

doors or lay in listless attitudes on the hot pavement, too overcome by the heat to move a limb. They had no energy to play, and their pale faces and slow, languid movements, told a tale of utter misery and exhaustion.

Oh the difference between the lot of the children of the poor and that of the rich! If the latter did but realise it, surely they would realise also that it is their duty to lessen the misery of the needy by giving to them of their own superfluity.

On the evening of the day on which Mrs. Phillips had told her of her great sorrow, Mrs. Cahill came down the street looking as if she had a very pleasing piece of intelligence to communicate to everyone. The kind-hearted old Irishwoman was personally known to all the children, for when there was distress or sickness in their homes, she was invariably a welcome visitor, and whenever they wanted a kindness from Mrs. Cahill, they were always certain of getting it if it lay within the limits of her very humble power.

'What is it, Mrs. Cahill? Have you come into a fortune?' queried one of the children, on seeing Mrs. Cahill's beaming countenance.

'And you'd be glad if I had, wouldn't you, mavourneen,' answered she.

'That we would, Mrs. Cahill; for we know it's good about it you'd be,' said a chorus of voices, for many of the children had now collected around Mrs. Cahill.

'Well, it's not the same as a fortune, but it's grand news at any rate for all of ye. My mistress that I go to work to every day is going to give ye all a grand day in the country.'

'Do you mean it, Mrs. Cahill? Is it really true?' queried several together.

On being assured that it was a reality and no delusion, there was loud clapping of hands; and a few dozen half-starved, half-clad children lay down to sleep that night with visions of bliss beyond the dreams of the petted and pampered offspring of the rich.

It was arranged that the excursion was to take place to Epping Forest on the 2nd of July, and all the children in the street in which Mrs. Cahill lived, and practically all Mrs. Cahill's juvenile acquaintances, were to be of the party. Her mistress had given orders that no expense was to be spared to make the day as enjoyable as possible for the little ones, and all the arrangements were left entirely in her hands.

On the morning of the appointed day, the brakes which were to take the party to the forest arrived punctually, and were soon filled with crowds of merry children.

As they were about to depart, an onlooker gazing at one of the brakes, remarked:

'Why, there's only thirteen in that there brake. It's a very unlucky number is thirteen. I shouldn't be surprised if there was an accident.'

Mrs. Cahill, as having charge of the arrangements, was appealed to, but not all her common sense could convince the onlookers, who were principally the fathers and mothers of the children, that there was nothing more unlucky about thirteen than about any other number.

'I'll tell you what, Mrs. Cahill,' said one of the children in the brake, 'there's a little girl always standing at the corner of the next street who sells newspapers for a livin'. I'm sure she'd like to come, if we asked her.'

'Run quickly then and fetch her,' said Mrs. Cahill.

In a few minutes the child returned, accompanied by another, ill-clad, and apparently worse fed. She had a solitary newspaper in her hand, the last of her morning's bundle, for she had always sold her papers very quickly to the passers-by, who were attracted by her sweet face and pretty ways, so utterly unlike those of a common street child.

'Here, youngster, let me have that paper,' said the father of one of the children, placing a coin in her hand, which she pocketed with much satisfaction. Evidently it meant much to her.

Then the signal for departure was given, and off went the party with happiness depicted on every countenance.

That day in the forest was like a foretaste of heaven itself to the little slum children. The mossy sward, the leafy trees, the balmy breezes, together with the unlimited supply of cakes, oranges, and other such unaccustomed luxuries, filled up their little cup of happiness to the very brim, for that day at least, and they sang and danced for very joy of heart.

The only one among them who wore a sad expression was the little news-vender. She gazed about her with a thoughtful, abstracted air, as if she were trying to remember something.

Kind-hearted Mrs. Cahill noticed her, and coming up to her, said:

'What's the matter, my dear? Why aren't you amusin' yourself like the others. Sure the kind lady that's payin' for the outin' will be here presently, and it won't do at all to let her see you lookin' sad like that.'

For answer the child burst into tears. In a moment Mrs. Cahill's arms were around her, and with many endearments she succeeded in coaxing from her the secret of her grief.

'It was in a place like this long ago that I lost my mother, and then the nasty woman found me and carried me off and dressed me in ugly clothes, and made me beg for her in the street. But she's dead now, and I earn my money by selling papers in the street,' said the child in answer to Mrs. Cahill's inquiries.

Mrs. Cahill was electrified. She had just finished her novena that very morning, and when she asked the child her name she felt certain what the answer would be.

'The woman that carried me off used to call me Chris, and would beat me if I told people that I had any other name, but long ago my own mother used to call me Marion,' said the child.

'And what was your other name, my dear,' queried Mrs. Cahill.

'I cannot remember,' answered the child.

'Was it Phillips, my dear?'

'Oh, that was it,' exclaimed the child, while her countenance was illumined as if by a flash of recollection.

'Mrs. Cahill, the lady has come and wishes to speak to you,' exclaimed several voices close to her ear, and in an instant she hurried off to her mistress.

'Well, Mrs. Cahill,' said Marion Phillips when she saw her, 'the ninth day has come and I have heard nothing. After all, I was right in thinking that your novena was mere superstition, but I hope the children will enjoy themselves all the same.'

'The ninth day has come, but it isn't over yet, ma'am. Please come and see if you ever saw a little girl that's here before.'

So saying, she led her to the little news-vender, and when Marion Phillips saw her child, for it was she, she went into an ecstasy of delight, which almost threatened her reason. The child's joy was almost equally intense, and for a long time they remained locked in each other's arms, while little Marion poured into her mother's ear the story of her life since their sad parting.

'Glory be to God and His Blessed Mother!' exclaimed Mrs. Cahill. 'It's they that can do every-thing.'

'It is indeed, Mrs. Cahill,' said Marion Phillips, looking up and remembering for the first time to return thanks to God for the great mercy which had just been vouchsafed her.

In a very few days she and her child were received into the Church, and old Mrs. Cahill was installed in a comfortable position in her house, which she retained until her death.

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