

those old Bible names—years and years!"

It is not my habit to thrust religion down people's throats—perhaps I am wrongly backward in properly speaking out—but here was a clear opening for saying a word in my Master's cause; so I remarked:

"It is a wonderful thing that if we forget to think about the Bible, or of Him by whose Divine will that Bible was written, yet God never forgets us, but waits close to us, ready to answer us if we choose to turn to Him with a word of feeble prayer for His aid."

"It would be wonderful if it were true."

The words were so low I could scarcely catch them above the deafening noise and turmoil of the streets.

"You *know* it is true, as well as I know it!" I said. Neither of us spoke for a while. Presently my friend asked,

"Sir, are you a clergyman?"

"No, indeed."

He looked at me with the same keen look which I had noticed before.

"Excuse me, sir, but are you an Englishman?"

"Well, a kind of an Englishman,"

I answered, smiling; "an Irishman, that is."

He struck his hand upon his knee.

"God bless you, sir!" he cried—but more as an exclamation than a blessing, however—"God bless you! and I'm an Irishman too! but I've never stood in Ireland."

"How's that?" I asked, more and more interested.

"Sir, I'll just tell you how it is. I was born in Sicily, my parents were Irish. My father was a gentleman, my mother a lady. He was consul at Palermo, and there I was reared. Then—then—in short, sir, I took to bad ways. I fled from my home; I wandered far and wide; I got desperately wounded in a drunken fray in France; I sank and sank until I almost came to beg my bread. Now I drive this 'bus.'"

Abruptly as he spoke, his manner could not wholly hide the deep feeling which lay beneath. He turned his face aside, but I fancied I could see the water glistening in his eyes.

"I don't know why I talk like this to you," he said, "I beg your pardon, sir."

"Nay," I replied, "you have interested me greatly. In all your wanderings have you not been to Ireland?"

"No, but I long to go there. Sir, it is a strange instinct, that love of a man for his country! It's a queer thing that I, who never stood upon its sod, should yet have no dearer wish than to go to Ireland."

"It strikes me as being more beautiful than strange," I said. "I have never seen the face of my Father which is in Heaven, nor ever got a glimpse of His glorious kingdom, yet I love Him, and I love His land, and long beyond all things to see Him, and to know what may be the beauty of the things which He has prepared for me. Wander as you may, your heart turns to Ireland still; and I, however held in bondage here, yet look and hope and sigh for the land which is mine by the free gift of the Saviour."

Had I said too much? He understood me, I could see, and I did not think he could be vexed at my speech. I took courage.

"And Heaven is *yours* by equal right with *mine*," I said, "and God Himself will not dispute our claim if we plead our heirship in His Son."

He did not reply. We had reached the City now, and were crossing the Holborn Viaduct; presently my journey would be at an end, and my new friend and I would part, most likely for ever.

"Will you tell me your name?" I said.

"My real name is forgotten now, sir; it would be useless to repeat it. I call myself Bob Dillon now."