

then, with so many and such wholesale evictions staring us in the face, that there should be agrarian discontent too often breaking forth in wild justice of self-defence or banded violence?"

"That is, that they would murder us is it?" said Mr. Baker; for Mr. Baker always took care to identify himself with the higher class, though on account of his harmless blustering disposition he often, unconsciously, told bitter truths against them."

"That they would murder us, is it? ay, the pa—hem, ha! yes, they would if they could; but you see I don't care that about them," and Mr. Baker held up a small teaspoonful of punch for inspection, and then drank it off. "Not that, faith! Hand the decanter down, Frank, my boy: that will do. Why, you are taking nothing. I would recommend it to you: nothing like a good glass of punch to keep up the spirits: I could never have done all I did but for it."

"There is no danger, Mr. Baker, that any one will attack you: you have given them too many wholesome lessons to mind you now," said Kate, raising her eyes from the book, and looking smilingly at Mr. Baker.

As I said before, or, as I should have said, if I did not say it, Mr. Baker was a great admirer of the fair sex, and though a heavy-looking man, never missed acknowledging a compliment from a lady, so he got up to make a bow, but in attempting to do so he upset his glass of punch, and walked on Fid. It happened that Fid and the cat were enjoying themselves most comfortably on the hearth-rug, so when Mr. Baker disturbed their tete-a-tete, Fid protested against it in sundry angry yelps.

"Choke that dog!" said Mr. O'Donnell.

"Poor little Fid: come here, poor thing. Where are you hurt? There now, don't cry, and I'll cure you. Sure, he couldn't help it," said Bessy, and Bessy took Fid to nestle in her mamma's lap with her. Fid felt that he fell into kind hands, for he only whined a little, and then laid his little silky head to rest beside Bessy's.

"No, Miss, no, I couldn't help him—I'm blowed if I could, for I could not see, I spilt all the punch. I beg your pardon, Miss Kate."

"Don't mind, Mr. Baker, no harm done," and she wiped away the streaming liquid, and placed a clean glass for Mr. Baker.

"I think, Mr. Baker, you were going to tell us about some fellows that attacked you, or something of that kind."

"Oh, yes: did I ever tell you, Mr. —?" and he nodded at Willy.

"Mr. Shea," suggested Willy.

"Well, Mr. Shea—good name, too—where is this I was?"

"Some adventure you were going to relate," said Willy.

"Oh, yes: you see, I was coming from Cashel one night, and I had a large sum of money about me. Just as I was coming by the grove I saw two men, and they slunk into the ditch as soon as they saw me. Begad, something struck me, so I out with my pistols. When I came up one of them jumped out and seized the reins. Out with your arms and money, or you are a dead man," he shouted: the other fellow was standing beside me with a gun presented. "Here," said I, putting my hand in, as if for them, but before he had time to look about him I out with the pistol and blazed at him. He turned about like a top and fell dead. My horse jumped with the fright, and that saved me, for the other fellow missed me with his shot: I turned at him, but he jumped over the ditch. Just as he was going out I picked him behind."

"That was well done," said Willy: "did you bury the dead man?"

"No, the pa—, rascals, I mean, took him away; at least he was never got."

"You had more adventures than that, though," said Frank.

"More! it would keep us till morning to tell you, by jove; but the villains are now so much afraid, they

are shunning me. I suppose I shot about a dozen in all!"

"A dozen! really the government ought to pension you."

"So they ought, boy; so they ought; that's what I do be telling Lord Clearall, for we are particular friends. Shove over the decanter; I hadn't a glass of punch this two hours."

Mr. Baker's measure of time must have been guided by no chronometer but his own, for the hand of Mr. O'Donnell's clock had not revolved over ten minutes since he had filled his last glass.

"I suppose you will not go home to-night, Mr. Baker," said Frank.

"Certainly, boy: certainly. Why not?"

"It is rather late and the roads are said not to be too honest."

"Ha, ha, ha! no fear of that: they know old Jack Baker too well for that: many a one of their skins I tickled."

"Won't you be afraid, Mr. Baker?" said Kate.

"Afraid! ha, ha, ha, afraid—Jack Baker—afraid! by jove that is a good one! I assure you, Miss Kate, it would not be well for a man that would tax Jack Baker, old as he is, with cowardice; ha, ha, ha! Jack Baker afraid! look at these bull dogs, Frank: need a man be afraid having them?"

Frank took the pistols to the side table, and under pretence of examining them, he extracted the balls, no doubt with the charitable intention of preventing Mr. Baker from committing murder: he then went into the kitchen. While Frank was in the kitchen, Mr. O'Donnell was taking a doze, and Willy being engaged in a cosy chat with Kate and Mrs. O'Donnell, and Bessy, and puss, and Fid, held a council on the sofa, so Mr. Baker thought the best thing he could do was to take a nap: and in order to make his doze comfortable, he first emptied his glass. Certain sonorous sounds emitted from Mr. Baker's nasal organs betokened plainly as words could that he was enjoying rather a heavy doze.

"Come, Bessy, child," said Mrs. O'Donnell, "let us leave Fid and puss now to sleep for themselves, and say your prayers."

The pretty little thing knelt at her mother's knee and rested her closed hands upon her lap. As she finished her little prayers she naively asked—"Our Father, Who art in heaven! What does that mean, mamma? Is it that God is our father?"

"Certainly, my dear child. He is the father of the fatherless, and he has called little children to Him, for of such, He says, is the kingdom of heaven." Bessy was silent for some time, then she said:

"Mamma, is heaven a beautiful place?"

"Yes, my love: no words could paint its beauty, for ears have not heard, nor eyes seen, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive the glory of heaven."

"Mamma, I would like to go to heaven: would you like me to go?"

Mrs. O'Donnell looked at that quiet, ethereal-looking child, with her pale cheeks and bright eyes, and a pang of anguish struck her heart at these words, and she thought what would she do if she lost her darling child, and a tear trickled and fell on Bessy's little hand.

"What ails you, mamma? sure you would not grudge me to go to heaven: if so, mamma, and if you'd be very sorry, I will pray to the good God not to take me, and I know as He is so good He will not refuse me."

"No, child, no! do not: God will take you in His own wise time: but not now, Bessy: what, darling, would I do after you," and she pressed her to her bosom.

Bessy remained silent for some time, and then looked up and said:

"Mamma, are Richard and Ellen in heaven; but I know they are."

"They are, child."