

refuge in the grave, they cry over her ! Irish fathers are bad fathers !”

“Oh, Kitty, Kitty, if you warn't my aunt !”

“But I am your aunt, I left my home and my country, when the Almighty took your parents, to share what I had with my sister's children. All I want is for you to hear me.”

“Aunt, you want us to heed you too.”

“Not unless your reason is convinced, Pierce.”

“Bother the reason, aunt ! I want to have no call to it ; and I hope you wont be coming over what you said just now to Eliza Byrne about Irish husbands.”

“Irish husbands are generally bad, and Irish fathers are even worse.”

“And their care for their comfort and prosperity amounts to nothing. Peer and peasant live up to what they have, and leave their children the Irish heritage of beggary. How did your own father leave you and your three little sisters ? It breaks my heart when I think of it ! You're a good boy, Pierce ; a kind-hearted boy, if you'd give up stretching ; only stick to the truth, the bright ornament, Pierce. I do think if you would, you'd be almost as good a husband as an Englishman, as wise a one as a Scotchman.”

“Will you say that to Eliza Byrne, aunt ? Do aunt, like a darling, and I wont give a stretch for a week !”

“Talking of Eliza Byrne,” said his kind, but peculiar aunt Kitty, “now I think of it, Eliza heard something you had said of Lucy Flynn that has cut her up very much.”

“Of Lucy Flynn ?”

“Yes either of Lucy or to Lucy, I am not sure which, so do not run away my story into a stretch. And, Pierce, what did you mean by saying that Brady owed Garrett more gold than his mare could carry, and that he'd be broke horse and foot if he could not pay.”

“Oh, by the powers,” replied Pierce, colouring deeply, “I never said such a word, not that I remember ; or, if I did, 'twas only a bit of a stretch, just to taze old Mother Brady, that thought to haul me over the coals about a bit of fun concerning her son and Ellen Graves. I meant no harm at the time. Any how,

he does owe Bardy a matter of ten pounds.”

“Is that more than his mare could carry ?”

“Oh, aunt Kitty, be easy ; you're too bad entirely ; faith the town land's turning English upon us, observing every stretch a boy makes for divarsion.”

“There is plenty of divarsion on the subject, I assure you,” said his aunt. “Every lie in the parish is called a *Pierce Scanlan*.”

“By the powers ?” he exclaimed, “any man that will say that, I'll break every bone in his body.”

“Would't it be easier to break yourself of the habit of stretching, as you call it ?” inquired his aunt.

“Bad cess to the people that can't see a joke, and ye're enough, aunt, so you are, to set a body mad.”

The interview had proceeded to this particular point, when Pierce's sisters Jane and Anne and little Mary entered together ; they had taken half a holiday, and crossed the hill to spend it at Eliza Byrne's, and now returned, not laughing and talking as usual, but with sober steady countenances, and quiet footsteps. Each entered without speaking, and there was traces of tears on little Mary's cheeks.

“Holloa, girls !” exclaimed their really good-tempered brother, “have you been to a funeral ?”

“Be easy with your nonsense,” said Jane.

“Too much of one thing is good for nothing,” muttered Anne.

“I wonder at you, so I do, brother Pierce, to say what you did of Eliza Byrne,” added little Mary.

“And your life isn't safe in the country, I can tell you that,” recommenced Jane ; “for every one of the Brady people are up as high as the Hill of Howth.”

“And will have you as low down as the towers in Lough Neath,” added Anne.

“And Ellen Graves's father has been all the way to Newtownmountchallaghshane, to see 'orney Driscoll, to take the law of you for taking away his daughter's character.”

“Easy, girls, for the love of the holy saints !—easy I say,” said Pierce, looking, as well he might, bewildered ; “you open upon me all the world like a pack of