

one of his attendants to tell McEneiry what Falvey of the Ear had done.

"Some time since," said the attendant coming forward, "my master came down here on a visit to his brother, and was so much diverted by the wit and sprightliness of the prisoner, that he asked John of the Wine to let him go with him to Connaught for a while. When they were about going, John of the Wine called the prisoner aside and addressed him in these words. 'Now, you Falvey of the Ear, listen to me and remember what I am going to tell you, for if you don't, it will be worse for yourself. My brother is a man of a hasty turbulent temper, and I strongly recommend to you, to keep your wit under check, and take care never to play on his words, or to make him a smart answer, or take him short in what he may say, for that is what nobody relishes, and what he cannot bear. A satirical tongue, or a mouthful of repartees, Claus,' said he, 'are more dangerous to the owner of them, than to anybody else. You may remember what the Latin poet says:

—Mitte jocos; non est jocus esse malignum,  
Nun quam sunt grati qui nocturne salas.

and moreover:

Omnibus minatur qui facit uni injuriam.

meaning, that the honey of wit cannot sweeten the sting of satire, and that the jester is a common enemy, for he who cracks a joke upon one, threatens all. But enough said—remember what I tell you. Falvey promised him to be careful, and came with us to Connaught. He went on very well for some time, and my master liked him ever day more and more. One morning, however, my master and some gentlemen went out fowling in the wood of Landers, belonging to his wife's father, and they took Falvey with them. One of them shot a bird which fell into the top of a very straight and lofty tree. When my master saw that, he said, he would be very glad to have the bird down by some means or another. 'I'll go up for it, O'Connor,' said Falvey of the Ear, and accordingly he did so. When he was coming down again with the bird in his hand, my master looked up, and said: '*Ní rian suas an gearann ar mo*

*capul*.\* On hearing this, Claus looked at him, and said: '*Bo dheachair domhsa díl suas gancuran capul do bleith oram*.'† At this there was a laugh amongst those who stood by. When my master heard his words played upon in that manner, he got furious. 'Take him some of ye,' said he, 'until I hang him this instant out of the tree.' They made a run at him, but Claus hopped away from them, and run homewards. My master and his people followed him a long way, but he had an advantage of them, for he could go all the short cuts across the country, while they being mounted were obliged to take the road round. They pursued him to Limerick and beyond, and got sight of him just as he drew nigh the river Maig, where it flows between Adare and Court. There being no bridge, he had no other way of escape than to leap across the river, and he did so, cleverly; and I'll leave it to anybody that ever saw the Maig whether it wasn't a noble leap. Well, when my master saw that, he forget all his anger in admiring such a spring. 'Claus,' said he, 'that was a good leap.'—'It wasn't better than the run I had to it,' replied Claus, taking him short again. At that, my master got twice as furious as ever, though he was on the point of forgiving him the moment before. The whole party dashed into the river on horseback and swam across, but with all the haste they could make, Claus was at Carrigfoile before them and told John of the Wine all that happened, begging of him to save him from his brother. 'Well,' says Seaghan an Fhiona, 'I told you how it would be, and I don't see any chance of protecting you, for I'm sure I have no notion of getting into a dispute with my brother on account of a trifle, such as the hanging of a fellow of your kind. Claus hearing my master at the gate, went up into a turret of the Castle where he is now confined, and waiting the order for his execution.'"

When the attendant had concluded

\* I would not go up there for my horse.

† It was hard for me to go up without my horse!

The wit of Claus o' Failbhe's answer turns on the double meaning attached to the *ar* in Irish, which signifies either *for* or *upon*, according to its context. Claus affected to take it in the latter sense.