

300 CHILDREN OF THE DEAD END

her face. A bright colour glowed faintly in her cheeks, and about her face there was still the girlish grace of the Norah whom I had met years before on the leading road to Greenanore.

"I was dreamin' of ye, Dermod," she said in a low silvery voice. "Ye were long in comin'."

Sitting up with one elbow buried in the pillow, her chemise slipped from her shoulders and her skin looked very pink and delicate under the scattered locks of brown hair. I went down on my knees by the bedside and clasped both her hands in mine. She was expecting me—waiting for me.

"Ellen told me that ye were lookin' for meself," she continued. "A man came this mornin'."

"I sent him, Norah," I said. "'Tis good to see you again, darling. I have been looking for you such a long time."

"Have ye?" was all her answer, and gripping my two big hands tightly with her little ones she began to sob like a child.

"It's the kindly way that ye have with ye, Dermod," she went on, sinking back into the bed. Her tearless sobs were almost choking her and she gazed up at the roof with sad, blank eyes. "Ye don't know what I am and the kind of life I have been leadin' for a good lot of years, to come and speak to me again. It's not for a decent man like ye to speak to the likes of my kind! It's meself that has suffered a big lot, too, Dermod, and I deserve pity more than hate. Me sufferin's would have broke the heart of a cold mountainy stone."

"Poor Norah! well do I know what you have suffered," I said. "I have been looking for you for a long while and I want to make you happy now that I have found you."

"Make me happy!" she exclaimed, withdrawing her hands from mine. "What would ye be doin' wantin' to