

twenty milch kine, besides enjoying the privilege of free entertainment for a month after, and the attendance of four-and-twenty servants. Merry were the companies which Madaghan enlivened with his presence, and long were his narratives remembered by the hearers, for no one understood so well the art of conveying solid instruction under the guise of mirth, and intermingling his most fanciful incidents with maxims of practical wisdom.

But although he often enlivened the hearts of others, his own was not without its cares. His only child, a son, who he hoped should inherit his talents and his fortune, proved to be deaf and dumb, and there remained no hope of his advancement in life. The father had seen all his relatives descend into the tomb before him, and felt his own life wasting rapidly away, without any prospect of leaving his son established in comfort behind him. His affliction at this circumstance was the keener, as the boy was beautiful, affectionate, and intelligent, beyond many of those who were rising fast in the esteem and favor of the public. The poor old Ollamh, who loved his son with all the tenderness of a father, sighed as he accorded to the children of his friends and neighbors those honors which his own boy could never hope to accomplish. It was not that the old man's heart was capable of so foul a passion as envy, but it was natural that, with the most benevolent feelings, the sight of filial merit and paternal happiness should remind him, by the contrast, of his own affliction. He was often visited by those remembrances of grief, for the consciousness of his own disappointment made him careful of inflicting a similar pain upon the hearts of other parents by showing any needless rigor in his examination of the young candidates that came before him. His heart sank and grew heavy under the weight of his own feelings, and he who knew so well how to soothe and even to banish the sorrow of another, was often in want of a comforter for his own.

The younger Madaghan showed that the deficiency in his senses did not extend to his intellect or to his heart. His eyes were ever fixed upon his parent. The slightest action of the old man's hand, or motion of his frame, was for him a swifter indication of his wishes than language would have been to another. He brought

him his clarsech when he saw the clouds gathering upon his brow, although he knew not why it was that running his fingers along the chords of the instrument should inspire joy and life into the heart of his father as well as of the listeners. Neither could he understand the cause of the old harper's grief, but he did all that lay in his power to ascertain and remove it. His efforts, however, could only aggravate the evil they were intended to counteract; and it was with pain and surprise he perceived that the more he exerted himself to withdraw the arrow, the deeper did he infix it in the heart of the old man.

One evening, when the aged Ollamh was striking a mournful air upon his instrument, while the sun was sinking in the west, and flinging across their sheiling door the shadow of an adjacent round tower, his son approached and bent his eyes upon his face with an expression of deep interest and anxiety. The earnestness of his look brought back some sorrowful recollections to the harper, who, letting his hand fall idly on his knee, endeavored to trace in the blooming features of the youth the semblance of his long-lost mother. Tear following tear flowed down the old man's cheek as he thought of the happiness of other times, until at length he pushed the clarsech aside with a feeling of heart-sickness, and sank back on his tripod, overwhelmed at once by his recollections and his forebodings.

The young man started forward and flung his arms wide, as if to solicit some explanation of this burst of sorrow. He pressed his hand forcibly upon his heart, to express what was passing within—he uttered some passionate and inarticulate murmurs—threw himself at the feet of his parent—embraced his knees, and again looked up eargerly and inquiringly in his eyes. The Ollamh smiled through his grief at those demonstrations of affection, and laid his hand kindly on the curling ringlets of the youth, while he shook his head, at the same time, to express the hopelessness of his condition. The youth started to his feet, and pointed to the four quarters of the world, intimating, by his liveliest gestures, his readiness to undertake any toil or journey that could restore happiness to his parent. Again the latter shook his grey hairs in silence, and pointed up to heaven. The youth understood his meaning, and bending down with a