

opening, and with a corner of her old apron stuck in her mouth, she strove to conceal her laughter at Molly's affected devotion; but when she came to how often she prayed, Peg could contain herself no longer, but burst out into a loud titter, which titter was taken up by at least a dozen women and children that lined the stairs outside. Molly was so enraged, that she rudely shoved the other back, calling her the greatest robber in the village.

"Don't mind a word she says, your riverence," said Peg, "shure I caught her last Monday stealing a bag of praties. As for prayers, och mavrone! sarra one I believe she ever says."

"Oh, you villian," said the other; "shure I I wouldn't steal them but for you put me up to it; you said you got a bag there yourself; the country knows you well, Peg; never fear when they hear that you are out, they'll run to take in their clothes, and to have an eye to you; never fear they will," and Molly, in her indignation, shook her head most violently at the other. Peg looked up with pious indignation at such an assertion, and then in the depth of her humility, exclaimed: "Oh, did anyone ever hear the likes; oh, oh, shure, if his riverence goes to the pawn office, he will get more of the neighbors' clothes there after her than"—Peg was unable to finish, but looked for sympathy to the priest. Molly, seeing no other means of redress for her wounded honor, twined her hand most affectionately in Peg's hair, and applied the other to her countenance.

"Step there, the two of you, for one moment until I get a catechism, and I will see which of you have your prayers the better. If you don't answer me, maybe it is the whip you'll be getting," exclaimed the priest.

Father O'Donnell shut the door, and gave a wink to Frank, as much as to say, "I have got rid of them." Father O'Donnell was right, for when he came to divide the alms, both Peg and Molly had decamped.

Father O'Donnell, accompanied by Frank and Alice, returned to the cottage. After dinner he went to attend a sick call. On his return home he met the Rover trudging along.

"Ha, Shawn, is this you," said Father O'Donnell.

"Aye, indeed, your riverence," said Shawn, respectfully doffing his caubeen.

"Where are you bound for now, Shawn?"

"I was thinking of going to Glen Cottage;

but as the sergeant and Master Frank are with you, I was thinking of calling to see them."

"Why not, Shawn; sure you know you are welcome, while the poor priest has a bit or sup for you or a bed for you to lie upon."

"I know that, Father O'Donnell; God bless you and give you a long life," and Shawn reverently took off his hat as he mumbled a Pater and Ave for the priest's especial benefit.

"That's a bad hat you have, Shawn," said the priest, remarking its broken state.

"It does for the fine weather well enough—shure it lets in the air."

"True enough; but when the rain comes, what will you do?"

"God is good," said Shawn, sententially.

"Here, Shawn, poor fellow, this will buy a hat for you," and Father O'Donnell handed him two shillings.

Shawn hesitated. "It is too much—besides, I don't like to take it."

"Why so?"

"Maybe it's to drink it, I'd do."

"Drink it! why, that would be a sin; and all the good it would do a poor person."

"That's what I was thinking myself; shure, you can give me an old hat, and that will do as well."

"Very well, Shawn; but why not buy it for the money?"

"It wouldn't have luck, sir," said Shawn, looking down; "it should go to feed the poor."

"Ha, Ha!" laughed Father O'Donnell; "it is said so, Shawn, and I believe it's true. All we get belongs to the poor, Shawn, and to the poor we should give it. Money is a great evil, Shawn, when we place our affections upon it. St. Thomas Villanova ordered himself not to be buried in consecrated ground, if there should be a single chink found with him. A priest should never hoard up money, Shawn."

"So I does be always saying," said Shawn; "it would be a shame an' disgrace for them to do so."

"Well, Shawn, let us leave them to God; there are some of them good and bad, like all men."

"The parson over there is a better man than many of them. God pardon me for comparing them," said Shawn.

Now, whether Shawn's dark side of the comparison was cast to the account of the priest's or the parson's I cannot say; I suspect the latter.