

hopeful sons and daughters, you saw here to-day ; holding evening lectures at their houses ; presiding over Dorcas' societies, and doling out meal and potatoes to the beggars by the stone ? Don't you think such occupations highly calculated to call forth the energies of an aspiring mind, and prepare it to

' Fill the speaking trump of future Fame ! '

" Why, then, have you undertaken them ? " I asked.

" I had no choice. I was compelled either to do as I have done, or go usher in a school, and I suppose you will allow that out of two evils I chose the least."

" There may be two opinions about that, perhaps," I said.

" Oh ! I know what you mean, but I am only doing like all the rest of the world, except a few unfortunate enthusiasts, giving up impracticable ideals, and accepting facts."

By this time we had entered a gorge among the hills, where green holly bush and yellow broom nodded from every crag with foxglove and fern intermixed, rivulets leaped in tiny cascades across our path, and the red berries of the mountain-ash dipped in the sparkling current. At the moment I was going to reply to my companion's last speech, the bark of a dog attracted my attention, and looking up to the spot whence the sound proceeded, I saw a little rough brown terrier followed by a man whose rather odd appearance I thought I recognised, springing over rock and bush, and coming from that side of the glen nearest the valley I had left that morning. As dog and man drew near, I saw I was not mistaken. The man was Freney Macnamara, or Freney Mac, as he was popularly called ; one of those merry, reckless, hair-brained, good-for-nothing fellows so common in Ireland. When I say good-for-nothing, I mean nothing that could essentially benefit himself or his friends, for in another sense he was good for a great deal. He was unequalled in his own county and those adjoining for his swiftness of foot, and strength of wind, often following the Kildare fox hounds for a whole day ; he could ride the wildest horse, break the most unmanageable colt, train pointers, setters and greyhounds in the most approved style ; always knew where a covey of partridge, a brace of grouse, a hare or a snipe could be found ; could tell some wild legend about every old ruin ; sing old ballads, of which love's truth or falsehood was always the argument, sweetly enough, the young maidens averred, " to charm the birds off the bushes," and tell tales of fairies, or highwaymen, which ever suited your taste, " better than those in the story books ; " his skill at hurling, wrestling, and wielding a shillelagh was matchless ; his mirth and good humour inexhaustible ; and his kindness and courtesy to old and young, gentle and simple, not the least of his good qualities. Perhaps, like some other