

"Not at all, man; here, I have them off: what would they do with me; they will treat it as a good joke when you are gone. Come, off smart; on wid them; there is not a moment to be lost!"

They exchanged clothes, and as he passed out with the dishes, he wrung the brave fellow's hand, exclaiming:

"God bless you! I'll reward you well."

"Pooh," said the other, "that will do: pass on now, and don't appear concerned."

He was challenged by the sentinel, and even by the party in the parlor; yet he stood the test. As soon as the butler heard the hall-door close after him, he breathed freely.

"Thank God! he is safe! I might as well say my prayers now; for I know the men I have to deal with too well to expect mercy; no matter, he's saved!"

When the magistrate discovered the trick that had been played upon him, there was no end to his anger; he at once ordered the poor fellow to execution. When going to the gallows, the magistrate asked him—

"Why did you do it?"

"Sir," said he, "I am his foster-brother!"

His death did not pass unavenged; for, after some years, the young gentleman returned from the Continent; he challenged the magistrate to a duel. They had selected a retired part, near a plantation. They took their positions on two mounds. The magistrate was shot through the breast. After falling, the young man walked over to him, and whispered into his ear:

"You recollect John Mahon, he was my foster-brother; his grave is now drinking your blood; you murdered him, you did; but he is avenged. I have nursed my vengeance for years; I have practised until I could put a ball where I like; now, I have sweet revenge upon his murderer. And, if there be any one here," looking fiercely around him, "that says he was not murdered, let him take your place, you dog!"

Such was the affection existing between foster-brothers. Whether it is so fervid now or not, I cannot say; perhaps, like a good many of our old Irish customs and habits, our very impulsive affections have given way to the cold, soulless philosophy of English innovators.

This was the kind of relationship that existed between Frank and the Cormacks. The Cormacks held a small farm of about ten acres. They never worked for hire, as their little farm gave them sufficient employment; they helped Mr. O'Donnell during his busy season, for which they received more than an equivalent in various ways such as a plough to till their garden, a present of a cow, a few lambs or pigs, as they wanted them. With all O'Donnell's kindness, it is no wonder that the Cormacks were what is called well-to-do in the world; besides, they were sober, industrious young men.

After some commonplace conversation with those in the kitchen, Frank remarked:

"We have old Mr. Baker above half-drunk. He is as usual killing every one. I was thinking it would be a good joke if two of you would meet him when going home, and take his pistols and money from him; we would have such a good laugh at him."

"I and Neddy Burkem will go," said James Cormack.

"Well, I don't care," said Burkem. "But he does be so often at Mr. Ellis's that he might know me; besides he might fire."

"No danger of that," said Frank; "I have drawn the balls from his pistols; besides, he will be so much frightened I am sure he won't know any one."

"Let another of the boys go with you, James," said Burkem.

"Burkem is afeered: I'll go, Misther Frank," said another.

"Oh, devil afeerd," said Burkem; "but you know if he should chance to know me, I was undone."

"A four-year-old child needn't be afeerd of Slob Baker," said the Rover. "Did you ever hear what they did to him at Mr. Lane's?"

"Shure young Mr. Lane vexed him one night until

they got him up to fight a duel. Well becomes Mr. Lane, he loaded his pistol with blood, and put nothing but powder in Mr. Baker's. They fired across the table. When Baker saw himself all covered with blood, he kicked, and tumbled, and swore he was shot. 'Oh, Lane,' says he, 'you have me murdered. God have mercy on me a poor sinner.' They all laughed at him. 'Oh! laugh and be —,' said he. 'You can easily laugh at a dead man,' 'Ha! ha! ha! You're not dead at all man,' said Mr. Lane; 'get up, man alive.' 'Dead—as dead as a door nail, man; if I weren't, I'd have you shot for laughing at a poor devil you are after murdering.' 'Ha! ha! ha! Where do you feel the pain?' 'Where do I feel the pain? Shure a man never feels pain after being shot until he's dead. Shure I am all covered wid blood—isn't that enuff? You kilt me; for you hadn't any ball in my pistol, for if you had you were shot.' 'No, nor in mine either; there was only blood in it.' Do you say so? Gog! maybe I'm not dead afther all.' 'Divil a dead. Get up to a glass of punch.' 'Well, well; did any one ever hear the likes! When I saw the blood I thought I was done for. Down wid the decanthur!' They then set him drunk, and rubbed his face with lamp-black; so they took him up to the drawing-room to dance wid the ladies. Shure if they didn't laugh at him, nabock-lish."

The parlor bell was rung.

"Run, Mary Cahill; and none of your sly ways there with James; and bring them up more water. I know that is what they want. And, Cormack, let you and another of the boys get two peeled cabbage stumps, and meet him at the gate. I'll go up to hurry him off."

When Frank returned to the parlor he found his father and Mr. Baker taking a parting glass.

"Come, Frank, boy, take a *doch a durriss*."

"You don't mean to go home, Mr. Baker? It is rather late and not too safe to travel."

"Safe! boy, safe! That's what makes me go, to show you and the pa——, robbers, I mean, that I'm not afraid; order my horse, Frank; order my horse."

"Mary," said Frank to Mary Cahill, who had brought in the hot water, "Mary, tell one of the boys to bring out Mr. Baker's horse."

"Yes, sir."

As Mr. Baker rode from the house he held the following bit of conversation with himself.

"I think I was a deuce of a fool, an ass, to say the least of it, to leave to-night; but then they'd say I was afraid; ay, afraid, and that wouldn't do, Mr. Baker. Afraid! who said I was afraid; who dare say it, I want to know? God protect me! What the devil is that though? Oh! only an ass—ha! out of my way. Well, if I meet any fellows will I shoot them? Sure they'd shoot me, but then I'd be a deuce of a fool to lose my life on account of two pistols and a few pounds. No, I am at the gate now, I —"

"Deliver your arms and money or you're a dead man!" was shouted from behind the piers, and two wicked looking things, guns, no doubt, looked out at him as if they would take great pleasure in cracking at him.

"Ye-ye-yes! gentlemen, fo-fo-for the love of God, don't shoot me! here they are," and he handed out his pistols and money.

"Ride back again now."

"Ye-ye-yes! gentlemen; Lord spare your lives for sparing me."

Mr. Baker thundered up to the hall door, and knocked fiercely; Frank made his appearance.

"O, Frank, Frank, for the love of God, hurry! Call out the men! I was robbed; about twenty men attacked me. I shot two, anyway; I think three; two for certain; then they overpowered me, but I made my escape from the pa——, robbers, I mean, robbers, Frank, robbers. There are four shot, anyway; four of the pa——, robbers, I mean. The government will hear all this in the morning. I will have them taken like the pa——, robbers, I mean, I shot coming from Cashel."