

As I said before, or, as I should have said, if I did not say it, Mr. Baker was a great admirer of the fair sex and though a heavy looking man, never missed acknowledging a compliment from a lady, so he got up to make a bow, but in attempting to do so he upset his glass of punch, and walked on Fid. It happened that Fid and the cat were enjoying themselves most comfortably on the hearth-rug, so when Mr. Baker disturbed their tete-a-tete, Fid protested against it in sundry angry yelps.

"Choke that dog!" said Mr. O'Donnell.

"Poor little Fid; come here, poor thing. Where are you hurt? There now, don't cry, and I'll cure you. Sure, he couldn't help it," said Bessy, and Bessy took Fid to nestle in her mamma's lap with her. Fid felt that he fell into kind hands, for he only whined a little, and then laid his little silky head to rest beside Bessy's.

"No, Miss, no, I couldn't help him—I'm d—d if I could, for I could not; see, I spilt all the punch. I beg your pardon, Miss Kate."

"Don't mind, Mr. Baker, no harm done," and she wiped away the streaming liquid, and placed a clean glass for Mr. Baker.

"I think, Mr. Baker, you were going to tell us about some fellows that attacked you, or something of that kind?"

"Oh, yes; did I ever tell you, Mr.—?" and he nodded at Willy.

"Mr Shea," suggested Willy.

"Well, Mr. Shea—devilish good name, too—where is this I was?"

"Some adventure you were going to relate," said Willy.

"Oh, yes; you see I was coming from Cashel one night, and I had a large sum of money about me. Just as I was coming by the grove I saw two men, and they slunk into the ditch as soon as they saw me. Begad, something struck me, so I out with my pistols. When I came up one of them jumped out and seized the reins. 'Out with your arms and money, or you are a dead man,' he shouted; the other fellow was standing beside me with a gun presented. 'Here,' said I, putting my hand in, as if for them, but before he had time to look about him I out with the pistol and blazed at him. He turned about like a top and fell dead. My horse jumped with the fright and that saved me, for the other fellow missed me with his shot; I turned at him, but he jumped over the ditch. Just as he was going out I picked him behind."

"That was well done," said Willy; "did you bury the dead man?"

"No, the d—d pa—, rascals, I mean, took him away; at least he was never got."

"You had more adventures than that, though," said Frank.

"More! it would keep us till morning to tell you, by jove; but the villains are now so much afraid, they are shunning me. I suppose I shot about a dozen in all!"

"A dozen! really the governm ought to pension you."

"So they ought, boy; so they ought; that's what I do be telling Lord Clearall, for we are particular friends. Shove over the decanter; I hadn't a glass of punch this two hours."

Mr. Baker's measure of time must have been guided by no chronometer but his own, for the hand of Mr. O'Donnell's clock had not revolved over ten minutes since he had filled his last glass.

"I suppose you will not go home to night, Mr. Baker," said Frank.

"Certainly, boy, certainly; why not?"

"It is rather late and the roads are said not to be too honest."

"Ha, ha, ha! no fear of that; they know Jack Baker too well for that; many a one of their skins I tickled."

"Wou't you be afraid, Mr. Baker?" said Kate.

"Afraid! ha, ha, ha, afraid—Jack Baker—afraid! by jove this is a good one! I assure you, Miss Kate, it would not be well for a man that would tax Jack Baker, old as he is, with cowardice; ha, ha, ha! Jack Baker afraid! look at these bull dogs, Frank; need a man be afraid having them?"

Frank took the pistols to the side table, and under pretence of examining them, he extracted the balls, no doubt with the charitable intention of preventing Mr. Baker from committing murder; he then went into the kitchen. While Frank was in the kitchen, Mr. O'Donnell was taking a doze, and Willy being engaged in a cosy chat with Kate and Mrs. O'Donnell, and Bessy, and puss, and Fid, held a council on the sofa, so Mr. Baker thought the best thing he could do was to take a nap; and in order to make his doze comfortable, he first emptied his glass. Certain sonorous sounds emitted from Mr. Baker's nasal organs betokened plainly as words could that he was enjoying rather a heavy doze.

"Come, Bessy, child," said Mrs. O'Donnell, "let us leave Fid and puss. now to sleep for themselves, and say your prayers."

The pretty little thing knelt at her mother's knee and rested her closed hands upon her lap. As she finished her little prayers she naively asked—"Our Father, who art in heaven! what does that mean, mamma? is it that God is our father?"

"Certainly, my dear child. He is the Father of the fatherless, and He has called little children to Him, for of such He says, is the kingdom of heaven." Bessy was silent for some time, then she said;—

"Mamma, is heaven a beautiful place?"