

me as very curious," said Mr. Passmore, with a scrutinizing glance, "that you who, I think, were born and bred in this country, should speak with such a remarkable foreign accent."

"Is it spaking you mane?" replied the captain, much nettled: "and do you pretend to tache me to spake the blessed tongue that I've used iver since I was borned, Mither Passmore? Och, now, if you was n't such an old jintleman I would pity the ignorance iv you, wid all my heart."

"Why, do you wish to make me believe that you speak English?" exclaimed Mr. Passmore, growing a little impatient in his turn, "I tell you, sir, that no person who knew you not would believe that you had been two months out of Ireland."

"I spake nather English nor Irish," answered Shady, "but good 'Merican, such as they spake althegether in the part where I came from, Mither Passmore."

But the old man's suspicions were now somewhat aroused, and he resolved to make a thorough investigation of this mysterious affair.

"Pray, captain," said he, "what is your father's first name?"

"It's joking you are;" answered Shady, nowise embarrassed, "I'm ashamed of you, Mr. Passmore; a decent ould body like yourself to claver at that rate. And sure me father's name is to be found in the letter he sent you."

"Very true," answered Mr. Passmore; "but it was your first name I meant to inquire; he has neglected to mention that, and it is requisite that I should know it before our business can be settled."

"Arrah, now you talk," replied the captain; "Shady is the name by which I was christened."

"Which is an abbreviation of Shadrach," said Mr. Passmore, so turning to his niece, he nodded intelligently, and added, "Shadrach is the given name of old Mr. O'Neil, after whom I suppose this young gentleman was called."

"That's true enough for you," remarked the captain; "and faith you're not quite so stupid, after all, as you would make folks believe."

While this conversation continued, Nancy regarded the new comer with a great deal of attention; she knew he could not be the gentleman whom he thought proper to personate; for although it had been eight or ten years since she had beheld the latter, yet the features, complexion, hair, eyes, &c. were so different in the two individuals, that no person who had ever seen one could possibly mistake him for the other. But such was the distaste she had conceived for the object of her father's choice, that almost any alternative would have been acceptable, and the alternative which now offered in the agreeable figure of Shady O'Neil, was very much to her fancy; so that she watched the captain's operations with an anxious wish that he might be successful. Matters seemed now to be getting into a very good train, when there occurred a disaster which, to any one but Shady O'Neil who have been overwhelmed. A knocking was heard at the door, and presently after, a person in a travelling dress entered the room. He was a short, thick figure, with red whiskers, a face miserably torn to pieces with the small pox, a nose like the spout of one of Mettee's pumps, and a mouth like nothing we have ever met with. Nancy shuddered at this apparition—Mr. Passmore gazed in astonishment, and captain O'Neil alone looked on with his customary indifference.

"Have you any business with me?" at length said Mr. Passmore, in a voice somewhat agitated.

"I am Jacob O'Neil," said the new visitant, "my business, I suppose, sir, has been sufficiently explained by my father's letter."

"Sir, why really this is strange; indeed, very singular, or plural, perhaps I should say, since there are two of you. Why, sir, here is a gentleman who represents himself as captain O'Neil, and he offered me such proof of his identity as I was completely satisfied with, before your arrival."

"And now, ar'nt you ashamed of your ugly self, to be

sure?" exclaimed Shady to his duplicate, "for the likes iv you to be after taking the name of an honest man, you rogue!—and wanting to chate the young leddy and the ould jintleman both, you blackguard. Sure and the young leddy herself knows you are not the capthain O'Neil that is to be the husband iv her. Arrah, does she know it, and be bothered to you, you villain."

The party addressed was speechless. The steady countenance and imposing attitude of Shady O'Neil had a most powerful effect on his nerves, and when he attempted to offer a word in his own vindication, the accents died on his lips.

"Why, then, it's dumb-founded you are," resumed Shady; "and dont you cut a pretty figure there, now, Mither Jacob, as you and yourself? Jist like one of the imps in a poppet show, that look so ugly, and have niver a word to say for themselves at all. Are you going now, or must I break the bones iv you, for a rogue as you are?" continued Shady O'Neil, as he arose and advanced, with a menacing gesture, towards the object of his wrath, who retreated to the door, evidently unwilling to sustain a personal conflict with his athletic name-sake. But here Mr. Passmore thought proper to interfere:

"Hold, my friends," cried he, "it is not thus that this business can be settled." "Niece," he continued, addressing Miss Nancy, "you have seen captain O'Neil—can you not tell which of these persons bears the strongest resemblance to that gentleman?"

"Captain O'Neil was a boy when I met with him," answered Nancy; "but from the recollections I have and the impressions on my mind, this, pointing to Shady, is the right person."

"And what is his name—Shadrach or Jacob?" demanded her uncle.

"The name of the person who is to my husband, please Providence, is Shadrach," answered Nancy, blushing.

"There now, isn't that as straight as a fishhook?" asked Shady, appealing to Mr. Passmore. "Sure and I remember the young leddy entirely. Hav'nt we played lape-frog, hunt slipper, and who knows what, all thegither? Dont you mind the time when ye upset the tay-kettle, Miss Nancy?"

Here Nancy raised her finger, and made an intelligible sign to Shady, signifying that he was going too far in his reminiscences.

"No, faith, that was'nt you ather," he continued, profiting by the admonitory gesture; "but sure and I remember you, by the powers, betther nor the church staple in Drogheda."

"The church steeple in Drogheda!" exclaimed Mr. Passmore, "why then you have been in Ireland, captain O'Neil?"

"Ye may say that," answered Shady, "I've been there for a matter of more than two years at a time."

"So that accounts for your speaking the Irish language so fluently," said Passmore; "that, I must confess, was the most puzzling thing to me in the whole of this riddling affair. Well, sir, turning to the new arrival, you see you stand convicted of being an impostor, and I would advise you to withdraw with all convenient haste, or I shall not answer for the consequences."

Jacob O'Neil advanced to Mr. Passmore, and in a low tone requested a private audience, when both adjourned into another apartment, leaving Shadrach and Nancy to a *tele a tele*. As soon as the door was shut, our captain, with that gallantry which is almost second nature, to an Irishman, knelt at the feet of his mistress, and made an ample confession, in his peculiar dialect, of all the deception he had practised. Much of this confession was unnecessary, but Nancy was gratified with the candor and generosity of the disclosure, and the opportunity which now offered them to come to a mutual explanation.

"And faith, mavourneen," said Shadrach, "I did not tell a bith of a lie, after all, for I'm a true captain O'Neil, every inch iv me, by me sowl, and a better man too than that Mither Jacob, and I'd trate him if he'd jist say nay to it. Och!—and sure we'll be two of the happiest couples in the world, that we will, and we'll kape a pig and maybe a coo, and we'll have livery thing uate and jintale around us."

Here Shady's projects of domestic felicity were interrupted by the re-entrance of Mr. Passmore and Jacob. The former put his hand to his forehead with an air of vexation and perplexity.

"What to say or do," he began; "I know no more than a baby."

Here Shady took up the discourse.

"And the more shame for you Mither Passmore;—is it a baby ye mean?—why then, it's a swate little baby you are, to be sure."

At this sarcasm, the old man walked up to Shadrach, and with anger visibly portrayed in his countenance, said: "I believe you are the impostor, after all; and if it should turn out so to be, you had better put your head in the cage of a tiger than trifle with me thus."

As he spoke, he watched Shady's countenance as if to detect some mark of that trepidation by which guilt is commonly thought to discover itself: but nothing was discernible in that handsome visage, but the same half serious, half comic expression by which it had all along been distinguished.

"Arrah now, its a fool that you make of yourself, Mither Passmore; is it scaring me your ather? by the crook of Saint Patrick, its entirely a thing to be laughed at by Shady O'Neil. If Mither Jacob has been blarneying, have 'nt you the sinse to persave that he's altogether a chate?"

"Ay, that's the question," cried Passmore, "that's what I wish to know; and then——"

"Why then, let him step into the strate," said Shady,—"and we'll fight it out to-be-sure; you might bother the stupid head iv ye all day to disciver the truth, any other way you can fix it."

Truly, if the ancient method of trial by combat had been in use, human justice and judgment would most probably have declared for Shadrach O'Neil. But an arbitration of a more modern,—and with deference to antiquity, of a more rational character, seemed now to be at hand. During the excitement of the conversation above detailed, another person had entered the room, and stood for several minutes, apparently unperceived by the whole party. Soon, however, Mr. Passmore turned and recognised the figure of the elder O'Neil, whom he perfectly remembered, and extending his hand, he gave his new guest a welcome, the warmth of which was possibly augmented by the hopes he now entertained of being freed from his very troublesome dilemma. Nancy cast a blank and disconsolate glance at Shadrach, who roused his energies to prepare himself for what he justly conceived to be the climax of his adventure.

"And now Mr. O'Neil," said Passmore, after the customary greetings were over, "be pleased to inform me which of these persons is your son."

"Which is my son?" echoed O'Neil, in astonishment, why that one in the corner, certainly."

As he said this, he pointed, alas! to the hideous Jacob—Nancy grew paler and paler as the investigation proceeded, but Shady, to his credit be it spoken, preserved his usual undaunted air, amidst all the misfortunes which now threatened him:

"And you have no knowledge of this bold looking individual?" said Passmore.

"Never saw him before in my life," answered O'Neil.

"And yet he confidently reported himself to be your son."

"My son!—impossible!"

"Arrah now, you ould rogue, would you be after deny-ing it?" said Shady, whose slender acquaintance with filial duties made him enact the part of a son but indifferently.

Old Mr. O'Neil gaped and gazed at the speaker, like a wild duck at the decoy, but he seemed to have lost the power of utterance, and was so much embarrassed that Shady was encouraged to proceed, but with what hope or prospect we can form no idea.

"Och-hone!—then I'm not your son at all, Mither O'Neil? and sorrow til ye for saying so. But it's no matter," said Shady.