."

"I was sorry after that I didn't," said Affy, "when I seen all the trouble that I put you to. It was too much altogether fetching the ladies and gentlemen up here to be speaking to the like of me. It's what never happened to me before, and I'm sorry you were bothered."

"Why didn't you tell me then?"

"Sure, I did my best. Did you not see me winking at you once, when you had the priest and the minister in with me, as much as to say: 'Doctor, if I thought I could trust you I'd tell you the truth this minute.' I made full sure you'd understand what it was I was meaning the second time, even if you didn't at the first go-off."

"That's not what I gathered from your wink at all," said the doctor. "I thought you'd got some kind of a nervous affection of the eye." 306

"It's a queer thing, now," said Affy, "that the two of them reverend gentlemen should have the same name, and that Manders."

"We'll drop that subject," said the Doctor.

"We will, of course, if it's pleasing to you. But it is queer all the same, and I'd be glad if I knew the reason of it, for it must be mighty confusing for the people of this place, both Catholic and Protestant. Tell me now, doctor, is there any fear that I might be took by the police?"

"Not a bit. That affair of yours, whatever it was, is blown over long ago."

"Are you certain of that?"

"I am."

"Then as soon as I'm fit I'll take a bit of a stroll out and look at the old place. I'd like to see it again. Many's the time I've said to myself, me being, may be, in some far-away country at the time, 'I'd like to see Ballintra again, and the house where my mother lived, and the bohireen that the asses does be going along into the bog when the turf's brought home.' Is it there yet?"

"I expect it is," said the doctor.

"God is good," said Affy. "It's little ever I expected to set eyes on it."

307

A Test of Truth.

From "Irish Neighbours."

By Jane Barlow.

Jim Hanlon, the cobbler, was said by his neighbours to have had his own share of trouble, and they often added, "And himself a very dacint man, goodness may pity him!" His misfortunes began when poor Mary Anne, his wife, died, leaving him forlorn with one rather sickly little girl, and they seemed to culminate when one frosty morning a few years later he broke his leg with a fall on his way to visit Minnie in hospital. The neighbours, who were so much impressed by her father's good qualities and bad luck, did not hold an equally favourable opinion about this Minnie, inclining to consider her a "cross-tempered, spoilt little shrimp of a thing." But Jim himself thought that the width of the world contained nothing like her, which was more or less true. So when she fell ill of a low fever, and the doctor said that the skilled nursing in a Dublin hospital would be by far her best chance, it was only after a sore struggle that Jim could make up his mind to let her go. And then his visit to her at the first moment possible had brought about the unwary walking and slip on a

slide, which resulted so disastrously.

It was indeed a most deplorable accident. If it had happened somewhere near Minnie's hospital, he said to himself, it might have been less unlucky, but, alas, the whole city spread between them and the institution whither he was brought. The sense of his helplessness 308
almost drove him frantic, as he lay in the long ward fretting over the thought that he was tied by the leg, unable to come next or nigh her, whatever might befall, or even to get a word of news about her. But on this latter point his forebodings were not fulfilled, his neighbours proved themselves to be friends in need. At the tidings of his mishap they made their way in to see him from unhandy little Ballyhoy, undeterred by what was often to them no very trivial expense and inconvenience. Nor were they slow to discover that they could do him no greater service than find out for him "what way herself was at all over at the other place." Everybody helped him readily in this matter, more especially three or four good-natured Ballyhoy matrons. On days when they came into town to do their bits of marketing they would augment their toils by long trudges on foot, or costly drives on tramcars, that they might convey to Jim Hanlon the report for which he pined. They considered neither their heavy baskets, nor the circumstance that they were folk to whom time was time, and a penny a penny indeed.

Yet, sad to say, great as was Jim's relief and his gratitude, their very zeal did in some degree diminish the value of their kindness. For their evident desire to please and pacify him awakened in his mind doubts about the means which they might adopt; and it must be admitted that his mistrust was not altogether ungrounded. The tales which they carried to him from "the other place" were not seldom intrinsically improbable, and sounded all the more so to him because of his intimate acquaintance with their subject. When Mrs. Jack Doyle averred that Minnie was devouring all before her, and that the nurse said a strong man would scarce eat as much as she did, Jim remembered Minnie's tomtit-like meals at 309
home, and found the statement hard to accept. It was still worse when they gave him effusively affectionate messages, purporting to come from Minnie, who had always been anything in the world but demonstrative and sentimental. His heart sank as Mrs. Doran assured him that Minnie had sent her love to her own darling treasure of a precious old daddy, for he knew full well that no such greeting had ever emanated from Minnie, and how could he tell, Jim reflected, but that they might be as apt to deceive him about one thing as another? Perhaps there was little or no truth in what they told him about the child being so much better, and able to sit up, and so forth. Like enough one couldn't believe a word they said. On this terribly baffling question he pondered continually with a troubled mind.

Saturday mornings were always the most likely to bring him visitors, and on a certain Saturday he rejoiced to hear that somebody was asking for him. He was all the more pleased because the lateness of the hour had made him despair of seeing any friends, and because this portly, good-humoured Mrs. Connolly was just the person he had been wishing to come. She explained that she would have paid him a visit sooner, had not all her children been laid up with colds, and then, as he had hoped, she went on to say that she was going over to see after little Minnie. "And the Sister here's promised me," said Mrs. Connolly, "she'll let me in to bring you word on me way back, even if I'm a trifle beyond the right visitin' time itself."

Thereupon Jim produced a sixpence from under his pillow, where he had kept it ready all the long morning. "If it wouldn't be throublin' you too much, ma'am," he said, "I was 310
wonderin' is there e'er a place you would be passin' by where you could get some sort of a little doll wid this for Minnie."

"Is it a doll?" said Mrs. Connolly. "Why to be sure I will, and welcome. I know a shop in O'Connell Street where they've grand sixpenny dolls, dressed real delightful. I'll get her a one of them as aisy as anythin'." Mrs. Connolly knew that the price of the dolls she had in her eye was actually sixpence-halfpenny, but she at once resolved to pay the halfpenny herself and not let on.

"And you might maybe be gettin' her an orange wid this," Jim said, handing her a penny.

"Well, now, it's the lucky child poor Minnie is," Mrs. Connolly declared, "to have such a good daddy. Finely set up she will be wid a doll and an orange. I'll bring her the best in Dublin, Jim, no fear."

"She might fancy the orange, anyway," Jim said, half to himself, with a queer remorseful sort of look.

Mrs. Connolly having gone, he began to expect her back again with an unreasonable promptitude which lengthened the afternoon prodigiously. He had suffered innumerable

apprehensions, and fidgetted himself into a fever of anxiety before she could possibly have returned. At last, however, when her broad, cheerful countenance did reappear to him, looming through the misty March dusk, he felt that he would almost have chosen a further delay. For he had staked so much upon this venture that the crisis of learning, whether it had failed or succeeded could not but be rather terrible.

There was nothing apparently alarming in Mrs. Connolly's report. She had found Minnie 311
doing finely. Her nurse said she would be out of bed next week, and was very apt to get her health better than before she took bad. The orange had pleased her highly, and she had bid Mrs. Connolly tell her daddy that he might be sending her another one next Saturday if he liked. All this was good as far as it went, but about the doll, Mrs. Connolly kept silence, and it struck Jim that she shrank away from anything which seemed leading towards a reference to the subject. Jim, who at first had half dreaded and half longed every moment to hear her speak of it, began to think that she might go away without mentioning it, which would not do at all. In the end he had to introduce it himself.

"And how about the bit of a doll, ma'am?" he inquired as unconcernedly as he could. "Was you able to get her e'er a one?"

Unmistakably Mrs. Connolly was much disconcerted by the question. Her face fell, and she hesitated for a while before she replied, with evident reluctance—

"Sure, now, man alive, you never can tell what quare notions childer'll take up wid when they're sick, and more especially when they do be about gettin' well agin, the way Minnie is now. Quiet enough the crathurs do be as long as they're rale bad. But, tellin' you the truth, Jim, not a bit of her would look at the doll. Some fantigue she had agin it, whatever ailed her, an' it a great beauty, wid a pink sash on it and all manner. Slingin' it into the middle of the floor she was, only the nurse caught a hould of it, an' biddin' me to take it away out of that. So says I to her, 'What at all should I do wid the lovely doll, after your poor daddy sendin' it to yourself?' And, says she to me, 'Give the ugly big lump of a thing to the ould 312
divil,' says she, 'an' let him give it to the little young black-leggy divils to play wid if they like.' I declare to you, Jim, thim was the very words of her, sittin' up in her bed, not lookin' the size of anythin'. 'Deed, now, she's the comical child. But sure who'd be mindin' her? And the nurse says she'll keep the doll till to-morrow, an' if Minnie doesn't fancy it then, she'll give it to the little girl in the next cot that does be frettin' after her mother, so it won't go to loss. An' besides—"

She stopped short in surprise, for Jim, who had been laughing silently to himself, now broke out in tones of positive rapture—

"'The little young black-leggy divils'—that's Minnie herself, and no mistake this time, glory be to God! Sorra the fantigue it was, but just the nathur of her, for the thoughts of a doll she never could abide all the days of her life. She'd as lief be playin' wid a snake or a toad. So if you'd let on to me that she liked it, ma'am, well I'd know 'twas only romancin' to me you were. But the truth you tould me, right enough, and thank you kindly. The little villin'll be runnin' about before I am, plaze goodness. Och, bedad, I can see her slingin' it neck an' crop out of the bed."

As Jim fell to laughing again, Mrs. Connolly looked at him puzzled, and with some disapproval, though she would not express the latter sentiment to him in his invalided condition. But she soon afterwards took leave, and on her homeward way she said to herself, "Musha, good gracious, mightn't one suppose Jim Hanlon 'ud have more since than to go sind the poor imp of a child a prisint only for the sake of annoyin' her? 'Twas the quare, foolish way to be spendin' a sixpence, in my opinion. But sure, 'twas be way of a joke, an' the 313
poor man hasn't much chance of e'er a one lyin' there. It's wonderful the store men set by nonsense. Sometimes you'd think they were all born fools, they do be that aisy amused. You'll hear thim guffawin' like a jackass bewitched over silly ould blathers that an infant child 'ud have more wit than to be mindin'."

Certainly, Jim was so well satisfied with his joke, if joke it were, that when he grew drowsy towards evening, his last thoughts made him chuckle contentedly. "The little black-leggy divils," he said to himself. "Glory be to God! she's finely." And he fell asleep with a glad and grateful heart.

314

The Wise Woman.

From "A Boy in the Country."

By John Stevenson.

That she knew far more than all the doctors put together was commonly considered, in the territory of her operations, as truth beyond question. Sometimes a man body, with a pain for which he could not account, fearing the inquisition and expense of the qualified practitioner, would make believe to doubt the potency of her medicines, the reality of her cures. But even the discernment of a boy was sufficient to detect the insincerity of his contemptuous talk about "auld wife's doctorin'," and to find lurking behind his brave words the strong desire to consult the wise woman. With much show of impatience, and pretence of anger, at the over-persuasion of his womankind, he would give a seemingly reluctant consent to see Mrs. Moloney, "if she should happen to look in." He knew as well as that he lived that her coming would be by invitation.

Such a one, receiving in the field the message that "Mrs. Moloney's in," would probably say, "Hoots, nonsense," and add that he had his work to look after. But, very soon, he would find that he needed a spade or a hook, a pot of paint, or a bit of rope, from home, and he must needs go home for it himself. He believed in a man's doing a thing for himself if he wanted it well done; as like as not a messenger would spend half a day in looking for what he wanted, and bring the wrong thing in the end. At home he would make a fine show of searching out-houses and lofts, passing and repassing, with some noise, the kitchen 315
windows, finally looking in to see if the thing is in the kitchen; and there, of course, quite accidentally, he would see Mrs. Moloney and would not be rude enough to leave without passing the time o' day. Then the womankind took hold of the case, drew out the man's story of distress, took notes of the remedy, and saw to it that the medicine was taken according to direction.

"The innards o' man is tough, and need to be dealt with accordin'," said Mrs. Moloney, and for man she prescribed a dose which gave him some pain and, usually, cured him. It may be that Nature, provoked by the irritant remedy, got rid of it, and the ailment at once; or it may be that the man body, after the racket in "his innards," found his ailment, by comparison, easy to live with, and imagined himself cured. In either case, the result was counted as cure to the credit of Mrs. Moloney.

By profession a seller of needles, pins, buttons, and such small wares, she owed her livelihood, in reality, to payment for her medical skill. Not that she took money for her prescription or advice—"Thanks be to God," she said, "I never took wan penny for curin' man, woman, or child"; but then, no one ever asked her advice without buying something, and if her charges were just a little more than shop prices, she was entitled to something extra for bringing the shop to the customer. Then she got her meals from grateful and believing patients, and her basket had an uncommercial end, covered with a fair, white cloth, into which the good wife, with some show of doing good by stealth, introduced the useful wreck of a boiled fowl, or a ham-bone with broth possibilities.

She did not meddle with diseases of children, except in cases of measles, for which she 316
prescribed whisky and sulphur, and a diet of sweet milk warm from the cow. Decline, she considered to be due to "a sappin' o' the constitution," and she shared the old-time belief in the noxious effect of night air on consumptives, and would have them warm in curtained four-posters, in rooms into which little light and no fresh air could enter. Beyond a recommendation of port wine, she had no message for healing for these poor sufferers. Her strength lay in the treatment of adults' ailments which do not necessarily kill. Her list of diseases was a short one. For the numerous forms of hepatic trouble known to the professional, she had one comprehensive title—

Liver Complent,

and for it one remedy, varied only in magnitude of dose. She recognised also as a common ailment—

Stomach Complent,

differentiating under this heading, Andygestion, Waterbrash, and Shuperfluity o' phlegm on the stomach. She knew, too—

Bowel Complent,
Rheumatism,

Gineral Wakeness,
and
Harry Siplars.[1]

The foundation of her great reputation was, indeed, largely built on her celebrated cure of this last, in the case of Peggy Mulligan. She shall tell of it herself:—

“She come to me, an’ she ses, ‘Mary,’ ses she, ‘can ye cure me, for I’m heart-sick o’ them doctors at the dispinsary, an’ they’re not doin’ me wan pick o’ good.’ Ses I to her, ses I, 317
‘What did they give ye?’ ses I. ‘O the dear knows,’ ses she. ‘I haven’t tuk anythin’ they said, for I didn’t believe they would do me no good.’ An’ I had pity on the cratur, for her face was the size o’ a muckle pot, an’ lek nothin’ under the sun. Ses I to her, ses I, ‘I can cure you, my good woman, but ye’ll hev to do what you’re tould,’ ses I, ‘an’ I’ll make no saycret about it,’ ses I—‘it’s cow-dung and flour mixed, an’ ye’ll put it on your face, an’ lave it there for a fortnight,’ ses I, ‘an’ when ye’ll wash it off, ye’ll have no Harry Siplars.’ An’ nether she had.”

She had a fine professional manner, and she knew how to set at ease the anxious patient. The concerned man body, wishful to appear unconcerned, she took at his own valuation; appearing more interested in a bit of chat or gossip of the country than in particulars of pains and aches. And while she talked with him of crops and kine, and the good and ill-doings of men’s sons, the wife would urge John to tell Mrs. Moloney about that bit of pain of his and how he could not sleep for it o’ nights. Then the wise woman would mention something which the good wife “might” get for the good man—it would cure him in no time, but—turning to the man,—“‘deed, an’ there’s not much the matter with ye. It’s yerself that’s gettin’ younger lookin’ every year—shows the good care the mistress takes o’ ye.” And the gratified creature would retire, proud to think that he had acted so well the part of the unconcerned, and filled with respect for Mrs. Moloney as a woman of “great sinse and onderstandin’.”

Of new-fangled diseases she had a perfect horror, speaking of them more in anger than in sorrow, as of things which never should have been introduced. Even the New Ralgy she 318
declined to entertain, dismissing the mention of it, contemptuously, in the formula, “New Ralgy or Ould Ralgy, I’ll have nothing to do with it.” To it, however, as Tic Doloro,[2] she gave a qualified recognition, allowing its right to existence, but condemning it as outlandish, and a gentry’s ailment, which the gentry should keep to themselves. And while she did not refuse to treat it (with “Lodelum” in “sperrits,” hot milk, and a black stocking tied round the jaws), the patient was made to feel a certain degree of culpability in touching a thing with which she should not have meddled, and that Mrs. Moloney had reason for feeling displeased.

Very different was her attitude to one suffering from Gineral Wakeness. This was her pet diagnosis, and one much craved by overworked and ailing farmers’ wives, for it meant for them justification of rest, and indulgence in food and drink which they would have been afraid or ashamed to ask or take, unfortified by an authoritative command. No man ever suffered from Gineral Wakeness—it was a woman’s trouble, and never failed to draw from Mrs. Moloney a flood of understanding sympathy, which was to the despairing one like cool water on the hot and thirsty ground, making hope and health revive ere yet medicament had been prescribed. Seated before the patient, she would sway slowly back and forward, gently patting the while the afflicted’s hand, and listening, with rapt attention, to the longest and dreariest tale of woe.

The Patient.—O, but it’s the weary woman I am, waitin’ and hopin’ that you would come roun’. ‘Deed, and if it hadn’t been for the hope o’ seein’ ye I would have give up altogether. 319

Mrs. M.—Puir dear; tell me all aboot it.

The Patient.—It’s a cough and a wakeness and a drappin’-down feelin’, as if my legs were goin’ from under me; and I could no more lift that girdle o’ bread there than I could fly—not if ye were to pay me a thousand pound.

Mrs. M.—I know, dear; if it were writ out I cudn’t see it plainer.

The Patient.—And when I get up in the mornin’, I declare to ye, I have to sit on the edge o’ the bed for five minutes before puttin’ fut to groun’, and if I didn’t take a sup of cold water I couldn’t put on my clothes.

Mrs. M.—That’s it, dear; that’s just the way it goes.

The Patient.—And as for breakfast, I declare to ye, ye couldn’t see what I ate.

Mrs. M.—That’s a sure sign, a sure sign.

The Patient.—And all through the day it’s just the same thing. I’m just in a state of collops the whole time. Niver a moment’s aise the day through, especially in the afternoon. It’s just hingin’ on I am; that’s what it raly is.

After an hour of alternating symptomatic description and sympathetic response, interrupted only by the making and drinking of tea, the wise woman is prepared to utter, and the patient to hear, the words of healing.

“Now, dearie, listen to me, that’s a good woman. It’s Gineral Wakeness that ails ye. I knew it the minute I set fut inside the dure. Ses I to myself, ses I, ‘There’s Gineral Wakeness writ on the mistress’s face; it’s prented on her face like a book,’ ses I, ‘before ever she says a word to me.’ Now listen, dearie, and do what I tell ye. Ye’ll get a bottle o’ sherry wine, and 320
ye’ll take a bate-up egg in milk every day, with a sup o’ sherry in it, at eleven o’clock. And ye’ll fill that pot there with dandelion leaves and roots, and a handful o’ mint on the top o’ it, and ye’ll put as much water on it as’ll cover it, and ye’ll let it sit at the side o’ the fire all day until all the vartue is out o’ it. And ye’ll take a tablespoonful o’ it three times a day, immajintly before your meals. And every day, whin it comes to three o’clock, ye’ll go to your bed and lie down for an hour, and when ye get up ye’ll take a cup o’ tay. Do that now, an’ ye’ll not know yerself whin I come back.”

As Mrs. Moloney’s list of legitimate and proper country diseases was a short one, so was her pharmacopœia a small book. Besides such common remedies as Epsom salts, senna, ginger, and powdered rhubarb, it took account of—

Lodelum	which is	Laudanum,
Hickery pickery	”	Hiera picra,
Gum Go Whackem	”	Gum guaiacum,
Assy Fettidy	”	Asafoetida,

as chemist’s stuff fit for her practice, and of various herbs (pronounced yarbs), alterative or curative, such as dandelion, camomile, peppermint, and apple-balm. As she said herself, she made no “saycret” of many of her remedies, but she was wise enough to carry and dispense certain agents; for, to the benefit of the wise woman, these free gifts constituted a claim for the liberal purchase of small wares, and the use of one of these gave a certain cachet to an ailment which, with a prescription of hot milk and pepper, or of ginger tea, would have been sufficiently commonplace. These secret remedies were kept in little bottles, each of which 321
had its own sewed compartment in a large linen pocket hanging at the mistress’s waist, between the gown and the uppermost petticoat. A certain solemnity attached to their production—three, four, or five being invariably drawn and set out on the table, even when, as in most cases, the contents of one only was needed. Mrs. Moloney would contemplate the range, attentively and silently, for a few minutes; lifting one after another, wrinkling her brows the while, and, finally, selecting and uncorking one, while she requested “a clane bottle and a good cork.” The selected drug was generally a crystal; the bottle, by request, was half-filled with hot water, in which, through vigorous shaking, the crystal rapidly disappeared. Handing the bottle to the patient, the instruction would be given to take a tablespoonful immediately after eating. Silly young folks, who had no need of the good woman’s services, were known to say that Mrs. Moloney knew perfectly well what she was going to use, that the consideration was simulated, and that the oft-used crystal was common washing-soda and nothing else. But these flighty children took care not to say such things in the hearing of their mothers, who had been treated for Gineral Wakeness.

Doubtless the prescriptions of Mrs. Moloney lacked precision on the quantitative side. A cure of rheumatism was threepence-worth of “Hickery Pickery in a naggin o’ the best sperrits.” To be well shaken and taken by the teaspoonful, alternative mornings, on a fasting stomach. “Sixpence worth o’ Gum Go Wackem,” also made up in the “best sperrits,” was a remedy supposed to acquire special potency from a prodigious amount of shaking. “Show 322
me how ye’ll shake it,” the medicine-woman would say, and when the patient made a great show of half-a-minute’s shaking, she—it was oftenest she—would be surprised to hear that *that* was no shaking, and an exhibition of what was good and sufficient shaking would be made by Mrs. Moloney. In the case of her sovran remedy for sore eyes, to be used very sparingly—a pennorth o’ Red Perspitherate,[3] in a tablespoonful of fresh butter—the quantity for an application was always indicated in special and dramatic fashion. She asked, “And how much will ye be puttin’ in your eye, now?—jist show me.” The patient, desiring to avoid a mean or niggardly use of the remedy, would probably indicate on the finger a lump as large as an eye of liberal measurements could be supposed to accommodate. Then the good

woman would lean back and sigh. A pin would be withdrawn from some part of her clothing, and held between the thumb and finger so that only the head appeared.

“Do ye see that pin-head?”

The afflicted nods in acquiescence.

“Do ye see that pin-head? Now take a good look at it.”

Again the sore-eyed indicates accurate observation.

“Well, not a pick more nor that, if ye want to keep your eyesight.”

Other quantitative directions were given in “fulls”—“the full o’ yer fist,” “the full o’ an egg-cup,” even “the full o’ yer mooth.” Or, by sizes of objects, as, “the size o’ a pay,” “the size o’ a marble.” Or by coin areas, “what’ll lie on a sixpence,” or on a shilling, or on a penny. Or by money values, as in the Hickery Pickery prescription. Fists, peas, marbles vary considerably 323
in size, and in the case of money-values a change of chemist might mean a considerable variation in quantity; but, with the possible exception of “Lodelum,” prescribed in drops, the quantities of the good woman’s remedies bore variation to a considerable extent without serious difference in result. That “the best sperrits” were so frequently the medium for “exhibition” of her remedies may account for the great popularity with adults which these remedies enjoyed. These were the days when hospitality was not hospitality without “sperrits” free from medicinal addition, and, late in the afternoon, Mrs. Moloney was accustomed to accept graciously “the full o’ an egg-cup,” qualified by the addition of sugar and hot water. Once, while sipping her punch, she asked that a little should be given to me as a treat, and when the pungent spirit, in the unaccustomed throat, produced a cough, she promptly diagnosed “a wake chist.”

---

1 Erysipelas.

2 Tic douloureux.

3 Red Precipitate—red oxide of mercury.

324

The Meet of the Beagles.

From “Patsy.”

By H. de Vere Stacpoole.

Directly Patsy had left the news that the “quality” were coming to the meet and returned to the house the crowd in front of the Castle Knock Inn thickened.

Word of the impending event went from cabin to cabin, and Mr. Mahony, the chimney sweep, put his head out of his door.

“What’s the news, Rafferty?” cried Mr. Mahony.

“Mimber of Parlymint and all the quality comin’ to the meet!” cried a ragged-looking ruffian who was running by.

“Sure, it’ll be a big day for Shan Finucane,” said Mrs. Mahony, who was standing behind her husband in the doorway with a baby in her arms.

Mr. Mahony said nothing for a while, but watched the crowd in front of the inn.

“Look at him,” said Mr. Mahony, breaking out at last—“look at him in his ould green coat! Look at him with the ould whip undher his arm, and the boots on his feet not paid for, and him struttin’ about as if he was the Marqus of Waterford! Holy Mary! did yiz ever see such an objick! Mr. Mullins!”

“Halloo!” replied Mr. Mullins, the cobbler across the way, who, with his window open owing to the mildness of the weather, was whaling away at a shoe-sole, the only busy man in the village.

“Did y’ hear the news?”

“What news?”

“Shan’s going to get a new coat.” 325

“Faith, thin, I hope he’ll pay first for his ould shoes.”

“How much does he owe you?”

“Siven and six—bad cess to him!”

“He’ll pay you to-night, if he doesn’t drink the money first, for there’s a Mimber of Parlymint goin’ to the meet, and he’ll most like put a suverin in the poor box.”

Mr. Mullins made no reply, but went on whaling away at his shoe, and Bob Mahony, having stepped into his cottage for a light for his pipe, came back and took up his post again at the door.

The crowd round the inn was growing bigger and bigger. Sneer as he might, Mr. Mahony could not but perceive that Shan was having the centre of the stage, a worshipping audience, and free drinks.

Suddenly he turned to his offspring, who were crowding behind him, and singling out Billy, the eldest:

“Put the dunkey to,” said Mr. Mahony.

“Sure, daddy,” cried the boy in astonishment, “it’s only the tarriers.”

“Put the dunkey to!” thundered his father, “or it’s the end of me belt I’ll be brightenin’ your intellects with.”

“There’s two big bags of sut in the cart and the brushes,” said Billy, as he made off to do as he was bidden.

“Lave them in,” said Mr. Mahony; “it’s only the tarriers.”

In a few minutes the donkey, whose harness was primitive and composed mainly of rope, was put to, and the vehicle was at the door.

“Bob!” cried his wife as he took his seat.

“What is it?” asked Mr Mahony, taking the reins.

“Won’t you be afther givin’ your face the lick of a tow’l?” 326

“It’s only the tarriers,” replied Mr. Mahony; “sure, I’m clane enough for them. Come up wid you, Norah.”

Norah, the small donkey, whose ears had been cocking this way and that, picked up her feet, and the vehicle, which was not much bigger than a costermonger’s barrow, started.

At this moment, also, Shan and the dogs and the crowd were getting into motion, making down the road for Glen Druid gates.

“Hulloo! hulloo! hulloo!” cried Mr. Mahony, as he rattled up behind in the cart, “where are yiz off to?”

“The meet of the baygles,” replied twenty voices; whilst Shan, who had heard his enemy’s voice, stalked on, surrounded by his dogs, his old, battered hunting horn in one hand, and his whip under his arm.

“And where are they going to meet?” asked Mr. Mahony.

“Glen Druid gate,” replied the camp followers. “There’s a Mimber of Parlymint comin’, and all the quality from the Big House.”

“Faith,” said Mr. Mahony, “I thought there was somethin’ up, for, by the look of Shan, as he passed me house this mornin’, I thought he’d swallowed the Lord Liftinant, Crown jew’ls and all. Hulloo! hulloo! hulloo! make way for me carridge! Who are you crowdin’? Don’t you know the Earl of Leinsther when y’ see him? Out of the way, or I’ll call me futman to disparse yiz.”

Shan heard it all, but marched on. He could have killed Bob Mahony, who was turning his triumph into a farce, out he contented himself with letting fly with his whip amongst the dogs, and blowing a note on his horn. 327

“What’s that nize?” enquired Mr. Mahony, with a wink at the delighted crowd tramping

beside the donkey cart.

“Shan’s blowin’ his harn,” yelled the rabble.

“Faith, I thought it was Widdy Finnegan’s rooster he was carryin in the tail pockit of his coat,” said the humourist.

The crowd roared at this conceit, which was much more pungent and pointed as delivered in words by Mr. Mahony; but Shan, to all appearances, was deaf.

The road opposite the park gates was broad and shadowed by huge elm trees, which gave the spot in summer the darkness and coolness of a cave. Here Shan halted, the crowd halted, and the donkey-cart drew up.

Mr. Mahony tapped the dottle out of his pipe carefully on the rail of his cart, filled the pipe, replaced the dottle on the top of the tobacco, and drew a whiff.

The clock of Glen Druid House struck ten, and the notes came floating over park and trees; not that anyone heard them, for the yelping of the dogs and the noise of the crowd filled the quiet country road with the hubbub of a fair.

“What’s that you were axing me?” cried Mr. Mahony to a supposed interrogator in the crowd. “Is the Prince o’ Wales comin’? No, he ain’t. I had a tellygrum from him this mornin’ sendin’ his excuzes. Will some gintleman poke that rat-terrier out that’s got under the wheels of me carridge—out, you baste!” He leaned over and hit a rabbit-beagle that had strayed under the donkey-cart a tip with his stick. The dog, though not hurt, for Bob Mahony 328
was much too good a sportsman to hurt an animal, gave a yelp.

Shan turned at the sound, and his rage exploded.

“Who are yiz hittin’? cried Shan.

“I’m larnin’ your dogs manners,” replied Bob.

The huntsman surveyed the sweep, the cart, the soot bags, and the donkey.

“I beg your pardin’,” said he, touchin his hat, “I didn’t see you at first for the sut.”

Mr. Mahony took his short pipe from his mouth, put it back upside down, shoved his old hat further back on his head, rested his elbows on his knees, and contemplated Shan.

“But it’s glad I am,” went on Shan, “you’ve come to the meet and brought a mimber of the family with you.”

Fate was against Bob Mahony, for at that moment Norah, scenting another of her species in a field near by, curled her lip, stiffened her legs, projected her head, rolled her eyes, and “let a bray out of her” that almost drowned the howls of laughter from the exulting mob.

But Shan Finucane did not stir a muscle of his face, and Bob Mahony’s fixed sneer did not flicker or waver.

“Don’t mention it, mum,” said Shan, taking off his old cap when the last awful, rasping, despairing note of the bray had died down into silence.

Another howl from the onlookers, which left Mr. Mahony unmoved.

“They get on well together,” said he, addressing an imaginary acquaintance in the crowd.

“Whist and hould your nize, and let’s hear what else they have to say to wan another.”

Suddenly, and before Shan Finucane could open his lips, a boy who had been looking over 329
the rails into the park, yelled:

“Here’s the Mimber of Parlyment—here they come—Hurroo!”

“Now, then,” said the huntsman, dropping repartee and seizing the sweep’s donkey by the bridle, “sweep yourselves off, and don’t be disgracin’ the hunt wid your sut bags and your dirty faces—away wid yiz!”

“The hunt!” yelled Mahony, with a burst of terrible laughter. “Listen to him and his ould rat-tarriers callin’ thim a hunt! Lave go of the dunkey!”

“Away wid yiz!”

“Lave go of the dunkey, or I’ll batter the head of you in wid me stick! Lave go of the dunkey!”

Suddenly seizing the long flue brush beside him, and disengaging it from the bundle of sticks with which it was bound, he let fly with the bristle end of it at Shan, and Shan, catching his heel on a stone, went over flat on his back in the road.

In a second he was up, whip in hand; in a second Mr. Mahony was down, a bag half-filled with soot—a terrible weapon of assault—in his fist.

“Harns! harns!” yelled Mahony, mad with the spirit of battle, and unconsciously chanting the fighting cry of long-forgotten ancestors. “Who says cruckeder than a ram’s harn!”

“Go it, Shan!” yelled the onlookers. “Give it him, Bob—sut him in the face—Butt-end the whip, y’idgit—Hurroo! Hurroo! Holy Mary! he nearly landed him then—Mind the dogs—”

Armed with the soot-bag swung like a club, and the old hunting-whip butt-ended, the two combatants formed the centre of a circle of yelling admirers.

“Look!” said Miss Lestrange, as the party from the house came in view of the road. “Look 330
at the crowd and the two men!”

“They’re fighting!” cried the general. “I believe the ruffians dared to have the impudence to start fighting!”

At this moment came the noise of wheels from behind, and the “tub,” which had obtained permission to go to the meet, drew up, with Patsy driving the children.

“Let the children remain here,” said the General. “You stay with them, Violet. Come along, Boxall, till we see what these ruffians mean.”

So filled was his mind with the objects in view that he quite forgot Dicky Fanshawe.

“You have put on the short skirt,” said Dicky, who at that moment would scarcely have turned his head twice or given a second thought had the battle of Austerlitz been in full blast beyond the park palings.

“And my thick boots,” said Violet, pushing forward a delightful little boot to speak for itself.

The children were so engaged watching the proceedings on the road that they had no eyes or ears for their elders.

“Have you ever been beagling before?” asked Dicky.

“Never; but I’ve been paper-chasing.”

“You can get through a hedge?”

“Rather!”

“That’ll do,” said Dicky.

“Mr. Fanshawe,” cried Lord Gawdor from the “tub,” “look at the chaps in the road—aren’t they going for each other!”

“I see,” said Mr. Fanshawe, whose back was to the road—“Violet—”

“Yes.”

“No one’s looking—” 331

“That doesn’t matter—No—not here—Dicky, if you don’t behave, I’ll get into the tub—Gracious! what’s that?”

“He’s down!” cried Patsy, who had been standing up to see better.

“Who?” asked Mr. Fanshawe.

“The Mimber of Parlyment—Misther Boxall—Bob Mahony’s grassed him—”

“They’re all fighting!” cried Violet. “Come, Mr. Fanshawe—Patsy—” She started for the gates at a run.

When the General had arrived on the scene, Shan had just got in and landed his antagonist a drum-sounding blow on the ribs with the butt of his whip.

“Seize the other chap, Boxall!” cried General Grampound, making for Mahony.

He was just half a second too late; the soot bag, swung like a club, missed Shan, and, catching Mr. Boxall fair and square on the side of the face, sent him spinning like a tee-

totum across the road, and head over heels into the ditch.

That was all.

A dead silence took the yelling crowd.

“He’s kilt!” came a voice.

“He isn’t; sure, his legs is wavin’.”

“Who is he?”

“He’s the Mimber of Parlyment! Run for your life, and don’t lave off runnin’ till you’re out of the country.”

“Hold your tongue!” cried General Grampound. “Boxall—hullo! Boxall! are you hurt?”

“I’m all right,” replied Mr. Boxall, who, from being legs upwards, was now on hands and 332
knees in the ditch. “I’ve lost something—dash it!”

“What have you lost?”

“Watch.”

“Come out and I’ll get some of these chaps to look.”

Mr. Boxall came out of the ditch with his handkerchief held to the left side of his forehead.

“Why, your watch and chain are on you!” cried the General.

“So they are,” said Mr. Boxall, pulling the watch out with his left hand, and putting it back. “I’m off to the house—I want to wash.”

“Sure, you’re not hurt?”

“Not in the least, only my forehead scratched.”

“What’s up?” cried Dicky Fanshawe, who had just arrived.

“Nothing,” replied his uncle. “Fellow hit him by mistake—no bones broken. Will you take the governess cart back to the house, Boxall?”

“No, thanks—I’ll walk.”

“His legs is all right,” murmured the sympathetic crowd, as the injured one departed still with his handkerchief to his face, “and his arums. Sure, it’s the mercy and all his neck wasn’t bruck.”

“Did yiz see the skelp Bob landed him?”

“Musha! Sure, I thought it would have sent his head flying into Athy, like a gulf ball.”

Patsy, who had pulled the governess cart up, rose to his feet; his sharp eye had caught sight of something lying on the road.

“Hould the reins a moment, Mr. Robert,” said he, putting them into Lord Gawdor’s hands. He hopped out of the cart, picked up the object in the road, whatever it was, put it in his 333
trousers’ pocket, and then stood holding the pony’s head; whilst the Meet, from which Bob Mahony had departed as swiftly as his donkey could trot, turned its attention to the business of the day, and Shan, collecting his dogs, declared his intention of drawing the Furzes.

“Was that a marble you picked up, Patsy?” asked Lord Gawdor, as the red-headed one, hearing Shan’s declaration, climbed into the “tub” again and took the reins.

Patsy grinned.

* * * * * * *

Meanwhile Mr. Fanshawe had been writing three important letters in the library. When he had finished and carefully sealed them, he placed them one on top of the other, and looked at his watch.

The three letters he had just written would make everything all right at the other end. This was the hot end of the poker, and it had to be grasped.

Patsy was the person who would help him to grasp it. Patsy he felt to be a tower of strength and ‘cuteness, if such a simile is permissible. And, rising from the writing-table and

putting the letters in his pocket, he went to find Patsy. He had not far to go, for as he came into the big hall Patsy was crossing it with a tray in hand.

“Patsy,” said Mr. Fanshawe, “when does the post go out?”

“If you stick your letters in the letter box by the hall door, sir,” said Patsy, “it will be cleared in half-an-hour. Jim Murphy takes the letter-bag to Castle Knock.”

“Right!” said Mr. Fanshawe. “And, see here, Patsy!”

“Yes, sir?” 334

“I’m in a bit of a fix, Patsy, and you may be able to help.”

“And what’s the fix, sir?” asked Patsy.

“You know the young lady you gave the note to this morning—by the way, how did you give it?”

“I tried to shove it undher her door, sir.”

“Yes?”

“It wouldn’t go, so I give a knock. ‘Who’s there?’ says she. ‘No one,’ says I; ‘it’s only hot wather I’m bringin’ you,’ for, you see, sir, the ould missis, her ladyship, was in the next room, and she’s not as deaf as she looks, and it’s afraid I was, every minnit, her door’d open, and she and her ear-trumpet come out in the passidge. ‘I have hot wather,’ says she. ‘Niver mind,’ says I, ‘this is betther. Open the door, for the love of God, for I can’t get it under the door, unless I rowl it up and shove it through the keyhole.’ Wid that she opens the door a crack and shoves her head out. ‘Who’s it from?’ she says. ‘I don’t know,’ says I; ‘it’s just a letther I found on the stairs I thought might belong to you.’ ‘Thanks,’ says she, ‘it does,’ and wid that she shut the door, and I left her.”

“Well, see here, Patsy!”

“Yes, sir?”

“I’m going to marry Miss Lestrange.”

“Faith, and I guessed that,” said Patsy; “and it’s I that’d be joyful to dance at your weddin’, sir.”

“There won’t be any dancing in the business,” said Mr. Fanshawe, grimly. “You know Mr. Boxall, Patsy?”

“The Mimber of Parlymint?”

“Yes. Well, he wants to marry Miss Lestrange; and the worst of it is, Patsy, that my uncle, 335
General Grampound, wants him to marry her, too.”

“Yes, sir,” said Patsy. “And, Mr. Fanshawe?”

“Yes.”

“I forgot to tell you, sir, you needn’t be afear’d of Mr. Boxall for the next few days.”

“How’s that?”

“When Bob Mahony hit him the skelp on the head wid the sut bag, his eye popped out of his head on the road.”

“His what?—Oh, I remember—”

“Finders is keepers, sir,” said Patsy, with a grin.

“Why, good heavens—you don’t mean to say—”

“I’ve got his eye in my pocket, sir,” said Patsy, in a hoarse whisper. “He’s sint a telygram for another wan but till it comes he’s tethered to his bed like a horse to a—”

“That’s enough—that’s enough,” said Mr. Fanshawe. “Here’s half a crown for you, Patsy, for—carrying my cartridges.”

336

The Ballygullion Creamery Society, Limited.

From "Ballygullion."

By Lynn Doyle.

'Twas the man from the Department of Agriculture comin' down to give a lecture on poultry an' dairy-farmin', that set the ball a-rollin'.

The whole farmers av the counthry gathered in to hear him, an' for days afther it was over, there was no talk at all barrin' about hens an' crame, an' iverybody had a schame av their own to propose.

Ould Miss Armitage ap at the Hall was on for encouragin' poultry-farmin'; an' give a prize for the best layin' hen in Ballygullion, that riz more scunners in the counthry than the twelfth av July itself. There was a powerful stir about it, an' near iverybody enthered.

Deaf Pether of the Bog's wife was an easy winner if her hen hadn't died, an' nothin' would satisfy her but it was poisoned; though divil a all killed it but the gorges of Indian male the ould woman kept puttin' intil it.

Ivery time the hen laid she give it an extra dose of male, "to encourage the crather," as she said; an' wan day it laid a double-yolked wan, she put a charge intil it that stretched it out stiff in half-an-hour.

Afther that there was no doubt but Larry Thomas's wife would win the prize; for, before the end av the month Miss Armitage had allowed for the test, her hen was above a dozen ahead av iverybody else's.

Howiver, when it came to the countin' there was a duck-egg or two here an' there among 337
the lot that naither Mrs. Thomas nor the hen could well account for, so the both of thim was disqualified.

An' whin it came to the bit, an' Mrs. Archy Doran won the prize, she counted up an' made out that between corn an' male, she had paid away double the value of it, so she wasn't very well plazed; an' thim that had spent near as much on feedin'-stuff, an' had got no prize, was worse plazed still.

The only one that came out av it well was Miss Armitage herself; for she kept all the eggs, an' made above twice the prize-money out av thim. But there was nobody else as well plazed about that as she was.

So all round the hen business was a failure; an' it looked as if there was nothin' goin' to come of the lecture at all.

However, iverybody thought it would be a terrible pity if Ballygullion should be behind the other places; an' at last there was a move made to start a cramery, an' a committee was got up to set things goin'.

At first the most av us thought they got the crame in the ould-fashioned way, just be skimmin'; but presently it begin to be talked that it was all done be machinery. Some av us was very dubious about that; for sorrow a bit could we see how it was to be done Thomas McGorrian maintained it would be done wi' blades like the knives av a turnip-cutter, that it would just shave the top off the milk, an' sweep it intil a pan; but then he couldn't well explain how they'd avoid shavin' the top off the milk-dish, too.

Big Billy Lenahan swore it was done with a worm like a still; but, although we all knowed
Billy was well up on potheen, there was few had iver seen him havin' much to do wi' milk; so 338
nobody listened to him.

At last the Committee detarmined they'd have a dimonsthration; and they trysted the Department man to bring down his machine an' show how it was done; for all iv thim was agin spendin' money on a machine till they were satisfied it would do its work.

The dimonsthration was to be held in Long Tammas McGorrian's barn, an' on the night set above forty av us was there. We all sat round in a half-ring, on chairs an' stools, an' any other conthrivance we could get, for all the world like the Christy Minstrels that comes to the Market House av a Christmas.

The dimonsthrator had rigged up a belt to Tammas's threshin'-machine, an' run it from that to the separator, as he called it.

The separator itself was a terrible disappointin' conthrivance at the first look, an' no size av a thing at all for the money they said it cost. But whin the dimonsthrator begin to tell us what it would do, an' how by just pourin' the milk intil a metal ball an' bizzin' it round, ye could make the crame come out av one hole, an' the milk out av another, we began to think more av it.

Nobody liked to spake out wi' the man there, but there was a power av whisperin'.

"It's a mighty quare conthrivance," sez wan.

"Did ye iver see the like av it?" sez another.

"Boy-a-boys," sez James Dougherty, "the works av man is wonderful. If my ould grandmother could see this, it would break her heart. 'Twas herself was the handy dairy-woman, too; but what'd she be till a machine?"

But most av thim wouldn't say one thing or another till they seen it workin'; an', 'deed, we were all wishin' he'd begin. We had to thole, though; for the dimonsthrator was a bumptious wee man, an' very fond av the sound av his own voice, an' kept talkin' away wi' big, long words that nobody knowed the manin' av but himself, till we were near deaved. 339

So we were powerful glad whin he sez to Mrs. McGorrian: "Now, Madam, if you'll be good enough to bring in the milk, I will proceed to give an actual demonstration."

But Mrs. McGorrian is a quiet wee woman, an' wi' all the crowd there, an' him callin' her Madam, she was too backward to get up out av the corner she was in; an' she nudges Tammas to go, tellin' him where to get the milk.

So Tammas goes out, an' presently he staggers in wi' a big crock in his arms, an' sets it down.

"Now," sez the demonsthrator, "if you'll just get the horses goin', an' pour the milk into that receptacle, I'll start the separator working."

Tammas in wi' the milk, an' the wee son whips up the horses outside, an' away goes the separator bizzin' like a hive av bees.

"In a few seconds, gentlemen and ladies," sez the dimonsthrator, "you will see the milk come out here, an' the cream here. Kindly pay attention, please."

But he needn't have spoke; for iverybody was leanin' forrard, holdin' their breath, an' there wasn't a sound to be heard but the hummin' of the separator.

Presently there comes a sort av a thick trickle out av the milk-hole, but divil a dhrap av crame.

The dimonsthrator gathered up his brow a bit at that, an' spakes out av the barn windy to Tammas's wee boy to dhrive faster. The separator hums harder than iver, but still no crame. Wan begin to look at the other, an' some av the wimmen at the back starts gigglin'. 340

The dimonsthrator begin to get very red an' flusthered-lookin'. "Are ye sure this milk is fresh an' hasn't been skimmed?" he sez to Tammas, very sharp.

"What do you say, Mary?" sez Tammas, lookin' over at the wife. "Sartin, sir," sez Mrs. Tammas. "It's just fresh from the cows this very evenin'."

"Most extraordinary," sez the dimonsthrator, rubbin' his hair till it was all on end. "I've niver had such an experience before."

"It's the way Tammas feeds his cows," sez Big Billy Lenahan from the back; "sure, iverybody knows he gives them nothin' but shavin's."

There was a snigger av a laugh at this; for Tammas was well known to be no great feeder av cattle.

But Tammas wasn't to be tuk down so aisy.

"Niver mind, Billy," sez he; "av you were put on shavin's for a week or two, ye'd maybe see your boots again before you died."

There was another laugh at this, an' that started a bit av jokin' all round—a good dale av it at the dimonsthrator; till he was near beside himself. For, divil a dhrop av crame had put in an appearance yet.

All at wanst he stoops down close to the milk.

“Bring me a candle here,” sez he, very sharp.

Tammas reaches over a sconce off the wall. The dimonsthrator bends over the can, then dips the point av his finger in it, an’ puts it in his mouth.

“What’s this?” sez he, lookin’ very mad at Tammas. “This isn’t milk at all.”

“Not milk,” sez Tammas. “It must be milk. I got it where you tould me, Mary.” 341

The wife gets up an’ pushes forward. First she takes a look at the can av the separator, an’ thin wan at the crock.

“Ye ould fool,” she sez to Tammas; “ye’ve brought the whitewash I mixed for the dairy walls!”

I’ll say this for the dimonsthrator, he was a game wee fellow; for the divil a wan laughed louder than he did, an’ that’s sayin’ something; but sorrow a smile Tammas cracked, but stood gapin’ at the wife wi’ his mouth open; an’ from the look she gave him back, there was some av us thought she was, maybe, more av a tarther than she looked.

Though troth ’twas no wondher she was angry, for the joke wint round the whole counthry, an’ Tammas gets nothin’ but “Whitewash McGorrian” iver since.

Howaniver, they got the machine washed out, an’ the rale milk intil it, an’ there was no doubt it worked well. The wee dimonsthrator was as plazed as Punch, an’ ivery body wint away well satisfied, an’ set on havin’ a cramery as soon as it could be got started.

First av all they wint round an’ got the names av all thim that was goin’ to join in; an’ the explainin’ of the schame took a dale av a time. The co-operatin’ bothered them intirely.

The widow Doherty she wasn’t goin’ to join an’ put in four cows’ milk, she said, whin she’d only get as much out av it as Mrs. Donnelly, across the field, that had only two. Thin, whin they explained to the widow that she’d get twice as much, ould mother Donnelly was clane mad; for she’d thought she was goin’ to get the betther av the widow.

Thin there was tarrible bother over barrin’ out wee Mrs. Morley, because she had only a 342
goat. Some was for lettin’ her in; but the gineral opinion was that it would be makin’ too little av the Society.

Howiver, all was goin’ brave an’ paceable till ould Michael Murray, the ould dunderhead, puts in his oar.

Michael was a divil of a man for pace-makin’, an’ riz more rows than all the county, for all that; for whin two dacent men had a word or two av a fair-day, maybe whin the drink was in them, an’ had forgot all about it, the next day ould Michael would come round to make it up, an’ wi’ him mindin’ them av what had passed, the row would begin worse than iver.

So, whin all was set well agoin’, an’ the committee met to call a gineral meetin’ av the Society, ould Michael he gets up an’ says what a pity it would be if the Society would be broke up wi’ politics or religion; an’ he proposed that they should show there was no ill-feelin’ on either side by holdin’ this giniral meetin’ in the Orange Hall, an’ the nixt in the United Irish League rooms. He named the Orange Hall first, he said, because he was a Nationalist himself, an’ a Home Ruler, an’ always would be.

There was one or two Orangemen beginnin’ to look mighty fiery at the tail-end av Michael’s speech, an’ there’s no tellin’ what would a’ happened if the chairman hadn’t whipped in an’ said that Michael’s was a very good idea, an’ he thought they couldn’t do betther than folly it up.

So, right enough, the first gineral meetin’ was held in the Ballygullion Orange Hall.

Iverything was very quiet an’ agreeable, except that some av the red-hot Nationalists kept talkin’ quare skellys at a flag in the corner wi’ King William on it, stickin’ a man in a green 343
coat wi’ his sword.

But, as fortune would have it, little Billy av the Bog, the sthrongest wee Orangeman in Ulsther, comes in at half-time as dhrunk as a fiddler, sits down on a form an’ falls fast asleep. An’ there he snored for the most av half an hour, till near the end av the meetin’, whin the chairman was makin’ a speech, there was a bit av applause, an’ ap starts Billy all dazed. First he looked up an’ seen King William on the flag. Thin hearin’ the chairman’s voice, he gives a stamp wi’ his fut on the flure, an’ a “hear, hear,” wi’ a mortial bad hiccup between the “hears.” The wee man thought he was at a lodge-meetin’.

All av a sudden he sees ould Michael Murray, an', beside him, Tammas McGorrian.

Wi' that he lepps to his feet like a shot, dhrunk as he was, an' hits the table a terrible lick wi' his fist.

"Stap, brethren," sez he, glarin' round the room.

"Stap! There's Papishes present."

Ye niver seen a meetin' quicker broke up than that wan. Half the men was on their feet in a minit, an' the other half pullin' thim down be the coat-tails. Iverybody was talkin' at the wan time, some av thim swearin' they'd been insulted, an' others thryin' to make pace.

Thin the wimmin begin to scrame an' hould back men from fightin' that had no notion av it at the start, an' only begin to think av it whin they were sure they wouldn't be let.

Altogether there was the makin's of as fine a fight as iver ye seen in your life.

However, there was a lot of dacent elderly men on both sides, and wi' arguin' an' 344
perswadin', and houldin' back wan, an' pushin' out the other, the hall was redd without blows, an', bit by bit, they all went home quiet enough.

But the Cramery Society was clane split. It wasn't wee Billy so much; for whin people begin to think about it the next mornin', there was more laughed at him than was angry; but the party feelin' was up as bitther as could be.

The Nationalists was mad at themselves for givin' in to go to a meetin' in the Orange Hall, for fear it might be taken that they were weakenin' about Home Rule; an' the Orange party were just as afeard at the papers makin' out that they were weakenin' about the Union. Besides, the ould King William in the corner av the Hall had done no good.

I'm no party man, myself; but whin I see William Robinson, that has been me neighbour this twinty years, goin' down the road on the Twelfth av July wi' a couple av Orange sashes on, me heart doesn't warm to him as it does av another day. The plain truth is, we were bate at the Boyne right enough; but some av us had more than a notion we didn't get fair play at the fightin'; an' between that and hearin' about the batin' iver since, the look of ould Billy on his white horse isn't very soothin'.

Anyway, the two parties couldn't be got to join again. The red-hot wans av both av thim had meetin's, wee Billy leadin' wan side, and Tammas McGorrian the other, an' the nixt thing was that there was to be two Crameries.

The moderate men seen that both parties were makin' fools av themselves, for the place wasn't big enough for two; but moderate men are scarce in our parts, an' they could do 345
nothin' to soothe matthers down. Whin the party work is on, it's little either side thinks av the good av thimselves or the counthry either.

It's "niver mind a dig yourself if ye get a slap at the other fellow."

So notices was sent out for a meetin' to wind up the Society, an' there was a powerful musther av both sides, for fear either of them might get an advantage over the other wan.

To keep clear av trouble it was to be held in the Market house.

The night av the meetin' come; an' when I got into the room who should I see on the platform but Major Donaldson an' Father Connolly. An' thin I begin to wondher what was on.

For the Major was too aisy-goin' and kindly to mix himself up wi' party-work, an' Father Connolly was well known to be terrible down on it, too.

So a sort av a mutther begin to run through the meetin' that there was goin' to be an attempt to patch up the split.

Some was glad and not afraid to say it; but the most looked sour an' said nothin'; an' wee Billy and Tammas McGorrian kept movin' in an' out among their friends an' swearin' them to stand firm.

When the room was well filled, an' iverybody settled down, the Major gets on his feet.

"Ladies an' gentlemen," sez he—the Major was always polite if it was only a travellin' tinker he was spakin' to—"Ladies an' gentlemen, you know why we've met here to-night—to wind up the Ballygullion Cramery Society. I wish windin' up meant that it would go on all 346
the better; but, unfortunately, windin' up a Society isn't like windin' up a clock."

“Now, I’m not going to detain you; but before we proceed, I’d like you to listen to Father Connolly here for a minute or two. I may tell you he’s goin’ to express my opinion as well as his own. I needn’t ask you to give him an’ attentive hearin’; ye all know, as well as I do, that what he says is worth listenin’ to.” An’ down the Major sits.

Thin Father Connolly comes forward an’ looks roun’ a minit or so before spakin’. Most av his own people that catched his eye looked down mighty quick, for they all had an idea he wouldn’t think much av what had been goin’ on.

But wee Billy braces himself up an’ looks very fierce, as much as to say “there’ll no praste ordher me about,” and Tammas looks down at his feet wi’ his teeth set, much as if he meant the same.

“Men an’ wimmin av Ballygullion,” sez Father Connolly—he was aye a plain-spoken wee man—“we’re met here to end up the United Cramery Society, and after that we’re goin’ to start two societies, I hear.

“The sinsible men av Ballygullion sees that it would be altogether absurd an’ ridiculous for Catholics an’ Protestants, Home Rulers an’ Unionists, to work together in anything at all. As they say, the two parties is altogether opposed in everything that’s important.

“The wan keep St. Patrick’s Day for a holiday, and the other the Twelfth av July; the colours of the one is green, an’ the colours of the other orange; the wan wants to send their Mimbers av Parliament to College Green, and the other to Westminster; an’ there are a lot more differences just as important as these.

“It’s thrue,” goes on the Father, “that some ignorant persons says that, after all, the two 347
parties live in the same counthry, undher the same sky, wi’ the same sun shinin’ on them an’ the same rain wettin’ thim; an’ that what’s good for that counthry is good for both parties, an’ what’s bad for it is bad for both; that they live side by side as neighbours, an’ buy and sell among wan another, an’ that nobody has iver seen that there was twinty-one shillin’s in a Catholic pound, an’ nineteen in a Protestant pound, or the other way about; an’ that, although they go about it in different ways, they worship the same God, the God that made both av thim; but I needn’t tell ye that these are only a few silly bodies, an’ don’t riprisint the opinion av the counthry.”

A good many people in the hall was lookin’ foolish enough be this time, an’ iverybody was waitin’ to hear the Father tell them to make it up, an’ most av them willin’ enough to do it. The major was leanin’ back, looking well satisfied.

“Now,” sez Father Connolly, “after what I’ve said, I needn’t tell ye that I’m av the opinion av the sinsible men, and I think that by all manes we should have a Catholic cramery and a Protestant wan.”

The Major sits up wi’ a start, an’ wan looks at the other all over the room.

“The only thing that bothers me,” sez the Father, goin’ on an’ takin’ no notice, “is the difficulty av doin’ it. It’s aisy enough to sort out the Catholic farmers from the Protestant; but what about the cattle?” sez he.

“If a man rears up a calf till it becomes a cow, there’s no doubt that cow must be Nationalist or Orange. She couldn’t help it, livin’ in this country. Now, what are you going to
do when a Nationalist buys an Orange cow? Tammas McGorrian bought a cow from wee 348
Billy there last month that Billy bred an’ reared himself. Do ye mane to tell me that’s a Nationalist cow? I tell ye what it is, boys,” sez the Father, wi’ his eyes twinklin’, “wan can av that cow’s milk in a Nationalist cramery would turn the butther as yellow as the shutters av the Orange Hall.”

By this time there was a smudge av a laugh on iverybody’s face, an’ even Tammas an’ wee Billy couldn’t help crackin’ a smile.

“Now,” sez Father Connolly, “afther all, it’s aisy enough in the case of Tammas’s cow. There’s no denyin’ she’s an Orange cow, an’ either Tammas may go to the Orange cramery or give the cow back to Billy.”

Tammas sits up a bit at that.

“But, thin, there’s a lot of mighty curious cases. There’s my own wee Kerry. Iverybody knows I bred her myself; but, thin, there’s no denyin’ that her father—if that’s the right way to spake av a bull—belonged to Major Donaldson here, an’ was called ‘Prince of Orange.’ Now, be the law, a child follows its father in these matters, an’ I’m bound be it to send the

wee Kerry’s milk to the Orange cramery, although I’ll maintain she’s as good a Nationalist as ever stepped; didn’t she thramp down ivery Orange lily in Billy Black’s garden only last Monday?

“So, boys, whin you think the matter out, ye’ll see it’s no aisy matther this separatin’ av Orange an’ Green in the cramery. For, if ye do it right—and I’m for no half-measures—ye’ll have to get the pedigree av ivery bull, cow, and calf in the counthry, an’ then ye’ll be little further on, for there’s a lot av bastes come in every year from Americay that’s little better than haythin’.

“But, if ye take my advice, those av ye that isn’t sure av your cows’ll just go on quietly together in the manetime, an’ let thim that has got a rale thrue-blue baste av either persuasion just keep her milk to themselves, and skim it in the ould-fashioned way wi’ a spoon.”

There was a good dale av sniggerin’ whin the Father was spakin’; but ye should have heard the roar of a laugh there was whin he sat down. An’ just as it was dyin’ away, the Major rises, wipin’ his eyes—

“Boys,” sez he, “if it’s the will av the prisint company that the Ballygullion Cramery Society go on, will ye rise an’ give three cheers for Father Pether Connolly?”

Ivery man, woman, an’ child—Protestant and Catholic—was on their feet in a minit; an’ if the Ballygullion Market-house roof didn’t rise that night, it’s safe till etarnity.

From that night on there was niver another word av windin’ up or splittin’ either. An’ if ever ye come across a print av butther wi’ a wreath of shamrocks an’ orange-lilies on it, ye’ll know it come from the Ballygullion Cramery Society, Limited.

---

of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext

form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities

to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements

concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.