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"IT'S ONLY A BIT OF A STRETCH."

"And were there many at the race, Pierce?"

"Many, is it many, aunt? Faith, I believe ye; thousands upon thousands!"

"And did many horses run, Pierce?"

"Ay, hundreds!"

"Oh, Pierce, how could that be!—there would not be room; and, besides, I'm astonished at the people's coming out in the teams of rain."

"Och, aunt, ye're such a bother! Warn't there hundreds of tents to shelter them?"

"Is it to shelter thousands, Pierce?" said his aunt Kitty, laying down her knitting, and looking with her pale blue eyes steadfastly in his face.

"Lord! aunt, how can you go on believing every word a fellow says?"

"That's true my dear, when you are the fellow," answered aunt Kitty in her usual placid way.

"Sure," he continued, "there were plenty of people on the race-course, and that's all as one as thousands; and there were plenty of horses, and a good sprinkling of tents; but, aunt, you drive all the spirit out of a man with your regulation of questions. I tell you, you drive all the spirit out of me."

"Then I do very wrong," replied aunt Kitty, smiling. "I only want to exchange spirits—the spirit of truth for the spirit of falsehood."

"Falsehood, aunt!"

"Lying—whether black or white—if it pleases you better."

"By the powers!—and they're a large family—I wouldn't let a man say that of me."

"You could not prevent his thinking it."

"No man should dare tell me I was a liar!"

"I dare say not, Mr. Pierce Scanlan. You quarrelled last week with Miles Pendergast for repeating, as if it had been truth, what you afterwards said was a jest, and then you quarrelled with him for saying that something else was falsehood which you wished to be understood was truth. You said on both occasions you'd blow his brains out; but you have stated your intentions of doing so towards so many, that I suppose my friend Miles still has his brains. I hope he will keep them cool."

"I wish," exclaimed the young farmer, "I wish my mother had been any thing but an English woman."

"Why, Pierce?"

"Why, because then I should not have an English aunt to fuss about nothing. Now, don't look angry; no, not angry; you never look angry, that's the d—l of it—Nor don't blow me up—but no, that's as bad, you never blow me up; if you did, there would be some comfort in it, but you won't do neither. You won't do any thing but reason with me—it is really enough to make a fellow mad!"

"To be reasoned with?"

"Ay, to be reasoned with. My father used to say that it was one of the privileges of an Irish husband, that he was never expected to listen to reason."

"Irish husbands," said aunt Kitty very solemnly, while preparing to take up a stitch she had dropped, "are generally speaking, great tyrants; they have the most tender affectionate wives in the world, and they bluster their lives out. Storm!—storm!—fly!—fly!—and then (as was the case with my poor sister) when the trembling spirit has found