

their most ungentle temperament, they would have been the happiest as well as the richest family in the district.

"I'm not going to laugh, Morris," replied the little maid at last, after a very long pause; "I've got a wise thought in my head for once. His reverence, your uncle, you say, spoke to father to speak to mother about it?—I wonder (and he a priest) that he had'n't more sense. Sure mother was the man; but, I've got a wise thought—Good night, dear Morris, good night."

The lass sprang lightly over the fence into her own garden, leaving her lover perdu at the other side, without possessing an idea of what her "wise thought" might be. When she entered the kitchen, matters were going on as usual—her mother bustling in glorious style, and as cross (her husband muttered) "as a bag of weasels."

"Ye'r a pair of lazy hussies!" she exclaimed to a pair of fat, red-armed, stockingless handmaids; d'ye think I can keep ye in idleness? Ten cuts to the dozen!—why, that would'n't keep ye in pratees, let alone salt—and such illigint flax too! Darney Leary, ye dirty ne'er-do-good, can ye find no better employment this blessed night, than kicking the turf ashes in the cat's face! Oh! ye'll be mate for the ravens yet, that's one comfort! Jack Clarry!" addressing herself to her husband, who sat quietly in the corner, smoking his *doodeen*, "it's well ye've got a wife who knows what's what! God help me, I've little the good of a husband, barring the name! Are ye sure Black Nell's in the stable?"—(The sposo nodded.) "The cow and the calf, had they fresh straw?" (Another nod.) "Bad cess to ye, man alive, can't ye use ye'r tongue, and answer a civil question!" continued the lady.

"My dear," he replied, "sure one like you has enough talk for ten."

This very just observation was, like most truths, so disagreeable, that a severe storm would have followed, had not Norah stepped up to her father, and whispered in his ear, "I don't think the stable door is fastened."—Mrs. Clary caught the sound, and in no very gentle terms ordered her husband to attend to the comforts of Black Nell. "I'll go with father myself and see," said Norah, "That's like my own child, always careful," observed the mother, as father and daughter closed the door.

"Dear father," began Norah, "it isn't altogether about the stable I wanted ye—but—but—the priest said something to ye to-day about Morris Donovan."

"Yes, darling, and about yourself, my sweet Norry."

"Did ye speak to mother about it?"

"No, darling, she's been so cross all day. Sure

I go through a deal for pace and quietness. If I was like other men, and got drunk, and wasted, it might be in reason.—But that's neither here nor there. As to Morris, she was very fond of the boy 'till she found that I liked him; and then my dear, she turned like sourmilk all in a minute. I'm afraid even the priest 'ill get no good of her."

"Father, dear father," said Norah, "suppose ye were to say nothing about it good or bad, and just pretend to take a sudden dislike to Morris, and let the priest speak to her himself, she'd come round."

"Out of opposition to me, eh!"

"Yes."

"And let her gain the day, then?—that would be cowardly," replied the farmer, drawing himself up—"No, I won't!"

"Father, dear father," said the dunning lass, "you don't understand me.—Sure, ye're for Morris; and when we are—that is, if—I mean—suppose—father—you know what I mean," she continued, and luckily the deepening twilight concealed her blushes,—“if that took place, it's you that would have your own way."

"True for ye, Norry, my girl, true for ye; I never thought of that before!" And, pleased with the idea of tricking his wife, the old man fairly capered for joy. "But stay awhile—asy, asy," he recommenced; "how am I to manage? Sure the priest himself will be here tomorrow morning early, and he's out upon a station now; so there's no speaking with him, he's no way quick either—we'll be bothered entirely if he comes in on a sudden."

"Leave it to me, dear father—leave it all to me," exclaimed the animated girl—"only pluck up a spirit, and whenever Morris's name is mentioned, abuse him—but not with all ye'r heart—only from the teeth out."

When they re-entered, the fresh-boiled potatoes sent a warm curling steam to the very rafter of the lofty kitchen; they were poured out into a large wicker *kish*, and on the top of the pile rested a plate of coarse white salt; noggins of butter-milk were filled on the dresser, and on a small table a cloth was spread, and some delf plates awaited the more delicate repast which the farmer's wife was herself preparing.

"What's for supper, mother?" inquired Norah, as she drew her wheel towards her, and employed her fairy foot in whirling it round.

"Plaghy *snipeens*," she replied, "bits o' bog chickens, that you've always such a fancy for—Barney Leary kilt them himself."

"So I did," said Barney, grinning, "and that stick wid a hook, of Morris Donovan's, the finest thing in the world for knocking 'em down."