

of wood and lawn ; much of the timber was evidently the remains of the primeval forest. Magnificent avenues shaded by old knarled oaks, led across it in various directions, and underneath reposed immense herds of deer. At a distance might be seen the old mansion-house, grey with time, but having its steep gables, and curiously twisted chimneys, wreathed with luxuriant ivy. It was a bright, frosty winter evening, and the half dozen spaniels which followed Daly, now chased the hares which each moment started from their forms—now flushed the skirring coveys, long unused to such intrusion. The park, at least, had been well kept, and the Earl's game-keepers had done their duty.

"By Jove," cried Dawkins, "it puzzles me much how the owner of such a place as this can condescend to hang about our farce of an Irish Court ; if I were he, my visits to town would be few and far between. What a prince this Lord Altham might be here."

"Most likely he would be about as happy as the late Lord," replied Bushe. "He is not a man to enjoy the country ; but young Mounmorris will be of a different stamp—I can fancy him one of these days a regular patriarch ; but here we are—the old house seems shut up—I wonder whether we shall get in ?"

Loudly and repeatedly they rapped, and rung peals of the sonorous hall bell, which resounded from basement to garret, through the empty old house, but had nigh given up the effort in despair, when an elderly lady was seen coming through a door in an old moss-clad wall, which probably enclosed the garden. The young men ceased their clamorous demands for entrance, as she slowly approached. She did not perceive them until within a few paces, when she stopped and gazed on the unwonted presence of strangers, with unfeigned astonishment. Her voice was harsh and imperious as she asked—

"How got you into the park, sirs ?"

"Why faith, madam, very much against the wish of the good woman at the gate, by which we entered ; fortunately we found it on the latch—a young girl having just passed out, and once we were in, the portress vainly tried to persuade us to return," answered Bushe. "The truth is, Madam," he continued, "my friend, Mr. Dawkins, and I, knew a poor woman named Mary Weedon, who now resides here, in Dublin, and having something of importance to tell her, have taken the liberty almost to force an entry into the domain. May I ask, madam, where we are likely to find her ?"

"Unless your business is of very great importance to others, sir, you must not intrude on her now. With earth and its concerns she has well nigh done," answered the lady in a softened tone.