

ty-four that ever swum, may he be sent undher hatches for a skulker ! a buss, my little hearty, an' all's settled." And before the terrified Moya could recede from his advance, he snatched the favour he had promised. "My hulk to splinters, shipmit!" addressing Murty Meehen, "but she's a well-built little vessel—an't she? Lookee; painted, pinnace-like, d'ye see me, and right well rigged from stem to stern; don't you shiver so, my hearty; cheer up, I say," I never knew a land jack that warn't afear'd o' salt wather, at the settin' out; but you'll not be long before the wind till you bear a hand bravely; I know it—so cheer up." The ould admiral again saluted his bride; and Moya, then pulling herself somewhat free of his gripe, retreated to her corner.

Her mother next boarded the sayman, engaging him in a discussion of all her plans of improvement and management in the house and on the farm. For a short time he listened to her with some little seeming attention; but fatigued with her "jaw," suddenly bounced off his seat, told her that he left the whole business of the outfit to his shipmate and herself, snatched a parting *bonbouche* from his little pinnace, and scudded away, full before the wind.

Terence felt perfectly satisfied with the state of affairs. All was now settled, and so no more talk about it. Mrs. Moore could not be smother nor kinder. Moya seemed shy to be sure; but, as he had intimiated to her, so were, according to his recollections and experience, all fresh water jacks at the first sight of the sea. She had not repulsed him—she had not said "No;" and, seeing that she was gifted with a tongue in her head, such must have been the case did she really dislike the proposed "cruise in company." On board the ould Vincent all his life long, his shipmates and he had always spoken their minds honestly to each other, and he had no other rule of judging of people's opinions, and he would have none. No meant no, and yes meant yes; or, what was even better, for it saved jaw, if you asked a "shipmit" will you? and he said neither yes nor no, but just held his tongue, and at the same time did not knock you down, or give any similar indication of dissent, why, you had an answer much plainer than all the languages in the world could convey it, to the effect of—"To be sure I will." So that our honest admiral left the widow Moore's "ould ship," experiencing pretty nearly the same sensations he used to feel, when about to make a fresh cruise after riding some time at anchor—careless and hearty, and his spirits up, from an undefined hope of something novel about to happen to him.

How often, with the best intentions in the world, do the best people in the world go near to break the hearts of the unhappy, in an endeavour to do them good!

And why?

Because they don't, or won't, or can't, understand.

And ah! that little word "won't," contains matter for chapters upon the curious and contemptible compound of our nature, take it, upon the average, at its best——

But—"d—n your sentiment."

With all our heart. Don't be afraid, "gentle light reader."

CHAPTER IX.

THE news of the intended nuptials soon spread abroad, and, among the guests selected by Mrs. Moore on the occasion, great preparations ensued to grace the widow's roof upon the appointed day; and under that roof itself a still greater bustle went on, to do honour to her invitations. Before the arrival of the priest there is something to be noticed.

The high road leading, in the district in which we find ourselves, to the principal country town, ran at the distance of about a mile at right-angles with the front of the widow Moore's dwelling. From it a *bosheen*, or narrow way, diverged, and took a circuitous route towards the humble abode, and, by a branch-track, communicated directly with its threshold; and along this route horses and carts, or—as the primitive machines which then substituted carts were called—cars, could journey to and from market. But pedestrains chose a shorter cut to the main road, as well from her house as from other solitary dwellings near her.

Upon the night when she first became informed of Terence O'Erien's proposal of marriage, Moya Moore, as we are aware, ran down a slope from her mother's door to the side of a little stream, there to vent her feeling in solitude. This stream, having its source among high hills in the recesses of the country, had, before Moya arrived at its banks on that spot, passed close by Murty Meehan's cabin, about half a mile up from her, and continued to flow on from her feet to the high-road already spoken of, which it crossed; thence pursuing its fated course to the river, with which it soon became confounded. While sketching, at the opening of our story, Murty Meehan's residence, and its surrounding features, we believe we hinted that the tiny rivulet ran a very zig-zag race near to his threshold; and we have now to say that it did the same thing all the way it had to run: its aberrations being caused by the nature of the ground, through which, like a dog on a scent, it seemed to nose its way; for sometimes the banks misdirected it to the right, sometimes to the left; now in an obtuse angle, now almost in a right angle—so that, every twist, it was almost shut up among puzzling inequalities, in one little solitude or another, from all sight whence it had come, or whither it was to go; and each of those