

let me alone about religion, for I won't stand any nonsense of that kind. You know what *I* am, and I know what *you* are. So let us agree to leave religion aside while we stay with you, and I'm your man for a whole week with my good Protestant son and my Papist wife and daughters—not so bad in their way, I can tell you, if they do swear by the Pope and the Jesuits.”

III.

So the visit was made, to the blank amazement of the Ransom family and, indeed, of Mrs. Williams and her daughters. Nothing was said on the subject of religion, and all went on so smoothly that blustering Jasper Williams could not refrain from telling his host one day what a fine thing it was, after all, to see a whole family living in peace together and all united.

“You're a happy man, Squire Ransom,” he added; “and I vow I almost envy you. Now, in our house, we hardly ever know a quiet hour, and it's all cross purposes we're at from morning till night, pulling one against the other.”

Ransom smiled. “I could perhaps tell you the reason of all that, my good sir,” he said pleasantly, “but you might not like it if I did, so I'll keep my own counsel and say nothing.”

“All right, Ransom, all right! I see you're bound to keep the agreement.” And Williams turned on his heel and walked away, whistling “the Boyne Water.”

That same afternoon he surprised his wife no little by telling her—“Lennie, why don't you and the girls go to church in G——this evening with the Ransoms? I hear they go every evening this month, and I told them they must not think of staying at home on our account.”

“But, Jasper,” said his wife in a hesitating way, “we could not think of leaving you and Dick here all alone in a strange house.”