

THE BRADFORD REPORTER.

THE DOLLAR PER ANNUM INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

"REGARDLESS OF DENUNCIATION FROM ANY QUARTER."

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TOWANDA:

Thursday Morning, January 20, 1889.

Selected Poetry.

WE TOO HAVE AUTUMNS.

BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

How have autumns, when our leaves
Drop loosely through the dampened air,
When all our good seems bound in sheaves,
And we stand reaped and bare.

Our seasons have no fixed returns,
Without our will they come and go;
At noon our sudden summer burns,
The sunset all is snow.

But each day brings less summer cheer,
Clings more our ineffectual spring,
And something earlier every year
The singing birds take wing.

As less the golden glow abides,
And less the chiller lead aspires,
With dew that weathers in past spring tides,
We fight our sullen fires.

By the pinched sunlight's starving beam,
We cover and strain our wasted sight,
To catch the youth's shroud, seen by seam,
In the long Arctic night.

It was not so—once we were young—
When spring to womanly Summer turning,
In dewdrops on each grass blade strong,
In the sunrise burning.

We trosted then, aspired, believed
That earth would be re-made to-morrow—
Why give up unbelieved?
Why ever up faith for sorrow?

Oh, how whose days are yet all spring,
Tread, lighted once, is just retrieving;
Experience is a dumb, dead thing,
The story's in believing.

Selected Case.

(From the Dublin University Magazine.)

Life and Death in Tipperary.

A Story Founded on Fact.

CHAPTER I.

There was a brilliant one to those who crossed it. The barn was wide, high and neatly floored, so that no inequalities impeded the footing of the dancers. Goodly tallow candles were stuck in the corners of the apartment, flaring out luridly, as the light of each wavered and flickered in a way that occasionally pierced the chinks of the doors.

Neddy Noger, the half-blind fiddler, with his eyebrows and eyelashes, and Jack Mullin, the whole-blind pipers, sat near each other at the head of the ball-room, now and then changing low words of conversation, and some mysterious chucklings, while the young eyes of the party were ranged modestly all round, in a line against one of the walls, gazed in the splendor of new and gaudy tan gowns, and waiting to be bowed out of position by the gallant youth, who formed the opposition line of attraction. There were some knots of elderly and married women, and some of the atmosphere strongly was an odor of tobacco and whiskey—for Neddy and Jack liked whiskey and poteen, and whenever the dancers paused to rest themselves, each would regale himself to his heart's content. Neddy had both just finished a good smoke.

Now, Neddy, give us the reel of Tullyngly, and out a dashing young fellow with a profusion of dark hair and whiskers, and a bandit's eye in his black eye, as he started from his seat and stood on the middle of the floor; strike it up, man, for it's the best tune you know!

"Bedad, that's true for ye, Peter Fogarty," said a dwarfish little woman, scarcely four feet high, who stood among a group of lookers-on; "it's herself that knows what's what." The last speaker stood all in the freedom of the floor for the second time in her life, and in spite of her large head and short figure, was a favorite with the darker sex.

"Catch Pety ever makin' a mistake about the pertinence of a tune or anything else," observed an elderly unmarried female, whose eyes and wits had become sharpened by time, and instinctively, as she spoke, her eye wandered to a spot where the fairest girl in the barn was dancing. Never did the West-end ball room show a more beautiful creature. Slight and graceful, with features nobly formed, and eyes slightly flushed, she sat leaning against a black wall of the barn, her red lips a little parted, as if to disclose teeth like pearls. She was much prouder in the expression of her countenance—almost haughty; and her eye had always look, as if her eye was not content with anything present; her dress was neat, and arranged in many a glossy braid, and a small hand that she raised occasionally to wipe upon her forehead, showed she was not accustomed to hard work. The eyes of Mrs. Dillon, the before-mentioned dwarfish widow, followed the direction of those of her companion, and something of grave distrust was marked upon her countenance as she contemplated the figure of the barn belle; and when she saw her eyes from her, she fixed them upon the athletic form of Peter Fogarty with strange, uncertain expression. Neddy Noger was tuning his fiddle, displaying during the process many a grotesque contortion of visage, and some strange operations, and having tightened the strings and given a screw here and there, commenced the first note of Tullyngly.

As Peter Fogarty approached the spot where the beauty of night was sitting, and with a bow, by no means ungraceful bow before she commenced dance. Perhaps one or two people in the barn might have observed that another young man had started from his position against the wall, as soon as Neddy's first strains of the reel were poured forth, and with a hand upon the beautiful Nelly Dillon, had pressed himself upon claiming her for his partner; but on seeing that Peter Fogarty was too quick for him, he shrunk back with a crest-fallen air, and sat down again, as if dancing with any one but Nelly could afford him no pleasure.

"It isn't fair to ask me to dance so often, Pety," murmured Nelly, as she arose to become Fogarty's partner.

"Musha faith, an' I have as much right to you as any one here," replied the youth in an undertone, with a quick flash of his dark eye. Very dejected and perturbed was the crest-fallen Denis Ryan, as he sat against the barn wall, looking on the ground, while Neddy Noger's arm waxed more vigorous each moment, filling the apartment with the strains of Tullyngly, which were kept time to by the clatter of a score of feet.

"Isn't it a pity that a body can't stay longer?" murmured a pretty young woman with a consumptive flush on her cheek, as, at the close of this dance, she caught up a sleepy child in her arms, and prepared to leave the barn. "See what it is to be married, Mrs. Fagan, with half a dozen children!" and with a sigh of real regret, the fair young mother departed.

"Nancy the cratur's sorry to go so early," said Mrs. Fagan, nodding her large head gravely, as a whiff of wind, consequent on the opening and closing of the door, blew through the barn. "They say the husband bates her, an' more shame 'tis for him. What'd ye say to that, Pety Fogarty? Has a man a right to bate his wife?"

"To be sure he has if she deserves it," replied Peter, shortly.

"Then may ye never have a wife, bad cess to ye!" shouted Mrs. Fagan, flinging a clod of turf at him. "Now girls, what'd ye say to that? Which of ye'd take him after them words?"

"Oh, not one of them, to be sure!" exclaimed Pety, with a half-sneering expression. "I wouldn't like to make the trial, Mrs. Fagan."

"Maybe ye think ye'd get any o' them ye liked," retorted Mrs. Fagan.

"Ay, and them I didn't like, maybe, too," said Pety.

There was a shout raised at this; and as Fogarty's tall figure stood erect in the middle of the barn, muttered sentences of "Bad luck to his impudence! Set him up indeed," "I'd like him to go to ask for me!" "Did ye ever hear her like?" ran through the female department, while, among the men, some smiled, because the girls were vexed, and others looked as fierce and angry as jealousy could make them. Pety, who seemed the moving spirit of the scene, now called for another tune, and with a quickness peculiar to her, Mrs. Fagan saw that he was meditating another dance with Nelly Dillon, when she called out:

"Here, Pety, ye'd better take the widow this time, for bedad I don't think any o' the girls'll like to dance wid ye after what has passed!" and stepping forward, the lively Mrs. Fagan snuck her hands in her sides, and jiggled away, throwing her head from side to side, with movements more comical than graceful.

"Oh, with all the pleasure in life," replied Fogarty, gallantly, "I'm highly honored," and amid the laughter of many present, the quick-witted widow became his partner.

"Isn't Bed Fagan the pleassant woman?" whispered Nelly Dillon to her next neighbor, who fully assented to the observation. With all her seeming careless gaiety, Mrs. Fagan had some very deep thoughts, too; and, as she stood before her chosen partner, she gave a sly glance of encouragement to Denis Ryan, as she observed him advancing slowly to the fair Nelly, who, as well as her partner, looked confused and sheepish when she got up to dance. Everything pleasant must have an end in this world, and so had the dance that night in the barn. The candles grew shorter and shorter; one by one the elderly women dropped away; and such sentences as "Come, Kitty, how will you be up for the washin' at daylight to-morrow?" or "Oh, bedad I'm fairly bet out now anyhow wid the sleep!" or "Ah, thin, musha I wish a body could dance for ever!" burst forth from the lips of sundry fair ones as the party was breaking up.

"Dinna Ryan's to go home wid ye, Nelly," said the Widow Fagan, as she strutted over to Nelly Dillon. "Ye father laid them commands upon me. 'Bet,' says he, 'if you see Dinna at the dance, let him, an' no other, bring Nelly home.' So I said I'd go wid you myself, only I'm going off wid Dan Phelan to the fair of Knockmyle; an' I'm not intendin' to go home at all."

"And was Dillon afraid I'd run away wid Nelly?" asked Pety Fogarty, with a dark sneer on his face, which the shrewd widow remarked quickly enough.

"Oh, bedad, there's many's the one I'd be glad to make off wid her," she replied jokingly.

"He isn't afraid of Dinna, though," observed Peter, dryly.

"Dinna's a neighbor's son, you know, and Pat has every dependence upon the family. Besides that, you know," lowering her voice, "Dinna's so quiet in himself, he's a most like a young woman."

Peter looked out darkly into the night. The barn door was wide open, and the stars glimmered faintly in the sky. He had scarcely gone many steps when a light figure came hurriedly towards him, and a hand gently touched his arm.

"Pety," "Well, Nelly."

"For the love of all that's good, don't go wid the boys to the still to-night. I heard that the ganger's men are huntin' close upon it, an' there'll be murder, surely."

"What do I care?" muttered Fogarty, angrily. "I don't care a whistle for still or ganger; and as for the murder—"

"Keep out o' mischief anyhow," whispered Nelly; and with this parting injunction she left him to join Denis Ryan, who was waiting to escort her home. The night, though breezy, had a warmth very unusual at that season of the year. It was already November, and still the blackberries hung on the bramble bushes, and the hoarse croak of the rail could be heard far in the meadows. Denis and Nelly took a short cut through the fields, and for some time their walk was pursued in silence. At last Denis spoke:

"I'm thinkin' Nelly, you can't care for me as much as I care for you, or you wouldn't vex me the way you do, dancin' an' coherin' wid that ill-conducted fellow, Peter Fogarty, forin': every body."

"What can I do when he speaks to me?" asked Nelly in a slightly offended tone. "Didn't I know him since he was the light o' that?" laying her hand very near the ground indeed; "and when he calls me to dance I can't refuse; it wouldn't be manners."

"Be sure, if ye weren't civil to him he wouldn't be wid ye so often," said Denis. "The country's talkin' of ye all round, sayin' yer makin' a fool o' me."

"Who cares what the country says?" said Nelly, whose eye flashed in the starlight; "it says many's the thing that isn't true."

"But Nelly, I've got eyes myself," murmured Ryan.

"Dinna!" exclaimed the girl passionately, "if I thought you doubted me, even for a minute, I'd have you at your heels! I'd never open my lips to bid ye the time o' day again!" And as she uttered the words her proud face looked prouder than ever. "Were one o' Pat Dillon's children counted to tell lies; and haven't I told you over and over again, that I'd never care for one as I care for you?"

"I know that Nelly; but—"

"Not a sintence more!" interrupted Nelly, "ye've got my word that's enough."

The white walls of farmer Dillon's house now rose up to view. It was a comfortable domicile, clean and tidy, and more commodious than the generality of such houses in Ireland. It had its yard and garden, its detached out-offices; and the goodly-sized hagert in the rear was still stocked with potatoes, waiting to be dug out for winter and spring use. There was hay and straw in abundance, already gathered in, and altogether an air of peace and plenty reigned around the rustic home. Pat was as honest a man as Tipperary could boast of; and Tipperary has its true hearts as well as any other county in Ireland. Not one of them had ever cracked a skull, or fired at a landlord in his life; and no relative of the family, for the last thirty years, had been hung, which was saying a good deal of the Tipperary respectability of the Dillons.

Pat had two daughters. The older one a steady, dark-haired maiden who eschewed dances and merry-meetings; the other our fair friend, Nelly, who was the youngest of the family, and pet and pride of the house. The farmer had for some time been aware that Denis Ryan was attached to his pretty daughter; and as he belonged to a family quite as respectable as his own, and was, moreover, a well-conducted, handsome young fellow, neither he nor his wife had any objections to a match taking place between the young people. Denis had, certainly nothing to fear from his sweetheart's parents; but there were times when a dread entered his breast that Nelly was influenced by her family in receiving his attentions and tolerating his addresses. There were dark rumors afloat that she and Peter Fogarty had been lovers, even in childhood; and well he knew that, as a wild lad in his teens, Peter had hovered round Nelly, continually devoted to her every wish. If Nelly had wanted a bird's nest from the top of the highest tree, who had she always to climb for it? Pety. And did he ever refuse her? Oh, no! he never did; nor would he if she had asked him to do as much more for her. He gathered flowers from wild hills, and berries from the mountains for her, as offerings of his youthful love; and if he had shot a snipe or woodcock he presented it always to her. His boyish adoration may have passed away; but if had, it was only succeeded by the deep and loving love of manhood. Ardent of temperament, Fogarty loved her almost to madness; and it can hardly cause surprise that he looked upon Denis Ryan, who was allowed to pay his court, as a dangerous and hateful rival. There were dark reports about Pety in the neighborhood. He bore a doubtful character; and though, as yet, no accusation of crime had been made against him, and it was whispered abroad that he was not "a safe person." Yet, somehow, the girls liked him; and, perhaps, not a few were a little envious of the notice he bestowed upon Nelly Dillon. Among his own sex, however, he was looked upon as quite a black sheep; and there was not a farmer in the neighborhood who would have liked a daughter or sister to become his wife.

Nelly and Denis parted at the house pretty good friends, and the latter returned to his own home, a little relieved of some of his misgivings, respecting his sweetheart's regard for Fogarty, though he still wished Nelly would more firmly resist the attentions of his rival. He feared the "country's talk;" and to hear her conduct commented upon did not please him.

Some where near his own house he encountered a solitary figure bearing a blunderbuss; on nearer inspection it proved to be Fogarty, who, with a quick "fine night," passed him rapidly. Denis stopped to look after him, and he thought Pety stopped, too, but he could not be sure; perhaps it was only a bush that he took for his figure in the dim starlight.

"What work is he up to now?" thought Ryan, as he proceeded on his way.

CHAPTER II.

"Did ye hear the news, girls?" asked Pat Dillon, as he came into breakfast next morning.

"No father; what is it?" asked the elder daughter, Kitty.

"Why, it's said for certain that Tom Grogan, the ganger, was killed either last night or this mornin'. He was found with his head smashed to bits, down near the Devil's Pass, a few hours ago."

"The saints be good to us," ejaculated Kitty, as she placed a loaf on the table; but it was evident that the information caused her comparatively little emotion—not that she was particularly selfish or hard-hearted, but she was a Tipperary damsel, and accounts of midnight murders, or daylight assassinations, could not be expected to affect her nerves very powerfully. At the time we write of, and, mayhap, it is pretty much the same at the present period, there was scarcely a resident country gentleman in the county that did not expect to have his life terminated at some time or other by a shot fired from behind a hedge, or whose death, under such circumstances, would have caused more than a few moments' surprise to his neighbors. To hear that a man was murdered in this *locus*, occasioned about as much wonder as might have been excited in any other place by the information that a neighbor's cow or horse was discovered drowned in a pond.

"Grogan was a quiet man, then," said Kitty as she went on getting breakfast.

"He was bether, maybe, than them that'll come in his place," said Dillon, shaking his head; "but you see he did something to vex them fellows that keeps the still above Knock shea, and it's likely they were bent on killin' him."

"I wonder had Pety Fogarty any hand in it?" said Kitty.

"I wouldn't put it past him," observed Dillon, gravely; "an' if there's anything I dislike it's that sort of underhand murder. Why, a regular fair fight's another different thing—it's honest work; but waylayin' an' unsuspectin' man's cowardly and thief like." And having uttered this sentiment the farmer proceeded to eat a hearty, homely breakfast.

During the repast Nelly had not spoken much; but a quick flush passed over her face whenever her father or sister mentioned the name of Fogarty; and by the tone in which both spoke of him, it was very evident that they had a marked meaning in condemning his mode of life.

"If I had my will," said Dillon, "I wouldn't wish ever to see Pety inside the door."

"For I either," replied Kitty. "I don't know how it is, or what the cause of it can be, but he makes me thrill a' most when I see him."

"Then why does he ever come here?" asked her father. "It's not to see me, I'm sure; for him an' I isn't in any ways friendly; his long time; an' now I'll be still all out wid him on account of this business of Grogan. I hear, Nelly, that you an' Pety danced a dale together last night."

"We did, father," said Nelly, as boldly as she could, while her heart quivered nervously.

"He is as impudent as brass," added Kitty, emphatically, without looking at Nelly, who, nevertheless, felt pained by the tone of her sister's voice.

"Can't we have done wid him entirely, and give him no more encouragement?" said Dillon. "I'm sure, if ye, girls, 'd give him the treatment he deserves, he'd soon stop comin' to the house."

"Bedad, I look black enough at him," replied Kitty, with sincerity.

Nelly's face was pale, her lips compressed, and a dark light beamed from her downcast eye. That she was agitated, and yet endeavoring to suppress all sign of emotion was very evident.

"Fogarty's father was a decent man," said Dillon, after a pause; "an' him an' I were comrades many a year ago. I'm not the man to give up the son of an old friend, if he behaved respectable in himself; but I'm the last man in Tipperary to countenance an' idle schemin' fella like Pety, an' what's more I wouldn't wish to have it reported that he an' me, or any one belonging to me, was great wid other. Glory be to God, I'd rather see one o' my daughters in her coffin than married to the same Pety Fogarty!"

"An' small blame to ye, father," rejoined Kitty, as she hastily moved the fire.

"Neither I nor yer mother 'd hold up our heads another hour if the like happened," continued Pat.

"It's not here that Pety'll ever dream of looking for a wife, I'm thinkin'," said Kitty with a short laugh, and a furtive look at her sister, whose head was now bent low over a stocking she was knitting.

"He may look if he likes, but he'll never get one out o' my house," observed Dillon, significantly as he arose from the table and quitted the house.

When he was gone, the sisters did not speak for some time. Nelly continued her knitting, and Kitty went about putting up the breakfast things—wiping cups and saucers carefully before ranging them on the white, well-scoured dresser; then she swept the floor, and taking her spinning-wheel from the corner where it usually past the night, placed it in a more convenient position for use. There was soon a monotonous sound whizzing through the apartment, as Kitty sat before her wheel, drawing down a great mop of flax by slender threads.

Almost in total silence the two girls thus sat pursuing their occupations, till the dinner hour arrived, bringing in their father and brothers; their mother had not yet returned from the fair at Knockmyle. After partaking of a very hasty meal, eaten without the least appetite, Nelly declared her intention of going to meet her mother, observing that she had promised to do so, to help to carry parcels for her.

"Very well," replied her father; "you'll not have to go far, for she said she'd be home afore nightfall. Her an' Bet Fagan was to come home wid other."

"Who says it?" asked Dillon, sternly. "Who dar' say it? Come here, Nelly, and tell us what reason people has to talk this way."

"They think, I suppose, they have a right to say what they like," replied Nelly.

"That's no answer," said Dillon sternly, as he took her arm. "D'ye hear, little girl—an' mind it's yer father's speakin' to ye—if I knew you to give Fogarty the last encouragement in the world, I'd never look at you more—Promise now—there's a good colleen, an' ye needn't look so frightened—that ye won't spake to him ever again, more than to bid him the time o' day."

The girl was silent; her brothers looked grave, with eyes bent on the floor.

"Will ye spake out, Nelly Dillon?" cried the father in a tone of authority.

Still the girl stood silently before him; her face pale as ashes, and an indignant light burning in her eye. Seldom before had Pat Dillon spoken so hastily to his pet child; but now he was trembling with passion, as he again seized her arm, exclaiming—

"Say that you'll not spake or dance any more with Pety Fogarty, as ye value yer father's good opinion, and don't stand there like an obstinate mule!"

"No father I'll never promise that," replied Nelly in a firm voice.

"And why not, young woman?"

"Because I'll never say the thing I don't intend to keep to; an' if you an' all here think Pety Fogarty's more to me than my own people, sure you're welcome to think it," and with an air of mortified pride the damsel hastily left the house.

"She never told me a lie yet," said Dillon as soon as she was gone; "an' it's not the likes of her that id go for to bring disgrace on her people."

CHAPTER III.

The November evening grew swiftly dusky—a sultriness almost oppressive was in the atmosphere; scarcely a leaf was stirring, so still was the air. Gradually, however, as the night advanced, a murmuring breeze ran through the tree tops, by degrees swelling into a stiff gale; thick dark clouds hung over the distant mountains, and the muttering of far-off thunder broke upon the ear.

"That'll be the terrible night," murmured Kitty Dillon, as she looked out upon the storm.

"Glory! there's a flash in earnest!" And for an instant a gleam of forked lightning danced in jagged brightness through the kitchen, followed by a loud rattling peal of thunder. "I hope mother and Nelly isn't under that rain," she continued, closing the door.

"They're takin' shelter somewhere, you may be sure," replied Dillon lighting his pipe composedly; "they wouldn't be that foolish to come on till the storm's over."

Kitty waited for an hour beyond the usual time, before getting supper ready, but at length seeing no sign of her mother's arrival, she prepared it, and it was partaken of with some solemnity, as the thunder crashed louder and louder, and the rain splashed violently, till rivulets streamed down hill-sides to the plains below. A few stragglers dropped in for shelter, and fresh fuel being piled on the fire, there was a good deal of conversation touching the storm.

Various anecdotes were told respecting cattle killed, men struck senseless, and whole houses burnt up by lightning—all of which served to beguile the time, though they certainly did not contribute much towards supporting Kitty's spirits, or allaying her fears of being suddenly killed by lightning, or seeing some of her companions laid prostrate each moment.

One intelligent, elderly wayfarer, who seemed to possess a very extensive knowledge of thunder-storms in general, told a remarkably edifying story relative to lightning and Orangemen in the North.

"It's a good many years ago, now," he said, drawing near the fire and replenishing his pipe, "that I knew Phil Branegan in the county Monaghan—a decent man he was till the devil got possession of him; an' it happened that he had a convalescent house that the Orange lads thought id answer for a lodge. What did they do but ask him to let it to them—an', bedad though he scrupled about it first, knowin' well it wasn't holy to have anything to say to them fellows—the thought o' gain came into his head, glory to the Lord—an' he agreed to give the place up to them for a brave sum o' money. The night afore the Orange meetin' was to be held in it, he was gettin' every thing ready for to go out the next mornin' when the awfullest storm arose. I mind it well, an' bedad the hail-stones were as big as new prates, and the lightning was flamin' out o' the sky like a hundred burnin' candles. Well, to make a long story short, Phil Branegan was knocked dead as a door nail, and half the house was burnt away. Father Pat Reilly was the first that entered the next day; for there wasn't one but him wasn't afraid to put a foot in it till he had stood in it himself, and search was made every where for the money Phil got from the Orangemen; but the sorra farthin' o' it, glory to God, could ever be found; so that if the devil himself didn't swally it, no one knew what ken of it. There wasn't one that don't think Branegan was kilt, because he let his house to the Orange lads; an' sure enough it had the appearance of it."

"I wouldn't b'lieve it," said Dillon in a tone of scepticism. "Them mericles doesn't happen now-a-days; and as to the disappearance of the money, it's very likely some crafty fella got in and took it afore the rest of the neighbors gathered in."

"O, bedad, there wasn't one in it afore Father Pat himself," replied the intelligent story teller.

"Ah, thin, there's plenty of Orange lodges in the North still," continued Dillon; "an' the Alaughty wouldn't go for to destroy one in particular that way. Depend upon it it was just an accident, like the way Mick Doolan's brown beller was kilt by a thunderbolt last Lammass."

"Pat Dillon, ye may talk—but it was the queer accident; an' b'lieve me, no one, after that, had anything to say to the Orangemen in them parts."

"It isn't many Orangemen we've got here,"

said Dillon, putting a coal in his pipe; "an' I'm blest if we're any the bether of it. Sure Tipprary's noted for murder and misconduct all over the world!"

"There's a sperit in the Tipprary lads that isn't to be found any where else in Ireland," rejoined a powerful, rather ragged man, who was dripping with rain; "they're a mane set in the North, bearin' every oppression and insult, widout as much as liftin' a finger to right themselves. If every county was like Tipprary, Ireland id be a different place."

"Bedad if the Tipprary lads id keep their sperit to work in the fields, in place of shootin' all afore them, there id be greater comfort under every roof," said Dillon, with determination.

"Well Pat Dillon, ye're quarre notions any how," said the large dripping man, who having got some supper, and seeing the storm was abating, prepared to depart with his companions.

"Its time mother was here," observed Kitty as she looked into the night. It was near ten o'clock now; and the moon and stars were again visible in a clear blue sky. She had hardly spoken the words, when two female figures were seen leisurely approaching the house.

"Here they are, father!" she cried eagerly; "let me blow up the fire a bit." And stooping down, she blew some hoarse strong breaths upon the half smouldering turf and sticks till they blazed brightly. In a few moments she heard her mother's voice exclaiming—

"Ah, thin, Nelly, how well ye kem to meet me, after all your fine talk, and me half kilt with the basket: its four stone weight, if its an ounce!"

Turning hastily around Kitty beheld her mother and Bet Fagan standing in the kitchen. "Where's Nelly?" she exclaimed in surprise. "How would I know?" rejoined Mrs. Dillon sharply. She was a determined faced woman, about fifty, most industrious and most strong, with one of those unbending in placable styles of visage often beheld among honest folk.

"The sorra sight o' Nelly we seen the night," replied Bet Fagan, shortly.

"Thin, she want to meet ye just after dinner," replied Kitty; "but maybe the thunder scared her and she didn't go on."

"What way did ye come?" demanded Dillon.

"The way we always come—over the hills and through the Scully gap," said Mrs. Dillon. "She must have missed you somewhere," replied Pat. "Were ye takin' shelter anywhere?"

"To be sure we were; we stopped two full hours, an' more, at Dan Phelan's; but, sure, that's only a wee bit off. We might have met Nelly twice over afore we got there, if she had been comin' at all."

"Where is she anyhow?" broke in Kitty, in a tone of concern, for sundry vague terrors were running through her mind, not the least of which was that Nelly might have met with untimely end from a stroke of lightning.

"Get up, Mick, an' go see where she is!" said Mrs. Dillon, peremptorily, to one of her sons who was lounging, half a sleep in a straw chair. "You can call at all the neighbors, for it's most likely she's afraid to come on her alone, its so late now."

Mick got up, rubbed his eyes, and, having refreshed himself by yawning two or three times, left the house in quest of his sister.

"Where'd ye think she is?" asked Bet Fagan in a low voice addressing Kitty, with a strange, meaning light in her black eyes.

"Sure I don't know," replied the girl, starting at the peculiar expression of the widow's face. "Where would she be?"

Mrs. Fagan turned her large head away without speaking, and gathering her cloak round her, muttering something about not liking to take her departure without seeing Nelly safe in.

"Did any body vex Nelly in any way?" asked Mrs. Dillon, as she flung herself wearily into the straw chair vacated by her son.

"She wasn't too well pleased, for certain, goin' out," said Kitty, looking over at her father.

"Her an' I had a few words together," said Pat; "but sure, that wouldn't keep her out till this hour."

"She's very high in herself," observed Mrs. Fagan. "Nelly has a great sperit."

"But it's not wid her own father she'd go for to be angry," rejoined Mrs. Dillon gravely.

Faith, then, she went out o' the house short enough," thought Kitty, as she began to prepare some supper for her mother and Bet Fagan.

Mick Dillon did not return for nearly an hour and when he did come back, he brought out tidings of Nelly; he had searched for her in every cabin as far as Scully gap, without meeting any one who knew where she was. Much consternation was caused by this information; and while Pat Dillon and his wife and daughter were bewildered and horrified, Mrs. Fagan stood with eyes fixed upon the fire and lips compressed, as if some deep thought was perplexing her.

"I'd better go home," she observed, after having thus stood for some time.

"What'd