

suppose they will go to America, or do the best they can. They are a lot of poor wretches, poor d— P—, hem, hem, ha! poor creature, I mean."

Kate sighed, and Frank held down his head, for he did not wish to argue the matter further with Mr. Baker, knowing his prattling propensities, and fearing that his lordship would feel offended at any strictures on the management of his property from a tenant.

"It is known who will replace him?" said Mr. O'Donnell.

"You see how it is, Mr. O'Donnell; of course I will get a preference, as his lordship and I are particular friends; but then I won't take it, d—n me if I do; I am now getting too old; besides, I don't like hunting out poor devils,—I am d—d if I do; so I suppose Mr. Ellis, our worthy Scotch friend, will come in."

"Now, he has feathered his nest pretty well under his lordship."

"Devilish well; ay, that is it; I will tell—but this is between ourselves, honor bright—as I was saying, he came there a poor steward, let me see, about twenty years ago. He didn't make much hand of the old lord, but he picked up some nice farms for himself and his friends; according as the young lord wanted money, he supplied him with hundreds and thousands; so, when the old man died, he became a right-hand man with the son. He supplies him with money at his calls. His lordship finds him very easy in his terms. He sometimes takes a mortgage upon this farm or that, merely for form's sake, Mr. O'Donnell, but he is sure that it is on some property nearly out of lease; so in order to improve the land, and carry out a system of high farming, he ejects the tenants, builds houses, and improves the land, and then brings over his friends from Scotland, who get the land at about half what the poor popish devils—I beg pardon, Mr. O'Donnell, I mean no offence; as I was saying, they take the land for about half the rent the damned pa— O yes! the old tenants I mean, paid for it, Mr. Ellis taking care to be well paid by the new comers; but all this *sub rosa*, you see, *sub rosa*; so Mr. Ellis is getting rich every day, while his lordship is getting poor; and the poor devils of pa—tenants, I mean, are sent about their business, to beg, or starve, or die, as they please."

"Good God!" cried Willy Shea, "can this be true? Where is that Constitution that boasts of being the protection of the weak against the strong? The slave is fed and cared by his master, he is property; but the Irish slave cannot be bought or sold, therefore he has no value as property; it is true, he is the slave of circumstances, and his master is generally a tyrant that crushes him. Why does not the law protect the weak?"

"Pooh! all nonsense, young man;

pooh! I fancy I know something about the law; don't I, Mr. O'Donnell?"

"Certainly, Mr. Baker."

"Yes, sir, I do. Frank, hand over the decanter while water is hot. So I do know something about it; now, will you tell me who makes the laws? Don't the landlords? a pity they wouldn't make laws against themselves, ay, young man?"

"But haven't we representatives, sir; what are they about?"

"Granted, granted, my young friend; who are your representatives but your landlords or their nominees; all a set of place-hunting schemers, who bamboozle the people and then laugh at them; no wonder, faith."

"God help the poor tenants," said Mr. O'Donnell; they are the worst off."

"To be sure, man, to be sure; between the priests, and landlords, and members, the poor are tossed about like a shuttlecock."

"It is a strange country, indeed," said Willy Shea, "where men cannot live on the fruits of a soil so fertile—a soil literally teeming with milk and honey—a soil blessed by God but cursed by man. What have we gained by our modern civilization?—what by our connexion with England? Why, in the feudal times there was a kind of tie of clanship, and a rough, but social intercourse between the country gentlemen and their tenants, or retainers, that made them feel that they were bound by a kind of family bond; but now the tenants are not needed as a display or protection to the landlord; they are, therefore, retained or dismissed at his whim or option. Is it a wonder, then, with so many and such wholesale evictions staring us in the face, that there should be agrarian discontent too often breaking forth in wild justice of self-defence or banded violence?"

"That is, that they would murder us, is it?" said Mr. Baker; for Mr. Baker always took care to identify himself with the higher class, though on account of his harmless blustering disposition he often, unconsciously, told bitter truths against them."

"That they would murder us, is it? ay, the damned pa— hem, ha! yes, they would if they could; but you see I don't care that about them," and Mr. Baker held up a small teaspoonful of punch for inspection, and then drank it off. "Not that, faith! Hand the decanter down, Frank, my boy; that will do. Why, you are taking nothing. I would recommend it to you; nothing like a good glass of punch to keep up the spirits; I could never have done all I did but for it."

"There is no danger, Mr. Baker, that any one will attack you; you have given them too many wholesome lessons to mind you now," said Kate raising her eyes from the book, and looking smilingly at Mr. Baker.