

at Nora all over. What did this wild and eccentric girl want? How was it possible that she could demean herself by coming so freely into the servants' premises?

'I want to know, Mrs Shaw,' said Nora, 'if you will oblige me?'

'Of course I will, Miss O'Shanaghgan; if I can.'

'Will you pack a little basket with some cold pie, and anything else tasty and nourishing which you have got; and will you put a tin bottle of brandy into the basket, and also a bottle of water; and can I have it at once, for I am in a great hurry?'

'Well, there is a fresh pigeon-pie in the larder,' answered the cook; 'but why should you want it?'

'Oh! please, Mrs Shaw,' answered Nora, 'will you give it to me without asking questions? I will love you for all the rest of my life if you will.'

'Love me, is it?' thought the cook. 'A pretty creature like that love me!'

'Your love is cheaply purchased, miss,' she said aloud, and then went without a word into the larder, and soon returned with a well-filled basket, which she placed in Nora's hand. 'And I added some fruit, a little cup of jelly, and a knife and fork and a spoon, and some salt; but why you, Miss Nora, should need a picnic in the middle of the night beats me.'

'Remember our compact,' said Nora. 'You say nothing of this, and—I love you;' and then,