

If the scene and himself could have been transferred within the sound of Bow Bells, he would have pronounced it heavenly; Irish though it was he thought it "hawful nice." At the bottom of the avenue wound the road, which, at a short distance down the valley, reached the village of Kilsheelan. It was a picturesque little place, pitched beside the Suir, which be-
sected the rich valley as with a silver partition. The little cabins that composed the village were cozy-looking in their coats of thatch, though a nearer view showed them to be wretched enough. The valley all round was blooming with verdure till, at the foot of the mountain, it was covered with thick woods reaching high up the blue height. It was in a lordly space among those woods, that Kilsheelan Castle stood. Steeped in the soft light of a fine Spring evening, with the birds chirping in the woods, and the sounds of life and mirth coming from the village, O'Dwyer Garv's broad patrimony was indeed a pleasant place to see.

But Mr. Langton had no taste for pictures; his thoughts turned on sterner subjects. He was wandering in tender fancy to a certain area in Bedford Square, where, he would have sworn, a certain Sarah Jane was bestowing, perhaps kisses, certainly cold mutton, on a ferocious guardsman.

"Ah! Sarah Jane!" he murmured reproachfully, "Hi often said as you was a deep 'un: the military gents always was 'er weak point. Wonder do she ever go to Islington o' Sundays now? What a precious time we used to 'ave, to be sure! And the pork pies hat the Green Dragon. Heigho! shall we ever 'ave such times again?"

Before he could decide this point to satisfaction, Mr. Langton found his meditations disturbed by the shrill music of the bagpipes and a mirthful hum of voices on the village common. He had already walked down the road as far as where it took a sudden bend into the village, and so commanded a full view of the scene of merriment, without being himself observed.

"Here is a go!" cried Mr. Langton. "Blest if the H Irish haint agoing mad! Wot 'orrid creatures to be sure!"

And he threw himself lazily on the ditch to contemplate at leisure the degradation of which uncivilized man is capable.

His position was quite close to the Common, a large piece of waste land at one end of the village. Here were gathered a noisy, merry crowd, nearly the whole population of Kilsheelan,

some dancing, some drinking, some gossiping, some playing, but all blent with the valley round them and the sky above them into a picture of speaking happiness. For Kilsheelan village and all within it were as essential parts of Kilsheelan Castle as its towers or ivy. Nobody could reckon how many centuries they had been linked in fortune—how many generations from the Castle and the village slept together in the old graveyard of Kileary. The lord and the peasant came of the same clannish race: open-handed, warm-hearted, fiery alike; equally reckless and thriftless in cabin and hall. So time, and joy, and sorrow welded them together, and assimilated their vices and virtues. And so came it to pass, that, this evening, the eve of young O'Dwyer's departure for College, the feasting at the Castle had its counterpart on the Common, where the vulgar fun of the natives wounded Mr. Langton's nerves so keenly.

The elders—those who could dance jig or reel better forty years ago than just then—were squatted on infirm plough-handles and incurable cart-wheels round the grimy palace of the blacksmith, which opened on the Common. They were discussing the merits of the dancers—discussing also, in a quiet way, the merits of certain foaming casks of porter and of a certain odorous keg of the native, some of the treasures of the Castle cellars. It is necessary to introduce a few of them.

The blacksmith himself, Mat Hannigan, was essentially a man of few words. With face black as Erebus, yellow *duhden* in mouth, and heavy iron-like cap drawn down over his eyes, he sat and smoked and drank, and to all appearance enjoyed himself famously; he even listened to the gossip going on around him, and intimated betimes in his own laconic way that it was not without interest for him; but beyond grunts and nods he made little display of his own views, if he had any. When politics were the theme, he was more tongue-tied than ever. Rumour had it that in the rebellion his opinions took the shape of pikeheads; never since was he betrayed into any plainer confession of his political learnings than "Baythershin"—a term with which he frequently punctuated other people's discourses about Ireland.

A strong contrast to the silent blacksmith was very noisy, lean, and bitter-faced Jur. Murphy, at once shoemaker, schoolmaster and leader of public opinion in Kilsheelan. Th's prodigy was not content with mending shoes (which in Kilsheelan were not very widely patronized), nor with dabbling in the A B C and 'pot-hook'