

THE STORY OF A STRANGER IN LONDON.*

Kate Lanigan dwelt with her son Terence, in a semi-subterraneous room of a small house situated in a court within court-upon-court, in the aforesaid lane appertaining to that worse than Cretan labyrinth—Seven Dials. Kate followed the vocation of a basket-woman, by which she picked up a scanty living, and had on this day earned the solitary shilling which paid for the removal of Horace O'Meara to her squalid dwelling. Terence followed more varied occupations. He was a day labourer at brick-work, vulgarly termed a *hod man*; but he was also what is more elegantly called a *hullabaloo-boy*, that is, one whose strength of lungs made him peculiarly acceptable at wakes, rows and merry-makings. If a family fight took place among the Cumminses of the neighbourhood, or an attack was made by the Bradys, or the Kellys upon others of their compatriots, Terence was always in requisition, to shout the war-cry with a voice remarkable even among Irishmen; and the frequency with which the young man was entangled in these awkward amusements made a change of name sometimes requisite. So he adopted a few *aliases*, by one of which he led the *gallant*, waked the dead by another, and so on; being, as he ought to be, Terence Lanigan when he went to work in the morning, and then, in the evening, Jem, Terence or Jem Flanigan, or any thing else, just as it happened, or as the nature of his employment seemed to require.

Amid such companions and such scenes the once proud and still elegant Horace passed many long and weary months. He had at first determined to seek employment in even the lowest capacity, if he could thereby obtain the means of paying for his own support. He knew that the misery of his appearance and the raggedness of his clothing quite precluded him from obtaining the gentlemanly situation he had originally desired; and his pride would not bear an application to his mother, for what little she could possibly have spared him. He had not written to her for many weeks; he felt that she must think him dead, and he would rather that she should mourn his loss than know that he was subsisting on charity in the lowest purlieus of St. Giles's.

A short time after he had joined this family, it was farther augmented by two orphan children, whom the kind-hearted Kate took in.

'These children are not yours, Mrs. Lanigan?' said Mrs. Waterton, a dear aged friend of mine, who visits the poor in that miserable neighbourhood.

'Yes, me lady,' replied Kate, 'sure they are mine but they were born to me shister.'

Horace saw the hard struggle made by both Terence and his mother to support this addition to their household; he felt himself a burden to them, and could not bear the thought of 'taking the bread out of the children's mouths.' He therefore took but half his former quantity of food, while he renewed his efforts to gain employment, but the one plan completely defeated the other; for his strength, never duly recruited after his illness, failed entirely under the starving system, and he soon became unable not only to have worked, but even to walk.

Mrs. Waterton had often seen him in her visits to Kate, and had been struck by his appearance, gentlemanlike even in his rags, and with the aristocratic cast of his almost skeleton countenance. He always turned away from her, and crouched moodily over the fire, evidently wishing to avoid observation; and considering him to be a lodger, she had taken no notice of him.

She had a pleasure in visiting the Lanigan's room, for, whatever might be their other qualities, both Kate and her son were honest and kind-hearted; and though Terence was seldom to be seen without a black eye or a plastered face, and very often in a state far from sober, yet he was always civil to her ladyship's riverince.

The poor children also excited her compassion. Her great object was to introduce them into a Pro-

testant school, and thus to let in a little light upon the family; for they were all bigotted Romanists, and not one of them was able to read a word, excepting Horace, who had the best possible chance of forgetting how to practice that accomplishment; for the only book-like thing they possessed was a piece of a Latin breviary, which was devoutly kissed by the whole family every night, as a kind of preservative charm.

One day Mrs. Waterton found old Kate at home alone. Horace had crawled out, to catch a breath of the soft spring air, such as it can be procured in the smoky atmosphere of Seven Dials. The old lady took this favourable opportunity of asking who the person she had so often seen were indeed a lodger.

Kate drew herself up with an air of offending dignity, and putting her hands on her sides, replied, 'A lodger, faith! no, and that's what it isn't at all, at all! Sure isn't it the young masher that's in it, and he the rale O'Meara itself?'

Mrs. Waterton was astonished, and Kate Lanigan proceeded to inform her of his adventures, as far as she was acquainted with them.

'And indeed,' said she, 'it's the weary sight it is to me heart to see him so sickly and white; with just as much strength as a babby, and that's all, barring the cough that is upon him.'

Just at this moment the door slowly opened, and Horace entered; he was evidently discomposd at seeing Mrs. Waterton, and after making her a bow (that might have graced her drawing-room, he silently crept to his accustomed corner. He was no longer, however, to avoid observation; she accosted him, condoled with him upon his illness, promised that her husband, who was a medical man, should call upon him, and concluded her visit by leaving with him a little tract addressed to the sick.

The sight of a book, be it what it might, was delightful to Horace; and though at one time he would have turned away with contempt from a Protestant tract, he now received it thankfully.

Mrs. Waterton hastened home, to consult her husband as to the proper mode of treating so strange and interesting a case; and it was not long before the humane surgeon had found his way to old Kate's room, and was in full possession of Horace's story as well as his symptoms. His first prescriptions were proper food and proper clothing; and these medicines were not only ordered but supplied. A corresponding improvement was soon visible, and Horace was able to walk as far as his benefactor's house, where he now became a constant visitor.

The next step was to enable him to seek for that suitable employment which he had so long been unable to procure. Money was supplied by a few benevolent friends, a suit of gentlemanlike apparel purchased, and 'the rale O'Meara' once more felt and looked 'himself again.'

Meanwhile, Mrs. Waterton had not neglected her special province of instructing her protégé's mind. The first tract, gratefully received and diligently read, proved so congenial to his depressed and despairing state of feeling, that a second was gladly welcomed; and after that a third and fourth, and so on; until at length a Bible was placed in his hands. He rather drew back from this book, for it had always been a forbidden one to him, while under the eye of his priest at home; but now that he had been so long without any books, even Protestant ones were willingly read. Having a curiosity, moreover, to know what the prohibited book contained, he perused it at length very eagerly.

Mrs. Waterton had never alluded to the difference between his religion and her own; but had treated him as she would have treated a Protestant, and judiciously selected the tracts she gave him, so as to avoid controversial subjects. His was a peculiar case, and she acted accordingly.

The light of truth now began to break in upon his

desponding and bewildered mind, which had been humbled to a point at which the consolations of scripture found a ready way to his heart. At length he openly asked his friend's opinion on several points of difference between the Protestant church and the system of Rome. The conversation was long and interesting, and when Horace took his leave that evening, he said, 'Well, madam, after what I have read in your Bible, I don't think I'll ever pray to the Virgin and the saints again.'

At length, an eligible situation offered itself—a head clerkship in the office of Mr. R—, an estimable lawyer, residing at the west end of the town; who had most kindly offered to receive the young man into his house, and to treat him as a member of his own family.

Mrs. O'Meara had been some time since informed of her son's improved prospects; for this first impulse, on finding himself restored to something like his natural station in society, was to write to her, to tell her that he was still alive, and after long sickness and trouble, was in hopes of better days. His benevolent friends, the Watertons, figured prominently in his letters, as did also poor Kate and Terence. When Horace took a kind leave of Mrs. Waterton, on departing to his fresh residence, he asked her if she had said any thing to Mr. R. concerning his religion.

'No,' said she, 'he did not ask me any questions on the subject; he only inquired whether I considered you to be a moral and well-disposed character, and I conscientiously replied in the affirmative.'

'I am glad he did not ask you the exact question,' said O'Meara; 'for I am afraid you would not have given him a correct reply.'

'What would you wished me to have replied?' she asked.

'That I am a Protestant,' answered Horace firmly. 'After all the new and blessed light I have received during the last few weeks, I can no longer profess myself a Roman Catholic. I shall go to church with the family, and when I have once got into your church, I don't suppose I will ever have to leave it again.'

The delight of Mrs. Waterton will be better imagined than I can describe it. The good seed she had been privileged to sow in his humbled mind had indeed taken root, and brought forth fruit in abundance. A long conversation ensued, and the young convert exhibited the depth and reality of his conscientious convictions. The friends parted in silence. Mrs. Waterton could not express the joy she felt, and Horace was equally unable (as well as reluctant, from the native reserve of his character) to call forth all the gratitude of his full and bounding heart.

I have a little more to add to my story.—Horace O'Meara, snatched from positive starvation and death by one kind female friend, and from misery and fatal errors by another,—continues happy and thankful in his new position; and blesses the day when he first saw his invaluable friend at Kate's little room in St. Giles's.—Concluded.

THE SUDDEN DEATH OF A YOUNG MAN AGED ONLY 30.

By a Constant Reader.

W. B. was born of poor but honest and industrious parents, in a small village in the county of L—, where he was always considered a moral steady young man. About seven years since he married a young woman to whom he was always attached and with whom he lived very comfortably, wishing only for her society at the close of the day when he had finished his daily labour. But how short-sighted are we! Whilst they were thus promising themselves

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