

to the squeamish in other writers, as, well as ourselves—

“Ladies love to be who love their lords.”

and her words of alarm expressed a fear, and so Murty well knew, though their meaning was not fully expressed, that “the young Christin,” who, by this time, was far on his road into the world, would make his appearance among us with, upon his cheek, such a black tear as now welled down that of his mother.

Murty was at her side in a moment, anxious to reassure her, though almost as much alarmed as herself, “No, no, *ma chree*,” he cried in his tenderest accents; “no harum can cum iv id—there now.”

We are almost ashamed, this time to crave pardon of, or otherwise to conciliate, the refined patron of our hum’ studies from nature; but we must indicate the shocking fact, that the anxious and loving husband did use to his wife’s cheek the very same horrid sponge which he had with so much felicity just before applied to the stained paper; and when he conceived that, as in the former initiating case, success had crowned his efforts, Murty kissed the sufferer.

“Cleared out for action at last, or my hulk toould Davy !” said the patient, never-doubting admiral, who had observantly regarded this second peice of cleverness on Murty’s part, with the same profound interest bestowed on the first.

“Ay, by *gonnus* ! now or niver, as the ould say-in’ goes, admiral a hager.”

Once more the amanuensis sat, right in the doorway, to his cross-legged table, and once more, with increased sedateness, disposed himself to his task. Murty was now a wiser, because a more experienced man. Previous failure and mishap had taught him extreme caution. After a third time imparting ink to his pen, he carefully examined it, in order to ascertain whether or no it contained the necessary measure of liquid, and no more. In properly fixing it between his two fingers and thumb, he spent a reasonable portion of time, and, in the eyes of his neighbour and spouse, evinced much ingenuity: the operation being effected by seizing the top, or feathery part of the quill, with the fingers of his left hand, and, by their aid, drawing it upwards and downwards, and twisting and turning it, till it was poised to his satisfaction; and still, by the joint agency of both hands, Murty guided it to the paper.

“Choice steerage my hearty,” said the ever-watchful admiral with glee.

“Nately done, of a sart’nty,” agreed Chevaun.

All seemed, indeed, most happily ready. The pen took dead aim at the place on the sheet which it was first to hit; the scribe’s mouth screwed itself up; his eyes intently fixed on the paper, and his

head twisted round towards his left shoulder, where stood the admiral, awaiting the breath of that personage to be discharged of his full-crammed intentions; a double-loaded musket, at full cock, levelled at a target, and only wanting a touch on its trigger to let it off, would convey an idea of Murty at this big moment. Having waited a second or two—“Now, admiral, say out, and don’t be afeard, what we’re to put down,” he said, solemnly.

“We had a fashion o’ callin’ this sort o’ writin’ a memorandle o’ service—put down that, first,” said his employer; but suddenly interrupting himself, he sang out shrilly, “No, no; avast there—no, not yet, shipmit; afore any other thing, d’y’e see me, put down the time o’ the watch.”

“The time o’ the watch, avich? Musha, niver a one in the poor house; nor a clock neither, as you know well yourself; but couldn’t we guess the hour o’ the day it is by the sun, as we’re used to do, an seldom go wrong somehow?”

“Jaw, jabber!—ax pardon, shipmit; didn’t by no manner o’ manes intend an offence; but what I want you to put down isn’t the time o’ the hour, d’y’e see me, but the date o’ the month we have, wid the day of the year.”

“Och, ay; the day o’ the month and the figures o’ the year, that is id, is to go down first, admiral; that’s what you mane, we b’lieve,” corrected Murty “an’ you’re right; yes, the year an’ the day goes down at the first offer bee course;” and the penman went on, still very cautiously bringing his instrument to bear on the long-covered point of attack. “Well; this is the year aighteen hundred an’ one, isn’t it?” There was silence, and he paused a moment in deep study. “Yes; aighteen hundred an’ one.” From a confused recollection of the dashing manner in which “the masher in the school” used to commence similar tasks, he gave two or three flourishes of his pen, at a civil distance, however, from the paper, as many a boastful man will make a show of fighting without soon coming to blows.

“Aighteen hundred an’ one,” continued Murty, and he repeated the words five times at the least; and then, giving up his affected mastery over the pen, he once more very cautiously moved it, thrice resolved on a beginning.

The admiral watched him with keenest attention; and Chevaun, sharing his feelings in her own way, pulled her stool close to her husband, and poked her head almost over the table.

The pen at length touched the oft-threatened mark; but Murty’s difficulties were not thereby lessened. It will be recollected that, since the sponging process the paper had remained damp, and that, previously, Murty’s hand had rasped it into a fuzzy surface; so that, in this state of preparation, as soon as Murty now described upon it the first figure which he meant to stand at the beginning of the year’s date, the lines of that figure chose gradu-