

The melody to which the words were wedded was weird—

It was fitful and wild as the breeze,
It wandered about into several keys—

but the Thurston girls hailed the performance with—

'Lovely! Now, couldn't you dance a reel or a fling, or something?'

Again Cyril interposed.

'Miss Baird must not tire herself out for our amusement,' he said. 'Suppose you favor us with a horn-pipe, Amy? Or perhaps Hilda will do a Lancashire step-dance?'

These requests reduced the girls to wrathful silence, and Miss Baird rose to depart.

'I've enjoyed myself fine,' she said, as Mr. Thurston handed her into the carriage as if she had been a duchess.

'Isn't she a beauty?' cried Hilda, as he re-entered the drawing-room.

'She has magnificent eyes and a perfect profile,' he answered. Aunt Latham was right in saying that.

'Well, she has given us something to laugh at,' the girls declared with almost hysterical mirth. 'It will be splendid fun to draw her out.'

'Perhaps she will return the compliment,' he said—an absurd suggestion that met with scorn and derision.

The middle of the week brought a note from Aunt Latham asking her nieces and nephew to a musical 'At Home.' The nieces decided not to go, declaring that they could not stand 'another dose of Miss Baird'; and they felt that there was no danger of Cyril's being captivated by such an outlandish person. Consequently he presented himself at Mrs. Latham's without his usual bodyguard.

He was exchanging greetings with his numerous acquaintances when his aunt tapped his shoulder with her fan and murmured an introduction. He bowed to a slender girl in creamy voile, and he recognised the splendid eyes and the perfect profile. But the complexion was delicately clear, and the soft fair hair curled away from a brow of immaculate whiteness.

'We have met before,' said she, as the hostess passed on to other guests; though you seem to have forgotten.'

'You look so different in evening dress!' he faltered; and a dimple came and went in her dainty chin.

'Don't you admire the national costume of bonnie Scotland, then?' she asked demurely.

'Have I seen it? I suspected you were laughing at us—that somewhere lurked a hoax, a practical joke. Now I am sure. But why, wherefore?'

'Call it retaliation,' she suggested.

'I am still at sea. Won't you help me to the shore of understanding? Here is a quiet nook where you might kindly explain the mystery.'

He held aside a curtain beyond which was a balcony overhanging the dewy garden. After a brief hesitation she stepped forth and he followed.

'Half a dozen words will suffice,' she said, rather coldly. 'When people discuss absent persons, and accuse them of unworthy schemes and motives, they should be sure that those persons really are absent, or else prepare for reprisals.'

'To what or to whom is the allusion?'

'Oh, to a certain dialogue in a certain compartment when my dear old father heard himself and me and our nationality ridiculed!'

Memory gave one of her lightning flashes, and the thunderclap of comprehension followed. Cyril's face burned; he stood still and silent.

'Father was hurt and angry,' the girl resumed; 'and I was rather worse when he told me. So I masqueraded. I owe my song to "Punch"—the journal, not the beverage. But I hope I have convinced the Misses Thurston that I do not wish to attract their brother. I was at some pains to achieve the opposite result.'

'We ought to be ashamed of ourselves,' he conceded.

'Why do you say "we" and "our"? ' she asked in a gentler tone. 'On both occasions you behaved as a gentleman.'

'Thank you! But you must allow me to apologise for my sisters. You can afford to forgive, as the laugh is with you.'

'Please don't. I am not at all proud of my exploit now. It will have to be a case of mutual forgiveness.'

When the guests had dispersed and Madge Baird was brushing her long hair before her toilet glass, Mrs. Latham, plump and stately in her dressing-gown, walked into the room and subsided into the easiest chair.

'My child,' said she, 'you will give people cause to talk, and I don't want my nephew branded as a fortune-hunter.'

'Oh, I have been branded as a fortune-huntress!' replied Madge. 'But why these reproaches?'

'Do you know how long you were on that balcony with Cyril Thurston?'

'A few minutes, I dare say. Why?'

'Well, if three solemn quarters of an hour seemed only a few minutes, I have nothing more to say except good-night!'

It was the prime of summer-time when Mrs. Hopkins announced to her lord and master that Cyril Thurston was engaged to be married to that rich and pretty Miss Baird.

'I thought his sisters detested her,' said he.

'Oh, not now! And what if they do? Cyril and she are devoted to each other; and, after all, it is only that which matters.'

The Catholic World

ENGLAND—Exiled Religious

A number of the Brothers of St. Gabriel's Institute, who were compelled to leave France owing to the operations of the Associations Law, have now settled at Beaconsfield House, near Plymouth, where they intend to carry on the instruction of the deaf and dumb, in which work the institution was engaged in France for close on a century.

The First of the Oxford Converts

Father Grant, S.J., who died at St. Beuno's College, North Wales, on November 18, aged eighty-four, was the first of the converts of the Oxford Movement. He was received into the Church in 1841 whilst an undergraduate at Oxford. He was followed by the late Canon Bernard Smith in 1843. Newman 'came over' in 1845. Father Grant served at St. Francis Xavier's in the fifties.

Nazareth Nuns for New Zealand

On December 17 six Sisters of Nazareth—Mother M. de Pazzi (Fahy), Archdiocese of Tuam; Sister M. Menna (Louney), Diocese of Killaloe; Sister M. Domenica (O'Sullivan), Cork; Sister St. Benedict (Frost), Killaloe; Sister Martha Mary (Fenton), Limerick; and Sister John of Calvary (Crowe), Ballarat—from the Mother House, Hammersmith, left London for Christchurch. The little missionary band received the special blessing of our Holy Father the Pope. The Sisters arrived in Wellington on Wednesday, of last week.

Altered Times

Archbishop Bourne officiating on November 21 at the ceremony of consecration of a Bishop at Tower Hill is one of those revenges which time sometimes brings about. The new Bishop—the Rev. William Miller, O.M.I., Vicar Apostolic of the Transvaal Colony—belongs to the Oblate Order, which opened an establishment some forty years ago at Tower Hill, close to the spot where Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Sir Thomas More were executed in 1535 at the instance of Henry VIII. The church where the ceremony took place is dedicated to the English martyrs.

Missionaries for the Congo

The 'Catholic Herald' states that the Superior of the Catholic Missionary College of St. Joseph's, Mill Hill, Middlesex, has completed arrangements with the Congo authorities whereby six English missionaries will proceed to that region early this year. These missionaries will be temporarily under the existing ecclesiastical authorities, but later on an independent English Vicariate will probably be established.

Ecclesiastical Music

In communicating to his clergy the instruction of the Holy Father on ecclesiastical music, the Archbishop of Westminster says all the points it prescribes are to be introduced gradually and with prudence. He intimates that a Diocesan Commission is being formed; meanwhile he advises that the Salford 'List of Church Music' be consulted. As it is contrary to the instruction that 'women should form part of the official choir,' if the clergy are unable to have harmonised music without the aid of female voices, it will be necessary to confine the singing to music of a congregational and unison character. No instrument except the organ is to be used in the churches save by special permission, and he trusts the permission will not be asked.