

upon a clean and well-swept hearth, on one side of which was a humble armchair of straw, and on the other a grave but placid-looking cat, purring, with half-closed eyes, her usual song for the evening.

"Lord bless us, Mr. Reilly, is this you? Sure, it's little I expected you any way—but come when you will, you're welcome. And who ought to be welcome to the poor ould widow, if you wouldn't?"

"Take a stool and sit down, honest man," she said, addressing Fergus; "and you, Mr. Reilly, take my chair; it's the one you sent me yourself, and if anybody is entitled to a sate in it, surely you are. I must light a rush."

"No, Molly," replied Reilly, "I would be too heavy for your frail chair. I will take one of those stout stools, which will answer me better."

She then lit a rush-light, which she pressed against a small cleft of iron that was driven into a wooden shaft, about three feet long, which stood upon a bottom that resembled the head of a churn staff. Such are the lights, and such the candle-sticks, that are to be found in the cabins and cottages of Ireland!

"I suppose, Molly," said Reilly, "you are surprised at a visit from me just now?"

"You know, Mr. Reilly," she replied, "that if you came in the dearest hour of the night you'd be welcome, as I said—and this poor man is welcome, too—sit over to the fire, poor man, and warm yourself. Maybe you're hungry; if you are, I'll get you something to ait."

"Many thanks to you, ma'am," replied Fergus, "I'm not a taste hungry, and could ait nothing now. I'm much obliged to you at the same time."

"Mr. Reilly, maybe you'd like to ait a bit—I can give you a farrel of bread, and a sup o' nice goat's milk. God preserve him from evil that gave me the same goats, and that's your four quarters, Mr. Reilly. But sure, everything I have either came or comes from your hand; but if I can't thank you, God will do it for me, and that's betther still."

"No more about that, Molly; not a word more. Your long residence with my poor mother, and your affection for her in all her trials and troubles, entitle you to more than that at the hands of her son."

"Mrs. Buckley," replied Fergus, "this is a quiet-looking little place you have here."

"And it is for that I like it," she replied. "I have pace here, and the noise of the wicked world seldom reaches me here. My only friend and companion here is the Almighty—praise and glory be to His name!—and here she devoutly crossed herself—"barrin', indeed, when the light-hearted *girshas* come a *kailyc* wid their wheels, to keep the poor ould woman company, and raise her ould heart by their light and merry songs, the creatures."

"That must be a relief to you, Molly," observed Reilly, who, however, could with difficulty take any part in this little dialogue.

"And so, indeed, it is," she replied, "and poor things, sure, if their sweethearts do come at the dusk to help them to carry home their spinning-wheels, who can be angry wid them? It's the way of life, sure, and of the world."

She then went into another little room—for the cabin was divided into two—in order to find a ball of woollen thread; her principal occupation being the knitting of mittens and stockings, and while bustling about, Fergus observed with a smile—

"Poor Molly! little she thinks that it's the bachelors, rather than any particular love for her company, that brings the thieves here."

"Yes, but," said Reilly, "you know it's the custom of the country."

"Mrs. Buckley," said Fergus, "did the sogers ever pay you a visit?"

"They did once," she replied, "about six months ago or more."

"What, in the name of wondher," he asked, "could bring them to you?"

"They were out huntin' a priest," she replied, "that had done something contrary to the law."

"What did they say, Mrs. Buckley, and how did they behave themselves?"

"Why," she answered, "they axed me if I had seen about the country a large woman, wid a blue cloak, striped petticoat, an' a black bonnet on her, and a pair o' priest's boots? I said no, but to the reverse. They then searched the cabin, tossed the two beds about—poor Jemmy's—God rest my boy's soul!—an' afterwards my own. There was one that seemed to hold authority over all the rest, and he axed who was my landlord? I said I had no landlord. They then said that surely I must pay rent to someone, but I said I paid rent to nobody; that Mr. Reilly here, God bless him, gave me this house and garden free."

"And what did they say when you named Mr. Reilly?"

"Why, they said he was a decent Papish, I think they called it; and that there wasn't sich another among them. They then lighted their pipes, had a smoke, went about their business, and I saw no more of them from that day to this."

Reilly felt that this conversation was significant and that the widow's cabin was anything but a safe place of refuge, even for a few hours. We have already said that he had been popular with all parties, which was the fact, until his acquaintance with the old squire and his lovely daughter. In the meantime, the loves of Willy Reilly and the far-famed *Coleen Bawn* had gone abroad, heaven knows how, over the whole country; and the natural result was that a large majority among those who were anxious to exterminate the Catholic Church, by the rigor of bigoted and inhuman laws, looked upon the fact of a tolerated Papist daring to love a Protestant heiress, and the daughter of a man who was considered such a stout prop of the Establishment, as an act that deserved death itself. Reilly's affection for the *Coleen Bawn* was considered, therefore, not only daring, but treasonable. Those men, then, he reflected, who had called upon her while in pursuit of the unfortunate priest, had become acquainted with the fact of her dependence upon his bounty; and he took it for granted, very naturally and very properly, as the event will show, that now, while "on his keeping," it would not be at all extraordinary if they occasionally searched her remote and solitary cabin, as a place where he might be likely to conceal himself. For this night, however, he experienced no apprehension of a visit from them, but with what correctness of calculation we shall soon see.

"Molly," said he, "this poor man and I must sit with you for a couple of hours, after which we will leave you to your rest."

"Indeed, Mr. Reilly," she replied, "from what I heard this day, I can make a purty good guess at the reason why you are here now, instead of bein' in your own comfortable house. You have bitter enemies; but God—blessed be His name—is stronger than any of them. However, I wish you'd let me get you and that poor man something to ait."

This kind offer they declined, and as the short rush-light was nearly burned out, and as she had not another ready, she got what is called a *cam* or *grisset*, and put it on the hearth-stone, with a portion of hog's lard in it; she then placed the lower end of the tongs in the fire, until the broad portion of them, with which the turf is gripped, became red-hot; she then placed the lard in the *grisset* between them, and squeezed it until nothing remained but pure oil; through this she slowly drew the peeled rushes, which were instantly saturated with the grease, after which she left them on a little table to cool. Among the poorer classes—small farmers and others—this process is performed every evening, a little before dusk. Having thus supplied them with these lights, the pious widow left them to their own conversation, and retired to the little room in order to repeat her rosary. We also will leave them to entertain themselves as best they can, and request our readers to follow us to a different scene.

(To be continued.)

FOR THE CHILD THAT NEVER WAS.

O little hands that never were,
With apple petalled beauty made,
You might have held me close to joy
Whence I have strayed:

O little feet that never were,
Fashioned for tripping melody,
Your gladness might have kept me brave
On Calvary:

O little lips that would have drawn
White love to feed you from my breast,
You might have been my love itself
Made manifest.

O Child of mine, you never were—
No throes have thrilled me to rejoice—
You would have been my conquering soul,
My singing voice!

—MARGUERITE WILKINSON, in *Current Opinion*.

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