

Time wore on, and it is recorded on reliable tradition that more than one applicant for her heart and hand had been martyr to Mary's rash vow. But, "Relentless time, it wouldn't wait."

The years kept numbering up, and the eligible young men were not becoming more numerous—indeed, rather the reverse. And so by and by, in calm reflection, Mary reluctantly decided to drop off one of her stern resolves, having come to think that should the next anxious sigh and good offer come from the heart and lips of a schoolmaster, "it wasn't so unworthy a calling," only let him not be of the detestible country or the horrid color of hair; and yet, strange to say, with all this condescending liberality on her part, somehow the right young men didn't come round.

Whatever *could* be the matter? Now would she, *could* she, yet further modify her vow?—perhaps dispense with and strike off one more of the three fixed conditions, and if so, which of them? She would wait yet a little longer; "patience and perseverance often overcome difficulties"; (yet even this does not always apply). Ultimately, however, the knotty question was compromised in this way, simply that the next time a seeming good offer came along, it might be just as wise to ask no particular questions as to the *nationality*, and, furthermore, suppose the interview took place in not very clear light, the exact shade of hair need not be too closely scrutinized. Wasn't there an art to bring hair to almost any color desired? In fact, she could see there were far higher considerations than these *minor* matters.

The record further is, that one fine morning Mary did finally find herself the fond stepmother of Mr. Phelim O'Hanayan's little family—good Phelim being a schoolmaster and a genuine, fiery-headed son of the Green Isle, and it is certified that she efficiently aided him in the discharge of his arduous teaching duties.

Now, moreover, sedate Mrs. O'Hanayan seriously advises all silly young people never to make thoughtless vows, and if they have done so, why, to be sure, a rash promise is better broken than kept.