

either his natural height or his personal convenience. But no matter. Such instances of disproportion between the miserable houses of his countrymen, and even their own bones and muscles, to say nothing of the bounty and loveliness of nature all around them, were and are sufficiently numerous to remove from Murty's architectural practices, according to his means, any thing like a charge of waywardness or singularity.

So Murty "threnched" away, the birds we have spoken of singing loudly to him, and he, as if by mere loudness he would make them admit themselves over-matched in melody, bawling out,—in tones to which the sweet little hollow rang again, though they did not scare the rival singers, because they knew he was only expressing, like themselves, his ecstatic sense of existence, in his own fashion,—the song which has the frequent chorus of

"Cuishla-ma-chree, did you not see

What, the rogue, he done to me ?

Broke my pitcher, and spilt my wather,

Kissed my wife and married my daughter !

Cuishla-ma-chree !"

To observe Murty Meehan at his task, the looker-on might with some slight assistance from imagination, gain a tolerably accurate notion of the lusty ease and dexterity with which Hercules must have performed his labours, and indeed, were our amateur a statuary, he need not have searched farther for a model from which to chisel a god of strength. In Murty's person were combined accurate symmetry of parts with almost gigantic proportions ; he stood to the full height of six feet four inches. His face, though not a very intellectual one, was comely, honest and well-meaning ; but for reasons to be mentioned, we ought, perhaps, to limit to one or two days in the week, all opportunity for deciding either on its character, or its claims to be considered handsome or ugly. In fact, upon one day alone out of the seven, he got shaved, and this was Sunday. The next, his beard began to sprout again, and, even so soon, some change was thereby induced over his physiognomy. By noon on the Tuesday it, or, as he styled it, "the afther-grass," gained a goodly growth ; and thenceforward, day by day, till shaving-day came round in course, so disguised was his face by the great crop of black bristle surrounding it, that it would be very difficult to decipher its cast, hue or general effect : light blue eyes hinting, indeed, good-nature, with spots of wholesome red just under them, about a half a nose, and a forehead above it, being the only glimpses of features distinguishable amid the luxuriant "afther-grass."

Notwithstanding all his natural qualifications, so far as person went, for bullying his way through the world, and notwithstanding also, the proverbial pug-nacity of his countrymen of every stature, Murty

Meehan was a quiet easy man, using his rare strength chiefly for the right lawful purpose of executing, in full ratio with his superior capacity for such a task, a portion of field labour. But if he otherwise made no display of himself, his neighbours boasted of him ; and the district in which he resided was called, far and near, Murty Meehan's parish, as if the honour of having given birth to him entitled it to that distinguishing appellation. We must explain.

Although never known to have quarrelled with any human being, and seldom proposing himself, a trial of strength with a neighbour, in a friendly way, Murty, without his knowledge, was often staked by his admirers against all comers ; and then, for the honour of the parish, he would quietly submit to be led forth against his ambitious challengers, and with invariable and immeasurable success, he exhibited his hidden might in tossing a stone, almost a rock, or in flinging a sledge-hammer, or in performing, beyond chance of competition, any other of the various rustic feats, in the doing of which massive force is the only qualification for excellence. And on the occasions of his proceeding to the place of trial, he might be seen surrounded by the young and the old, the boys, the girls, and the aged men and women of his little lonesome valley, and its vicinity, towering above them all, and—without our meaning a threadbare pun—looking down on his escort with all the simple good-nature of his character, and smiling on their enthusiasm just as any other assured great man might at that of his humble adherents.

But we are not going to exhibit Murty Meehan in his most distinguished and famous light : upon a matter widely different from his prowess either in the labouring field or in the arena of manly contention, it is our present duty to record the achievements of this redoubtable personage, and readers may choose to form their own notions of the manner in which he acquitted himself of the business in hand, one thing is however certain, namely that it proved to honest Murty himself a task much more difficult than if he had engaged to toss a metal weight of one hundred pounds over the roof of his own house.

Before entering farther into affair, a few lines must be devoted to a sketch of the individual at whose instance, and for whose advantage, he undertook this serious matter.

The man in question, for reasons to be gradually given, generally went by the name of "the ould Admiral." Standing at Murty Meehan's side, he appeared to no advantage in point of stature ; and yet pigmy he was not, unless a person of nearly six feet high deserves that epithet. His air, regards, and carriage were bluff—bluff almost to a challenge to box with you. A cicatrized gash commencing under his left eye, traversing his nose, and terminating at the right corner of his mouth, diagonally severed his face into two tolerably equal portions, of