

head, "I was purty good at the plain dance; but Callaghan had such fine steps, I said to myself I'd get a few new wans. An' then they persuaded me to learn the figures; but begob I couldn't keep 'e min my head. And now, you know, I don't like to see my money goin' for nothin'." Barney added with the air of a man of business.

"Will you let us see one of Callaghan's steps, Barney?" said Grace.

"An' welcome, Miss," replied Barney, throwing care to the winds—for the idea of his money going for nothing seemed to have quite a crushing effect upon his spirits—"I'll do a step or two in a double for you."

And Barney, after going round gracefully in a circle to his own music, commenced battering the gravel with those remarkable feet which procured for him the *soubriquet* of "Wattletoes," in a style which we are not mad enough to attempt a description of.

"O Hugh," said Grace, who could hardly speak for laughing, "you must give him the five shillings."

"Would I doubt you, Miss Grace?" exclaimed Barney, twisting his features in a most extraordinary manner, but ultimately allowing them to settle into a grin of delight.

"Sound man, Mr. Hugh," he added, as Hugh presented him with two half-crowns. "An' now give me leave to run over to the Cross."

"What do you want there?" Hugh asked.

"Callaghan is goin' away to-day," replied Barney.

"Then he gave you credit, and you want to pay your debts?"

"Oh, the devil a credit," returned Barney. "What a fool he is!"

"I can't make out what he means," said Hugh.

"Is not that Callaghan himself passing the gate?" said Mary, pointing to a little man with a bundle in his hand walking at a brisk pace from the direction of the hamlet.

"Oh, the rascal," cried Barney, "an' all my dance in his pocket!"

He set off in pursuit of the dancing-master as if his very life depended upon catching him.

"Can you solve this mystery, Grace?" said Mary.

"Really, no," she replied, shaking her head. "'Tis too much for me. We must wait till he comes back."

But the dancing-master was too far off to hear Barney shouting after him, and Barney was soon too much out of breath to continue the shouting, so that both were lost to view at the turn of the road.

"He was gaining upon him," said Grace. "I think he will catch him before they reach the fort. But what does he mean?"

About an hour later, as they were setting out to visit Norah Lahy, Grace said:

"Wait a moment till I ask Barney what he wanted with the dancing-master. I can't make head or tail of it."

"I'm glad to hear it," returned Mary. "I was beginning to fear you had some connection with the 'good people.'"

"I must repress my curiosity," said Grace, after inquiring for Barney. "He is gone to drive home the cows."

The cows referred to were at a farm some two miles from the house, and it was near sunset when Barney returned. After "bailing" them in, he hastened to the barn, where Mat Donovan and Tom Maher had been at work. Their day's work was over, and Tom was just hanging the door on its hinges. Barney began at once to practise his steps on the well-swept floor.

"Blood-an-oukers, Mat," he exclaimed, stopping suddenly, as if a happy thought struck him, "I believe you are able to read writin'."

"Well, I believe I could," Mat replied, as he shook the chaff from his coat before putting it on. "Why so?"

Barney pulled off his canbeen, and pulled a large crumpled document from the crown.

"Read that," said he.

Mat went to the door, and unfolding the paper, held it to the light, which was beginning to fade.

Barney watched him as if he entertained doubts of Mat's ability to read writing. After a little delay, however, Mat read the words "Haste to the Wedding," which had the effect of sending Barney with a bound to the middle of the floor.

"Go on," he shouted excitedly, crushing his hat tight

upon his head. And with his arms extended, as if he were going to fly, Barney commenced whistling "Haste to the Wedding."

"What the devil do you mane?" Mat asked in astonishment.

"Read on; read, read," said Barney, breathlessly, trying to whistle and talk at the same time.

"Oh, I see what you're at now," said Mat the Thrasher, as if a new light had dawned upon him. "I see what you're up to," he repeated seriously. "But faith I don't know that I could read print in 'double' time, let alone writin'."

"Oh, if you couldn't!" And Barney took the paper and replaced it in the crown of his hat, with the look of a man who had been made a disgustingly inadequate offer for some article he wanted to sell.

(To be continued.)

## Evening Memories

(By WILLIAM O'BRIEN.)

CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued.)

It was in this stone-walled Arcadia I found the rarest luxury of all—*les longs et silencieux loisirs* (to use the words of M. Burdeau) in which I composed the only two romances I was destined ever to write—*When We Were Boys*, and *A Queen of Men*. Mr. Sexton once made the remark: "There is one thing I envy you, that wherever you go you can carry your workshop with you." I was now to realise how much this fairy-godmother's gift was to be valued. *When We Were Boys* occupied the brightest months of my first two sojourns in Galway and *A Queen of Men* was the delicious "hard labor" of my last. The works were written on sheets of official blue foolscap, stamped with the Royal lion and unicorn, and marked with the red ink initials of the Governor at the head of every page. The Governor was also solemnly directed to act as Censor of the contents of each page as it was completed. No prison task could well have seemed more burdensome than that imposed on the unfortunate Governor of deciphering the mysterious inscriptions of a hand-writing as puzzling for most people as any on the stones of Nineveh. To my amazement he not only discovered the key to the mystery, but would spend his evenings poring over the manuscript with the fondness of the faithful John Forster hanging over the first reading of a page of Dickens. That no trait of absurdity should to the last be wanting to Mr. Balfour's Draconic Prison rigors, the Prison Board confiscated my writings on the official foolscap they had supplied me with, and only consented to surrender the manuscript under the threat of a lawyer's letter.

*When We Were Boys* was planned, so far as it was planned at all, as a transcript of life in Ireland in the 'sixties, with special relation to the conflict between the young idealism of the patriots and the selfless but short-sighted ecclesiastical powers whom Cardinal Cullen induced to range themselves on the side of England and of the Parliamentary corruptionists. The book literally wrote itself, without any "plot" beyond the workings of Irish life as it was lived, and the graces of pure literature were, no doubt, neglected for the passionateness of a political appeal, at a moment when the sympathies of the British Democracy for a sturdy Irish independence, "neither Saxon nor Italian," were already as good as conquered. The hope was to conjure down the superstition that "Home Rule" meant "Rome Rule," by depicting the youth of Ireland to be capable of holding its own against aggression in the political sphere from any power no matter how worshipped in its proper sanctuary, and better still, by proving the dogmas of civic freedom to be cherished no less bravely by the most powerful school of Irish ecclesiastics themselves. The most ticklish topic in Ireland, no doubt; but it was for the very reason that my soul was aflame with admiration for the order of splendid Irishmen I had been admitted to study by Archbishop Croke's fire-side, in their prison cells, and by their people's side in many a moving scene of famine or oppression that I felt bold enough to believe that the truth would not be found to do injustice to the Irish priests, while it would be of inestimable value to their nation. It was the impossible that happened. The book that was for many months the

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