

But what way?' persisted Abby.
The neighbor looked at her.

'I was in hopes you could guess,' he observed.
'Supposing we were to get married?'

The color flamed into Abby's cheeks, which had been pale since her illness, and her eyes sought the good, red earth in a confusion which was strangely mixed with gladness.

'You can hear about me down at the priest's. My character's all right. I've got a good bit of land, a house that's a great sight too big for a bachelor, and a little pile in the bank.'

Abby made no response, and encouraged perhaps by her silence, or by that something in her face which was not repellant, the neighbor continued:

'I've liked you real well ever since I saw your face that day when you were hoeing. You looked mighty pretty, I can tell you, and—maybe you didn't mean just as all you said in your letters.'

Abby, to whom speech never came readily, felt as if her tongue were glued to the roof of her mouth. As she had been eloquent upon paper, so now it was the neighbor's turn to be eloquent in the speech.

'I guess you'd make more out of your land if you had my help,' the young man added, with a twinkle in his eye. 'Anyway, I've got enough for two, and a good sight more. I like you better, I guess, than I ever liked anyone. So, come, own up, Abby, that you didn't mean all you said in your letters.'

A smile was softening the curve of Abby's mouth; her eyes were very soft and sweet in their expression. The neighbor's heart thumped loudly against the rock while he waited for her answer.

'I'd like to see the claim settled,' Abby said demurely. 'I'm mighty fond of this bit of earth.'

'Couldn't you manage to get a little mite fond of me?' the neighbor suggested.

Abby pondered, the smile deepening, the color flickering bewitchingly in her cheeks, and the softness growing in her eyes that were now downcast.

'I guess I could get to like you some,' she confessed. Then a great shyness fell upon them both, and a great light of happiness shone in their faces. The life-giving joy of the spring seemed to pervade them.

'May I tell the priest to call our banns in a fortnight?' whispered the neighbor, and Abby made no objection.

*

In the years that followed, seated over her sewing in the big farmhouse kitchen, Abby used to say to her friends, with a quiet laugh:

'One thing I've got out of the good, red earth—a husband, and a mighty fine one, too.'—Anna T. Sadlier in the *Sacred Heart Review*.

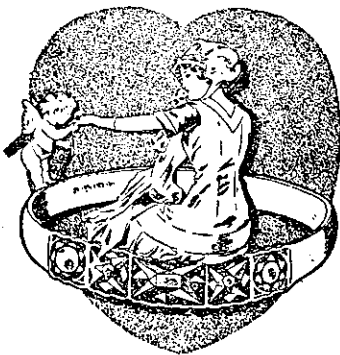
OBITUARY

MRS. ELLEN O'LEARY, WELLINGTON.

On Sunday, November 19, there passed away Mrs. Ellen O'Leary, eldest daughter of Mrs. E. Fitzgerald, and sister of Mr. D. Fitzgerald of the Defence Department, after a long illness, borne with Christian fortitude. During her illness she was attended by the Rev. Father Hurley, who administered the last rites of the Church. Deceased leaves one daughter to mourn her loss.—R.I.P.

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