

THE

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## THE LOVE-DRAUGHT.

A TALE OF THE BARROW-SIDE.

*By the Author of the "High-ways and the By-ways."*

Whoever has journeyed along the banks of the River Barrow, in that part of its course which separates the Queen's county from the county of Kildare, must have remarked the remains of Grange-Mellon, the former residence of the St. Ledger family. The long avenue, choked with grass and weeds—the wooded grounds, stretching along the river's edge—the dilapidated gateway and mansion-walls—the loud cawing from the rockery—all combined to mark the place as one which ought to furnish some legend of antiquity and romance. Such was surely to be had there for those who would seek it. But Grange-Mellon is only linked to my memory by an humble love-story of almost modern date, yet tragical enough, heaven knows, to have had its source in the very oldest days of magic and misery.

I can state nothing of the tender dames, or youths of gentle blood, who inhabited the castle before it tumbled quite to decay. The only beings connected with the existence of the place (and that in the very last stage of its occupation) whom I would attempt to commemorate, were Lanty the whipper-in, and Biddy Keenahan the dairy-maid. Lanty was a kind, frank honest-hearted lad as ever lived. He was a great favorite with the family and the servants, particularly the females. The whole pack of hounds loved

him; and a cheering word from his voice could keep them together in the thickest cover, even if there were half-a-dozen hares, a-foot; when Brian Oge, the veteran huntsman, might tantivy himself hoarse, and only frighten the whelps and vex the old dogs for his pains. Lanty was, indeed, in the words of the ballad,

"Beloved much by man and baste."

But if he was welcome in the kitchen and the kennel, as surely he was, how many a thousand times more welcome was he, when he came home from the chase, cheering the tired harriers along, and stopping to say, "How is it wid you, Biddy?" or, "What a fine night it is, Biddy!" or some such passing phrase, at the dairy door, where Biddy was sure to be waiting, with a ready answer and a kind look. Ay, welcome indeed was the commonest word which came from Lanty's lips; and the more so, as not a syllable of a more direct tendency had he ever uttered; although it was plain to every one in the world, that he had been in love with Biddy for full a year and a-half.

"Ah, Brine!" said he to the old huntsman one day when they were returning home after a couple of hard runs, followed by the limping pack, "Ah, Brine! it's no use talking! It's no use, you see; for I nivir can bring myself to say the words to her, out and out. I love her little finger better nor the whole 'varsal world; but, by this Cross-Pathrick! (and he put his finger on his whip handle, making a very positive cross) it's impossible for me to tell her so."