

"Well, well; what will I do with her, any yet, I cannot live without her," thought the priest. "I don't blame the boy to be in love with her; look at her, isn't she a noble looking girl? I don't blame him after all; sure it's natural, why wouldn't he love her—she's so pleasant and winning, sure it's natural; and it makes the poor children happy, who would grudge them their happiness? Not I; I'm sure. I don't see what objection any one can have to it; they are a little young, to be sure, well, when they get a little older, bedad I'll marry them myself—why wouldn't they be happy?" Father O'Donnell rubbed his hand and looked at them and smiled, and rubbed his hands again, and exclaimed, "I will make you happy, my children. Come, Frank, what are you thinking about?"

"Not much, sir."

"Oh, no matter, boy, when you are a little older I will settle all, my children; sure you couldn't conceal it from me—but no matter, I will settle all, I will, Frank; give me your hand, and you, Alice, God bless you;" and he looked so happy; no wonder that he was, for the angel of goodness and mercy was fanning him with his wings.

Alice sat beside the good priest, and laid her hands upon his knee, and looked tenderly and confidently into his face; a tear of joy and gratitude trembled on the lashes of her sparkling blue eyes. Father O'Donnell patted her cheek, and then threw back the golden hair that clustered around her brow.

"Alice, my child, believe me, there is a happy future in store for you; and now go and sing me one of your songs."

She did, and with a soft, silvery voice, trembling with emotion, she sang Davis' "Annie Dear."

"That is very sad, Alice; why didn't you sing something pleasant? No matter; Frank sings Davis' 'Welcome'."

Frank did so in a fine manly voice.

"Now, children, let us retire for the night."

CHAPTER VII.

THE OFFICERS Q-UZZED—FATHER O'DONNELL PEN-
PLEXED.

Mrs. Inchbald says that "love, however rated by many as the chief passion of the heart, is but a poor dependent, a retainer on the other passions—admiration, gratitude, respect, esteem, pride in the object. Divest the boisterous accession of these, and it is no more than the

impression of a twelvemonth, by courtesy or vulgar error called love." Now, Mrs. Inchbald, what do you mean by all this? If you chance to be a crusty old maid I could forgive you; but no, you are most likely a mother. I say then that Mr. Inchbald must be a musty custom-er, without a particle of love to warm your heart and his, or you never would write such nonsense. Love, a vulgar error! a sentiment of courtesy! Hear this ye love-sick swains and unaiden! Hear this, Master Cupid! I tell you, madam, it is a passion, and one of the deepest and strongest in our natures, too; if not why did many a poor d— take it into his head to drown himself for love. How would Alice Maher define it that night as she retired to her room? Would she call it a sentiment or passion, I wonder?

Alice sat beside her little bed, thinking about many things that had never come into her little head before.

There she sat, her slight graceful person leaning on the bed, and her head resting on her left hand, while her right played with her golden hair that fell about,

"Showered in ripple ringlets to her knee."

Her thoughts must be sweet, for her breast heaved, and she smiled, and whispered to herself:—

"Frank, I love you!"

And then braided her hair, and retired to her bed.

"Nestling among the pillows soft,
A dove, o'er wearied with its flight."

Sweet were Alice's dreams that night, for the passion, or sentiment if you will, of love had thrown its witchery around her heart.

Frank remained at Father O'Donnell's for a few weeks. He was a constant visitor at Mr. Maher's where he had made himself particularly agreeable to Alice's little brothers and sisters, by joining in all their childish amusements.

Mrs. Moran declared that "he was a nice young man," but she hoped he wouldn't be going on with his palavering on Miss Alice, and trying to coax her;" then giving a sly wink, as much as to say, "I know what's going on, don't I?"

Mr. Maher, too, felt a great interest in him, and frequently took him about to see his stock and farms; if Mr. Maher noticed anything like what lovers call a mutual attachment springing up between him and Alice, he allowed it to take its course, for he looked upon Frank not only as a worthy young man, but also as a