

of her prototype, all her culinary talents, all her caprice with guests she did not take a fancy for, and all powers, offensive or defensive, by tongue or broom, as the case in hand rendered the one or the other more expedient.

Peggy was the daughter of a respectable Irish farmer, and had made a runaway match with a handsome young Scotch sergeant. She had accompanied her husband through the various campaigns of the revolutionary war, and at the peace, his regiment being disbanded, they set up a small public house, which, when I knew her as a widow, she still kept. The sign was a long board, decorated by a very formidable likeness of St. Andrew at the one end, and St. Patrick at the other, being the patron saints of the high contracting parties over whose domicile they presided, and the whole surrounded by a splendid wreath of thistles and shamrocks.

Bred in the army, she still retained her old military predilection, and a scarlet coat was the best recommendation to her good offices. Civilians of whatever rank she deemed an inferior class of the human race, and it would have been a hard task to have convinced her that the Lord Chancellor was equal in dignity or station to a Captain of Dragoons.

It was my luck, (good or bad as the reader may be inclined to determine,) to be a prodigious favourite with the old lady; but even favour with the ladies has its drawbacks and inconveniences, and one of these with me was being dragged to the bedside of every man, woman and child who was taken ill in or about the village. At first I remonstrated against my being appointed physician-extraordinary to the whole parish, with which I was in no way connected; but Peggy found an argument which, as it seemed perfectly satisfactory to herself, had to content me. "What the d—l does the king pay you for, if you are not to attend to his subjects when they require your assistance?"

I once, and only once, outwitted her. She woke me out of a sound sleep a little after midnight, to go and see one of her patients. Having undergone great fatigue the day before, I felt very unwilling to get up. At first I meditated a flat refusal, but I could see with half a glance, that she anticipated my objections, for I saw her eye fix itself on a large ewer of water in the basin stand, and I knew her too well for a moment to suppose that she would hesitate to call in the aid of the pure element to enforce her arguments. So I feigned compliance, but pleaded the impossibility of my getting up, while there was a lady in the room. This appeared only reasonable, so she lit my

candle and withdrew to the kitchen fire, while I was at my toilet. Her back was no sooner turned, than I rose, double-locked and bolted the door, and retired again to rest, leaving her to storm in the passage, and ultimately to knock up one of the village doctors, whose skill she was well persuaded was immeasurably inferior to any *Army* medical man who wore His Majesty's uniform. But though I chuckled at my success at the time, I had to be most wary how I approached her, and many days elapsed before I ventured to come within broom's length of her. At last I appeased her wrath by promising never "in like case to offend," and so obtained her forgiveness, and was once more taken into favour; but Peggy was too old a soldier to be taken in twice, or to trust to the promise of a sleepy man that he would get up. After this, when she required my services, she would listen to no apology on the score of modesty, but placing her lantern on the table, waited patiently till I was dressed, when tucking up her gown through her pocket-holes and taking my arm, away we paddled through the mud in company.

After reaching the house of the patient, and after the wife and daughters had been duly scolded for their neglect in not calling her in sooner, we entered into consultation, which like many other medical consultations, generally ended in a difference of opinion. To a *military* surgeon, much sooner than than to any other surgeon, there were certain great leading principles in the healing art, to all impugning of which Peggy was flint and adamant and when these were mooted I much question if she would have succumbed to even the Director General of the *Army Medical Board* himself.

At the head of her medical dicta was that it was essential to "support the strength." That was to cram the patient with every kind of food that by entreaty or importunity he could be prevailed upon to swallow, (a practice by the way of more learned practitioners than Peggy.) A hot bath with herbs infused in it was another favourite remedy, and on this we were more at one, for the bath would most likely do good, and the herbs no harm. Her concluding act at the breaking up of the consultation was generally to dive into the recesses of a pair of pockets of the size and shape of saddle bags, from which, among other miscellaneous contents, would she fish up a couple of bottles of wine which she deemed might be useful to the patient. After we had finished business I escorted the old lady home, where there was always something comfortable kept warm for supper, which when we had discussed together,