there had been only Nora and himself to think of. It had never occurred to Nora to reproach him in the slightest degree in her own mind because he had not thought of her. To be sure, they were all in all to each other. They were so entirely one that she could not have imputed blame to him without attaching it to herself.

'My poor girl,' Andrew would say sometimes, 'to think of the life I have condemned you to! Why, if I close my eyes I can see you on Colleen riding up to the meet of the Slaney's, and myself beside you on the Don. Do you remember when we used to have the meet at Bawn Rose? I can see you standing at the head of the table pouring out the tea and coffee, with your hat on your head, and your habit held up on one arm, and the portrait of your Uncle Mick looking down at you from over the chimney-piece.'

'Those were good times,' Nora would say, pressing his arm fondly.

He liked to talk of the old times. In fact, the older he became the more he lived in the happy old days, and forgot the sad latter years. His memories stabbed her, kept the edge of hunger keen, yet she humored him as she would have humored him in anything. He grew old very fast. He was barely turned sixty, yet he was as old as another man at seventy. Sometimes Nora asked herself fearfully what she was going to do when he became really old and ought to have comfort and nursing. It seemed to herself that there had never been any real comfort, real warmth, in their lives since they had left Bawn Rose. Oh, Bawn Rose, with its trout stream singing and clattering over its gold and silver stones, its million birds, its tangled orchard, its drifts of lovely single roses on the lawn! How comfortable and homelike were the rooms! How pleasant the people, who never forgot that the Despards were an old, honorable family, and Nora herself an O'Moore, descended from princes! If they could only go home and end their days at Bawn Rose! But it was as far away from them as heaven.

Her thoughts went on idly to her cousin Dick, Richard O'Moore, the O'Moore. Andrew was talking away at her side of the old days, forgetting, while he talked, how far he had travelled away from them. With the telepathy which often exists between an attached husband and wife, he also thought of O'Moore.

'Poor Dick,' he said; 'I wonder what became of him. You couldn't have done worse if you'd married Dick, Nora.'

'I couldn't have done better than marry the man of my heart, anyhow,' she said cheerfully.

They had often discussed Dick. He and Andrew had been rivals in their love for Nora. She had accepted Andrew, and Dick had flung himself away out of the country—to the Australian goldfields. It was a long time ago. There had been neither tale nor tidings of Dick. He must have gone under long ago. And as for his old house, Dysart, it had been a gaunt ruin before the Despards had gone into exile. It was quite a long time since they had remembered to talk about Dick.

They walked back towards the empty hotel, Nora fiddling absently with the long, bog-oak chain she wore about her neck as they talked of Dick. It had been Dick's gift to her long ago. It was not pretty and had little value. Perhaps else it might have gone the way of her other pretty things. She had an unconquerable habit of generosity. You had but to admire a trinket, and it was yours if you would accept it. She had found a good many people at one time or another willing to accept her pretty things, and go away and forget her. What was the use of hoarding them? she asked. There was no one to come after her. Why shouldn't they give pleasure to a girl or a pretty, kind woman?

Although they were too poor to live in their own country, Nora had never learnt to hold her hand. Where children were concerned she would give them anything. She adored children. So did Andrew, for the matter of that. They never talked of the little life that had fluttered into the world for an hour and out of it again. But Nora had never forgotten it, nor had Andrew, if one could judge by the way he blinked his poor old eyes with a quiver of his face when he saw Nora playing with children. She could never keep away from children. At the summer hotels she might be a ghost among the merrymakers—the tall, thin, old-young woman with her shabby frocks—but to the children she was welcome. They spake a common language of the heart. The children never found her drab and sad an old. As she sat on the sands with them, or in the salon on a wet day, playing rowdy games in which she became flushed and dishevelled, she ceased to be a thin old ghost. Andrew coming upon her one day, with her hair about her shoulders, laughing as madly as the merriest child, went away again with his hand over his eyes. He had seen the ghost of his wife's youth.

'We had better move next week,' Nora said, as they went up the steep village street. 'Madame grows restive. She wants to shut up the house for the winter. I've written to Madame Cappeur to have our rooms ready.'

Andrew sighed. The winter in the Rue des Herbalistes was a melancholy prospect: the English-speaking population of the town were, like the Despards themselves, needy and hopeless. Winter used to be good at Bawn Rose. There was the hunting. Andrew had almost forgotten the feel of his legs across a horse. And he didn't like that winter population; Nora didn't. It consisted of people who had escaped their creditors, women with a past, all sorts of needy adventurers. No one had suffered for the Despards' misfortunes, no one but themselves. Amid that winter population Andrew could hold his head high.

But he was lonely, as Nora was lonely. There was nothing really in common between them and that winter population. Andrew, despite his broken-down air, had a look of clean living, and carried his head fearlessly. He was not like those furtive-looking men with the eyes that avoided a direct gaze, any more than Nora was like the cheap, over-dressed women. Andrew and Nora lived their own lives amid the winter population.

Yes, they would be sorry to go. The summer had been long and pleasant. The people had been pleasanter and kinder than usual. They had made friends with some of the fishing people and the animals. The air, even in October, was not languid. It was living and pure and strong. The narrow streets of the town were evil-smelling. The sun hardly struck down between the high houses; there were abominations underfoot among the uncleansed cobble-stones.

They met M. le Facteur coming down the theatrical street, with its colored walls and green-and-white shutters. M. le Facteur was trolling a song in a rich baritone. It was like a scene in an opera; the red-and-blue uniform of the gendarme, the white cap of an old woman sitting in the midst of her butter and eggs in a long country cart, added to the illusion.

M. le Facteur swept off his blue cap to Monsieur and Madame with a flash of white teeth. He had left a letter for Monsieur at the hotel.

The letter excited no anticipations. It was not time for the small quarterly dividends on which the Despards lived. Between the arrivals of those their post-bag was apt to be scanty and uninteresting. Sometimes one of those chance acquaintances would write or send a newspaper. An English newspaper, even if it were old, was a great boon to Andrew.

In the entresol of the hotel they found the letter—a blue, official-looking letter. While Andrew took it and turned it about, wondering whom it could be from before opening it, Nora's attention was otherwise engaged. There was a placid, rosy, middle-aged woman sitting in the entresol amid a pile of luggage. On her lap was a beautiful dark-haired, dark-eyed child, a boy of about three years old. Who could these belated arrivals be? Why, they were as much out of place at the hotel as would be swallows flying homeward in autumn.

Nora looked at the child and the child at Nora. The boy laughed, and then hid his face in his nurse's comfortable breast with a bewitching shyness. Nora put out her arms to him. They were comfortable arms for children, as many children knew. The nurse coughed, and then spoke.

'Be you Mrs. Despard, ma'am?' she asked. The accent was a West-country accent; Nora only knew that it was pleasant and homely.

'Yes; I am Mrs. Despard,' she said; but just then Andrew broke in with a sound between a laugh and a sob. He was holding the letter in a trembling hand.

'Why, Nora,' he said. 'Poor Dick, the poor fellow! How odd that we should have been talking of him! The kind fellow, to remember us all this time! This must be Dick's child. Do you understand, Nora?' He was holding out the letter to her. 'Poor Dick is dead. He has asked us to take the child. This little man is heir to a great fortune. Dick gives us the care of the child and a big income—a big income, to keep him with. He asks us to buy back Dysart, to rebuild it for the heir. But he thinks of the child with us at Bawn Rose. See, here is a copy of the poor fellow's will. The letter is from Knight, Osborne, and Barrow, of Lincoln's Inn Fields. This good woman is anxious to get back to her own husband and child, once she has fulfilled her trust. She fostered the child, little Dick, too. The lawyers thought it the best thing they could do was to send her on to us as soon as they had ascertained our address.