

ocidents of a tale, no matter how often she repeated it. So that, even prolix as she had proved in the present instance, none of her auditors seemed fatigued. On the contrary, throughout her narrative, and most emphatically at its conclusion, the old dame was greeted with various exclamations of wonder, pleasure, and applause. All which testimonies of her talents she accepted as matters of course.

One only of her auditors wore a face of indifference on the occasion, and even ostentatiously displayed it. This was Ned Mooney, the good dame's spouse, who quietly contented himself with ejaculating, "Thanks be to the blessed St. John, she has done!" It need not be observed, that this circumstance went most bitterly to Bridogue's heart. Want of interest in any one is certainly the keenest offence the story-teller can receive; what must it be when it comes from one's own husband?

Different remarks circulated among the old people upon the matter under discussion, until at length it was recollected that Gregory Roche had been interrupted in his modest attempt to relate an anecdote connected with the house at the Inch. He was now requested by all to resume. It was not, however, an easy matter to prevail on the weaver of Wind-Gap to take up the snapped threads of his intellectual loom—another artist had been publicly preferred to himself. But the Mayor knew the weak point of the man, and whispered him that what had occurred was only according to "good manners"; that, merely through gallantry, women must have their way, all the world over; that he was assured Gregory Roche, whom everybody regarded as the "pattren of Wind-Gap in regard of mannerly conduct," would not, for the first time in his life, be forgetful of "decent behavior." Gregory was conciliated. When all were again fixed in attitudes of attention, the "pattren of Wind-Gap" began his anecdote.

"All that the pleasing vanithee, Mistress Mooney by name, tould to ye, neighbours, was a thrue story, and well rehearsed over. Everybody said after the house at the Inch was shet up that strange cries used to be hard there in the night time, and strange lights seen in the upper windies. Mistress Mooney related for you that 'tis more than twenty years sence the young woman died there. By coorse of nature the Mayor of Wind-Gap and myself were younger people that day than we are now at the present time, forrent ye. We had no Mayor at all over us then, more be token, Maurteen Maher was only Maurteen Maher in them days. Well, Maurteen brought me down by the river side a-fishing, of a very fine evening, that would tempt any one to take a slope to himself by the green bank, where the flowers were blooming to the eyesight. Ye all know, neighbours, that the house at the Inch is near to the wather's side. We were a-coming our way home. Now and then we stopped in our discourse and turned our looks to the house, for we be thought ourselves of the story that was going. It was a good two hours after the night-fall.

"Says Maurteen Maher, to me (remember he was only Maurteen Maher at that time, neighbours, or I'd call him the Mayor, to be mannerly)—'Gregory,' says he to me, 'as sure as the fishing-rod is in my hand, I see light in the top windy of the place'—Neighbours all, I looked myself, and light there was. We held our tongues for a while, like people struck with amaze. Till at last, says Maurteen to me agin, 'Gregory, I'll see what's in the house, if 'twas the Duowl runnin' with his lantern through it. Will you come with me?"

"No, Maurteen, no,' I made answer to him. 'The heavens be our safegaurd, we shouldn't meddle or make with things of that sort.'

"Come near to the house, Gregory Roche,' Maurteen said to me. Myself demurred, good neighbours; myself demurred to Maurteen Maher. But he took me by the arm, and by main force brought me with him; for he was a sthonger boy nor I was.

"We got very near to the house. The light of the windies blazed brighter. And we hard, aye, as positive sure as I'm a livin' sowl, this St. John's eve, and as sure as the saint's good fire is burnin' before me, and as sure as ye are all harkenin' to me, we hard a pitiful, doleful screech, that stopt us as if we were shot. 'Twas like the screech of a woman in her sorest trouble. Neighbours, neighbours, it was;—only more dolefuller, by far, by far."

Gregory Roche here paused. It was not without intention that with due solemnity of voice, shaking of his head, and impressive mysteriousness of visage, he had managed to bring his story to a certain pitch of interest. To measure the success of his art, therefore, Gregory paused. Anon he grew pleased with his observations; the usual marks of deep sympathy with the narrator were fully displayed. Towards Maurteen Maher, indeed, Gregory did not venture to direct his eye. As he had sometimes experienced before, he feared to find on the Mayor's lip a half waggish smile. Nor would he have been at present disappointed in his apprehensions; though perhaps his Worship was only amused with his counsel's rhetorical decorations.

"Neighbours, neighbours," resumed Gregory, not yet quite satisfied with the strong impression that he made. "Maurteen Maher that was, and the Mayor that is, will bear me out in what I say; it was, it was, indeed, a very mournful screech we heard."

"You're tellin; the story mighty well, Gregory Roche," said the Mayor. 'Twas plain to know that a livin' Christian couldn't bawl out that way, through his teeth, if they made a King of England of him."

"No, neighbours, no! Not a livin' Christhin soul would screech that away.

"Come into the house, Gregory Roche,' says Maurteen Maher, to myself, very wickedly.

"Into the house is it, Maurteen Maher?—I made answer to him. And I shook my finger at him, the way I now shake it neighbours. I did—I shook my finger at him.

"No, Maurteen Maher,' says I, 'I will not darken the door-stone of that house. 'Tis no place for honest, livin' people,' says I to him.

"I'll go myself, then,' says Maurteen Maher, pushing me away from him. Didn't you push me from you, Mayor of Wind-gap, that was Maurteen Maher then, didn't you?"

"I did in good troth," answered his Worship, smiling quietly.

"Take my advice,' says I to him, and I shook my finger at him again; 'take my counsel and don't enter there; lave the dead to their doom, to their doom,' says I. 'I will go in,' says Maurteen Maher over again. Neighbours, I was the image of one thunder-struck, by reason of his bouldness. There was no fear upon him. 'Here is the fish and the fishing-rod,' says he to myself—'it would be a pity to have them good throats lost.' Aye, indeed, neighbours, all he seemed to think about was the losin' of the throats. 'If they brake my bones, and that I can't come back to you,' says Maurteen, 'If I don't come back to you in an hour's time, go home, Gregory Roche; go your ways home, and send the throats to Mr. Helsham at the Gazebo. I promised them to him, and, dead, or alive, I'll keep my word. Send them to him, Gregory Roche, and make sale of this fishing-rod, and of every thing you'll find in my house, and give the money to the poor, for the good o' my sowl.'

"I was amazed beyant the world, neighbours. I was like unto a body turned into a pillar of salt, after a manner. And while I was in this sort o' way Maurteen Maher left me. He stayed away near an hour, and he came back with a serious face, I'll pledge myself to ye. But what he seen he never tould of."

"Would ye have my face turned round to my back, Gregory, or would ye have me be withered into a sthagown [a frost-bitten potato], for lettin' my tongue run away with my brains?"

Gregory Roche was fully satisfied at perceivin' that his contribution to the wonders of the night was well received—quite as well, indeed, as the more lengthened one of Bridogue Mooney. Therefore, it did not come into his head to reply to the Mayor's last observation. Many comments and surmises followed, which we will pass over, only noticing the more material topics.

"It was a thrue remark for Bridogue Mooney to make," said a woman with a palsied head, every shake of which threw a very effective hiatus into her speech. "'Tis mighty thrue for Bridogue Mooney to say that no right body would go to live in such a house as the house at the Inch."

"Right body, imagh!" cried Bridogue, smartly, "He's no right body, as sure as I'm an ould sinner, he is not. I'm tould he's mighty ill-favoured to look on, and elderly into the bargain, and if he hadn't witchcraft on his side is it to be believed that an ould, ugly offender of a man 'ud be able to overpersuade so many young cratures?"

"I believe, beyant any doubt," observed one of the old men of the company, "that such sin and skhandie was never known to happen in a neighbourhood as fell upon the country round the Inch house since the strange man came to live there."

"There was never the like known in the world wide," answered Bridogue. "If he was a slightly young blade that 'ud be plasing to the eye, and carried a coazin' smile upon the lips, and had a sugary tongue in his head, there wouldn't be half the surprise. But take my word over again for it, it's by witchcraft, and witchcraft alone, he comes round them. Isn't Nelly Darcy, the smith's daughter, ashamed to show her head. Isn't there Doran's crature of a colleen, not over sixteen years ould, turned from the door by her own father and mother? And isn't there Mahoney's wife, that went by the name of purty Peggy, afore Tim Mahony brought her home—(Tim Mahony, ye know, keeps the sign of the 'Hurlers' at the cross roads beyant the Inch House)—wasn't she sent to her father by reason of her husband's displeasure? Ochone! ochone!" continued Bridogue, pathetically, "the skhandie is brought on us all on account of the unsightly ould man o' the Inch! I'll tell ye, onst for all, he gives draughts to us some way or other."

"You didn't drink of his draught, Bridogue?" the Mayor facetiously inquired.

"The ould sinner! I'd throw the vessel and the liquor into his sinful eyes," Bridogue answered, with virtuous indignation.

"There's sich things done of a certain," said ould Daddy Leeach. "Everybody can spake of what the *shoolin' Bacchos* [wandering beggars], brings upon young cratures by manes of bewitched pins, and herbs, and dbrinks, sweet and plasing to the mouth, though bitter for the heart, and bad for the poor sowl. I knew in my time strange things to be used for the makin' of the love draughts. They say that the young ones of them *fouhognes* [swallows], that flies through the air from the morning till the night, taken from the nest afore their feathers graws, and the nest they're found in taken at the same time—they say that if the bird, and nest, and all is biled up together for the wicked purpose, the broth it makes will force a girl to run after a boy, or a boy to run after a girl, for the mere love, the world over."

"Is it the swallows ye made mention of, Shawn Leeach?" asked another very old man near him.

"Aye, in good thruth, Meehawl, 'twas about them swallows, the youngest of 'em, I mane, that I made mention of."

"And falke," resumed Meehawl, "therason I put the question to ye on that head is this. Very airy of a hazy morning, I was passin' by the house at the Inch—the Lord stand between us and all harm!"—here the narrator piously crossed himself: "when what should I see, lookin' towards the house, but the strange man himself, standin' outside of a windy. He was pullin' down a swallow's nest."

"An, ye seen him doin' that, Meehawl? Then, it's likely enough that Bridogue Mooney is right in her sayin'."

"I'll stand up for my sayin'," replied Bridogue Mooney. "He puts the charm on us, howsomever he finds manes to do it."

"I'll tell ye what I hard of them swallows, neighbours," said Daddy Leeach. "Them swallows, and them birds, too, that goes by the name o' willy-wagtails, I'm tould for sartin, has three drops o' the Devil's blood in them, Lord be good to us."

"'Tis often and often I took notice of both kinds of them birds, the *fouhognes* and the *spiddogues coppell*. The *spiddogue coppell* is never known to sing his verse of a song, only when the day is bitther could, and dripping wet. Then it's a mournful thing to hear him, and look at him, standin' on a cold wet stone by the road side, or by the river side, iiltin' his bit of a *croonawn*, an' lookin' about him so 'cute, and waggin' his long tail, for all the world as if he gloried in the dark rainy-day, that puts a cloud over the mind of all Christian cratures. And them swallows, agin, They skim about,