

'I see. Yes—that explains something. Why don't you sell them now?'
 'My father, sir, took sick, an' was very bad, an' wan day with another, sir, I spent me little money; an' other boys got me customers, sir, an' me heart was gone, an' me mother an' sisters were starvin', an' the rent wasn't paid, sir—an' the Lord save you and yours from tastin' the bitter cup!'
 'But how could a boy suffering all this be so full of fun and nonsense as you were yesterday, and as you would have been to-day if everything had gone as you expected?' the doctor asked, in a kinder tone.

'Oh, sir, there's many ways in the world, an' them as travels wan don't know the stones in another! Two or three days, sir, I shivered bare-footed in the cowl, and told the people what I've told you just now, sir, an' I couldn't get a sixpence; so I thought o' trying another tack, an' your kind face, sir, made me try it on ye—an' that's the whole truth, sir. I'm no blackguard, if I look wan.'

'Very well put in—very well told, Thady. But I've something more to say yet. The house you live in is mine, and your landlord is my tenant.'

'Then I hope,' said Thady, 'he's a better tenant than landlord.'

'Well, he tells me that yesterday you lied to him that you hadn't a shilling in the world.'

'Lied to him! Sure, it was the blessed truth, sir!'

'But he says he threatened you with the poor-house and the reformatory, and that this morning your mother found money to pay the rent in full. Now, you must have had this money at the time or you must have stolen it since, for he says you are very poor.'

'Ah, look at him, your honor! Think o' the back-biter! He knows I am poor, he says, an' he threatens me with the reformatory for not payin' me mother's rent. An' maybe he didn't tell ye, sir, that he told me that I might have begged money as well as shoes, an' abused me for the very kindness which your lady had for me. An' then he says I stole the money, an' still he puts it in his pocket 'idout a tear.'

'Thady, you have made the case bad for your accuser, but you haven't helped yourself yet. Tell me honestly, where did this money come from?'

'It was loaned to me, sir. Maybe, sir, ye think the impudent little blackguard has no friends; but there's a God above who remembers the widow an' the fatherless, an' He sent a friend to us when we was all in the sorrow. An' it isn't the first good thing he's done, sir. He's come out of his bed in the bitter night, time an' again, to relieve the pain o' the poor who couldn't give him fee or reward, an' he puts his hand in his pocket over an' often to pay for the medicine for the dyin' man when he knew he could not live so much as to thank him—the blessings o' heaven fall on him for it! An' now me poor father is in heaven, an' Dr. Crosbie may wan day meet him there—may it be a long day off! Good mornin', ladies, an' you, too sir; an' when next ye would play with the poor, don't put the farce before the tragedy, sir, if ye please, sir; for that's not the way at Blind Alley.'

Lucy was in tears, and her mother in silent amazement at the little fellow's eloquence.

'Here, Thady—stop!' shouted the doctor as the boy moved away. 'Your name is O'Brien and the doctor's is Crosbie, eh?'

'Yes, sir.'
 'Well, here,' continued the doctor, 'is the "Medical Review," in which your father's case is prominently set forth.'

'I can read, sir,' said Thady proudly. 'Don't play with the bones o' the dead, if ye please, sir.'

'No, no, Thady,' said the doctor, kindly. 'I know Dr. Crosbie, and there are those in this house who know him better than I.' Thady shrewdly looked toward Lucy, and she blushed crimson. 'We will inquire about you, Thady. What rent do you pay?'

'A shilling a week, sir.'
 'Fifty-two shillings a year. And how many rooms have you?'

'Wan, sir.'

'And how many tenants are there in the whole house?'

'Ten, besides the grocery on the ground floor, sir.'

'Hum! hum!' said the doctor. 'So the fellow gets more for that one house than he pays me for five—and he wants me to reduce his rent at that. Miserably must the poor be crushed by such harpies!'

'True for ye, sir,' said Thady. 'If your honor would only take the house into your own hands.'

'I can't do that, boy,' said the doctor, musing. 'Thady,' said he, after a pause, 'how old are you?'

'Sixteen come Twelft' Day, sir.'
 'Hum! hum!—Well, I'll ask Dr. Crosbie about you, and if he gives you half as good a character as you have given him I'll give you charge of the house you live in. You shall have it at the same price he pays—on condition that you don't charge the others more than enough to get your own part-rent free and a fair price for the trouble in collecting. And I'll not renew his lease for any of them, either. If you show yourself honest and capable, here's an opening for a living for you.'

Thady's heart was too full for words now. He blushed, hung his head, stood still and then wept his thanks.

'Call here to-morrow,' said the doctor, willing to relieve his grateful embarrassment.

'Thady,' said Lucy, calling him back, 'I want a word with you. Have you a couple of pleasant rooms in your house to let me?'

'What, miss—me lady?' said the boy, astonished.

'What?' said Dr. O'Rourke.

'Why, father,' said Lucy, 'you certainly have not forgotten your promise you made this morning that when Thady has a house to let I may be married.'

'Ho! ho! said the doctor. 'Well, when one has a pill to take, the sooner it is off his mind the better. Marry as soon as your mother can get you ready, for I see you are both of a mind. But don't you go and tell Dr. Crosbie what depends on his endorsement of Thady here.'

'Sure, sir, Dr. Crosbie would not tell a lie to—to free Ireland,' said Thady, earnestly.

'Get out of the house, you little rogue!' said the doctor. 'You've done in two hours what my wife and daughter have been trying in vain to do for two years.'—Mount Angel Magazine.

The Blessed Virgin in the Middle Ages

The following passage is from Lecky's 'History of Rationalism':—

'The world is governed by ideals, and seldom or never has there been one which has exercised a more salutary influence than the mediaeval conception of the Virgin. For the first time woman was elevated to her rightful position and the sanctity of weakness was recognised as well as the sanctity of sorrow. No longer the slave, the toy of man, no longer associated only with ideas of degradation and of sensuality, woman arose in the Virgin Mother into a new sphere and became the object of a reverent homage of which antiquity had had no conception. Love was idealized. The moral charm and beauty of female excellence was for the first time felt. A new type of character was called into being, a new kind of admiration was fostered. Into a harsh, ignorant, benighted age this ideal type infused a gentleness, a purity unknown to the proudest civilisations of the past. In the millions who in many lands, in many ages have sought with no barren desire to mould their character into her image, in those holy maids who for the love of Mary have separated themselves from all the glories and the pleasures of the world to seek in fastings, vigils, and humble charity to render themselves worthy of her benediction, in the new sense of honor, in the chivalrous respect, in the softening of manners, in the refinement of tastes displayed in all the walks of life, in this, and in many ways, we detect its influence. All that was best in Europe clustered around it, and it is the origin of many of the purest elements of our civilisation.'

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'I am afraid, madam,' said a gentleman who was looking for country lodgings, 'that the house is too near the station to be pleasant.'

'It is a little noisy,' assented the landlady, 'but from the front verandah one has such a fine view of the people who miss the trains.'