

to me ; he has a turn for the drop, Ellen ; you know he has."

"How spitefully you said that!" replied Ellen; "and it isn't generous to spake of it when he's not here to defend himself."

"You'll not let a word go against him," said Michael.

"No," she said, "I will not let ill be spoken of an absent friend. I know he has a turn for the drop, but I'll cure him."

"After he's married," observed Michael, not very good-naturedly.

"No," she answered, "*before*. I think a girl's chance of happiness is not worth much who trusts to after-marriage reformation. *I wont*. Didn't I reform you, Mike, of the shockin' habit you had of putting every thing off to the last? and after reforming a brother, who knows what I can do with a lover! Do you think that Larry's heart is harder than *yours*, Mike? Look what fine vegetables we have in our garden now, all planted by your own hands when you come home from work—planted during the very time which you used to spend in leaning against the door cheek, or sleeping over the fire; look at the money you got from the Agricultural Society."

"That's yours, Ellen," said the generous-hearted Mike; "I'll never touch a penny of it; but for you I should never have had it; I'll never touch it."

"You never shall," she answered; I have laid every penny out, so that when the young bride comes home, she'll have such a house of comforts as are not to be found in the parish—white table-cloths for Sundays, a little store of tay and sugar, soap, candles, starch, everything good, and plenty of it."

"My own dear generous sister," exclaimed the young man.

"I shall ever be your sister," she replied, "and hers too. She's a good *colleen*, and worthy of my own Mike, and that's more than I'd say to 'ere another in the parish. I wasn't in earnest when I said you'd be glad to get rid of me; so put the pouch, every bit of it, off your handsome face. And hush!—whisht! will ye! there's the sound of Larry's footsteps in the bawn—hand me the needles, Mike." She braided back her hair with both hands, arranged the

red ribbon that confined its luxuriance, in the little glass that hung upon a nail on the dresser, and, after composing her arch laughing features into an expression of great gravity, sat down, and applied herself with singular industry to take up the stitches her brother had dropped, and put on a look of right maidenly astonishment when the door opened, and Larry's good-humoured face entered with the salutation of "God save all here!" He popped his head in first, and, after gazing round, presented his goodly person to their view; and a pleasant view it was, for he was of the genuine Irish bearing and beauty—frank and manly, and fearless-looking. Ellen, the wicked one, looked up with well feigned astonishment, and exclaimed, "Oh, Larry, is it you, and who would have thought of seeing you this blessed night?—ye're lucky—just in time for a bit of supper afther your walk across the moor. I cannot think what in the world makes you walk over the moor so often; you'll get wet feet, and yer mother 'ill be forced to nurse you. Of all the walks in the country, the walk across the moor's the dreariest, and yet ye're always going it? I wonder ye havn't better sense; ye're not such a chicken now."

"Well," interrupted Mike, "it's the women that bates the world for desaving. Sure she heard your step when nobody else could; its echo struck on her heart, Larry—let her deny it; she'll twist you and twirl you, and turn you about, so that you wont know whether it's on your head or heels ye're standing. She'll tossicate yer brains in no time, and be as composed herself as a dove on her nest in a storm. But ask her, Larry, the straight forward question, whether she heard you or not. She'll tell no lie—she never does."

Ellen shook her head at her brother, and laughed, and immediately after the happy trio sat down to a cheerful supper.

Larry was a good tradesman, blythe, and "well to do" in the world; and had it not been for the one great fault—an inclination to take the "least taste in life more" when he had already taken quite enough—there could not have been found a better match for good, excellent Ellen Murphy, in the whole kingdom of Ireland. When supper was finished, the