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NORA BRADY'S VOW.

BY MRS. ANNA H. DORSEY.

CHAPTER VIII.- (Continued.)

"Thrue enough for you; but there's no telling who the grace of God is with, and who it isu't, in a dying hour. Anyway, I hope his reverence will come. I will go for Dr. Bryant, if you will go in, Miss Brady, and sit with widow Blake, who's a dacent, hard-working erayther as ever broke bread."

" Of course I'll wait, Mr. McGinuis, and see if I can be of some use, too." replied Nora, going into the house, and entering a small room which communicated with another by an old-fashioned, narrow door. Two or three women were sitting around, taking snuff, and suggesting to each other a thousand infallible remedies for the sick person's relief, which in their own experience had worked miracles .--Mrs. Blake now bustled in to get the vinegarcruet, and in her hurry almost stumbled over Nora, who said, with a modest air, "I came with Mr. McGinnis, ma'am. He is gone for the doctor, and I shall be glad if I can help you at all.'

"Well, I don't know about help-poor gentleman ! he's dying, I think. I wish to God we could find his friends," said hind-hearted, fat Mrs. Blake, in a distracted manner. "But come in, honey, and see what you think."

Nora followed her with a timid step into the small, diagy room. On a bed in the corner the sick man lay; but she could not see his face, or even his person, because there were two or three women grouped around him, attracted by that strange fascination which the appearance of death always presents to the living .-The atmosphere of the room was stifling from the heat of the stove and the number of breaths in it, and Nora quietly opened the door and raised the window a little way, then resoured other places. Faith ! and there's no butter her seat. A dip candle burned in a tin candle- sells like the Brae butter, after all." stick, on a table which stood in a recess heside the chimney, and the flickering shadows it cast on the wall, with the quick, gasping sobs of the mon food. Do not purchase any more game or unconscious man, filled Nora's heart with a wine; we have enough to last a year already." nameless terror; a weakness and trembling she said, with a half smile on her sad countencame over her, and a strong desire, which is ance. common under such circumstances, took possession of her, to look on the sufferer's face .---She approached the bed and quietly waited until one of the women moved away, then looked down on the white convulsed features before her. Was she dreaming? Was she bereft of and I've been buying everything, until there's Halloran's name was blended with the low, sharp the old MacCarthy More silver and jewels, the ery that burst from her lips? She flew across the room, snatched up the candlestick and at all; for, as sure as God rules, they'll court brought it to the bedside, and, holding it close to their rights again." And between him and to the face of the dying man, scanned his features, and gently lifted the dark, clustering the wreck of Mary Halloran's fallen fortunes as masses of hair back from his temples and fore- if she had been a captive queen. She was head. It is his blessed self, thanks be to tended with a watchfulness and care, and all God !" she exclaimed, bursting into tears ; "it | is my poor master, Mr. Halloran !" At that moment McGinnis returned with Dr. Bryant, who was soon followed by a clergyman; and words cannot paint the amazement of the whole party when they learned that the unconscious man before them was the noble, the brave, the beloved John Halloran, whom they had all loved without having ever seen. The physician ordered the room to be cleared, and requested the clergyman and Thomas McGinnis to assist him. As to Nora, she knelt quietly in a corner of the next room, pouring out her soul to God, and pleading earnestly for the restoration of the stricken man, who was one of that band about whom the tenacious fibers of her heart's warm love had been clinging for vears.

stranger. It is true that the roads had been almost impossible for weeks, and there was no way of sending to Buttevant unless Dennis Byrne walked there; and that was impossible on account of the frequent storms, the swollen streams, and the piled-up snow-drifts. Many of her old friends and neighbors around Glendariff, Protestants and Catholies, had made a day's journey to see her during the fine autunnal weather, and had cheered her somewhat by their hearty sympathy and the on-dils of amusing or interesting news which they im parted. They all knew Mary Halloran's poverty; but, not daring to offer peeuniary assistance, which they were well assured her pride would reject, their generous Celtic hearts suggested many modes of aiding without offending her sensitive deliency; and many a hamper of game, wine and delicacies of various kinds, found their way mysteriously into her larder, which caused Dennis the full exercise of his ingenuity and imagination to account for, by telling her plausible tales of wonderful purchases when he went to Buttevant with butter and eggs; and it was edifying to observe his patience when she gently reproved him for his extravagance.

disaster having befallen him,---of loneliness,

illness, and perhaps death, in the land of the

"You know, Dennis, that we are poor, quite poor, now, and we must live according to our means," said Mrs. Halloran, on one occasion, "It is no disgrace to be poor, since our Lord Himself chose a life of poverty while He was on earth; but it is disgraceful to go beyond your means and get others into difficulties to support our pride."

" Bad seran, then, ma'am, to the difficulties I'll ever bring anybody into by my extravagance. It's all ped for, sure ; and it would be a mortal shame for a lady born and raised like yourself to suffer for delicacies and the like, that you've been used to from your cradle .--My things fetch a great price at Buttevant and

" Thank you kindly, Dennis, for thinking of me; but we can do with less and more com-

"She'll have to know it afore long," said poor Dennis, as Mrs. Halloran went away, while a puzzled expression settled on his countenance. " The blight is on the potatoes: they're rotted black in the ground everywhere. few that's left, why, agra ! it's not to be done Ellen there was as much state kept up around her wishes anticipated with a fidelity, which can find no parallel under the sun, out of Ire land. Dennis generally circulated around the table at meal-time with an antique silver salver | souls, which is the flower, bloom in heaven .-in his hand, and Ellen was as scrupulous about the courses at dinner as if there had been a banquet, instead of the too frequently poor meal of bread, cheese, and tea. The children were daily drilled into the importance of using their silver forks and table-napkins properly, and were in a fair way to believe that it was a much better thing to be poor gentry than rich parcenues. They were never allowed to do anything for themselves when either of their faithful guardians was present. "It's not becoming sir, or miss," Dennis would say, "for one of the old stock like yourself to be letting yourself down to do such a thing when there's servants to the fore. Ye come of the old princes of Munster, and it's no use to try and make yoursels like common people; because it ain't in human nature to do it. You might as well attempt to wash Major O'Grady's nagur coachman white in the Suire. What God made us we is, and not all devil informers, with the English to help, can unmake | breast, weeping. it.

the blue sky, the glory of sunlight, the song of birds, the fragrance of flower, enter largely into the world of a child's happiness; and these Mary Halloran's children had in precious abundance at Fada-Brae. Ere the winter set in, they had lived out on the brac-side in the fresh air and sunshine, gazing down into the beautiful glen below them, or beyond at the wild chain of mountains that inclosed the valley, and in their glee wishing for wings to fly whithersoever they pleased. Desmond brought into the closed-up dwelling the free glad spirit that had made the hill-sides re echo with his silent ones around him, But Gracie was drooping. She was wasting. The rosetint faded from her cheeks and she often complained of feeling tired; but that was all: there was no fever or pain ; and Mrs. Halloran hoped that it was only the in-door confinement which affected her. One morning Desmond and herself had been playing together, when she suddenly became silent, and sat down in her little chair, and, folding her beautiful hands together, became motionless and abstracted. It idea of her being in danger. was her way whenever a new idea or thought was suggested to her which she could not ex-

actly solve. Her mother observed her,--for, uneasy concerning her, she watched every movement,-but did not speak; she only wondered what puzzled the "little lady," for she well knew that she would come presently with her difficulties to her. While she sat thus. with her blue eyes cast down in reverie, her dove flow down and nestled in her arms. She kissed the gentle creature's head, and smoothed the snowy wings with her hands, which were scarcely less white, and said,-

" Birdie, where do the flowers go to when winter comes ? Tell me, Birdie. But, ah me! what a pity you cannot talk, beautiful white Birdie ! I shall have to ask my mamma." " What is it, little daughter?" said Mrs. Halloran:

" Mamma, can you tell me where the flowers hide themselves when the frost and snow come? They don't die, for they come back in the very same places, in the spring, that they were before : so they must creep away and hide-the her mother's hand in hers, she would lie quiet cunning little things !-- in the earth." And | for hours together. Sometimes she would start she laughed at her own conceit.

"No; only the leaves die, dear one. The root, which holds the true life of the flower, remains in the earth; and when the warm sunshine and the soft spring rains come, it opens its bosom and sends forth the leaf and the her toys and pictures, hoping to interest her as flower again," said Mrs. Halloran, caressing of old; and if he could win a single smile from

hurts you.

"Only my head, --- a little; and I feel so tired," she said, faintly. "Only her head ! Oh, Heaven !" said Mrs. Halloran, wildly. ... Dennis ! Ellen ! Des-

Witness,

mond ! come, some of you, instantly. Dennis happened to be in the dining-room at

the moment, and ran in, "Gracie is very ill, Dennis; I fear the child

is very ill; and I must have a physician immediately," said Mrs. Halloran,

" I'll go right off at once, ma'am, for Dr. Ward. It's but a step from here to his house; glee, and, like a winter flower, cheered the and if he's not there. I'll go over for Father Hanlon, who is as good a doctor as any in the country. There's nothing like the soggarth, after all, for the sick," exclaimed Dennis, hur rying away on his errand, heedless of the three miles of broken and unfrequented road between Fada-Brae and Dr. Ward's place. The snowdrifts and the steep slippery paths were nothing to that warm and generous heart; he had loved the child from her habyhood, and was searcely less distressed than the mother at the

The doctor came toward evening; he examined the child's pulse, and looked at her tongue; he talked cheeringly and in pleasant tones to her; but she was languid and silent. making no complaint, except that her "head hurt her little,—not much."

"I fear," said the medical man, "that a slow fever is coming on; but in this early stage there are many efficacious remedies for it. There's not much the matter now, but I will | could I accept it for myself or them. All I leave some medicine, Mrs. Halloran, and call ask is that you go away. again to-morrow. We'll have you well, pretty one, by the time the cuckoo sings." Gracie smiled one of her quiet smiles, and held out her beautiful hand when the doctor said goodbye.

Now, fully aroused to a sense of the child's danger, and her maternal instincts ever on the watch for the slightest change, other sorrows were forgotten. The doctor come again and again ; he changed the medicines, he alternated the nourishment; but she faded and drooped, she wasted and grew paler every day. With

with a happy smile from her fitful slumbers, saying, "I thought papa was here," "I thought I had wings like Birdie's Desmond, anxious and sorrowful, crept in and out, and spoke in low, whispered tones, when L+ brought [

her senses and subject to an illusion, that John but little of my own left; and as to selling off the beautiful head which leaned on her boson. her he was quite consoled and happy. Ellen Catholic gentry absolutely cut him with every " And, mamma, would the flowers come out would sit down and tell her, over and over flushed checks of "her haby," as she used to the sake of recovering a position he had fallen "They must be buried in the earth to bring call her, a bright promise of her growing bet- on this plan, knowing well that an act of juster. But Dennis could find no comfort,-" Is that the reason," she asked, suddenly. Twenty times a day would be creep in and look at her, then go out with noiseless steps, and say, "Inagh ! sure she's fadin' like a snowdrop. Ochone! but it'll be the heaviest news of all to Misther Halloran! Glory to God! but surely our · little lady' will be the fairest her fragile form dilated with indignation .-angel of them all." Father Hanlon came frequently to visit and comfort Mrs. Halloran; he spoke words of consolation and sympathy to her; but in his heart he rejoiced that another soul was about to be housed from life's tempests and evils, that another one of the elect was about to pass away into eternal possessions; for surely of the predestined are little children who die in their innocence. Mrs. Halloran never left her side for an instant: day and night she watched her, slumbering sometimes during the broken sleep of Gracie, but starting up at the slightest movement. Her restless hands were ever busied about her, changing her position, smoothing her pillow, with a thousand other nameless litto let me fly back again and watch around my the cares which maternal love suggested. She could not bear that any other one should nurse know I shall never, never see him again !" she her, so jealous was she of every moment that said, while she threw horself on her mother's she lingered. But amidst it all there was an unacknowledged hope that her ceaseless care dainty lady," he said, while the nearest apand tender nursing would bring her through; proach to tenderness h for the doctor slill assured her there was not gathered on his features. much the matter.

"What ails my darling? Tell me what already felt the glow from the fiery furnace into which her bereaved heart was to be cast; she already tasted the bitterness of the cup she was to drink.

> The next day she sat watching and weeping. The child lay still, but breathing quick and low. A footstep sounded on the threshold .---She started, looked up, and her kinsman, Douald More, stood before her,-the destroyer of her peace, the spoiler of her home.

> ... I could not find the servants : so you must pardon me, Cousin Mary, for announcing myself so unceremoniously," he said, with an easy air.

"Why come you have at all?" said Mrs. Halloran, vising, and standing between the sick child and the unwelcome intruder.

"I came to inquire after my kinswoman's health," he said, with an air of effrontery. "T hope I find you well."

" Insolent !" she murmured, while the blood, receding from her face. left it very white; but she thought of the dying child, and the storm was calmed.

"This is no place for you, Denald More," she said, calmly. "I pray you go away. Your being here disturbs me."

"I am sorry to hear that, Mary, I came with far other intentions. I wish to be your friend and your children's friend."

"Friend I" she said, with hitter scorn depieted in every feature. "You do not understand the meaning of the word. We do not need your friendship, even if you did; nor

"I came on an errand which deserves a better reception, Mary. I know you despise me and regard me as the enemy of your household ; but I only did my duty, and government chose to reward me with a grant of the Glendariff estate. I had reasons for not refusing. It is far better for it to be in my possession than in a stranger's; and now 1 promise, before God, that, on certain conditions, it shall return to your branch of the family again."

"And what may be those conditions ? But speak softly : my child is ill."

"Well, listen. I have made up my mind never to marry---WILY, met belle consine knows; and I have come to the determination, with your consent, to adopt Desmond, provided I can prevail on him to give up the superstitions and follies of the Romish Church and adopt the Protestant Creed."

Donald More had lost all caste. Protestants spoke coldly to him, and avoided him; the

And she felt that her Father in Heaven would succor him.

She would now claim help from Mr. Mallow.

And she thanked God, and felt comforted that in the publisher who had so kindly assisted her Mr. Halloran had a friend.

CHAPTER IX.

"Oh, blessed be that warning, my child, thy sleep adorning, For I know that the angels are whispering to

thee;

And while they are keeping bright watch o'er thy sleeping,

Oh, pray to them sweetly, my baby, with me, And say thou wouldst rather they'd watch o'er thy father ;

For I know that the angels are whispering to thee."

shadows of golden sunlight, were over. The slow, while smiles became strangers to the face thrush had sung her last song on the mosscovered turrets of the ruined abby of Fada-Brae, and a wild, cold wind had swept down | a pet rabbit, and a white dove which a lady had from the Galties, like on "army with banners," brought to little Gracie, were quite happy.— and torn away the few withered leaves which The heaven abiding in the breasts of little chilhad been left clinging, like human hopes to dren, makes all places alike to them, if they carthly promises, to the bare and gnarled have those with them whom they love. An-branches overhead. For two months no letter cestral homes, magnificent furniture, and the had come from Nora Brady, and, heart-sick with anxiety, Mrs. Halloran had almost ceased these little ones whom Jesus loved; they value Mrs. Halloran observed her leaning back on hoping to hear from her husband. Innumer- them as lightly and wear the insignia of wealth the lounge very pale. Alarmed, she caught able fears assailed her, and her immagination as loosely as should Christians of an older her up to her bosom, and, folding her arms passing away from her; and, leaning her head was filled with anticipations of some terrible growth, who are directed to little children as about her, said,-

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"And it's a true word ye've spoken, Denny,' Ellen would chime in; "and it's just as hard to make a silk purse out of a pig's car, as it is to make real gentry out of them that hasn't got the ould dhrop in their blood."

And through those sad, dim days when desolate winter lay around them, and the vacant places in the household made a winter within, the star of hope waxed dimmer in Mary Hal-The rich autumnal glories, the burnished loran's heart, and her steps grew feeble and which had once seemed to be created for them. The children, with their games and pictures, appliances of wealth are but small things to

if the roots were not buried in the earth? It again, the fairy-tales she used to hear with such seems ernel to leave the poor roots out in the delight, and saw in the kindling eyes and frozen earth all the winter."

forth flowers," said Mrs. Halloran. "they laid Mary Flynn's little child in the churchyard, manuna?"

" Little children who are laid in the earth, Gracie darling, are like the roots : only their They could not see God without passing through death and the grave. Heaven is their spring and eternal summer; God is their sunshine; and the earth holds their bodies until the great day comes for all the world to be judged: then, little darling, those dear innocent ones who sleep in the dust shall arise, filled with new life and brightness, never to know death again."

"And will they have wings like Birdic, mamma ?"

"Yes,-soft, white wings, like Birdie." "I wish I might be planted in the earth, mamma,-that I might awake in heaven,that I might have wings like my dear dove." " My child !"

"Mamma, I would ask my heavenly Father dear, dear papa, who is so far away. Oh, I

" Oh, yes : we shall surely see him again .-You must not think so; for it would grieve him, because you are the dearest little birdie of his heart; so come, let us sing something he used to love," said Mrs. Halloran, with a feel-

ing of indefinite dread in her heart as she uncovered her harp and ran her fingers over the strings. The child leaned against her, and the entrancing music lured her away from her strange mood, and, lifting up her sweet, tiny voice, she sang smilingly the strains that used to ring through the happy home at Glendariff.--But the next day the "little lady" drooped, and often, leaning against her mother, complained of being very tired : then day by day the bloom faded out of her cheeks, and her feotsteps became faltering and uncertain, and at last she reclined on the lounge near the fire all the time, or sat in her little cushioned chair beside her mother, silently caressing her white dove or whispering to her doll. One morning

"Open the window, mamma, by my bed,' she asked, one evening.

The window was opened, and in flowed a gold and crimson flood of sunset. The sky, like a "sea of fire," glowed behind the ragged and wild cliffs of the Galties, and above, in the blue, silent depths, a few splendid cloud-spots floated. The child looked out long and thoughtfully; then, turning her full, beautiful cycs on her mother's face, she said,-

"When I die, and go away up there, and have wings like Birdic's, can I see you every day through these windows ?"

"Die | Oh, my child, why talk of dying? Do you wish to die ?" "Yes, ma'am,"

"And not afraid, my own ?"

Halloran knew that her child was surely mamma and Desmond." down on the pillow, she wept in silence. She well," he whispered, leaning over her. "When

mark of contempt; while the lower classes regarded him with distrust and hatred : for all alike in Ireland detest the informer; and for tice to John Halloran's family would be the best recommendation he could offer. He was so full of it, and so sanguine of success, that he was scarcely prepared for what followed.

"You have said your say, Donald More; now listen to mine," said Mrs. Halloran, while " Child of mine shall never be your heir .----There lies one, dying. Rather would I cousign them both to the grave than accede to your base proposal. Let them be beggared, my God! or return to Thee, if Thou willest it ; but through all preserve to them the gift of Faith. No, Mr. More: it is out of your power to serve me or mine."

"You will think better of it, Mary !"

"I am defenseless, sir. I refuse your proposal decidedly. I have told you that your presence is painful and unwelcome. Shall I have to tell you more emphatically that you are an intruder ?" she replied.

" Don't trouble yourself, Mary. It is the way of women to get into the heroics. I shall go away presently, but will return in a few weeks to know the result of your considerations on the subject. One thing you cannot refuse me: I must kiss that child. She is one of the few things I have ever loved, Mary,-little, proach to tenderness he had in his nature

"Do not touch her, I beseech you, sir," said Mrs. Halloran, leaning over the child. "Do not touch her. You might awaken and terrify her."

But the whispering had awakened her: she looked around with a bright, eager expression, then lifted her eyes to her mother's, saying, "I thought he was here,"

"Who, darling ?" "My papa! Cousin Donald, how do you do ?" she said, reaching out her dainty and beautiful little hand. "Bring my papa back, Cousin Donald, and take my, mamma to Glendariff."

"Why, Gracie, little lady, what ails you ?" "Nothing much; only I am so tired waiting for papa to come, it makes my head hurt me. I'm afraid I shall go away before he comes, for "No, ma'am,—not afraid." Then, as if an angel had whispered it, Mary you know I'm going far, far away; but do you find him, Cousin Donald, and bring him to

"I'll try, Graoie; but make haste and be