

ters, declared he never pronounced grace over a better spread. But still, in the midst of the good cheer, neighbors (the women particularly) would suggest to each other the "wondher" where the bridegroom could be; and even within ear-shot of the bride elect, low-voiced whisper ran "Where in the world is James Casey?"

Still the bride kept up her smiles, and cheerfully returned the healths that were drunk to her; but old Jack was not unmoved—a cloud hung on his brow, which grew darker and darker as the hour advanced and the bridegroom yet tarried. The board was cleared of the eatables, and copious jugs of punch going their round, but the usual toast of the united healths of the happy pair could not be given, for one of them was absent. Father Phil hardly knew what to do, for even his overflowing cheerfulness began to forsake him, and a certain air of embarrassment began to pervade the whole assembly, till Jack Dwyer could bear it no longer, standing up, he thus addressed the company.

"Friends and neighbors—you see the disgrace that's put on me and my child."

A murmur of "No, no," ran round the board.

"I say, y.s."—

"He'll come yet, said a voice.

"No, he won't," said Jack. "I see he won't—I know he won't. He wanted to have every thing all his own way, and he thinks to disgrace me into doing what he likes, but he shan't!"—and he struck the table fiercely as he spoke, for Jack, when once his blood was up, was a man of desperate determination. "He's a greedy chap, the same James Casey, and he loves his bargain better than he loves you, Matty, so don't look glum about what I'm saying—I say he's greedy, he's just the fellow that if you gave him the roof off your house, would ax you for the rails before your door—and he goes back of his bargain now, bekase I would not let him have it all his own way, and puts the disgrace on me, thinkin' I'll give in to him, through that same—but I won't. And I tell you what it is, friends and neighbors; there's the lease of the three-cornered field below there,"—and he held up a parchment as he spoke,—“and a snug cottage on it, and it's all ready for the girl to walk into with the man that

will have her, and if there's a man among you here that's willing, let him say the word now, and I'll give her to him!"

The girl could not resist an exclamation of surprise, which her father hushed by a word and look so preremptory, that she saw remonstrance was in vain, and a silence of some moments ensued; for it was rather startling, this immediate offer of a girl who had been so strangely slighted, and the men were not quite prepared to make advances until they knew something more of the why and wherefore of the sweetheart's desertion.

"Are yiz all dumb?" exclaimed Jack in surprise. "Faix, it's not every day a snug little field and a cottage, and a good-looking girl, falls in a man's way;—I say again, I'll give her and the lease to the man that will say the word."

Still no one spoke, and Andy began to think they were using Jack Dwyer and his daughter very ill, but what business had he to think of offering himself—"a poor devil like him?" But the silence still continuing, Andy took heart of grace, and as the profit and pleasure of a snug match and a handsome wife flashed upon him, he got up and said, "Would I do sir?"

Every one was taken by surprise—even old Jack himself; and Matty could not suppress a faint exclamation, which every one but Andy understood to mean "she didn't like it at all;" but which Andy interpreted quite the other way, and he grinned his loutish admiration at Matty, who turned away her head from him in sheer distaste, which action Andy took for mere coyness.

Jack was in an dilemma—for Andy was just the very last man he would have chosen as a husband for his daughter; but what could he do?—he was taken at his word, and even at the worst he was determined that some one should marry the girl out of hand, and show Casey the "disgrace should not be put on him;" but anxious to have another chance, he stammered something about the fairness of "letting the girl choose;" and that "some one else might wish to spake;" but the end of all was, that no one rose to rival Andy, and Father Phil bore witness to the satisfaction he had that day in finding so much uprightness and fidelity in "the boy,"—that he had raised his character