

into the twilight into the trees. Among the admiring eyes that followed the horseman as he rode through the village were two small, round black ones that belonged to Rody Flynn, the cooper, who, resting upon his drawing knife, and pushing his brown paper cap back upon the poll of his round close-cropped head, exclaimed delightedly—

"He's a mighty handsome man. I never seen a purtier man, except one gentleman I was acquainted with in the—Queen's County." Rody Flynn emphasised his words in a manner peculiar to himself, making a rhetorical pause before the emphatic expression, as if it had been trying to run away from him, and he had to catch it, and drive it with some force into its proper place with a jerk. And here let us confess, that with all due respect for Rody Flynn, it is to this day an undecided question in our mind whether he did not sometimes—in fact often and habitually—draw upon his imagination in reference to what he had seen and known in the Queen's County. No matter what the subject under discussion might be—no matter what the harrowing accident by flood or field related—no matter how enormous the potato or turnip brought in for exhibition by the Scotch steward at the Castle—Rody Flynn had seen something more extraordinary "in the Queen's County."

This is a sore subject with us. We quite entered into the feelings of our old friend Father Walter Cleary (peace be with him) when one day, having found Rody Flynn shaving the head of a poor man in typhus fever, to whom Father Walter had been called to administer the Sacrament—he said to us—"what an admirable character that Rody Flynn is. He's always doing work of charity; his house is like a dispensary, and he's really very skilful. And there he is now after shaving that poor man's head, not deterred by the danger, though he knows there is danger. I'd rather than fifty pounds," he continued, "that Rody Flynn didn't see so many things in the Queen's County. But I suppose," Father Walter added with a sigh of resignation, "there's no use in looking for perfection in this world."

It was Father Walter first gave the name of "Dicky Sheil" to Rody Flynn's canary, whose shrill volubility cowed even Terry Hanrahan's thrush into silence, and sometimes drove Tom Doherty's flute-throated blackbird into fits of temporary insanity. But Rody Flynn had seen one better singing bird even than his own Dicky Sheil, "in the Queen's County."

"Did you ever hear Sheil?" Father Walter asked indignantly, as if he thought Rody meant to disparage not the canary, but the brilliant Richard Lalor himself.

"I did," Rody replied, his little eyes sparkling with delight.

"In the Queen's County, I suppose," muttered Father Walter with something like a scowl.

"No, in Clonmel," returned Rody Flynn triumphantly. "The time of General Matthew's election."

"Tell me something he said?" rejoined Father Walter, dubiously.

"'Twas the last day of the polling," Rody replied, laying down his mallet, and pushing

his paper cap back from his forehead. "He was speaking from the balcony of Hearne's Hotel. He was about my own size," added Rody Flynn, looking upon his shapely legs encased in a well-fitting corduroy breeches, and light grey angola stockings, and then drawing himself up to his full height.

"Tell us something he said," Father Walter interrupted, almost morosely.

"The polling was coming to a close," Rody Flynn went on, his round face radiant at the recollection of that exciting contest, when the "Gallant Forties"—so soon, alas! to be flung away like broken tools—trooped to the poll in the teeth of more deadly peril than soldier ever encountered upon the battlefield. "The polling was coming to a close; and it was known we had a successful majority. As Sheil was speaking, a big—Orange flag was hoisted over the club-house. 'They're beat, they're beat,' says Sheil, 'I see they have hung out an Orange pocket handkerchief there beyond. Oh, friends, it is bedewed with many an orange tear.'"

"You did hear Sheil," said Father Walter, fixing his eyes upon Rody Flynn, as if he would look through and through him, and satisfy himself as to the reality or otherwise of those Queen's County experiences, which he regarded as the one shadow upon Rody Flynn's character.

"Yes," said Rody, "and Doheny spoke after, and told the people not to mind Orange or Green, or any color, but to stand by their country and their religion."

"Don't talk about Doheny," said Father Walter.

"He was the honestest man of 'em all," retorted Rody Flynn, stoutly. "Sheil was a—brilliant senator, as you say. He was a great man, too, while he stuck to O'Connell. But, after all, what was he but a—place-hunter?"

Father Walter felt the force of this, and was silent for a minute or two, of which "Dicky Sheil" took advantage to hurl a thrilling defiance at Tom Doherty's blackbird, who immediately dropped cowering from his perch as if a hawk were poised above his head, and then fluttered round and round his wicker prison uttering discordant cries, and apparently bent upon dashing himself to pieces.

"Well, here," said Father Walter, as if posed by Rody's last remark. "Do these razors, and come up early to-morrow to shave me. But don't bother me about Doheny. And don't tell me you have heard a better singing bird than "Dicky Sheil"—in the Queen's County, or in any other county, for I don't believe a word of it."

"'Tis surprising," said Rody Flynn, when the priest had turned away from the door at which he had merely stopped on his way to the chapel, to leave his razors to be set. "'Tis surprising how—prejudiced they are against Doheny."

"I remarked that," returned his melancholy-faced friend and crony, Davy Lacy, the shoemaker, who, with his long-tailed body-coat hanging loosely over his shoulders, leant upon the half-door, his lack-lustre eyes fixed upon the top of a poplar tree behind Mr. Amby Armstrong's house. That tree seemed to possess some extraordinary fascina-

tion for Davy Lacy. He was leaning over Rody Flynn's half-door one calm summer evening when the first fluttering leaf of the poplar that peeped above the red tiles of the quaint old house caught his eye, and while he was puzzling his brains to guess whether that fluttering little object was a bird or what else it might be—Nell, the cobbler, rushed down the street excitedly, and announced to Davy Lacy that a son and heir had just been born to him. Ever after Davy Lacy seemed to recognise some mysterious connection between that tree and his first-born, whom he invariably spoke of as "that lad of mine"—and watched its growth with an interest that seemed to have no small share of awe and wonder mingled with it, as, year after year, the poplar tree rose higher and higher over the red tiles. When he took part in the conversation in Rody Flynn's workshop—which was but seldom and abruptly—Davy Lacy seemed to address himself to the top of the poplar tree. Whenever he did take his bony hand from his lank cheek, and his shirt sleeves from the half-door, it was to fix a questioning and reproachful stare upon somebody; and the stare was all the more intensely melancholy as well as questioning and reproachful when he himself had said, or was about to say, something very amusing.

The contrast between the good-humored, plump, and rounded little cooper, and the lean, angular, and sad-faced shoemaker, was very striking. Yet there must have been some bond of sympathy that drew them to each other. Davy appeared to spend nearly all his unemployed hours resting upon Rody's half-door; and Rody's clubby face always brightened up when his melancholy friend appeared hitching his blue body-coat—into the sleeves of which he never put his arms except on Sundays—upon his shoulders, and silently took up his position with his elbow upon the half-door, and his hand under his chin.

"Sure I remember," said Davy Lacy, in reply to Rody Flynn's last remark, and appearing to address himself, not to Rody, but to the poplar tree—"I remember that speech Mr. Sweeny read that made John Nowlan rush out of the door here, and knock down that lad o' mine, who came to call me home to take Mr. Dwyer's measure. He was so ragin' mad he didn't mind the boy, though I thought every bone in his body was broke."

"I remember," returned Rody Flynn, laughing, "I told that story to Mr. Armstrong while I was shaving him the evening after, and he laughed heartily. He said it showed how much people are influenced by prejudice." Rody Flynn had a habit of giving the *ipsissima verba* of those he quoted, which possibly may account for the rather long pauses in unusual places in his sentences, and the unexpected emphasis upon words to which we have before referred. "Mr. Armstrong said it was a most—amusing instance of the—powerful influence that prejudice—exercises over men's—judgment. I knew another instance of the same kind," said Rody Flynn, "in the Queen's County."

"That lad o' mine had reason to remember it," Davy Lacy interrupted, turning round and fixing a severely reproachful glance upon