

manner as to hear all that was said within the chamber.

"At last, Father," said the Mother Abbess, "the time has come. God grant it may not be too late. We ought to have gone some days ago—ought we not?"

"It would have been better," responded the priest. "Nevertheless, I believe there is time."

"The Lord-Lieutenant is veritably here in person?" demanded the Vicarress.

"He is," answered Father Taaffe.

"When the morning dawned we beheld his troops before us; but he hath got much to do ere he can attack the town. His batteries have yet to be constructed. It will take him, we think, twelve or fourteen days to accomplish that work, and until then he dare not molest us seriously. But you must at once enter the town, and as the sooner you can quit it the better, I have arranged—and it please you, Mother Abbess, that you should set sail this very night."

"We are ready, good and kind Father," answered the Abbess.

"The moon is at her full," rejoined the priest. "At nightfall, then, you will embark in two boats, which will take you down the Boyne to the place where the little craft is lying. She, having you aboard, will set her sails with all speed for Wexford. Now, I have come hither to say Mass, and to consume the Blessed Sacrament, after which Bride O'Sullivan and some of her people will arrive to aid you quit this house, and enter the town."

"Father," said the Abbess, "is there time for shrift before you begin your Mass?"

"There is," returned the Father; "for it is yet early morn, and if by noontide you are beneath the roof of the O'Sullivans, it will suffice."

So saying, he went towards the chapel, followed by the nuns, and the unseen auditor glided from his hiding-place, and directed his steps, not into the town, but by a long *detour* which would bring him to the outposts of Cromwell's army.

Very tranquilly the Mass was said, and one by one the nuns drew near to receive for the last time the Bread of Life from the Altar, where they had been nourished with that Divine Food

for so many years. Tears coursed down the cheeks of some, others were calm and unmoved; but there was a burst of low, restrained grief when after Mass, Father Taaffe began to strip the Altar, and they knew Jesus in His Sacrament had no dwelling place less.

With many tears the last meal was eaten, and soon after the sad procession began to move. By twos and threes the Sisters went, the Abbess going last of all, and the little convent of S. Mary of the Angels was left empty and desolate.

The day passed sadly in taking farewells. The house of Bride O'Sullivan was crowded with persons who came to take leave of daughter, sister, or niece, and old and tried friends also had a parting word to say.

Sister Clare of Jesus, was more free than many of her Sisters, as none of her family were in Drogheda. She wandered into the garden which adjoined the O'Sullivan's house, and there was met by Kathleen Maguire, whose sweet face was bathed in tears.

"Dearest Katie," said Sister Clare, "you must not mourn our departure so bitterly. You have your good husband, Hugh, and your fair children by your side, and in this world we must learn to part with our friends."

"Ah, Eveleen," sighed Kathleen, "'tis but the beginning of the end. I feel a sad foreboding that we shall never meet again. Do you know—ah, no, I never had courage to tell thee—on my wedding-day, as I was coming home from the chapel, leaning on my dear Hugh's arm, an old woman—I suppose she was a 'wise woman' muttered as I passed,

Och, fair maid,  
Soon to fade!

and a cold chill crept about my heart. For myself, Eveleen, I could be ready to die, but it seems to me she meant that my Hugh would be taken from me, and then, assuredly, I shall fade, and that quickly," and Kathleen's tears flowed fast.

"My own dear Kate," said Sister Clare, "lift up your heart, and do not be dismayed. Why heed or ponder on the sayings of some poor, half-witted creature; indeed 'tis a sad mistake to call such a one wise. 'Tis the will of our God to hide the future from us. Oh,