

"Don't I, indeed?" says Mrs. Rooney, huffed at having her word doubted, as she thought. "I tell you, he never was at home last night, and may be it's yourself was helping him, Micky Lavery to keep his bad coorses—the slingein' dirty blackguard that he is."

Micky Lavery set up a shout of laughter, which increased the ire of Mrs. Rooney, who would have passed on in dignified silence, but that Micky held her fast, and when he recovered breath enough to speak, he proceeded to tell her about Andy's marriage, but in such adis-jointed way, that it was some time before Mrs. Rooney could comprehend him—for his interjectional laughter at the capital joke it was, that she should be the last to know it, and that he should have the luck to tell it, sometimes broke the thread of his story—and then his collateral observations so disfigured the tale that its comprehensibility became very much increased, till at last Mrs. Rooney was driven to push him by direct questions.

"For the tendher mercy, Micky Lavery, make me sinsible, and don't distract me—is the boy marri'd?"

"Yis, I tell you."

"To Jack Dwyer's daughter?"

"Yes."

"And gev him a fort'n?"

"Gev him half his property, I tell you, and he'll have all when the owld man's dead."

"Oh, more power to you, Andy?" cried his mother in delight; "it's you that is the boy, and the best child that ever was! Half his property, you tell me, Mither Lavery," added she, getting distant and polite the moment she found herself mother to a rich man, and curtailing her familiarity with a poor one like Lavery.

"Yis, ma'am," said Lavery, touching his hat, "and the whole of it when the owld man dies."

"Then indeed, I wish him a happy release!" said Mrs. Rooney, piously,—"not that I owe the man spite—but sure he'd be no loss—and it's a good wish to any one, sure, to wish them in heaven. Good mornin', Mither Lavery,"—said Mrs. Rooney with a patronising smile, and 'going the road with a dignified air."

Mick Lavery looked after her with mingled wonder and indignation. "Bad

luck to you, you owld sthrap!" he muttered between his teeth.—"How consaited you are, all of a sudden—by Jakers, I'm sorry I towld you—cock you up, indeed—put a beggar on horseback to be sure—humph!—the divil ent the tongue out o' me, if ever I give any one good news again—I've a mind to turn back and tell Tim Doolin his horses is in the pound."

Mrs. Rooney continued her dignified pace as long as she was within sight of Lavery, but the moment an angle of the road screened her from his observation, off she set, running as hard as she could, to embrace her darlin Andy, and realize, with her own eyes and ears, all the good news she had heard. She puffed out by the way many set phrases about the goodness of Providence, and arranged, at the same time, sundry fine speeches to make the bride; so that the old lady's piety and flattery ran a strange couple together along herself; while mixed up with her prayers and her blarney, were certain speculations of how long Jack Dwyer could possibly live, and how much he would have to leave.

It was this frame of mind she reached the hill which commanded a view of the three-cornered field and the snug cottage; and down she rushed to embrace her darling Andy, and his gentle bride. Puffing and blowing like a porpoise, bang she went into the cottage, and Matty being the first person she met, flung herself upon her, and covered her with embraces and blessings.

Matty, being taken by surprise, was some time before she could shake off the old beldam's hateful caresses, but at last getting free and tucking up her hair, which her imaginary mother-in-law had clawed about her ears, she exclaimed, in no very gentle tones—

Arrah good moman, who axed for yo' r company, who are you at all?"

"Your mother-in-law, jewel!" cried the widow Rooney, making another open-armed rush at her beloved daughter-in-law, who received the widow's protruding mouth on her clinched fist, instead of her lips; and the old woman's nose coming in for a share of Matty's knuckles, a ruby stream spirted forth, while all the colors of the rainbow danced before Mrs. Rooney's eyes as she reeled backwards on the floor.