

information, incidentally added, that the three-and-twenty pianos were "all out of tune." We learn, however, that a movement has been set on foot by the dispensary doctor to secure the occasional services of a tuner from the county town. And from our personal knowledge of the doctor's popularity and energy—and bearing in mind the intrinsic goodness of the cause he advocates—we venture to predict that harmony will reign from end to end of our parish long before the Phooka takes his next annual gallop over the summits of the surrounding hills.

Cynical people may ascribe the harmonious revolution just chronicled to an unhealthy hankering after "gentility," but we are satisfied that a genuine love of music has been at the bottom of it. Nor is this love of music confined to the fair performers themselves. The Scotch agriculturist who would only consent to his daughter's getting a piano on the express condition that she should "do her practising while he was out about the farm," has not had a single imitator in the whole parish of Shannacloough. Though perhaps the "practising" is sometimes most agreeable when softened by distance, and listened to in the intervals of a *shannachus* with an old neighbor from the kitchen chimney corner. And doubtless "the concord of sweet sounds," with which at such moments the bucolic soul is "moved," loses nothing of its sweetness from the reflection that it in no way interferes with the more serious domestic duties.

"I never filled so many firkins as since I bought the piano for my daughter," a thriving farmer was heard to soliloquise in the market-house a week or two ago, while his eyes dwelt complaisantly upon the "butter ticket." "A little education, after all, doesn't do the least harm to a girl," he added, as he put the ticket into his pocket.

But better still, the humblest home—even the hearth of the poor laboring man—is vocal with the sweetest music below the stars—Irish children's voices attuned to the melodies of their own land of song.

After a silence of some minutes, during which both Mr. Cormack and his wife unconsciously continued to gaze upon the picture over the chimney-piece, the latter said:

"I am very glad you are not to be troubled about your vote." She took the silver thimble from her finger and laid it in its place in the work-box on the table beside her, and waited to see whether the husband happened to be in a conversational mood. It was evident she had something particular to speak about, but did not wish to introduce it too abruptly. "It is strange," she remarked, closing the lid of the work-box noiselessly, "that Father Feehan should be so anxious for the return of men like this young O'Mulligan, who only want to get places or something for themselves."

"And their friends," said her husband with a smile, in which there was more than a suspicion of sarcasm.

"Do you think," she asked—evidently *apropos* of the last remark—"do you think does Mr. O'Keeffe mean anything particular by coming here so often lately?"

"Yes," was the reply; "I have got a pretty broad hint of it."

"And what do you think?"

"I don't like it," he answered almost harshly, drawing his little son—who was turning over the leaves of a picture-book at the table—quickly towards him, and running his fingers through the boy's crisp auburn curls. "He is too deeply in debt."

"I thought that was not his own fault, but his father's," said Mrs. Cormack.

"And what difference does that make when he is in debt?" her husband asked with a look of surprise.

"Oh, it makes a great difference," she replied.

"Well, you are right," said Ned Cormack, looking admiringly at his wife, of whose clear good sense he was very proud. "It *does* make a great difference. But he'd be expecting too much money." And Ned Cormack passed his hand over his little son's face, and pressed the curly head against his waistcoat.

Six or seven years before Ned Cormack would have contemplated the possibility of Mr. Robert O'Keeffe, of Cloonmore, becoming his son-in-law with more than satisfaction. But that little curly head leaning against his waistcoat was not in the world then. And since its coming—all unlooked for as it was—a complete change had come over the spirit of the father's dreams. To get his daughter well and respectably married was now a very secondary ambition with Ned Cormack, of Rockview. He began to think with dismay of that "big fortune" so often spoken of in connection with his handsome daughter; and sometimes wished that she, like his first love, Ellen Dwyer, would go into a convent.

"Well, what would you think of Mr. Delahunty?" Mrs. Cormack asked after another interval of silence.

"Mr. Delahunty has plenty of money," cried little Eddy. "He gave Jerry a half-crown for holding his horse."

"Oh! Eddy," exclaimed his mother after exchanging a glance with her husband, "there is the young ass coming towards the paling. He'll put his head in and crop some of the flowers. Run out and drive him away."

"He, too, is looking for money," Ned Cormack replied, when Eddy had run out into the lawn, "and besides, business men are so uncertain. There are few of them now like your uncle."

"That's true," replied Mrs. Cormack. "But still you see it is business men who are purchasing estates everywhere."

"Yes, but what kind of business men? Men who began at the beginning, and lived over their shops till they had made their fortunes. They did not commence with a country house and a carriage, like Delahunty."

"Oh, I must say," returned his wife, "that I'd be always uneasy if Margaret was married to him. He is too fond of display, and so is she. I could see that the carriage had its effect upon her. But I fancy she'd prefer Mr. O'Keeffe. He is really a very nice man; and his being a 'gentleman' goes a great way with Margaret. She is really quite ambitious, but I think Alice is the very contrary." Mrs. Cormack, as she spoke, turned her eyes towards the ivy-clad farm-

house at the foot of the mountain, which at one time seemed to look down almost scornfully upon Ned Cormack's humble roof-tree, but never appeared homely, even compared with the modern mansion that had taken the place of the old thatched house. And Martin Dwyer's farmhouse had a great charm for Mrs. Cormack. She often walked with Nannie and Nellie in the orchard on summer evenings when the trees were in blossom, and liked to sit upon Mr. Armstrong's rustic seat and contemplate her own handsome residence, which year by year was growing into greener beauty, and putting off by degrees that look of bareness which at first displeased her; the while her two graceful daughters walked up and down by the hazels on the river bank. And when Terry Hanrahan, the apple-man, had taken up his abode in the orchard house, and the eve apples and queenings were ripe, Mrs. Cormack always came herself to make purchases and pluck the fruit with her own hand. And this she continued to do up to November-eve, when, assisted by Tom Dwyer, she selected the winter supply, taking all the Nonpareilles—the right name of which Terry Hanrahan took pains to assure her was "Moss umbrells."

Yes, Mrs. Cormack liked that old orchard; and had a great liking also for young Tom Dwyer. Perhaps that was why she looked towards the orchard just now when she remarked that her younger daughter was not ambitious like her sister. It used to annoy her to see how little either of them seemed to appreciate Tom Dwyer.

"Did you ever think of Tom Dwyer at all?" she asked turning to her husband, who was watching little Eddy driving the young ass away from the flowers.

"I used to think of it," he replied. "His aunt would have like it so much. And it would be pleasant to have Margaret settled so near us. But there's no use of thinking of it now. The place is not fit for her."

"It would be easy to make it fit for anybody," she replied.

"Yes, if you only mean the house. But how would it be with the family?" he asked.

"That's true," Mrs. Cormack replied with a shake of her head; "I fear she could never get on with his mother. But if it was not for that, and if she really liked Tom, something tells me she'd be happier as his wife than she would be with any man I know. Don't you think there is something above the common in him?"

"He has stuff in him if he got a fair chance," Ned Cormack replied. "I'd be glad to give him a helping hand if I saw any way of serving him." Ned Cormack was not only considered "lucky" himself, but the cause of luck in others as well. It was remarked that the man he helped was always sure to prosper. But it was only a knowing few who were able to see that the help was only given to those who possessed the qualities that made success almost a certainty. "Why wouldn't you ask Ned Cormack to secure you, and get a hundred pounds from the bank, as he got for Dick Shea?" Mrs. Dwyer persisted for a long time in dinning into her husband's ears—till at last Martin gave way and made the request.

"No, Martin," said Ned Cormack firmly,