

"Holy mother!" cried Ted, in a strange whisper. "Is it Kitty ye are spakin' av?"

"Yes, Ted, it is Kitty I am speaking of. It was for Kitty's sake Lyndon spared the people of Ballymore; it was for their sakes she went away, knowing very well what would be said of her, and that even those she loved so dearly might blame her most of all."

"But she has come back, father?" said Ted, in a hoarse whisper. "I heard you say she is his lawful wife."

"She says so, and she has the proofs. Yet she has come back from Scotland to-night alone; her longing to see her mother and you would no longer be set aside."

"Alone! and she has gone to Ballymore first, as she ought, to her husband's house?"

The priest noticed the persistence with which Ted dwelt on the fact that she was Lyndon's wife. The breath of dishonour would have killed him, especially dishonour which touched any woman of his house. In this the pride of the peasant equalled—nay, perhaps excelled, that of the peer. Father O'Hagan saw that the pride of the Rooneys, of which he had often heard, had not been exaggerated in Glendalough, but was a real quality which no man could measure.

"You must understand, Ted," he said, in his gentle, soothing voice, "that a marriage such as this has been is necessarily hedged about by many difficulties. It was a runaway and secret marriage to begin with, and the difference in their position increases the difficulties of which I spoke. Lady Lyndon will not approve it. We could not expect it. No doubt Lyndon is wise to try and reconcile his mother to it by degrees."