

Phil Purcel, The Pig-Driver; The Geography Of An Irish Oath; The Lianhan Shee eBook

Phil Purcel, The Pig-Driver; The Geography Of An Irish Oath; The Lianhan Shee by William Carleton

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Page 1

PHIL PURCEL, THE PIG-DRIVER.

Phil Purcel was a singular character, for he was never married; but notwithstanding his singularity, no man ever possessed, for practical purposes, a more plentiful stock of duplicity. All his acquaintances knew that Phil was a knave of the first water, yet was he decidedly a general favorite. Now as we hate mystery ourselves, we shall reveal the secret of this remarkable popularity; though, after all, it can scarcely be called so, for Phil was not the first cheat who has been popular in his day. The cause of his success lay simply in this; that he never laughed; and, none of our readers need be told, that the appearance of a grave cheat in Ireland is an originality which almost runs up into a miracle. This gravity induced every one to look upon him as a phenomenon. The assumed simplicity of his manners was astonishing, and the ignorance which he feigned, so apparently natural, that it was scarcely possible for the most keen-sighted searcher into human motives to detect him. The only way of understanding the man was to deal with him: if, after that, you did not comprehend him thoroughly, the fault was not Phil's, but your own. Although not mirthful himself, he was the cause of mirth in others; for, without ever smiling at his own gains, he contrived to make others laugh at their losses. His disposition, setting aside laughter, was strictly anomalous. The most incompatible, the most unamalgamatable, and the most uncomeatable qualities that ever refused to unite in the same individual, had no scruple at all to unite in Phil. But we hate metaphysics, which we leave to the mechanical philosophers, and proceed to state that Phil was a miser, which is the best explanation we can give of his gravity.

Ireland, owing to the march of intellect, and the superiority of modern refinement, has been for some years past, and is at present, well supplied with an abundant variety of professional men, every one of whom will undertake, for proper considerations, to teach us Irish all manner of useful accomplishments. The drawing-master talks of his profession; the dancing-master of his profession; the fiddler, tooth-drawer, and corn-cutter (who by the way, reaps a richer harvest than we do), since the devil has tempted the schoolmaster to go abroad, are all practising in his absence, as professional men.

Now-Phil must be included among this class of grandiloquent gentlemen, for he entered life as a Professor of Pig-driving; and it is but justice towards him to assert, that no corn-cutter of them all ever elevated his profession so high as Phil did that in which he practised. In fact, he raised it to the most exalted pitch of improvement of which it was then susceptible; or to use the cant of the day, he soon arrived at "the head of his profession."

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In Phil's time, however, pig-driving was not so general, nor had it made such rapid advances as in modern times. It was, then, simply, pig-driving, unaccompanied by the improvements of poverty, sickness, and famine. Political economy had not then taught the people how to be poor upon the most scientific principles; free trade had not shown the nation the most approved plan of reducing itself to the lowest possible state of distress; nor liberalism enabled the working classes to scoff at religion, and wisely to stop at the very line that lies between outrage and rebellion. Many errors and inconveniences, now happily exploded, were then in existence. The people, it is true, were somewhat attached to their landlords, but still they were burdened with the unnecessary appendages of good coats and stout shoes; were tolerably industrious, and had the mortification of being able to pay their rents, and feed in comfort. They were not, as they are now, free from new coats and old prejudices, nor improved by the intellectual march of politics and poverty. When either a man or a nation starves, it is a luxury to starve in an enlightened manner; and nothing is more consolatory to a person acquainted with public rights and constitutional privileges, than to understand those liberal principles upon which he fasts and goes naked.

From all we have said, the reader sees clearly that pig-driving did not then proceed upon so extensive a scale as it does at present. The people, in fact, killed many of them for their own use; and we know not how it happened, but political ignorance and good bacon kept them in more flesh and comfort than those theories which have since succeeded so well in introducing the science of starvation as the basis of national prosperity. Irishmen are frequently taxed with extravagance, in addition to their other taxes; but we should be glad to know what people in Europe reduce economy in the articles of food and clothing to such close practice as they do.

Be this as it may, there was, in Ireland, an old breed of swine, which is now nearly extinct, except in some remote parts of the country, where they are still useful in the hunting season, particularly if dogs happen to be scarce.* They were a tall, loose species, with legs of an unusual length, with no flesh, short ears, as if they had been cropped for sedition, and with long faces of a highly intellectual cast. They were also of such activity that few greyhounds could clear a ditch or cross a field with more agility or speed. Their backs formed a rainbow arch, capable of being contracted or extended to an inconceivable degree; and their usual rate of travelling in droves was at mail-coach speed, or eight Irish miles an hour, preceded by an outrider to clear the way, whilst their rear was brought up by another horseman, going at a three-quarter gallop.

* We assure John Bull, on the authority of Purcel himself, that this is a fact.

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In the middle of summer, when all nature reposed under the united influence of heat and dust, it was an interesting sight to witness a drove of them sweeping past, like a whirlwind, in a cloud of their own raising; their sharp and lengthy outlines dimly visible through the shining haze, like a flock of antelopes crossing the deserts of the East.

But alas! for those happy days! This breed is now a curiosity—few specimens of it remaining except in the mountainous parts of the country, whither these lovers of liberty, like the free natives of the back settlements of America, have retired to avoid the encroachments of civilization, and exhibit their Irish antipathy to the slavish comforts of steamboat navigation, and the relaxing luxuries of English feeding.

Indeed, their patriotism, as evinced in an attachment to Ireland and Irish habits, was scarcely more remarkable than their sagacity. There is not an antiquary among the members of that learned and useful body, the Irish Academy, who can boast such an intimate knowledge of the Irish language in all its shades of meaning and idiomatic beauty, as did this once flourishing class of animals. Nor were they confined to the Irish tongue alone, many of them understood English too; and it was said of those that belonged to a convent, the members of which, in their intercourse with each other, spoke only in Latin, that they were tolerable masters of that language, and refused to leave a potato field or plot of cabbages, except when addressed in it. To the English tongue, however, they had a deep-rooted antipathy; whether it proceeded from the national feeling, or the fact of its not being sufficiently guttural, I cannot say; but be this as it may, it must be admitted that they were excellent Irish scholars, and paid a surprising degree of deference and obedience to whatever was addressed to them in their own language. In Munster, too, such of them as belonged to the hedge-schoolmasters were good proficient in Latin; but it is on a critical knowledge of their native tongue that I take my stand. On this point they were unrivalled by the most learned pigs or antiquaries of their day; none of either class possessing, at that period, such a knowledge of Irish manners, nor so keen a sagacity in tracing out Irish roots.

Their education, it is true, was not neglected, and their instructors had the satisfaction of seeing that it was not lost. Nothing could present a finer display of true friendship founded upon a sense of equality, mutual interest, and good-will, than the Irishman and his pig. The Arabian and his horse are proverbial; but had our English neighbors known as much of Ireland as they did of Arabia, they would have found as signal instances of attachment subsisting between the former as between the latter; and, perhaps, when the superior comforts of an Arabian hut are contrasted with the squalid poverty of an Irish cabin, they would have perceived a heroism and a disinterestedness evinced by the Irish parties, that would have struck them with greater admiration.



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The pigs, however, of the present day are a fat, gross, and degenerate breed; and more like well-fed aldermen, than Irish pigs of the old school. They are, in fact, a proud, lazy, carnal race, entirely of the earth, earthy. John Bull assures us it is one comfort, however, that we do not eat, but ship them out of the country; yet, after all, with great respect to John, it is not surprising that we should repine a little on thinking of the good old times of sixty years since, when every Irishman could kill his own pig, and eat it when he pleased. We question much whether any measure that might make the eating of meat compulsory upon us, would experience from Irishmen a very decided opposition. But it is very condescending in John to eat our beef and mutton; and as he happens to want both, it is particularly disinterested in him to encourage us in the practice of self-denial. It is possible, however, that we may ultimately refuse to banquet by proxy on our own provisions; and that John may not be much longer troubled to eat for us in that capacity.

The education of an Irish pig, at the time of which we write, was an important consideration to an Irishman. He, and his family, and his pig, like the Arabian and his horse, all slept in the same bed; the pig generally, for the sake of convenience, next the "stock" (* at the outside). At meals the pig usually was stationed at the *serahag*, or potato-basket; where the only instances of bad temper he ever displayed broke out in petty and unbecoming squabbles with the younger branches of the family. Indeed, if he ever descended from his high station as a member of the domestic circle, it was upon these occasions, when, with a want of dignity, accounted for only by the grovelling motive of self-interest, he embroiled himself in a series of miserable feuds and contentions about scraping the pot, or carrying off from the jealous urchins about him more than came to his share. In these heart-burnings about the good things of this world, he was treated with uncommon forbearance: in his owner he always had a friend, from whom, when he grunted out his appeal to him, he was certain of receiving redress: "Barney, behave, avick: lay down the potstick, an' don't be batin' the pig, the crathur."

In fact, the pig was never mentioned but with this endearing epithet of "crathur" annexed. "Barney, go an' call home the pig, the crathur, to his dinner, before it gets cowl'd an him." "Barney, go an' see if you can see the pig, the crathur, his buckwhist will soon be ready." "Barney, run an' dhrive the pig, the crathur, out of Larry Neil's phatie-field: an', Barney, whisper, a bouchal bawn, don't run *too* hard, Barney, for fraid you'd lose your breath. What if the crathur does get a taste o' the new phaties—small blame to him for the same!"



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In short, whatever might have been the habits of the family, such were those of the pig. The latter was usually out early in the morning to take exercise, and the unerring regularity with which he returned at mealtime gave sufficient proof that procuring an appetite was a work of supererogation on his part. If he came before the meal was prepared, his station was at the door, which they usually shut to keep him out of the way until it should be ready. In the meantime, so far as a forenoon serenade and an indifferent voice could go, his powers of melody were freely exercised on the outside. But he did not stop here: every stretch of ingenuity was tried by which a possibility of gaining admittance could be established. The hat and rags were repeatedly driven in from the windows, which from practice and habit he was enabled to approach on his hind legs; a cavity was also worn by the frequent grubblings of his snout under the door, the lower part of which was broken away by the sheer strength of his tusks, so that he was enabled, by thrusting himself between the bottom of it and the ground, to make a most unexpected appearance on the hearth, before his presence was at all convenient or acceptable.

But, independently of these two modes of entrance, i. e., the door and window, there was also a third, by which he sometimes scrupled not to make a descent upon the family. This was by the chimney. There are many of the Irish cabins built for economy's sake against slopes in the ground, so that the labor of erecting either a gable or side-wall is saved by the perpendicular bank that remains after the site of the house is scooped away. Of the facilities presented by this peculiar structure, the pig never failed to avail himself. He immediately mounted the roof (through which, however, he sometimes took an unexpected flight), and traversing it with caution, reached the chimney, into which he deliberately backed himself, and with no small share of courage, went down precisely as the northern bears are said to descend the trunks of trees during the winter, but with far different motives.

In this manner he cautiously retrograded downwards with a hardihood, which set furze bushes, brooms, tongs, and all other available weapons of the cabin at defiance. We are bound, however, to declare, that this mode of entrance, which was only resorted to when every other failed, was usually received by the cottager and his family with a degree of mirth and good-humor that were not lost upon the sagacity of the pig. In order to save him from being scorched, which he deserved for his temerity, they usually received him in a creel, often in a quilt, and sometimes in the tattered blanket, or large pot, out of which he looked with a humorous conception of his own enterprise, that was highly diverting. We must admit, however, that he was sometimes received with the comforts of a hot poker, which Paddy pleasantly called, "givin' him a warm welcome."



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Another trait in the character of these animals, was the utter scorn with which they treated all attempts to fatten them. In fact, the usual consequences of good feeding were almost inverted in their case; and although I might assert that they became leaner in proportion to what they received, yet I must confine myself to truth, by stating candidly that this was not the fact; that there was a certain state of fleshlessness to which they arrived, but from which they neither advanced nor receded by good feeding or bad. At this point, despite of all human ingenuity, they remained stationary for life, received the bounty afforded them with a greatness of appetite resembling the fortitude of a brave man, which rises in energy according to the magnitude of that which it has to encounter. The truth is, they were scandalous hypocrites; for with the most prodigious capacity for food, they were spare as philosophers, and fitted evidently more for the chase than the sty; rather to run down a buck or a hare for the larder, than to have a place in it themselves. If you starved them, they defied you to diminish their flesh; and if you stuffed them like aldermen, they took all they got, but disdained to carry a single ounce more than if you gave them whey thickened with water. In short, they gloried in maceration and liberty; were good Irish scholars, sometimes acquainted with Latin; and their flesh, after the trouble of separating it from a superfluity of tough skin, was excellent venison so far as it went.

Now Phil Purcel, whom we will introduce more intimately to the reader by and by, was the son of a man who always kept a pig.

His father's house had a small loft, to which the ascent was by a step-ladder through a door in the inside gable. The first good thing ever Phil was noticed for he said upon the following occasion. His father happened to be called upon, one morning before breakfast, by his landlord, who it seems occasionally visited his tenantry to encourage, direct, stimulate, or reprove them, as the case might require. Phil was a boy then, and sat on the hob in the corner, eyeing the landlord and his father during their conversation. In the mean time the pig came in, and deliberately began to ascend the ladder with an air of authority that marked him as one in the exercise of an established right. The landlord was astonished at seeing the animal enter the best room in the house and could not help expressing his surprise to old Purcel:

"Why, Purcel, is your pig in the habit of treating himself to the comforts of your best room?"

"The pig is it, the crathur? Why, your haner," said Purcel, after a little hesitation, "it sometimes goes up of a mornin' to waken the childhre, particularly when the buckwhist happens to be late. It doesn't like to be waitin'; and sure none of us likes to be kept from the male's mate, your haner, when we want it, no more than it, the crathur!"

"But I wonder your wife permits so filthy an animal to have access to her rooms in this manner."



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“Filthy!” replied Mrs. Purcel, who felt herself called upon to defend the character of the pig, as well as her own, “why, one would think, sir, that any crathur that’s among Christyen childhre, like one o’ themselves, couldn’t be filthy. I could take it to my dyin’ day, that there’s not a claner or dacenter pig in the kingdom, than the same pig. It never misbehaves, the crathur, but goes out, as wise an’ riglar, jist by a look, an’ that’s enough for it, any day—a single look, your haner, the poor crathur!”

“I think,” observed Phil, from the hob, “that nobody has a betther right to the run of the house, whedher up stairs or down stairs, *than him that pays the rint.*”

“Well said, my lad!” observed the landlord, laughing at the quaint ingenuity of Phil’s defence. “His payment of the rent is the best defence possible, and no doubt should cover a multitude of his errors.”

“A multitude of his shins, you mane, sir,” said Phil, “for thruth he’s all shin.”

In fact, Phil from his infancy had an uncommon attachment to these animals, and by a mind naturally shrewd and observing, made himself as intimately acquainted with their habits and instincts, and the best modes of managing them, as ever the celebrated *Cahir na Cappul** did with those of the horse. Before he was fifteen, he could drive the most vicious and obstinate pig as quietly before him as a lamb; yet no one knew how, nor by what means he had gained the secret that enabled him to do it. Whenever he attended a fair, his time was principally spent among the pigs, where he stood handling, and examining, and pretending to buy them, although he seldom had half-a-crown in his pocket. At length, by hoarding up such small sums as he could possibly lay his hand on, he got together the price of a “slip,” which he bought, reared, and educated in a manner that did his ingenuity great credit. When this was brought to its *ne plus ultra* of fatness, he sold it, and purchased two more, which he fed in the same way. On disposing of these, he made a fresh purchase, and thus proceeded, until, in the course of a few years, he was a well-known pig-jobber.

* I subjoin from Townsend’s Survey of the county of Cork a short but authentic account of this most extraordinary character:—“James Sullivan was a native of the county of Cork, and an awkward ignorant rustic of the lowest class, generally known by the appellation of the *Whisperer*, and his profession was horse-breaking. The credulity of the vulgar bestowed that epithet upon him, from an opinion that he communicated his wishes to the animal by means of a whisper; and the singularity of his method gave some color to the superstitious belief. As far as the sphere of his control extended, the boast of *Veni, Vidi, Vici*, was more justly claimed by James Sullivan, than by Caesar, or even Bonaparte himself. How his art was acquired, or in what it consisted, is likely

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to remain for ever unknown, as he has lately left the world without divulging it. His son, who follows the same occupation, possesses but a small portion of the art, having either never learned its true secret, or being incapable of putting it in practice. The wonder of his skill consisted in the short time requisite to accomplish his design, which was performed in private, and without any apparent means of coercion. Every description of horse, or even mule, whether previously broke, or unhandled, whatever their peculiar vices or ill habits might have been, submitted, without show of resistance, to the magical influence of his art, and, in the short space of half an hour, became gentle and tractable. The effect, though instantaneously produced, was generally durable. Though more submissive to him than to others, yet they seemed to have acquired a docility, unknown before. When sent for to tame a vicious horse, he directed the stable in which he and the object of his experiment were placed, to be shut, with orders not to open the door until a signal given. After a *tete-a-tete* between him and the horse for about half an hour, during which little or no bustle was heard, the signal was made; and upon opening the door, the horse was seen, lying down, and the man by his side, playing familiarly with him, like a child with a puppy dog. From that time he was found perfectly willing to submit to discipline, however repugnant to his nature before. Some saw his skill tried on a horse, which could never be brought to stand for a smith to shoe him. The day after Sullivan's half hour lecture, I went, not without some incredulity, to the smith's shop, with many other curious spectators, where we were eye-witnesses of the complete success of his art. This, too, had been a troop-horse; and it was supposed, not without reason, that after regimental discipline had failed, no other would be found availing. I observed that the animal seemed afraid, whenever Sullivan either spoke or looked at him. How that extraordinary ascendancy could have been obtained, it is difficult to conjecture, in common eases, this mysterious preparation was unnecessary. He seemed to possess an instinctive power of inspiring awe, the result, perhaps, of natural intrepidity, in which, I believe, a great part of his art consisted; though the circumstance of his *tete-a-tete* shows, that, upon particular occasions, something more must have been added to it. A faculty like this would, in other hands, have made a fortune, and great offers have been made to him for the exercise of his art abroad; but hunting, and attachment to his native soil, were his ruling passions. He lived at home, in the style most agreeable to his disposition, and nothing could induce him to quit Dunhalow and the fox-hounds."

Phil's journeys as a pig-driver to the leading seaport towns nearest him, were always particularly profitable. In Ireland, swine are not kept in sties, as they are among English feeders, but permitted,

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to go at liberty through pasture fields, commons, and along roadsides, where they make up as well as they can for the scanty pittance allowed them at home during meal-times. We do not, however, impeach Phil's honesty; but simply content ourselves with saying, that when his journey was accomplished, he mostly found the original number with which he had set out increased by three or four, and sometimes by half a dozen. Pigs in general resemble each other, and it surely was not Phil's fault if a stray one, feeding on the roadside or common, thought proper to join his drove and see the world. Phil's object, we presume, was only to take care that his original number was not diminished, its increase being a matter in which he felt little concern. He now determined to take a professional trip to England, and that this might be the more productive, he resolved to purchase a lot of the animals we have been describing. No time was lost in this speculation. The pigs were bought up as cheaply as possible, and Phil sat out, for the first time in his life, to try with what success he could measure his skill against that of a Yorkshireman. On this occasion, he brought with him a pet, which he had with considerable pains trained up for purposes hereafter to be explained.

There was nothing remarkable in the passage, unless that every creature on board was sea-sick, except the pigs; even to them, however, the change was a disagreeable one; for to be pent up in the hold of a ship was a deprivation of liberty, which, fresh as they were from their native hills, they could not relish. They felt, therefore, as patriots, a loss of freedom, but not a whit of appetite; for, in truth, of the latter no possible vicissitude short of death could deprive them.

Phil, however, with an assumed air of simplicity absolutely stupid, disposed of them to a Yorkshire dealer at about twice the value they would have brought in Ireland, though as pigs went in England it was low enough. He declared that they had been fed on tip-top feeding: which was literally true, as he afterwards admitted that the tops of nettles and potato stalks constituted the only nourishment they had got for three weeks before.

The Yorkshireman looked with great contempt upon what he considered a miserable essay to take him in.

"What a fule this Hirishmun mun bea;" said he, "to think to teake me in! Had he said that them there Hirish swoine were badly feade, I'd ha' thought it fairish enough on un; but to seay that they was oll weal feade on tip-top feeadin'! Nea, nea! I knaws weal enough that they was noat feade on nothin' at oll, which meakes them loak so poorish! Howsomever, I shall fatten them. I'se warrant—I'se warrant I shall!"

When driven home to sties somewhat more comfortable than the cabins of unfortunate Irishmen, they were well supplied with food which would have been very often considered a luxury by poor Paddy himself, much less by his pigs.



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“Measter,” said the man who had seen them fed, “them there Hirish pigs ha’ not feasted nout for a moonth yet: they feade like nout I seed o’ my laife!!”

“Ay! ay!” replied the master, “I’sse warrant they’ll soon fatten—I’sse warrant they shall, Hodge—they be praimse feeders—I’sse warrant they shall; and then, Hodge, we’ve bit the soft Hirishmun.”

Hodge gave a knowing look at his master, and grinned at this observation.

The next morning Hodge repaired to the sties to see how they were thriving; when, to his great consternation, he found the feeding-troughs clean as if they had been washed, and, not a single Irish pig to be seen or heard about the premises; but to what retreat the animals could have betaken themselves, was completely beyond his comprehension. He scratched his head, and looked about him in much perplexity.

“Dang un!” he exclaimed, “I never seed nout like this.”

He would have proceeded in a strain of cogitation equally enlightened, had not a noise of shouting, alarm, and confusion in the neighborhood, excited his attention. He looked about him, and to his utter astonishment saw that some extraordinary commotion prevailed, that the country was up, and the hills alive with people, who ran, and shouted, and wheeled at full flight in all possible directions. His first object was to join the crowd, which he did as soon as possible, and found that the pigs he had shut up the preceding night in sties whose enclosures were at least four feet high, had cleared them like so many chamois, and were now closely pursued by the neighbors, who rose *en masse* to hunt down and secure such dreadful depredators.

The waste and mischief they had committed in one night were absolutely astonishing. Bean and turnip fields, and vegetable enclosures of all descriptions, kitchen-gardens, corn-fields, and even flower-gardens, were rooted up and destroyed with an appearance of system which would have done credit to Terry Alt himself.

Their speed was the theme of every tongue. Hedges were taken in their flight, and cleared in a style that occasioned the country people to turn up their eyes, and scratch their heads in wonder. Dogs of all degrees bit the dust, and were caught up dead in stupid amazement by their owners, who began to doubt whether or not these extraordinary animals were swine at all. The depredators in the meantime had adopted the Horatian style of battle. Whenever there was an ungenerous advantage taken in the pursuit, by slipping dogs across or before their path, they shot off, at a tangent through the next crowd; many of whom they prostrated in their flight; by this means they escaped the dogs until the latter were somewhat exhausted, when, on finding one in advance of the rest, they turned, and, with standing bristles and burning tusks, fatally checked their pursuer in his full career. To wheel and fly until another got in advance, was then the plan of fight; but, in fact



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the conflict was conducted on the part of the Irish pigs with a fertility of expediency that did credit to their country, and established for those who displayed it, the possession of intellect far superior to that of their opponents. The pigs now began to direct their course towards the sties in which they had been so well fed the night before. This being their last flight they radiated towards one common centre, with a fierceness and celerity that occasioned the woman and children to take shelter within doors. On arriving at the sties, the ease with which they shot themselves over the four-foot walls was incredible. The farmer had caught the alarm, and just came out in time to witness their return; he stood with his hands driven down into the pockets of his red, capacious waistcoat, and uttered not a word. When the last of them came bounding into the sty, Hodge approached, quite breathless and exhausted:

“Oh, measter,” he exclaimed, “these be not Hirish pigs at oll, they be Hirish devils; and yau mun ha’ bought ’em fra a cunning mon!”

[Illustration: *Page 911*— These be not Hirish pigs at oll]

“Hodge,” replied his master, “I’se be bit—I’se heard feather talk about un. That breed’s true Hirish: but I’se try and sell ’em to Squoire Jolly to hunt wi’ as beagles, for he wants a pack. They do say all the swoine that the deevils were put into ha’ been drawn; but for my peart, I’se sure that some on un must ha’ escaped to Hireland.”

Phil during the commotion excited by his knavery in Yorkshire, was traversing the country, in order to dispose of his remaining pig; and the manner in which he effected his first sale of it was as follows:

A gentleman was one evening standing with some laborers by the wayside when a tattered Irishman, equipped in a pair of white dusty brogues, stockings without feet, old patched breeches, a bag slung across his shoulder, his coarse shirt lying open about a neck tanned by the sun into a reddish yellow, a hat nearly the color of the shoes, and a hay rope tied for comfort about his waist; in one hand he also held a straw rope, that depended from the hind leg of a pig which he drove before him; in the other was a cudgel, by the assistance of which he contrived to limp on after it, his two shoulder-blades rising and falling alternately with a shrugging motion that indicated great fatigue.

When he came opposite where the gentleman stood he checked the pig, which instinctively commenced feeding upon the grass by the edge of the road.

“Och,” said he, wiping his brow with the cuff of his coat, “*mavrone orth a muck*,* but I’m kilt wit you. Musha, Gad bless yer haner, an’ maybe ye’d buy a slip of a pig fwhrom me, that has my heart bruck, so she has, if ever any body’s heart was bruck wit the likes of her; an’ sure so there was, no doubt, or I wouldn’t be as I am wid her. I’ll give her a



dead bargain, sir; for it's only to get her aff av my hands I'm wanting plase yer haner—
*husth amuck—husth, a veehone!*** Be asy, an' me in conversation wid his haner here!"



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* My sorrow on you for a pig.

** Silence pig! Silence, you pig! Silence, you vagabond!

“You are an Irishman?” the gentleman inquired.

“I am, sir, from Connaught, yer haner, an’ ill sell the crathur dag cheap, all out. Asy, you thief!”

“I don’t want the pig, my good fellow,” replied the Englishman, without evincing curiosity enough to inquire how he came to have such a commodity for sale.

“She’d be the darlint in no time wid you, sir; the run o’ your kitchen ’ud make her up a beauty, your haner, along wit no trouble to the sarvints about sweepin’ it, or any thing. You’d only have to lay down the potato-basket on the flure, or the misthress, Gad bless her, could do it, an’ not lave a crumblin’ behind her, besides sleepin, your haner, in the carner beyant, if she’d take the throuble.”

The sluggish phlegm of the Englisman was stirred up a little by the twisted, and somewhat incomprehensible nature of these instructions.

“How far do you intend to proceed tonight, Paddy?” said he.

“The sarra one o’ myself knows, plaze yer haner: sure we’ve an ould sayin’ of our own in Ireland beyant—that he’s a wise man can I tell how far he’ll go, sir, till he comes to his journey’s ind. I’ll give this crathur to you at more nor her value, yer haner.”

“More!—why the man knows not what he’s saying,” observed the gentleman; “less you mean, I suppose, Paddy?”

“More or less, sir: you’ll get her a bargain; an’ Gad bless you, sir!”

“But it is a commodity which I don’t want at present. I am very well stocked with pigs, as it is. Try elsewhere.”

“She’d flog the counthry side, sir; an’ if the misthress herself, sir, ’ud shake the wishp o’ sthraw fwor her in the kitchen, sir, near the whoire. Yer haner could spake to her about it; an’ in no time put a knife into her whin you plazed. In regard o’ the other thing, sir—she’s like a Christyeen, yer haner, an’ no throuble, sir, if you’d be seein’ company or any thing.”

“It’s an extraordinary pig, this, of yours.”



“It’s no lie fwhor you, sir; she’s as clane an’ dacent a crathur, sir! Och, if the same pig ‘ud come into the care o’ the misthress, Gad bliss her! an’ I’m sure if she has as much gudness in her face as the hanerable *dinnha ousahl* (* gentleman)—the handsome gintleman she’s married upon!—you’ll have her thrivin’ bravely, sir, shartly, plase Gad, if you’ll take courage. Will I dhrive her up the aveny fwor you, sir? A good gintlewoman I’m sure, is the same misthriss! Will I dhrive her up fwor you, sir? *Shadh amuck—shadh dherin!*”*

Behave yourself pig—behave, I say!

“No, no; I have no further time to lose; you may go forward.”

“Thank your haner; is it whorid toarst the house abow, sir? I wouldn’t be standin’ up, sir, wit you about a thrifle; an you’ll have her, sir, fwhor any thing you plase beyant a pound, yer haner; an’ ‘tis throwin’ her away it is: but one can’t be hard wit a rale gintleman any way.”



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“You only annoy me, man; besides I don’t want the pig; you lose time; I don’t want to buy it, I repeat to you.”

“Gad bliss you, sir—Gad bliss you. Maybe if I’d make up to the mishthress, yer haner! Thrath she wouldn’t turn the crathur from the place, in regard that the tindherness ow the feelin’ would come ower her—the rale gintlewoman, any way! ’Tis dag chape you have her at what I said, sir; an’ Gad bliss you!”

“Do you want to compel me to purchase it whether I will or no?”

“Thrath, it’s whor next to nothin’ I’m giv-in’ her to you, sir; but sure you can make your own price at any thing beyant a pound. *Huerish amuck—sladh anish!*—be asy, you crathur, sure you’re gettin’ into good quarthers, any how—go into the hanerable English gintleman’s kitchen, an’ God knows it’s a pleasure to dale wit ’em. Och, the world’s differ there is betuxt them, an’ our own dirty Irish buckeens, that ’ud shkin a bad skilleen, an’ pay their debts wit the remaindher. The gateman ’ud let me in, yer haner, an’ I’ll meet you at the big house, abow.”

“Upon my honor this is a good jest,” said the gentleman, absolutely teased into a compliance; “you are forcing me to buy that which I don’t want.”

“Sure you will, sir; you’ll want more nor that yit, please Gad, if you be spared. Come, amuck—come, you crathur; faix you’re in luck so you are—gettin’ so good a place wit his haner, here, that you won’t know yourself shortly, plase God.”

He immediately commenced driving his pig towards the gentleman’s residence with such an air of utter simplicity, as would have imposed upon any man not guided by direct inspiration. Whilst he approached the house, its proprietor arrived there by another path a few minutes before him, and, addressing his lady, said:

“My dear, will you come and look at a purchase which an Irishman has absolutely compelled me to make? You had better come and see himself, too, for he is the greatest simpleton of an Irishman I have ever met with.”

The lady’s curiosity was more easily excited than that of her husband. She not only came out, but brought with her some ladies who had been on a visit, in order to hear the Irishman’s brogue, and to amuse themselves at his expense. Of the pig, too, it appeared she was determined to know something.

“George, my love, is the pig also from Ireland?”

“I don’t know, my dear; but I should think so from its fleshless appearance. I have never seen so spare an animal of that class in this country.”



“Juliana,” said one of the ladies to her companion, “don’t go too near him. Gracious! look at the bludgeon, or beam, or something he carries in his hand, to fight’ and beat the people, I suppose: yet,” she added, putting up her glass, “the man is actually not ill-looking; and, though not so tall as the Irishman in Sheridan’s Rivals, he is well made.”

“His eyes are good,” said her companion—“a bright gray, and keen; and were it not that his nose is rather short and turned up, he would be handsome.”



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“George, my love,” exclaimed the lady of the mansion, “he is like most Irishmen of his class that I have seen; indeed, scarcely so intelligent, for he does appear quite a simpleton, except, perhaps, a lurking kind of expression, which is a sign of their humor, I suppose. Don’t you think so, my love?”

“No, my dear; I think him a bad specimen of the Irishman. Whether it is that he talks our language but imperfectly, or that he is a stupid creature, I cannot say; but in selling the pig just now, he actually told me that he would let me have it for more than it was worth.”

“Oh, that was so laughable! We will speak to him, though.”

The degree of estimation in which these civilized English held Phil was so low, that this conversation took place within a few yards of him, precisely as if he had been an animal of an inferior species, or one of the aborigines of New Zealand.

“Pray what is your name?” inquired the matron.

“Phadhrumshagh Corfuffle, plase yer haner: my fadher carried the same name upon him. We’re av the Corfuffles av Leatherum Laghy, my lady; but my grandmudher was a Dornyeen, an’ my own mudher, plase yer haner, was o’ the Shudhurthagans o’ Ballymadoghy, my ladyship, *Sladh anish, amuck bradagh!**—be asy, can’t you, an’ me in conversation wit the beauty o’ the world that I’m spakin’ to.”

* Be quiet now, you wicked pig.

“That’s the Negus language,” observed one of the young ladies, who affected to be a wit and a blue-stocking; “it’s Irish and English mixed.”

“Thrath, an’ but that the handsome young lady’s so purty,” observed Phil, “I’d be sayin’ myself that that’s a quare remark upon a poor unlearned man; but, Gad bless her, she is so purty what can one say for lookin’ an her!”

“The poor man, Adelaide, speaks as well as he can,” replied the lady, rather reprovingly: “he is by no means so wild as one would have expected.”

“Candidly speaking, much *tamer* than I expected,” rejoined the wit. Indeed, I meant the poor Irishman no offence.”

“Where did you get the pig, friend? and how came you to have it for sale so far from home?”

“Fwhy it isn’t whor sale, my lady,” replied Phil, evading the former question; “the masher here, Gad bless him an’ spare him to you, ma’am!—thrath, an’ it’s his four quarters that knew how to pick out a wife, any how, whor beauty an’ all hanerable whormations o’ grandheur—so he did; an’ well he deserves you, my lady: faix, it’s a fine



houseful o' thim you'll have, plase Gad—an' fwhy not? whin it's all in the coorse o' Providence, bein' both so handsome:—he gev me a pound note whor her my ladyship, an' his own plisure aftherwards; an' I'm now waitin' to be ped.”

“What kind of a country is Ireland, as I understand you are an Irishman?”

“Thrath, my lady, it's like fwhat maybe you never seen—a fool's purse, ten guineas goin' out whor one that goes in.”



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“Upon my word that’s wit,” observed the young blue-stocking.

“What’s your opinion of Irishwomen?” the lady continued; “are they handsomer than the English ladies, think you?”

“Murdher, my lady,” says Phil, raising his caubeen, and scratching his head in pretended perplexity, with his linger and thumb, “fwhat am I to say to that, ma’am, and all of yez to the fwfore? But the sarra one av me will give it agin the darlin’s beyant.”

“But which do you think the more handsome?”

“Thrath, I do, my lady; the Irish and English women would flog the world, an’ sure it would be a burnin’ shame to go to sot them agin one another fwfor beauty.”

“Whom do you mean by the ‘darlin’s beyant?’” inquired the blue-stocking, attempting to pronounce the words.

“Faix, miss, who but the crathers ower the wather, that kills us entirely, so they do.”

“I cannot comprehend him,” she added to the lady of the mansion.

“Arrah, maybe I’d make bould to take up the manners from you fwfor a while, my lady, Plase yer haner?” said Phil, addressing the latter.

“I do not properly understand you,” she replied, “speak plainer.”

“Troth, that’s fwfor they do, yer haner; they never go about the bush wit yez—the gintlemen, ma’am, of our country, fwfor they do be coortin’ yez; an’ I want to ax, ma’am, if you plase, fwfor you think of thim, that is if ever any of them had the luck to come across you, my lady?”

“I have not been acquainted with many Irish gentlemen,” she replied, “but I hear they are men of a remarkable character.”

“Faix, ’tis you may say that,” replied Phil; “sowl, my lady, ’tis well for the masther here, plase yer haner, sir, that none o’ them met wit the misthress before you was both marrid, or, wit riverence be it spoken, ’tis the sweet side o’ the tongue they’d be layin’ upon you, ma’am, an’ the rough side to the masther himself, along wit a few scrapes of a pen on a slip o’ paper, jst to appoint the time and place, in regard of her ladyship’s purty complexion—an’ who can deny that, any way? Faix, ma’am, they’ve a way wit them, my counthrymen, that the ladies like well enough to thtravel by. Asy, you deludher, an’ me in conwersaytion wit the quality.”

“I am quite anxious to know how you came by the pig, Paddy,” said the wit.



“Arrah, miss, sure ‘tishn’t pigs you’re thinkin’ on, an’ us discoorsin’ about the gintlemen from Ireland, that you’re all so fond ow here; faix, miss, they’re the boys that fwoight for yees, an’ ’ud rather be bringing an Englishman to the sad fwhor your sakes, nor atin’ bread an’ butther. Fwhy, now, miss, if you were beyant wit us, sarra ounce o’ gunpqwdher we’d have in no time, for love or money.”

“Upon my word I should like to see Ireland!” exclaimed the blue-stocking; “but why would the gunpowder get scarce, pray?”

“Faix, fightin’ about you, miss, an’ all of yez, sure; for myself sees no differ at all in your hanerable fwhormations of beauty and grandheur, an’ all high-flown admirations.”



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“But tell us where you got the pig, Paddy?” persisted the wit, struck naturally enough with the circumstance. “How do you come to have an Irish pig so far from home?”

“Fwhy thin, miss, ‘twas to a brother o’ my own I was bringing it, that was livin’ down the country here, an’ fwhin I came to fwhere he lived, the sarra one o’ me knew the place, in regard o’ havin’ forgotten the name of it entirely, an’ there was I wit the poor crathur an my hands, till his haner here bought it from me—Gad bless you, sir!”

“As I live, there’s a fine Irish blunder,” observed the wit; “I shall put in my commonplace-book—it will be so genuine. I declare I’m quite delighted!”

“Well, Paddy,” said the gentleman, “here’s your money. There’s a pound for you, and that’s much more than the miserable animal is worth.”

“Troth, sir, you have the crathur at what we call in Ireland a bargain.* Maybe yer haner ’ud spit upon the money fwhor luck, sir. It’s the way we do, sir, beyant.”

* Ironically—a take in.

“No, no, Paddy, take it as it is. Good heavens! what barbarous habits these Irish have in all their modes of life, and how far they are removed from anything like civilization!”

“Thank yer haner. Faix, sir, this’ll come so handy for the landlord at kome, in regard o’ the rint for the bit o’ phatie ground, so it will, if I can get home agin widout brakin’ it. Arrah, maybe yer haner ’ud give me the price o’ my bed, an’ a bit to ate, sir, an’ keep me from brakin’ in upon this, sir, Gad bless the money! I’m thinkin’ o’ the poor wife an’ childher, sir—strivin’, so I am, to do fwhor the darlins.”

“Poor soul,” said the lady, “he is affectionate in the midst of his wretchedness and ignorance.”

“Here—here,” replied the Englishman, anxious to get rid of him, “there’s a shilling, which I give because you appear to be attached to your family.”

“Och, och, fwhat can I say, sir, only that long may you reign ower your family, an’ the hanerable ladies to the fwore, sir. Gad fwhorever bliss you, sir, but you’re the kind, noble gintleman, an’ all belongin’ to you, sir!”

Having received the shilling, he was in the act of departing, when, after turning it deliberately in his hand, shrugging his shoulders two or three times, and scratching his head, with a vacant face he approached the lady.

“Musha, ma’am, an maybe ye’d have the tindherness in your heart, seein’ that the gudness is in yer hanerable face, any way, an’ it would save the skillyeen that the masther gev’d for payin’ my passage, so it would, jist to bid the steward, my ladyship, to



ardher me a bit to ate in the kitchen below. The hunger, ma'am, is hard upon me, my lady; an' fwhat I'm doin', sure, is in regard o' the wife at home, an' the childher, the crathurs, an' me far fwhrom them, in a sthrange country, Gad help me!"

"What a singular being, George! and how beautifully is the economy of domestic affection exemplified, notwithstanding his half-savage state, in the little plans he devises for the benefit of his wife and children!" exclaimed the good lady, quite unconscious that Phil was a bachelor. "Juliana, my love, desire Timmins to give him his dinner. Follow this young lady, good man, and she will order you refreshment."



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“Gad’s blessin’ upon your beauty an’ gudness, my lady; an’ a man might thraavel far afore he’d meet the likes o’ you for aither o’ them. Is it the other handsome young lady I’m to folly, ma’am?”

“Yes,” replied the young wit, with an arch smile; “come after me.”

“Thrath, miss, an’ it’s an asy task to do that, any way; wit a heart an’ a half I go, acushla; an’ I seen the day, miss, that it’s not much of mate an’ dhrink would thruble me, if I jist got lave to be lookin’ at you, wit nothing but yourself to think an. But the wife an’ childher, miss, makes great changes in us entirely.”

“Why you are quite gallant, Paddy.”

“Trath, I suppose I am now, miss; but you see, my honorable young lady, that’s our fw hailin’ at home: the counthry’s poor, an’ we can’t help it, whedor or not. We’re fw horced to it, miss, whin we come ower here, by you, an’ the likes o’ you, mavourneen!”

Phil then proceeded to the house, was sent to the kitchen by the young lady, and furnished through the steward with an abundant supply of cold meat, bread, and beer, of which he contrived to make a meal that somewhat astonished the servants. Having satisfied his hunger, he deliberately—but with the greatest simplicity of countenance—filled the wallet which he carried slung across his back, with whatever he had left, observing as he did it:—

“Fwhy, thin, ’tis sthrange it is, that the same custom is wit us in Ireland beyant that is here: fw hor whinever a thraveller is axed in, he always brings fw hat he doesn’t ate along wit him. An sure enough it’s the same here amongst yez,” added he, packing up the bread and beef as he spoke, “but Gad bliss the custom, any how, fw hor it’s a good one!”

When he had secured the provender, and was ready to resume his journey, he began to yawn, and to exhibit the most unequivocal symptoms of fatigue.

“Arrah, sir,” said he to the steward, “you wouldn’t have e’er an ould barn that I’d throw myself in fw hor the night? The sarra leg I have to put undher me, now that I’ve got stiff with the sittin’ so lang; that, an’ a wishp o’ sthraw, to sleep an, an’ Gad bliss you!”

“Paddy, I cannot say,” replied the steward; “but I shall ask my master, and if he orders it, you shall have the comfort of a hard floor and clean straw, Paddy—that you shall.”

“Many thanks to you, sir: it’s in your face, in thrath, the same gudness an’ ginerosity.”

The gentleman, on hearing Phil’s request to be permitted a sleeping-place in the barn, was rather surprised at his wretched notion of comfort than at the request itself.



“Certainly, Timmins, let him sleep there,” he replied; “give him sacks and straw enough. I dare say he will feel the privilege a luxury, poor devil, after his fatigue. Give him his breakfast in the morning, Timmins. Good heavens,” he added, “what a singular people! What an amazing progress civilization must make before these Irish can be brought at all near the commonest standard of humanity!”



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At this moment Phil, who was determined to back the steward's request, approached them.

"Paddy," said the gentleman, anticipating him, "I have ordered you sacks and straw in the barn, and your breakfast in the morning before you set out."

"Thrath," said Phil, "if there's e'er a stray blissin' goin', depind an it, sir, you'll get it fwhor your hanerable ginerosity to the sthranger. But about the 'slip,' sir—if the misthress herself 'ud shake the whisp o' sthraw fwhor her in the far carner o' the kitchen below, an' see her gettin' her supper, the crathur, before she'd put her to bed, she'd be thrivin' like a salmon, sir, in less than no time; and to ardher the sarwints, sir, if you plase, not to be defraudin' the crathur of the big phaties. Fwhor in regard it cannot spake fwhor itself, sir, it frets as wise as a Christyeen, when it's not honestly thrated."

"Never fear, Paddy; we shall take good care of it."

"Thank you, sir, but I aften heered, sir, that you dunno how to feed pigs in this counthry in ardher to mix the fwhat an' lane, lair (layer) about."

"And how do you manage that in Ireland, Paddy?"

"Fwhy, sir, I'll tell you how the misthress Gad bless her, will manage it fwhor you. Take the crathur, sir, an' feed it to-morrow, till its as full as a tick—that's for the fwhat, sir; thin let her give it nothin' at all the next day, but keep it black fwfastin'—that's fwhor the lane (leap). Let her stick to that, sir, keepin' it atin' one day an' fastin' an-odher, for six months, thin put a knife in it, an' if you don't have the fwhat an' lane, lair about, beautiful all out, fwhy nirer bl'eve Phadrumshagh Corfuffle agin. Ay, indeed!"

The Englishman looked keenly at Phil, but could only read in his countenance a thorough and implicit belief in his own recipe for mixing the fat and lean. It is impossible to express his contempt for the sense and intellect of Phil; nothing could surpass it but the contempt which Phil entertained for him.

"Well," said he to the servant, "I have often heard of the barbarous habits of the Irish, but I must say that the incidents of this evening have set my mind at rest upon the subject. Good heavens! when will ever this besotted country rise in the scale of nations! Did ever a human being hear of such a method of feeding swine! I should have thought it incredible had I heard it from any but an Irishman!"

Phil then retired to the kitchen, where his assumed simplicity highly amused the servants, who, after an hour or two's fun with "Paddy," conducted him in a kind of contemptuous procession to the barn, where they left him to his repose.

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The next morning he failed to appear at the hour of breakfast, but his non-appearance was attributed to his fatigue, in consequence of which he was supposed to have overslept himself. On going, however, to call him from the barn, they discovered that he had decamped; and on looking after the “slip,” it was found that both had taken French leave of the Englishman. Phil and the pig had actually travelled fifteen miles that morning, before the hour on which he was missed—Phil going at a dog’s trot, and the pig following at such a respectful distance as might not appear to identify them as fellow-travellers. In this manner Phil sold the pig to upwards of two dozen intelligent English gentlemen and farmers, and after winding up his bargains successfully, both arrived in Liverpool, highly delighted by their commercial trip through England.

The passage from Liverpool to Dublin, in Phil’s time, was far different to that which steam and British enterprise have since made it. A vessel was ready to sail for the latter place on the very day of Phil’s arrival in town; and, as he felt rather anxious to get out of England as soon as he could, he came, after selling his pig in good earnest, to the aforesaid vessel to ascertain if it were possible to get a deck passage. The year had then advanced to the latter part of autumn; so that it was the season when those inconceivable hordes of Irishmen who emigrate periodically for the purpose of lightening John Bull’s labor, were in the act of returning to that country in which they find little to welcome them—but domestic affection and misery.

When Phil arrived at the vessel, he found the captain in a state of peculiar difficulty. About twelve or fourteen gentlemen of rank and property, together with a score or upwards of highly respectable persons, but of less consideration, were in equal embarrassment. The fact was, that as no other vessel left Liverpool that day, about five hundred Irishmen, mostly reapers and mowers, had crowded upon deck, each determined to keep his place at all hazards. The captain, whose vessel was small, and none of the stoutest, flatly refused to put to sea with such a number. He told them it was madness to think of it; he could not risk the lives of the other passengers, nor even their own, by sailing with five hundred on the deck of so small a vessel. If the one-half of them would withdraw peaceably, he would carry the other half, which was as much as he could possibly accomplish. They were very willing to grant that what he said was true; but in the meantime, not a man of them would move, and to clear out such a number of fellows, who loved nothing better than fighting, armed, too, with sickles and scythes, was a task beyond either his ability or inclination to execute. He remonstrated with them, entreated, raged, swore, and threatened; but all to no purpose. His threats and entreaties were received with equal good-humor. Gibes and jokes were broken on him without number, and as his passion increased, so did their mirth, until nothing could be seen but the captain in vehement gesticulation, the Irishmen huzzaing him so vociferously, that his damns and curses, uttered against them, could not reach even his own ears.



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"Gentlemen," said he to his cabin passengers, "for the love of Heaven, tax your invention to discover some means whereby to get one-half of these men out of the vessel, otherwise it will be impossible that we can sail to-day. I have already proffered to take one-half of them by lot, but they will not hear of it; and how to manage I am sure I don't know."

The matter, however, was beyond their depth; the thing seemed utterly impracticable, and the chances of their putting to sea were becoming fainter and fainter.

"Bl—t their eyes!" he at length exclaimed, "the ragged, hungry devils! If they heard me with decency I could bear their obstinacy better: but no, they must turn me into ridicule, and break their jests, and turn their cursed barbarous grins upon me in my own vessel. I say, boys," he added, proceeding to address them once more—"I say, savages, I have just three observations to make. The first is,"—

"Arrah, Captain, avourneen, hadn't you better get upon a stool," said a voice, "an' put a text before it, thin divide it dacently into three halves, an' make a sarmon of it."

"Captain, you wor intended for the church," added another. "You're the moral (* model) of a Methodist preacher, if you wor dressed in black."

"Let him alone," said a third; "he'd be a jinteel man enough in a wildherness, an' 'ud make an illigant dancin'-masther to the bears."

"He's as graceful as a shaved pig on its hind legs, dancin' the 'Baltithrum Jig.'"

The captain's face was literally black with passion: he turned away with a curse, which produced another huzza, and swore that he would rather encounter the Bay of Biscay in a storm, than have anything to do with such an unmanageable mob.

"Captain," said a little, shrewd-looking Connaught man, "what 'ud you be willin' to give anybody, ower an' abow his free passage, that 'ud tell you how to get one half o' them out?"

"I'll give him a crown," replied the captain, "together with grog and rations to the eyes: I'll be hanged if I don't."

"Then I'll do it fwhor you, sir, if you keep your word wit me."

"Done!" said the captain; "it's a bargain, my good fellow, if you accomplish it; and, what's more, I'll consider you a knowing one."

"I'm a poor Cannaught man, your haner," replied our friend Phil; "but what's to prevent me thryin'? Tell thim," he continued, "that you must go; pertind to be for takin' thim all wit you, sir. Put Munster agin Connaught, one-half on this side, an' the odher an that, to



keep the crathur of a ship steady, your haner; an' fwhin you have thim half an' half, wit a little room betuxt thim, 'now,' says yer haner, 'boys, you're divided into two halves; if one side kicks the other out o' the ship, I'll bring the conquirors.'"

The captain said not a word in reply to Phil, but immediately ranged the Munster and Connaught men on each side of the deck—a matter which he found little difficulty in accomplishing, for each party, hoping that he intended to take themselves, readily declared their province, and stood together. When they were properly separated, there still remained about forty or fifty persons belonging to neither province; but, at Phil's suggestion, the captain paired them off to each division, man for man, until they were drawn up into two bodies.



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“Now” said he, “there you stand: let one-half of you drub the other out of the vessel, and the conquerors shall get their passage.”

Instant was the struggle that ensued for the sake of securing a passage, and from the anxiety to save a shilling, by getting out of Liverpool on that day. The saving of the shilling is indeed a consideration with Paddy which drives him to the various resources of begging, claiming kindred with his resident countrymen in England, pretended illness, coming to be passed from parish to parish, and all the turnings and shiftings which his reluctance to part with money renders necessary. Another night, therefore, and probably another day, in Liverpool, would have been attended with expense. This argument prevailed with all: with Munster as well as with Connaught, and they fought accordingly.

When the attack first commenced, each party hoped to be able to expel the other without blows. This plan was soon abandoned. In a few minutes the sticks and fists were busy. Throttling, tugging, cuffing, and knocking down—shouting, hallooing, huzzaing, and yelling, gave evident proofs that the captain, in embracing Phil's proposal, had unwittingly applied the match to a mine, whose explosion was likely to be attended with disastrous consequences. As the fight became warm, and the struggle more desperate, the hooks and scythes were resorted to; blood began to flow, and men to fall, disabled and apparently dying. The immense crowd which had now assembled to witness the fight among the Irishmen, could not stand tamely by, and see so many lives likely to be lost, without calling in the civil authorities. A number of constables in a few minutes attended; but these worthy officers of the civil authorities experienced very uncivil treatment from the fists, cudgels, and sickles of both parties. In fact, they were obliged to get from among the rioters with all possible celerity, and to suggest to the magistrates the necessity of calling in the military.

In the meantime the battle rose into a furious and bitter struggle for victory. The deck of the vessel was actually slippery with blood, and many were lying in an almost lifeless state. Several were pitched into the hold, and had their legs and arms broken by the fall; some were tossed over the sides of the vessel, and only saved from drowning by the activity of the sailors; and not a few of those who had been knocked down in the beginning of the fray were trampled into insensibility.

The Munster men at length gave way; and their opponents, following up their advantage, succeeded in driving them to a man out of the vessel, just as the military arrived. Fortunately their interference was unnecessary. The ruffianly captain's object was accomplished; and as no lives were lost, nor any injury more serious than broken bones and flesh-wounds sustained, he got the vessel in readiness, and put to sea.

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Who would not think that the Irish were a nation of misers, when our readers are informed that all this bloodshed arose from their unwillingness to lose a shilling by remaining in Liverpool another night? Or who could believe that these very men, on reaching home, and meeting their friends in a fair or market, or in a public-house after mass on a Sunday, would sit down and spend, recklessly and foolishly, that very money which in another country they part with as if it were their very heart's blood? Yet so it is! Unfortunately, Paddy is wiser anywhere than at home, where wisdom, sobriety, and industry are best calculated to promote his own interests.

This slight sketch of Phil Purcel we have presented to our readers as a specimen of the low, cunning Connaught-man; and we have only to add, that neither the pig-selling scene, nor the battle on the deck of the vessel in Liverpool, is fictitious. On the contrary, we have purposely kept the tone of our description of the latter circumstance beneath the reality. Phil, however, is not drawn as a general portrait, but as one of that knavish class of men called "jobbers," a description of swindlers certainly not more common in Ireland than in any other country. We have known Connaughtmen as honest and honorable as it was possible to be; yet there is a strong prejudice entertained against them in every other province of Ireland, as is evident by the old adage, "Never trust a Connaughtman."

THE GEOGRAPHY OF AN IRISH OATH.

No pen can do justice to the extravagance and frolic inseparable from the character of the Irish people; nor has any system of philosophy been discovered that can with moral fitness be applied to them. Phrenology fails to explain it; for, so far as the craniums of Irishmen are concerned, according to the most capital surveys hitherto made and reported on, it appears that, inasmuch as their moral and intellectual organs predominate over the physical and sensual, the people ought, therefore, to be ranked at the very tip-top of morality. We would warn the phrenologists, however, not to be too sanguine in drawing inferences from an examination of Paddy's head. Heaven only knows the scenes in which it is engaged, and the protuberances created by a long life of hard fighting. Many an organ and development is brought out on it by the cudgel, that never would have appeared had Nature been left to herself.

Drinking, fighting, and swearing, are the three great characteristics of every people. Paddy's love of fighting and of whiskey has been long proverbial; and of his tact in swearing much has also been said. But there is one department of oath-making in which he stands unrivalled and unapproachable; I mean the alibi. There is where he shines, where his oath, instead of being a mere matter of fact or opinion, rises up into the dignity of epic narrative, containing within itself, all the complexity of machinery, harmony of parts, and fertility of invention, by which your true epic should be characterized.

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The Englishman, whom we will call the historian in swearing, will depose to the truth of this or that fact, but there the line is drawn; he swears his oath so far as he knows, and stands still. "I'm sure, for my part, I don't know; I've said all I know about it," and beyond this his besotted intellect goeth not.

The Scotchman, on the other hand, who is the metaphysician in swearing, sometimes borders on equivocation. He decidedly goes farther than the Englishman, not because he has less honesty, but more prudence. He will assent to, or deny a proposition; for the Englishman's "I don't know," and the Scotchman's "I dinna ken," are two very distinct assertions when properly understood. The former stands out a monument of dulness, an insuperable barrier against inquiry, ingenuity, and fancy; but the latter frequently stretches itself so as to embrace hypothetically a particular opinion.

But Paddy! Put him forward to prove an alibi for his fourteenth or fifteenth cousin, and you will be gratified by the pomp, pride, and circumstance of true swearing. Every oath with him is an epic—pure poetry, abounding with humor, pathos, and the highest order of invention and talent. He is not at ease, it is true, under facts; there is something too commonplace in dealing with them, which his genius scorns. But his flights—his flights are beautiful; and his episodes admirable and happy. In fact, he is an improvisatore at oath-taking; with this difference, that his extempore oaths possess all the ease and correctness of labor and design.

He is not, however, *altogether* averse to facts: but, like your true poet, he veils, changes, and modifies them with such skill, that they possess all the merit and graces of fiction. If he happen to make an assertion incompatible with the plan of the piece, his genius acquires fresh energy, enables him to widen the design, and to create new machinery, with such happiness of adaptation, that what appeared out of proportion of character is made, in his hands, to contribute to the general strength and beauty of the oath.

'Tis true, there is nothing perfect under the sun; but if there were, it would certainly be Paddy at an *alibi*. Some flaws, no doubt, occur; some slight inaccuracies may be noticed by a critical eye; an occasional anachronism stands out, and a mistake or so in geography; but let it be recollected that Paddy's alibi is but a human production; let us not judge him by harsher rules than those which we apply to Homer, Virgil, or Shakspeare.

"Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus," is allowed on all hands. Virgil made Dido and Aeneas contemporary, though they were not so; and Shakspeare, by the creative power of his genius, changed an inland town into a seaport. Come, come, have bowels. Let epic swearing be treated with the same courtesy shown to epic poetry, that is, if both are the production of a rare genius. I maintain, that when Paddy commits a blemish he is too harshly admonished for it. When he soars out of sight here, as occasionally happens, does he not frequently alight somewhere about Sydney Bay, much against his



own inclination? And if he puts forth a hasty production, is he not compelled, for the space of seven or fourteen years, to revise his oath? But, indeed, few words of fiction are properly encouraged in Ireland.

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It would be unpardonable in us, however, to overlook the beneficial effects of Paddy's peculiar genius in swearing alibis. Some persons, who display their own egregious ignorance of morality, may be disposed to think that it tends to lessen the obligation of an oath, by inducing a habit among the people of swearing to what is not true. We look upon such persons as very dangerous to Ireland and to the repeal of the Union; and we request them not to push their principles too far in the disturbed parts of the country. Could society hold together a single day, if nothing but truth were spoken, would not law and lawyers soon become obsolete, if nothing but truth were sworn what would become of parliament if truth alone were uttered there? Its annual proceedings might be dispatched in a month. Fiction is the basis of society, the bond of commercial prosperity, the channel of communication between nation and nation, and not unfrequently the interpreter between a man and his own conscience.

For these, and many other reasons which we could adduce, we say with Paddy, "Long life to fiction!" When associated with swearing, it shines in its brightest colors. What, for instance, is calculated to produce the best and purest of the moral virtues so beautifully, as the swearing an alibi? Here are fortitude and a love of freedom resisting oppression; for it is well known that all law is oppression in Ireland.

There is compassion for the peculiar state of the poor boy, who, perhaps, only burned a family in their beds; benevolence to prompt the generous effort in his behalf; disinterestedness to run the risk of becoming an involuntary absentee; fortitude in encountering a host of brazen-faced lawyers; patience under the unsparing gripe of a cross-examiner; perseverance in conducting the oath to its close against a host of difficulties; and friendship, which bottoms and crowns them all.

Paddy's merits, however, touching the alibi, rest not here. Fiction on these occasions only teaches him how to perform a duty. It may be, that he is under the obligation of a previous oath not to give evidence against certain of his friends and associates. Now, could anything in the whole circle of religion or ethics be conceived that renders the epic style of swearing so incumbent upon Paddy? There is a kind of moral fitness in all things; for where the necessity of invention exists, it is consolatory to reflect that the ability to invent is bestowed along with it.

Next to the alibi comes Paddy's powers in sustaining a cross-examination. Many person thinks that this is his forte; but we cannot yield to such an opinion, nor compromise his originality of conception in the scope and plan of an alibi. It is marked by a minuteness of touch, and a peculiarity of expression which give it every appearance of real life. The circumstances are so well imagined, the groups so naturally disposed, the coloring so finished, and the background in such fine perspective, that the whole picture presents you with such keeping and *vraisemblance*, as could be accomplished only by the genius of a master.

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In point of interest, however, we must admit that his ability in a cross-examination ranks next to his skill in planning an alibi. There is, in the former, a versatility of talent that keeps him always ready; a happiness of retort, generally disastrous to the wit of the most established cross-examiner; an apparent simplicity, which is quite as impenetrable as the lawyer's assurance; a *vis comica*, which puts the court in tears; and an originality of sorrow, that often convulses it with laughter. His resources, when he is pressed, are inexhaustible; and the address, with which he contrives to gain time, that he may suit his reply to the object of his evidence, is beyond all praise. And yet his appearance when he mounts the table is anything but prepossessing; a sheepish look, and a loose-jointed frame of body, wrapped in a frieze great-coat, do not promise much. Nay, there is often a rueful blank expression in his visage, which might lead a stranger to anticipate nothing but blunders and dulness. This, however, is hypocrisy of the first water. Just observe the tact with which he places his caubeen upon the table, his kippeen across it, and the experienced air with which he pulls up the waistbands of his breeches, absolutely girding his loins for battle. 'Tis true his blue eye has at present nothing remarkable in it, except a drop or to of the native; but that is not remarkable.

[Illustration: PAGE 919— A rueful blank expression in his visage]

When the direct examination has been concluded, nothing can be finer than the simplicity with which he turns round to the lawyer who is to cross-examine him. Yet, as if conscious that firmness and caution are his main guards, he again pulls up his waistbands with a more vigorous hitch, looks shyly into the very eyes of his opponent, and awaits the first blow.

The question at length comes; and Paddy, after having raised the collar of his big coat on his shoulder, and twisted up the shoulder along with it, directly puts the query back to the lawyer, without altering a syllable of it, for the purpose of ascertaining more accurately whether that is the precise question that has been put to him; for Paddy is conscientious. Then is the science displayed on both sides. The one, a veteran, trained in all the technicalities of legal puzzles, irony, blarney, sarcasm, impudence, stock jokes, quirks, rigmarolery, brow-beating, ridicule, and subtlety; the other a poor peasant, relying only upon the justice of a good cause and the gifts of nature; without either experience, or learning, and with nothing but his native modesty to meet the forensic effrontery of his antagonist.

Our readers will perceive that the odds are a thousand to one against Paddy; yet, when he replies to a hackneyed genius at cross-examination, how does it happen that he uniformly elicits those roars of laughter which rise in the court, and convulse it from the judge to the crier? In this laugh, which is usually at the expense of the cross-examiner, Paddy himself always joins, so that the counsel has the double satisfaction of being made not only the jest of the judge and his brother lawyers, but of the ragged witness whom he attempted to make ridiculous.

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It is not impossible that this merry mode of dispensing justice may somewhat encourage Paddy in that independence of mind which relishes not the idea of being altogether bound by oaths that are too often administered with a jocular spirit. To most of the Irish in general an oath is a solemn, to some, an awful thing. Of this wholesome reverence for its sanction, two or three testimonies given in a court of justice usually cured them. The indifferent, business-like manner in which the oaths are put, the sing-song tone of voice, the rapid utterance of the words, give to this solemn act an appearance of excellent burlesque, which ultimately renders the whole proceedings remarkable for the absence of truth and reality; but, at the same time, gives them unquestionable merit as a dramatic representation, abounding with fiction, well related and ably acted.

Thumb-kissing is another feature in Paddy's adroitness too important to be passed over in silence. Here his tact shines out again! It would be impossible for him, in many cases, to meet the perplexities of a cross-examination so cleverly as he does, if he did not believe that he had, by kissing his thumb instead of the book, actually taken no oath, and consequently given to himself a wider range of action. We must admit, however, that this very circumstance involves him in difficulties which are sometimes peculiarly embarrassing. Taking everything into consideration, the prospect of freedom for his sixth cousin, the consciousness of having kissed his thumb, or the consoling reflection that he swore only on a Law Bible, it must be granted that the opportunities presented by a cross-examination are well calculated to display his wit, humor, and fertility of invention. He is accordingly great in it; but still we maintain that his execution of an alibi is his ablest performance, comprising, as it does, both the conception and construction of the work.

Both the oaths and imprecations of the Irish display, like those who use them, indications of great cruelty and great humor. Many of the former exhibit that ingenuity which comes out when Paddy is on his cross-examination in a court of justice. Every people, it is true, have resorted to the habit of mutilating or changing in their oaths the letters which form the Creator's name; but we question if any have surpassed the Irish in the cleverness with which they accomplish it. Mock oaths are habitual to Irishmen in ordinary conversation; but the use of any or all of them is not considered to constitute an oath: on the contrary, they are in the mouths of many who would not, except upon a very solemn occasion indeed, swear by the name of the Deity in its proper form.



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The ingenuity of their mock oaths is sufficient to occasion much perplexity to any one disposed to consider it in connection with the character and moral feelings of the people. Whether to note it as a reluctance on their part to incur the guilt of an oath, or as a proof of habitual tact in evading it by artifice, is manifestly a difficulty hard to be overcome. We are decidedly inclined to the former; for although there is much laxity of principle among Irishmen, naturally to be expected from men whose moral state has been neglected by the legislature, and deteriorated by political and religious asperity, acting upon quick passions and badly regulated minds—yet we know that they possess, after all, a strong, but vague undirected sense of devotional feeling and reverence, which are associated with great crimes and awfully dark shades of character. This explains one chief cause of the sympathy which is felt in Ireland for criminals from whom the law exacts the fatal penalty of death; and it also accounts, independently of the existence of any illegal association, for the terrible retribution inflicted upon those who come forward to prosecute them. It is not in Ireland with criminals as in other countries, where the character of a murderer or incendiary is notoriously bad, as resulting from a life of gradual profligacy and villany. Far from it. In Ireland you will find those crimes perpetrated by men who are good fathers, good husbands, good sons, and good neighbors—by men who would share their last morsel or their last shilling with a fellow-creature in distress—who would generously lose their lives for a man who had obliged them, provided he had not incurred their enmity—and who would protect a defenseless stranger as far as lay in their power. There are some mock oaths among Irishmen which must have had their origin amongst those whose habits of thought were much more elevated than could be supposed to characterize the lower orders. “By the powers of death” is never now used as we have written it; but the ludicrous travestie of it, “by the powdhors o’ delf,” is quite common. Of this and other mock oaths it may be right to observe, that those who swear by them are in general ignorant of their proper origin. There are some, however, of this description whose original form is well known. One of these Paddy displays considerable ingenuity in using. “By the cross” can scarcely be classed under the mock oaths, but the manner in which it is pressed into asseverations is amusing. When Paddy is affirming a truth he swears “by the crass” simply, and this with him is an oath of considerable obligation. He generally, in order to render it more impressive, accompanies it with suitable action, that is, he places the forefinger of each hand across, that he may assail you through two senses instead of one. On the contrary, when he intends to hoax you by asserting what is not true, he ingeniously multiplies the oath, and swears “by the five crashes,” that



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is by his own five fingers, placing at the same time his four fingers and his thumbs across each other in a most impressive and vehement manner. Don't believe him then—the knave is lying as fast as possible, and with no remorse. “By the crass o' Christ” is an oath of much solemnity, and seldom used in a falsehood. Paddy also often places two bits of straws across, and sometimes two sticks, upon which he swears with an appearance of great heat and sincerity—*sed caveto!*

Irishmen generally consider iron as a sacred metal. In the interior of the country, the thieves (but few in number) are frequently averse to stealing it. Why it possesses this hold upon their affections it is difficult to say, but it is certain that they rank it among their sacred things, consider that to find it is lucky, and nail it over their doors when found in the convenient shape of a horse-shoe. It is also used as a medium of asserting truth. We believe, however, that the sanction it imposes is not very strong. “By this blessed iron!”—“by this blessed an' holy iron!” are oaths of an inferior grade; but if the circumstance on which they are founded be a matter of indifference, they seldom depart from truth in using them.

We have said that Paddy, when engaged in a fight, is never at a loss for a weapon, and we may also affirm that he is never at a loss for an oath. When relating a narrative, or some other circumstance of his own invention, if contradicted, he will corroborate it, in order to sustain his credit or produce the proper impression, by an abrupt oath upon the first object he can seize. “Arrah, nonsense! by this pipe in my hand, it's as throe as”—and then, before he completes the illustration, he goes on with a fine specimen of equivocation—“By the stool I'm sittin' an, it is; an' what more would, you have from me barrin' I take my book oath of it?” Thus does he, under the mask of an insinuation, induce you to believe that he has actually sworn it, whereas the oath is always left undefined and incomplete.

Sometimes he is exceedingly comprehensive in his adjurations, and swears upon a magnificent scale; as, for instance,—“By the contints of all the books that ever wor opened an' shut, it's as throe as the sun to the dial.” This certainly leaves “the five crasses” immeasurably behind. However, be cautious, and not too confident in taking so sweeping and learned an oath upon trust, notwithstanding its imposing effect. We grant, indeed, that an oath which comprehends within its scope all the learned libraries of Europe, including even the Alexandrian of old, is not only an erudite one, but establishes in a high degree the taste of the swearer, and displays on his part an uncommon grasp of intellect. Still we recommend you, whenever you hear an alleged fact substantiated by it, to set your ear as sharply as possible; for, after all, it is more than probable that every book by which he has sworn might be contained in a nutshell. The secret may be briefly explained:—Paddy is in the habit of substituting the word never for ever. “By all the books that never wor opened or shut,” the reader perceives, is only a nourish of trumpets—a mere delusion of the enemy.



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In fact, Paddy has oaths rising gradually from the lying ludicrous to the superstitious solemn, each of which finely illustrates the nature of the subject to which it is applied. When he swears “By the contints o’ Moll Kelly’s Primer,” or “By the piper that played afore Moses,” you are, perhaps, as strongly inclined to believe him as when he draws upon a more serious oath; that is, you almost regret the thing is not the gospel that Paddy asserts it to be. In the former sense, the humorous narrative which calls forth the laughable burlesque of “By the piper o’ Moses,” is usually the richest lie in the whole range of fiction.

Paddy is, in his ejaculatory, as well as in all his other mock oaths, a kind, of smuggler in morality, imposing as often as he can upon his own conscience, and upon those who exercise spiritual authority over him. Perhaps more of his oaths are blood-stained than would be found among the inhabitants of all Christendom put together.

Paddy’s oaths in his amours are generally rich specimens of humorous knavery and cunning. It occasionally happens—but for the honor of our virtuous countrywomen, we say but rarely—that by the honey of his flattering and delusive tongue, he succeeds in placing some unsuspecting girl’s reputation in rather a hazardous predicament. When the priest comes to investigate the affair, and to cause him to make compensation to the innocent creature who suffered by his blandishments, it is almost uniformly ascertained that, in order to satisfy her scruples as to the honesty of his promises, he had sworn marriage to her on a book of ballads!!! In other cases blank books have been used for the same purpose.

If, however, you wish to pin Paddy up in a corner, get him a Relic, a Catholic prayer-book, or a Douay Bible to swear upon. Here is where the fox—notwithstanding all his turnings and windings upon heretic Bibles, books, or ballads, or mock oaths—is caught at last. The strongest principle in him is superstition. It may be found as the prime mover in his best and worst actions. An atrocious man, who is superstitious, will perform many good and charitable actions, with a hope that their merit in the sight of God may cancel the guilt of his crimes. On the other hand, a good man, who is superstitiously the slave of his religious opinions, will lend himself to those illegal combinations, whose object is, by keeping ready a system of organized opposition to an heretical government, to fulfil, if a political crisis should render it practicable, the absurd prophecies of Pastorini and Columbkil. Although the prophecies of the former would appear to be out of date to a rational reader, yet Paddy, who can see farther into prophecy than any rational reader, honestly believes that Pastorini has left for those who are superstitiously given, sufficient range of expectation in several parts of his work.

We might enumerate many other oaths in frequent use among the peasantry; but as our object is not to detail them at full length, we trust that those already specified may be considered sufficient to enable our readers to get a fuller insight into their character, and their moral influence upon the people.



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The next thing which occurs to us in connection with the present subject, is cursing; and here again Paddy holds the first place. His imprecations are often full, bitter, and intense. Indeed, there is more poetry and epigrammatic point in them than in those of any other country in the world.

We find it a difficult thing to enumerate the Irish curses, so as to do justice to a subject so varied and so liable to be shifted and improved by the fertile genius of those who send them abroad. Indeed, to reduce them into order and method would be a task of considerable difficulty. Every occasion, and every fit of passion, frequently produce a new curse, perhaps equal in bitterness to any that has gone before it.

Many of the Irish imprecations are difficult to be understood, having their origin in some historical event, or in poetical metaphors that require a considerable process of reasoning to explain them. Of this twofold class is that general one, "The curse of Cromwell on you!" which means, may you suffer all that a tyrant like Cromwell would inflict! and "The curse o'the crows upon you!" which is probably an allusion to the Danish invasion—a raven being the symbol of Denmark; or it may be tantamount to "May you rot on the hills, that the crows may feed upon your carcass!" Perhaps it may thus be understood to imprecate death upon you or some member of your house—alluding to the superstition of rooks hovering over the habitations of the sick, when the malady with which they are afflicted is known to be fatal. Indeed, the latter must certainly be the meaning of it, as is evident from the proverb of "Die, an' give the crow a puddin'."

"Hell's cure to you!—the devil's luck to you!—high hanging to you!—hard feeling to you!—a short coorse to you!" are all pretty intense, and generally used under provocation and passion. In these cases the curses just mentioned are directed immediately to the offensive object, and there certainly is no want of the *malus animus* to give them energy. It would be easy to multiply the imprecations belonging to this class among the peasantry, but the task is rather unpleasant. There are a few, however, which, in consequence of their ingenuity, we cannot pass over: they are, in sooth, studies for the swearer. "May you never die till you see your own funeral!" is a very beautiful specimen of the periphrasis: it simply means, may you be hanged; for he who is hanged is humorously said to be favored with a view of that sombre spectacle, by which they mean the crowd that attends an execution. To the same purpose is, "May you die wid a caper in your heel!"—"May you die in your pumps!"—"May your last dance be a hornpipe on the air!" These are all emblematic of hanging, and are uttered sometimes in jest, and occasionally in earnest. "May the grass grow before your door!" is highly imaginative and poetical. Nothing, indeed, can present the mind with a stronger or more picturesque emblem of desolation and ruin. Its malignity is terrible.



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There are also mock imprecations as well as mock oaths. Of this character are, "The devil go with you an' sixpence, an' thin you'll want neither money nor company!" This humorous and considerate curse is generally confined to the female sex. When Paddy happens to be in a romping mood, and teases his sweetheart too much, she usually utters it with a countenance combating with smiles and frowns, while she stands in the act of pinning up her dishevelled hair; her cheeks, particularly the one next Paddy, deepened into a becoming blush.

"Bad scran to you!" is another form seldom used in anger: it is the same as "Hard feeding to you!" "Bad win' to you!" is "Ill health to you!" it is nearly the same as "Consumin' (consumption) to you!" Two other imprecations come under this head, which we will class together, because they are counterparts of each other, with this difference, that one of them is the most subtilely and intensely withering in its purport that can well be conceived. The one is that common curse, "Bad 'cess to you!" that is, bad success to you: we may identify it with "Hard fortune to you!" The other is a keen one, indeed—"Sweet bad luck to you!" Now, whether we consider the epithet sweet as bitterly ironical, or deem it as a wish that prosperity may harden the heart to the accomplishment of future damnation, as in the case of Dives, we must in either sense grant that it is an oath of powerful hatred and venom. Occasionally the curse of "Bad luck to you!" produces an admirable retort, which is pretty common. When one man applies it to another, he is answered with "Good luck to you, thin; but may neither of them ever happen."

"Six eggs to you, an' half-a-dozen o' them rotten!"—like "The devil go with you an' sixpence!" is another of those pleasantries which mostly occur in the good-humored badinage between the sexes. It implies disappointment.

There is a species of imprecation prevalent among Irishmen which we may term neutral. It is ended by the word bit, and merely results from a habit of swearing where there is no malignity of purpose. An Irishman, when corroborating an assertion, however true or false, will often say, "Bad luck to the bit but it is;"—"Divil fire the bit but it's thruth!"—"Damn the bit but it is!" and so on. In this form the mind is not moved, nor the passions excited: it is therefore probably the most insipid of all their imprecations.

Some of the most dreadful maledictions are to be heard among the confirmed mendicants of Ireland. The wit, the gall, and the poetry of these are uncommon. "May you melt off the earth like snow off the ditch!" is one of a high order and intense malignity; but it is not exclusively confined to mendicants, although they form that class among which it is most prevalent. Nearly related to this is, "May you melt like butther before a summer sun!" These are, indeed, essentially poetical; they present the mind with appropriate imagery, and exhibit a comparison perfectly just and striking. The former we think unrivalled.



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Some of the Irish imprecations would appear to have come down to us from the Ordeals. Of this class, probably, are the following: "May this be poison to me!"—"May I be roasted on red hot iron!" Others of them, from their boldness of metaphor, seem to be of Oriental descent. One expression, indeed, is strikingly so. When a deep offence is offered to an Irishman, under such peculiar circumstances that he cannot immediately retaliate, he usually replies to his enemy—"You'll sup sorrow for this!"—"You'll curse the day it happened!"—"I'll make you rub your heels together!" All those figurative denunciations are used for the purpose of intimating the pain and agony he will compel his enemy to suffer.

We cannot omit a form of imprecation for good, which is also habitual among the peasantry of Ireland. It is certainly harmless, and argues benevolence of heart. We mean such expressions as the following: "Salvation to me!—May I never do harm!—May I never do an ill turn!—May I never sin!" These are generally used by men who are blameless and peaceable in their lives—simple and well-disposed in their intercourse with the world.

At the head of those Irish imprecations which are dreaded by the people, the Excommunication, of course, holds the first and most formidable place. In the eyes of men of sense it is as absurd as it is illiberal: but to the ignorant and superstitious, who look upon it as anything but a *brutum fulmen*, it is terrible indeed.

Next in order are the curses of priests in their private capacity, pilgrims, mendicants, and idiots. Of those also Paddy entertains a wholesome dread; a circumstance which the pilgrim and mendicant turn with great judgment to their own account. Many a legend and anecdote do such chroniclers relate, when the family, with whom they rest for the night, are all seated around the winter hearth. These are often illustrative of the baneful effects of the poor man's curse. Of course they produce a proper impression; and, accordingly, Paddy avoids offending such persons in any way that might bring him under their displeasure.

A certain class of cursers much dreaded in Ireland are those of the widow and the orphan. There is, however, something touching and beautiful in this fear of injuring the sorrowful and unprotected. It is, we are happy to say, a becoming and prominent feature in Paddy's character; for, to do him justice in his virtues as well as in his vices, we repeat that he cannot be surpassed in his humanity to the lonely widow and her helpless orphans. He will collect a number of his friends, and proceed with them in a body to plant her bit of potato ground, to reap her oats, to draw home her turf, or secure her hay. Nay, he will beguile her of her sorrows with a natural sympathy and delicacy that do him honor; his heart is open to her complaints, and his hand ever extended to assist her.



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There is a strange opinion to be found in Ireland upon the subject of curses. The peasantry think that a curse, no matter how uttered, will fall on something; but that it depends upon the person against whom it is directed, whether or not it will descend on him. A curse, we have heard them say, will rest for seven years in the air, ready to alight upon the head of the person who provoked the malediction. It hovers over him, like a kite over its prey, watching the moment when he may be abandoned by his guardian angel: if this occurs, it shoots with the rapidity of a meteor on his head, and clings to him in the shape of illness, temptation, or some other calamity.

They think, however, that the blessing of one person may cancel the curse of another; but this opinion does not affect the theory we have just mentioned. When a man experiences an unpleasant accident, they will say, "He has had some poor body's curse;" and, on the contrary, when he narrowly escapes it, they say, "He has had some poor body's blessing."

There is no country in which the phrases of good-will and affection are so strong as in Ireland. The Irish language actually flows with the milk and honey of love and friendship. Sweet and palatable is it to the other sex, and sweetly can Paddy, with his deluding ways, administer it to them from the top of his mellifluous tongue, as a dove feeds her young, or as a kind mother her babe, shaping with her own pretty mouth every morsel of the delicate viands before it goes into that of the infant. In this manner does Paddy, seated behind a ditch, of a bright Sunday, when he ought to be at Mass, feed up some innocent girl, not with "false music," but with sweet words; for nothing more musical or melting than his brogue ever dissolved a female heart. Indeed, it is of the danger to be apprehended from the melody of his voice, that the admirable and appropriate proverb speaks; for when he addresses his sweetheart, under circumstances that justify suspicion, it is generally said—"Paddy's feedin' her up wid false music."

What language has a phrase equal in beauty and tenderness to *cushla machree—pulse of my heart*? Can it be paralleled in the whole range of all that are, ever were, or ever will be spoken, for music, sweetness, and a knowledge of anatomy? If Paddy is unrivalled at swearing, he fairly throws the world behind him at the blarney. In professing friendship, and making love, give him but a taste of the native, and he is a walking honey-comb, that every woman who sees him wishes to have a lick at; and Heaven knows, that frequently, at all times, and in all places, does he get himself licked on their account.

Another expression of peculiar force is *vick machree*—or, son of my heart. This is not only elegant, but affectionate, beyond almost any other phrase except the foregoing. It is, in a sense, somewhat different from that in which the philosophical poet has used it, a beautiful comment upon the sentiment of "the child's the father of the man," uttered by the great, we might almost say, the glorious, Wordsworth.



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We have seen many a youth, on more occasions than one, standing in profound affliction over the dead body of his aged father, exclaiming, "*Ahir, vick machree—vick machree—wuil thu marra wo'um? Wuil thu marra wo'um?*" Father, son of my heart, son of my heart, art thou dead from me—art thou dead from me?" An expression, we think, under any circumstances, not to be surpassed in the intensity of domestic affection which it expresses; but under those alluded to, we consider it altogether elevated in exquisite and poetic beauty above the most powerful symbols of Oriental imagery.

A third phrase peculiar to love and affection, is "*Manim asthee hu—or, My soul's within you.*" Every person acquainted with languages knows how much an idiom suffers by a literal translation. How beautiful, then, how tender and powerful, must those short expressions be, uttered, too, with a fervor of manner peculiar to a deeply feeling people, when, even after a literal translation, they carry so much of their tenderness and energy into a language whose genius is cold when compared to the glowing beauty of the Irish.

Mauourneen dheelish, too, is only a short phrase, but, coming warm and mellowed from Paddy's lips into the ear of his *colleen dhas*, it is a perfect spell—a sweet murmur, to which the *lenis susurrus* of the Hybla bees is, with all their honey, jarring discord. How tame is "My sweet darling," its literal translation, compared to its soft and lulling intonations. There is a dissolving, entrancing, beguiling, deluding, flattering, insinuating, coaxing, winning, inveigling, roguish, palavering, come-overing, comedhering, consenting, blarneying, killing, willing, charm in it, worth all the philters that ever the gross knavery of a withered alchemist imposed upon the credulity of those who inhabit the other nations of the earth—for we don't read that these shrivelled philter-mongers ever prospered in Ireland.

No, no—let Paddy alone. If he hates intensely and effectually, he loves intensely, comprehensively, and gallantly. To love with power is a proof of a large soul, and to hate well is, according to the great moralist, a thing in itself to be loved. Ireland is, therefore, through all its sects, parties, and religions, an amicable nation. Their affections are, indeed, so vivid, that they scruple not sometimes to kill each other with kindness: but we hope that the march of love and friendship will not only keep pace with, but outstrip, the march of intellect.

Peter Cornell was for many years of his life a pattern and proverb for industry and sobriety. He first began the world as keeper of a shebeen-house at the cross-roads, about four miles from the town of Ballypoteen. He was decidedly an honest man to his neighbors, but a knave to excisemen, whom he hated by a kind of instinct that he had, which prompted him, in order to satisfy his conscience, to render them every practicable injury



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within the compass of his ingenuity. Shebeen-house keepers and excisemen have been, time out of mind, destructive of each other; the exciseman pouncing like a beast or bird of prey upon the shebeen man and his illicit spirits; the shebeen man staving in the exciseman, like a barrel of doublings, by a knock from behind a hedge, which sometimes sent him to that world which is emphatically the world of spirits. For this, it some happened that the shebeen man was hanged; but as his death only multiplied that of the excisemen in a geometrical ratio, the sharp-scented fraternity resolved, if possible, not to risk their lives, either by exposing themselves to the necessity of travelling by night, or prosecuting by day. In this they acted wisely and prudently: fewer of the unfortunate peasantry were shot in their rencounters with the yeomanry or military on such occasions, and the retaliations became by degrees less frequent, until, at length, the murder of a gauger became a rare occurrence in the country.

Peter, before his marriage, had wrought as laboring servant to a man who kept two or three private stills in those caverns among the remote mountains, to which the gauger never thought of penetrating, because he supposed that no human enterprise would have ever dreamt of advancing farther into them than appeared to him to be practicable. In this he was frequently mistaken: for though the still-house was in many cases inaccessible to horses, yet by the contrivance of slipes—a kind of sledge—a dozen men could draw a couple of sacks of barley with less trouble, and at a quicker pace, than if horses only had been employed. By this, and many other similar contrivances, the peasantry were often able to carry on the work of private distillation in places so distant, that few persons could suspect them as likely to be chosen for such purposes. The uncommon personal strength, the daring spirit, and great adroitness of Peter Connell, rendered him a very valuable acquisition to his master in the course of his illicit occupations. Peter was, in addition to his other qualities, sober and ready-witted, so that whenever the gauger made his appearance, his expedients to baffle him were often inimitable. Those expedients did not, however, always arise from the exigency of the moment; they were often deliberately, and with much exertion of ingenuity, planned by the proprietors and friends of such establishments, perhaps for weeks before the gauger's visit occurred. But, on the other hand, as the gauger's object was to take them, if possible, by surprise, it frequently happened that his appearance was as unexpected as it was unwelcome. It was then that the prompt ingenuity of the people was fully seen, felt, and understood by the baffled exciseman, who too often had just grounds for bitterly cursing their talent at outwitting him.



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Peter served his master as a kind of superintendent in such places, until he gained the full knowledge of distilling, according to the processes used by the most popular adepts in the art. Having acquired this, he set up as a professor, and had excellent business. In the meantime, he had put together by degrees a small purse of money, to the amount of about twenty guineas—no inconsiderable sum for a young Irishman who intends to begin the world on his own account. He accordingly married, and, as the influence of a wife is usually not to be controlled during the honey-moon, Mrs. Connell prevailed on Peter to relinquish his trade of distiller, and to embrace some other mode of life that might not render their living so much asunder necessary. Peter suffered himself to be prevailed upon, and promised to have nothing more to do with private distillation, as a distiller. One of the greatest curses attending this lawless business, is the idle and irregular habit of life which it gradually induces. Peter could not now relish the labor of an agriculturist, to which he had been bred, and yet he was too prudent to sit down and draw his own and his wife's support from so exhaustible a source as twenty guineas. Two or three days passed, during which "he cudgelled his brains," to use his own expression, in plans for future subsistence; two or three consultations were held with Elish, in which their heads were laid together, and, as it was still the honey-moon, the subject-matter of the consultation, of course, was completely forgotten. Before the expiration of a second month, however, they were able to think of many other things, in addition to the fondlings and endearments of a new-married couple. Peter was every day becoming more his own man, and Elish by degrees more her own woman. "The purple light of love," which had changed Peter's red head into a rich auburn, and his swivel eye into a knowing wink, exceedingly irresistible in his bachelorship, as he made her believe, to the country girls, had passed away, taking the aforesaid auburn along with it and leaving nothing but the genuine carrot behind. Peter, too, on opening his eyes one morning about the beginning of the third month, perceived that his wife was, after all, nothing more than a thumping red-cheeked wench, with good eyes, a mouth rather large, and a nose very much resembling, in its curve, the seat of a saddle, allowing the top to correspond with the pommel.

"Pether," said she, "it's like a dhrame to me that you're neglectin' your business, alanna."

"Is it you, beauty? but, maybe, you'd first point out to me what business, barrin' buttherin' up yourself, I have to mind, you phanix bright?"

"Quit yourself, Pether! it's time for you to give up your ould ways; you caught one bird wid them, an' that's enough. What do you intind to do! It's full time for you to be lookin' about you."

"Lookin' about me! What do you mane Elish?"



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“The dickens a bit o’ me thought of it,” replied the wife, laughing at the unintentional allusion to the circumspect character of Peter’s eyes,—“upon my faix, I didn’t—ha, ha, ha!”

“Why, thin, but you’re full o’ your fun, sure enough, if that’s what you’re at. Maybe, avourneen, if I had looked right afore me, as I ought to do, it’s Katty Murray an’ her snug farm I’d have, instead of”—

Peter hesitated. The rapid feelings of a woman, and an Irishwoman, quick and tender, had come forth and subdued him. She had not voluntarily alluded to his eyes; but on seeing Peter offended, she immediately expressed that sorrow and submission which are most powerful when accompanied by innocence, and when meekly assumed, to pacify rather than to convince. A tear started to her eye, and with a voice melted into unaffected tenderness, she addressed him, but he scarcely gave her time to speak.

“No, avourneen, no, I won’t say what I was goin’ to mintion. I won’t indeed, Elish, dear; an’ forgive me for woundin’ your feelin’s *alanna dhas*. (* My pretty child.) Hell resave her an’ her farm! I dunna what put her into my head at all; but I thought you wor jokin’ me about my eyes: an’ sure if you war, acushla, that’s no rason that I’d not allow you to do that an’ more wid your own Pether. Give me a slewsther, (* a kiss of fondness) agrah—a sweet one, now!”

He then laid his mouth to hers, and immediately a sound, nearly resembling a pistol-shot, was heard through every part of the house. It was, in fact, a kiss upon a scale of such magnitude, that the Emperor of Morocco might not blush to be charged with it. A reconciliation took place, and in due time it was determined that Peter, as he understood poteen, should open a shebeen house. The moment this resolution was made, the wife kept coaxing him, until he took a small house at the cross-roads before alluded to, where, in the course of a short time, he was established, if not in his own line, yet in a mode of life approximating to it as nearly as the inclination of Elish would permit. The cabin which they occupied had a kitchen in the middle, and a room at each end of it, in one of which was their own humble chaff bed, with its blue quilted drugget cover; in the other stood a couple of small tables, some stools, a short form, and one chair, being a present from his father-in-law. These constituted Peter’s whole establishment, so far +as it defied the gauger. To this we must add! a five-gallon keg of spirits hid in the garden, and a roll of smuggled tobacco. From the former he bottled, over night, as much as was usually drank the following day; and from the tobacco, which was also kept under ground, he cut, with the same caution, as much as tomorrow’s exigencies might require. This he kept in his coat-pocket, a place where the gauger would never think of searching for it, divided into halfpenny and pennyworths, ounces or half-ounces, according as it might be required; and as he had it without duty, the liberal spirit in which he dealt it out to his neighbors soon brought him a large increase of custom.



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Peter's wife was an excellent manager, and he himself a pleasant, good-humored man, full of whim and inoffensive mirth. His powers of amusement were of a high order, considering his station in life and his want of education. These qualities contributed, in a great degree, to bring both the young and old to his house during the long winter nights, in order to hear the fine racy humor with which he related his frequent adventures and battles with excisemen. In the summer evenings, he usually engaged a piper or a fiddler, and had a dance, a contrivance by which he not only rendered himself popular, but increased his business.

In this mode of life, the greatest source of anxiety to Peter and Elish was the difficulty of not offending their friends by refusing to give them credit. Many plans, were, with great skill and forethought, devised to obviate this evil; but all failed. A short board was first procured, on which they got written with chalk—

“No credit giv'n—barrin' a thrifle to Pether's friends.”

Before a week passed, after this intimation, the number of “Pether's friends” increased so rapidly, that neither he nor Elish knew the half of them. Every scamp in the parish was hand and glove with him: the drinking tribe, particularly, became desperately attached to him and Elish. Peter was naturally kind-hearted, and found that his firmest resolutions too often gave way before the open flattery with which he was assailed. He then changed his hand, and left Elish to bear the brunt of their blarney. Whenever any person or persons were seen approaching the house, Peter, if he had reason to suspect an attack upon his indulgence, prepared himself for a retreat. He kept his eye to the window, and if they turned from the direct line of the road, he immediately slipped into bed, and lay close in order to escape them. In the meantime they enter.

“God save all here. Elish, agra machree, how are you?”

“God save you kindly! Faix, I'm mid-dim', I thank you, Condy: how is yourself, an' all at home?”

“Devil a heartier, barrin' my father, that's touched wid a loss of appetite afther his meals—ha, ha, ha!”

“Musha, the dickens be an you, Condy, but you're your father's son, any way; the best company in Europe is the same man. Throth, whether you're jokin' or not, I'd be sarry to hear of anything to his disadvantage, dacent man. Boys, won't you go down to the other room?”

“Go way wid yez, boys, till I spake to Elish here about the affairs o' the nation. Why, Elish, you stand the cut all to pieces. By the contints o' the book, you do; Pether doesn't stand it half so well. How is he, the thief?”



“Throth, he’s not well, to-day, in regard of a smotherin’ about the heart he tuck this mornin’ afther his breakfast. He jist laid himself on the bed a while, to see if it would go off of him—God be praised for all his marcies!”



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“Thin, upon my *solevation*, I’m sarry to hear it, and so will all at home, for there’s not in the parish we’re sittin’ in a couple that our family has a greater regard an’ friendship for, than him and yourself. Faix, my modher, no longer ago than Friday night last, argued down Bartle Meegan’s throath, that you and Bidy Martin wor the two portliest weemen that comes into the chapel. God forgive myself, I was near quarrelin’ wid Bartle on the head of it, bekase I tuck my modher’s part, as I had a good right to do.”

“Thrath, I’m thankful to you both, Condy, for your kindness.”

“Oh, the sarra taste o’ kindness was in it at all, Elish, ’twas only the truth; an’ as long as I live, I’ll stand up for that.”

“Arrah, how is your aunt down at Carntall?”

“Indeed, thin, but middlin’, not gettin’ her health: she’ll soon give the crow a puddin’, any way; thin, Elish, you thief, I’m in for the yallow boys. Do you know thim that came in wid me?”

“Why, thin, I can’t say I do. Who are they, Condy?”

“Why one o’ them’s a bachelor to my sisher Norah, a very dacent boy, indeed—him wid the frieze jock upon him, an’ the buckskin breeches. The other three’s from Teernabraighera beyant. They’re related to my brother-in-law, Mick Dillon, by his first wife’s brother-in-law’s uncle. They’re come to this neighborhood till the ’Sizes, bad luck to them, goes over; for you see, they’re in a little throuble.”

“The Lord grant them safe out of it, poor boys!”

“I brought them up here to treat them, poor fellows; an’, Elish, avourneen, you must credit me for whatsoever we may have. The thruth is, you see, that when we left home, none of us had any notion of drinkin’ or I’d a put somethin’ in my pocket, so that I’m taken at an average.—Bud-an’-age! how is little Dan? Sowl, Elish, that goorsoon, when he grows up, will be a credit to you. I don’t think there’s a finer child in Europe of his age, so there isn’t.”

“Indeed, he’s a good child, Condy. But Condy, avick, about givin’ credit:—by thim five crasses, if I could give score to any boy in the parish, it ’ud be to yourself. It was only last night that I made a promise against doin’ such a thing for man or mortual. We’re a’most broken an’ harrish’d out o’ house an’ home by it; an’ what’s more, Condy, we intend to give up the business. The landlord’s at us every day for his rint, an’ we owe for the two last kegs we got, but hasn’t a rap to meet aither o’ thim; an’ enough due to us if we could get it together: an’ whisper, Condy, atween ourselves, that’s what ails Pettier, although he doesn’t wish to let an to any one about it.”

“Well, but you know I’m safe, Elish?”



“I know you are, avourneen, as the bank itself; an’ should have what you want wid a heart an’ a half, only for the promise I made an my two knees last night, aginst givin’ credit to man or woman. Why the dickens didn’t you come yisterday?”



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“Didn’t I tell you, woman alive, that it was by accident, an’ that I wished to sarve the house, that we came at all. Come, come, Elish; don’t disgrace me afore my sisher’s bachelor an’ the sthrange boys that’s to the fore. By this staff in my hand, I wouldn’t for the best cow in our byre be put to the blush afore thim; an’ besides, there’s a *cleeveen* (* a kind of indirect relationship) atween your family an’ ours.”

“Condy, avourneen, say no more: if you were fed from the same breast wid me, I couldn’t, nor wouldn’t break my promise. I wouldn’t have the sin of it an me for the wealth o’ the three kingdoms.”

“Beclad, you’re a quare woman; an’ only that my regard for you is great entirely, we would be two, Elish; but I know you’re dacent still.”

He then left her and joined his friends in the little room that was appropriated for drinking, where, with a great deal of mirth, he related the failure of the plan they had formed for outwitting Peter and Elish.

“Boys,” said he, “she’s too many for us! St. Pettier himself wouldn’t make a hand of her. Faix, she’s a cute one. I palavered her at the rate of a hunt, an’ she ped me back in my own coin, with dacent intherest—but no whiskey!—Now to take a rise out o’ Pettier. Jist sit where ye are, till I come back.”

He left them enjoying the intended “spree,” and went back to Elish.

“Well, I’m sure, Elish, if any one had tuck their book oath that you’d refuse my father’s son such a thrifle, I wouldn’t believe them. It’s not wid Pettier’s knowledge you do it, I’ll be bound. But bad as you thrated us, sure we must see how the poor fellow is, at an rate.”

As he spoke, and before Elish had time to prevent him, he pressed into the room where Peter lay.

“Why, tare alive, Pether, is it in bed you are at this hour of the day?”

“Eh? Who’s that—who’s that? oh!”

“Why thin, the sarra lie undher you, is that the way wid you?”

“Oh!—oh! Eh? Is that Condy?”

“All that’s to the fore of him. What’s asthray wid you man alive?”

“Throth, Condy, I don’t know, rightly. I went out, wantin’ my coat, about a week ago, an’ got cowld in the small o’ the back; I’ve a pain in it ever since. Be sittin’.”



“Is your heart safe? You have no smotherin’ or anything upon it?”

“Why thin, thank goodness, no; it’s all about my back an’ my inches.”

“Divil a thing it is but a complaint they call an *alloverness* ails you, you shkaimer o’ the world wide. ‘Tis the oil o’ the hazel, or a rubbin’ down wid an oak towel you want. Get up, I say, or, by this an’ by that, I’ll flail you widin an inch o’ your life.”

“Is it beside yourself you are, Condyl?”

“No, no, faix; I’ve found you out: Ellish is afther tellin’ me that it was a smotherin’ on the heart; but it’s a pain in the small o’ the back wid yourself. Oh, you born desaver! Get up, I say agin, afore I take the stick to you!”



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“Why, thin, all sorts o’ fortune to you, Condy—ha, ha, ha!—but you’re the sarra’s pet, for there’s no escapin’ you. What was that I hard atween you an’ Elish?” said Peter, getting up.

“The sarra matther to you. If you behave yourself, we may let you into the wrong side o’ the sacret afore you die. Go an’ get us a pint of what you know,” replied Condy, as he and Peter entered the kitchen.

“Elish,” said Peter, “I suppose we must give it to thim. Give it—give it, avourneen. Now, Condy, whin ’ill you pay me for this?”

“Never fret yourself about that; you’ll be ped. Honor bright, as the black said whin he stole the boots.”

“Now Pettier,” said the wife, “sure it’s no use axin’ me to give it, afther the promise I made last night. Give it yourself; for me, I’ll have no hand in such things good or bad. I hope we’ll soon get out of it altogether, for myselfs sick an’ sore of it, dear knows!”

Pettier accordingly furnished them with the liquor, and got a promise that Condy would certainly pay him at mass on the following Sunday, which was only three days distant. The fun of the boys was exuberant at Condy’s success: they drank, and laughed, and sang, until pint after pint followed in rapid succession.

Every additional inroad upon the keg brought a fresh groan from Elish; and even Peter himself began to look blank as their potations deepened. When the night was far advanced they departed, after having first overwhelmed Elish with professions of the warmest friendship, promising that in future she exclusively should reap whatever benefit was to be derived from their patronage.

In the meantime, Condy forgot to perform his promise. The next Sunday passed, but Peter was not paid, nor was his clever debtor seen at mass, or in the vicinity of the shebeen-house, for many a month afterwards—an instance of ingratitude which mortified his creditor extremely. The latter, who felt that it was a take in, resolved to cut short all hopes of obtaining credit from them in future. In about a week after the foregoing hoax, he got up a board, presenting a more vigorous refusal of score than the former. His friends, who were more in number than he could have possibly imagined, on this occasion, were altogether wiped out of the exception. The notice ran to the following effect:—

“Notice to the Public, *and to Pether Connell’s friends in particular*.—Divil resave the morsel of credit will be got or given in this house, while there is stick or stone of it together, barrin’ them that axes it has the ready money.



“Pettier X his mark Connell,
“Elish X her mark Connell.”

This regulation, considering everything, was a very proper one. It occasioned much mirth among Peter’s customers; but Peter cared little about that, provided he made the money.

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The progress of his prosperity, dating it from so small a beginning, was decidedly slow. He owed it principally to the careful habits of Elish, and his own sobriety. He was prudent enough to avoid placing any sign in his window, by which his house could be known as a shebeen; for he was not ignorant that there is no class of men more learned in this species of hieroglyphics than excisemen. At all events, he was prepared for them, had they come to examine his premises. Nothing that could bring him within the law was ever kept visible. The cask that contained the poteen was seldom a week in the same place of concealment, which was mostly, as we have said, under ground. The tobacco was weighed and subdivided into small quantities, which, in addition to what he carried in his pocket, were distributed in various crevices and crannies of the house; sometimes under the thatch; sometimes under a dish on the dresser, but generally in a damp place.

When they had been about two or three years thus employed, Peter, at the solicitation of the wife, took a small farm.

“You’re stout an’ able,” said she; “an’ as I can manage the house widout you, wouldn’t it be a good plan to take a bit o’ ground—nine or ten acres, suppose—an’ thry your hand at it? Sure you wor wanst the greatest man in the parish about a farm. Surely that ’ud be dacenter nor to be slungein’ about, invintin’ truth and lies for other people, whin they’re at their work, to make thim laugh, an you doin’ nothin’ but standin’ over thim, wid your hands down to the bottom o’ your pockets? Do, Pether, thry it, avick, an’ you’ll see it ’ill prosper wid us, plase God?”

“Faix I’m ladin’ an asier life, Elish.”

“But are you ladin’ a dacenter or a more becominer life?”

“Why, I think, widout doubt, that it’s more becominer to walk about like a gintleman, nor to be workin’ like a slave.”

“Gintleman! Musha, is it to the fair you’re bringin’ yourself? Why, you great big bosthoon, isn’t it both a sin an’ a shame to see you sailin’ about among the neighbors, like a sthray turkey, widout a hand’s turn to do? But, any way, take my advice, avillish, —will you, aroon?—an’ faix you’ll see how rich we’ll get, wid a blessin’?”

“Elish, you’re a deludher!”

“Well, an’ what suppose? To be sure I am. Usen’t you be followin’ me like a calf afther the finger?—ha, ha, ha!—Will you do my biddin’, Pether darlin’?”

Peter gave her a shrewd, significant wink, in contradiction to what he considered the degrading comparison she had just made.



“Elish, you’re beside the mark, you beauty; always put the saddle on the right horse, woman alive! Didn’t you often an’ I often swear to me, upon two green ribbons, across one another, that you liked a red head best, an’ that the redder it was you liked it the better?”

“An’ it was thruth, too; an’ sure, by the same a token, where could I get one half so red as your own? Faix, I knew what I was about! I wouldn’t give you yet for e’er a young man in the parish, if I was a widow to-morrow. Will you take the land?”



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“So thin, afther all, if the head hadn’t been an me, I wouldn’t be a favorite wid you?—ha, ha, ha!”

“Get out wid you, and spake sinse. Throth, if you don’t say aither ay or no, I’ll give myself no more bother about it, There we are now wid some guineas together, an’—Faix, Pettier, you’re vexin’ me!”

“Do you want an answer?”

“Why, if it’s plasin’ to your honor, I’d have no objection.”

“Well, will you have my new big coat made agin Shraft?” (* Shrovetide)

“Ay, will I, in case you do what I say; but if you don’t the sarra stitch of it ’ll go to your back this twelvemonth, maybe, if you vex me. Now!”

“Well, I’ll tell you what: my mind’s made up—I will take the land; an’ I’ll show the neighbors what Pether Connell can do yit.”

“Augh! augh! mavoumeen, that you wor! Throth I’ll fry a bit o’ the bacon for our dinner to-day, on the head o’ that, although I didn’t intind to touch it till Sunday. Ay, faix, an’ a pair o’ stockins, too, along wid the coat; an’ somethin’ else, that you didn’t hear of yit.”

Ellish, in fact, was a perfect mistress of the science of wheedling; but as it appears instinctive in the sex, this is not to be wondered at. Peter himself was easy, or rather indolent, till properly excited by the influence of adequate motives; but no sooner were the energies that slumbered in him called into activity, than he displayed a firmness of purpose, and a perseverance in action, that amply repaid his exertions.

The first thing he did, after taking, his little farm, was to prepare for its proper cultivation, and to stock it. His funds were not, however, sufficient for this at the time. A horse was to be bought, but the last guinea they could spare had been already expended, and this purchase was, therefore, out of the question. The usages of the small farmers, however, enabled him to remedy this inconvenience. Peter made a bargain with a neighbor, in which he undertook to repay him by an exchange of labor, for the use of his plough and horses in getting down his crop. He engaged to give him, for a stated period in the slack season, so many days’ mowing as would cover the expenses of ploughing and harrowing his land. There was, however, a considerable portion of his holding potato-ground; this Peter himself dug with his spade, breaking it as he went along into fine mould. He then planted the seed—got a hatchet, and selecting the best thorn-bush he could find, cut it down, tied a rope to the trunk, seized the rope, and in this manner harrowed his potato-ground. Thus did he proceed, struggling to overcome difficulties by skill, and substituting for the more efficient modes of husbandry, such rude artificial resources as his want of capital compelled him to adopt.

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In the meantime, Elish, seeing Peter acquitting himself in his undertaking with such credit, determined not to be outdone in her own department. She accordingly conceived the design of extending her business, and widening the sphere of her exertions. This intention, however, she kept secret from Peter, until by putting penny to penny, and shilling to shilling, she was able to purchase a load of crockery. Here was a new source of profit opened exclusively by her own address. Peter was astonished when he saw the car unloaded, and the crockery piled in proud array by Elish's own hands.

"I knew," said she, "I'd take a start out o' you. Faix, Pether, you'll see how I'll do, never fear, wid the help o' Heaven! I'll be off to the market in the mornin', plase God, where I'll sell rings around me * o' them crocks and pitchers. An' now, Pether, the sarra one o' me would do this, good or bad, only bekase your managin' the farm so cleverly. Tady Gormley's goin' to bring home his meal from the mill, and has promised to lave these in the market for me, an' never fear but I'll get some o' the neighbors to bring them home, so that there's car-hire saved. Faix, Pether, there's nothin' like givin' the people sweet words, any way; sure they come chape."

* This is a kind of hyperbole for selling a grout quantity.

"Faith, an' I'll back you for the sweet words agin any woman in the three kingdoms, Elish, you darlin'. But don't you know the proverb, 'sweet words butther no parsnips.'"

"In throth, the same proverb's a lyin' one, and ever was; but it's not parsnips I'll butther wid 'em, you gommoch."

"Sowl, you butthered me wid 'em long enough, you deludher—devil a lie in it; but thin, as you say, sure enough, I was no parsnip—not so soft as that either, you phanix."

"No? Thin I seldom seen your beautiful head without thinkin' of a carrot, an' it's well known they're related—ha, ha, ha!—Behave, Pether—behave, I say—Pether, Pether—ha, ha, ha!—let me alone! Katty Hacket, take him away from me—ha, ha, ha!"

"Will ever you, you shaver wid the tongue that you are? Will ever you, I say? Will ever you make delusion to my head again—eh?"

"Oh, never, never—but let me go, an' me go full o' tickles! Oh, Pether, avourneen, don't, you'll hurt me, an' the way I'm in—quit, avillish!"

"Bedad, if you don't let my head alone, I'll—will ever you?"

"Never, never. There now—ha, ha, ha!—oh, but I'm as wake as wather wid what I laughed. Well now, Pether, didn't I manage bravely—didn't I?"



“Wait till we see the profits first, Elish—crockery’s very tindhher goods.”

“Ay!—just wait, an’I’ll engage I’ll turn the penny. The family’s risin’ wid us.”—

“Very thrue,” replied Peter, giving a sly wink at the wife—“no doubt of it.”

“—Kisin’ wid us—I tell you to have sinse, Pether; an’ it’s our duty to have something for the crathurs when they grow up.”



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“Well, that’s a thruth—sure I’m not sayin’ against it.”

“I know that; but what I say is, if we hould an, we may make money. Everything, for so far, has thruv wid us, God be praised for it. There’s another thing in my mind, that I’ll be tellin’ you some o’ these days.”

“I believe, Elish, you dhrame about makin’ money.”

“Well, an’ I might do worse; when I’m dhramin’ about it, I’m doin’ no sin to any one. But, listen, you must keep the house to-morrow while I’m at the market. Won’t you, Pether?”

“An’ who’s to open the dhrein in the bottom below?”

“That can be done the day afther. Won’t you, abouchal?”

“Elish, you’re a deludher, I tell you. Sweet words;—sowl, you’d smooth a furze bush wid sweet words. How-an-ever, I will keep the house to-morrow, till we see the great things you’ll do wid your crockery.”

Elish’s success was, to say the least of it, quite equal to, her expectations. She was certainly an excellent wife, full of acuteness, industry, and enterprise. Had Peter been married to a woman of a disposition resembling his own, it is probable that he would have sunk into indolence, filth, and poverty, these miseries might have soured their tempers, and driven them into all the low excesses and crimes attendant upon pauperism. Elish, however, had sufficient spirit to act upon Peter’s natural indolence, so as to excite it to the proper pitch. Her mode of operation was judiciously suited to his temper. Playfulness and kindness were the instruments by which she managed him. She knew that violence, or the assumption of authority, would cause a man who, like him, was stern when provoked, to react, and meet her with an assertion of his rights and authority not to be trifled with. This she consequently avoided, not entirely from any train of reasoning on the subject; but from that intuitive penetration which taught her to know that the plan she had resorted to was best calculated to make him subservient to her own purposes, without causing him to feel that he was governed.

Indeed, every day brought out her natural cleverness more clearly. Her intercourse with the world afforded her that facility of understanding the tempers and dispositions of others, which can never be acquired when it has not been bestowed as a natural gift. In her hands it was a valuable one. By degrees her house improved in its appearance, both inside and outside. From crockery she proceeded to herrings, then to salt, in each of which she dealt with surprising success. There was, too, such an air of bustle, activity, and good-humor about her that people loved to deal with her. Her appearance was striking, if not grotesque. She was tall and strong, walked rapidly, and when engaged in fair or market disposing of her coarse merchandise, was dressed in a short



red petticoat, blue stockings, strong brogues, wore a blue cloak, with the hood turned up, over her head,

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on the top of which was a man's hat, fastened by a ribbon under her chin. As she thus stirred about, with a kind word and a joke for every one, her healthy cheek in full bloom, and her blue-gray eye beaming with an expression of fun and good-nature, it would be difficult to conceive a character more adapted for intercourse with, a laughter-loving people. In fact, she soon became a favorite, and this not the less that she was as ready to meet her rivals in business with a blow as with a joke. Peter witnessed her success with unfeigned pleasure; and although every feasible speculation was proposed by her, yet he never felt that he was a mere nonentity when compared to his wife. 'Tis true, he was perfectly capable of executing her agricultural plans when she proposed them, but his own capacity for making a lucky hit was very limited. Of the two, she was certainly the better farmer; and scarcely an improvement took place in his little holding which might not be traced to Elish.

In the course of a couple of years she bought him a horse, and Peter was enabled, to join with a neighbor, who had another. Each had a plough and tackle, so that here was a little team made up, the half of which belonged to Peter. By this means they ploughed week about, until their crops were got down. Peter finding his farm doing well, began to feel a kind of rivalry with his wife—that is to say, she first suggested the principle, and afterwards contrived to make him imagine that it was originally his own.

“The sarra one o’ you, Pettier,” she exclaimed to him one day, “but’s batin’ me out an’ out. Why, you’re the very dickins at the farmin’, so you are. Faix, I suppose, if you go an this way much longer, that you’ll be thinkin’ of another farm, in regard that we have some guineas together. Pettier, did you ever think of it, abouchal?”

“To be sure, I did, you beauty; an’ amn’t I in fifty notions to take Harry Neal’s land, that jist lies alongside of our own.”

“Faix, an’ you’re right, maybe; but if it’s strivin’ again me you are, you may give it over: I tell you, I’ll have more money made afore this time twelvemonth than you will.”

“Arrah, is it jokin’ you are? More money? Would you advise me to take Harry’s land? Tell me that first, you phanix, an’ thin I’m your man!”

“Faix, take your own coorse, avourneen. If you get a lase of it at a fair rint, I’ll buy another horse, any how. Isn’t that doin’ the thing dacent’?”

“More power to you, Elish! I’ll hold you a crown, I pay you the price o’ the horse afore this time twelvemonth.”

“Done! The sarra be off me but done!—an’ here’s Barny Dillon an’ Katty Hacket to bear witness.”



“Sure enough we will,” said Barny, the servant.

“I’ll back the mistress any money,” replied the maid.

“Two to one on the mather,” said the man. “Whoo! our side o’ the house for ever! Come, Pether, hould up your head, there’s money bid for you!”



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“Elish, I’ll fight for you ankle deep,” said Katty—“depind your life an me.”

“In the name o’ goodness, thin, it’s a bargain,” said Elish; “an’ at the end o’ the year, if we’re spared, we’ll see what we’ll see. We’ll have among ourselves a little sup o’ tay, plase goodness, an’ we’ll be comfortable. Now, Barny, go an’ draw home thim phaties from the pits while the day’s fine; and Katty, a colleen, bring in some wather, till we get the pig killed and scalded—it’ll hardly have time to be good bacon for the big markets at Christmas. I don’t wish,” she continued, “to keep it back from them that we have a thrifle o’ money. One always does betther when it’s known that they’re not strugglin’. There’s Nelly Cummins, an’ her customers is lavin’ her, an’ dalin’ wid me, bekase she’s goin’ down in business. Ay an’, Pether, ahagur, it’s the way o’ the world.”

“Well but, Elish, don’t you be givin’ Nelly Cummins the harsh word, or lanin’ too heavily upon her, the crathur, merely in regard that she is goin’ down. Do you hear, acolleen?”

“Indeed I don’t do it, Pether; but you know she has a tongue like a razor at times, and whin it gets loose she’d provoke St. Pether himself. Thin she’s takin’ to the dhrink, too, the poor misfortunate vagabone!”

“Well, well, that’s no affair o’ yours, or mine aither—only don’t be risin’ ructions and norrations wid her. You *threwn* a jug at her the last day you war out, an’ hot the poor ould Potticary as he was passin’. You see I hard that, though you kept it close from me! —ha, ha, ha!”

“Ha, ha, ha!—why you’d split if you had seen the crathur whin he fell into Pether White’s brogue-creels, wid his heels up. But what right had she to be sthrivin’ to bring away my customers afore my face? Ailey Dogherty was buying a crock wid me, and Nelly shouts over to her from where she sot like a queen on her stool, ‘Ailey,’ says she, ‘here’s a betther one for three fardens less, an’ another farden ’ill get you a pennorth o’ salt.’ An’, indeed, Ailey walks over, manely enough, an’ tuck her at her word. Why, flesh an’ blood couldn’t bear it.”

“Indeed, an’ you’re raal flesh and blood, Elish, if that’s thru.”

“Well, but consarnin’ what I mintioned awhile ago—hut! the poor mad crathur, let us have no more discourse about her—I say, that no one ever thrives so well as when the world sees that they are gettin’ an, an’ prosperin’; but if there’s not an appearance, how will any one know whether we are prosperin’ or not, barrin’ they see some sign of it about us; I mane, in a quiet rasonable way, widout show or extravagance. In the name o’ goodness, thin, let us get the house brushed up, an’ the outhouses dashed. A bushel or two of lime ’ill make this as white as an egg widin, an’ a very small expinse will get it plastered, and whitewashed widout. Wouldn’t you like it, avourneen? Eh, Pether?”

“To be sure I’d like it. It’ll give a respectful look to the house and place.”



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“Ay, an’ it’ll bring customers, that’s the main thing. People always like to come to a snug, comfortable place. An’, plase God, I’m thinkin’ of another plan that I’ll soon mintion.”

“An’ what may that be, you skamer? Why, Elish, you’ve ever and always some skam’e or other in that head o’ yours. For my part, I don’t know how you get at them.”

“Well, no matter, acushla, do you only back me; just show me how I ought to go on wid them, for nobody can outdo you at such things, an’ I’ll engage we’ll thrive yit, always wid a blessin’ an us.”

“Why, to tell God’s thruth, I’d bate the devil himself at plannin’ out, an’ bringin’ a thing to a conclusion—eh, you deludher?”

“The sarra doubt of it; but takin’ the other farm was the brightest thought I seen wid you yit. Will you do it, avillish?”

“To be sure. Don’t I say it? An’ it’ll be up wid the lark wid me. Hut, woman, you don’t see the half o’ what’s in me, yet.”

“I’ll buy you a hat and a pair o’ stockings at Christmas.”

“Will you, Elish? Then, by the book, I’ll work like a horse.”

“I didn’t intind to tell you, but I had it laid out for you.”

“Faith, you’re a beauty, Elish. What’ll we call this young chap that’s comin’, acushla?”

“Now, Pether, none o’ your capers. It’s time enough when the thing happens to be thinkin’ o’ that, Glory be to God!”

“Well, you may talk as you plase, but I’ll call him Pether.”

“An’ how do you know but he’ll be a girl, you omadhawn?”

“Murdher alive, ay, sure enough! Faith, I didn’t think o’ that!”

“Well, go up now an’ spake to Mither Eccles about the land; maybe somebody else ‘ud slip in afore us, an’ that wouldn’t be pleasant. Here’s your brave big coat, put it an; faix, it makes a man of you—gives you a bodagh* look entirely; but that’s little to what you’ll be yet, wid a blessin’—a Half-Sir, any way.”

* This word is used in Ireland sometimes in a good and sometimes in a bad sense. For instance, the peasantry will often say in allusion to some individual who may happen to be talked of, “Hut! he’s a dirty bodagh;” but again, you may hear them use it in a sense



directly the reverse of this; for instance, “He’s a very dacent man, and looks the bodagh entirely.” As to the “Half sir,” he stands about half-way between the bodagh and the gentleman, Bodagh—signifying churl—was applied originally as a term of reproach to the English settlers.

In fact, Elish’s industry had already gained a character for both herself and her husband. He got credit for the assiduity and activity to which she trained him: and both were respected for their cleverness in advancing themselves from so poor a beginning to the humble state of independence they had then reached. The farm which Elish was so anxious to secure was the property of the gentleman from whom they held the other. Being a man of



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sense and penetration, he fortunately saw—what, indeed, was generally well known—that Peter and Elish were rising in the world, and that their elevation was the consequence of their own unceasing efforts to become independent, so that industry is in every possible point of view its own reward. So long as the farm was open to competition the offers for it multiplied prodigiously, and rose in equal proportion. Persons not worth twenty shillings in the world offered double the rent which the utmost stretch of ingenuity, even with suitable capital, could pay. New-married couples, with nothing but the strong imaginative hopes peculiar to their country, proposed for it in a most liberal spirit. Men who had been ejected out of their late farms for non-payment of rent, were ready to cultivate this at a rent much above that which, on better land, they were unable to pay. Others, who had been ejected from farm after farm—each of which they undertook as a mere speculation, to furnish them with present subsistence, but without any ultimate expectation of being able to meet their engagements—came forward with the most laudable efforts. This gentleman, however, was none of those landlords who are so besotted and ignorant of their own interests, as to let their lands simply to the highest bidders, without taking into consideration their capital, moral character, and habits of industry. He resided at home, knew his tenants personally, took an interest in their successes and difficulties, and instructed them in the best modes of improving their farms.

Peter's first interview with him was not quite satisfactory on either side. The honest man was like a ship without her rudder, when transacting business in the absence of his wife. The fact was, that on seeing the high proposals which were sent in, he became alarmed lest, as he flattered himself, that the credit of the transaction should be all his own, the farm might go into the hands of another, and his character for cleverness suffer with Elish. The landlord was somewhat astounded at the rent which a man who bore so high a name for prudence offered him. He knew it was considerably beyond what the land was worth, and he did not wish that any tenant coming upon his estate should have no other prospect than that of gradually receding into insolvency.

"I cannot give you any answer now," said he to Peter; "but if you will call in a day or two I shall let you know my final determination."

Peter, on coming home, rendered an account of his interview with the landlord to his wife, who no sooner heard of the extravagant proposal he made, than she raised her hands and eyes, exclaiming—

"Why, thin, Pether, alanna, was it beside yourself you wor, to go for to offer a rint that no one could honestly pay! Why, man alive, it 'ud lave us widout house or home in do time, all out! Sure Pettier, acushla, where 'ud be the use of us or any one takin' land, barrin' they could make somethin' by it? Faix, if the gintleman had sinse, he wouldn't give the



same farm to anybody at sich a rint; an' for good rasons too—bekase they could never pay it, an' himself 'ud be the sufferer in the long run.”

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“Dang me, but you’re the long-headedest woman alive this day, Elish. Why, I never wanst wint into the rason o’ the thing, at all. But you don’t know the offers he got.”

“Don’t I? Why do you think he’d let the Mullins, or the Conlans, or the O’Donog-hoes, or the Duffys, upon his land, widout a shillin’ in one o’ their pockets to stock it, or to begin workin’ it properly wid. Hand me my cloak from the pin there, an’ get your hat. Katty, avourneen, have an eye to the house till we come back; an’ if Dick Murphy comes here to get tobaccy on score, tell him I can’t afford it, till he pays up what he got. Come, Pether, in the name o’ goodness—come, abouchal.”

Elish, during their short journey to the landlord’s, commenced, in her own way, a lecture upon agricultural economy, which, though plain and unvarnished, contained excellent and practical sense. She also pointed out to him when to speak and when to be silent; told him what rent to offer, and in what manner he should offer it; but she did all this so dexterously and sweetly, that honest Peter thought the new and corrected views which she furnished him with, were altogether the result of his own penetration. The landlord was at home when they arrived, and ordered them into the parlor, where he soon made his appearance.

“Well, Connell,” said he, smiling, “are you come to make me a higher offer?”

“Why thin no, plase your honor,” replied Peter, looking for confidence to Elish: “instead o’ that, sir, Elish here—”

“Never heed me, alanna; tell his honor what you’ve to say, out o’ the face. Go an acushla.”

“Why, your honor, to tell the blessed thruth, the dickens a bit o’ myself but had a sup in my head when I was wid your honor to-day before.”

Elish was thunderstruck at this most unexpected apology from Peter; but the fact was, that the instructions which she had given him on their way had completely evaporated from his brain, and he felt himself thrown altogether upon his own powers of invention. Here, however, he was at home; for it was well known among all his acquaintances, that, however he might be deficient in the management of a family when compared to his wife, he was capable, notwithstanding, of exerting a certain imaginative faculty in a very high degree. Elish felt that to contradict him on the spot must lessen both him and herself in the opinion of the landlord, a circumstance that would have given her much pain.

“I’m sorry to hear that, Connell,” said Mr. Eccles; “you bear the character of being strictly sober in your habits. You must have been early at the bottle, too, which makes your apology rather unhappy. Of all tipplers, he who drinks early is the worst and most incurable.”



“Thru for you, sir, but this only happens me wanst a year, your honor.”

“Once a year! But, by the by, you had no appearance of being tipsy, Peter.”

“Tipsy! Bud-a’-age, your honor, I was never seen tipsy in all my life,” said Peter,—
“That’s a horse of another color, sir, plase your honor.”



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The reader must at once perceive that Peter here was only recovering himself from the effects of the injurious impression which his first admission was calculated to produce against him in the mind of his landlord. “Topsy! No, no, sir; but the rason of it, sir, was this: it bein’ my birthday, sir, I merely tuck a sup in the mornin’, in honor o’ the day. It’s altogether a lucky day to me, sir!”

“Why, to be sure, every man’s birthday may, probably, be called such—the gift of existence being, I fear, too much undervalued.”

“Bedad, your honor, I don’t mane that, at all.”

“Then what do you mean, Peter?”

“Why, sir, you see, it’s not that I was *entirely* born on this day, but partly, sir; I was marrid to Ellish here into the bargain,—one o’ the best wives, sir—however, I’ll say no more, as she’s to the fore herself. But, death alive, sir, sure when we put both conclusions together—myself bein’ sich a worthy man, and Ellish such a tip-top wife, who could blame me for smellin’ the bottle?—for divil a much more I did—about two glasses, sir—an’ so it got up into my head a little when I was wid your honor to-day before.”

“But what is the amount of all this, Peter?”

“Why, sir, you see only I was as I said, Sir—not tipsy, your honor, any way, but seein’ things double or so; an’ that was, I suppose, what made me offer for the farm double what I intinded. Every body knows, sir, that the ‘crathur’ gives the big heart to us, any how, your honor.”

“But you know, Peter, we entered into no terms about it. I, therefore, have neither power nor inclination to hold you to the offer you made.”

“Faith, sir, you’re not the gintleman to do a shabby turn, nor ever was, nor one o’ your family. There’s not in all Europe”—

Ellish, who was a point blank dealer, could endure Peter’s mode of transacting business no longer. She knew that if he once got into the true spirit of applying the oil of flattery to the landlord, he would have rubbed him into a perfect froth ere he quitted him. She, therefore, took up the thread of the discourse, and finished the compliment with much more delicacy than honest Peter could have displayed.

“Thru for you, Pether,” she added; “there is not a kinder family to the poor, nor betther landlords in the country they live in. Pether an’ myself, your honor, on layin’ both our ’heads together, found that he offered more rint for the land nor any! tenant could honestly pay. So, sir, where’s the use of keepin’ back God’s truth—Pether, sir”—



Peter here trembled from an apprehension that the wife, in accomplishing some object of her own in reference to the land, was about to undeceive the landlord, touching the lie which he had so barefacedly palmed upon that worthy gentleman for truth. In fact, his anxiety overcame his prudence, and he resolved to anticipate her.

“I’d advise you, sir,” said he, with a smile of significant good-humor, “to be a little suspicious of her, for, to tell the truth, she draws the”—here he illustrated the simile with his staff—“the long bow of an odd time; faith she does. I’d kiss the book on the head of what I tould you, sir, plase your honor. For the sacret of it is, that I tuck the moistare afore she left her bed.”



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“Why, Peter, alanna,” said Elish, soothingly, “what’s comin’ over you, at all, an’ me; goin’ to explain to his honor the outs and ins I of our opinion about the land? Faix, man, we’re not thinkin’ about you, good or bad.”

“I believe the drop has scarcely left your head yet, Peter,” said the landlord.

“Bud-an’-age, your honor, sure we must have our joke, any how—doesn’t she deserve it for takin’ the word out o’ my mouth?”

“Whisht, avillish; you’re too cute for us all, Pether. There’s no use, sir, as I was sayin’, for any one to deny that when they take a farm they do it to make by it, or at the laste to live comfortably an it. That’s the thruth, your honor, an’ it’s no use to keep it back from you, sir.”

“I perfectly agree with you,” said the landlord. “It is with these motives that a tenant should wish to occupy land; and it is the duty of every landlord who has his own interest truly at heart, to see that his land be not let at such a rent as will preclude the possibility of comfort or independence on the part of his tenantry. He who lets his land above its value, merely because people are foolish enough to offer more for it than it is worth, is as great an enemy to himself as he is to the tenant.”

“It’s God’s thruth, sir, an’ it’s nothin’ else but a comfort to hear sich words comin’ from the lips of a gintleman that’s a landlord himself.”

“Ay, an’ a good one, too,” said Peter; “an’ kind father for his honor to be what he is. Divil resave the family in all Europe”—

“Thru for you, avourneen, an’ even’ one knows that. We wor talkin’ it over, sir, betuxt ourselves, Pether an’ me, an’ he says very cutely, that, upon second thoughts, he offered more nor we could honestly pay out o’ the land: so”—

“Faith, it’s a thru as gospel, your honor. Says I, ‘Elish, you beauty’”—

“I thought,” observed Mr. Eccles, “that she sometimes drew the long bow, Peter.”

“Oh, murdher alive, sir, it was only in regard of her crassin’ in an’ whippin’ the word out o’ my mouth, that I wanted to take a rise out of her. Oh, bedad, sir, no; the crathur’s thruth to the backbone, an’ farther if I’d say it.”

“So, your honor, considherin’ everything, we’re willin’ to offer thirty shillin’s an acre for the farm. That rint, sir, we’ll be able to pay, wid the help o’ God, for sure we can do nothin’ widout his assistance, glory be to his name! You’ll get many that’ll offer you more, your honor; but if it ‘ud be plasin’ to you to considher what manes they have to pay it, I think, sir, you’d see, out o’ your own sinse, that it’s not likely people who is gone to the bad, an’ has nothin’ could stand it out long.”

“I wish to heaven,” replied Mr. Eccles, “that every tenant in Ireland possessed your prudence and good sense. Will you permit me to ask, Mrs. Connell, what capital you and your husband can command provided I should let you have it.”



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“Wid every pleasure in life, sir, for it’s but a fair question to put. An’ sure, it is to God we owe it, whatever it is, plase your honor. But, sir, if we get the land, we’re able to stock it, an’ to crop it well an’ dacently; an’ if your honor would allow us for sartin improvements, sir, we’d run it into snug fields, by plantin’ good hedges, an’ gettin’ up shelther for the outlyin’ cattle in the hard seasons, plase your honor, and you know the farm is very naked and bare of shelter at present.”

“Sowl, will we, sir, an’ far more nor that if we get it. I’ll undhertake, sir, to level”—

“No, Pether, we’ll promise no more nor we’ll do; but anything that his honor will be plased to point out to us, if we get fair support, an’ that it remains on the farm afther us, we’ll be willin’ to do it.”

“Willin’!” exclaimed Peter!—“faith, whether we’re willin’ or not, if his honor but says the word”—

“Mrs. Connell,” said their landlord, “say no more. The farm is yours, and you may, consider yourselves as my tenants.”

“Many thanks to you, sir, for the priference. I hope, sir, you’ll not rue what you did in givin’ it to us before them that offered a higher rint. You’ll find, sir, wid the help o’ the Almighty, that we’ll pay you your rint rigular an’ punctual.”

“Why, thin, long life, an’ glory, an’ benedication to your honor! Faith, it’s only kind father for you, sir, to be what you are. The devil resave the family in all Europe”—

“Peter, that will do,” replied the landlord, “it would be rather hazardous for our family to compete with all Europe. Go home, Peter, and be guided by your wife, who has more sense in her little finger than ever your family had either in Europe or out of it, although I mean you no offense by going beyond Europe.”

“By all the books that never wor opened an’ shut,” replied Peter, with the intuitive quickness of perception peculiar to Irishmen, “an innocenter boy than Andy Connell never was sent across the water. I proved as clear an alibi for him as the sun in the firmanent; an’ yit, bad luck to the big-wig O’Grady, he should be puttin’ in his leek an me afore the jury, jist whin I had the poor boy cleared out dacently, an’ wid all honor. An’ bedad, now, that we’re spakin about it, I’ll tell your honor the whole conclusions of it. You see, sir, the Agint was shot one night; an’ above all nights in the year, your honor, a thief of a toothache that I had kep me”—

“Pether, come away, abouchal: his honor kaows as much about it as you do, Come, aroon; you know we must help to scald an’ scrape the pig afore night, an’ it’s late now.”

“Bodad, sir, she’s a sweet one, this.”



“Be guided by her, Peter, if you’re wise, she’s a wife you ought to be proud of.”

“Thru for you, sir; divil resave the word o’ lie in that, any how. Come, Ellish; come, you deludher, I’m wid you.”

“God bless your honor, sir, an’ we’re ob’laged to you for you kindness an’ patience wid the likes o’ us.”



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"I say ditto, your honor. Long life an' glory to you every day your honor rises!"

Peter, on his way home, entered into a defence of his apology for offering so high a rent to the landlord; but although it possessed both ingenuity and originality, it was, we must confess, grossly defective in those principles usually inculcated by our best Ethic writers.

"Couldn't you have tould him what we agreed upon goin' up," observed Elish; "but instead o' that, to begin an' tell the gintlemen so many lies about your bein' dhrunk, an' this bein' your birth-day, an' the day we wor marrid, an',—Musha, sich square stories to come into your head?"

"Why," said Peter, "what harm's in all that, whin he didn't *find me out*?"

"But why the sarra did you go to say that I was in the custom o' tellin' lies?"

"Faix, bekase I thought you wor goin' to let out all, an' I thought it best to have the first word o' you. What else?—but sure I brought myself off bravely."

"Well, well, a hudh; don't be invintin' sich things another time, or you'll bring yourself into a scrape, some way or other."

"Faix, an' you needn't spake, Elish; you can let out a nate bounce yourself, whin it's to sarve you. Come now, don't run away wid the story!"

"Well, if I do, it's in the way o' my business; whin I'm batin' them down in the price o' what I'm buyin', or gettin' thim to bid up for any thing I'm sellin': besides, it's to advance ourselves in the world that I do it, abouchal."

"Go an, go an; faix, you're like the new moon, sharp at both corners: but what matter, you beauty, we've secured the farm, at any rate, an', by this an' by that, I'll show you tip-top farmin' an it."

A struggle now commenced between the husband and wife, as to which of them should, in their respective departments, advance themselves with greater rapidity in life. This friendly contest was kept up principally by the address of Elish, who, as she knew those points in her husband's character most easily wrought upon, felt little difficulty in shaping him to her own purposes. Her great object was to acquire wealth; and it mostly happens, that when this is the ruling principle in life, there is usually to be found, in association with it, all those qualities which are best adapted to secure it. Peter, on finding that every succeeding day brought something to their gains, began to imbibe a portion of that spirit which wholly absorbed Elish. He became worldly; but it was rather the worldliness of habit than of principle. In the case of Elish, it proceeded from both; her mind was apt, vigorous, and conceptive; her body active, her manners bland and insinuating, and her penetration almost intuitive. About the time of their entering upon



the second farm, four children had been, the fruit of their marriage—two sons and two daughters. These were now new sources of anxiety to their mother, and fresh impulses to her industry. Her ignorance, and that of her husband, of any kind of education, she had often, in the course of their business, bitter cause to regret. She now resolved that their children should be well instructed; and no time was lost in sending them to school, the moment she thought them capable of imbibing the simplest elements of instruction.



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"It's hard to say," she observed to her husband, "how soon they may be useful to us. Who knows, Pether, but we may have a full shop yit, an' they may be able to make up bits of accounts for us, poor things? Throth, I'd be happy if I wanst seen it."

"Faix, Elish," replied Peter, "if we can get an as we're doin', it is hard to say. For my own part, if I had got the larnin' in time, I might be a bright boy to-day, no doubt of it—could spake up to the best o' thim. I never went to school but wanst, an' I remember I threw the mather into a kiln-pot, an' broke the poor craythur's arm; an' from that day to this, I never could be brought a single day to school."

Peter and Elish now began to be pointed out as a couple worthy of imitation by those who knew that perseverance and industry never fail of securing their own reward. Others, however,—that is to say, the lazy, the profligate, and the ignorant,—had a ready solution of the secret of their success.

"Oh, my dear, she's a lucky woman, an' anything she puts her hand to prospers. Sure sho was born wid a *lucky caul** an her head; an', be sure, ahagur, the world will flow in upon thim. There's many a neighbor about thim works their fingers to the stumps, an' yit you see they can't get an: for Elish, if she'd throw the sweepins of her hearth to the wind, it 'ud come back to her in money. She was born to it, an' nothin' can keep her from her luck!"**

* The caul is a, thin membrane, about the consistence of very fine silk, which sometimes covers the head on a new-born infant like a cap. It is always the omen of great good fortune to the infant and parents; and in Ireland, when any one has unexpectedly fallen into the receipt of property, or any other temporal good, it is customary to say, "such a person was born with a 'lucky caul' on his head." Why these are considered lucky, it would be a very difficult matter to ascertain. Several instances of good fortune, happening to such as were born with them, might, by their coincidences, form a basis for the superstition; just as the fact of three men during one severe winter having been found drowned, each with two shirts on, generated an opinion which has now become fixed and general in that parish, that it is unlucky to wear two shirts at once. We are not certain whether the caul is in general the perquisite of the midwife—sometimes we believe it is; at all events, her integrity occasionally yields to the desire of possessing it. In many cases she conceals its existence, in order that she may secretly dispose of it to good advantage, which she frequently does; for it is considered to be the herald of good fortune to those who can get it into their possession. Now, let not our English neighbors smile at us for those things until they wash their own hands clear of such practices. At this day a caul will bring a good price in the most civilized city in the world—to wit, the good city of London—the British metropolis. Nay to such lengths has the mania for cauls been carried there, that they have been actually advertised for in the Times newspaper.

* This doctrine of fatalism is very prevalent among the lower orders in Ireland.



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Such are many of the senseless theories that militate against exertion and industry in Ireland, and occasion many to shrink back from the laudible race of honest enterprise, into filth, penury, and crime. It is this idle and envious crew, who, with a natural aversion to domestic industry, become adepts in politics, and active in those illegal combinations and outrages which retard the prosperity of the country, and bring disgrace upon the great body of its peaceable inhabitants.

In the meantime Elish was rapidly advancing in life, while such persons were absurdly speculating upon the cause of her success. Her business was not only increased, but extended. From crockery, herrings, and salt, she advanced gradually to deal in other branches adapted to her station, and the wants of the people. She bought stockings, and retailed them every market-day. By and by a few pieces of soap might be seen in her windows; starch, blue, potash, and candles, were equally profitable. Pipes were seen stuck across each other, flanked by tape, cakes, children's books, thimbles, and bread. In fact, she was equally clever and expert in whatever she undertook. The consciousness of this, and the reputation of being "a hard honest woman," encouraged her to get a cask or two of beer, and a few rolls of tobacco. Peter, when she proposed the two last, consented only to sell them still as smuggled, goods—sub silentio. With her usual prudence, however, she declined this.

"We have gone on that way purty far," she replied, "an' never got a touch, (* never suffered by the exciseman) thanks to the kindness o' the neighbors that never informed an us: but now, Pether, that we're able we had betther do everything above board. You know the ould say, 'long runs the fox, but he's catched at last:' so let us give up in time, an' get out a little bit o' license."

"I don't like that at all," replied Peter: "I cain't warm my heart to the license. I'll back you in anything but that. The gauger won't come next or near us: he has thried it often, an' never made anything of it. Dang me, but I'd like to have a bit o' fun with the gauger to see if my hand's still ready for practice."

"Oh, thin, Pether, how can you talk that way, ashore? Now if what I'm sayin' was left to yourself wouldn't you be apt to plan it as I'm doin'?—wouldn't you, acushla? Throth, I know you're to cute an' sinsible not to do it."

"Why thin, do you know what, Elish—although I didn't spake it out, upon my faix I was thinkin' of it. Divil a word o' lie in it."

"Oh, you thief o' the world, an' never to tell it to me. Faix, Pether, you're a cunnin' shaver, an' as deep as a draw well."

"Let me alone. Why I tell you if I study an' lay myself down to it, I can conthrive anything. When I was young, many a time my poor father, God be good to him! said

that if there was any possibility of gettin' me to take to larnin', I'd be risin' out o' the ashes every mornin' like a phanix."



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“But won't you hould to your plan about the license?”

“Hould! To be sure I will. What was I but takin' a rise out o' you. I intinded it this good while, you phanix—faix, I did.”

In this manner did Elish dupe her own husband into increasing wealth. Their business soon became so extensive, that a larger house was absolutely necessary. To leave that, beneath whose roof she succeeded so well in all her speculations, was a point—be it of prudence or of prejudice—which Elish could not overcome. Her maxim was, wherever you find yourself doing well, stay there. She contrived, however, to remedy this. To the old house additional apartments were, from time to time, added, into which their business soon extended. When these again became too small, others were also built; so that in the course of about twenty years, their premises were so extensive, that the original shebeen-house constituted a very small portion of Peter's residence. Peter, during Elish's progress within doors, had not been idle without. For every new room added to the house, he was able to hook in a fresh farm in addition to those he had already occupied. Unexpected success had fixed his heart so strongly upon the accumulation of money, and the pride of rising in the world, as it was possible for a man, to whom they were only adventitious feelings, to experience. The points of view in which he and his wife were contemplated by the little public about them were peculiar, but clearly distinct. The wife was generally esteemed for her talents and incessant application to business; but she was not so cordially liked as Peter. He, on the other hand, though less esteemed, was more beloved by all their acquaintances than Elish. This might probably originate from the more obvious congeniality which existed between Peter's natural disposition, and the national character; for with the latter, Elish, except good humor, had little in common.

The usual remarks upon both were—“she would buy an' sell him”—“'twas she that made a man of him; but for all that, Pether's worth a ship-load of her, if she'd give him his own way.” That is, if she would permit him to drink with the neighbors, to be idle and extravagant.

Every year, now that their capital was extending, added more perceptibly to their independence. Elish's experience in the humbler kinds of business, trained her for a higher line; just as boys at school rise from one form to another. She made no plunges, nor permitted Peter, who was often, inclined to jump at conclusions, to make any. Her elevation was gradual and cautious; for her plans were always so seasonable and simple that every new description of business, and every new success, seemed to arise naturally from that which went before it.

Having once taken out a license, their house soon became a decent country spirit establishment; from soap, and candles, and tobacco, she rose into the full sweep of groceries; and from dealing in Connemara stockings and tape, she proceeded in due time to sell woollen and linen drapery. Her crockery was now metamorphosed into delf,



pottery, and hardware; her gingerbread into stout loaves, for as Peter himself grew wheat largely, she seized the opportunity presented by the death of the only good baker in the neighborhood, of opening an extensive bakery.



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It may be asked, how two illiterate persons, like Peter and Elish, could conduct business in which so much calculation was necessary, without suffering severely by their liability to make mistakes. To this we reply—first, that we should have liked to see any person attempting to pass a bad note or a light guinea upon Elish after nine or ten years' experience; we should like to have seen a smug clerk taking his pen from behind his ear, and after making his calculation, on inquiring from Elish if she had reckoned up the amount, compelled to ascertain the error which she pointed out to him. The most remarkable point in her whole character, was the rapid accuracy she displayed in mental calculation, and her uncommon sagacity in detecting bad money.

There is, however, a still more satisfactory explanation of this circumstance to be given. She had not neglected the education of her children. The eldest was now an intelligent boy, and a smart accountant, who, thanks to his master, had been taught to keep their books by Double Entry. The second was little inferior to him as a clerk, though as a general dealer he was far his superior. The eldest had been principally behind the counter; whilst the younger, in accompanying his mother in all her transactions and bargain-making, had in a great measure imbibed her address and tact.

It is certainly a pleasing, and, we think, an interesting thing, to contemplate the enterprise of an humble, but active, shrewd woman, enabling her to rise, step by step, from the lowest state of poverty to a small sense of independence; from this, by calling-fresh powers into action, taking wider views, and following them up by increased efforts, until her shebeen becomes a small country public-house; until her roll of tobacco, and her few pounds of soap and starch, are lost in the well-filled drawers of a grocery shop; and her gray Connemara stockings transformed by the golden wand of industry into a country cloth warehouse. To see Peter—from the time when he first harrowed part of his farm with a thorn-bush, and ploughed it by joining his horse to that of a neighbor—adding farm to farm, horse to horse, and cart to cart, until we find him a wealthy and extensive agriculturist.

The progress of Peter and Elish was in another point of view a good study for him who wishes to look into human nature, whilst adapting itself to the circumstances through which it passes. When this couple began life, their friends and acquaintances were as poor as themselves; as they advanced from one gradation to another, and rose up from a lower to a higher state, their former friends, who remained in their original poverty, found themselves left behind in cordiality and intimacy, as well as in circumstances; whilst the subjects of our sketch continued to make new friendships of a more respectable stamp, to fill up, as it were, the places held in their good will by their humble, but neglected, intimates. Let not our readers, however, condemn them for this.



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It was the act of society, and not of Peter and Elish. On their parts, it was involuntary; their circumstances raised them, and they were compelled, of course, to rise with their circumstances. They were passing through the journey of life, as it were, and those with whom they set out, not having been able to keep up with them, soon lost their companionship, which was given to those with whom they travelled for the time being. Society is always ready to reward the enterprising and industrious by its just honors, whether they are sought or not; it is so disposed, that every man falls or rises into his proper place in it, and that by the wisdom and harmony of its structure. The rake, who dissipates by profligacy and extravagance that which might have secured him an honorable place in life, is eventually brought to the work-house; whilst the active citizen, who realizes an honest independence, is viewed with honor and esteem.

Peter and Elish were now people of consequence in the parish; the former had ceased to do anything more than superintend the cultivation of his farms; the latter still took an active part in her own business, or rather in the various departments of business which she carried on. Peter might be seen the first man abroad in the morning proceeding to some of his farms mounted upon a good horse, comfortably dressed in top boots, stout corduroy breeches, buff cashmere waistcoat, and blue broad-cloth coat, to which in winter was added a strong frieze greatcoat, with a drab velvet collar, and a glazed hat. Elish was also respectably dressed, but still considerably under her circumstances. Her mode of travelling to fairs or markets was either upon a common car, covered with a feather-bed and quilt, or behind Peter upon a pillion. This last method flattered Peter's vanity very much; no man could ride on these occasions with a statelier air. He kept himself as erect and stiff as a poker, and brandished the thong of his loaded whip with the pride of a gentleman farmer.

'Tis true, he did not always hear the sarcastic remarks which were passed upon him by those who witnessed his good-natured vanity:

"There he goes," some laboring man on the wayside would exclaim, "a purse-proud *bodagh* upon our hands. Why, thin, does he forget that we remember when he kept the shebeen-house, an' sould his smuggled to-baccy in gits (* the smallest possible quantities) out of his pocket, for fraid o' the gauger! Sowl, he'd show a blue nose, any way, only for the wife—'Twas she made a man of him."

"Faith, an' I for one, won't hear Pether Connell run down," his companion would reply; "he's a good-hearted, honest man, an' obligin' enough; an' for that matter so is the wife, a hard honest woman, that made what they have, an' brought herself an' her husband from nothin' to somethin'."

"Thru for you, Tim; in throth, they do desarve credit. Still, you see, here's you an' me, an' we've both been slavin' ourselves as much as they have, an' yet you see how we are! However, *its their luck*, and there's no use in begrudgin' it to them."



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When their children were full-grown, the mother did not, as might have been supposed, prevent them from making a respectable appearance. With excellent judgment, she tempered their dress, circumstances, and prospects so well together, that the family presented an admirable display of economy, and a decent sense of independence. From the moment they were able to furnish solid proofs of their ability to give a comfortable dinner occasionally, the priest of the parish began to notice them; and this new intimacy, warmed by the honor conferred on one side, and by the good dinners on the other, ripened into a strong friendship. For many a long year, neither Peter nor Elish, God forgive them, ever troubled themselves about going to their duty. They soon became, however, persons of too much importance to be damned without an effort made for their salvation. The worthy gentleman accordingly addressed them on the subject, and as the matter was one of perfect indifference to both, they had not the slightest hesitation to go to confession—in compliment to the priest. We do not blame the priest for this; God forbid that we should quarrel with a man for loving a good dinner. If we ourselves were a priest, it is very probable,—nay, from the zest with which we approach a good dinner, it is quite certain—that we would have cultivated honest Peter's acquaintance, and drawn him out to the practice of that most social of virtues—hospitality. The salvation of such a man's soul was worth looking after; and, indeed, we find a much warmer interest felt, in all churches, for those who are able to give good dinners, than for those poor miserable sinners who can scarcely get even a bad one.

But besides this, there was another reason for the Rev. Mr. Mulcahy's anxiety to cultivate a friendship with Peter and his wife—which reason consisted in a very laudable determination to bring about a match between his own niece, Miss Granua Mulcahy, and Peter's eldest son, Dan. This speculation he had not yet broached to the family, except by broken hints, and jocular allusions to the very flattering proposals that had been made by many substantial young men for Miss Granua.

In the mean time the wealth of the Connells had accumulated to thousands; their business in the linen and woollen drapery line was incredible. There was scarcely a gentleman within many miles of them, who did not find it his interest to give them his custom. In the hardware, flour, and baking concerns they were equally fortunate. The report of their wealth had gone far and near, exaggerated, however, as everything of the kind is certain to be; but still there were ample grounds for estimating it at a very high amount.

Their stores were large, and well filled with many a valuable bale; their cellars well stocked with every description of spirits; and their shop, though not large in proportion to their transactions, was well filled, neat, and tastefully fitted up. There was no show, however—no empty glare to catch the eye; on the contrary, the whole concern was marked by an air of solid, warm comfort, that was much more indicative of wealth and independence than tawdry embellishment would have been.



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“Avourneen,” said Elish, “the way to deck out your shop is to keep the best of goods. Wanst the people knows that they’ll get betther money-worth here than they’ll get anywhere else, they’ll come here, whether the shop looks well or ill. Not savin’ but every shop ought to be clane an’ dacent, for there’s rason in all things.”

This, indeed, was another secret of their success. Every article in their shop was of the best description, having been selected by Elish’s own eye and hand in the metropolis, or imported directly from the place of its manufacture. Her periodical visits to Dublin gave her great satisfaction; for it appears that those with whom she dealt, having had sufficient discrimination to appreciate her talents and integrity, treated her with marked respect.

Peter’s farm-yard bore much greater evidence of his wealth than did Elish’s shop. It was certainly surprising to reflect, that by the capacity of two illiterate persons, who began the world with nothing, all the best and latest improvements in farming were either adopted or anticipated. The farmyard was upon a great scale; for Peter cultivated no less than four hundred acres of land—to such lengths had his enterprise carried him. Threshing machines, large barns, corn kilns, large stacks, extensive stables, and immense cow-houses, together with the incessant din of active employment perpetually going on—all gave a very high opinion of their great prosperity, and certainly reflected honor upon those whose exertions had created such a scene about them. One would naturally suppose, when the family of the Connells had arrived to such unexpected riches, and found it necessary to conduct a system whose machinery was so complicated and extensive that Elish would have fallen back to the simple details of business, from a deficiency of that comprehensive intelligence which is requisite to conduct the higher order of mercantile transactions; especially as her sons were admirably qualified by practice, example, and education, to ease her of a task which would appear one of too much difficulty for an unlettered farmer’s wife. Such a supposition would be injurious to this excellent woman. So far from this being the case, she was still the moving spirit, the chief conductor of the establishment. Whenever any difficulty arose that required an effort of ingenuity and sagacity, she was able in the homeliest words to disentangle it so happily, that those who heard her wondered that it should at all have appeared to them as a difficulty. She was everywhere. In Peter’s farm-yard her advice was as excellent and as useful as in her own shop. On his farms she was the better agriculturist, and she frequently set him right in his plans and speculations for the ensuing year.

She herself was not ignorant of her skill. Many a time has she surveyed the scene about her with an eye in which something like conscious pride might be seen to kindle. On those occasions she usually shook her head, and exclaimed, either in soliloquy, or by way of dialogue, to some person near her:—



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“Well, avourneen, all’s very right, an’ goin’ an bravely; but I only hope that when I’m gone I won’t be missed!”

“Missed,” Peter would reply, if he happened to hear her; “oh, upon my credit”—he was a man of too much consequence to swear “by this and by that” now—“upon my credit, Elish, if you die soon, you’ll see the genteel wife I’ll have in your place.”

“Whisht, avourneen! Although you’re but jokin’, I don’t like to hear it, avillish! No, indeed; we wor too long together, Pether, and lived too happily wid one another, for you to have the heart to think of sich a thing!”

“No, in troth, Elish, I would be long sarry to do it. It’s displasin’ to you, achree, an’ I won’t say it. God spare you to us! It was you put the bone in us, an’ that’s what all the country says, big an’ little, young and ould; an’ God He knows it’s truth, and nothin’ else.”

“Indeed, no, thin, Pether, it’s not altogether thruth, you deserve your full share of it. You backed me well, acushla, in everything, an’ if you had been a dhrinkin’, idle, rollikin’ vagabone, what ’ud signify all, that me or the likes o’ me could do.”

“Faith, an’ it was you made me what I am, Elish; you tuck the soft side o’ me, you beauty; an’ it’s well you did, for by this—hem, upon my reputation, if you had gone to cross purposes with me you’d find yourself in the wrong box. An’, you phanix of beauty, you managed the childhre, the crathurs, the same way—an’ a good way it is, in throth.”

“Pether, wor you ever thinkin’ o’ Father Muloahy’s sweetness to us of late?”

“No, thin, the sorra one o’ me thought of it. Why, Elish?”

“Didn’t you obsarve that for the last three or four months he’s full of attintions to us? Every Sunday he brings you up, an’ me, if I’d go, to the althar,—an’ keeps you there by way of showin’ you respect. Pether, it’s not you, but your money he respects; an’ I think there ought to be no respect o’ persons in the chapel, any how. You’re not a bit nearer God by bein’ near the althar; for how do we know but the poorest crathur there is nearer to heaven than we are!”

“Faith, sure enough, Elish; but what deep skame are you penethratin’ now, you desaver?”

“I’d lay my life, you’ll have a proposial o’ marriage from Father Mulcahy, atween our Dan an’ Miss Granua. For many a day he’s hintin’ to us, from time to time, about the great offers she had; now what’s the rason, if she had these great offers, that he didn’t take them?”



“Bedad, Elish, you’re the greatest headpiece in all Europe. Murdher alive, woman, what a fine counsellor you’d make. An’ suppose he did offer, Elish, what ‘ud you be sayin’ to him?”

“Why, that ‘ud depind entirely upon what he’s able to give her—they say he has money. It ‘ud depind, too, upon whether Dan has any likin’ for her or not.”

“He’s often wid her, I know; an’ I needn’t tell you, Elish, that afore we wor spliced together, I was often wid somebody that I won’t mintion. At all evints, he has made Dan put the big O afore the Connell, so that he has him now full namesake to the Counsellor; an’, faith, that itself ‘ud get him a wife.”



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“Well, the best way is to say nothin’, an’ to hear nothin’, till his Reverence spates out, an’ thin we’ll see what can be done.”

Elish’s sagacity had not misled her. In a few months afterwards Father Mulcahy was asked by young Dan Connell to dine; and as he and holiest Elish were sitting together, in the course of the evening, the priest broached the topic as follows:—

“Mrs. Connell, I think this whiskey is better than my four-year old, that I bought at the auction the other day, although Dan says mine’s better. Between ourselves, that Dan is a clever, talented young fellow; and if he happens upon a steady, sensible wife, there is no doubt but he will die a respectable man. But, by the by, Mrs. Connell, you’ve never tried my whiskey; and upon my credit, you must soon, for I know your opinion would decide the question.”

“Is it worth while to decide it, your Reverence? I suppose the thruth is, sir, that both is good enough for anyone; an’ I think that’s as much as we want.”

Thus far she went, but never alluded to Dan, judiciously throwing the onus of introducing that subject upon the priest.

“Dan says mine’s better,” observed Father Mulcahy; “and I would certainly give a great deal for his opinion upon that or any other subject, except theology.”

“You ought,” replied Elish, “to be a bether judge of whiskey nor either Dan nor me; an’ I’ll tell you why—you dhrink it in more places, and can make comparishment one wid another; but Dan an’ me is confined mostly to our own, an’ of that same we take very little, an’ the less the betther for people in business, or indeed for anybody.”

“Very true, Mrs. Connell! But for all that, I won’t give up Dan’s judgment in anything within his own line of business, still excepting theology, for which, he hasn’t the learning.”

“He’s a good son, without *tayology*—as good as ever broke the world’s bread,” said Peter, “glory be to God! Although, for that matther, he ought to be as well acquainted wid *tayology* as your Reverence, in regard that he *sells* more of it nor you do.”

“A good son, they say, Mrs. Connell, will make a good husband. I wonder you don’t think of settling him in life. It’s full time.”

“Father, avourneen, we must lave that wid himself. I needn’t be tellin’ you, that it ’ud be hard to find a girl able to bring what the girl that ’ud expect Dan ought to bring.”

This was a staggerer to the priest, who recruited his ingenuity by drinking Peter’s health, and Elish’s.



“Have you nobody in your eye for him, Mrs. Connell?”

“Faith, I’ll engage she has,” replied Peter, with a ludicrous grin—“I’ll venture for to say she has that.”

“Very right, Mrs. Connell; it’s all fair. Might one ask who she is; for, to tell you the truth, Dan is a favorite of mine, and must make it a point to see him well settled.”

“Why, your Reverence,” replied Peter again, “jist the one you mintioned.”



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“Who? I? Why I mentioned nobody.”

“An’ that’s the very one she has in her eye for him, plase your Reverence—ha, ha, ha! What’s the world widout a joke, Docthor? beggin’ your pardon for makin’ so free wid you.”

“Peter, you’re still a wag,” replied the priest; “but, seriously, Mrs. Connell, have you selected any female, of respectable connections, as a likely person to be a wife for Dan?”

“Indeed no, your Reverence, I have not. Where could I pitch upon a girl—barrin’ a Protestant, an’ that ’ud never do—who has a fortune to meet what Dan’s to get?”

The priest moved his chair a little, and drank their healths a second time.

“But you know, Mrs. Connell, that Dan needn’t care so much about fortune, if he got a girl of respectable connections. He has an independence himself.”

“Thru for you, father; but what right would any girl have to expect to be supported by the hard arnin’ of me an’ my husband, widout bringin’ somethin’ forrid herself? You know, sir, that the fortune always goes wid the wife; but am I to fortune off my son to a girl that has nothin’? If my son, plase your Reverence, hadn’t a coat to his back, or a guinea in his pocket—as, God be praised, he has both—but, supposin’ he hadn’t, what right would he have to expect a girl wid a handsome fortune to marry him? There’s Paddy Neil your sarvint-boy; now, if Paddy, who’s an honest man’s son, axed your niece, wouldn’t you be apt to lose your timper?”

“I beg your pardon, Mrs. Connell, I think your fire’s rather hot—allow me to drawback a little. Mrs. Connell, your health again!—Mr. Connell, your fireside!”

“Thank you, Docthor; but faith I think you ought hardly to dhrink the same fireside, because it appears to be rather hot for your Reverence, at the present time—ha, ha, ha! Jokin’ still, Docthor, we must be. Well, what harm! I wish we may never do worse!”

“And what fortune would you expect with a girl of genteel connexion—a girl that’s accomplished, well say in music, plain work, and Irish, vernacularly?—hem! What fortune would you be expecting with such a girl?”

“Why, Docthor, ahagur, the only music I’d wish for my son’s wife is a good timper; an’ that’s what their music-masthers can’t tache thim. The plain work, although I don’t know what you mane by it, sounds well enough; an’ as to Irish, whick-whacku-larly, if you mane our own ould tongue, he may get thousands that can spake it whackinly, an’ nothin’ else.”



“You’re a wealthy woman, certainly, Mrs. Connell, and what’s more, I’m not at all surprised at it. Your health, once more, and long life to you! Suppose, however, that Dan got a fitting wife, what would you expect as a proper portion? I have a reason for asking.”

“Dan, please your Reverence, will get four thousand to begin the world wide; an’, as he’s to expect none but a Catholic, I suppose if he gets the fourth part of that, it’s as much as he ought to look for.”



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“A thousand pounds!—hut tut! The woman’s beside herself. Why look about you and try where you can find a Catholic girl with a thousand pounds fortune, except in a gentleman’s family, where Dan could never think of going.”

“That’s throe, any how, your Reverence,” observed Peter.—“A thousand pounds! Elish! you needn’t look for it. Where is it to be had out of a gintleman’s family, as his Reverence says throe enough.”

“An’ now, Docthor,” said Elish, “what ’ud you think a girl ought to bring a young man like Dan, that’s to have four thousand pounds?”

“I don’t think any Catholic girl of his own rank in the county, could get more than a couple of hundred.”

“That’s one shillin’ to every pound he has,” replied Elish, almost instantaneously. “But, Father, you may as well spake out at wanst,” she continued, for she was too quick and direct in all her dealings to be annoyed by circumlocution; “you’re desairous of a match between Dan an’ Miss Granua?”

“Exactly,” said the priest; “and what is more, I believe they are fond of each other. I know Dan is attached to her, for he told me so. But, now that we have mentioned her, I say that there is not a more accomplished girl of her persuasion in the parish we sit in. She can play on the bagpipes better than any other piper in the province, for I taught her myself; and I tell you that in a respectable man’s wife a knowledge of music is a desirable thing. It’s hard to tell, Mrs. Connell, how they may rise in the World, and get into fashionable company, so that accomplishments, you persave, are good, she can make a shirt and wash it, and she can write Irish. As for dancing, I only wish you’d see her at a hornpipe. All these things put together, along with her genteel connections, and the prospect of what I may be able to lave her—I say your son may do worse.”

“It’s not what you’d lave her, sir, but what you’d give her in the first place, that I’d like to hear. Spake up, your Reverence, an’ let us know how far you will go.”

“I’m afeard, sir,” said Peter, “if it goes to a clane bargain atween yez, that Elish will make you bid up for Dan. Be sharp; sir, or you’ll have no chance; faix, you won’t.”

“But, Mrs. Connell;” replied the priest, “before I spake up, consider her accomplishments. I’ll undertake to say, that the best bred girl in Dublin cannot perform music in such style, or on such an instrument as the one she uses. Let us contemplate Dan and her after marriage, in an elegant house, and full business, the dinner over, and they gone up to the drawing-room. Think how agreeable and graceful it would be for Mrs. Daniel O’Connell to repair to the sofa, among a few respectable friends, and, taking up her bagpipes, set her elbow a-going, until the drone gives two or three broken groans, and the chanter a squeak or two, like a child in the cholic, or a cat that you had



trampled on by accident. Then comes the real ould Irish music, that warms the heart. Dan looks upon her graceful position, until the tears of love, taste, and admiration are coming down his cheeks. By and by, the toe of him moves: here another foot is going; and, in no time, there is a hearty dance, with a light heart and a good conscience. You or I, perhaps, drop in to see them, and, of course, we partake of the enjoyment.”



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“Divil a pleasanter,” said Peter: “I tell you, I’d like it well; an’, for my own part, if the deludher here has no objection, I’m not goin’ to spoil sport.”

Ellish looked hard at the priest; her keen blue eye glittered with a sparkling light, that gave decided proofs of her sagacity being intensely excited.

“All that you’ve said,” she replied, “is very fine; but in regard o’ the bag-pipes, an’ Miss Granua Mulcahy’s squeezin’ the music out o’ thim—why, if it plased God to bring my son to the staff an’ bag—a common beggar—indeed, in that case, Miss Granua’s bagpipes might sarve both o’ thim, an’ help, maybe, to get them a night’s lodgin’ or so; but until that time comes, if you respect your niece, you’ll burn her bagpipes, dhroner, chanther, an’ all. If you are for a match, which I doubt, spake out, as I said, and say what fortune you’ll pay down on the nail wid her, otherwise we’re losin’ our time, an’ that’s a loss one can’t make up.”

The priest, who thought he could have bantered Ellish into an alliance, without pledging himself to pay any specific fortune, found that it was necessary for him to treat the matter seriously, if he expected to succeed. He was certainly anxious for the match; and as he really wished to see his niece—who, in truth, was an excellent girl, and handsome—well settled, he resolved to make a stretch and secure Dan if possible.

“Mrs. Connell,” said he, “I will be brief with you. The most I can give her is three hundred pounds, and even that by struggling and borrowing: I will undertake to pay it as you say—on the nail! for I am really anxious that my niece should be connected with so worthy and industrious a family. What do you say?”

“I’m willin’ enough,” replied Peter. It’s not asy to get that and a Catholic girl.”

“There’s some thruth in what you say, aroon, sure enough,” observed Ellish; “an’ if his Reverence puts another hundhre to it, why, in the name of goodness, let them go together. If you don’t choose that, Docthor, never breathe the subject to me agin. Dan’s not an ould man yit, an’ has time enough to get wives in plenty.”

“Come,” replied the priest, “there’s my hand, it’s a bargain; although I must say there’s no removing you from your point. I will give four hundred, hook or crook; but I’ll have sad scrambling to get it together. Still I’ll make it good.”

“Down on the nail?” inquired Ellish.

“Ay! ay! Down on the nail,” replied the priest.

“Well, in the name o’ Goodness, a bargain be it,” said Peter; “but, upon my credit, Ellish, I won’t have the bag-pipes burnt, anyhow. Faith, I must hear an odd tune, now an’ thin, when I call to see the childhre.”



“Pether, acushla, have sinse. Would you wish to see your daughter-in-law playin’ upon the bag-pipes, when she ought to be mindin’ her business, or attendin’ her childhre? No, your Reverence, the pipes must be laid aside. I’ll have no pipery connection for a son of mine.”



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The priest consented to this, although Peter conceded it with great reluctance. Further preliminaries were agreed upon, and the evening passed pleasantly, until it became necessary for Mr. Mulcahy to bid them good-night.

When they were gone, Peter and Elish talked over the matter between themselves in the following dialogue:

"The fortune's a small one," said Elish to her husband; "an' I suppose you wondher that I consinted to take so little."

"Sure enough, I wondhered at it," replied Peter, "but, for my own part, I'd give my son to her widout a penny o' fortune, in ordher to be connected wid the priest; an' besides, she's a fine, handsome, good girl—ay, an' his fill of a wife, if she had but the shift to her back."

"Four hundhre wid a priest's niece, Pether, is before double the money wid any other. Don't you know, that when they set up for themselves, he can bring the custom of the whole parish to them? It's unknown the number o' ways he can sarve them in. Sure, at stations an' weddins, wakes, marriages, and funerals, they'll all be proud to let the priest know that they purchased whatever they wanted from his niece an' her husband. Betther!—faix, four hundhre from him is worth three times as much from another."

"Glory to you, Elish!—bright an' cute for ever! Why, I'd back you for a woman' that could buy an' sell Europe, aginst the world. Now, isn't it odd that I never think of these long-headed skames?"

"Ay do you, often enough, Pether; but you keep them to yourself, abouchal."

"Faith, I'm close, no doubt of it; an'—but there's no use in sayin' any more about it—you said whatsomever came into my own head consarnin' it. Faith, you did, you phanix."

In a short time the marriage took place.

Dan, under the advice of his mother, purchased a piece of ground most advantageously located, as the site of a mill, whereon an excellent one was built; and as a good mill had been long a desideratum in the country, his success was far beyond his expectations. Every speculation, in fact, which Elish touched, prospered. Fortune seemed to take delight, either in accomplishing or anticipating her wishes. At least, such was the general opinion, although nothing could possibly be more erroneous than to attribute her success to mere chance. The secret of all might be ascribed to her good sense, and her exact knowledge of the precise moment when to take the tide of fortune at its flow. Her son, in addition to the mill, opened an extensive mercantile establishment in the next town, where he had ample cause to bless the instructions of his mother, and her foresight in calculating upon the advantage of being married to the priest's niece.



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Soon after his marriage, the person who had for many years kept the head inn of the next town died, and the establishment was advertised for sale. Elish was immediately in action. Here was an opportunity of establishing the second son in a situation which had enabled the late proprietor of it to die nearly the richest man in the parish. A few days, therefore, before that specified for the sale, she took her featherbed car, and had an interview with the executors of the late proprietor. Her character was known, her judgment and integrity duly estimated, and, perhaps, what was the weightiest argument in her favor, her purse was forthcoming to complete the offer she had made. After some private conversation between the executors, her proposal was accepted, and before she returned home, the head inn, together with its fixtures and furniture, was her property.

The second son, who was called after his father, received the intelligence with delight. One of his sisters was, at his mother's suggestion, appointed to conduct the housekeeping department, and keep the bar, a duty for which she was pretty well qualified by her experience at home.

"I will paint it in great style," said Peter the Younger. "It must be a head Inn no longer; I'll call it a Hotel, for that's the whole fashion."

"It wants little, avourneen," said his mother; "it was well kept—some paintin' an other improvements it does want, but don't be extravagant. Have it clane an' dacent, but, above all things, comfortable, an' the attendance good. That's what'll carry you, an—not a flourish o' paintin' outside, an' dirt, an' confusion, an' bad attendance widin. Consider, Pether darlin', that the man who owned it last, feathered his nest well in it, but never called it a Hotill. Let it appear on the outside jist as your old customers used to see it; but improve it widin as much as you can, widout bein' lavish an it, or takin' up the place wid nonsense."

"At all evints, I'll have a picture of the Liberator over the door, an' O'Connell' written under it. It's both our names, and besides it will be 'killin' two birds with one stone."

"No, avourneen. Let me advise you, if you wish to prosper in life, to keep yourself out of party-work. It only stands betune you an' your business; an' it's surely wiser for you to mind your own affairs than the affairs of the nation. There's rason in everything. No man in trade has a right, widout committin' a sin, to neglect his family for politics or parties. There's Jack Cummins that was doin' well in his groceries till he began to make speeches, an' get up public meetins, an' write petitions, an' now he has nothin' to throuble him but politics, for his business is gone. Every one has liberty to think as they plase. We can't expect Protestants to think as we do, nor Protestants can't suppose that we ought to think as they'd wish; an' for that same rason, we should make allowance on both sides, an' not be like many we know, that have their minds up, expectin' they don't know, what, instead of workin' for themselves and their families as they ought to do. Pether, won't you give that up, avillish?"



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“I believe you’re right, mother. I didn’t see it before in the light you’ve placed it in.”

“Then, Pether darlin’, lose no time in gettin’ into your place—you an’ Alley; an’ faix, if you don’t both manage it cleverly, I’ll never spake to yez.”

Here was a second son settled, and nothing remained but to dispose of their two daughters in marriage to the best and most advantageous offers. This, in consequences of their large fortunes, was not a matter of much difficulty. The eldest, Alley, who assisted her brother to conduct the Inn, became the wife of an extensive grazier, who lived in an adjoining county. The younger, Mary, was joined to Father Mulcahy’s nephew, not altogether to the satisfaction of the mother, who feared that two establishments of the same kind, in the same parish, supported by the same patronage, must thrive at the expense of each other. As it was something of a love-match, however, she ultimately consented.

“Avourneen,” said she, “the parish is big enough, an’ has customers enough to support two o’ them; an’ I’ll engage his Reverence will do what he can for them both.”

In the meantime, neither she nor her husband was dependent upon their children. Peter still kept the agricultural department in operation; and although the shop and warehouse were transferred to Mr. Mulcahy, in right of his wife, yet it was under the condition of paying a yearly sum to Mrs. Connell and her husband, ostensibly as a provision, but really as a spur to their exertions. A provision they could not want, for their wealth still amounted to thousands, independently of the large annual profits arising out of their farms.

For some time after the marriage of her youngest daughter, Mrs. Connell took a very active part in her son-in-law’s affairs. He possessed neither experience, nor any knowledge of business whatsoever, though he was not deficient in education, nor in capacity to acquire both. This pleased Mrs. Connell very much, who set herself to the task of instructing him in the principles of commercial life, and in the best methods of transacting business.

“The first rules,” said she to him, “for you to observe is these: tell truth; be sober; be punctual; rise early; persevere; avoid extravagance; keep your word; and watch your health. Next: don’t be proud; give no offence; talk sweetly; be ready to oblige, when you can do it without inconvenience, but don’t put yourself or your business out o’ your ways to serve anybody.

“Thirdly: keep an appearance of substance and comfort about your place, but don’t go beyond your means in doing it; when you make a bargain, think what a corroboration they you deal with bears, and whether or not you found them honest before, if you ever had business with them.



“When you buy a thing, appear to know your own mind, an’ don’t be hummin’ an’ hawin’, an’ higgin’, an’ longin’ as if your teeth wor watherin’ afther it; but be manly, downright, an’ quick; they’ll then see that you know your business, an’ they won’t be keepin’ off an’ an, but will close wid you at wanst.



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“Never drink at bargain makin’; an’ never pay money in a public-house if you can help it; if you must do it, go into an inn, or a house that you know to be dacent.

“Never stay out late in a fair or market; don’t make a poor mouth; on the other hand, don’t boast of your wealth; keep no low company; don’t be rubbin’ yourself against your betthers, but keep wid your aquils. File your loose papers an’ accounts, an’ keep your books up to the day. Never put off anything that can be done, when it ought to be done. Go early to bed; but be the last up at night, and the first in the mornin’, and there’s no fear o’ you.”

Having now settled all her children in comfort and independence, with each a prospect of rising still higher in the world, Mrs. Connell felt that the principal duties devolving upon her had been discharged. It was but reasonable, she thought, that, after the toil of a busy life, her husband and herself should relax a little, and enjoy with lighter minds the ease for which they had labored so long and unremittingly.

“Do you know what I’m thinkin’ of, Pether?” said she, one summer evening in their farm-yard.

“Know, is it?” replied Peter—“some long-headed plan that none of us ’ud ever think of, but that will stare us in the face the moment you mintion it. What is it, you ould sprig o’ beauty?”

“Why, to get a snug jaunтин’-car, for you an’ me. I’d like to see you comfortable in your old days, Peter. You’re gettin’ stiff, ahagur, an’ will be good for nothin’ by an’ by.”

“Stiff! Arrah, by this an’ by—my reputation, I’m younger nor e’er a one o’ my sons yet, you——eh?” said Peter, pausing—

“Faith, then I dunna that. Upon my credit, I think, on second thoughts, that a car ’ud be a mighty comfortable thing for me. Faith, I do, an’ for you, too, Ellish.”

“The common car,” she continued, “is slow and throublesome, an’ joults the life out o’ me.”

“By my reputation, you’re not the same woman since you began to use it, that you wor before at all. Why, it’ll shorten your life. The pillion’s dacent enough; but the jaunтин’-car!—faix, it’s what ’ud make a fresh woman o’ you—divil a lie in it.”

“You’re not puttin’ in a word for yourself now, Pether?”

“To be sure I am, an’ for both of us. I’d surely be proud to see yourself an’ myself sittin’ in our glory upon our own jaunтин’-car. Sure we can afford it, an’ ought to have it, too. Bud-an’-ager! what’s the rason I didn’t, think of it long ago?”



“Maybe you did, acushla; but you forgot, it. Wasn’t that the way wid you, Pether? Tell the thruth.”

“Why, thin, bad luck to the lie in it, since you must know. About this time twelve months—no, faix, I’m wrong, it was afore Dan’s marriage—I had thoughts o’ spakin’ ta you about it, but somehow it left my head. Upon my word, I’m in airnest, Elish.”

“Well, avick, make your mind asy; I’ll have one from Dublin in less nor a fortnight. I can thin go about of an odd time, an’ see how Dan an’ Pether’s comin’ an. It’ll be a pleasure to me to advise an’ direct them, sure, as far an’ as well as I can. I only hope? God will enable thim to do as much for their childher, as he enabled us to do for them, glory be to his name!”

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Peter's eye rested upon her as she spoke—a slight shade passed over his face, but it was the symptom of deep feeling and affection, whose current had run smooth and unbroken during the whole life they had spent together.

“Ellish,” said he, in a tone of voice that strongly expressed what he felt, “you wor one o’ the best wives that ever the Almighty gev to mortal man. You wor, avourneen—you wor, you wor!”

“I intind, too, to begin an’ make my sowl, a little,” she continued; “we had so much to do, Pether, aroon, that, indeed, we hadn’t time to think of it all along; but now, that everything else is settled, we ought to think about that, an’ make the most of our time—while we can.”

“Upon my conscience, I’ve strong notions myself o’ the same thing,” replied Peter. “An’ I’ll back you in that, as well as in every thing else. Never fear, if we pull together, but we’ll bring up the lost time. Faith, we will! Sowl, if you set about it, let me see them that ’ud prevint you goin’ to heaven!”

“Did Paddy Donovan get the bay filly’s foot aised, Pether?”

“He’s gone down wid her to the forge: the poor crathur was very lame to-day.”

“That’s right; an’ let Andy Murtagh bring down the sacks from Drumdough early to-morrow. That what ought to go to the market on Thursday, an’ the other stacks ought to be thrashed out of hand.”

“Well, well; so it will be all done. Tare alive! if myself knows how you’re able to keep an eye on everything. Come in, an’ let us have our tay.”

For a few months after this, Ellish was perfectly in her element. The jaunting-car was procured; and her spirits seemed to be quite elevated. She paid regular visits to both her sons, looked closely into their manner of conducting business, examined their premises, and subjected every fixture and improvement made or introduced without her sanction, to the most rigorous scrutiny. In fact, what, between Peter’s farm, her daughter’s shop, and the establishments of her sons, she never found herself more completely encumbered with business. She had intended “to make her soul,” but her time was so fully absorbed by the affairs of those in whom she felt so strong an interest, that she really forgot the spiritual resolution in the warmth of her secular pursuits.

One evening, about this time, a horse belonging to Peter happened to fall into a ditch, from which he was extricated with much difficulty by the laborers. Ellish, who thought it necessary to attend, had been standing for some time directing them how to proceed; her dress was rather thin, and the hour, which was about twilight, chilly, for it was the middle of autumn. Upon returning home she found herself cold, and inclined to shiver.

At first she thought but little of these symptoms; for having never had a single day's sickness, she was scarcely competent to know that they were frequently the forerunners of very dangerous

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and fatal maladies. She complained, however, of slight illness, and went to bed without taking anything calculated to check what she felt. Her sufferings during the night were dreadful: high fever had set in with a fury that threatened to sweep the powers of life like a wreck before it. The next morning the family, on looking into her state more closely, found it necessary to send instantly for a physician.

On arriving, he pronounced her to be in a dangerous pleurisy, from which, in consequence of her plethoric habit, he expressed but faint hopes of her recovery. This was melancholy intelligence to her sons and daughters: but to Peter, whose faithful wife she had been for thirty years, it was a dreadful communication indeed.

“No hopes, Docthor!” he exclaimed, with a bewildered air: “did you say no hopes, sir? —Oh! no, you didn’t—you couldn’t say that there’s no hopes!”

“The hopes of her recovery, Mr. Connell, are but slender,—if any.”

“Docthor, I’m a rich man, thanks be to God an’ to——” he hesitated, cast back a rapid and troubled look towards the bed whereon she lay, then proceeded—“no matther, I’m a rich man: but if you can spare her to me, I’ll divide what I’m worth in the world wid you: I will, sir; an’ if that won’t do, I’ll give up my last shillin’ to save her, an’ thin I’d beg my bit an’ sup through the counthry, only let me have her wid me.”

“As far as my skill goes,” said the doctor, “I shall, of course, exert it to save her; but there are some diseases which we are almost always able to pronounce fatal at first sight. This, I fear, is one of them. Still I do not bid you despair—there is, I trust, a shadow of hope.”

“The blessin’ o’ the Almighty be upon you, sir, for that word! The best blessing of the heavenly Father rest upon you an’ yours for it!”

“I shall return in the course of the day,” continued the physician; “and as you feel the dread of her loss so powerfully, I will bring two other medical gentlemen of skill with me.”

“Heavens reward you for that, sir! The heavens above reward you an’ them for it! Payment!—och, that signifies but little: but you and them ’ll be well paid. Oh, Docthor, achora, thry an’ save her!—Och, thry an’ save her!”

“Keep her easy,” replied the doctor, “and let my directions be faithfully followed. In the meantime, Mr. Connell, be a man and display proper fortitude under a dispensation which is common to all men in your state.”

To talk of resignation to Peter was an abuse of words. The poor man had no more perception of the consolation arising from a knowledge of religion than a child. His

heart sank within him, for the prop on which his affections had rested was suddenly struck down from under them.

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Poor Elish was in a dreadful state. Her malady seized her in the very midst of her worldly-mindedness; and the current of her usual thoughts, when stopped by the aberrations of intellect peculiar to her illness, bubbled up, during the temporary returns of reason, with a stronger relish of the world. It was utterly impossible for a woman like her, whose habits of thought and the tendency of whose affections had been all directed towards the acquisition of wealth, to wrench them for ever and at once from the objects on which they were fixed. This, at any time, would have been to her a difficult victory to achieve; but now, when stunned by the stroke of disease, and confused by the pangs of severe suffering, tortured by a feverish pulse and a burning brain, to expect that she could experience the calm hopes of religion, or feel the soothing power of Christian sorrow, was utter folly. 'Tis true, her life had been a harmless one: her example, as an industrious and enterprising member of society, was worthy of imitation. She was an excellent mother, a good neighbor, and an admirable wife; but the duties arising out of these different relations of life, were all made subservient to, and mixed up with, her great principle of advancing herself in the world, whilst that which is to come never engaged one moment's serious consideration.

When Father Mulcahy came to administer the rites of the church to Elish, he found her in a state of incoherency. Occasional gleams of reason broke out through the cloud that obscured her intellect, but they carried with them the marks of a mind knit indissolubly to wealth and aggrandizement. The same tenor of thought, and the same broken fragments of ambitious speculation, floated in rapid confusion through the tempests of delirium which swept with awful darkness over her spirit.

"Mrs. Connell," said he, "can you collect yourself? Strive to compose your mind, so far as to be able to receive the aids of religion."

"Oh, oh!—my blood's boilin'! Is that—is that Father Mulcahy?"

"It is, dear: strive now to keep your mind calm, till you prepare yourself for judgment."

"Keep up his head, Paddy—keep up his head, or he'll be smothered undher the wather an' the sludge. Here, Mike, take this rope: pull, man,—pull, or the horse will be lost! Oh, my head!—I'm boilin'—I'm burnin'!"

"Mrs. Connell, let me entreat you to remember that you are on the point of death, and should raise your heart to God, for the pardon and remission of your sins."

"Oh! Father dear, I neglected that, but I intinded—I intinded—Where's Pether!—bring, bring—Pether to me!"

"Turn your thoughts to God, now, my dear. Are you clear enough in your mind for confession?"



“I am, Father! I am, avourneen. Come, come here, Pether! Pether, I’m goin’ to lave you, asthore machree! I could part wid them all but—but you.”

“Mrs. Connell, for Heaven’s sake.”—.



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"Is this—is this—Father Mulcahy? Oh! I'm ill—ill!"—

"It is, dear; it is. Compose yourself and confess your sins."

"Where's Mary? She'll neglect—neglect to lay in a stock o' linen, although I—I—Oh, Father, avourneen! won't you pity me! I'm sick—oh, I'm very sick!"

"You are, dear—you are, God help you, very sick, but you'll be better soon. Could you confess, dear?—do you think you could?"

"Oh, this pain—this pain!—it's killin' me!—Pether—Pether, a *suillish, machree*, (* The light of my heart) have, have you des—have you deserted me."

The priest, conjecturing that if Peter made his appearance she might feel soothed, and perhaps sufficiently composed to confess, called him in from the next room.

"Here's Peter," said the priest, presenting him to her view—"Here's Peter, dear."

"Oh! what a load is on me! this pain—this pain is killin' me—won't you bring me, Pether? Oh, what will I do? Who's there?"

The mental pangs of poor Peter were, perhaps, equal in intensity to those which she suffered physically.

"Ellish," said he, in smothered sobs—"Ellish, acushla machree, sure I'm wid you here; here I'm sittin' on the bed wid you, achora machree."

"Catch my hand, thin. Ah, Pether! won't you pity your Ellish?—Won't you pity me—won't you pity me? Oh! this pain—this pain—is killin' me!"

"It is, it is, my heart's delight—it's killin' us both. Oh, Ellish, Ellish! I wish I was dead sooner nor see you in this agony. I ever loved you!—I ever an' always loved you, avourneen dheelish; but now I would give my heart's best blood, if it'ud save you. Here's Father Mulcahy come."

"About the mon—about the money—Pether—what do you intind—Oh! my blood—my blood's a-fire!—Mother o'Heaven!—Oh! this pain is—is takin' me from all—faix!—Rise me up!"

"Here, my darlin'—treasure o' my heart here—I'm puttin' your head upon my breast—upon my breast, Ellish, ahagur. Marciful Virgin—Father dear," said Peter, bursting into bitter tears—"her head's like fire! O! Ellish, Ellish, Ellish!—but my heart's brakin' to feel this! Have marcy on her, sweet God—have marcy on her! Bear witness, Father of heaven—bear witness, an' hear the vow of a brakin' heart. I here solemnly promise before God, to make, if I'm spared life an' health to do it, a Station on my bare feet to



Lough Derg, if it plases you, sweet Father o' pity, to spare her to me this day! Oh! but the hand o' God, Father dear, is terrible!—feel her brow!—Oh! but it's terrible!"

"It is terrible," said the priest; "and terribly is it laid upon her, poor woman! Peter, do not let this scene be lost. Remember it."

"Oh, Father dear, can I ever forget it?—can I ever forget seein' my darlin' in sich agony?"

"Pether," said the sick woman, "will you get the car ready for to-mor—to-morrow—till I look at that piece o' land that Dan bought, before he—he closes the bargain?"



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“Father, jewel!” said Pether, “can’t you get the world banished out of her heart? Oh, I’d give all I’m worth to see that heart fixed upon God! I could bear to part wid her, for she must die some time; but to go wid this world’s thoughts an’ timptations ragin’ strong in her heart—mockin’ God, an’ hope, an’ religion, an’ everything:—oh!—that I can’t bear! Sweet Jasus, change her heart!—Queen o’ Heaven, have pity on her, an’ save her!”

The husband wept with great sorrow as he uttered these words.

“Neither reasoning nor admonition can avail her,” replied the priest; “she is so incoherent that no train of thought is continued for a single minute in her mind. I will, however, address her again. Mrs. Connell, will you make a straggle to pay attention to me for a few minutes? Are you not afraid to meet God? You are about to die!—prepare yourself for judgment.”

“Oh, Father dear! I can’t—I can’t—I am af—afraid—Hooh!—hooh!—God! You must do some thin’for—for me! I never done anything for myself.”

“Glory be to God! that she has that much sinse, any way,” exclaimed her husband. “Father, ahagur, I trust my vow was heard.”

“Well, my dear—listen to me,” continued the priest—“can you not make the best confession possible? Could you calm yourself for it?”

“Pether, avick machree—Pether,”—

“Ellish, avourneen, I’m here!—my darlin’, I am your vick machree, an’ ever was. Oh, Father! my heart’s brakin’! I can’t bear to part wid her. Father of heaven, pity us this day of throuble?”

“Be near me, Pether; stay wid me—I’m very lonely. Is this you keepin’ my head up?”

“It is, it is! I’ll never lave you till—till”—

“Is the carman come from Dublin wid—wid the broadcloth?”

“Father of heaven! she’s gone back again!” exclaimed the husband.

“Father, jewel! have you no prayers that you’d read for her? You wor ordained for these things, an’ comin’ from you, they’ll have more stringth. Can you do nothin’ to save my darlin’?”

“My prayers will not be wanting,” said the priest: “but I am watching for an interval of sufficient calmness to hear her confession; and I very much fear that she will pass in darkness. At all events, I will anoint her by and by. In the meantime, we must



persevere a little longer; she may become easier, for it often happens that reason gets clear immediately before death.”

Peter sobbed aloud, and wiped away the tears that streamed from his cheeks. At this moment her daughter and son-in-law stole in, to ascertain how she was, and whether the rites of the church had in any degree soothed or composed her.

“Come in, Denis,” said the priest to his nephew, “you may both come in. Mrs. Mulcahy, speak to your mother: let us try every remedy that might possibly bring her to a sense of her awful state.”

“Is she raving still?” inquired the daughter, whose eyes were red with weeping.



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The priest shook his head; “Ah, she is—she is! and I fear she will scarcely recover her reason before the judgment of heaven opens upon her!”

“Oh thin may the Mother of Glory forbid that!” exclaimed her daughter—“anything at all but that! Can you do nothin’ for her, uncle?”

“I’m doing all I can for her, Mary,” replied the priest; “I’m watching a calm moment to get her confession, if possible.”

The sick woman had fallen into a momentary silence, during which, she caught the bed-clothes like a child, and felt them, and seemed to handle their texture, but with such an air of vacancy as clearly manifested that no corresponding association existed in her mind.

The action was immediately understood by all present. Her daughter again burst into tears; and Peter, now almost choked with grief, pressing the sick woman to his heart, kissed her burning lips.

“Father, jewel,” said the daughter, “there it is, and I feard it—the sign, uncle—the sign!—don’t you see her gropin’ the clothes? Oh, mother, darlin’, darlin’!—are we going to lose you for ever?”

“Oh! Elish, Elish—won’t you spake one word to me afore you go? Won’t you take one farewell of me—of me, aroon asthore, before you depart from us for ever!” exclaimed her husband.

“Feeling the bed-clothes,” said the priest, “is not always a sign of death; I have known many to recover after it.

“Husht,” said Peter—“husht!—Mary—Mary! Come hear—hould your tongues! Oh, it’s past—it’s past!—it’s all past, an’ gone—all hope’s over! Heavenly fither!”

The daughter, after listening for a moment, in a paroxysm of wild grief, clasped her mother’s recumbent body in her arms, and kissed her lips with a vehemence almost frantic. “You won’t go, my darlin’—is it from your own Mary that you’d go? Mary, that you loved best of all your childhre!—Mary that you always said, an’ every body said, was your own image! Oh, you won’t go without one word, to say you know her!”

“For Heaven’s sake,” said Father Mulcahy, “what do you mean?—are you mad?”

“Oh! uncle dear! don’t you hear?—don’t you hear?—listen an’ sure you will—all hope’s gone now—gone—gone! The dead rattle!—listen!—the dead rattle’s in her throat!”—



The priest bent his ear a moment, and distinctly heard the gurgling noise produced by the phlegm, which is termed with wild poetical accuracy, by the peasantry—the “dead rattle,” or “death rattle,” because it is the immediate and certain forerunner of death.

“True,” said the priest—“too true; the last shadow of hope is gone. We must now make as much of the time as possible. Leave the room for a few minutes till I anoint her, I will then call you in.”

They accordingly withdrew, but in about fifteen or twenty minutes he once more summoned them to the bed of the dying woman.

“Come in,” said he, “I have anointed her—come in, and kneel down till we offer up a Rosary to the Blessed Virgin, under the hope that she may intercede with God for her, and cause her to pass out of life happily. She was calling for you, Peter, in your absence; you had better stay with her.”



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"I will," said Peter, in a broken voice; "I'll stay nowhere else."

"An'I'll kneel at the bed-side," said the daughter. "She was the kind mother to me, and to us all; but to me in particular. 'Twas with me she took her choice to live, when they war all striving for her. Oh," said she, taking her mother's hand between hers, and kneeling-down to kiss it, "a Vahr dheelish! (* sweet mother) did we ever think to see you departing from us this way! snapped away without a minute's warning! If it was a long-sickness, that you'd be calm and sensible in, but to be hurried away into eternity, and your mind dark! Oh, Vhar dheelish, my heart is broke to see you this way!"

"Be calm," said the priest; "be quiet till I open the Rosary."

He then offered up the usual prayers which precede its repetition, and after having concluded them, commenced what is properly called the Rosary itself, which consists of fifteen Decades, each Decade containing the Hail Mary repeated ten times, and the Lord's Prayer once. In this manner the Decade goes round from one to another, until, as we have said above, it is repeated fifteen times; or, in all, the Ave Maria's one hundred and sixty-five times, without variation. From the indistinct utterance, elevated voice, and rapid manner in which it is pronounced, it certainly has a wild effect, and is more strongly impressed with the character of a mystic rite, or incantation, than with any other religious ceremony with which we could compare it.

"When the priest had repeated the first part, he paused for the response: neither the husband nor daughter, however, could find utterance.

"Denis," said he, to his nephew, "do you take up the next."

His nephew complied; and with much difficulty Peter and his daughter were able to join in it, repeating here and there a word or two, as well as their grief and sobbings would permit them.

The heart must indeed have been an unfeeling one, to which a scene like this would not have been deeply touching and impressive. The poor dying woman reclined with her head upon her husband's bosom; the daughter knelt at the bed-side, with her mother's hand pressed against her lips, she herself convulsed with sorrow—the priest was in the attitude of earnest supplication, having the stole about his neck, his face and arms raised towards heaven—the son-in-law was bent over a chair, with his face buried in his hands. Nothing could exceed the deep, the powerful expression of entreaty, which marked every tone and motion of the parties, especially those of the husband and daughter. They poured an energy into the few words which they found voice to utter, and displayed such a concentration of the faculties of the soul in their wild unregulated attitudes, and streaming, upturned eyes, as would seem to imply that their own salvation depended upon that of the beloved object before them. Their words, too, were accompanied by such expressive tokens of their attachment to her,

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that the character of prayer was heightened by the force of the affection which they bore her. When Peter, for instance, could command himself to utter a word, he pressed his dying wife to his bosom, and raised his eyes to heaven in a manner that would have melted any human heart; and the daughter, on joining occasionally in the response, pressed her mother's hand to her heart, and kissed it with her lips, conscious that the awful state of her parent had rendered more necessary the performance of the two tenderest duties connected with a child's obedience—prayer and affection.

When the son-in-law had finished his Decade, a pause followed, for there was none now to proceed but her husband, or her daughter.

"Mary, dear," said the priest, "be a woman; don't let your love for your mother prevent you from performing a higher duty. Go on with the prayer—you see she is passing fast."

"I'll try, uncle," she replied—"I'll try; but—but—it's hard, hard, upon me."

She commenced, and by an uncommon effort so far subdued her grief, as to render her words intelligible. Her eyes, streaming with tears, were fixed with a mixture of wildness, sorrow, and devotedness, upon the countenance of her mother, until she had completed her Decade.

Another pause ensued. It was now necessary, according to the order and form of the Prayer, that Peter should commence and offer up his supplications for the happy passage from life to eternity of her who had been his inward idol during a long period. Peter knew nothing about sentiment, or the philosophy of sorrow; but he loved his wife with the undivided power of a heart in which nature had implanted her strongest affections. He knew, too, that his wife had loved him with a strength of heart equal to his own. He loved her, and she deserved his love.

The pause, when the prayer had gone round to him, was long; those who were present at length turned their eyes towards him, and the priest, now deeply affected, cleared his voice, and simply said, "Peter," to remind him that it was his duty to proceed with the Rosary.

Peter, however, instead of uttering the prayer, burst out into a tide of irrepressible sorrow.—"Oh!" said he, enfolding her in his arms, and pressing his lips to hers: "Ellish, ahagur machree! sure when I think of all the goodness, an' kindness, an' tenderness that you showed me—whin I think of your smiles upon me, whin you wanted me to do the right, an' the innocent plans you made out, to benefit me an' mine!—Oh! where was your harsh word, avillish?—where was your could brow, or your bad tongue? Nothin' but goodness—nothin' but kindness, an' love, an' wisdom, ever flowed from these lips!



An' now, darlin', pulse o' my broken heart! these same lips can't spake to me—these eyes don't know me—these hands don't feel me—nor your ears doesn't hear me!”

“Is—is—it you?” replied his wife feebly—“is it—you?—come—come near me—my heart—my heart says it misses you—come near me!”

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Peter again pressed her in an embrace, and, in doing so, unconsciously received the parting breath of a wife whose prudence and affection had saved him from poverty, and, probably, from folly or crime.

The priest, on turning round to rebuke Peter for not proceeding with the prayer, was the first who discovered that she had died; for the grief of her husband was too violent to permit him to notice anything with much accuracy.

“Peter,” said he, “I beg your pardon; let me take the trouble of supporting her for a few minutes, after which I must talk to you seriously—very seriously.”

The firm, authoritative tone in which the priest spoke, together with Peter’s consciousness that he had acted wrongly by neglecting to join in the Rosary, induced him to retire from the bed with a rebuked air. The priest immediately laid back the head of Mrs. Connell on the pillow, and composed the features of her lifeless face with his own hands. Until this moment none of them, except himself, knew that she was dead.

“Now,” continued he, “all her cares, and hopes, and speculations, touching this world, are over—so is her pain; her blood will soon be cold enough, and her head will ache no more. She is dead. Grief is therefore natural; but let it be the grief of a man, Peter. Indeed, it is less painful to look upon her now, than when she suffered such excessive agony. Mrs. Mulcahy, hear me! Oh, it’s in vain! Well, well, it is but natural; for it was an unexpected and a painful death!”

The cries of her husband and daughter soon gave intimation to her servants that her pangs were over. From the servants it immediately went to the neighbors, and thus did the circle widen until it reached the furthest ends of the parish. In a short time, also, the mournful sounds of the church-bell, in slow and measured strokes, gave additional notice that a Christian soul had passed into eternity.

It is in such scenes as these that the Roman Catholic clergy knit themselves so strongly into the affections of the people. All men are naturally disposed to feel the offices of kindness and friendship more deeply, when tendered at the bed of death or of sickness, than under any other circumstances. Both the sick-bed and the house of death are necessarily the sphere of a priest’s duty, and to render them that justice which we will ever render, when and wheresoever it may be due, we freely grant that many shining, nay, noble instances of Christian virtue are displayed by them on such occasions.

When the violence of grief produced by Elish’s death had subsided, the priest, after giving them suitable exhortations to bear the affliction which had just befallen them with patience, told Peter, that as God, through the great industry and persevering exertions of her who had then departed to another world, had blessed him abundantly with wealth and substance, it was, considering the little time which had been allowed her to repent in a satisfactory manner for her transgressions, his bounden and solemn duty to set

aside a suitable portion of that wealth for the delivery of her soul from purgatory, where, he trusted, in the mercy of God, it was permitted to remain.



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“Indeed, your Reverence,” replied Peter, “it wasn’t necessary to mention it, considering the way she was cut off from among us, without even time to confess.”

“But blessed be God,” said the daughter, “she received the ointment at any rate, and that of itself would get her to purgatory.”

“And I can answer for her,” said Peter, “that she intended, as soon as she’d get everything properly settled for the children, to make her soul.”

“Ah! good intentions,” said the priest, “won’t do. I, however, have forewarned you of your duty, and must now leave the guilt or the merit of relieving her departed spirit, upon you and the other members of her family, who are all bound to leave nothing undone that may bring her from pain and fire, to peace and happiness.”

“Och! och! ashore, ashore! you’re lyin’ there—an’, oh, Elish, avourneen, could you think that I—I—would spare money—trash—to bring you to glory with the angels o’ heaven! No, no, Father dear. It’s good, an’ kind, an’ thoughtful of you to put it into my head; but I didn’t intend to neglect or forget it. Oh, how will I live without her, Father? When I rise in the mornin’, avillish, where ’ud be your smile and your voice? We won’t hear your step, nor see you as we used to do, movin’ pleasantly about the place. No—you’re gone, avoumeen—gone—an’ we’ll see you and hear you no more!”

His grief was once more about to burst forth, but the priest led him out of the room, kindly chiding him for the weakness of his immoderate sorrow, and after making arrangements about the celebration of mass for the dead, pressed his hand, and bade the family farewell.

The death of Elish excited considerable surprise, and much conversation in the neighborhood. Every point of her character was discussed freely, and the comparisons instituted between her and Peter were anything but flattering to the intellect of her husband.

“An’ so Elish is whipped off, Larry,” said a neighbor to one of Peter’s laboring men, “Faix, an’ the best feather in their wing is gone.”

“Ay, sure enough, Risthard, you may say that. It was her cleverness made them what they are. She was the best manager in the three kingdoms.”

“Ah, she was the woman could make a bargain. I only hope she hasn’t brought the luck o’ the family away with her!”

“Why, man alive, she made the sons and daughters as clever as herself—put them up to everything. Indeed, it’s queer to think of how that one woman brought them rise to what they are!”



“They shouldn’t forget themselves as they’re doin’, thin; for betune you an’ me, they’re as proud as Turks, an’ God he sees it ill becomes them—sits very badly on them, itself, when everything knows that their father an’ mother begun the world wid a bottle of private whiskey an’ half a pound of smuggled tobacco.”



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“Poor Pether will break his heart, any way. Oh, man, but she was the good wife. I’m livin’ wid them going an seven year, an’ never hard a cross word from the one to the other. It’s she that had the sweet tongue all out, an’ did manage him; but, afther all, he was worth the full o’ the Royal George of her. Many a time, when some poor craythur ’ud come to ax whiskey on score to put over* some o’ their friends, or for a weddin’, or a christenin’, maybe, an’ when the wife ’ud refuse it, Pether ’ud send what whiskey they wanted afther them, widout lettin’ her know anything about it. An’, indeed, he never lost anything by that; for if they wor to sell their cow, he should be ped, in regard of the kindly way he gave it to them.”

* To put over—the corpse of a friend, to be drunk at the wake and funeral.

“Well, we’ll see how they’ll manage now that she’s gone; but Pether an’ the youngest daughter, Mary, is to be pitied.”

“The sarra much; barrin’ that they’ll miss her at first from about the place. You see she has left them above the world, an’ full of it. Wealth and substance enough may they thank her for; and that’s very good comfort for sorrow, Risthard.”

“Faith, sure enough, Larry. There’s no lie in that, any way!”

“Awouh! Lie! I have you about it.”

Such was the view which had been taken of their respective characters through life. Yet, notwithstanding that the hearts of their acquaintances never warmed to her—to use a significant expression current among the peasantry—as they did to Peter, still she was respected almost involuntarily for the indefatigable perseverance with which she pushed forward her own interests through life. Her funeral was accordingly a large one; and the conversation which took place at it, turning, as it necessarily did, upon her extraordinary talents and industry, was highly to the credit of her memory and virtues. Indeed, the attendance of many respectable persons of all creeds and opinions, gave ample proof that the qualities she possessed had secured for her general respect and admiration.

Poor Peter, who was an object of great compassion, felt himself completely crushed by the death of his faithful partner. The reader knows that he had hitherto been a sober, and, owing to Ellish’s prudent control, an industrious man. To thought or reflection he was not, however, accustomed; he had, besides, never received any education; if his morals were correct, it was because a life of active employment had kept him engaged in pursuits which repressed immorality, and separated him from those whose society and influence might have been prejudicial to him. He had scarcely known calamity, and when it occurred he was prepared for it neither by experience nor a correct view of moral duty. On the morning of his wife’s funeral, such was his utter prostration both of

mind and body, that even his own sons, in order to resist the singular state of collapse into which

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he had sunk, urged him to take some spirits. He was completely passive in their hands, and complied. This had the desired effect, and he found himself able to attend the funeral. When the friends of Elish assembled, after the interment, as is usual, to drink and talk together, Peter, who could scarcely join in the conversation, swallowed glass after glass of punch with great rapidity. In the mean time, the talk became louder and more animated; the punch, of course, began to work, and as they sat long, it was curious to observe the singular blending of mirth and sorrow, singing and weeping, laughter and tears, which characterized this remarkable scene. Peter, after about two hours' hard drinking, was not an exception to the influence of this trait of national manners. His heart having been deeply agitated, was the more easily brought under the effects of contending emotions. He was naturally mirthful, and when intoxication had stimulated the current of his wonted humor, the influence of this and his recent sorrow produced such an anomalous commixture of fun and grief as could seldom, out of Ireland, be found checkering the mind of one individual.

It was in the midst of this extraordinary din that his voice was heard commanding silence in its loudest and best-humored key:

“Hould yer tongues,” said he; “bad win to yees, don’t you hear me wantin’ to sing! Whist wid yees. Hem—och—’Eise up’—Why, thin, Phil Callaghan, you might thrate me wid more dacency, if you had gumption in you; I’m sure no one has a betther right to sing first in this company nor myself; an’ what’s more, I will sing first. Hould your tongues! Hem!”

He accordingly commenced a popular song, the air of which, though simple, was touchingly mournful.

“Och, rise up, Willy Reilly, an’ come wid me,
I’m goin’ for to go wid you, and lave this counteree;
I’m goin’ to lave my father, his castles and freelands—
An’ away what Willy Reilly, an’ his own Colleen Bawn.

“Och, they wint o’er hills an’ mountains, and valleys that was
fair,
An’ fled before her father as you may shortly hear;
Her father followed afther wid a well-chosen armed band,
Och, an’ taken was poor Reilly, an’ his own Colleen Bawn.”

The simple pathos of the tune, the affection implied by the words, and probably the misfortune of Willy Reilly, all overcame him, He finished the second verse with difficulty, and on attempting to commence a third he burst into tears.



“Colleen bawn! (fair, or fair-haired girl)—Colleen bawn!” he exclaimed; “she’s lyin’ low that was my colleen bawn! Oh, will ye hould your tongues, an’ let me think of what has happened me? She’s gone: Mary, avourneen, isn’t she gone from us? I’m alone, an’ I’ll be always lonely. Who have I now to comfort me? I know I have good childhre, neighbors; but none o’ them, all of them, if they wor ten times as many, isn’t



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aqual to her that's in the grave. Her hands won't be about me—there was tindherness in their very touch. An', of a Sunday mornin', how she'd tie an my handkerchy, for I never could rightly tie it an myself, the knot was ever an' always too many for me; but, och, och, she'd tie it an so snug an' purty wid her own hands, that I didn't look the same man! The same song was her favorite, Here's your healths; an' sure it's the first time ever we wor together that she wasn't wid us: but now, avillish, your voice is gone—you're silent and lonely in the grave; an' why shouldn't I be sarry for the wife o' my heart that never angered me? Why shouldn't I? Ay, Mary, asthore, machree, good right you have to cry afther her; she was the kind mother to you; her heart was fixed in you; there's her fatures on your face; her very eyes, an' fair hair, too, an' I'll love you, achora, ten times more nor ever, for her sake. Another favorite song of hers, God rest her, was 'Brian O'Lynn.' Troth an' I'll sing it, so I will, for if she was livin' she'd like it.

'Och, Brian O'Lynn, he had milk an' male,
A two-lugged porringer wanfcin' a tail.'

Oh, my head's through other! The sarra one o' me I bleeve, but's out o' the words, or, as they say, there's a hole in the ballad. Send round the punch will ye? By the hole o' my coat, Parra Gastha, I'll whale you wid-in an inch of your life, if you don't Shrink. Send round the punch, Dan; an' give us a song, Parra Gastha. Arrah, Paddy, do you remimber—ha, ha, ha—upon my credit, I'll never forget it, the fun we had catchin' Father Soolaghan's horse, the day he gave his shirt to the sick man in the ditch. The Lord rest his sowl in glory—ha, ha, ha—I'll never forget it. Paddy, the song, you thief?"

"No, but tell them about that, Mither Connell."

"Throth, an' I will; but don't be Mitherin me. Faith, this is The height o' good punch. You see—ha, ha, ha! You see, it was one hard summer afore I was married to Elish—mavourneen, that you wor, asthore! Och, och, are we parted at last? Upon my sowl, my heart's breakin'—breakin', (weeps) an' no wondher! But as I was sayin'—all your healths! faith, it is tip-top punch that—the poor man fell sick of a faver, an' sure enough, when it was known what ailed him, the neighbors built a little shed on the roadside for him, in regard that every one was afeard to let him into their place. Howsomever—ha, ha, ha—Father Soolaghan was one day ridin' past upon his horse, an' seein' the crathur lyin' undher the shed, on a whisp o' straw, he pulls bridle, an' puts the spake on the poor sthranger. So, begad, it came out, that the neighbors were very kind to him, an' used to hand over whatsomever they thought best for him from the back o' the ditch, as well as they could.

"My poor fellow,' said the priest, 'you're badly off for linen.'



“Thru for you, sir,’ said the sick man, ‘I never longed for anything so much in my life, as I do for a clane shirt an’ a glass o’ whiskey.’



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“The devil a glass o’ whiskey I have about me, but you shall have the clane shirt, you poor compassionate crathur,’ said the priest, stretchin’ his neck up an’ down to make sure there was no one comin’ on the road—ha, ha, ha!

“Well an’ good—I have three shirts,’ says his Reverence, ‘but I have only one o’ them an me, an’ that you shall have.’

“So the priest peels himself on the spot, an’ lays his black coat and waistcoat afore him across the saddle, thin takin’ off his shirt, he threw it across the ditch to the sick man. Whether it was the white shirt, or the black coat danglin’ about the horse’s neck, the divil a one o’ myself can say, but any way, the baste tuck fright, an’ made off wid Father Soolaghan, in the state I’m tellin’ yez, upon his back—ha, ha, ha!

“Parra Gastha, here, an’ I war goin’ up at the time to do a little in the distillin’ way for Tom Duggan of Aidinasamlagh, an’ seen what was goin’ an. So off we set, an we splittin’ our sides laughin’—ha, ha, ha—at the figure the priest cut. However, we could do no good, an’ he never could pull up the horse, till he came full flight to his own house, opposite the pound there below, and the whole town in convulsions when they seen him. We gother up his clothes, an’ brought them home to him, an’ a good piece o’ fun—we had wid him, for he loved the joke as well as any man. Well, he was the good an’ charitable man, the same Father Soolaghan; but so simple that he got himself into fifty scrapes, God rest him! Och, och, she’s lyin’ low that often laughed at that, an’ I’m here—ay, I have no one, no one that ’ud show me sich a warm heart as she would. (Weeps.) However, God’s will be done. I’ll sing yez a song she liked:—

‘Och, Brian O’Lynn, he had milk an’ male,
A two-lugged porringer wantin’ a tail.’

Musha, I’m out agin—ha, ha, ha! Why, I b’lieve there’s pishthrogues an me, or I’d remember it. Bud-an-age, dhrink of all ye. Lie in to the liquor, I say; don’t spare it. Here, Mike, send us up another gallon, Faith, we’ll make a night of it.

‘Och, three maidens a milkin’ did go
An’ three maidens a milkin’ did go;
An’ the winds they blew high
An’ the winds they blew low,
An’ they dashed their milkin’ pails to an’ fro.’

All your healths, childhre! Neighbors, all your healths! don’t spare what’s before ye. It’s long since I tuck a jorum myself an—come, I say, plase God, we’ll often meet ins’ way, so we will. Faith, I’ll take a sup from this forrid, with a blessin’. Dhrink, I say, dhrink!”

By the time he had arrived at this patch, he was able to engross no great portion either of the conversation or attention. Almost every one present had his songs, his sorrows,



his laughter, or his anecdotes, as well as himself. Every voice was loud; and every tongue busy. Intricate and entangled was the talk, which, on the present occasion, presented a union of all the extremes which the lights and shadows of the Irish character alone could exhibit under such a calamity as that which brought the friends of the deceased together.

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Peter literally fulfilled his promise of taking a jorum in future. He was now his own master; and as he felt the loss of his wife deeply, he unhappily had recourse to the bottle, to bury the recollection of a woman, whose death left a chasm in his heart, which he thought nothing but the whiskey could fill up.

His transition from a life of perfect sobriety to one of habitual, nay, of daily intoxication, was immediate. He could not bear to be sober; and his extraordinary bursts of affliction, even in his cups, were often calculated to draw tears from the eyes of those who witnessed them. He usually went out in the morning with a flask of whiskey in his pocket, and sat down to weep behind a ditch—where, however, after having emptied his flask, he might be heard at a great distance, singing the songs which Ellish in her lifetime was accustomed to love. In fact, he was generally pitied; his simplicity of character, and his benevolence of heart, which was now exercised without fear of responsibility, made him more a favorite than he ever had been. His former habits of industry were thrown aside; as he said himself, he hadn't heart to work; his farms were neglected, and but for his son-in-law, would have gone to ruin. Peter himself was sensible of this.

“Take them,” said he, “into your own hands, Denis; for me, I'm not able to do anything more at them; she that kep me up is gone, an' I'm broken down. Take them—take them into your own hands. Give me my bed, bit, an' sup, an' that's all I Want.”

Six months produced an incredible change in his appearance. Intemperance, whilst it shattered his strong frame, kept him in frequent exuberance of spirits; but the secret grief preyed on him within. Artificial excitement kills, but it never cures; and Peter, in the midst of his mirth and jollity, was wasting away into a shadow. His children, seeing him go down the hill of life so rapidly, consulted among each other on the best means of winning him back to sobriety. This was a difficult task, for his powers of bearing liquor were prodigious. He has often been known to drink so many as twenty-five, and sometimes thirty tumblers of punch, without being taken off his legs, or rendered incapable of walking about. His friends, on considering who was most likely to recall him to a more becoming life, resolved to apply to his landlord—the gentleman whom we have already introduced to our readers. He entered warmly into their plan, and it was settled, that Peter should be sent for, and induced, if possible, to take an oath against liquor. Early the following-day a liveried servant came down to inform him that his master wished to speak with him. “To be sure,” said Peter; “divil resave the man in all Europe I'd do more for than the same gintleman, if it was only on account of the regard he had for her that's gone. Come, I'll go wid you in a minute.”

He accordingly returned with the flask in his hand, saying, “I never thtravel widout a pocket-pistol, John. The times, you see, is not overly safe, an' the best way is to be prepared!—ha, ha, ha! Och, och! It houlds three half-pints.”



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"I think," observed the servant, "you had better not taste that till after your return."

"Come away, man," said Peter; "we'll talk upon it as we go along: I couldn't do readily widout it. You hard that I lost Ellish?"

"Yes," replied the servant, "and I was very sorry to hear it."

"Did you attind the berrin?"

"No, but my master did," replied the man; "for, indeed, his respect for your wife was very great, Mr. Connell."

This was before ten o'clock in the forenoon, and about one in the afternoon a stout countryman was seen approaching the gentleman's house, with another man bent round his neck, where he hung precisely as a calf hangs round the shoulders of a butcher, when he is carrying it to his stall.

"Good Heavens!" said the owner of the mansion to his lady, "what has happened to John Smith, my dear? Is he dead?"

"Dead!" said his lady, going in much alarm to the drawing-room window: "I protest I fear so, Frank. He is evidently dead! For God's sake go down and see what has befallen him."

Her husband went hastily to the hall-door, where he met Peter with his burden.

"In the name of Heaven, what has happened, Connell?—what is the matter with John? Is he living or dead?"

"First, plase your honor, as I have him on my shouldhers, will you tell me where his bed is?" replied Peter. "I may as well lave him snug, as my hand's in, poor fellow. The devil's bad head he has, your honor. Faith, it's a burnin' shame, so it is, an' nothin' else—to be able to bear so little!"

The lady, children, and servants, were now all assembled about the dead footman, who hung, in the mean time, very quietly round Peter's neck.

"Gracious Heaven! Connell, is the man dead?" she inquired.

"Faith, thin, he is, ma'am,—for a while, any how; but, upon my credit, it's a burnin' shame, so it is,"—

"The man is drunk, my dear," said her husband—"he's only drunk."



“—a burnin’ shame, so it is—to be able to bear no more nor about six glasses, an’ the whiskey good, too. Will you ordher one o’ thim to show me his bed, ma’am, if you plase,” continued Peter, “while he’s an me? It’ll save throuble.”

“Connell is right,” observed his landlord. “Gallagher, show him John’s bed-room.”

Peter accordingly followed another servant, who pointed out his bed, and assisted to place the vanquished footman in a somewhat easier position than that in which Peter had carried him.

“Connell,” said his landlord, when he returned, “how did this happen?”

“Faith, thin, it’s a burnin’ shame,” said Connell, “to be able only to bear”—

“But how did it happen? for he has been hitherto a perfectly sober man.”



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“Faix, plase your honor, asy enough,” replied Peter; “he began to lecthur me about! dhrinkin’ so, says I, ‘Come an’ sit down behind the hedge here, an’ we’ll talk it over between us;’ so we went in, the two of us, a-back o’ the ditch—an’ he began to advise me agin dhrink, an’ I began to tell him about her that’s gone, sir. Well, well! och, och! no matther!—So, sir, one story an’ one pull from the bottle, brought on another, for divil a glass we had at all, sir. Faix, he’s a tindher-hearted boy, anyhow; for as myself I begun to let the tears down, whin the bottle was near out, divil resave the morsel of him but cried afther poor Ellish, as if she had been his mother. Faix, he did! An’ it won’t be the last sup we’ll have together, plase goodness! But the best of it was, sir, that the dhrunker he got, he abused me the more for dhrinkin’. Oh, thin, but he’s the pious boy whin he gets a sup in his head! Faix, it’s a pity ever he’d be sober, he talks so much scripthur an’ devotion in his liquor!”

“Connell,” said the landlord, “I am exceedingly sorry to hear that you have taken so openly and inveterately to drink as you have done, ever since the death of your admirable wife. This, in fact, was what occasioned me to send for you. Come into the parlor. Don’t go, my dear; perhaps your influence may also be necessary. Gallagher, look to Smith, and see that every attention is paid him, until he recovers the effects of his intoxication.”

He then entered the parlor, where the following dialogue took place between him and Peter:—

“Connell, I am really grieved to hear that you have become latterly so incorrigible a drinker; I sent for you to-day, with the hope of being able to induce you to give it up.”

“Faix, your honor, it’s jist what I’d expect from your father’s son—kindness, an’ dacency, an’ devotion, wor always among yez. Divil resave the family in all Europe I’d do so much for as the same family.”

The gentleman and lady looked at each other, and smiled. They knew that Peter’s blarney was no omen of their success in the laudable design they contemplated.

“I thank you, Peter, for your good opinion; but in the meantime allow me to ask, what can you propose to yourself by drinking so incessantly as you do?”

“What do I propose to myself by dhrinkin’, is it? Why thin to banish grief, your honor. Surely you’ll allow that no man has reason to complain who’s able to banish the thief for two shillins a-day. I reckon the whiskey at first cost, so that it doesn’t come to more nor that at the very outside.”

“That is taking a commercial view of affliction, Connell; but you must promise me to give up drinking.”



“Why thin upon my credit, your honor astonishes me. Is it to give up banishin’ grief? I have a regard for you, sir, for many a dalin we had together; but for all that, faix, I’d be miserable for no man, barrin’ for her that’s gone. If I’d be so to oblage any one, I’d do it for your family; for divil the family in all Europe “—



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“Easy, Connell—I am not to be palmed off in that manner; I really have a respect for the character which you bore, and wish you to recover it once more. Consider that you are disgracing yourself and your children by drinking so excessively from day to day—indeed, I am told, almost from hour to hour.”

“Augh! don’t believe the half o’ what you hear, sir. Faith, somebody has been dhraw-in’ your honor out! Why I’m never dhrunk, sir; faith, I’m not.”

“You will destroy your health, Connell, as well as your character; besides, you are not to be told that it is a sin, a crime against. God, and an evil example to society.”

“Show me the man, plase your honor, that ever seen me incapable. That’s the proof o’ the thing.”

“But why do you drink at all? It is not-necessary.”

“An’ do you never taste a dhrop yourself, sir, plase your honor? I’ll be bound you do, sir, raise your little finger of an odd time, as well as another. Eh, Ma’am? That’s comin’ close to his honor! An’ faix, small blame to him, an’ a weeshy sup o’ the wine to the misthress herself, to correct the tindherness of her dilicate appetite.”

“Peter, this bantering must not pass: I think I have a claim upon your respect and deference. I have uniformly been your friend and the friend of your children and family, but more especially of your late excellent and exemplary wife.”

“Before God an’ man I acknowledge that, sir—I do—I do. But, sir; to spake sarious—it’s thruth, Ma’am, downright—to spake sarious, my heart’s broke, an’ every day it’s brakin’ more an’ more. She’s gone, sir, that used to manage me; an’ now I can’t turn myself to anything, barrin’ the dhrink—God help me!”

“I honor you, Connell, for the attachment which you bear towards the memory of your wife, but I utterly condemn the manner in which you display it. To become a drunkard is to disgrace her memory. You know it was a character she detested.”

“I know it all, sir, an’ that you have thruth an rason on your side; but, sir, you never lost a wife that you loved; an’ long may you be so, I pray the heavenly Father this day! Maybe if you did, sir, plase your honor, that, wid your heart sinkin’ like a stone widin you, you’d thry whether or not something couldn’t rise it. Sir, only for the dhrink I’d be dead.”

“There I totally differ from you, Connell. The drink only prolongs your grief, by adding to it the depression of spirits which it always produces. Had you not become a drinker, you would long before this have been once more a cheerful, active, and industrious man. Your sorrow would have worn away gradually, and nothing but an agreeable melancholy—an affectionate remembrance of your excellent wife—would have remained. Look at other men.”



“But where’s the man, sir, had sich a wife to grieve for as she was? Don’t be hard on me, sir. I’m not a dhrunkard. It’s throe I dhrink a great dale; but thin I can bear a great dale, so that I’m never incapable.”



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“Connell,” said the lady, “you will break down your constitution, and bring yourself to an earlier death than you would otherwise meet.”

“I care very little, indeed, how soon I was dead, not makin’ you, Ma’am, an ill answer.”

“Oh fie, Connell, for you, a sensible man and a Christian, to talk in such a manner!”

“Throth, thin, I don’t, Ma’am. She’s gone, an’ I’d be glad to folly her as soon as I could. Yes, asthore, you’re departed from me! an’ now I’m gone asthray—out o’ the right an’ out o’ the good! Oh, Ma’am,” he proceeded, whilst the tears rolled fast down his cheeks, “if you knew her—her last words, too—Oh, she was—she was—but where’s the use o’ sayin’ what she was?—I beg your pardon, Ma’am,—your honor, sir, ’ill forgive my want o’ manners, sure I know it’s bad breedin’, but I can’t help it.”

“Well, promise,” said his landlord, “to give up drink. Indeed, I wish you would take an oath against it: you are a conscientious man, and I know would keep it, otherwise I should not propose it, for I discountenance such oaths generally. Will you promise me this, Connell?”

“I’ll promise to think of it, your honor,—against takin’ a sartin quantity, at any rate.”

“If you refuse it, I’ll think you are unmindful of the good feeling which we have ever shown your family.”

“What?—do you think, sir, I’m ungrateful to you? That’s a sore cut, sir, to make a villain o’ me. Where’s the book?—I’ll swear this minute. Have you a Bible, Ma’am?—I’ll show you that I’m not mane, any way.”

“No, Connell, you shall not do it rashly; you must be cool and composed: but go home, and turn it in your mind,” she replied; “and remember, that it is the request of me and my husband, for your own good.”

“Neither must you swear before me,” said his landlord, “but before Mr. Mulcahy, who, as it is an oath connected with your moral conduct, is the best person to be present. It must be voluntary, however. Now, good-bye, Connell, and think of what we said; but take care never to carry home any of my servants in the same plight in which you put John Smith to-day.”

“Faix thin, sir, he had no business, wid your honor’s livery upon his back, to begin lecthurin’ me again dhrinkin’, as he did. We may all do very well, sir, till the ttemptation crasses us—but that’s what thries us. It thried him, but he didn’t stand it—faix he didn’t!—ha, ha, ha! Good-mornin’, sir—God bless you, Ma’am! Divil resave the family in all Europe”—

“Good-morning, Connell—good-morning! —Pray remember what we said.”



Peter, however, could not relinquish the whiskey. His sons, daughters, friends, and neighbors, all assailed him, but with no success. He either bantered them in his usual way, or reverted to his loss, and sank into sorrow. This last was the condition in which they found him most intractable; for a man is never considered to be in a state that admits of reasoning or argument, when he is known to be pressed by strong gushes of personal feeling. A plan at length struck Father Mulcahy, which he resolved to put into immediate execution.



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“Peter,” said he, “if you don’t abandon drink, I shall stop the masses which I’m offering up for the repose of your wife’s soul, and I will also return you the money I received for saying them.”

This was, perhaps, the only point on which Peter was accessible. He felt staggered at such an unexpected intimation, and was for some time silent.

“You will then feel,” added the priest, “that your drunkenness is prolonging the sufferings of your wife, and that she is as much concerned in your being sober as you are yourself.”

“I will give in,” replied Peter; “I didn’t see the thing in that light. No—I will give it up; but if I swear against it, you must allow me a reasonable share every day, an’ I’ll not go beyant it, of coorse. The truth is, I’d die soon if I gev it up altogether.”

“We have certainly no objection against that,” said the priest, “provided you keep within what would injure your health, or make you tipsy. Your drunkenness is not only sinful but disreputable; besides, you must not throw a slur upon the character of your children, who hold respectable and rising situations in the world.”

“No,” said Peter, in a kind of soliloquy, “I’d lay down my life, avoumeen, sooner nor I’d cause you a minute’s sufferin’. Father Mulcahy, go an wid the masses. I’ll get an oath drawn up, an’ whin it’s done, I’ll swear to it. I know a man that’ll do it for me.”

The priest then departed, quite satisfied with having accomplished his object; and Peter, in the course of that evening, directed his steps to the house of the village schoolmaster, for the purpose of getting him to “draw up” the intended oath.

“Misther O’Flaherty,” said he, “I’m comin’ to ax a requist of you an’ I hope you’ll grant it to me. I brought down a sup in this flask, an’ while we’re takin’ it, we can talk over what I want.”

“If it be anything widin the circumference of my power, set it down, Misther Connell, as already operated upon. I’d drop a pen to no man at keepin’ books by double enthy, which is the Italian method invinted by Pope Gregory the Great. The Three sets bear a theological ratio to the three states of a throe Christian. ‘The Waste-book,’ says Pope Gregory, ‘is this world, the Journal is purgatory, an’ the Ledger is heaven. Or it may be compared,’ he says, in the priface of the work, ‘to the three states of the Catholic church—the church Militant, the church Suffering and the church Triumphant.’ The larnin’ of that man was beyant the reach of credibility.”

“Arra, have you a small glass, Masther? You see, Misther O’Flaherty, it’s consarnin’ purgatory, this that I want to talk about.”

“Nancy, get us a glass—oh, here it is! Thin if it be, it’s a wrong enthy in the Journal.”

“Here’s your health, Masther!—Not forgetting you, Mrs. O’Flaherty. No, indeed, thin it’s not in the Journal, but an oath I’m goin’ to take against liquor.”



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“Nothin’ is asier to post than it is. We must enter it it undher the head of—let me see!—it must go in the spirit account, undher the head of Profit an’ Loss, Your good health, Mr. Connell!—Nancy, I dhrink ta your improvement in imperturbability! Yes, it must be enthered undher the”——

“Faix, undher the rose, I think,” observed Pether; “don’t you know the smack, of it? You see since I took to it, I like the smell o’ what I used to squeeze out o’ the barley myself, long ago. Mr. O’Flaherty, I only want you to dhraw up an oath against liquor for me; but it’s not for the books, good or bad. I promised to Father Mulcahy, that I’d do it. It’s regardin’ my poor Elish’s sowl in purgatory.”

“Nancy, hand me a slate an’ cutter. Faith, the same’s a provident resolution; but how is it an’ purgatory concatenated?”

“The priest, you see, won’t go an wid the masses for her till I take the oath.”

“That’s but wake logic, if you ped him for thim.”

“Faix, an’ I did—an’ well, too;—but about the oath? Have you the pencil?”

“I have; jist lave the thing to me.”

“Asy, Masther—you don’t undherstand it yit. Put down two tumblers for me at home.”

“How is that, Misther Connell?—It’s mysterious, if you’re about to swear against liquor!”

“I am. Put down, as I said, two tumblers for me at home—Are they down?”

“They are down—but”——

“Asy!—very good!—Put down two more for me at Dan’s. Let me see!—two more; behind the garden. Well!—put down one at Father Mulcahy’s;—two more at, Frank M’Carrol’s of Kilclay. How many’s that?”

“Nine!!!”

“Very good. Now put down one wid ould’ Bartle Gorman, of Cargah; an’ two over wid honest Roger M’Gaugy, of Nurchasey. How-many have you now?”

“Twelve in all!!!! But, Misther Connelly there’s a demonstration badly wanted here. I must confis I was always bright, but at present I’m as dark as Nox. I’d thank you for a taste of explanation.”

“Asy, man alive! Is there twelve in all?”



“Twelve in all: I’ve calculated them.”

“Well, we’ll hould to that. Och, och!—I’m sure, avourneen, afore I’d let you suffer one minute’s pain, I’d not scruple to take an oath against liquor, any way. He may go an wid the masses now for you, as soon as he likes! Mr. O’Flaherty, will you put that down on paper,—an’ I’ll swear to it, wid a blessin’, to-morrow.”

“But what object do you wish to effectuate by this?”

“You see, Masther, I dhrink one day wid another from a score to two dozen tumblers, an’ I want to swear to no more nor twelve in the twenty-four hours.”

“Why, there’s intelligibility in that!—Wid great pleasure, Mr. Connell, I’ll indite it. Katty, tare me a lafe out o’ Brian Murphy’s copy there.”

“You see, Masther, it’s for Elish’s sake I’m doin’ this. State that in the oath.”



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“I know it; an’ well she desarved that specimen of abstinence from you, Mither Connell. Thank you!—Your health agin! an’ God grant you grace an’ fortitude to go through wid the same oath!—An’ so he will, or I’m greivously mistaken in you.”

“OATH AGAINST LIQUOR,

made by me, Cornelius O’Flaherty, Philomath, on behalf of Mr. Peter Connell, of the cross-roads, Merchant, on one part—and of the soul of Mrs. Elish Connell, now in purgatory, Merchantess, on the other. “I solemnly and meritoriously, and soberly swear, that a single tumbler of whiskey punch shall not cross my lips during the twenty-four hours of the day, barring twelve, the locality of which is as followeth:

“Imprimis—Two tumblers at home, 2
 Secundo—Two more ditto at my son Dan’s, 2
 Tertio—Two more ditto behind my own garden, 2
 Quarto—One ditto at the Reverend Father Mulcahy’s, 1
 Quinto—Two more ditto at Frank M’Carroll s, of Kilclay, 2
 Sexto—One ditto wid ould Bartle Gorman, of Cargah, 1
 Septimo—Two more ditto wid honest Roger M’Gaugy, of Nurchasey, 2

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N.B.—Except in case any Docthor of Phisic might think it right and medical to ordher me more for my health; or in case I could get Father Mulcahy to take the oath off of me for a start, at a wedding, or a christening, or at any other meeting of friends where there’s drink.

his
 Peter X Connell.
 mark.

Witness present,
 Cornelius O’Flaherty, Philomath.
June the 4th, 18—

I certify that I have made and calculated this oath for Mither Pettier Connell, Merchant, and that it is strictly and arithmetically proper and correct.

“Cornelius O’Flaherty, Philomath.
“Dated this Mh day of June, 18—.”



“I think, Misther O’Flaherty, it’s a dacent oath as it stands. Plase God, I’ll swear to it some time to-morrow evenin’.”

“Dacent! Why I don’t wish to become eulogistically addicted; but I’d back tha same oath, for both grammar and arithmetic, aginst any that ever was drawn up by a lawyer—ay, by the great Counsellor himself!—but faith, I’d not face him at a Vow, for all that; he’s the greatest man at a Vow in the three kingdoms.”

“I’ll tell you what I’m thinkin’, Masther—as my hand’s in, mightn’t I as well take another wid an ould friend of mine, Owen Smith, of Lisbuy? He’s a dacent ould residenther, an’ likes it. It’ll make the baker’s or the long dozen.”

“Why, it’s not a bad thought; but won’t thirteen get into your head?”

“No, nor three more to the back o’ that. I only begin to get hearty about seventeen, so that the long dozen, afther all, is best; for—God he knows, I’ve a regard for Owen Smith this many a year, an’ I wouldn’t wish to lave him out.”

“Very well,—I’ll add it up to the other part of the oath.



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'Octavo—One ditto out of respect for dacent Owen Smith, of Lisbuy, 1

Now I must make the total amount thirteen, an' all will be right.”

“Masther, have you a prayer-book widin?—bekase if you have, I may as well swear here, and you can witness it.”

“Katty, hand over the Spiritual Exercises—a book aquil to the Bible itself for piety an' devotion.”

“Sure they say, Masther, any book that, the name o' God's in, is good for an oath. Now, wid the help o' goodness, repate the words afore me, an' I'll sware thim.”

O'Flaherty hemmed two or three times, and complied with Peter's wishes, who followed him in the words until the oath was concluded. He then kissed the book, and expressed himself much at ease, as well, he said, upon the account of Elish's soul, as for the sake of his children.

For some time after this, his oath was the standing jest of the neighborhood: even to this day, Peter Connell's oath against liquor is a proverb in that part of the country. Immediately after he had sworn, no one could ever perceive that he violated it in the slightest degree; indeed there could be no doubt as to literally fulfilling it. A day never passed in which he did not punctually pay a visit to those whose names wore dotted down, with whom he sat, pulled out his flask, and drank his quantum. In the meantime the poor man was breaking down rapidly; so much so, that his appearance generally excited pity, if not sorrow, among his neighbors. His character became simpler every day, and his intellect evidently more exhausted. The inoffensive humor, for which he had been noted, was also completely on the wane; his eye waxed dim, his step feeble, but the benevolence of his heart never failed him. Many acts of his private generosity are well known, and still remembered with gratitude.

In proportion as the strength of his mind and constitution diminished, so did his capacity for bearing liquor. When he first bound himself by the oath not to exceed the long dozen, such was his vigor, that the effects of thirteen tumblers could scarcely be perceived on him. This state of health, however, did not last. As he wore away, the influence of so much liquor was becoming stronger, until at length he found that it was more than he could bear, that he frequently confounded the names of the men, and the number of tumblers mentioned in the oath, and sometimes took in, in his route, persons and places not to be found in it at all. This grieved him, and he resolved to wait upon O'Flaherty for the purpose of having some means devised of guiding him during his potations.



“Masther,” said he, “we must thry an’ make this oath somethin’ plainer. You see when I get confused, I’m not able to remimber things as I ought. Sometimes, instid o’ one tumbler, I take two at the wrong place; an’ sarra bit o’ me but called in an’ had three wid ould Jack Rogers, that isn’t in it at all. On another day I had a couple wid honest Barney Casey, an my way across to Bartle Gorman’s. I’m not what I was, Masther, ahagm; so I’d thank you to dhraw it out more clearer, if you can, nor it was.”



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"I see, Mr. Connell; I comprehend wid the greatest ase in life, the very plan for it. We must reduce the oath to Geography, for I'm at home there, bein' a Surveyor myself. I'll lay down a map o' the parish, an' draw the houses of your friends at their proper places, so that you'll never be out o' your latitude at all."

"Faix, I doubt that, Masther—ha, ha, ha!" replied Peter; "I'm afeard I will, of an odd time, for I'm not able to carry what I used to do; but no matther: thry what you can do for me this time, any how. I think I could bear the long dozen still if I didn't make mistakes."

O'Flaherty accordingly set himself to work; and as his knowledge, not only of the parish, but of every person and house in it, was accurate, he soon had a tolerably correct skeleton map of it drawn for Peter's use.

"Now," said he, "lend me your ears."

"Faix, I'll do no sich thing," replied Peter—"I know a thrick worth two of it. Lend you my ears, inagh!—catch me at it! You have a bigger pair of your own nor I have—ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, in other words, pay attintion. Now, see this dot—that's your own house."

"Put a crass there," said Peter, "an' thin I'll know it's the Crass-roads."

"Upon my reputation, you're right; an' that's what I call a good specimen of ingenuity. I'll take the hint from that, an' we'll make it a Hieroglyphical as well as a Geographical oath. Well, there's a crass, wid two tumblers. Is that clear?"

"It is, it is! faix"

"Now here we draw a line to your son Dan's. Let me see; he keeps a mill, an' sells cloth. Very good. I'll dhraw a mill-wheel an' a yard-wand. There's two tumblers. Will you know that?"

"I see it: go an, nothin' can be clearer. So far, I can't go asthray."

"Well, what next? Two behind your own garden. What metaphor for the garden? Let me see!—let me cogitate! A dragon—the Hesperides! That's beyant you. A bit of a hedge will do, an' a gate."

"Don't put a gate in, it's not lucky. You know, when a man takes to dhrink, they say he's goin' a gray gate, or a black gate, or a bad gate. Put that out, an' make the hedge longer, an' it'll do—wid the two tumblers, though."

"They're down. One at the Reverend Father Mulcahy's. How will we thranslate the priest?"



“Faix, I doubt that will be a difficquilt business.”

“Upon my reputation, I agree wid you in that, especially whin he repates Latin. However, we’ll see. He writes P.P. aafter his name;—pee-pee is what we call the turkeys wid. What ‘ud you think o’ two turkeys?”

“The priest would like them roasted, but I couldn’t undherstand that. No; put down the sign o’ the horsewhip, or the cudgel; for he’s handy, an’ argues well wid both?”

“Good! I’ll put down the horsewhip first, an’ the cudgel alongside of it; then the tumbler, an’ there’ll be the sign o’ the priest.”



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“Ay, do, Masther, an’ faix the priest ’ll be complate—there can be no mistakin’ him thin. Divil a one but that’s a good thought!”

“There it is in black an’ white. Who comes next? Frank M’Carroll. He’s a farmer. I’ll put down a spade an’ a harrow. Well, that’s done—two tumblers.”

“I won’t mistake that, aither. It’s clear enough.”

“Bartle Gorman’s of Cargah. Bartle’s a little lame, an’ uses a staff wid a cross on the end that he houlds in his hand. I’ll put down a staff wid a cross on it.”

“Would there be no danger of me mistakin’ that for the priest’s cudgel?”

“Divil the slightest. I’ll pledge my knowledge of geography, they’re two very different weapons.”

“Well, put it down—I’ll know it.”

“Roger M’Gaugy of Nurchasy. What for him? Roger’s a pig-driver. I’ll put down pig. You’ll comprehend that?”

“I ought; for many a pig I sould in my day. Put down the pig; an’ if you could put two black spots upon his back, I’d know it to be one I sould him about four years agone—the fattest ever was in the country—it had to be brought home on a car, for it wasn’t able to walk wid fat.”

“Very good; the spots are on it. The last is Owen Smith of Lisbuy. Now, do you see that I’ve drawn a line from place to place, so that you have nothing to do only to keep to it as you go. What for Owen?”

“Owen! Let me see—Owen! Pooh! What’s come over me, that I’ve nothin’ for Owen? Ah! I have it. He’s a horse-jockey: put down a gray mare I sould him about five years agone.”

“I’ll put down a horse; but I can’t make a gray mare wid black ink.”

“Well, make a mare of her, any way.”

“Faith, an’ that same puzzles me. Stop, I have it; I’ll put a foal along wid her.”

“As good as the bank. God bless you, Mither O’Flaherty. I think this ’ll keep me from mistakes. An’ now, if you’ll slip up to me aafter dusk, I’ll send you down a couple o’ bottles and a flich. Sure you deserve more for the throuble you tuck.”



Many of our readers, particularly of our English readers, will be somewhat startled to hear that, except the change of names and places, there is actually little exaggeration in the form of this oath; so just is the observation, that the romance of truth frequently exceeds that of fiction.

Peter had, however, over-rated his own strength in supposing that he could bear the long dozen in future; ere many months passed he was scarcely able to reach the half of that number without sinking into intoxication. Whilst in this state, he was in the habit of going to the graveyard in which his wife lay buried, where he sat, and wept like a child, sang her favorite songs, or knelt and offered up his prayers for the repose of her soul. None ever mocked him for this; on the contrary, there was always some kind person to assist him home. And as he staggered on, instead of sneers and ridicule, one might hear such expressions as these:—



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“Poor Pether! he’s nearly off; an’ a dacent, kind neighbor he ever was. The death of the wife broke his heart—he never ris his head since.”

“Ay, poor man! God pity him! Hell soon be sleepin’ beside her, beyant there, where she’s lyin’. It was never known of Peter Connell that he offinded man, woman, or child since he was born, barrin’ the gaugers, bad luck to thim, afore he was marrid—but that was no offence. Sowl, he was their match, any how. When he an’ the wife’s gone, they won’t lave their likes behind them. The sons are bodaghs—gintlemen, now; an’ it’s nothin’ but dinners an’ company. Ahagur, that wasn’t the way their hardworkin’ father an’ mother made the money that they’re houldin’ their heads up wid such consequence upon.”

The children, however, did not give Peter up as hopeless. Father Mulcahy, too, once more assailed him on his weak side. One morning, when he was sober, nervous, and depressed, the priest arrived, and finding him at home, addressed him as follows:—

“Peter, I’m sorry, and vexed, and angry this morning; and you are the cause of it”

“How is that, your Reverence?” said Peter. “God help me,” he added, “don’t be hard an me, sir, for I’m to be pitied. Don’t be hard on me, for the short time I’ll be here. I know it won’t be long—I’ll be wid her soon. Asthore machree, we’ll’ be together, I hope, afore long—an’, oh! if it was the will o’ God, I would be glad if it was afore night!”

The poor, shattered, heart-broken creature wept bitterly, for he felt somewhat sensible of the justice of the reproof which he expected from the priest, as well as undiminished sorrow for his wife.

“I’m not going to be hard on you,” said the good-natured priest; “I only called to tell you a dream that your son Dan had last night about you and his mother.”

“About Elish! Oh, for heaven’s sake what about her, Father, avourneen?”

“She appeared to him, last night,” replied Father Mulcahy, “and told him that your drinking kept her out of happiness.”

“Queen of heaven!” exclaimed Peter, deeply affected, “is that true? Oh,” said he, dropping on his knees, “Father, ahagur machree, pardon me—oh, forgive me! I now promise, solemnly and seriously, to drink neither in the house nor out of it, for the time to come, not one drop at all, good, bad, or indifferent, of either whiskey, wine, or punch—barrin’ one glass. Are you now satisfied? an’ do you think she’ll get to happiness?”

“All will be well, I trust,” said the priest. “I shall mention this to Dan and the rest, and depend upon it, they, too, will be happy to hear it.”



“Here’s what Mr. O’Flaherty an’ myself made up,” said Peter: “burn it, Father; take it out of my sight, for it’s now no use to me.”

“What is this at all?” said Mr. Mulcahy, looking into it. “Is it an oath?”

“It’s the Joggraphy of one I swore some time ago; but it’s now out of date—I’m done wid it.”



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The priest could not avoid smiling when he perused it, and on getting from Peter's lips an explanation of the hieroglyphics, he laughed heartily at the ingenious shifts they had made to guide his memory.

Peter, for some time after this, confined himself to one glass, as he had promised; but he felt such depression and feebleness, that he ventured slowly, and by degrees, to enlarge the "glass" from which he drank. His impression touching the happiness of his wife was, that as he had for several months strictly observed his promise, she had probably during that period gone to heaven. He then began to exercise his ingenuity gradually, as we have said, by using, from time to time, a glass larger than the preceding one; thus receding from the spirit of his vow to the letter, and increasing the quantity of his drink from a small glass to the most capacious tumbler he could find. The manner in which he drank this was highly illustrative of the customs which prevail on this subject in Ireland. He remembered, that in making the vow, he used the words, "neither in the house nor out of it;" but in order to get over this dilemma, he usually stood with one foot outside the threshold, and the other in the house, keeping himself in that position which would render it difficult to determine whether he was either out or in. At other times, when he happened to be upstairs, he usually thrust one-half of his person out of the window, with the same ludicrous intention of keeping the letter of his vow.

Many a smile this adroitness of his occasioned to the lookers-on: but further ridicule was checked by his wobegone and afflicted look. He was now a mere skeleton, feeble and tottering.

One night, in the depth of winter, he went into the town where his two sons resided; he had been ill in mind and body during the day, and he fancied that change of scene and society might benefit him. His daughter and son-in-law, in consequence of his illness, watched him so closely, that he could not succeed in getting his usual "glass." This offended him, and he escaped without their knowledge to the son who kept the inn. On arriving there, he went upstairs, and by a *douceur* to the waiter, got a large tumbler filled with spirits. The lingering influences of a conscience that generally felt strongly on the side of a moral duty, though poorly instructed, prompted him to drink it in the usual manner, by keeping one-half of his body, as, nearly as he could guess, out of the window, that it might be said he drank it neither in nor out of the house. He had scarcely finished his draught, however, when he lost his balance, and was precipitated upon the pavement. The crash of his fall was heard in the bar, and his son, who had just come in, ran, along with several others, to ascertain what had happened. They found him, however, only severely stunned. He was immediately brought in, and medical aid sent for; but, though he recovered from the immediate effects of the fall, the shock it gave to his broken constitution, and his excessive grief, carried him off in a few months afterwards. He expired in the arms of his son and daughter, and amidst the tears of those who knew his simplicity of character, his goodness of heart, and his attachment to the wife by whose death that heart had been broken.



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Such was the melancholy end of the honest and warm-hearted Peter Connell, who, unhappily, was not a solitary instance of a man driven to habits of intoxication and neglect of business by the force of sorrow, which time and a well-regulated mind might otherwise have overcome. We have held him up, on the one hand, as an example worthy of imitation in that industry and steadiness which, under the direction of his wife, raised him from poverty to independence and wealth; and, on the other, as a man resorting to the use of spirituous liquors that he might be enabled to support affliction—a course which, so far from having sustained him under it, shattered his constitution, shortened his life, and destroyed his happiness. In conclusion, we wish our countrymen of Peter's class would imitate him in his better qualities, and try to avoid his failings.

THE LIANHAN SHEE.

One summer evening Mary Sullivan was sitting at her own well-swept hearthstone, knitting feet to a pair of sheep's gray stockings for Bartley, her husband. It was one of those serene evenings in the month of June, when the decline of day assumes a calmness and repose, resembling what we might suppose to have irradiated Eden, when our first parents sat in it before their fall. The beams of the sun shone through the windows in clear shafts of amber light, exhibiting millions of those atoms which float to the naked eye within its mild radiance. The dog lay barking in his dreams at her feet, and the gray cat sat purring placidly upon his back, from which even his occasional agitation did not dislodge her.

Mrs. Sullivan was the wife of a wealthy farmer, and niece to the Rev. Felix O'Rourke; her kitchen was consequently large, comfortable, and warm. Over where she sat, jutted out the "brace" well lined with bacon; to the right hung a well-scoured salt-box, and to the left was the jamb, with its little gothic paneless window to admit the light. Within it hung several ash rungs, seasoning for flail-sooples, or boulteens, a dozen of eel-skins, and several stripes of horse-skin, as hangings for them. The dresser was a "parfit white," and well furnished with the usual appurtenances. Over the door and on the "threshel," were nailed, "for luck," two horse-shoes, that had been found by accident. In a little "hole" in the wall, beneath the salt-box, lay a bottle of holy water to keep the place purified; and against the cope-stone of the gable, on the outside, grew a large lump of house-leek, as a specific for sore eyes and other maladies.

In the corner of the garden were a few stalks of tansy "to kill the thievin' worms in the childhre, the crathurs," together with a little Rose-noble, Solomon's Seal, and Bu-gloss, each for some medicinal purpose. The "lime wather" Mrs. Sullivan could make herself, and the "bog bane" for the Unh roe, (* Literally, red water) or heart-burn, grew in their own meadow drain; so that, in fact,



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she had within her reach a very decent pharmacopoeia, perhaps as harmless as that of the profession itself. Lying on the top of the salt-box was a bunch of fairy flax, and sewed in the folds of her own scapular was the dust of what had once been a four-leaved shamrock, an invaluable specific “for seein’ the good people,” if they happened to come within the bounds of vision. Over the door in the inside, over the beds, and over the cattle in the outhouses, were placed branches of withered palm, that had been consecrated by the priest on Palm Sunday; and when the cows happened to calve, this good woman tied, with her own hands, a woollen thread about their tails, to prevent them from being overlooked by evil eyes, or elf-shot* by the fairies, who seem to possess a peculiar power over females of every species during the period of parturition. It is unnecessary to mention the variety of charms which she possessed for that obsolete malady the colic, the toothache, headache, or for removing warts, and taking motes out of the eyes; let it suffice to inform our readers that she was well stocked with them; and that, in addition to this, she, together with her husband, drank a potion made up and administered by an herb-doctor, for preventing forever the slightest misunderstanding or quarrel between man and wife. Whether it produced this desirable object or not our readers may conjecture, when we add, that the herb-doctor, after having taken a very liberal advantage of their generosity, was immediately compelled to disappear from the neighborhood, in order to avoid meeting with Bartley, who had a sharp lookout for him, not exactly on his own account, but “in regard,” he said, “that it had no effect upon Mary, at all, at all;” whilst Mary, on the other hand, admitted its efficacy upon herself, but maintained, “that Bartley was worse nor ever afther it.”

* This was, and in remote parts of the country still is, one of the strongest instances of belief in the power of the Fairies. The injury, which, if not counteracted by a charm from the lips of a “Fairy-man,” or “Fairy-woman,” was uniformly inflicted on the animal by what was termed an elf-stone—which was nothing more nor less than a piece of sharp flint, from three to four or five ounces in weight. The cow was supposed to be struck upon the loin with it by these mischievous little beings, and the nature of the wound was indeed said to be very peculiar—that is, it cut the midriff without making any visible or palpable wound on the outward skin. All animals dying of this complaint, were supposed to be carried to the good people, and there are many in the country who would not believe that the dead carcass of the cow was that of the real one at all, but an old log or block of wood, made to resemble it. All such frauds, however, and deceptions were inexplicable to every one, but such as happened to possess a four-leaved shamrock, and this enabled its possessor to see the block or log in its



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real shape, although to others it appeared to be the real carcass.

Such was Mary Sullivan, as she sat at her own hearth, quite alone, engaged as we have represented her. What she may have been meditating on we cannot pretend to ascertain; but after some time, she looked sharply into the “backstone,” or hob, with an air of anxiety and alarm. By and by she suspended her knitting, and listened with much earnestness, leaning her right ear over to the hob, from whence the sounds to which she paid such deep attention proceeded. At length she crossed herself devoutly, and exclaimed, “Queen of saints about us!—is it back ye are? Well sure there’s no use in talkin’, bekase they say you know what’s said of you, or to you—an’ we may as well spake yez fair.—Hem—musha, yez are welcome back, crickets, avourneenee! I hope that, not like the last visit ye ped us, yez are comin’ for luck now! Moolyeen (* a cow without horns) died, any way, soon afther your other kailyee, (* short visit) ye crathurs ye. Here’s the bread, an’ the salt, an’ the male for yez, an’ we wish ye well. Eh?—saints above, if it isn’t listenin’ they are jist like a Christien! Wurrah, but ye are the wise an’ the quare crathurs all out!”

She then shook a little holy water over the hob, and muttered to herself an Irish charm or prayer against the evils which crickets are often supposed by the peasantry to bring with them, and requested, still in the words of the charm, that their presence might, on that occasion, rather be a presage of good fortune to man and beast belonging to her.

“There now, ye *dhonans* (* a diminutive, delicate little thing) ye, sure ye can’t say that ye’re ill-thrated here, anyhow, or ever was mocked or made game of in the same family. You have got your hansel, an’ full an’ plenty of it; hopin’ at the same time that you’ll have no rason in life to cut our best clothes from revinge. Sure an’ I didn’t desurve to have my brave stuff long body (* an old-fashioned Irish gown) riddled the way it was, the last time ye wor here, an’ only bekase little Barny, that has but the sinse of a gorsoon, tould yez in a joke to pack off wid yourself somewhere else. Musha, never heed what the likes of him says; sure he’s but a caudy, (* little boy) that doesn’t mane ill, only the bit o’ divarsion wid yez.”

She then resumed her knitting, occasionally stopping, as she changed her needles, to listen, with her ear set, as if she wished to augur from the nature of their chirping, whether they came for good or for evil. This, however, seemed to be beyond her faculty of translating their language; for—after sagely shaking her head two or three times, she knit more busily than before.*



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* Of the origin of this singular superstition I can find no account whatsoever; it is conceived, however, in a mild, sweet, and hospitable spirit. The visits of these migratory little creatures, which may be termed domestic grasshoppers, are very capricious and uncertain, as are their departures; and it is, I should think, for this reason, that they are believed to be cognizant of the ongoings of human life. We can easily suppose, for instance, that the coincidence of their disappearance from a family, and the occurrence of a death in that family, frequently multiplied as such coincidences must be in the country at large, might occasion the people, who are naturally credulous, to associate the one event with the other; and on that slight basis erect the general superstition. Crickets, too, when chirruping, have a habit of suddenly ceasing, so that when any particularly interesting conversation happens to go on about the rustic hearth, this stopping of their little chaunt looks so like listening, that it is scarcely to be wondered at that the country folks think they understand every word that is spoken. They are thought, also, to foresee both good and evil, and are considered vindictive, but yet capable of being conciliated by fair words and kindness. They are also very destructive among wearing-apparel, which they frequently nibble into holes; and this is always looked upon as a piece of revenge, occasioned by some disrespectful language used towards them, or some neglect of their little wants. This note was necessary in order to render the conduct and language of Mary Sullivan perfectly intelligible.

At this moment, the shadow of a person passing the house darkened the window opposite which she sat, and immediately a tall female, of a wild dress and aspect, entered the kitchen.

"Gho manhy dhea ghud, a ban chohr! the blessin' o' goodness upon you, dacent woman," said Mrs. Sullivan, addressing her in those kindly phrases so peculiar to the Irish language.

Instead of making her any reply, however, the woman, whose eye glistened with a wild depth of meaning, exclaimed in low tones, apparently of much anguish, *"Husht, husht', dherum!* husht, husht, I say—let me alone—I will do it—will you husht? I will, I say—I will—there now—that's it—be quiet, an' I will do it—be quiet!" and as she thus spoke, she turned her face back over her left shoulder, as if some invisible being dogged her steps, and stood bending over her.

"Gho manhy dhea ghud, a ban chohr, dherhum areesh! the blessin' o' God on you, honest woman, I say again," said Mrs. Sullivan, repeating that sacred form of salutation with which the peasantry address each other. "'Tis a fine evenin', honest woman, glory be to him that sent the same, and amin! If it was cowl'd, I'd be axin' you to draw your chair in to the fire: but, any way, won't you sit down?"

As she ceased speaking, the piercing eye of the strange woman became riveted on her with a glare, which, whilst it startled Mrs. Sullivan, seemed full of an agony that almost abstracted her from external life. It was not, however, so wholly absorbing as to prevent

it from expressing a marked interest, whether for good or evil, in the woman who addressed her so hospitably.



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“Husht, now—husht,” she said, as if aside—“husht, won’t you—sure I may speak the thing to her—you said it—there now, husht!” And then fastening her dark eyes on Mrs. Sullivan, she smiled bitterly and mysteriously.

“I know you well,” she said, without, however, returning the blessing contained in the usual reply to Mrs. Sullivan’s salutation—“I know you well, Mary Sullivan—husht, now, husht—yes, I know you well, and the power of all that you carry about you; but you’d be better than you are—and that’s well enough now—if you had sense to know—ah, ah, ah!—what’s this!” she exclaimed abruptly, with three distinct shrieks, that seemed to be produced by sensations of sharp and piercing agony.

“In the name of goodness, what’s over you, honest woman?” inquired Mrs. Sullivan, as she started from her chair, and ran to her in a state of alarm, bordering on terror—“Is it sick you are?”

The woman’s face had got haggard, and its features distorted; but in a few minutes they resumed their peculiar expression of settled wildness and mystery. “Sick!” she replied, licking her parched lips, “awirck, awirek! look! look!” and she pointed with a shudder that almost convulsed her whole frame, to a lump that rose on her shoulders; this, be it what it might, was covered with a red cloak, closely pinned and tied with great caution about her body—“’tis here! I have it!”

“Blessed mother!” exclaimed Mrs. Sullivan, tottering over to her chair, as finished a picture of horror as the eye could witness, “this day’s Friday: the saints stand betwixt me an’ all harm! Oh, holy Mary protect me! *Nhanim an airh*,” in the name of the Father, *etc.*, and she forthwith proceeded to bless herself, which she did thirteen times in honor of the blessed virgin and the twelve apostles.

“Ay, it’s as you see!” replied the stranger, bitterly. “It is here—husht, now—husht, I say—I will say the thing to her, mayn’t I? Ay, indeed, Mary Sullivan, ’tis with me always—always. Well, well, no, I won’t. I won’t—easy. Oh, blessed saints, easy, and I won’t.”

In the meantime Mrs. Sullivan had uncorked a bottle of holy water, and plentifully bedewed herself with it, as a preservative against this mysterious woman and her dreadful secret.

“Blessed mother above!” she ejaculated, “the *Lianhan Shee*” And as she spoke, with the holy water in the palm of her hand, she advanced cautiously, and with great terror, to throw it upon the stranger and the unearthly thing she bore.

“Don’t attempt it!” shouted the other, in tones of mingled fierceness and terror, “do you want to give me pain without keeping yourself anything at all safer? Don’t you know it doesn’t care about your holy water? But I’d suffer for it, an’ perhaps so would you.”

Mrs. Sullivan, terrified by the agitated looks of the woman, drew back with affright, and threw the holy water with which she intended to purify the other on her own person.



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“Why thin, you lost crathur, who or what are you at all?—don’t, don’t—for the sake of all the saints and angels of heaven, don’t come next or near me—keep your distance—but what are you, or how did you come to get that ‘good thing’ you carry about wid you?”

“Ay, indeed!” replied the woman bitterly, “as if I would or could tell you that! I say, you woman, you’re doing what’s not right in asking me a question you ought not let to cross your lips—look to yourself, and what’s over you.”

The simple woman, thinking her meaning literal, almost leaped off her seat with terror, and turned up her eyes to ascertain whether or not any dreadful appearance had approached her, or hung over her where she sat.

“Woman,” said she, “I spoke you kind an’ fair, an’ I wish you well—but”—

“But what?” replied the other—and her eyes kindled into deep and profound excitement, apparently upon very slight grounds.

“Why—hem—nothin’ at all sure, only”—

“Only what?” asked the stranger, with a face of anguish that seemed to torture every feature out of its proper lineaments.

“Dacent woman,” said Mrs. Sullivan, whilst the hair began to stand with terror upon her head, “sure it’s no wondher in life that I’m in a perplexity, whin a *Lianhan Shee* is undher the one roof wid me. ’Tisn’t that I want to know anything’ at all about it—the dear forbid I should; but I never hard of a person bein’ tormented wid it as you are. I always used to hear the people say that it thrated its friends well.”

“Husht!” said the woman, looking wildly over her shoulder, “I’ll not tell: it’s on myself I’ll leave the blame! Why, will you never pity me? Am I to be night and day tormented? Oh, you’re wicked an’ cruel for no reason!”

“Thry,” said Mrs. Sullivan, “an’ bless yourself; call on God.”

“Ah!” shouted the other, “are you going to get me killed?” and as she uttered the words, a spasmodic working which must have occasioned great pain, even to torture, became audible in her throat: her bosom heaved up and down, and her head was bent repeatedly on her breast, as if by force.

“Don’t mention that name,” said she, “in my presence, except you mean to drive me to utter distraction. I mean,” she continued, after a considerable effort to recover her former tone and manner—“hear me with attention—I mean, woman—you, Mary Sullivan—that if you mention that holy name, you might as well keep plunging sharp knives into my heart! Husht! peace to me for one minute, tormentor! Spare me something, I’m in your power!”



“Will you ate anything?” said Mrs. Sullivan; “poor crathur, you look like hunger an’ distress; there’s enough in the house, blessed be them that sent it! an’ you had betther thry an’ take some nourishment, any way;” and she raised her eyes in a silent prayer of relief and ease for the unhappy woman, whose unhallowed association had, in her opinion, sealed her doom.



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“Will I?—will I?—oh!” she replied, “may you never know misery for offering it! Oh, bring me something—some refreshment—some food—for I’m dying with hunger.”

Mrs. Sullivan, who, with all her superstition, was remarkable for charity and benevolence, immediately placed food and drink before her, which the stranger absolutely devoured—taking care occasionally to secrete under the protuberance which appeared behind her neck, a portion of what she ate. This, however, she did, not by stealth, but openly; merely taking means to prevent the concealed thing, from being, by any possible accident discovered.

When the craving of hunger was satisfied, she appeared to suffer less from the persecution of her tormentor than, before; whether it was, as Mrs. Sullivan thought, that the food with which she plied it, appeased in some degree its irritability, or lessened that of the stranger, it was difficult to say; at all events, she became more composed; her eyes resumed somewhat of a natural expression; each sharp ferocious glare, which shot, from them! with such intense and rapid flashes, partially disappeared; her knit brows dilated, and part of a forehead, which had once been capacious and handsome, lost the contractions which deformed it by deep wrinkles. Altogether the change was evident, and very-much relieved Mrs. Sullivan, who could not avoid observing it.

“It’s not that I care much about it, if you’d think it not right o’ me, but it’s odd enough for you to keep the lower part of your face muffled up in that black cloth, an’ then your forehead, too, is covered down on your face a bit? If they’re part of the bargain,”—and she shuddered at the thought—“between you an’ anything that’s not good—hem!—I think you’d do well to throw thim off o’ you, an’ turn to thim that can protect you from everything that’s bad. Now a scapular would keep all the divils in hell from one; an’ if you’d”—

On looking at the stranger she hesitated, for the wild expression of her eyes began to return.

“Don’t begin my punishment again,” replied the woman; “make no allus—don’t make mention in my presence of anything that’s good. Husht,—husht,—it’s beginning—easy now—easy! No,” said she, “I came to tell you, that only for my breakin’ a vow I made to this thing upon me, I’d be happy instead of miserable with it. I say, it’s a good thing to have, if the person will use this bottle,” she added, producing one, “as I will direct them.”

“I wouldn’t wish, for my part,” replied Mrs. Sullivan, “to have anything to do wid it—neither act nor part;” and she crossed herself devoutly, on contemplating such an unholy alliance as that at which her companion hinted.

“Mary Sullivan,” replied the other, “I can put good fortune and happiness in the way of you and yours. It is for you the good is intended; if you don’t get both, no other can,”

and her eyes kindled as she spoke, like those of the Pythoness in the moment of inspiration.



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Mrs. Sullivan looked at her with awe, fear, and a strong mixture of curiosity; she had often heard that the *Lianhan Shee* had, through means of the person to whom it was bound, conferred wealth upon several, although it could never render this important service to those who exercised direct authority over it. She therefore experienced something like a conflict between her fears and a love of that wealth, the possession of which was so plainly intimated to her.

"The money," said she, "would be one thing, but to have the *Lianhan Shee* planted over a body's shoulder—oh; the saints preserve us!—no, not for oceans' of hard goold would I have it in my company one minnit. But in regard to the money—hem!—why, if it could be managed widout havin' act or part wid that thing, people would do anything in rason and fairity."

"You have this day been kind to me," replied the woman, "and that's what I can't say of many—dear help me!—husht! Every door is shut in my face! Does not every cheek get pale when I am seen? If I meet a fellow-creature on the road, they turn into the field to avoid me; if I ask for food, it's to a deaf ear I speak; if I am thirsty, they send me to the river. What house would shelter me? In cold, in hunger, in drought, in storm, and in tempest, I am alone and unfriended, hated, feared, an' avoided; starving in the winter's cold, and burning in the summer's heat. All this is my fate here; and—oh! oh! oh!—have mercy, tormentor—have mercy! I will not lift my thoughts there—I'll keep the paction—but spare me now!"

She turned round as she spoke, seeming to follow an invisible object, or, perhaps, attempting to get a more complete view of the mysterious being which exercised such a terrible and painful influence over her. Mrs. Sullivan, also, kept her eye fixed upon the lump, and actually believed that she saw it move. Fear of incurring the displeasure of what it contained, and a superstitious reluctance harshly to thrust a person from her door who had eaten of her food, prevented her from desiring the woman to depart.

"In the name of Goodness," she replied, "I will have nothing to do wid your gift. Providence, blessed be his name, has done well for me an' mine, an' it mightn't be right to go beyant what it has pleased him to give me."

"A rational sentiment!—I mean there's good sense in what you say," answered the stranger: "but you need not be afraid," and she accompanied the expression by holding up the bottle and kneeling: "now," she added, "listen to me, and judge for yourself, if what I say, when I swear it, can be a lie." She then proceeded to utter oaths of the most solemn nature, the purport of which was to assure Mrs. Sullivan that drinking of the bottle would be attended with no danger. "You see this little bottle, drink it. Oh, for my sake and your own drink it; it will give wealth without end to you and to all belonging to you. Take one-half of it before sunrise, and the other half when he goes down. You must stand while drinking it, with your face to the east, in the morning; and at night, to the west. Will you promise to do this?"



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“How would drinkin’ the bottle get me money?” inquired Mrs. Sullivan, who certainly felt a strong tendency of heart to the wealth.

“That I can’t tell you now, nor would you understand it, even if I could; but you will know all when what I say is complied with.”

“Keep your bottle, dacent woman. I wash my hands of it: the saints above guard me from the timplation! I’m sure it’s not right, for as I’m a sinner, ’tis getting stronger every minute widin me? Keep it! I’m loth to bid any one that ett o’ my bread to go from my hearth, but if you go, I’ll make it worth your while. Saints above, what’s comin’ over me. In my whole life I never had such a hankerin’ afther money! Well, well, but it’s quare entirely!”

“Will you drink it?” asked her companion. “If it does hurt or harm to you or yours, or anything but good, may what is hanging over me be fulfilled!” and she extended a thin, but, considering her years, not ungraceful arm, in the act of holding out the bottle to her kind entertainer.

“For the sake of all that’s good and gracious take it without scruple—it is not hurtful, a child might drink every drop that’s in it. Oh, for the sake of all you love, and of all that love you, take it!” and as she urged her, the tears streamed down her cheeks.

“No, no,” replied Mrs. Sullivan, “it’ll never cross my lips; not if it made me as rich as ould Hendherson, that airs his guineas in the sun, for fraid they’d get light by lyin’ past.”

“I entreat you to take it?” said the strange woman.

“Never, never!—once for all—I say, I won’t; so spare your breath.”

The firmness of the good housewife was not, in fact to be shaken; so, after exhausting all the motives and arguments with which she could urge the accomplishments of her design, the strange woman, having again put the bottle into her bosom, prepared to depart.

She had now once more become calm, and resumed her seat with the languid air of one who has suffered much exhaustion and excitement. She put her hand upon her forehead for a few moments, as if collecting her faculties, or endeavoring to remember the purport of their previous conversation. A slight moisture had broken through her skin, and altogether, notwithstanding her avowed criminality in entering into an unholy bond, she appeared an object of deep compassion.

In a moment her manner changed again, and her eyes blazed out once more, as she asked her alarmed hostess:—



“Again, Mary Sullivan, will you take the gift that I have it in my power to give you? ay or no? speak, poor mortal, if you know what is for your own good?”

Mrs. Sullivan’s fears, however, had overcome her love of money, particularly as she thought that wealth obtained in such a manner could not prosper; her only objection being to the means of acquiring it.



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“Oh!” said the stranger, “am I doomed never to meet with any one who will take the promise off me by drinking of this bottle? Oh! but I am unhappy! What it is to fear—ah! ah!—and keep his commandments. Had I done so in my youthful time, I wouldn’t now—ah—merciful mother, is there no relief? kill me, tormentor; kill me outright, for surely the pangs of eternity cannot be greater than those you now make me suffer. Woman,” said she, and her muscles stood out in extraordinary energy— “woman, Mary Sullivan—ay, if you should kill me—blast me—where I stand, I will say the word—woman—you have daughters—teach them—to fear-”

Having got so far, she stopped—her bosom heaved up and down—her frame shook dreadfully—her eyeballs became lurid and fiery—her hands were clenched, and the spasmodic throes of inward convulsion worked the white froth up to her mouth; at length she suddenly became like a statue, with this wild, supernatural expression intense upon her, and with an awful calmness, by far more dreadful than excitement could be, concluded by pronouncing, in deep, husky tones, the name of God.

Having accomplished this with such a powerful struggle, she turned round, with pale despair in her countenance and manner, and with streaming eyes slowly departed, leaving Mrs. Sullivan in a situation not at all to be envied.

In a short time the other members of the family, who had been out at their evening employments, returned. Bartley, her husband, having entered somewhat sooner than his three daughters from milking, was the first to come in; presently the girls followed, and in a few minutes they sat down to supper, together with the servants, who dropped in one by one, after the toil of the day. On placing themselves about the table, Bartley, as usual, took his seat at the head; but Mrs. Sullivan, instead of occupying hers, sat at the fire in a state of uncommon agitation. Every two or three minutes she would cross herself devoutly, and mutter such prayers against spiritual influences of an evil nature, as she could compose herself to remember.

“Thin, why don’t you come to your supper, Mary,” said the husband, “while the sowans are warm? Brave and thick they are this night, any way.”

His wife was silent; for so strong a hold had the strange woman and her appalling secret upon her mind, that it was not till he repeated his question three or four times—raising his head with surprise, and asking, “Eh, thin, Mary, what’s come over you—is it unwell you are?”—that she noticed what he said.

“Supper!” she exclaimed, “unwell! ’tis a good right I have to be unwell,—I hope nothin’ bad will happen, any way. Feel my face, Nanny,” she added, addressing one of her daughters, “it’s as cowl’d an’ wet as a lime-stone—ay, an’ if you found me a corpse before you, it wouldn’t be at all strange.”

There was a general pause at the seriousness of this intimation. The husband rose from his supper, and went up to the hearth where she sat.



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“Turn round to the light,” said he; “why, Mary dear, in the name of wondher, what ails you? for you’re like a corpse, sure enough. Can’t you tell us what has happened, or what put you in such a state? Why, childhre, the cowld sweat’s teemin’ off her!”

The poor woman, unable to sustain the shock produced by her interview with the stranger, found herself getting more weak, and requested a drink of water; but before it could be put to her lips, she laid her head upon the back of the chair and fainted. Grief, and uproar, and confusion followed this alarming incident. The presence of mind, so necessary on such occasions, was wholly lost; one ran here, and another there, all jostling against each other, without being cool enough to render her proper assistance. The daughters were in tears, and Bartley himself was dreadfully shocked by seeing his wife apparently lifeless before him.

She soon recovered, however, and relieved them from the apprehension of her death, which they thought had actually taken place. “Mary,” said the husband, “something quare entirely has happened, or you wouldn’t be in this state!”

“Did any of you see a strange woman lavin’ the house, a minute or two before ye came in?” she inquired.

“No,” they replied, “not a stim of any one did we see.”

“*Wurrah dheelish!* No?—now is it possible ye didn’t?” She then described her, but all declared they had seen no such person.

“Bartley, whisper,” said she, and beckoning him over to her, in a few words she revealed the secret. The husband grew pale, and crossed himself. “Mother of Saints! childhre,” said he, “a *Lianhan Shee!*” The words were no sooner uttered than every countenance assumed the pallidness of death: and every right hand was raised in the act of blessing the person, and crossing the forehead. “The *Lianhan Shee!*” all exclaimed in fear and horror—“This day’s Friday, God betwixt us an’ harm!”*

* This short form is supposed to be a safeguard against the Fairies. The particular day must be always named.

It was now after dusk, and the hour had already deepened into the darkness of a calm, moonless, summer night; the hearth, therefore, in a short time, became surrounded by a circle, consisting of every person in the house; the door was closed and securely bolted;—a struggle for the safest seat took place, and to Bartley’s shame be it spoken, he lodged himself on the hob within the jamb, as the most distant situation from the fearful being known as the *Lianhan Shee*. The recent terror, however, brooded over them all; their topic of conversation was the mysterious visit, of which Mrs. Sullivan gave a painfully accurate detail; whilst every ear of those who composed her audience was set, and every single hair of their heads bristled up, as if awakened into distinct life by the

story. Bartley looked into the fire soberly, except when the cat, in prowling about the dresser, electrified him into a start of fear, which sensation went round every link of the living chain about the hearth.



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The next day the story spread through the whole neighborhood, accumulating in interest and incident as it went. Where it received the touches, embellishments, and emendations, with which it was amplified, it would be difficult to say; every one told it, forsooth, exactly as he heard it from another; but indeed it is not improbable, that those through whom it passed were unconscious of the additions it had received at their hands. It is not unreasonable to suppose that imagination in such cases often colors highly without a premeditated design of falsehood. Fear and dread, however, accompanied its progress; such families as had neglected to keep holy water in their houses borrowed some from their neighbors; every old prayer which had become rusty from disuse, was brightened up—charms were hung about the necks of cattle—and gospels about those of children—crosses were placed over the doors and windows;—no unclean water was thrown out before sunrise or after dusk—

“E’en those prayed now who never prayed before.
And those who always prayed, still prayed the more.”

The inscrutable woman who caused such general dismay in the parish was an object of much pity. Avoided, feared, and detested, she could find no rest for her weary feet, nor any shelter for her unprotected head. If she was seen approaching a house, the door and windows were immediately closed against her; if met on the way she was avoided as a pestilence. How she lived no one could tell, for none would permit themselves to know. It was asserted that she existed without meat or drink, and that she was doomed to remain possessed of life, the prey of hunger and thirst, until she could get some one weak enough to break the spell by drinking her hellish draught, to taste which, they said, would be to change places with herself, and assume her despair and misery.

There had lived in the country about six months before her appearance in it, a man named Stephenson. He was unmarried, and the last of his family. This person led a solitary and secluded life, and exhibited during the last years of his existence strong symptoms of eccentricity, which, for some months before his death, assumed a character of unquestionable derangement. He was found one morning hanging by a halter in his own stable, where he had, under the influence of his malady, committed suicide. At this time the public press had not, as now, familiarized the minds of the people to that dreadful crime, and it was consequently looked upon then with an intensity of horror, of which we can scarcely entertain any adequate notion. His farm remained unoccupied, for while an acre of land could be obtained in any other quarter, no man would enter upon such unhallowed premises. The house was locked up, and it was currently reported that Stephenson and the devil each night repeated the hanging scene in the stable; and that when the former was committing the “hopeless sin,” the halter slipped several times from the beam of the stable-loft, when Satan came, in the shape of a dark complexioned man with a hollow voice, and secured the rope until Stephenson’s end was accomplished.



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In this stable did the wanderer take up her residence at night; and when we consider the belief of the people in the night-scenes, which were supposed to occur in it, we need not be surprised at the new feature of horror which this circumstance super-added to her character. Her presence and appearance, in the parish were dreadful; a public outcry was soon raised against her, which, were it not from fear of her power over their lives and cattle, might have ended in her death. None, however, had courage to grapple with her, or to attempt expelling her by violence, lest a signal vengeance might be taken on any who dared to injure a woman that could call in the terrible aid of the *Lianhan Shee*.

In this state of feeling they applied to the parish priest, who, on hearing the marvellous stories related concerning her, and on questioning each man closely upon his authority, could perceive, that, like most other reports, they were to be traced principally to the imagination and fears of the people. He ascertained, however, enough from Bartley Sullivan to justify a belief that there was something certainly uncommon about the woman; and being of a cold, phlegmatic disposition, with some humor, he desired them to go home, if they were wise—he shook his head mysteriously as he spoke—“and do the woman no injury, if they didn’t wish—” and with this abrupt hint he sent them about their business.

This, however, did not satisfy them. In the same parish lived a suspended priest, called Father Philip O’Dallaghy, who supported himself, as most of them do, by curing certain diseases of the people—miraculously! He had no other means of subsistence, nor indeed did he seem strongly devoted to life, or to the pleasures it afforded. He was not addicted to those intemperate habits which characterize “Blessed Priests” in general; spirits he never tasted, nor any food that could be termed a luxury, or even a comfort. His communion with the people was brief, and marked by a tone of severe contemptuous misanthropy. He seldom stirred abroad except during morning, or in the evening twilight, when he might be seen gliding amidst the coming darkness, like a dissatisfied spirit. His life was an austere one, and his devotional practices were said to be of the most remorseful character. Such a man, in fact, was calculated to hold a powerful sway over the prejudices and superstitions of the people. This was true. His power was considered almost unlimited, and his life one that would not disgrace the highest saint in the calendar. There were not wanting some persons in the parish who hinted that Father Felix O’Rourke, the parish priest, was himself rather reluctant to incur the displeasure, or challenge the power, of the *Lianhan Shee*, by driving its victim out of the parish. The opinion of these persons was, in its distinct unvarnished reality, that Father Felix absolutely showed the white feather on this critical occasion—that he became shy, and begged leave to decline being introduced to this intractable pair—seeming to intimate that he did not at all relish adding them to the stock of his acquaintances.



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Father Philip they considered as a decided contrast to him on this point. His stern and severe manner, rugged, and, when occasion demanded, daring, they believed suitable to the qualities requisite for sustaining such an interview. They accordingly waited, on him; and after Bartley and his friends had given as faithful a report of the circumstances as, considering all things, could be expected, he told Bartley he would hear from Mrs. Sullivan's own lips the authentic narrative. This was quite satisfactory, and what was expected from him. As for himself, he appeared to take no particular interest in the matter, further than that of allaying the ferment and alarm which had spread through the parish. "Plase your Reverence," said Bartley, "she came in to Mary, and she alone in the house, and for the matther o' that, I believe she laid hands upon her, and tossed and tumbled the crathur, and she but a sickly woman, through the four corners of the house. Not that Mary lets an so much, for she's afeard; but I know from her way, when she spakes about her, that it's thruth, your Reverence."

"But didn't the *Lianhan Shee*," said one of them, "put a sharp-pointed knife to her breast, wid a divilish intintion of makin' her give the best of aitin' an' dhrinkin' the house afforded?"

"She got the victuals, to a sartinty," replied Bartley, "and 'overlooked' my woman for her pains; for she's not the picture of herself since."

Every one now told some magnified and terrible circumstance, illustrating the formidable power of the *Lianhan Shee*.

When they had finished, the sarcastic lip of the priest curled into an expression of irony and contempt; his brow, which was naturally black and heavy, darkened; and a keen, but rather a ferocious-looking eye, shot forth a glance, which, while it intimated disdain for those to whom it was directed, spoke also of a dark and troubled spirit in himself. The man seemed to brook with scorn the degrading situation of a religious quack, to which some uncontrollable destiny had doomed him.

"I shall see your wife to-morrow," said he to Bartley; "and after hearing the plain account of what happened, I will consider what is best to be done with this dark, perhaps unhappy, perhaps guilty character; but whether dark, or unhappy, or guilty, I, for one, should not and will not avoid her. Go, and bring me word to-morrow evening, when I can see her on the following day. Begone!"

When they withdrew, Father Philip paced his room for some time in silence and anxiety.

"Ay," said he, "infatuated people! sunk in superstition and ignorance, yet, perhaps, happier in your degradation than those who, in the pride of knowledge, can only look back upon a life of crime and misery. What is a sceptic? What is an infidel? Men who, when they will not submit to moral restraint, harden themselves into scepticism and infidelity, until in the headlong career



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of guilt, that which was first adopted to lull the outcry of conscience, is supported by the pretended pride of principle. Principle in a sceptic! Hollow and devilish lie! Would I have plunged into scepticism, had I not first violated the moral sanctions of religion? Never. I became an infidel, because I first became a villain! Writhing under a load of guilt, that which I wished might be true I soon forced myself to think true: and now"—he here clenched his hands and groaned—"now—ay—now—and hereafter—oh, that hereafter! Why can I not shake the thoughts of it from my conscience? Religion! Christianity! With all the hardness of an infidel's heart I feel your truth; because, if every man were the villain that infidelity would make him, then indeed might every man curse God for his existence bestowed upon him—as I would, but dare not do. Yet why can I not believe?—Alas! why should God accept an unrepentant heart? Am I not a hypocrite, mocking him by a guilty pretension to his power, and leading the dark into thicker darkness? Then these hands—blood!—broken vows!—ha! ha! ha! Well, go—let misery have its laugh, like the light that breaks from the thunder-cloud. Prefer Voltaire to Christ; sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind, as I have done—ha, ha, ha! Swim, world—swim about me! I have lost the ways of Providence, and am dark! She awaits me; but I broke the chain that galled us: yet it still rankles—still rankles!"

The unhappy man threw himself into a chair in a paroxysm of frenzied agony. For more than an hour he sat in the same posture, until he became gradually hardened into a stiff, lethargic insensibility, callous and impervious to feeling, reason, or religion—an awful transition from a visitation of conscience so terrible as that which he had just suffered. At length he arose, and by walking moodily about, relapsed into his usual gloomy and restless character.

When Bartley went home, he communicated to his wife Father Philip's intention of calling on the following day, to hear a correct account of the Lianhan Shee.

"Why, thin," said she, "I'm glad of it, for I intinded myself to go to him, any way, to get my new scapular consecrated. How-an'-ever, as he's to come, I'll get a set of gospels for the boys an' girls, an' he can consecrate all when his hand's in. Aroon, Bartley, they say that man's so holy that he can do anything—ay, melt a body off the face o' the earth, like snow off a ditch. Dear me, but the power they have is strange all out!"

"There's no use in gettin' him anything to ate or dhrink," replied Bartley; "he wouldn't take a glass o' whiskey once in seven years. Throth, myself thinks he's a little too dry; sure he might be holy enough, an' yet take a sup of an odd time. There's Father Felix, an' though we all know he's far from bein' so blessed a man as him, yet he has friendship an' neighborliness in him, an' never refuses a glass in rason."



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“But do you know what I was tould about Father Philip, Bartley?”

“I’ll tell you that afther I hear it, Mary, my woman; you won’t expect me to tell what I don’t know?—ha, ha, ha!”

“Behave, Bartley, an’ quit your jokin’ now, at all evints; keep it till we’re talkin’ of somethin’ else, an’ don’t let us be committin’ sin, maybe, while we’re spakin’ of what we’re spakin’ about; but they say it’s as thruе as the sun to the dial:—the Lent afore last itself it was,—he never tasted mate or dhrink durin’ the whole seven weeks! Oh, you needn’t stare! it’s well known by thim that has as much sinse as you—no, not so much as you’d carry on the point o’ this knittin’-needle. Well, sure the housekeeper an’ the two sarvants wondhered—faix, they couldn’t do less—an’ took it into their heads to watch him closely; an’ what do you think—blessed be all the saints above!—what do you think they seen?”

“The Goodness above knows; for me—I don’t.”

“Why, thin, whin he was asleep they seen a small silk thread in his mouth, that came down through the ceilin’ from heaven, an’ he suckin’ it, just as a child would his mother’s breast whin the crathur ’ud be asleep: so that was the way he was supported by the angels! An’ I remimber myself, though he’s a dark, spare, yallow man at all times, yet he never looked half so fat an’ rosy as he did the same Lent!”

“Glory be to Heaven! Well, well—it is sthrange the power they have! As for him, I’d as fee meet St. Pettier, or St. Pathrick himself, as him; for one can’t but fear him, somehow.”

“Fear him! Och, it ’ud be the pity o’ thim that ’ud do anything to vex or anger that man. Why, his very look ’ud wither thim, till there wouldn’t be the thrack* o’ thim on the earth; an’ as for his curse, why it ’ud scorch thim to ashes!”

* Track, foot-mark, put for life

As it was generally known that Father Philip was to visit Mrs. Sullivan the next day, in order to hear an account of the mystery which filled the parish with such fear, a very great number of the parishioners were assembled in and about Bartley’s long before he made his appearance. At length he was seen walking slowly down the road, with an open book in his hand, on the pages of which he looked from time to time. When he approached the house, those who were standing about it assembled in a body, and, with one consent, uncovered their heads, and asked his blessing. His appearance bespoke a mind ill at ease; his face was haggard, and his eyes bloodshot. On seeing the people kneel, he smiled with his usual bitterness, and, shaking his hand with an air of impatience over them, muttered some words, rather in mockery of the ceremony than otherwise. They then rose, and blessing themselves, put on their hats, rubbed the dust



off their knees, and appeared to think themselves recruited by a peculiar accession of grace.

On entering the house the same form was repeated; and when it was over, the best chair was placed for him by Mary's own hands, and the fire stirred up, and a line of respect drawn, within which none was to intrude, lest he might feel in any degree incommoded.



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“My good neighbor,” said he to Mrs. Sullivan, “what strange woman is this, who has thrown the parish into such a ferment? I’m told she paid you a visit? Pray sit down.”

“I humbly thank your Reverence,” said Mary, curtsying lowly, “but I’d rather not sit, sir, if you please. I hope I know what respect manes, your Reverence. Barny Bradagh, I’ll thank you to stand up, if you please, an’ his Reverence to the fore, Barny.”

“I ax your Reverence’s pardon, an’ yours, too, Mrs. Sullivan: sure we didn’t mane the disrespect, any how, sir, please your Reverence.”

“About this woman, and the *Lianhan Shee*?” said the priest, without noticing Barny’s apology. “Pray what do you precisely understand by a *Lianhan Shee*?”

“Why, sir,” replied Mary, “some sthrange bein’ from the good people, or fairies, that sticks to some persons. There’s a bargain, sir, your Reverence, made atween thim; an’ the divil, sir, that is, the ould boy—the saints about us!—has a hand in it. The *Lianhan Shee*, your Reverence, is never seen only by thim it keeps wid; but—hem!—it always, with the help of the ould boy, conthrives, sir, to make the person brake the agreement, an’ thin it has thim in its power; but if they don’t brake the agreement, thin it’s in their power. If they can get any body to put in their place, they may get out o’ the bargain; for they can, of a sartainty, give oceans o’ money to people, but can’t take any themselves, please your Reverence. But sure, where’s the use o’ me to be tellin’ your Reverence what you know betther nor myself?—an’ why shouldn’t you, or any one that has the power you have?”

He smiled again at this in his own peculiar manner, and was proceeding to inquire more particularly into the nature of the interview between them, when the noise of feet, and sounds of general alarm, accompanied by a rush of people into the house, arrested his attention, and he hastily inquired into the cause of the commotion. Before he could receive a reply, however, the house was almost crowded; and it was not without considerable difficulty, that, by the exertions of Mrs. Sullivan and Bartley, sufficient order and quiet were obtained to hear distinctly what was said.

“Please your Reverence,” said several voices at once, “they’re comin’, hot-foot, into the very house to us! Was ever the likes seen! an’ they must know right well, sir, that you’re widin in it.”

“Who are coming?” he inquired. “Why the woman, sir, an’ her good pet, the *Lianhan Shee*, your Reverence.”

“Well,” said he, “but why should you all appear so blanched with terror? Let her come in, and we shall see how far she is capable of injuring her fellow-creatures: some maniac,” he muttered, in a low soliloquy, “whom the villany of the world has driven into



derangement—some victim to a hand like m——. Well, they say there is a Providence, yet such things are permitted!”



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“He’s sayin’ a prayer now,” observed one of them; “haven’t we a good right to be thankful that he’s in the place wid us while she’s in it, or dear knows what harm she might do us—maybe rise the wind!”* As the latter speaker concluded, there was a dead silence. The persons about the door crushed each other backwards, their feet set out before them, and their shoulders laid with violent pressure against those who stood behind, for each felt anxious to avoid all danger of contact with a being against whose power even a blessed priest found it necessary to guard himself by a prayer.

* It is generally supposed by the people, that persons who have entered into a compact with Satan can raise the wind by calling him up, and that it cannot be laid unless by the death of a black cock, a black dog, or an unchristened child.

At length a low murmur ran among the people—“Father O’Rourke!—here’s Father O’Rourke!—he has turned the corner after her, an’ they’re both comin’ in.” Immediately they entered, but it was quite evident from the manner of the worthy priest that he was unacquainted with the person of this singular being. When they crossed the threshold, the priest advanced, and expressed his surprise at the throng of people assembled.

“Plase your Reverence,” said Bartley, “that’s the woman,” nodding significantly towards her as he spoke, but without looking at her person, lest the evil eye he dreaded so much might meet his, and give him “the blast.”

The dreaded female, on seeing the house in such a crowded state, started, paused, and glanced with some terror at the persons assembled. Her dress was not altered since her last visit; but her countenance, though more meagre and emaciated, expressed but little of the unsettled energy which then flashed from her eyes, and distorted her features by the depth of that mysterious excitement by which she had been agitated. Her countenance was still muffled as before, the awful protuberance rose from her shoulders, and the same band which Mrs. Sullivan had alluded to during their interview, was bound about the upper part of her forehead.

She had already stood upwards of two minutes, during which the fall of a feather might be heard, yet none bade God bless her—no kind hand was extended to greet her—no heart warmed in affection towards her; on the contrary, every eye glanced at her, as a being marked with enmity towards God. Blanched faces and knit brows, the signs of fear and hatred, were turned upon her; her breath was considered pestilential, and her touch paralysis. There she stood, proscribed, avoided, and hunted like a tigress, all fearing to encounter, yet wishing to exterminate her! Who could she be?—or what had she done, that the finger of the Almighty marked her out for such a fearful weight of vengeance?

Father Philip rose and advanced a few steps, until he stood confronting her. His person was tall, his features dark, severe, and solemn: and when the nature of the investigation about to take place is considered, it need not be wondered at, that the



moment was, to those present, one of deep and impressive interest—such as a visible conflict between a supposed champion of God and a supernatural being was calculated to excite.



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“Woman,” said he, in his deep stern voice, “tell me who and what you are, and why you assume a character of such a repulsive and mysterious nature, when it can entail only misery, shame, and persecution on yourself? I conjure you, in the name of Him after whose image you are created, to speak truly?”

He paused, and the tall figure stood mute before him. The silence was dead as death—every breath was hushed and the persons assembled stood immovable as statues! Still she spoke not; but the violent heaving of her breast evinced the internal working of some dreadful struggle. Her face before was pale—it was now ghastly; her lips became blue, and her eyes vacant.

“Speak!” said he, “I conjure you in the name of the power by whom we live!”

It is probable that the agitation under which she labored was produced by the severe effort made to sustain the unexpected trial she had to undergo.

For some minutes her struggle continued; but having begun at its highest pitch, it gradually subsided until it settled in a calmness which appeared fixed and awful as the resolution of despair. With breathless composure she turned round, and put back that part of her dress which concealed her face, except the band on her forehead, which she did not remove; having done this she turned again, and walked calmly towards Father Philip, with a deadly smile upon her thin lips. When within a step of where he stood, she paused, and riveting her eyes upon him exclaimed—

“Who and what am I? The victim of infidelity and you, the bearer of a cursed existence, the scoff and scorn of the world, the monument of a broken vow and a guilty life, a being scourged by the scorpion lash of conscience, blasted by periodical insanity, pelted by the winter’s storm, scorched by the summer’s heat, withered by starvation, hated by man, and touched into my inmost spirit by the anticipated tortures of future misery. I have no rest for the sole of my foot, no repose for a head distracted by the contemplation of a guilty life; I am the unclean spirit which walketh to seek rest and findeth none; I am—*what you have made me!* Behold,” she added, holding up the bottle, “this failed, and I live to accuse you. But no, you are my husband—though our union was but a guilty form, and I will bury that in silence. You thought me dead, and you flew to avoid punishment—did you avoid it? No; the finger of God has written pain and punishment upon your brow. I have been in all characters, in all shapes, have spoken with the tongue of a peasant, moved in my natural sphere; but my knees were smitten, my brain stricken, and the wild malady which banishes me from society has been upon me for years. Such I am, and such, I say, have you made me. As for you, kind-hearted woman, there was nothing in this bottle but pure water. The interval of reason returned this day, and having remembered glimpses of our conversation, I came to apologize to you, and to explain the nature of my



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unhappy distemper, and to beg a little bread, which I have not tasted for two days. I at times conceive myself attended by an evil spirit shaped out by a guilty conscience, and this is the only familiar which attends me, and by it I have been dogged into madness through every turning of life. Whilst it lasts I am subject to spasms and convulsive starts which are exceedingly painful. The lump on my back is the robe I wore when innocent in my peaceful convent.”

The intensity of general interest was now transferred to Father Philip; every face was turned towards him, but he cared not. A solemn stillness yet prevailed among all present. From the moment she spoke, her eye drew his with the power of a basilisk. His pale face became like marble, not a muscle moved; and when she ceased speaking, his blood-shot eyes were still fixed upon her countenance with a gloomy calmness like that which precedes a tempest. They stood before each other, dreadful counterparts in guilt, for truly his spirit was as dark as hers.

At length he glanced angrily around him;—“Well,” said he, “what is it now, ye poor infatuated wretches, to trust in the sanctity of man. Learn from me to place the same confidence in God which you place in his guilty creatures, and you will not lean on a broken reed. Father O’Rourke, you, too, witness my disgrace, but not my punishment. It is pleasant, no doubt, to have a topic for conversation at your Conferences; enjoy it. As for you, Margaret, if society lessen misery, we may be less miserable. But the band of your order, and the remembrance of your vow is on your forehead, like the mark of Cain—tear it off, and let it not blast a man who is the victim of prejudice still,—nay of superstition, as well as of guilt; tear it from my sight.” His eyes kindled fearfully, as he attempted to pull it away by force.

She calmly took it off, and he immediately tore it into pieces, and stamped upon the fragments as he flung them on the ground.

“Come,” said the despairing man—“come—there is a shelter for you, but no peace!—food, and drink, and raiment, but no peace!—no peace!” As he uttered these words, in a voice that sank to its deepest pitch, he took her hand, and they both departed to his own residence.

The amazement and horror of those who were assembled in Bartley’s house cannot be described. Our readers may be assured that they deepened in character as they spread through the parish. An undefined, fear of this mysterious pair seized upon the people, for their images were associated in their minds with darkness and crime, and supernatural communion. The departing words of Father Philip rang in their ears: they trembled, and devoutly crossed themselves, as fancy again repeated the awful exclamation of the priest—“No peace! no peace!”



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When Father Philip and his unhappy associate went home, he instantly made her a surrender of his small property; but with difficulty did he command sufficient calmness to accomplish even this. He was distracted—his blood seemed to have been turned to fire—he clenched his hands, and he gnashed his teeth, and exhibited the wildest symptoms of madness. About ten o'clock he desired fuel for a large fire to be brought into the kitchen, and got a strong cord, which he coiled and threw carelessly on the table. The family were then ordered to bed. About eleven they were all asleep; and at the solemn hour of twelve he heaped additional fuel upon the living turf, until the blaze shone with scorching light upon everything around. Dark and desolating was the tempest within him, as he paced, with agitated steps, before the crackling fire.

“She is risen!” he exclaimed—“the spectre of all my crimes is risen to haunt me through life! I am a murderer—yet she lives, and my guilt is not the less! The stamp of eternal infamy is upon me—the finger of scorn will mark me out—the tongue of reproach will sting me like that of a serpent—the deadly touch of shame will cover me like a leper—the laws of society will crush the murderer, not the less that his wickedness in blood has miscarried: after that comes the black and terrible tribunal of the Almighty’s vengeance—of his fiery indignation! Hush!—What sounds are those? They deepen—they deepen! Is it thunder? It cannot be the crackling of the blaze! It is thunder!—but it speaks only to my ear! Hush!—Great God, there is a change in my voice! It is hollow and supernatural! Could a change have come over me? Am I living? Could I have—Hah!—Could I have departed? and am I now at length given over to the worm that never dies? If it be at my heart, I may feel it. God!—I am damned! Here is a viper twined about my limbs trying to dart its fangs into my heart! Hah!—there are feet pacing in the room, too, and I hear voices! I am surrounded by evil spirits! Who’s there?—What are you?—Speak!—They are silent!—There is no answer! Again comes the thunder! But perchance this is not my place of punishment, and I will try to leave these horrible spirits!”

[Illustration: PAGE 975— Who’s there?—What are you?—Speak!]

He opened the door, and passed out into a small green field that lay behind the house. The night was calm, and the silence profound as death. Not a cloud obscured the heavens; the light of the moon fell upon the stillness of the scene around him, with all the touching beauty of a moonlit midnight in summer. Here he paused a moment, felt his brow, then his heart, the palpitations of which fell audibly upon his ear. He became somewhat cooler; the images of madness which had swept through his stormy brain disappeared, and were succeeded by a lethargic vacancy of thought, which almost deprived him of the consciousness of his own identity. From the green field he descended



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mechanically to a little glen which opened beside it. It was one of those delightful spots to which the heart clingeth. Its sloping sides were clothed with patches of wood, on the leaves of which the moonlight glanced with a soft lustre, rendered more beautiful by their stillness. That side on which the light could not fall, lay in deep shadow, which occasionally gave to the rocks and small projecting precipices an appearance of monstrous and unnatural life. Having passed through the tangled mazes of the glen, he at length reached its bottom, along which ran a brook, such as in the description of the poet,—

—In the leafy month of June,
Unto the sleeping woods all night,
Singeth a quiet tune.”

Here he stood, and looked upon the green winding margin of the streamlet—but its song he heard not. With the workings of a guilty conscience, the beautiful in nature can have no association. He looked up the glen, but its picturesque windings, soft vistas, and wild underwood mingling with gray rocks and taller trees, all mellowed by the moonbeams, had no charms for him. He maintained a profound silence—but it was not the silence of peace or reflection. He endeavored to recall the scenes of the past day, but could not bring them back to his memory. Even the fiery tide of thought, which, like burning lava, seared his brain a few moments before, was now cold and hardened.

He could remember nothing. The convulsion of his mind was over, and his faculties were impotent and collapsed.

In this state he unconsciously retraced his steps, and had again reached the paddock adjoining his house, where, as he thought, the figure of his paramour stood before him. In a moment his former paroxysm returned, and with it the gloomy images of a guilty mind, charged with the extravagant horrors of brain-stricken madness.

“What!” he exclaimed, “the band still on your forehead! Tear it off!”

He caught at the form as he spoke, but there was no resistance to his grasp. On looking again towards the spot it had ceased to be visible. The storm within him arose once more; he rushed into the kitchen, where the fire blazed out with fiercer heat; again he imagined that the thunder came to his ears, but the thunderings which he heard were only the voice of conscience. Again his own footsteps and his voice sounded in his fancy as the footsteps and voices of fiends, with which his imagination peopled the room. His state and his existence seemed to him a confused and troubled dream; he tore his hair—threw it on the table—and immediately started back with a hollow groan; for his locks, which but a few hours before had been as black as a raven’s wing, were now white as snow!



On discovering this, he gave a low but frantic laugh. “Ha, ha, ha!” he exclaimed; “here is another mark—here is food for despair. Silently, but surely, did the hand of God work this, as proof that I am hopeless! But I will bear it; I will bear the sight! I now feel myself a man blasted by the eye of God Himself! Ha, ha, ha! Food for despair! Food for despair!”



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Immediately he passed into his own room, and approaching the looking-glass beheld a sight calculated to move a statue. His hair had become literally white, but the shades of his dark complexion, now distorted by terror and madness, flitted, as his features worked under the influence of his tremendous passions, into an expression so frightful, that deep fear came over himself. He snatched one of his razors, and fled from the glass to the kitchen. He looked upon the fire, and saw the white ashes lying around its edge.

“Ha!” said he, “the light is come! I see the sign. I am directed, and I will follow it. There is yet one hope. The immolation! I shall be saved, yet so as by fire. It is for this my hair has become white;—the sublime warning for my self-sacrifice! The color of ashes!—white—white! It is so! I will sacrifice my body in material fire, to save my soul from that which is eternal! But I had anticipated the sign. The self-sacrifice is accepted!”*

* As the reader may be disposed to consider the nature of the priest’s death an unjustifiable stretch of fiction, I have only to say in reply, that it is no fiction at all. It is not, I believe, more than forty, or perhaps fifty, years since a priest committed his body to the flames, for the purpose of saving his soul by an incrematory sacrifice. The object of the suicide being founded on the superstitious belief, that a priest guilty of great crimes possesses the privilege of securing salvation by self-sacrifice. We have heard two or three legends among the people in which this principle predominated. The outline of one of these, called “The Young Priest and Brian Braar,” was as follows:—A young priest on his way to the College of Valladolid, in Spain, was benighted; but found a lodging in a small inn on the roadside. Here he was tempted by a young maiden of great beauty, who, in the moment of his weakness, extorted from him a bond signed with his blood, binding himself to her forever. She turned out to be an evil spirit: and the young priest proceeded to Valladolid with a heavy heart, confessed his crime to the Superior, who sent him to the Pope, who sent him to a Friar in the County of Armagh, called Brian Braar, who sent him to the devil. The devil, on the strength of Brian Braar’s letter, gave him a warm reception, held a cabinet council immediately, and laid the despatch before his colleagues, who agreed that the claimant should get back his bond from the brimstone lady who had inveigled him. She, however, obstinately refused to surrender it, and stood upon her bond, until threatened with being thrown three times into Brian Braar’s furnace. This tamed her: the man got his bond, and returned to Brian Braar on earth. Now Brian Braar had for three years past abandoned God, and taken to the study of magic with the devil; a circumstance which accounts for his influence below. The young priest, having possessed himself of his bond,



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went to Lough Derg to wash away his sins; and Brian Braar, having also become penitent, the two worthies accompanied each other to the lake. On entering the boat, however, to cross over to the island, such a storm arose as drove them back. Brian assured his companion that he himself was the cause of it. "There is now," said he, "but one more chance for me; and we must have recourse to it." He then returned homewards, and both had reached a hill-side near Bryan's house, when the latter desired the young priest to remain there a few minutes, and he would return to him; which he did with a hatchet in his hand.

"Now," said he, "you must cut me into four quarters, and mince my body into small bits, then cast them into the air, and let them go with the wind."

The priest, after much entreaty, complied with his wishes, and returned to Lough Derg, where he afterwards lived twelve years upon one meal of bread and water per diem. Having thus purified himself, he returned home; but, on passing the hill where he had minced the Friar, he was astonished to see the same man celebrating mass, attended by a very penitential looking congregation of spirits. "Ah," said Brian Braar, when mass was over, "you are now a happy man. With regard to my state for the voluntary sacrifice I have made of myself, I am to be saved; but I must remain on this mountain until the Day of Judgment." So saying, he disappeared. There is little to be said about the superstition of the *Lianhan Shee*, except that it existed as we have drawn it, and that it is now fading fast away. There is also something appropriate in associating the heroine of this little story with the being called the *Lianhan Shee*, because, setting the superstition aside, any female who fell into her crime was called *Lianhan Shee*. *Lianhan Shee an Sogarth* signifies a priest's paramour, or, as the country people say, "Miss." Both terms have now nearly become obsolete.

We must here draw a veil over that which ensued, as the description of it would be both unnatural and revolting. Let it be sufficient to say, that the next morning he was found burned to a cinder, with the exception of his feet and legs, which remained as monuments of, perhaps, the most dreadful suicide that ever was committed by man. His razor, too, was found bloody, and several clots of gore were discovered about the hearth; from which circumstances it was plain that he had reduced his strength so much by loss of blood, that when he committed himself to the flames, he was unable, even had he been willing, to avoid the fiery and awful sacrifice of which he made himself the victim. If anything could deepen the the impression of fear and awe, already so general among the people, it was the unparalleled nature of his death. Its circumstances are yet remembered in the parish and county wherein it occurred—for it is no fiction, gentle reader! and the titular bishop who then presided over the diocese, declared, that while he lived, no person bearing the unhappy man's name should ever be admitted to the clerical order.

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The shock produced by his death struck the miserable woman into the utter darkness of settled derangement. She survived him some years, but wandered about through the province, still, according to the superstitious belief of the people, tormented by the terrible enmity of the *Lianhan Shee*.