

us! we're all born—but those not dead, don't know what's before them—and so best—and sure the hand that made desolate yer nest, may stretch out for food yet and have none to get.

"When the Almighty made Paradise and put the holy saints in it, and beasts and things to cover the earth, he set the trees to shelter them, and the dwelling of the birds of the air—he made both the one and the other; but man is so unjust, *birdeen agra bawn!* that he says, 'I will have all the tree, though I hav'n't the skill to build a nest in it, and am *obligated* to live in a mud house under it, still you shan't enjoy what I can't, because I am a man, and you are a bird—that's man's justice, *birdeen a lanan.*'—And so he would go on for half the length of a spring day, mingling wisdom and folly together, as I never heard them mingled since. Whenever I see a rook now, and sometimes those that roost in the old trees at Lord Holland's, or the still older I believe, at the Bishop's Palace of Falham, wing over our garden, I think of poor Jack Purcel, who interested me when a child in their movements.

Valentine's day, he always made his quarters good close to the gateway that led into the rookery. He gave names to particular crows, and affirmed that he knew them all. As the season advanced, woe to the urchin who attempted to ascend a tree, or pelt a crow; and Jack would watch the birds coming and going as a mother does the coming and going of her beloved children. When he saw a steady pair wheel off to seek food for their young, he would stand under the tree, and sing and talk as much nursery nonsense to the nestlings as would delight a parish full of nurses. If the birds made a great clamour, or as he called it a "bobbery," he would grub up a handful of earth-worms, ascend the tree, imitate the voice of the parent crows in a most laughable manner, and having fed the young, descend with the agility of a squirrel, and then with great gravity inform the old rooks, on their return, of the benefit he had conferred upon their offspring.

I remember asking him, somewhat foolishly, one morning—"If the crows prayed more on Sundays, than any other day?"

"No, miss," replied Jack, "they pray as much every day, as Christians do on Sunday." Long observation had taught him which way the rooks would return after a predatory excursion, and it was no unusual thing for Jack Purcel to go and meet them, and shout and dance when the dark flock came in sight. In winter, he never asked for food or raiment for himself, but begged unceasingly for the crows,

and if refused by the servants, would appeal to the master.

"They have," said he, on one occasion, "a tenant's right—they *war* bred, born, and reared on yer honour's estate; and more, they have a right to labourers' wages, for they destroyed the grub that would have destroyed the grain."

I have only hinted at his fondness for, and kindness to all things living; but sometimes a terrible war disturbed his mind as to what he ought to do, under particular circumstances. Jack was a great mar-plot. If snares were set by gardeners or gamekeepers for vermin, Jack Purcel was sure to defeat their intentions by destroying the snares; and it was no uncommon thing for the cook to find the chickens, set apart in a particular coop for immediate use, at liberty; and yet, when they were cooked Jack would eat them. He was often upbraided with this inconsistency, but only replied with his usual half laugh—half shout.

Once, having detected a weasel, at the instant it had pounced upon a poor rabbit, and having made prisoners of them both, one under one arm, and the other under the other, he did not exactly know how to act.

After much deliberation, he let the rabbit go in a clover field; and then sitting down in his favourite rookery, despite the creature's struggles, he extracted the weasel's teeth with an old penknife, and then, as we told him, left the animal to starve.

"Well!" said he, "the times are bad, and when all's said and done, the Irish weasel won't be worse off than the Irish poor. *Cock him up with fresh meat.*"

It was always pleasant to meet Jack in the country roads and *bohreens*,* for he was certain to say something quaint or strange.

One evening we found him gathering wild flowers. "Here!" he exclaimed, "isn't this daisy the very moral† of Mary More, with her round white starry face, and *yalla* breast knot? And this—this little 'blue forget-me never,' that's my mother—my own mother that's in heaven—they put her in the Abbey-yard, and say she's in heaven. 'The forget-me-never' grows round her grave—over where she's laid—and there are her eyes, sure enough. Here's the tansey—the bitter tansey—that's Molly the Cook—Molly the Cook, of a fast day, in a black lent, when she smells the meat and can't eat it—can't eat it—can't eat it!" And the idea of the cook being unable to partake of the

* Lanes. † Picture.