

little Nora, and preferred staying with her and her people in their very humble abode. At the end of a week he grew better, and he and Nora took many walks together, and learned to know a great deal about each other. Nora chattered away in her broken English, and Hudson found her innocent talk a pleasant diversion from his own anxious thoughts. For with renewed health the altered state of his worldly prospects could not but puzzle the man. He had not a farthing in the world, and when he left the O'Neales he had nothing before him in this strange land but beggary. Hudson was a good man, one who feared God, and who in all his business transactions never forgot the Master whom he would serve, and the Judge who would one day ask him to give an account of his stewardship. His faith in his Heavenly Father did not forsake him now, but there is no doubt as he walked with little Nora on the beautiful wild sea-coast that faith was often sorely tried.

One day his thoughts were too sad to allow him even to notice the child's ceaseless prattle. 'What's ailing ye?' she asked, when the silence had become oppressive.

'I am very rude, Nora,' said Hudson. 'But the fact is I am a good deal troubled.'

Nora's blue eyes were opened very wide at this.

'Yer not,' she said; 'ain't yer a jintlemen? Why, me mothers says as yer rale quality, and I thought as it was only us poor folks as had any call to be troubled.'

'You are quite right, Nora; poor folks are troubled, and I am very poor; I am poorer than your good father and mother. I have no money at all.'

'Faith,' said Nora, 'ain't there the bite, and the sup, and the welcome for ye always wid us? Ye have no call to need money.'

'Thank you from my whole heart, my dear little girl; but I cannot stay always here. Yes, the want of money is a very serious trouble,' continued Hudson, again relapsing into deep silence.

'Pray to the Vargin,' continued Nora. 'I'm tauld that she's moighty kind-hearted.'

Hudson took her hand.

'Yes, my dear little girl, the Virgin is kind-hearted, but she cannot hear me. I will pray to the Virgin's dear Son—to our Lord Jesus Christ. He is kinder, and he can hear all our prayers.'

Nora did not understand. But after this talk she became grave and thoughtful. She did not like her man whom she had saved from the sea to be troubled, and as she told her beads night and morning, she always added a petition to the kind 'Vargin,' whom she still believed in, to give him a little money.

One day she was sitting alone by the hedge, thinking, as she always thought now, of Hudson. As she sat thus a rich gentleman, who lived in the neighborhood, rode by. When he saw Nora he pulled up his horse. Unknown to herself little Nora had become a sort of heroine, for it was well known all over the country that the little child had been the direct means of saving the only individual who had been rescued from the unhappy 'New York.'

'Well, Nora,' said the gentleman, 'and how is your hero? How is Hudson?'

'Thank yer honor kindly, but he's onasy enough,' replied Nora, sliding from the hedge as she spoke and dropping a profound curtsy.

'Uneasy? I am sorry to hear that. Poor gentleman, is he not well?'

'Begging yer honor's pardon, but he ain't a jintlemen; he's jist a poor body. He's as poor as father and mother and me.'

'You are not poor, Nora; you are too pret-

ty. And so the poor fellow lost his all in the wreck; I heard a rumor that it was so. I suppose he would like a little more money, Nora?'

'Ain't he praying for it day and night!' said Nora, clasping her hands.

At this remark the gentleman smiled and rode away.

But the interview bore fruit, for the next day this very same gentleman had another interview, not only with Nora but with Hudson himself. The further result of this was, that a few days later on—the very day before Hudson had made up his mind that he must, penniless as he was, leave the O'Neales—two or three of the richest gentlemen of the neighborhood sent for Nora and put a purse of gold into her hand for her hero, the man whom she had saved from the sea.

With what delight Nora gave this same purse to Hudson it needs no words to tell.

'Nora Crena,' he said, as, just before he left, he lifted her into his arms, 'do you know that you have saved me in a double sense?'

'What's Crena?' asked Nora in reply to this.

'There's a song written about a girl called "Nora Crena," and you are she. Some day, my Nora Crena, I may be able to show you that I am not ungrateful to you and yours for all you have done for me.'

CHAPTER IV.

But the wreck of the 'New York,' fearful as it was, bore some good fruit. Such wholesale destruction of life could not but call forth general and public attention. Very shortly afterwards a lighthouse was built, and from that moment the dangerous coast ceased to be dangerous. The 'New York' was the last vessel wrecked there. Years passed, and the dead rested undisturbed in their graves; the stranger pursued his solitary way, and the inhabitants of Armeskillig had ceased to remember either the great wreck or the man whom Nora had saved. Years passed, bringing other troubles to the poor people of Armeskillig, and even Nora forgot Hudson. From a pretty child she had grown up into a lovely girl. The belle and the pride of the simple place was Nora O'Neale. At the wakes and the weddings no girl was more admired, and she might have married more than one rich farmer had she pleased. Her old father and mother would have liked her to do so; but Nora's warm heart and high spirit caused her to prefer her true love, Mike O'Sullivan, a fisher-lad as handsome and as poor as herself. When she was seventeen they were married, and went to live in another little mud cabin close to the old people. She and her Mike were indeed very poor; they had almost empty purses. 'But what matter,' they both said, 'when their hearts were so full of love?' Yes, the first few years of Nora's married life were happy; but dark times must come to all, and they came to this peasant-girl and to her people.

The famine of '47 and '48 fell, perhaps, more heavily on the southern coast than on any other part of the country. Through these dark times of starvation, fever, death, Nora and her husband and one little child had to pass. They had, it is true, been accustomed to privations all their lives, but now they began to learn what hunger, unsatisfied hunger, meant. The potato crop failed utterly. The nice large stack of peat—or turf, as it was called—no longer stood at the back of the little cabin. Added to this, the winter of this dark year set in with unusual severity; snow and sleet even visited this usually warm southern shore. The poor people had no fires to warm themselves by, and no food to keep

out the cold. One by one the children died and the old people, and only the strong and those in the full prime of youth remained. Relief was given by the richer neighbors. Not one in this dark time remained selfish; not one lived who did not practise the strictest self-denial; but at last the supply of food failed, and it could not even be bought for money.

Nora's father and mother, a wonderfully hale old pair, had managed to exist on almost nothing, and to endure, without drooping, the most severe cold. But one day early in January the old man was overtaken in a field, where he was in vain digging for roots to satisfy his terrible hunger, by a snowstorm; he returned to his cabin wet to the skin, and the next day was dead.

The nearest neighbors ran to tell Nora.

'Yer father is dead and yer mother is dying,' they said.

Nora had been dividing the last of the Indian meal with which they had been supplied with her child. The little child, satisfied, had dropped to sleep. Nora was about to taste her own small portion; at the neighbor's words, however, she wrapped the little yellow bowl with its meagre contents into her cloak, stooped down to kiss her sleeping child, and ran swiftly to the little cabin to her dying mother.

'Here, mother, agra,' she whispered, 'for the love of Heaven take a bite of this good male; it'll put some strength inter yer.'

But the dying woman had no hunger left in the pathetic eyes she raised to her own pretty daughter's face.

'Ate it yerself wisha, darlin',' she said. 'I don't want no more mate. Yer father's gone, Nora. He jist come home wet thro', and he never spake, except once to say, "Never mind, Biddie, the hunger'll soon bring us together;" and then he died as easy as a babe; and I'm going to him, Nora. But it isn't the hunger, for bite nor sup now could not I ate for nobody; my throat's all closed up like.'

'A drop of wather then, mother,' said the daughter, who knew this sign of dying from starvation. 'A drop of wather for the love of the Vargin, mother.'

'No, no, child; nothing as 'ull kape me from my old man! No, Norry. I know I'm going to-night. Oh, musha, musha! isn't it a black, black year? Us dying off with never a priest, nor the holy wather, nor a brass farthing to say a poor mass for our souls in the fires of purgathery afterwards.'

The poor woman began to moan and sob most piteously, and Nora tried to comfort her by every loving word she could think of.

'Look her, mother, agra,' she said, 'I promise yer faithful that if ever the blessed Vargin gives us back the maley potatoes, and the good bit of turf, and the old plenty, I promise ye, mother, that if so be as Mike and me and the child is alive—any of us, or all of us—why, mother, we'll never let more than what 'ull jist kape life in us pass our lips until we gets you and my father out of the fires of purgatory. I promise you that true and faithful, mother.'

'You promise me that true and faithful,' repeated the poor woman, 'with the very first money you come by, Nora, agra?'

'Yes, yes, mother; the very first. You rest asy.'

'But it's a long, long way off,' said the poor dying woman, 'and it don't satisfy much like.' And, stretching out feeble hands of longing towards some better Mediator between God and her sins than the priest's masses, she died.

(To be continued.)

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