The Angels of Bethlehem.

Fair linkèd choirs of the midnight sky
A sweet straight cry,
The anthem of whose melody dwelt in echoes through the sky;
Now the vast hour is come—may the tidings for gladness,
From the Virgin mother strong, 'tis the Saviour we acclaim!'

Through the earthly embowed gloom pour the radiant shafts of light,
Yonder the flaking gates of heaven pour the brave angelic stream.
Like a sea of liquid pearl comes a splendor dazzling bright,
'Tis the Judge of God's glory, eternal and supreme.

By the throne of the Almighty, where the sapphire and the gold
In hues of matchless blending show a glory never dim
Kneel the three archangel chiefs, to the vails which light unfold;
And low in adoration fall the host of cherubim.

Now in the thrall of music, rise the voices of the throng.
In praise and jubilation to the majesty of God,
The Infinite, the Tender, sole, uncreated King,
Whose word commands the day and night, the chaos and the flood.

In bright harmonious numbers, they sing with sweetest tone,
Hosannas to the Persons Three, but to One God alone,
Rejoicing that this night hath seen the great Redeemer's birth,
And as they sing their melody is wafted to the earth.

Ere the day surpasses the crescent on high
And the night clouds in masses envelop the sky,
Aloft on the mountain, from valley to crest,
On crag and on boulder, the snowfall has rest.

And where the dark river is swollen and swift
With the cloud's heavy rain, the snow's heavy drift,
Its banks of deep verdure, which lately were bright
With rose and with emerald, are vestured in white.

The branch of the palm tree is stripped of its bloom,
And creaks in the blast that sweeps through the gloom.
On the wide waste of snow the withered trunk stands,
Like a sentinel sleepless o'er desolate lands.

By Bethlehem's gates, in a stable forlorn,
Is Jesus, from Mary, the Saviour born,
In the manger lies sleeping this Son of the Blest,
And the Mother is keeping a watch on His rest.

Lo! the Shadow of God was cast on the Maid,
And the flesh of the Virgin His will has obeyed.
From a Mother inviolate the Saviour has sprung;
Long promised to faith, whom prophets have sung.

Oh, Jesus, sweet Saviour, adoring we kneel;
Of mercy and power Thy birth is the seal,
From the depths of Thy heart, where the red stream of life
Springs pure to impart to Thee strength for the strife.

Pour the light of Thy love, and the dew of Thy grace
On those who have fallen, on Israel's race.
And when Thou redeemest its seed with Thy Blood,
Forgive them—forgive them, oh, Loved of God.

—*Irish Catholic.*

MOY O'BRIEN.

A TALE OF IRISH LIFE.

By Miss Skeffington ("Melusina.")

CHAPTER XXVIII.—(Continued)

'Of course I am a Protestant,' said Miss Wentworth; 'but I would never dream of interfering with people's religion. So I hope I may be allowed to visit the schools. I would like to see to their musical studies, and set up art classes for these bright Irish children. They ought to excel in art, when they are the descendants of those who made the relic cases, the crosiers, the brooches, and the illuminated manuscripts which we wonder over and strive to imitate.' Presently she continued, 'I should like very much to live here; but I am so afraid of not understanding the people, and so doing more harm than good.'

'I don't think that is likely,' said Moy, at her wits' end for suitable reply. 'I have always heard you were able to do so much good among the people in London.'

'Ah, that is different,' said Miss Wentworth, quickly. 'I am accused of having very republican ideas; but I assure you, if I were to speak [illegible] know I could not), with any [illegible] as familiarity to English peasant peasant class, they would [illegible] ple of the stand me. I really [illegible] not under the consequences [illegible] not know what the people would be; I fear and become [illegible] presume upon it, [illegible] quite insufferable; but think [illegible] though there is, one could [illegible] a social gulf wide enough between the poor and the Arthurs, they speak to one another in the most familiar way, and (this is the most curious part of it) it does not seem odd to me; they all seem to be devoted to the Arthurs, and to have the deepest respect for them, while they joke and laugh with them as though they were equals.'

'I have heard many English people make the same remark,' said Moy. 'I think the Irish have tact, which is a valuable gift.'

'They certainly have most charming manners.'

And just then, by Moy's directions, Miss Wentworth drew up the pony in the high road. She and Moy got out, and leaving the carriage in charge of the groom, they turned down an old road that led near the river, and soon found themselves passing along the wall which had been built of late around the ancient graveyard and the ruins of the abbey. Into stone walls were built many well-preserved crosiers and sculptures which once adorned this beautiful Cistercian monastery. The very steps they mounted were formed of carved and fluted corbels and frieze stones had once been the ornament, a suggested and [illegible]

[illegible]

CHAPTER XXIX.

"We must not stint
Our necessary action in the fear
To cope malicious censurers,
—Shakespeare.

If Mr. Gilmartin liked roughing it in Cambodia and Thibet, he certainly did not in Ballyvorna. He had not been three days at the inn before a fine covered carriage arrived for his use, quickly followed by carriage and riding horses. One morning Moy was tying up some flowers in the garden when he passed the gate on horseback. She knew he had seen her, for he raised his hat, but he never attempted to stop.

Moy had not been outside the garden since her drive with Miss Wentworth. Her grandfather was now able to come down stairs for about two hours every day and read his Dublin papers as of old.

Mr. Davoren went about a good deal, and brought home the news that the tenants on Mr. Hackney's estate, hearing that Mr. Syms was throwing up the agency, were in despair, for they jumped to the conclusion that he was leaving because he refused to sanction harsh measures towards themselves. They were waiting in sullen gloom for the outburst of Mr. Hackney's wrath, for the notices of increased rents would mean notice to quit. But while they thus waited they collected among themselves out of their hard earnings a sum of money to present the Scotch agent, with some little token of gratitude for the many times he had made a stand in their interests, and interposed between them and Mr. Hackney's unjust demands.

The rumor was that Mr. Hackney was going away to England to find a man after his own heart as the new agent, but that he would let Ardeevin and the grounds about it to any one who would keep it in repair. This had, indeed, been his first thought; but now the real truth was that he was leaving Ballyvorna and Ireland for good! 'For good,' in every sense of the word, to those he left behind. He meant to sell the place to some Manchester man, and he had induced Mr. Syms to remain till the business was completed.

His real intention was to be kept a profound secret from the tenants, while his first idea was to be noised abroad.

He was determined that his poor tenants should not benefit by the change. All the malignity of his nature was just now in the ascendant. Wherever he went he was met with freezing politeness from the gentry, and scowls of hatred and looks of scorn from the peasantry. His life was becoming unbearable. He seemed beneath the contempt of those around him. No threatening letters reached him, no man waylaid him. They merely seemed to shrink from meeting him, as one would turn out of the path to avoid some noisome beast.

Though Mr. Davoren ought to have been in London, he refused to leave Moy and her grandfather until he had some idea of what Mr. Hackney's movements were to be. He was always trying to find out; and one day he came in with the joyful news that the man was going to sell the property and leave the country forever. But this fact had been communicated to Maurice under the most solemn promise that he would not divulge the truth to any of the tenants.

No; but there was no reason why the news should not go to America. Moy sat down and wrote at once to Mr. McDonnell, the Irish-American, who, it may be remembered, had been so kind and attentive to Moy and Mrs. Fitzgerald when they were crossing from Holyhead to Dublin. Mr. and Mrs. McDonnell were then on their way to Cork to take passage for the United States after gay visit to Paris and London. Moy had touched the right chord in the young [illegible]'s heart. It was she who had [illegible] to prevented Mr. McDonnell hitherto [illegible]ling in Ireland and spending from [illegible] enormous wealth in the some of his [illegible] land of his birth; but before Mrs. Fitzgerald and Moy, said good-bye, the wife had assured them that it would not be her fault if her husband did not pay a long visit the following summer to the Emerald Isle.

She also promised to bring her little girl, who had always hitherto been left at home, so that they could stay a long time, and perhaps decide upon purchasing some desirable property; and then they had given Moy their address, so that if she heard of anything very good in the meantime she could let them know. And now the letter was written, giving full and minute particulars of old Ardeevin, which was really a noble place, standing on a height, and commanding almost as fine a view as Mr. Gilmartin would have when he built his new house on the site he had made Moy select.

'I have not seen the house at Ardeevin for a long time,' Moy wrote, 'but I hear that Mr. Hackney has greatly added to and improved it.' Then she had to describe the farms and the property, and even this (with Mr. Davoren's assistance) she did wonderfully well. Then she spoke of the people as in general quiet, well-conducted and intelligent, but that a bad landlord had roused some of them to fury and driven others away—that, had he been able, he would have made his tenants little better than serfs; but that she believed a kind and reasonable landlord might do anything with them. Moy also told Mr. McDonnell that if he made up his mind to write about the property, he had better not mention that he had heard of the intended sale from her, and explained her reasons for this piece of advice. She further told him that Mr. Hackney, originally from Manchester, was trying, as she believed, to sell to some friend there.

'Well, as the Americans would say, I think that ought to fetch him,' said Mr. Davoren, laughing, as he handed the letter to Moy, after reading it over carefully. 'And now,' he added, 'I have ordered that ancient covered car for this afternoon to take us over to the Arthurs. You ought to return Miss Wentworth's visit, and the drive will do you good.'

So they went, and found Lady Catherine in the act of sitting to Moy.

'How curious!' she cried, coming from the little writing table to meet them. 'I was just asking you both to come over and dine with me to-morrow, to talk over some private theatricals we are getting up.

Moy thanked her, but declined the theatricals.

'You know, dear,' she said; 'I have not been anywhere the whole winter.'

'The very reason you ought to begin now. Don't you think so?' and she appealed to Mr. Davoren.

He agreed with her. He thought it would be good for Moy, and that she ought to do it.

'And now that Mr. O'Brien is so well she has no excuse,' said Lady Catherine.

So Moy felt herself being drawn into gayety against her will. She had a good many reasons for not wishing to go out just now, but the strongest was to help Mr. Gilmartin. Had he not said, 'While you are here I must stay away.'

'We have already had such fun,' continued Lady Catherine. 'We were reading Shakspeare aloud, and one evening we actually set to work to act 'Hamlet.' We did Mr. Wentworth up in black calico, which crackled frightfully as 'Hamlet' walked about, and I lent the 'Ghost' my waterproof, and although papa said it ought to have been called a 'screaming farce,' I think it was very good. However, this new idea is on a much grander scale; and it seems to me there are a great many more people at home now than there used to be. I find I can scrape together a really respectable sized audience; and now, Mr. Davoren, will you act?'

'The 'Ghost' in 'Hamlet?' he asked. 'I will choose that if I may have your waterproof.'

She blushed and laughed. 'No, no. This time we are not going to attempt tragedy. We have almost decided on 'The Ladies' Battle.' It is very easy, they say. Do you know it?'

'Yes; but I have only seen it acted by amateurs,' he said.

'Ah, so much the better for us; you won't be drawing comparisons between some celebrated professionals and our humble selves. But to proceed. Miss Wentworth is to be 'Leonie,' her brother is to be the 'Brigadier,' I am to be the 'Countess,' and Mr. Gilmartin has at last consented to act 'Henri de Flavigneul.' I think he will describe that scene beautifully where he pins his own cross on the old soldier's breast. But now, Mr. Davoren, what will you be?' and she looked very eager for his answer.

'I think,' said Maurice, 'the only character for me to take is the one I would soonest have. But do you really want help?'

'Oh, most decidedly I've been counting on your help. I knew I was no use asking Moy. There is the 'Baron de Montichard' left, and 'Gustave de Grignon.'

At that moment Miss Wentworth entered the drawing-room, and as Moy hurried forward to meet her, Mr. Davoren said in a low voice to Lady Catherine, 'Let me be 'De Grignon' when he says to the Countess,' 'I will go through with it like the bravest of them,' if I may hear you say at my last moment, 'I am by you!'

Miss Wentworth thought, as Mr. Davoren was presented to her, that he had a very fine face, and was a remarkably happy looking man, while the next moment she found herself remarking the unusually brilliant color of her cousin's face.

Moy thought that Miss Wentworth looked anxious. She had not the calm, happy look of the other day, when they were driving together, but she took her knitting at once, and so occupied herself while she talked. Her knitting, as Lady Catherine pointed out, was worth remarking. It was only woolen socks for gentlemen, but with these she had put in a church window, and now supported a coffee palace in London. Her friends bought the stockings from her, and got her 'large orders' from others.

At last Moy looked at Mr. Davoren, and rose to take leave, and then it was arranged that the two should dine with the Arthurs the following day, and talk the 'play' over.

As they drove home, Maurice said, 'I am glad, for my own sake, that Lady Catherine is to be the Countess; but she ought to have been Leonie, she looks much younger than Miss Wentworth.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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