

DUKE DORGAN.

A STORY OF IRISH LIFE.

"I SAY, messmate," said a young sailor who had just been landed from a ship in the offing of Loup Head, on the coast of Kerry, Ireland, addressing a countryman whom he overtook as he was making his way inland, "can you put me on the track of Carrigaholt?"

"The path is under your *full* every step o' the way," said the man; then, after pacing behind the inquirer in silence for a few minutes, he added, "Why, then, for one that puts out the futt so slow, I never seen any body carry so much of the road with them as you do, Mr. Duke, Lord bless you!"

"You know me?" said the other, turning and fixing his eye on the speaker; then with an air of greater reserve as he recognised the face, "and I ought to know you too; that face is Pryce Kinchela's, if you haven't stole it from him."

"I wish that was all I had belonging to Pryce Kinchela about me," said the man heavily.

"I am glad to see you Pryce."

"I don't know whether you are or not, Duke; but I am glad to see *you*, although you may well doubt my word. I am an altered man since you left the country; and the foolish spite that you and I had then about Pennie MacLoughlen (the Silver Penny, as you called her—and the Luck Penny, as I called her) is no more than boy's play, to the cause I got since from others. That girl, Duke, was no Luck Penny to either you or me."

Here we interrupt the colloquy for a moment, to give some brief but necessary explanations regarding the relative positions and circumstances of the parties named, and thus place the end of the thread of the tale as it were in the hands of the reader.

Duke Dorgan, as the young sailor was called, was a rattling, warm-hearted Irishman, who had been attached, and the attachment was mutual, to Pennie MacLoughlen, from the days of their childhood. But her father, who was a wealthy farmer, disapproved of Duke's paying his addresses to his daughter, on the ground of the young man's poverty. With the view of removing this objection, Duke went to sea, trusting that fortune would enable him one day to return in such circumstances as would reconcile old MacLoughlen to his marriage with his daughter, and he was now returned, after an absence of six years, with a well-filled purse, the fruit of some valuable captures, and a Trafalgar medal dangling by a blue ribbon from one of his button-holes.

Pryce Kinchela, again, was, as he himself has hinted in the conversation with Duke, just quoted, the rival, though not a fond one, of the young sailor in the affections of Pennie MacLoughlen. On the latter's going to sea, he also had proposed for Pennie, but had been rejected by her father with still more marked contempt and displeasure than his rival. This

treatment, operating on a deep, designing, and vindictive mind, for which Pryce was remarkable, gave rise to a grudge on the part of the latter against old MacLoughlen, which nothing but the most deadly revenge could allay. For six long years, however, no opportunity had presented itself to Pryce for taking this revenge with safety to himself, but the lapse of this time had in no way abated his desire for it, nor in the least weakened his resolution to obtain it; and at the moment he met with the young sailor, his thirst for vengeance was as eager and remorseless as it had been on the day he was rejected as a suitor for Pennie's hand; but this feeling, with that cunning, which also formed a remarkable feature in his character, he had carefully concealed from the knowledge of the world. No one knew that Pryce Kinchela entertained any resentment towards old MacLoughlen, for he never breathed it; still less did any one dream that he longed to imbrue his hands in the old man's blood; and yet short of this the vengeance he meditated was not. But Kinchela was a quiet and a reserved man, and one who kept his secrets to himself.

Resuming the story, Pryce now proposed to the young sailor that they should sit down a little until he related to him how he had been persecuted, as he said, by old MacLoughlen, for having presumed to seek the hand of his daughter, and how he had, ever since that event, been losing ground in the world through the old man's resentment against him.

"And you take it so tamely?" exclaimed Duke, when Pryce had concluded the story of his grievances, and recollecting at the same time the treatment which he himself had met with at old MacLoughlen's hands. "I would have given the fellow a rope's end at any rate, if not round the neck, across the shoulders at least."

"Is that *all* you'd do to him?" asked Pryce, quietly.

"All! 'tis more, it seems, than you'd do—but you were ever and always a poor patient *slob*."

"Was I?" said Kinchela, with a smile, the expression of which, from his turning away his head while he spoke, it was evident he did not wish to give Duke an opportunity of speculating upon.

Shortly after this Duke and Kinchela parted, but before doing so, they made an appointment to meet on the following day at the Bee-hive Inn at Carrigaholt, where Dorgan proposed to put up. Having parted, the latter prosecuted his journey until darkness overtook him, and compelled him to think of taking refuge in some intermediate place for the night, as he was uncertain, now that he had no longer the light of day to guide him, whether he was pursuing the right road; and a place capable of affording him this, at length presented itself. After some hours' smart walking, Duke found himself close upon a respectable looking farm-house; but as the hour was late, he felt a reluctance to disturb its inmates,