

to meet him whenever he'd have time for a run to see us.'

The American wife, in her dignified way, immensely enjoyed these speeches of Peggy. She guessed that her husband, fond as he undoubtedly was of her, winced frequently at his mother's unsophisticated ejaculations of piety and wonder, which sounded so out of place in the fashionable atmosphere of their daily life. Still there was no touch of impatience in his manner towards her nor any feeling but tenderness evident in the kindly attentions he paid her so willingly. His sole wish was to make her happy and content, surrounded by love and comfort such as he and his brother had dreamed of for her in the distant days of their boyhood. Surely his children ought to be more with her; their bright, winning talk should keep her from brooding too much over bygone memories; and there were many small services that young hands could render to one whose feeble steps were already nearing the borderland.

With this thought in his mind, one day he entered the nursery, where he found a noisy group wildly excited over a new and most interesting game. In an armchair sat the youngest daughter, decked out in a figured counterpane, with a handkerchief round her head and knotted under her small chin, while an apron—borrowed from one of the maids, no doubt, and much too big for its present wearer—enveloped her tiny form. She seemed to be the central character of the play, and was addressing the others in a peculiar voice which caused them all to shriek with laughter, throwing up her hands with 'Well, now, glory be to God!' and 'Who ever heard the likes of that before?'

'What new game is this, children?' said the father, as he stepped in smilingly.

They all flushed red with embarrassment, and made no reply.

'Is it a secret?' he asked again.

'No; it's grannie we're playing, father,' said one, hesitatingly—'grannie, you know, that's down stairs—the funny old woman that talks so queer. Well, we're playing her.'

'Who gave you leave to do this?' he queried, sternly.

'Mother,' came in a hasty chorus, afraid of reproof, and ready to lay the blame on shoulders better fitted to bear it. 'Mother said we could make any game we liked of that old woman.'

The speech was so unexpected and cruel, issuing from those careless lips, that he had no word to say as he turned and left the room. They had their mother's permission to do this thing, and it was his mother they were caricaturing—his little children to whom he thought she would be so welcome, with her gentle ways and stores of wondrous tales from far Donegal! How did the hours pass for her during his absence at business? It struck him now that she must often be lonely and sorrowful; for a smile of relief would break like sunshine over her dear face at sight of him in the evenings.

And his wife had casually remarked that the Irish, as a race, were gifted with a scanty supply of self-control. That was when they had returned once from dining out, to find her seated in the grand wainscoted hall, with the wrinkled hands folded patiently in her lap, waiting to say 'Good night' to her son. She had started up and thrown her arms round his neck, kissing his bearded cheek, with all the fervor of a great gladness, and crying in her soft accents:

'You've come back, ashore machree, God be thanked! I got frightened to think of them wicked streets, and you out so late. 'Tis worse than the road through the Gap at night—and that's a fearsome enough place, as many a one can tell. Don't go out any more so late, my boy; for it makes me very uneasy, and I can't sleep for thinking.'

He noticed a smile passing quickly between the black footmen who stood like ebony statues on each side of the hall; and his wife's French maid tossed her head in sippant disgust as she followed her indignant mistress up the stairs. His blood boiled in rage at their open contempt of the anxious tenderness that had never learned to restrain itself, but had been fostered and deepened in the distant northern valley during the long years she had spent in waiting for news of her wanderers.

Clearly his hopes of cheering her declining days were doomed to failure. Better, far better, that she had never crossed the seas to share his wealth, as if scorn and dislike from her nearest and dearest were to be her daily portion. No blame could be attached to her, anyhow. She had striven so perseveringly to ingratiate herself with his boys and girls, making shadow-rabbits on the wall to amuse them, and fashioning little limp men-dolls out of her cotton handkerchiefs. They would have none of her, those cute New World youngsters. She was a 'greenhorn,' and they 'didn't believe she was

father's mother at all,' though she begged them to call her 'grannie,' as the children she had left behind in Donegal had done.

When Jim asked her once if she felt lonely in his house, she gave him an answer so clearly evasive that he knew his surmise had been true:

'Ah, no, darling, not lonely, so to say, when I have you and the thought of seeing Pat some day to keep my heart up! But I do be wishing often to see a sight of the neighbors that used to come into Molshie's on the winter nights; and the Careys and the wee childer I nursed. No, not lonely, my boy, but homesick; maybe that's the better word.'

II.

Every comfort that affection could suggest Jim showered upon his mother. A black silk dress stiff with richness, and a snowy silk shawl that rivalled in hue the borders of her cap, made her look like a picture, he told her lovingly. Then from Pat, in far California, came a draft sufficient to place her above want for the rest of her days. She was grateful, poor Peggy—pathetically so; and would raise Jim's hand, filled with many brave gifts, to her trembling lips in a gush of passionate motherliness. Yet he felt there was something wanting—something the longing for which weakened her visibly and gave to her dim old eyes a dreamy look, as if she were gazing through the distance to a dear and unattainable goal. Perhaps in those moments of intense desire her soul's eyes saw the sunshine in the valley and the rugged blue mountain peaks of her own dark Donegal.

She had brought with her a bundle of fine homespun wool as a present to Jim's wife; and when her gift was calmly set aside without a word of thanks, she took to knitting for her 'boys' in the solitary hours that were so weary in passing. Even the saucy lady's maid grew to pity the lonely old woman; but the American wife saw nothing to justify herself in giving up the least every-day pleasures. She was too worldly and selfish to note the sorrow in the worn face, or the tears that fell and wove themselves into the knitting.

Jim's anxiety at her changed looks made him beg his mother to tell if she were ill or merely unhappy.

''Tis the heart hunger that's on me, alanna,' she replied—'not the sickness at all, glory be to God! And in the night I think I hear your father calling me from his green grave to come home. Maybe he has more need of me than you and Pat; though there are some would say the souls above are too happy to think of us. But I'm sure the Almighty never meant the love that was between my husband and me to die out in heaven, when it lasted through such trouble and poverty on earth. I'm always grieving for him day and night, and remembering how proud he was when Pat and you were born. You were the image of me, everyone said; and Pat the dead moral of him. Ah, but the cruel fever robbed me of the pulse of my heart, and the sunlight was never so warm nor so golden since! So you'll let me go back, my son, to my own people, where I'll be offending nobody, nor be in the way any more.'

But while Jim was distressed between the pain of parting and the fear that the oppressive heat of New York might prove too enervating for her enfeebled frame, unexpected and gladsome news arrived from California. It was from Pat, setting out on the long journey to see his mother. How quietly thankful she was through those weary days of waiting! And when she held her long-lost twin son in her arms, Peggy's cup of joy was filled to the brim. As she stroked his dear brown head, the silver threads shining there hurt her like a sword-thrust. She understood then that his prosperity, like Jim's, had brought many a pang, as well as many blessing, in its train.

To his offer of a quiet home in San Francisco she gave the same reply as to his brother:

'I'm more thankful than I can tell you, Pat. But you have your wife and little childer out there to keep your ilfe sweet and happy, and I'd only be in the way. And it's your mother's right to have the courage to do it, whether it's hard for herself or not. There's a corner waiting for me in Molshie McGrath's, and the Careys will be coming back and forth. So have no fears for me, my darlings; for God'll be sure to take good care of me. He helped me through the cold and hunger many a time, and He'll not desert me now. But I'm not making little of all you offer. I'm proud and grateful to you both, that were not ashamed to own your poor old ignorant mother that came over the broad sea to find you.'

Burning tears stood in the blue and brown eyes contemplating her, grand in her unselfish love for which already there was a reward in store. Pat—busy, hard-working Pat,—whose time was more precious than gold to him, volunteered to see her safely back in the valley