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ORIGINAL POETRY.

FOR THE LITERARY TRANSCRIPT.

THE BROTHERS.

Years ago,
There were two sons of a noble house,
Brothers in nature and affection. They,
In their fresh-brooding days of infancy,
Rejoiced, and wept, and played in unison;
Each found a plea—were doubly sweet, when'er
His brother shared it; and near every spot
Lost half its value if enjoyed alone.

Time passed. The elder, flattered and caressed
By the sick mirth of his father's house,
Began to look with coldness upon him
Who erst had been so dear. His brother saw
And mourned the change; till, wounded to the soul
With insult and neglect, he left his house
Nor saw it more.

Years were away. A wanderer on the earth
He moved among his fellow-men as a band,
His words were with them, but his mind was not.
Yet did he much of good to the sons of grief,
And daughter's of a maiden, were to him
A link in a bond of brotherhood and love.
He entered the path, and opened the eyes of age,
And whispered words of renovating power,
That felt like manna on their wasted hearts.
He lived amid the bosoms of those,
Nor sought for more. And when at length he died,
They laid him in a green and quiet spot.
That seemed a fairer mansion for his soul,
And aged men did own their hearts, and breathe
Blessings unheard but felt: a solemn song,
And scathed flowers upon his lonely grave,
And deemed it holy ground. Thus, far away
From home and kindred, was he stricken down,
And laid by strangers in the narrow house.

Meanwhile, how fared the elder one? Begirt
With honours, plea-ares, lawnings, flatteries,
The pony trotted through him out a god
For men to crown and worship. He beheld
A seeming form of pleasure fit around,
And desperately strove to capture it.
He clapped his hands, and beauty stretched her arms,
Musicians played their choicest melodies,
And all that most delights the heart of man
Was placed within his grasp. What wonder then
That, as he grew, he learned to spurn his kind,
To lose his ear to penury's taunts,
And heap contempt on desolation's cry?
He breathed an atmosphere of courtly sander;
And with the peers and magnates of the land
He held familiar intercourse. But still,
And the crowds that thronged to honor him,
He felt the utter hollowness of all.
He knew himself most lone, most desolate,
Lone, he too died. With ceremonious rites,
And gorgeous pomp, they carried him towards
The mausoleum of his ancestors;
And, 'neath the banners, and escutcheons,
And heir inscriptions of his noble line,
They laid him down, and coldly left him there.

Such is their tale. Who may not draw from hence
A moral and a marvel?

KORATH.

THE DISPENSATION.

AN IRISH STORY.

BY MRS. C. S. HALL.

(Continued.)

The day after the priest's decision, Alick and Mary avoided each other, as if by mutual consent; and as the evening approached, the poor girl wandered to the little vale that had seen so lately the scene of her innocent hopes and seated herself under the very lime-tree where she had sat with her lover.

She was roused from her reverie by no other than Stephen Cormack, who, in a tone that sounded to her ear like an insult, said, "he was very sorry to find her so lonesome, but glad to get speaking to her on something that concerned them both."

Mary rose up with what might be truly called dignity, and replied, "she knew of nothing that could concern them both."

"Oh, truth and honesty Miss Mary! I haven't been coming after ye these two years, and you set know my honourable intentions. Sure it's Mrs. Stephen Cormack I want ye to be; and bring ye mistress over my uncle's house, who can lay down gold for gold with yer father."

Ye needn't look so scornful either; there's as good grass in the meadow as ever was mowed."

"Stephen Cormack," said Mary, "if I looked as you say, I didn't mean it. In whatever way a man proposes marriage to a woman, he does her honour; and I am grateful as I can be for what you have mentioned—but plain speaking is best. Were you King of England, or Emperor of all France, and I a poor lone outcast from home and family, I would lay my head under that tree, and die, sooner than be your wife!"

"And more fool you, for that same!" he retorted, bitterly. "It's not every one would have ye now, after you and yer torn first cousin been spoken of over the parish for company-keeping."

"I seek no man's love," replied Mary, calmly; "but a woman calls you coward, Stephen Cormack, for daring to say to her, when no friend's by, what it even her baneful house-dog were feeling at her feet you wouldn't dare speak!"

As she uttered the words she turned away towards the path that led to her home; but the young man seized her hand, and sought to detain her.

"What would ye with me, Stephen?—you know my name; and ye know that Mary Sullivan is not given to change."

"Just listen, Mary?—you and Alick never can be one in this world; and where 'il you find a boy that loves ye better than myself?"

"You have yer answer, Sir; and if you leave my contempt, instead of my pity, ye may thank yerself!"

"Then, by the Holy Father, he shall bitterly repent this treatment; and as I'm a living man, Mary, I'll see the day yet when ye'll kneel for me to marry ye, and die at my mercy, like that clod of dirt!"

The fellow kicked the greensward in illustration of his words; but at the same moment was extended at Mary's feet, by a blow from the stout sash of his faithful ally, Walter, who appeared, as it were, from the bosom of the earth, to avenge the insult offered to his cousin. The anger of the half-witted man, once excited, was not easily quelled. He repeated the words, even while Mary was clapping to his arm, and would have persisted in his vengeance, had she not roused her energies, and commanded him to forbear. She hastened home, almost dragging Watty with her, and sent her father to convey the priest's nephew to his dwelling; but when he arrived at the glen, Stephen was nowhere to be found.

Mary retired early to her chamber that night; but sleep deserted the unhappy and unfortunate. It was not so with Jessie; the light-hearted girl slept as if she had never known and never could know either care or sorrow.

The family, at length, were all at rest. Mary arose from her bed, and opened the little casement, thinking the fresh breezes of night would cool her fevered brain. She thought as shadow passed across the yard, and even rested on the humble shrubs that Alick, in happier times had planted. She listened—the house dog did not bark, nor could she hear a single footstep; but the shadow returned—approached—stole up to the window hastily, and the noise it made evidently apprised the intruder that some one watched his ramblings. The bushes were separated, and to her relief and astonishment, she recognized Walter's well-known face, peering upwards. Again she opened it, and inquired if any thing had happened at the mill.

"Whisht, agra, whisht—why a'n't you at rest?—I wouldn't have been here, only I thought I could wish you a silent good night, under yer windy. And I wint my rounds, and found my little birds sleeping and happy. An' it's rejoiced I am to see ye; and now the moon's coming out clear, you can see me too. I don't look like a fool now—do I, Mary?—fit to visit a King—a'n't I?"

Watty was, indeed, metamorphosed. Over his usual gear he had buttoned his father's grey coat; and his brother's had surmounted the scarlet kerchief he always wore round his

head; he had also drawn on his father's top boots, and brandished his uncle's heavy whip in his hand.

"I've saddled Alick's pony," he continued, in a half-whisper; "it's a merry bit of flesh, and follows me like a dog. And, Mary, a lanced! I'm going on a long journey—and just clap yer two hands in the moonshine, and bless me!—and pray that I don't increase by yet for twenty-four hours; and then he may take it back again, for I've sense enough to see that it is the innocent things that's happiest in this world. Oh, Mary, bless me!—ye ought, if ye knew but all; it's it's for his sake and yours that I'm going."

The affectionate creature knelt as devoutly as if he solicited the prayers of the Virgin Mother, while his cousin, astonished at what was so inexplicable, implored him to explain his meaning.

"But God direct me, Mary! I haven't words to make ye understand what I'm after; but I know my own know, and there's the charm of a secret!—and the pony's calling me—give me the blessing of I laid ye without all!—and keep up yer heart—and maybe the little sense that I have, start'd for good, will turn out better than a great mountain of sense, not start'd at all!"

Mary gave the blessing so earnestly implored. The instant it was delivered, Walter was out of sight; and in a few moments she heard the well-known trot of Alick's pony, tipping along the high road that skirted the Beacon Green.

The succeeding day passed very gloomily in both houses. No one could conjecture Walter's purpose, or whether he was gone; he seldom rode, though he rambled occasionally, far from home, and visited family connections even in the North, where he was always welcome; and for the strange mixture of keenness and simplicity that formed the distinguishing feature of his wandering mind, rendered him, when in a talkative mood, very entertaining; and above all, the skill and taste he evinced in singing national ballads earned him a kindly welcome in every cottage.

The evening was dull and rainy; and the night set in with the cold shivering feel, so unusual in summer time.

Sullivan occupied the "single nook"—his legs stretched out—his arms folded, except when he raised his hand to re-light or fill his pipe—that constant companion of Irish reticence. His wife busied herself about household matters—Jessie was rettriming her legion bonnet—and Mary sat spinning, opposite her father; her foot moved as swiftly as usual, and her fingers twisted the delicate thread, as if her mind had regained its tranquillity; but it was evident, from the varying expression of her countenance, that—

"—Mary, and sad, and deep.
"Were the thoughts tucked in her silent breast?"

"Come, Jessie," said the father, "sing us a song; not too merry, nor too sorrowful, and, maybe, my little lark here will join you in it."

Mary replied with a sweet smile; but, nevertheless, her voice was not heard in the simple lay.

"Come, girls," said the father, "come—it's time to go to bed, darlins!—God send us a fine sun-rise!"

"And a happier one than we've had lately," added Mrs. Sullivan. "There is something come over the house that's turned every thing."

"May the Holy Saints protect us!" said Mary; "Somehow, I feel loath to go to bed—there's a weight on my heart and mournful scounding in my ears—I wish daylight was come!"

"See there, now, what you put in the child's head, Nelly, with your croaking! Whatever present trouble we have, Mary, my blessing, I feel that for your sake it will all pass. The Lord sent ye just like a delicate plant of sweet scent among us—a thing to mind and love; and now, agra, when the winter and storm have gone over, and the

little plant has grown, and budded, and blossomed, it wouldn't be natural (and he that made Nature 'ud never turn against it) to cut it down."

"It may wither, father," murmured Mary, looking mournfully in her parent's face.

"I shall not wither, while I've a heart to press it to, or an arm to shelter it," he exclaimed, holding her to his bosom; and if tears did mingle in that pure and holy embrace, Corney Sullivan was neither less brave nor less manly for it.

The minutes of the Beacon House had long retired to rest, when Mrs. Sullivan started from her sleep, and shaking her husband violently, asked him if he had not heard a scream. Before he could reply, "Father!—father!"—she shrieked, with all the wildness of despair—and, merciful Providence!—in Mary's voice. He rushed to his room door, and endeavoured to force it open, but he strained every nerve in vain. Like many doors in Irish castles, it opened from the outside; and it was evident that heavy pressure had been resorted to, to prevent its being pushed forward. Again the mournful wail.

"Father!—Father!"—burst upon his ear. He started at impotent rage—he conjured those without, by every holy and sacred tie, to let him go forth. He then betought him of the little window that opened on the kitchen—sure! his head could hardy pass through the aperture. With frenzied eagerness he endeavoured to tear out the casement, even as a maniac attempts to rive his fetters. At length he succeeded, and the mad wail trembled beneath his hands. He listened—the afflicting words were not repeated; within the sound of footsteps had ceased, but suddenly without all was bustle; and as he renewed his exertions, the tramp of horsemen came heavily upon his ear. Again he flew to the door; it was unfastened; it extended on the earthen floor of the kitchen, he beheld Jessie in a state of perfect insensibility; he rushed to the fore-court—even the sound of the horse's hoofs had died in the distance; he sped to his mother's house—they were not long in coming to his assistance, and accompanied him speedily to the plunderer's nest. His wife's state of mind may be better conceived than described; and the only account Jessie could give of the outrage was, that she was roused from her sleep by mad and armed men entering her chamber, and that despite her efforts, they rolled a horseman's cloak round her cousin, and dragged her forth.

To rouse the neighbours—saddle, spur, and away after the lawless plunderers, was the universal resolve. It may readily be believed that Alick was foremost on execution; but the ruffians had anticipated pursuit. The saddles in the sheds, dignified by the name of stables, at both houses were cut to pieces; and a brown farm-house, with the exception of Alick's pony, the only good roaster in their possession, was cruelly maimed.

"Oh if Watty had been here, this could not have happened!" they exclaimed; "he has the ear of a hare, the foot of a hound, and the eye of an eagle;" but it was vain. And the grey morning had almost dawned, before a party, consisting of seven tolerably well-mounted and well-armed men, sallied forth in pursuit of the lost treasure. Various were the conjectures as to the probable authors of the abduction, and the course the miscreants had pursued. The Sullivan were silent on the former topic, but seemed to opine that Mary had been carried towards the very lawless neighbourhood of Keenahan's wood.

The crime of conveying the daughters of respectable farmers from their own homes, and forcing them to marry, frequently, persons whom they had never seen, was at one time not at all uncommon in Ireland; even in my own quiet district, I remember, about sixteen years ago, a circumstance of the kind that made a powerful impression on my youthful mind, although there was much less villainy about it than characterized "the lifting" of Mary Sullivan. Unfortunately the friends of the perpetrators on such occasion, seem to argue themselves into the belief that when such af-