

Between Two Lady Days.

III.

And sure enough, before Christmas there was deep snow. It came wavering across the bogland on a north wind, and lay strown at first in handfuls, and then in armfuls, till at last a huge lead-coloured cloud appeared to shatter itself sheer over Lisconnel—"Like as if," to quote Pat Ryan, "you were crumblin' a soft clod of clay between your two hands;" and thenceforward all was one blank of white, only broken here and there by the black mouth of a bog-hole. Even these filled eventually, as the water in them froze hard, and made of each a secret resting-place for the whirling drifts, pitfalls into one of which the Quigley's fawn-coloured goat floundered down, poor wretch, to her smothering death. For the snow was accompanied by such a biting frost as seldom grips Lisconnel, and the tiny dry flakes and granules seemed to be ground fine and driven in tangible mists of stinging dust on the wide-wailing storm.

"It's a good chanst we're gettin' to understand the sayin' :

"When you see the snow like salt and male, Your food and fire'll be apt to fail,"

Brian Kilfoyle said one day, ruefully kicking at a glittering powdery drift, which had sifted under the Doyne's rickety door into their house, where he was talking to Stacey and her mother. Brian, who is normally a big burly man, at that time had assumed, in common with his neighbours, the aspect of an uncomplete structure, a framework with much filling out left to do. "It's seven weeks lyin' on us now sin Christmas, and here's Candlemas wid nary a sign of a change yit. But I'm glad to see you houldin' up so well agin it, ma'am."

"Och, indeed I'm keepin' illigant and grand, thank God," said Mrs. Doyne, nervously fingering the largest hole in her frayed-out apron. "But as for Stacey there, the craythur, her face this munt isn't the breadth of the palm o' me hand; the two eyes of her'll pristinly be runnin' into one."

Stacey shrank further into the background at the sound of her own name, and Brian Kilfoyle said: "Ah, sure young things like her do be aisy perished—aye, and the ould people, too. There's no poor mother, she and little Jim, since the bad turn he took a while ago, they don't seem to have an atom of warmth left in them. Scarce a wink they sleep of a night wid the could, though we do give them ivery rag we can contrive. Our hearts are fairly broke wid them; for me mether, if we don't mind her, will be slippin' the wisp of ur ould cloak off her on to one of the childer, and gettin' her death; and that Jim does be creepin' from one to the other like a lost dog at a fair, thryin' for a taste of heat somewares, the misfortunt little spalpeen; its hat's grabbin' you do be just dabs of ice. But livin' a thrancen more have we got to put on them."

There was a painful pause, and then Mrs. Doyne said apologetically: "I wish to goodness gracious, Brian, I could offer you the loan of e'er an ould wrap, but indeed it's hard set we are, man, to keep the life from freezin' stiff in ourselves these times, wid the most we've got."

"Tubbo sure, tubbo sure, ma'am," Brian said, in hurried deprecation, "how would you? Sure we must all shift for ourselves the best way we can, and we'll do right enough wunst this blamed black frost quits a hould."

"So they were sayin'," said Mrs. Doyne. "But look-a, Brian"—lowering her voice solemnly—"div you know was there—anythin' special frightened her?"

"Well, yis," he answered, in a reluctant sort of mumble, "a fut goin' up and down along be her door, and nobody on the road; and somethin' that shook the latch and let a keck, an' niver a breath of win stirrin'. Lastwise that's the story she has. But just you tell me how's many nights in the year there is widout a waft o' win goin' thro' it; and as for them bastes of goats, times and agin I've mist-ock a one of them pattin' by for somethin' in brogues. Howsome'er, what fairly terrified her was a voice that

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After 'two Years

kep' callin' 'Anne, Big Anne,' imitatin' first one neighbour, and then another, and diff'rint in a manner from them all. She sez 'twas such hijeous clear moonlight sho duran't look out, and sho lay in a could thrimble till the mornin', listenin' to a tappin' on the window—sho'd stopped up the pane wid her ould saucepan-lid for 'frail sho might see somethin'. That was rattlin' belike."

"Saints shield us around," said Mrs. Doyne, crossing herself, "we'd be well off if there was nothin' worse than saucepans rattlin'. You've heard tell what happint young Mick Ryan about Holy Eve, when he'd a crib set for snipe be the river?"

Brian only said, "Aye, aye," uninvitingly, but she could not forgo the recital:

"Just liftin' the basket he was, when he looked up, and if there wasn't Wan of Thim standin' on the opposite bank right fornint him, wid on'y the flow of the bit of athramo between them—and the other comin' jiggin' along over the strip of field, not a stone's throw off. Troth, poor Mick thought he couldn't git his heels out of it fast enough. I-wonder he didn't lose his wits for good. When he fetched home, his people thought he was blind drunk—Och mercy, what at

all's you out there, Brian?" she interrupted herself, suddenly clutching him by the arm, and pointing through the open door, far out upon the blanched waste something there was, moving dimly in the thickened light of the gloaming, but whether the form of man or beast, or of neither, could not be told. Brian, without speaking, went a step outside, and seemed to measure the distance which intervened between his own door and the place where he stood.

"It's just merely one of the goats trapasin' around," he said.

(To be continued).

REV. MR. ARMIT, a young preacher just out from Scotland, as been called to the Kirk congregation, Pictou.

THE Boys Brigade of Truro, Nova Scotia, accompanied by several ministers, went into camp last week.

REV. E. B. MOORE, prior to his departure from Halifax for his charge in Yarmouth, was waited upon at his home by members of his church and presented with an address and a box containing \$ 00. This was a genuine surprise to the rev. gentleman who feelingly replied.