

the action of the Cork firm of pious attorneys in getting Canon Keller arrested and imprisoned.

The town of Baltimore is an example of how much might be done towards the promotion of Irish industries by judicious encouragement. From a wretched village known beyond a radius of a few miles only as the scene of the famous Algerine descent on the Cork coast, commemorated in Davis's "Sack of Baltimore," it has become a prosperous town, which is the seat of a flourishing industry that is rapidly extending. It was the Baroness Burdett-Coutts who was the immediate instrument by which this great change was effected. Yielding to the appeals of the Rev. Father Davis, the model pastor of Baltimore, she consented to give a sum of money to be available for loans to the fishermen to enable them to procure the gear necessary to carry on their fishing operations with success. The experiment succeeded beyond the expectation of all but the most sanguine; the boatmen of Baltimore proved to be the most grateful and honourable men to whom the hand of kindness was ever extended. They repaid every farthing lent to them, and are already reaping the rich reward of their honesty, industry, and enterprise. The town of Baltimore has become a hive of busiest workers, and is extending apace, and the good father, to whose kindly zeal and far-seeing wisdom they owe so much, rejoices in the possession of a flock to see whose comfortable homes and happy smiles is the sweetest return he desires for the labour he has expended in promoting their welfare.

THE FIT OF AILSIE'S SHOE.

(BY ROSA MULHOLLAND, in the *Irish Monthly*.)

CHAPTER, III.

It was speedily settled between Mary MacQuillan and the widow Devnish that Ailsie should go to the ball.

"I have a fine piece of yellow Chaney silk," said the widow Devnish, "that sailor Johnny sent me from beyond the seas. It would make her a skirt, barrin' it wasn't too long, an' a hem o' somebin' else lined on behind."

An' I've a ducky bit o' chery tabinet," said Mary, the mother, "that brother Pat, the weaver, sent me from Dublin to make a bonnet o'. It'll cut into a beautiful jockey for her, barrin' we don't make the sleeves too wide."

So on the eventful night Ailsie was dressed out in the yellow silk skirt and cherry-coloured bodice with a fine pair of stockings of Mary's own knitting, with magnificent clocks up the sides. Her little bog-trotting brogues were polished till you could see yourself in the toes, and a pair of elegant black silk mittens covered her hands up to her little brown knuckles, stretching up her wrists to make amends for the scantiness of her sleeves. Then, she had a grand pair of clanking earrings as long as your little finger, which the widow Devnish had worn as a bride; and two mothers, taking each a side of the victim's head, plaited her thick black hair into endless numbers of fanciful braids, which they rolled round the crown of her head and into which they planted a tortoiseshell comb, curved like the back of an arm-chair, which Jamie's mother had worn at his christening, and which towered over Ailsie's head like Minerva's helmet put on the wrong way. Ned Mucklehern of the Windy Gap was to take her to Castle Craigie in his new spring cart; and two good hours before dark Ailsie was standing at the door, looking longingly for a glimpse of Hughie coming over the hill, to see how handsome she looked in her strange finery. But Hughie did not appear, and vowing vengeance on him for his "solks," Ailsie submitted to be packed up in the cart.

"But its no use takin' the rue now," said she, "I be to go through with it." And with desperate bravery she said "good night," to Ned Mucklehern, who, at her command, set her down a little distance at the entrance gates, out and in c' which the carriages were rolling at such a rate as made poor Ailsie's heart thump against her side, till it was like to burst through Pat-the-weaver's tabinet.

She crept in through a little side-gate, and up the avenue, keeping as much as possible under the shelter of the trees; but it was not quite dark yet, and the coachmen coming and going stared at her, taking her maybe, for some masquerading gipsy or strolling actress, whom Lady Betty had engaged to amuse the company. She arrived at the hall door just in time to see a flock of young ladies in white robes floss gracefully over the threshold, and the absurdity of her own costume came before her in its terrible reality. Covered with confusion, she looked about to see if she could escape among the trees, and hide there till morning; but one of the grand servants had espied her, and under his eyes Ailsie scorned to beat a retreat.

"What is your business here, young woman?" asked this awful person, as she stepped into the glare of the hall lights.

"I am one of Lady Betty's guests," said Ailsie, lifting her head. But a horrible tittering greeted this announcement from a crowd of other servants, who were all eyeing her curiously from head to foot. Ailsie was ready to sink into the earth with shame and mortification, when, happily, the arrival of a fresh carriageful of guests diverted the general attention from herself, and she heard some one saying, "This way, miss." Glad to escape anywhere, she followed a servant whose face she could not see, but whose voice was wonderfully familiar. Passing through an inner hall, her hand was grasped by this person, and she was swiftly drawn into a pantry and the door shut.

"Oh, Hughie, Hughie!" cried Ailsie, bursting into tears, and clinging to his arm. "Then where did you dhrup from, an' says?"

"Whisht, avourneen!", said Hughie, "we haven't a minute to stay, for you chaps 'll be runnin' in an' out here all night. But do you think Hughie could rest aisy at home an' you unprocted in this place? Wan o' the fellows was knocked up with all the wine that's goin, an' they were glad to give me his place, an' his clothes. Ye won't feel so lonesome."

"Oh, Hughie, I wisht I'd stayed at home as you bid me. An' your han', Hughie!"

"Och, never mind it, asthove. I'll only carry small thrays, and the wan hand 'll do beautiful. Come now, aroon." So, resuming his character of servant, Hughie squirmed his trembling lady love up Lady Betty's gilded staircase.

The ball was held in an old-fashioned hall whose roof was crossed with dark rafters, from which gloomy old banners were swinging. The door was partly open, and Ailsie peeped in.

"Oh, Hughie, Hughie!" she whispered, "take me back to the pantry! I'll lie close in a cupboard, an' never stir a stir till morning."

"It couldn't be done, darling," whispered Hughie. "Ye must put a bold face on it, an' take your chance."

He opened the door wide, and Ailsie felt herself swallowed up in a blaze of light and colour, with a hum in her ears as of a thousand bees all buzzing round her head at once. When she recovered from her first stunned sensation, and regained consciousness of her own identity, she found herself seated side by side with the five Miss MacQuillans from Bally Scuffling, all dressed in their grass-coloured satin, all with their noses redder than ever, all eyeing her askance from her comb to her brogues, and tittering just as the servants had done in the hall.

A band was playing, and a crowd of people were dancing, but it seemed to Ailsie, whenever she looked up, that nobody had got anything to do but to stare at her. When she saw the elegant slippers of the dancers she was afraid to stir lest the "hammerin'" of her feet should be heard all over the room; and when MacQuillan of the Reek came up to her, and, making a low bow, begged the honour of dancing with her, Ailsie's ears began to sting with confusion and her teeth to chatter with fright. But as she did not know how to refuse, she got up and accompanied him to where there, was an empty space on the floor. The band was playing a lively tune as a quadrille, and Ailsie, thinking anything better than standing still, fell to dancing her familiar jig with energy. She had once slapped this gentleman's face for his impertinence, and she believed that he had now led her out to avenge himself by her confusion. So Ailsie danced her jig, and finding that the clatter of her brogues was drowned by the music, she gained courage, and danced it with spirit round and round her astonished partner, till the lookers-on cried "Brava!" and the laugh was turned against MacQuillan of the Reek, who was, after all, very glad when she made him her curtsy, and allowed him to take her back again to the Bally Scuffling maidens, who had not been dancing at all, and who held up their five fans before their five faces in disgust at Ailsie's performance.

A magic world, *supper*, acted like a charm on all there. The crowd thinned and disappeared, and nobody noticed Ailsie. Every gentleman had his own partner to attend to, and no one came near the little peasant girl. Ailsie was very glad, for she would rather endure hunger than be laughed at, and she was just beginning to nod asleep in her seat, when came Hughie.

"I'm goin' to fetch you somethin' to ate darlin'," he said, and hurried away again. And Ailsie was just beginning to nod asleep once more, when in came MacQuillan of the Reek, saying that Lady Betty had sent him to conduct her (Ailsie) to the supper-room.

Lady Betty was sitting at the head of the most distant table, with a knife in her hand, and a huge cake before her. The more substantial eatables seemed to have been already discussed, for every guest had a slice of this cake before him or her. They were nibbling it, and mincing it up with knives. All were silent, and all looked anxious and dissatisfied. Ailsie thought the silence and dissatisfaction were all on account of her audacious entrance.

"This way!" said Lady Betty MacQuillan, in a voice that made Ailsie start, and the august hostess cleared a place at her side for our blushing heroine. The wax lights blazed on Lady Betty's golden turban, and Ailsie did not dare to look at her face. She sat down, and Lady Betty with her own hand helped her to a small cut of the wonderful cake. Ailsie was very hungry, and the cake was very good. She devoured a few morsels eagerly; then she ceased eating.

"Why don't you eat child?" said Lady Betty, in a voice that again made Ailsie start; and this time she ventured to look up.

She looked up, and stared as if the clouds had opened above her head. There was a little withered yellow face, with twinkling black eyes, looking down on her—a face that she had seen before. It was Penny MacCambridge, from Lough Neagh side, who was to have been her godmother only for the unfortunate pain in her heel, who was sitting there, dressed up in purple velvet and a cloth-of-gold turban. Oh, murder! What would be the end of this? Penny MacCambridge befooling all the gentry folks of the country round, pretending to be the lady of Castle Craigie? Or, stay! Whether was Penny MacCambridge acting Lady Betty MacQuillan, or had Lady Betty MacQuillan been acting Penny MacCambridge?

"Why don't you eat, child?" repeated Lady Betty, as Ailsie sat turning her piece of cake about on her plate.

"I'm hungry enough," said Ailsie, "but I cannot ate this, my lady, barrin' you want me to choke myself!"

And Ailsie held up her bit of cake, in which was wedged the ring that declared her the heiress of Castle Craigie.

Well, I need not tell how, after supper, some of the guests who were spiteful ordered their carriages and whirled away in disgust; how others, who were not spiteful, stayed and danced the morning in; how some, who were good natured, congratulated Ailsie on her good luck; how others, who were quite the reverse, yet fawned on the bewildered heroine of the evening. How Ailsie was kept close by the wonderful Lady Betty all the rest of the time; how she watched in vain for another glimpse of Hughie; how, in the end, she was conducted to a splendid bedchamber, where she was frightened out of her senses at the grandeur of the furniture, and could not get a wink of sleep for the softness of the stately bed.

The news was not long in travelling over the country, and next day, when a carriage dashed up to the foot of the lounan, Jamie and his wife thought they were prepared to receive their fortunate daughter with dignity. But when Ailsie walked in to them in a white pelisse and sandalled slippers, her bonnie dark eyes looking out at them from