

charge of certain of Mr. Maloney's interests in America. He tells me that the old gentleman was immensely rich, and has left large bequests to religion and charity both in New England and in his native land, besides doing well by his relatives. But why should he have thought of me?' continued Matilda. 'Anyone would have done as much as I did for him. Of course, as his lawyer said, he was rather eccentric, as well as generous. We saw the eccentricity of the dear old man for ourselves.'

'There's only one explanation,' said the mother. 'God put it into the man's heart to be true friend in need which he promised you at parting.'

And 'God rest his kindly soul,' oft prayed the little household, as health came back with prosperity to its beloved head.—'The Holy Family.'

NORAH DILLON'S DREAM

CHAPTER I.

It was Christmas Eve in a Leinster home. Norah Dillon sat by the cheery fire that blazed and crackled on the open hearth. She felt tired, for she had been busy all day since early morning, and only now had she found a moment in which to rest. Everything was finished, all was in readiness for the great festival that is honored as truly in the peasant homes of Ireland as in any land beneath the sun. The last bit of holly was fitted into its place among the pictures and other little ornamental articles on the whitewashed wall, the tables and chairs and stools were scoured until they became white as when they left the carpenter's hands, the milk-cans, saucepans, and other kitchen utensils shone like silver in the light of the fire, the big Christmas candle was placed in the old-fashioned candlestick in the centre of the table opposite the kitchen window, the kettle was crooning contentedly over the fire ready for action, and all that two skilful hands could accomplish had been done to make the poor home as cheerful and festive-looking as possible. No wonder that Norah felt weary as she sank into the old chair of woven rods beside the fire to rest until the arrival of her father and mother from the market town, a couple of miles off, whither they had gone to do the Christmas shopping, as was their wont.

They were simple people, Mike Dillon and his wife Kate—poor, as poverty is spoken, but rich in the blessings of peace and health and contentment of mind. Norah was their only living child, though God had sent them six children besides her, and had called them home again—some in the dawn of babyhood, some in the early days of joyous boyhood and girlhood, and one, the eldest, Jim, who had emigrated and found a grave in the land of the stranger. It was the sad story so often repeated—the young, soft, country-reared peasant going into a life-devouring, smoky western city and then, uncongenial, over-burdening toil, hardship, consumption—and death. It was a great blow to the poor parents not so much on account of his death as for they knew how to welcome the Holy Will of God; but that he should be so far away from them in a cold, strange land, with no one, in all likelihood, to kneel by his grave and offer up a prayer for his soul. They would not mind so much if he was sleeping with the others in the little churchyard at home, where they could go on the Sunday morning and mingle their tears with the dust above his breast, and where they themselves would join him some day.

It was hard at first, but the silent years and their faith in the all-seeing Father softened the great sorrow, and then they had Norah—she had been spared to them, and she was their comforter and consoler, her loving care, her cheering words and hearty laughter brought back into their lives the gladness of former days.

Lately, however, the semblance of a shadow had begun to creep around them again. Just a few days before this Christmas Eve, Norah had received a letter from a girl in America, an old school companion, urging her to leave the dullness of home behind and to go where she could quickly earn a fortune. She told of her own success in obtaining a fine position, mentioning that Norah would be sure to find the same in a short time, and offered to pay her passage out to the New World if she would only consent to go. The old people were opposed to such a course—they would rather keep her at home, and the memory of Jim's fate haunted them. But Norah was entirely bent upon going, and after coaxing a sort of semi-approval that sounded like a refusal from her parents, she answered her friend's letter, accepting her offer gratefully. She had in her nature that inexorable hankering after the great world outside the circle of home, which seems to be placed like a curse over the children of Ireland, especially her daughters, and in the realisation of which so many of

them are sadly disappointed, meeting instead of the fortune which their fancies had fashioned out for them, misery, humiliation, destruction, and oft-time sinful death.

Eamon Fitzgerald, Norah's playmate in childhood, her schoolmate and friend, a strenuous worker for Ireland as secretary of the local branch of the Gaelic League, had pointed out to her the dangers attendant on emigration, and had almost begged of her to abandon the idea of going, but all was useless; she had finally decided to go in the early spring, and no amount of entreaty could induce her to alter that decision. Thoughts of Christmases gone by and of others yet to come mingled together in her mind as she lay back in the old chair and gazed dreamily into the warm heart of the fire.

Where would she be this time twelve months? What would she be doing? Who would be near her and speaking to her? Visions of a city home, of brilliant lights, of comfort and wealth and all that a girl could wish for flashed before her mind's eye, bright and very near at first, then growing dimmer, and fading away until at last they wooed her unto the realms of sleep.

And then there came a dream. She saw the hills of home and the dear friends and the old haunts of childhood fading away, passing from view slowly but surely; she heard her mother's voice raised in a wail of lamentation, and she saw her father's face reproachful and sad and worn, entreating her to remain at home; she felt the hot tears scorching her cheek and blinding her eyes, but the tempter's whisper spoke into her ear: 'There is wealth beyond the sea. Come, you will find it, and then you can return.' She nerved herself against pain and grief, and went toward where the wealth was waiting. Then home and all were blotted out and over the vast ocean she was speeding. To right and left, in front and rear, was a boundless waste of waters farther than the eye could reach, hundreds of faces were before her eyes, hundreds of forms were around her, but still she felt alone and friendless among them all, and that chilling loneliness was the first shadow on the bright vision that lured her away from home.

CHAPTER II.

At last the weary sea journey came to an end, and into a great noisy city she went, where the people went about their business at a break-neck speed, where it was a race for gold from morning till night and again from dark till dawn, for no one seemed to rest at all—everywhere it was bustle and roar and confusing, deafening clamor of many voices.

Then she thought the hand that had beckoned to her over land and sea, and the voice that had tempted her to cast away the simplicity of home and to seek for the pleasure of cities, were still forever in death—sunstroke or something they told her, those careless busy people who had known her friend, had carried away the one prospect which was hers in emigrating, and she she found herself wandering from place to place in search of something to do—something to keep away the wolf of hunger, who was even now staring her in the face. Alas for her dreams of luxury and happiness.

Again there was a change in the scene. She was toiling in the factory with hundreds of others, in a cloudy gas-lit room where the roar of machinery, the crash of wheels revolving and meeting and dashing around at lightning speed, seemed to still the very beating of her heart and beat upon her brain until the sight almost went from her eyes in the effort to keep control of her senses. Bold eyes stared at her, she heard the insulting comments of brazen girls on the Irish 'greemie,' and the harsh, jeering laughter that followed each vulgar jest, until her hands clenched in pain, and she prayed that God would send her relief in death. Now and then, in fancy, the sound of the Angelus came to her ears borne on the winds of home, the birds sang out their greetings to her from hedges, and the scent of the brown bog refreshed her like a draught of wine. Weakness, she imagined, at last overcame her; she could work no more, and dismissal from her employment was the result.

Out into the loveless, rushing city she went, weak and sick and hungry, without a friend—only God, and even He seemed to have forsaken her. On she wandered, fearing to stop or to return until the dark night came down, filling her with terror and despair; out from the dark places hands were stretched to clutch her, mocking laughter sounded in her ears and tempting voices whispered to her to sell her purity, to barter her soul, for food and shelter; but a vision rose up before her eyes, of the old chapel at home, and the beauty of her first Communion day came back to her. She saw the altar and the old white-haired parish priest, she knelt by the rails and watched him coming down to her and place the Sacred Particle on her tongue, and O! the great unspeakable joy that swelled up in her heart and made