

of Finn Water. Her delight when he told her of his plan was his compensation.

'I'm thinking, mother, of taking a trip across to the old country, just to see if everything is still the same, and I couldn't do better than go with you now. Jim means to come as well, but I guess you'll be as safe as a bird in a nest when I take you in charge. And, then, I'll see if you are the great traveller you've been pretending to be, and hear all the tales you'll be weaving to the neighbors. So we can start any minute for Ireland and home.'

On the evening of their departure Jim's wife addressed him affably from the head of the dinner table. There was a cold smile of triumph in her steel-grey eye.

'That was a good riddance, James,' she said.

'What was?' he asked, absently.

'Getting the old lady to take herself off so quietly.'

Her husband looked at her doubtfully. For a second he had no comprehension of her meaning; then in a flash he understood. He rose up in his place like an avenger, while the blood forsook his cheek, and his lips grew strained and white as he strove to speak. Was that his voice issuing from between those white lips?

'My God, woman, do you know of whom you speak? It is my mother,—my own old mother, with her pure, honest soul and all her simple, loving homeliness, as different from your artificial existence as heaven is from earth! And you to torture her day after day with your cold superiority, training my little children to scorn and mock at her who gave their father life and taught him all he knows of faith and truth! You have driven her away from me, when together we might have made her last years happy. May God forgive you, for I cannot!'

He could say no more; the bitterness of those months, in which he had learned to know the hidden character of the wife he had loved and treasured, rose in a flood that almost stopped his breathing, as he hurriedly left the table.

The well-bred lady smiled indulgently, with an unlifting of her arched eyebrows towards her eldest daughter.

'He will get over it, my dear, and be just the same as ever in a little while. It was a hard fight to get rid of that old nuisance; but the deed is done now, and our friends shall not have the power to stab me again by asking me why my husband's mother does not lunch or dine with us, and is she in any way objectionable. She has gone back now to her pigs and potatoes, that she should never have been taken from. Come, dear, the carriage is waiting, and we will forget all this trouble in Bernhardt's acting to-night.'

Had she only opened the door of her husband's study, as she swept by in her silken draperies, she might not have been so assured of the completeness of her triumph. He knelt, shaken with sobs, before the chair in which his mother used to sit while he wrote his letters at the desk beside her. He thought of the sad old face as he had seen it last, looking at him from the deck of the steamer, full of yearning love and self-renunciation. From that hour of supreme sorrow and regret the image of the dear one, strangely found and as strangely lost again, took a place in the heart's core of her son, where the love of wife and child was never strong enough to penetrate and disturb her sanctuary.

### III.

All day the September sun had smiled down on the gathering in of the harvest in the valley; and now, as the twilight's grey, misty veil over the mountain tops, he withdrew himself into a rosy radiance, that fell upon the fruitful earth like a farewell benediction. The harvesters had departed to their homes and to the hard-earned supper that awaited them. Peace brooded over the fields, where the corn stood stacked about the graves of dead poppies; and on the uplands, where the hayricks gleamed like little hillocks of gold on the fresh green grass.

It was the loveliest scene in the world, Hugh Diver thought, as he contentedly smoked his pipe in a corner of the settle that filled up his wide kitchen window. Aye, and he was lucky enough, thank God, that he could hold his bit of land through the bad times until the change for the better came. There was something worth counting in the old stocking now—something that would help to settle his little Madgie in a home of her own some day—here his reflections were rudely broken in upon upon the approach of young, bare-legged Patsy Doherty at breakneck speed down the loaming. He rushed, panting, into the kitchen, and cried out in a tone of imperious importance:

'Ye're to hurry up at once to McGrath's, Hugh—you and Mary—for old Peggy Brady's come back and I'm to warn the neighbors.'

Before the astonished Hugh could remove his pipe to make a single comment, the boy had departed as quickly as he came.

'Hear that now!' said Mary, throwing up her hands in amazement. 'Peggy left her grand sons and come back to us again! I'll never believe such a miracle till I see it.'

It was only too true, as the excited neighbors found out in time; for there she sat, travel-stained but happy with her boy, by Molshie's fireside. Such a cead mile faite as there was for her! 'Why, it seemed as if the whole country had turned out to pay her honor. They never do things by halves in 'Dark Donegal.'

When Pat saw how contented and safe she was he had less reluctance in leaving her, promising to return the following spring. How she cried over him in that farewell, and blessed him, not in the stranger's speech, but in the tongue that was 'your father's before you, and is the sweetest and most loving in the world! And may you carry my blessing to the end of your days, and may it help to open the gates of heaven to you when your hour has come, my bouchal bragh!'

Then she settled down to her new existence as a rich woman in the valley. On Sundays she would dress herself in the black silk gown, covering it carefully with her best checker apron, pinning across her slender, bent shoulders the little white shawl that was one of Jim's first gifts. Her finest cap with worked borders, and, oh, so snowy, and a gorgeous binder that rivalled all the colors of the rainbow, added dignity to her appearance.

So attired, after Mass she would sit in Molshie's armchair in the parlor, receiving visits from her friends, and never weary of relating her adventures beyond the seas. Pat's purse of sovereigns was always kept in her bosom; and on important occasions, especially when any doubt as to her wealth was hinted at—there were some not above teasing the poor soul, in a harmless way—she would display the purse with great pride, and even go to the extent of allowing a favored one to handle the precious gold.

She was generous to a fault, now that she had a chance of repaying a little of the kindness shown her in her years of want and wandering. The little Careys appeared that winter in new and comfortable attire; which they wore with an ill-at-ease though proud air; and their boastings of Granny's possessions gave them an unwonted importance among their playmates. Molshie was Peggy's almoner, and to her good sense much of Peggy's discretion in helping the needy might be traced. And there was no want of appreciation; for the talk went on everywhere, as talk will:

'Well, I'm saying 'tis little thanks one meets with in this world; but sure poor Peggy's the one that remembers. And it wasn't much that she got from any one: only the shelter and the bit—poor enough, God knows; but it brought the good luck to both them and her in the end.'

Of the years she lived with her friends in the valley, much might be written. Her last days were peaceful and happy; and when, one summer night, the great angel, sweeping silently into Molshie's, laid his hand on a feebly-beating heart, that still guarded its precious wealth of faith and hope and love, there rose a burst of grief as profound as it was sincere. And in time, when the grass had grown green over her grave, when greater dead would have been forgotten, she was still remembered and regretted, in virtue of her truth and tenderness, the holiness of her blameless life and patient dying.—'Ave Maria.'

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