

FOREFATHER'S SONG.

[A lady sends the following to the New York Independent. It was composed about the year 1630, and taken memoriter from the lips of a venerable lady 92 years of age. It so quaintly suggests the difference between the old time and the new that we give it a place.]

The place where we live is a wilderness wood,
Where grass is much wanted that's fruitful and good;
Our mountains and hills and our valleys below
Being commonly covered with ice and with snow.
And when the northwest wind with violence blows
Then every man pulls his cap over his nose;
But if any's so hardy and will it withstand,
He forfeits a finger, a foot, or a hand.

But when the Spring opens, we then take the hoe,
And make the ground ready to plant and to sow;
Our corn being planted, and seed being sown,
The worms destroy much, before it is grown.
And when it is growing, some spoil there is made
By birds and by squirrels that pick up the blade;
And when it is come to full corn in the ear,
It is often destroyed by rascals and by deer.

And now our old garments begin to grow thin,
And wool is much wanted to card and to spin;
If we can't get a garment to cover without,
Our other garments are clout upon clout.
For clothes we brought with us are apt to be torn,
They need to be clouted before they are worn;
But clouting our garments, they hinder us nothing,
Clouts double are warmer than single whole clothing.

If fresh meat be wanting to fill up our dish,
We have carrots and pumpkins and turnips and fish;
And is there a mind for a delicate dish?
We repair to the clam banks, and then we can fish.
Instead of pottage and puddings and custards and pies,
Our pumpkins and parsnips are common supplies;
We have pumpkins at morning and pumpkins at noon.
If 'twas not for pumpkins we should be undone.

If barley be wanting to make into malt,
We must be contented, and think it no fault.
For we can make liquor to sweeten our lips,
Of pumpkins and parsnips and walnut-tree chips.
(Four lines wanting.)

Now, while some are going, let others be coming.
For while liquor's a-bubbling it must have a scumming.
But I will not blame them, for birds of a feather,
By seeking their fellows, are flocking together.
But you, when the Lord intends hither to bring,
Forsake not the honey for fear of the sting;
But bring forth a quiet and contented mind,
And all needful blessings you surely will find.

THROUGH A JUDAS WINDOW.

I.

I am not cruel. I distinctly require that to be understood and believed. Granting, as I grant it, that I do possess the detective faculty strongly, and that I have cultivated it with advantage during many years of an arduous and responsible career as a bank inspector, I deny that I am thereby to be convicted, or justly suspected of being unnaturally cruel. Of course I like to find that I am in the right, and I take an honest pride in proving my case; but I am as cautious as any man living to listen to reason only, to distinguish between instinct and prejudice, and I have the solid consolation, when my friends hint that mine is a talent of a very dangerous kind, of knowing that I have been a terror to evil-doers, I have also frequently been a tower of strength to innocent persons in circumstances of an unfortunate and equivocal nature. Neither am I prone to think evil of my fellow-creatures, though I have found persons who hold the converse of the proposition about the thief, the hedge, and the constable to be true, and that a man whose business it has been to find out dishonesty where it existed suspects everybody in a subordinate position, and with opportunities of actual or prospective malpractices.

So large a proportion of the persons I have had to deal with have been honest men, that I have a better opinion of my fellow-creatures than I would venture to express to the very shrewd amongst my acquaintance.

There are few men of whom I entertain a better opinion than of Michael Quinlan, who, twenty years ago, was appointed manager of the Tabber branch of the Universal Bank of Ireland; an establishment which I served in the capacity of inspector. Michael was a jolly, hearty, outspoken big fellow, with a handsome face and a fine manly figure, which threatened to become rather too heavy for the moderate-priced horses which he could afford to ride; this was, I believe, at that time, his only present grief or future apprehension. His salary was not large, but he was satisfied with it. He had a happy home, a pretty wife—their marriage had been enormously imprudent, and a thorough success—three children, a sweet temper, and a contented mind. He was a popular man in the society of the small place in which his lot was cast; the society and the place were alike big enough for him; and on the whole, though I never intended to persuade myself that I should have been contented with the conditions of life which perfectly satisfied him, I was in the habit of thinking Michael Quinlan a decidedly enviable person.

Michael had a strong affection for me, and an extensive belief in me. He dreamed no dreams and he built no castles for himself; but he saw visions of extraordinary brilliancy on my account, and erected gorgeous edifices for my future habitation.

He had two favourite notions about me, which he cherished with pertinacious fervour—one was that I was "a fellow whom nobody could deceive," the other, that I was "a fellow whom nobody could beat."

"If that were the case, Mick," I said to him now, "I should do tremendous things. Alexander or Napoleon could ask no more than un-

failing penetration and invincibility. With them there would be nothing to fear from friends or enemies."

"Don't bother with your chaps out of history," was Michael's reply to my sententious disclaimer; and indeed Mick's forte was not historical, philosophical, or any other kind of literature. "It's not Napoleon or Alexander you ought to take pattern by, but Rothschild or Malcomson. They're the boys for you, Jack—making money in sackfuls in a peaceable way, not killing and murdering other people for it."

I did not trouble Mick with my views upon war loans, but I did suggest to him that a very considerable gap lay between the position of a bank inspector and that of a capitalist, and that he had better not make too sure, on pain of disappointment, of my filling up that gap. But he was invincibly sanguine, and wound up his remarks on this occasion with the unfailing argument that a fellow like me, whom nobody could deceive and nobody could beat, ought to be able to attain to anything he set his mind on. He was rather disappointed when, as time went on, it did not appear as if I had set my mind on anything particular, but remained a bank inspector still; but it was always an occasion of rejoicing when, in the routine of my business, I went to Tabber, and, the formality of inspection over, had time for a long talk with the ever-contented and sanguine Mick.

Mrs. Quinlan was a quiet little woman, endowed with a grand faculty for listening, or at least for being present while we talked, without either talking herself or looking affronted. If we asked her questions she gave us answers,—I don't know whether they were intelligent, but I remember that they were short; and she concocted whisky-punch with a practical comprehension of the laws of proportion rarely attained by a woman. She was as happy, as content, as her husband; and I do not remember to have seen a shadow upon her face, or noticed the smallest interruption of her placidity of temper, except on one occasion. It was the second day of one of my visits to Tabber, and the weather was detestable. I was Michael Quinlan's guest, and when I came down rather late to breakfast, I found Mick looking ruefully at a clock in an advanced condition of moistness, which he was hanging over the back of a chair by the fire.

"It's ringing wet," said Mick, "and so's her gown, I'm sure, and her stockings too. If she doesn't get her death some of these days, it's a wonder."

"You don't mean to say Mrs. Quinlan has been out such a morning as this?" I asked, looking at the rain, which came down against the parlour-windows, and was caught up and spattered about anew by the sweeping wind.

"Out!" said Mick. "Of course she was out; she's out every morning in the year—rain, or sunshine. The devil himself would not keep her away from eight o'clock mass." His tone had as much admiration as vexation in it, and he turned the steaming cloak with a gentle touch. While he was speaking Mrs. Quinlan entered the room, and he continued jestingly, "We're a punctual pair, Rosy, aren't we, you to mass and I to the hunt, and never miss a day?"

There was no answering smile upon his wife's face, nor did she speak to him; but with a brief "Good-morning" to me, she took the cloak off the chair and carried it out of the room. She came back immediately, and we sat down to breakfast; but Mrs. Quinlan's gravity remained unaltered, though Michael was in high spirits. I wondered whether it could be that her husband's harmless stupid jest had annoyed her, and whether I ought to take this as a lesson on that difficult subject—a woman's humour. I could not quite make it out, for Mrs. Quinlan's manner appeared to me sad rather than sullen. I had forgotten all about it before I bade Mick good-bye that evening, and started on the mail-car for Dublin; but the little insignificant scene recurred strangely to me afterwards.

I was at Birmingham, in the ordinary course of business, six months later. I had gone to a small hotel, favourably known to me, intending to sleep there and visit our Birmingham branch on the following day. The weather was very fine, and though the suburbs of Birmingham were not at that time tempting for an evening stroll, or provocative of poetic meditation, I could not remain alone in the dull inn parlour, whose windows commanded a view of a paved street, and a warehouse opposite, of apparently unlimited dimensions, for its long rows of dingy windows stretched beyond my line of vision. I left my dreary sitting room, and as I went through the wide square hall, on one side of which was the bar, I glanced at a rack hanging upon the wall, in which letters to the address of persons staying at the inn were placed, to be claimed by their owners. The rack was secured by a network of wire, fastened with a small padlock.

I did this accidentally. I was not expecting letters. I had not given my address at this hotel; and of the names which caught my remarkably quick eye, not one was known to me. I went out of the door with my mind suddenly awakened to an association of ideas which had been far enough from it. Something had made me think of Michael Quinlan. It was the postmark on one of the letters—Tabber. I had taken no heed of the address, but had a vague notion that it was a woman's name. "I must write to Michael," I thought, "one of these days;" and I walked on with a whimsical fancy of how ill at ease he would find himself if he should be transferred to a busy English manufacturing town like this rich, ugly, vulgar Birmingham,

where leisure seemed so scanty and money so plentiful.

I walked on and on, and did not fail to discover that a fine summer evening makes beauties of its own out of the least-promising materials, and was returning, tired and sleepy, to the hotel, when a fly, driven rapidly along the road by which I had come, was pulled up a few yards in advance of the spot I had reached, and a man jumped out and took his way up the street. He was a tall man, flashily dressed, with that peculiar jerky tightness about his gait—whether belonging to the legs or the trousers I never can quite make out—characteristic of third-rate sporting men. The fly remained stationary, and as I passed it slowly I perceived it had still a tenant—a lady, evidently young, and as even the brief opportunity I had of looking at her showed me, handsome. I saw a profusion of auburn hair, a bright complexion, large, bold, dark eyes and white teeth, liberally displayed by the smile—not at all bashful—with which the owner of these charms recognized my look, too long and too direct for good manners. I looked back once or twice before I reached my hotel, and on the second occasion the lady's bonnet was protruding from the window, and she had not withdrawn it when I lost sight of the fly by turning in at the doorway.

In the hall I perceived the man of sporting exterior who had got out of the fly. He was speaking to a florid young lady, entrenched behind the marble-topped shelf whereon numerous glasses and bottles displayed themselves, and above whose head hung lemons in nets and dried herbs in bunches, forming a sort of triumphal arch. His voice expressed impatience; hers, seconded by the look and attitude the imperturbability of a strong position. He evidently wanted something which it was in her power to procure, and above which she was in no humour to hurry herself.

"Mr. Jackson will be here presently, sir," she said calmly, touching up the silver label of a spirit bottle with a piece of chamois leather as she spoke. "He has got the key. James!"—to a waiter hovering in the open door of the coffee-room—"take this gentleman's orders."

I was the gentleman; so I explained that I had engaged a bedroom in the house, and named my requirements. Her previous interlocutor showed every sign of impatience while I was speaking, and I looked at him with no great favour. He was a man of about forty, with bushy reddish hair, small, keen, gray eyes, a hooked nose, and a harsh red complexion. He had thick whiskers, darker in colour than his hair, and was a specimen of "slang" from head to foot.

While I was speaking to the waiter the florid young lady put aside her piece of chamois leather and leaned against the bar, with her hands folded, totally regardless of the impatient person near. When I had done, she said to the slang person:

"Here is Mr. Jackson; you can speak to him about your letter." And then, diving into a recess out of sight, she presently emerged and presented me with a handsome plated candlestick, containing one of those dumpty wax-candles which are now among the things of the past.

In the meantime Mr. Jackson—who was mine host, as I then discovered—and the stranger had exchanged a few words, and the former had unlocked the wire frame which covered the rack with the letters, and was looking for an indicated address, the stranger assisting him. I took my candle, bade the florid young lady good-night, and had turned towards the staircase leading to my room, when I heard the landlord say:

"You're quite right, sir; here it is. 'Miss Kate Whelan. To be kept till called for.' Postmark Tabber."

On the following day, my business being concluded too late in the afternoon to admit of my leaving Birmingham that night, I devoted myself entirely during the evening to writing out my report, and clearing off some arrears of correspondence. Next morning I left Birmingham by the first train for Liverpool, and on getting out at the terminus, I perceived that the impatient gentleman and the handsome lady were among my travelling companions.

I don't think the man recognized me, but I have no doubt the woman did. I had allowed my consciousness of her beauty to be sufficiently evident to secure myself a place in her remembrance. Her companion, whose eager impatient manner was an exaggerated edition of what it had been on the previous occasion, was urging the porters to speed, and gesticulating angrily at the luggage van, while she stood apart, with a superb air of indifference, and I began to make my way along the crowded platform, portmanteau in hand. She was quite as handsome as my passing glimpse had led me to suppose her to be, and of a fine stately presence. She stood totally unconcerned among the crowd. A small travelling-bag, with the initials K. W. painted in white, was beside her on the ground. Inside the gaping mouth of the luggage-van I saw two or three boxes marked with the same "K. W." I thought, "The landlord said the letter was for Miss Kate Whelan; that is her name, no doubt. I suppose the man is her brother." I had passed the van, and ought to have been nearly out of the station, but I yielded to a temptation of curiosity—or perhaps something more—and turned back to have another look at her, on pretence of having left something in the carriage. There she was, standing still, with an amused and conscious smile upon her face, which made me aware that she saw and comprehended my manoeuvre. She was handsomer than I

thought at first; indeed I do not know that I have ever seen a more boldly-beautiful face. The features were as fine as the colouring, and the expression, at once cunning and daring, made it as remarkable as it was attractive. "A daring woman, and a dangerous," I thought, as I took a last look at her; and finally marched off with my portmanteau, just as her companion joined her, with a porter wheeling a truck laden with luggage.

My destination was the Railway Hotel, just round the corner, where I proposed to await the hour of departure of the Dublin boat; and I had arrived there, and was looking out of the coffee-room window, when I saw a fly, with the same batch of luggage on the roof that I had observed at the station, pass the hotel door. A waiter was standing on the lower step, and I saw him exchange a familiar salutation with the driver. Immediately afterwards he entered the coffee-room, and began to lay the cloth for my dinner.

"I wonder where those people are going with all that luggage," I said.

"Just gone by in a fly, sir! Going to New York by a Cunard liner, sir."

How he knew—by what cabalistic code of signals the driver had conveyed this intelligence to him (for I am sure they had not spoken)—I have no idea.

On arriving in Dublin I found several letters awaiting my return. Only one was of importance. It was marked "*Private—immediate.*" These were its contents:

"Tabber.

"Dear Jack,—For God's sake come down at once! I am in dreadful trouble. Don't lose an hour.—Yours ever,

"MICHAEL QUINLAN."

H.

"Don't lose an hour." Many an hour had been lost already, for Michael Quinlan's letter was three days old when I read it. The brevity and urgency of it inspired me with serious fear. I did not feel the least doubt about the nature of the trouble he was in: it was connected with the bank. I knew instantly there was caution as well as agitation in the absence of all indication of the reason of this urgent appeal. A domestic or personal matter Quinlan would have found time and words to define, indeed, would hardly have applied to me about it; whereas he would surely seek me in any business emergency. It was impossible for me to leave Dublin on that day, but I wrote him a note, almost as brief as his own, announcing my intention of starting the next morning, and explaining that my absence had caused the delay.

In those days the railway had not extended to Tabber, though it was in course of construction, and the last twenty miles of my journey were performed by mail car. This vehicle, painted bright red and remarkably well horsed, passed the bank on its way to the coach office, and duly deposited me at the door, at five o'clock in the afternoon of a bright summer's day—a day which contrasted strangely with that on which I had last taken leave of Michael Quinlan. He was not at the door to meet me, when I got off the car; and a face which I saw looking over the wire-blind on the right of the hall-door was strange to me.

"The master" was expecting me, the servant said; and I found him in a little room at the end of the passage, where he kept a medley of papers, riding equipments, boots, and garden seeds.

I could not have believed it possible that such a change could have been wrought by anything but severe bodily illness as that which I witnessed in Michael Quinlan. His figure looked shrunken, his face was pinched and haggard, his eyes dim and restless—he looked like a man in the wasting stages of a fever. His manner was as singular as his appearance; he seemed to shrink from me involuntarily, after the eagerness of his appeal that I should come to him.

"Out with it, Mick," said I, as soon as he had closed the door: "tell me at once what ails you. Bank business of course?"

"Bank business, sure enough," he answered. "The worst trick Fortune has ever played me. There's a thousand pounds missing, and I can't trace it to any one, or tell how it's gone, any more than the dead."

"A thousand pounds?"

"No less, indeed."

Michael Quinlan and I stared at one another for a few moments in silence; and the poor fellow's teeth chattered. I never saw greater misery in a face.

"Does any one know of this?" was my first question. "As you say *missag*, I conclude there has been no robbery, no violence."

"Robbery, but not violence," said Mick; "unless I took it myself in my sleep, I don't know how it was done, as you'll see when I tell you the particulars; and not a soul knows it. I thought it best to keep it to myself, until I could get your advice, and I knew you'd come before I had to send in my returns."

"Does your wife know it?"

"No," said Michael, with some hesitation and a remarkable change of countenance, "she does not. She knows there's something on my mind, of course, but that's not altogether new." He went up to the narrow window which looked into the dusty street as he spoke, and sighed heavily.

"Not altogether new, Mick?" said I, with what may seem an unwarrantable digression from the serious matter in hand. "But it is altogether new. What's up?"