

THE BIT O' WRITIN'.

BY THE O'HARA FAMILY.

Continued from our last Number.

CHAPTER VII.

We hate getting serious to-day, but cannot now well help it; and yet we have tried hard to avoid doing so. Sitting down to this story, we made up our minds, indeed, that it should not, if possible, grow solemn from the beginning to the end of it; and now, even when it is plain, that, with close regard to truth, it must take some such a turn, in spite of us, we would fain avoid the contingency, if, we repeat, circumstances permitted our choice; so anxious are we to have it to say that we possess the talent of selecting, for once in our lives at least, as the subject of a tale, occurrences and persons always of a sunshiny character.

But human nature, we fear, is against us. The clear blue sky and the cloud of life, the sun and the shower, work alternately with each other in whatever succession of true events our experience can bring before us. And it is to be even so with our little history, henceforward. We promise, however, to stay out in the sun as often and as long as we can, and not to chill you under the cloud-shadow, or wet you with the shower, except when there is no running in-doors from the approach of either.

Moya Moore deserved the character jointly given of her by her sister Chevaun, and by her good brother-in-law, Murty Meehan. She was, indeed, an excellent-hearted girl; very pretty, too, with as tender and loving a blue eye as ever lighted up a rosy cheek. We have often paused, with others, to admire her modest beauty, and her soft, retiring manner, as she stood by one of the pillars of our market-house, with some half-dozen pairs of woollen hose hanging over her arm, all of her own knitting—nay, the materials of all carded and spun by herself; and we have as often thought, while engaged in our innocent studies of Moya, that the cooing, pipy murmur of voice in which she used to recommend the quality of her merchandize, must have convinced many bidders of their excellence.

But Moya Moore had been more blooming some years before our approaching introduction to her, than she is at present. Care and sorrow, and her efforts, from morning to night, to supply, with unskilful industry, to her old broken spirited parent, the

comforts her age required, had lately made sad work among the roses on her cheeks. And, after all, little could she effect to soothe her mother's lot: the profits of her little household manufacture were inadequate to pay men to till the old farm, to stock it, and above all, to clear it of the heavy arrears of rent with which it was burdened.

Murty has already hinted to his friend, the old admiral, something of the present position of Moya and her mother; we must be a little more particular.

Mrs. Moore had once been a bustling, consequential personage. Perhaps she used to pride herself on the station she enjoyed in the world. She had been an heiress—after the fashion following. Her father held a small compact tract of land, but having no male issue, no child but herself, in fact—caused her husband, when she married, to come and reside with his wife, in the house in which she was born, and help him to cultivate and take care of the land, and be in every respect a son unto him—which, indeed, Daniel Moore was, until the old man died, leaving him, in right of his spouse, the envied possessor of a comfortable independence.

And still every thing went on prosperously; Mrs. Moore became the mother of two sons, who in time proved industrious lads, and, directed by their father, increased the profits of the farm; and so, year after year, the heiress, all along covered by her natal roof, saw herself and her family gain much repute in the neighbourhood. But a sorrowful reverse was doomed to her. A malignant fever broke out in her district; and, within a few weeks of each other, hurried her husband and her sons to the grave. And now, her broken-heartedness and her consternation assisting the ultimate result, the widow gradually became, first embarrassed, and then involved beyond hope of redemption. Eagerly would she have then insisted to a political economist, that labour, not land, is the true source of the wealth of nations.

At the time of her first misfortune, her daughter Chevaun had, during some years, been married to Murty Meehan, and her second daughter, Moya, was a child of nine or ten. At present that child is nineteen, so that for a long period poor Mrs. Moore