

evening?" As he stared at me for a moment or two without replying, I repeated the question.

"Is it a mash, sir?" said he. "Sure, I'd be plasin, your honor, any way, an' that's no lies."

As he spoke, however, I fancied I saw a strange sort of puzzled expression flit across his face; but taking it for granted he knew what I meant, I paid at the time no further attention to it. The conversation which followed immediately after, by one of those singular coincidences which so frequently happen in life, turning upon the subject of horses, tended still more to impress me with that belief. Now don't laugh, Urban; for though I perceive by your quizzical look that you are pretty well acquainted with your Irish friend, even you cannot have any conception of the manner in which the affair terminated.

"In some egregious blunder, Stanley, I'll be bound. But pray proceed with your narrative."

"Peter stood some time crushing his hat uneasily between his hands, and occasionally shifting the weight of his gaunt person from one foot to the other, until I began to entertain a suspicion that perhaps he had not exactly understood me after all, so I said to him, 'A warm bran mash for the black filly; you will not forget it, I hope, Mulrooney?'"

"Och, it's an illigant memory I have," said he, "and niver a word dhrops from yer honor's lips but I'll be bound to hold it as fast as the lobster did McGowk."

"How was that, Peter?"

"Bedad, sir, 'tis a quare story," said he, bursting out into one of his rich laughs. "You see, sir, there wasn't a handier boy in the matther of horse flesh in all the county Galway than Neal McGowk. Ayeh! but 'twas he that had a keen eye for a bit of the real blood! And so the rich gentry all the country round patronized him, an' called him Misther McGowk, an' treated him to a bit an' a sup; an' maybe they sometimes crossed his hands wid silver and goold beside. Deed, sir, 'twas mighty affectionate they wor wid him. 'Twas always the top o' the morning to ye, Misther Neal; or 'tis glad I am to see ye, Misther McGowk! For they entertained a respect for his scientific acquirements in the matther of horses that was beautiful to see. Whenever they wanted to buy a

splendid hunter or a span of fine horses for my lady, or a pony about the size of a month old calf for the childher, who but Neal McGowk must ride wid them to the fairs, an' the markets, an' discourse upon the qualities of the beasts? By a mysterious gift he could tell their ages."

"That is not at all difficult," said I, a little contemptuously. "Any fool can tell that by looking at their teeth."

"'Tis of Irish horses I am spakin', yer honor," responded Peter, with an air of the utmost simplicity.

"I know no difference between Irish and American horses in that respect," said I, laughing.

"O, but did I iver hear the likes o' that?" exclaimed Peter. "Sure it does not become a poor boy to impache yer honor's larnin'; but"—here he cast a side-long glance at me from under his half-closed eye-lids—"there isn't an ould maid wid all her silks, an' her satins, an' her goold, an' her bright sparklin' jewels that does be more fractious about having her age told than an Irish horse."

"It was almost impossible to resist this, but I managed to restrain my disposition to burst out into a hearty roar, and merely said poh! poh! have done with your nonsense, Mulrooney, and go on with your story."

"Sure enough, 'twas by the teeth, sir, that he told the age of a horse; for why should I be tellin' yer honor a lie about it? But 'twas only the coaxin' way he had that put the comether on the jealous baste, and persuaded it to open its mouth."

"Ah, I know; you Irish are famous for blarney."

"Deed, sir, that's thrue, any way," said Peter. "Well, Neal was but a poor craythur, after all; for by rason of the gentry colloguing wid him, he began to turn a cold shoulder to his old frionds, an' to brag, an' to boast as if he bate the world for wisdom. Arrah, what was the use of a dacent man demaining himself that way? Well, one day he took it into his head to thtravel to Dublin for divarshun; an' mighty purty divarshun he made of it, sure enough. Och, but it's a city that same Dublin, wid its four coorts, an' it's college green, an' its bridges over the Liffey! By-an'-by Neal strools to the market. Bedad but 'twas his avil janius tuk him there, I does be thinkin'. After admiring the