

the same day he gave me the 'Coravoth.' I was the first that ever sung id in those parts. But I wouldn't give a pin for them little *Lalla Rookhs* that's goin' now. That wan was as big as a double spellin' book."

Mary, who did her best to keep her countenance, said she feared hers was one of the little ones; but, as her brother Hugh had all her uncle's books, she would see whether the genuine edition of *Lalla Rookh* was among them.

Phil was by this time quite cured of his weakness, and Mary rose to take her leave.

During their conversation, Tommy was exhibiting the goldfinch's accomplishments to its new mistress.

When the bird, after much coaxing, moved sideways along its perch, now coquettishly advancing, now timidly holding back, at length picked hurriedly at the bunch of groundsel which Tommy held temptingly against the wires of its cage, Ellie's delight was only second to that of Honor Lahy herself, who gave much more attention to the little by-play at the window than to the conversation about "books and larnin'" between her husband and Miss Kearney.

Mary, too, stopped for a moment to contemplate the scene.

Ellie's bonnet was hanging on her back, and her hair fallen loose over her face and shoulders; while the boy, who was on his knees, looked up at her with a triumphant smile, as the goldfinch snatched the groundsel through the wires, and, placing its foot on it, commenced pulling it to pieces.

Mary thought the group would be a good subject for a pleasant picture.

But how sad was the contrast when she turned to the straw chair, and the dark, melancholy eyes met hers. And when she felt the love—the almost worship—for herself that filled those melancholy eyes, Mary found it hard to keep back the emotion that swelled up from her heart. She turned her face away, and pulled down her veil before bidding Norah good-bye.

"Oh, Mary," said Grace, when they had got into the open air, "wouldn't it be well for that poor girl if she were dead, and for her mother, too?"

"Oh, Miss!"

Grace started and looked around.

It was Honor Lahy who had followed them with Ellie's gloves, which she had forgotten. The poor woman's hands were stretched out as if begging for her child's life, and the tears stood in her eyes.

"Oh, Miss, sure 'tis she brings all the luck to me!"

This woman would snatch her child from the grave merely because "'twas she brought all the luck to her!"

Ah, if that old house were built upon crocks of gold—enough to purchase the fee-simple of broad Tipperary—Honor Lahy would have flung it all into the sea, and been content to "beg the world" with her child, if by doing so she could keep the light in those languid eyes a little longer.

Remonstrate with the heart-broken woman who paces the floor in wordless agony from morning till night, and often from night till morning. Tell her it is flying in the face of Providence; that it is time she should be reconciled to her loss; and she will reply: "It is so sad a case. She had just settled her in the world; encroached upon the portions of her other children, perhaps, in order to place her—her darling—in a home worthy of her. And now she is gone—the best and beautifullest of them all—and what a loss that money is! And she will try to make the wretched dross she had lost with her child the excuse for her sorrow. But if her darling's death had brought a queen's dowry to every other child of hers, the sorrow at her heart would be no lighter.

Say to this other one: "You should let your child go where she can better herself. Do you want to keep her a drudge all her life?" And see, the tears are in her eyes, and she answers: "If she goes I won't have anyone to do anything for me." But give her a train of attendants to anticipate her every wish, and the tears will be in her eyes all the same.

So, again, this other one, who has lighted upon a tiny pair of red woollen stockings at the bottom of an old drawer. The little feet they encased grew tired, and a sweet, sweet little voice said: "Carry me, mamma," and a little silky head drooped like a flower, and two violet eyes

grew, first brighter and brighter, and then heavy, and fixed, and glazed—twenty years ago. And when she sees you shake your head she dries her eyes, and says, with a sigh: "If I had her now how useful she'd be to me." You foolish woman! Look at those four healthy, blooming girls. Are they not good, and careful, and affectionate, and all that a mother's heart could wish? On the mere score of utility you have more help than you require, more hands than you can find employment for. And yet you would cheat us with: "How useful she would be to you." But we are forgetting our story.

"Oh, Miss, sure 'tis she's bringin' all the luck to me," said Honor Lahy.

Grace turned away, with her brows knit into something very like a frown.

Mary was greatly moved, and felt at a loss for something to say that might soothe the poor woman, when Tommy's appearance relieved her from her embarrassment.

Miss Ellie is certainly an untidy girl. She forgot her gloves, and now Tommy comes running, breathlessly, up to them with a woollen ruff held high above his head.

"I hope, Mrs. Lahy," said Mary, "that Tommy continues to be a good boy."

"He is, then, Miss," she replied, wiping the tears from her eyes with the corner of her apron, "very good at his books. An' every way—on'y for the climbin'."

Ellie looked laughingly at the delinquent, who scratched his curly poll and returned her smile with a shrug of his shoulders and a glance of his merry blue eyes.

"Oh, but as he is so good, you must not be too strict with him," said Mary.

"But 'tis on'y the mercy uv God, Miss," Honor exclaimed, as if her patience were tried beyond endurance, "that he don't make smitherens uv himself. An' besides, I can't keep a stitch on him."

She turned round to survey the culprit, whose bones and habiliments she considered in such constant jeopardy.

"Oh, oh, what am I to do wud him at all, at all? Look at him," she cried, catching Tommy by the shoulders and spinning him round. "How did you tear that piece out uv your breeches? An' where is it?"

Tommy looked considerably surprised; but guided by the spectators' eyes—and even Grace honored him with a sidelong glance—he clapped his hand behind and discovered that pretty large piece was missing out of his corduroys.

It could be seen by his puzzled look that he was trying to remember where or how the accident occurred. His mind was divided between Tom Hogan's gate and Mat the Thrasher's whitehorn hedge, when casting his eyes upwards, as people will do under like circumstances (meaning no reference to Tommy's mutilated garment, but only to the operation of his mind), a ray of light seemed to break upon him from the beech-tree. To Grace's profound astonishment he rushed suddenly to the tree, and, clasping his arms round it, began to ascend. Mary, too, seemed taken by surprise. But the proceeding was evidently nothing new to Ellie, who was indebted to Tommy's climbing propensities for an extensive collection of birds' eggs.

His mother shook her head, as if she had just made up her mind that Tommy's case was quite hopeless, and that reclaiming him was an utter impossibility.

Grace's eyebrows became more and more elevated as he mounted higher and higher.

But on reaching one of the highest boughs he stretched out his hand and the object of his ascent was visible to them all; for there was the missing piece of corduroy fluttering in the breeze. Thrusting it into his pocket, he descended with a rapidity that caused Mary to put her hands before her eyes, as if she thought the catastrophe which his mother considered so imminent was at hand, and that Tommy was then and there determined to "make smitherens of himself." It was greatly to her relief, if a little to her surprise, that when she looked round, the cause of her anxiety was nowhere visible—he having scampered into the house the moment his foot touched *terra firma*, as if he were quite unconscious of the presence of the little group who had watched his performance with so much interest.

Mary said good-bye again to Honor Lahy, and went a little further up the hill to pay a visit to Tom Hogan's handsome daughter Nancy, who she suspected was pining in thought in consequence of an approaching event in which it