

A MINUTE'S WAIT.

Scene: The platform of Dunfaill station. In the centre, back, is a railway seat, above which is name-board painted white with "Dunfaill" in large black letters on it. Behind, for the length of the platform within view, extends a wooden paling, painted white, by which R. G. is a tall iron lamp, also painted white with the name of the station on the lantern glass. Beyond the lamp R., are some packing-cases and hampers. There is a railway barrow, L., beside which are a barrel and a pile of luggage - including a very battered truck - and some splintered and yellow-stained deal boxes conspicuously marked "Eggs".

(The train audience are supposed to view the platform from the train).

As the curtain rising is discovered the platform crowded as the evening train is about to depart. The Porter, a grizzled old man, slow in action and manner, comes on L., ringing a hand-bell.

Porter. (querulously) Take yer sates, please! - sates please! - sates, please! We're starting every minute and we're not off yet. (He crosses right, to where a gentleman and ladies are standing) This way, *Ma'am* ~~Ma'am~~ this way. We're in a mortal hurry, so we are. (He takes the gentleman's valise, and leads the way off *left*.)

(Mrs Falsey, a comely middle-aged woman, dressed with a bonnet and cape, and Mary Anne M'Mahon, a fresh looking young girl, come on hurriedly, R., carrying several large parcels. They go to the seat and stand irresolutely there, looking about them anxiously, as the Porter again comes on. *Ln*.)

Mrs. Falsey. (calls). Porter!

Porter. (going towards her). Yes ma'am - yes, Ma'am.

Mrs. Falsey. Have you got that carriage open yet?

Porter. No, ma'am - I haven't then.
 Mrs. Falsey (vexedly) I told you I would't go into them crammed carriages - and I won't. 'Tis a crying shame for ye, nothing less, not to have enough carriages for everybody on a market day.

Porter. Begor, but you 'll find plenty of room in that carriage when you get into it.

Mrs. Falsey. Musha, let us get into it now, like a good man.

X Porter. Sure, ma'am I would, with a heart and a half, if I could open, it. / But I lent my key to a ~~man~~ ^{a rat} the fair day, to stop his pipe with, and the bla-guard put it in his pocket and want off with it.

Mrs. Falsey. (in alarm). 'Twill be a nice state of things if the train goes without me now - a cue for crowd to look at her

X Porter (soothingly). It won't, ma'am. I'll get that carriage open for you. X But whisht now! - don't let them all hear us talking about it. For 'tis a grand clean carriage, with a dab of new varnish on it, and they'd be crowding into it. So sit there quiet and aisy, till I shove them into the places that's good enough for the likes of them. And then I'll come back to you.

Mrs. Falsey and Mary Anne seat (themselves) themselves piling up the parcels beside them. The Porter goes about platform, pushing off passengers, R and L., and then goes off L. Barney Domigan comes on L., with an air of leisurely haste, followed by his son Christy. Domigan is an elderly, clean-shaven man, with the appearance of a comfortable small farmer. Christy, about twenty-five, is tall and awkward, with a simple-looking face.

stands L

C. goes R

Domigan (starring about him). Where in the wide world is Andy Rourke?

Guard (looking L.,) (sharply). Are you right there?
(He puts whistle to his lips.)

HOLDS UP STICK - SLOW
Domigan. (stepping forward and waving his hand R.,
to engine). Easy now! (To Guard, snatching whistle
which he has already began to blow, from his lips).
Before you go, tell me this. Have you Tom Murnane's
goat safe and sound on the train?

Guard (lowering flag). Tom Murnane's goat? (He looks *not back*
L., and shouts). Have you ye a goat in here?

at once, as if in hurry *cue for S*
Porter (appearing L.). What goat are ye talking about?
Sure, I didn't hear tale or tidings of any goat.

(The Stationmaster, Andy Rourke, comes fussily
on R. with some papers in his hand. He is a tall
man of about sixty, spectacled, with a self-important
air, and, at the moment, a worried and somewhat
bewildered expression on his bearded face. He wears
an imposing new uniform with many brass buttons:)

to Porter
Stationmaster (fussily). What are you waiting for
now? Get off! Get off!

Porter. We're hurrying our best. What more do you
want?

Stationmaster (irritably) I'd have you hurry enough
to get the train off in time. (To Guard, angerily).
'Tis the third time this week you have the train out
late. I'm inclined to think tis done on purpose, *not so*
the way the Ballyscran and Dunfaill line would be *slow*
made the laughing-stock of the whole universe! *X*

stronger
Guard (indignantly). Sure, 'tis one thing or another
keeps me late - when it's not yourself. And now, when
I'm just starting, they're asking me about a goat.
(Raising his flag.) But I'm off now, and no more
about it.

Domigan (stepping forward and clutching the Stationmaster

by the arm). 'Twas myself was(aking) asking that. Have you Tom Murname's puckawn on the train, that he'll be expecting in Drumdoman to-night.

Stationmaster(to Guard)(flurriedly). Stop! Stop! Hold on! It will ne only a minute's wait to put ~~an~~ that goat, that I was near clean forgetting.

(The guard ~~stan~~ lowers his flag and stands sullenly.)

Domigan. 'Twas well I came in time to remind you of it. Tom Murname is not the man to stand that goat being left behind. If you did that on him, faith you'd hear more about it, with his own cousin, a director.

Stationmaster(taking off his cap and scratching his head). 'Twas queer of me now to forget it - but look at all I have to think about and the responsibility there's on me. (To Porter) Hurry up, Pat, and get that goat! Mr Domigan and myself locked it into the first-class waiting-room a couple of hours ago - when yourself of course, was nowhere to be seen.

Porter. If I was itself, I would't be putting that goat there.

Stationmaster. And why not Pat Morrissey? What safer place could I get then that room to put the goat into, and not a first-class passenger this blessed day? Do you think, now, I'd be leaving it open for all comers to be making a county club of?

Porter(slowly). Sure, that wasn't in my mind at all, at all,. I was only thinking of the parcel of ~~acbb~~ ^{quicker} cabbage plants for Lord Ballycash I locked into that room myself this morning. And begor, they may ~~be~~ as well go on by this train as by another.

Stationmaster (shouts). Thunder and turf! (To Porter) Get that goat out at once, you omadhaun you!

(As the Stationmaster hurries of L., to the waiting-room, followed by the Porter and Guard and a considerable (term) portion of the crowd, Mrs. Falsey and Mary Anne come on L.,)

Mrs. Falsey. (laughingly). There 'll be another minute's wait now - but what hurry is on us? And sure, I'd sooner be sitting out here in the air than in that carriage, where the smell of paint is enough to kill you. (She and Mary Anne sit on seat, leaving parcels on the ground.)

Domigan (*largely - broadly* seating himself beside Mrs Falsey and taking out his pipe) 'Tis all the pity in the world i'm not traveling with you, for there's nothing like tobacco for smothering the smell of paint.

Mrs. Falsey. We'll be able to have ~~you~~ little chat now - so 'tis an ill wind that blows nobody good.

Domigan. Sure we will (He lights his pipe) *Puff.*

Mrs. Falsey. Here's Christy I haven't said a word to yet. He ~~was~~ only a garsoon, you might say, when I saw him last, and now look what a fine man he's ~~gon~~ grown! (To Christy) How are you, Christy?

Domigan. Oh, he's big enough and strong enough, if it comes to that.

(Christy, disturbed in staring in the direction of the waiting-room, goes and shakes hands with Mrs. Falsey. He then stands at the end of the seat near Mary Anne, who is eating bananas. She makes room for him on the seat, and gives him a banana.)

Mrs Falsey. (admiringly) (~~Small-credit-to-him,-for~~) You've filled out wonderful, Christy avick, that promised to be such a beanstalk!

Domigan (discontentedly). Small credit, to him, for it isn't too much work of any kind he does be doing

their carriage again. Christy who has risen from the packing case, looks after them and then walks about.)

Porter(sighing wearily). ^{BROADER} A nice day's work ^{blessed} we had, God help us! - All on account of that ~~damned~~ puckawn! Wish! but I feel sore in every bone my body as if I handled and excursion crowd full of bad whiskey.

Stationmaster. Well, 'tis over and done with now, and I won't say anything more out of respect for Mr Tom Murname. But I'll never keep the train waiting again for all the goats in the county. (He looks at his watch and starts.) Heavens above! - thirty-five minutes behind time! (to Guard irascibly) What are you doing there, Jim O'Brian! Do you ever mean to start all at! Get on, now - get on - get on! ^{PUSH CAP UP}

Guard(looking coolly at stationmaster). Sure is it my fault we're not up to time? I was ready to take the train out just thirty-five minutes ago - but faith you were not. (To Porter bustlingly) Are you right there, Pat? (He raises his green flag.) ^{v. cool} ^{not back}

^{hard} Porter. I'm hoping I'll be in a minute or two. But sure you can see with your own eyes that the passengers is all over the platform again. (He looks around him, and then walks backwards and forwards shoving the passengers off, R. and L., to their carriages, assisted by the Guard, as he shouts.) Take yer sates, plase! - sates plase! - sates, plase! Get in - get in - ye had time enough and to spare to say good-bye. Och! stay behind if ye like, but the train is off now!

(As the passengers re9enter the train, ^{Mrs.} Tom Kinsella and his wife hurry ^{up} on from R. laden with fish baskets. Kinsells is a rough man in fishing garb, and Mrs. Kinsella is a ^(steutly) sturdy middle-aged woman dressed in dark clothes and ^(waiting) wearing a check apron and a dark shawl over her head and crossed to the back where it is knotted. They dump down baskets

want to put their eyes on sticks to keep a watch on some of the likes of ye!

Mrs. Kinsella (aggressively). *Botheration* ~~Bad cess~~ to some people that ~~thinks themselves~~ admirals by reason of a few ^{v.} brass buttons on their coats! (She clutches at a ~~button~~ ^{meaningfully} of the Stationmaster coat). (To her husband) ~~In with them anywhere, Tom, till I get the other from the ass-cart. (To the Stationmaster). Three baskets here for the market, and one² in the cart for the ² manager of the Pavilion Hotel, no less.~~ Will that please you?

2 or 200

Stationmaster. Four or four hundred - 'tis all the same to me. 'Tis ~~too~~ ^{late} now to consign anything. So take your fish away again ~~Tom~~ ^{Mrs.} Kinsella.

Kinsella. Don't try any of your domineering over me, Mr. Roarke - I won't stand for it. ~~Begor~~ if it was only baskets here you'd refuse to take, you'd hear about it, with ~~them~~ ^{them} expected for sure in Ballyscran market at cockshout in the morning, and it a Friday too!

Stationmaster. I don't care if it was a week of Fridays all in one! (To Guard). Jim O'Brien, what are you waiting for now?

Mrs. Kinsella. ~~But there's the Hotel basket, as I was going to tell you when you jumped down my throat Begor, if you don't take that one, it will have to go by motor car and the company pay for it. Ist't that what all the hurry was about? Don't you know the Directors have a meeting in Ballyscran?~~

Stationmaster. The directors' meeting is no business of yours, ~~Tom~~ ^{Mrs.} Kinsella and it doesn't take place till ~~to-morrow~~. If they want a pick of fish for ~~luch~~ ^{lunch} then, it will be early enough for them by the morning train.

Kinsella. A pick of fish for lunch, ^{is it?} ~~Begor~~, - how

Mrs. Falsey. (with a deprecatory gesture). I won't say another word. I never believed repeating neighbours' talk - a shut mouth catches no flies.

Domigan. (persistently). But it would be well for me to know all about Annie's and Kate's matches, ^{the other daughters.} to judge what I'd best be doing myself. For you see now -

Mrs. Falsey. (with good-humoured vexation). Arrah, don't make me say another word, like a good man, when I don't want to. Why would I be interfering with that match of yours and making enemies? Won't I be in need of the good word for my own children by and by? Sure, here's this little girl I must see to getting settled as soon as I can.

Domigan. (glancing at Mary Anne). Faith, I'd never dream yourself had a girl so grown as that. *lean forward*

Mrs. Falsey. (indignantly). Musha, now, do you want to make me into an old woman all at once! Don't you know that my eldest girl was only fourteen this spring? But I don't wonder Mary Anne Here - my brother Pat's child - is a stranger to you, for you didn't see her for years.

Domigan. (indifferently). So that's Pat M'Mahon's child, is she? Whethen, but I wouldn't know her now.

Mrs. Falsey. (proudly). Yes she indeed, she's a fine big girl now, God bless her. And Mike and myself are beginning to think it full time to marry her off and we'd be glad to see her settled when a good man offers, though dear knows it would break my heart to lose her.

Domigan. (somewhat sourly). 'Tisn't easy to settle girls those time unless they have something to their name.

Mrs. Falsey. (laughing). It is not, then. there's so many hunting for the money. *you may as well set up a nurse Mary Anne*

Domigan. Poor Pat M'Mahon! 'Tween't much good he did for himself by going off to America.

Mrs. Falsey. (sighing). It was not. Well, well he had his faults, and he paid for them - rest his soul!

Domigan. Only for that he'd make money out in the States, like the rest, for ther's no denying he was a smart man.

Mrs. Falsey (smiles, and then turns to Mary Anne). You may as well get up a minute, Mary Anne, to stretch your legs. You've been sitting either here or in the train till you must be stiff.

(Mary Anne jumps up, and strolls about (to stretch the platform. She then goes to Christy, and the pair sit on the packing-case and converse.)

Mrs. Falsey (admiringly) ^{it looks fine} There's a fine girl for you! Isn't she worth twenty of your Mary Ryans You won't beat her looks in the county!

Domigan. (indifferently). She looks a neat girl.

Mrs Falsey. (warmly) And she's as good as she looks - oh, every bit! There's not a better housekeeper in all Ireland. I don't know how I'll let her go, she's such a help and comfort to me.

Domigan. All the same, I'm sure you'll be glad to get her settled - if you can. You have enough cares of your own without having to look after Pat's daughter.

Mrs. Falsey. (slightly indignantly). God knows but Mary Anne was always welcome to the shelter of our roof and her little bite and sup. And she would be so, as long as Mike or myself lived even if she hadn't a penny of her own.

Guard(to porter curtly). Are you right yet?

Porter. You may go in ^{a)} second, but there's no use in having some Christian massacred under the train by reason of it starting too soon, like that contrairy pig the other day. Sates plase! - sates, plase! - *clock* (He stops short, and puts his hand to his ear.) Musha but what's that bell ringing for now!

(A telephone bell is heard ringing violently, L.)

Stationmaster (To guard) Holdon! don't go till we know what this is for. (To Porter distractedly). Pat like a good boy, see who's on the telephone).

(Mrs Falsey and Domigan - who carries some of her parcels cross to L., and stand a moment saying farewells. Christy and Mary Anne talk together near by. Loud talk is heard at the telephone after which the Porter re-enters L.,hurriedly.)

Porter(pantingly). Oh, meela murdher! 'Tis a blessing yer were not off, or ye'd have to be backing into the station again.

Stationmaster(sharply). Well, what's it now?

Porter. Just that you're to put two waggons on to the train - that's all.

Stationmaster (violently). Holy Mosas! Who has the impudence to ask that now, and the train nearly an hour behind time!

Porter The stationmaster of Ballyscran himself, and no other. "Is the mail train left yet? says he. "No " says I "but"twill be leaving in half a second now, please God, if the engine isn't off the boil" "Well then "says he "keep it till yer couple on two waggons that's wanted here to-night by the manager". SaysHe "for if the train goes without them, they'll have to be sent special. And woe betide ye" he says " if they don't turn up her@at all!

Mrs. Falsey. (insinuatingly). I'm ready to go to Attorney Holan when I get a good offer. And the three hundred and fifty pounds goes with Mary Anne the day she mattsies - every penny of it.

Domigan. You couldn't do fairer than that. (He pauses thoughtfully.) Do you know, now 'tis mortal sorry I am --- (He stopsshort, pursing his lips)

Mrs. Falsey. (carelessly). ^{about} I don't know what you were going to say, of course. But talking of matches reminds me again ^{about} that match with Patsy Ryan you're so bent on.

Domigan. (quickly). Oh come now, I'm not so bent on it as all that. In fact, I was staying here to look into things easy and cautious. And Now that I think over everything. X

Mrs. Falsey. (laughing). Sure now, I've only to think of Mary Ryan beside my own Mary Anne - that's enough for me! (Laughs again) And Mary Anne, too, baving a fortune that 's not all in my eye;

Domigan. (slightly put out). 'Tis easy enough to laugh But of course X that match with P t Rayn would never enter my head if I saw yourself only a week ago. Badad, I wouldn't ask for a nicer girl for my boy than Mary Anne M'Mahon.

Mrs. Falswy. (pluming herself). Oh Well but it isn't every one I'd let Mary Anne go to now, X I won't say but that if things were agreeable and old friend like yourself would get the preference. X But from a word or two you dropped about Christy - ^{and}

Domigan. (with feigned astonishment). And what did I say about my noy that would make you think twice over a match with him.

Mrs Falsey. Mary Anee is a neat, thrifty girl and 'twould break the heart of her if the man she married was an idle slob.

~~over to~~ Christy at once, of course. I can tell you Mary Anne would be the lucky girl coming into such a place without any one to stand over her.

Mrs. Falsey (impressed). I won't deny at all I think it a promising match.

Domigan. (lowering his voice). And it ~~wasn't~~ won't be so long as the years go, before I'll be able to claim the old age pension. (lowering his voice still more) And then I'll keep only a couple of hundreds I have in the bank, and Christy and his wife will find what they'll get worth having.

Mrs. Falsey. (delighted). That's quite enough, We'll be down with you on Sunday, please God. I'll answer for Mike so you may call the match made.

(They shake hands. And as they do so the S tationmaster the Guard the Porter and the crowd come on again, L.)

Stationmaster (groaningly). ^{Heaven} God knows but 'tis a dog's lifeat best to be a stationmaster, but 'tis the ^{last word.} ~~devel~~ and ~~all~~ on the Ballyscran and Dunfaill line. 'Twill be the death of me if I last it out! (With an outburst of desperate energy) Well are you ready there. - are you ready? Pat, shut all the doors now, whether they're in or out. Look alive, now! - look alive!

(The Guard puts passengers off, R, and the Porter puts them off, left Mrs. Falsey assisted by Domigan again gathers up parcels and they both cross to L. where Chrisy and Mary Anne are already standing.)

Porter Take yer staes plase! - plase sates Plase! - sates, plase! ^{For God's sake} ^{will} get in, once and for all and ~~don't~~ be keeping us standing here all night.

Christy (to Mary Anne) It isn't much you can teach me about girls!

Mary Anne (nudging him, laughing gaily) What a lad you are.

(Christy playfully picks Mary Anne's handkerchief from her belt, and puts it into his pocket)

Domigan (looking smilingly at the couple) Them two arre honeymooning already.

Mrs Falsey. (laughing). Faith, they're great friends, and won't want much persuading, wither. But, of course, your're coming with us in the train now. We'll be together as far as Piper's Ford, and can have a good talk overeverything. Glory be to God! Who'd think half an hour ago our meeting would wnd like this!

(Domigan Mrs Falsey Christy and Mary Anne, all in high spitits go off L, To carriage. There are grantic fussings and leave-takings on the platforms.)

Stationmaster (moving to centre, and waving his arms from side to side) Be off - be off - be off! Oh thunder and t~~agg~~ turf this beats Banagher! (In a shout as he looks at his watch). Fifty-five minutes late!

Domigan. (reappearing L.) Mr Rourke.

Stationmaster (sharply). Get back to your carriage, Mr Donigan if you're traveling al all! Well, what ails you now.

Domigan, (laughing). Only this. I', dying to know for sure that Tom Murnane's puckawn is on the train safe and sound. I forgot to ask you.

Stationmaster (snorting angerily). The ^{mistfortune?} devil fly away with Tom Murnane's puckawn.

Domigan (laughing). And Lord Ballycash's cabbage plants? (He goes off again L.)

Stationmaster (bitterly and in jerks, as he gesticulates frantically to the Guard and Porter). They're packed up snug in that same puckawn - ~~bad cess to him~~, Faith yes - together with most of the brand^{new} paper that was on the first-class waiting-room walls!

29.

Oh, ther'll be wigs on the green when I send in my next report! (To the Guard furiously). Why are you standing there like an eejit, and we disgraced with lateness already! ^{amados} Get away, if you're not asleep (He stamps his foot)

Guard (to Porter in a slow low tone of concentrated exasperation). Are yight there, Patrick Morrissey.?

Porter. (impatienly) Sure now, why wouldn't I be! Don't ask me that again for the ~~love~~ ^{mercy's sake} of God!

(The Guard waves his green flag and blows his whistle and begins walking backwards to L. The engine gives three blasts, R. And then begins to puff.)

Stationmaster and Porter (warning back crowd, who are waving handkerchiefs etc., to dep rting train)
Stand back, there! - stand back!

The-End

Curtain.