

this high, self-sacrificing kind of love Mike did not want. It would have been far more convenient for his brother to agree to what he was beginning to persuade himself was a very harmless request.

"Ted," he said, when he had recovered himself, "you and me have never quarrelled, have we?"

"No," answered Ted, looking at him as if surprised at the question. "I don't want your rabbits."

Ted gave a sigh of relief.

"See!" continued Mike, his face flushing with excitement, "which will you have? me lovin' you same as ever, playin' with my rabbits beside you, diggin' in my garden beside you, or me not speakin' to you, never comin' near you, never playin' with you, and not lovin' you a bit."

"Not lovin' me?" asked Ted, opening his brown eyes very wide.

"No, not a bit. Now choose. If you tell mother, I'll do that."

"But, Mike, we must have our lessons together."

"Yes, but that's only three hours. All the rest of the time I'll not speak to you, even at night I'll not speak to you. It will be a great big quarrel between you and me. Now Ted, choose."

I think in the silence that followed the little brothers could almost hear each other's heart beat.

But it was a short silence.

Ted had no choice before him when his mind was already made up.

"Then, Mike, darlin'," he said, speaking slowly and with great emphasis—"Mike, darlin', it must be a quarrel, for I can't never tell a lie." And he turned and walked away.

CHAPTER VI.—TOOTSIE'S SHAWL.

Had Mrs. O'Donnel not been particularly busy during the next few days, she must have noticed the change in her little boys. She must have seen the gloomy frown on Mike's brow, and observed how silent and sad Ted had grown. But she was, as I said, very much occupied, and even completely forgot to make any more inquiries about Dan; and the boys, unless when in Miss Ross's care, who during this week stayed to dinner, and took them out walking, were left entirely to themselves.

Every night still their mother kissed and blessed them, and every night she entered a good conduct mark in their judgment book, and whispered to them of the delights in store for them next week, but only then and in the morning did she see them. Meanwhile, Nurse Nora never came near her charge. Meanwhile, also, Mike got accustomed to his quarrel with Ted, got accustomed to playing alone, to lying down at night, to rising in the morning, without kissing his brother. His little heart was growing harder and harder, he was no longer sorry for his sin. But he was very dull. When lessons were over, and they were said well all this week, he no longer rushed out wild with fun and spirits to his play. He thought he was quite reconciled to doing without Ted's companionship, but in reality he missed him more and more. He began to consider his rabbits tiresome, his pigeons poor

fun, his garden a bore, and even a new employment which he had invented for himself, namely, fishing with bits of twine in a stream which ran at the foot of the lawn, was a weariness to him. And as Mike grew dull, he began to grow curious. Dr. Watts says in his hymns for children that—

"Satan finds some mischief still For idle hands to do."

Mike spent many hours of these bright sunny days in complete idleness, and Satan, who never loses an opportunity—which we so often do—put thoughts into his little head which led to very sad results indeed. Mike became curious about Nora. Why was Nora away? Where was she? Now Ted never troubled his head on this subject; he had all a little child's perfect faith in his mother. His mother had said that she must keep his nurse away from him for a week, that he should know the reason some day, but not at present. Ted was quite content to wait, and thought he missed his faithful nurse, he did not reason as to the cause of her absence.

But Mike in his dullness fretted about this. He questioned Biddie, he questioned old Patrick, and though neither servant would tell him anything, he felt quite sure there was some mystery about, and was also sure that this mystery was connected with that wonderful bundle he had seen in his father's arms a few mornings ago.

Nora was in the house, he knew, for once or twice he saw Biddie carrying up dinner to a part of the old glebe which was never used, and which was shut off from the rest of the house by a strong oak door which was always kept carefully locked. Mike became more and more anxious to find out this secret about Nora, and alas! an opportunity for doing so soon came.

On the Friday after his quarrel with Ted, he was wandering disconsolately round the fruit garden, counting the days, and almost the hours, to his longed for pleasure—for which he had sacrificed so much and sinned so deeply.

He was not in the fruit garden, which was enclosed by a high wall, and into which the little boys were never allowed to go alone, as their father and mother considered unripe fruit too strong a temptation to subject them to. Suddenly he heard a high, clear voice singing the following gay words to a gay air—

"O where Can her like be found? Nowhere

The country round, A slinderer, tunderer, purtler, wittler, coolen than you,

Rose aroo!"

The voice was Nora's. Who was she singing for? In an instant Mike had climbed a tree which grew close to the wall, and was looking eagerly into the garden.

Yes, pacing up and down the gravelled walk directly under him, was his nurse Nora, bearing in her arms a little child—the most perfect to evely child he had ever seen. Ah, clever Mike! how well he had guessed what was in that bundle! His heart beat high with exultation and delight at having at last solved

\* Songs of Killarney.

the mystery. Up and down walked Nora, little guessing who was watching her. Again and again her shrill though sweet voice sounded in the chorus—

"A slinderer, purtler, wittler, coolen than you,

Rose aroo!"

and then she clasped the fair little child in all the ecstasy of her Irish nature to her heart. As Mike watched, a great longing came over him to kiss the baby too. Not so very long ago, he himself had a baby sister—a baby sister who died. This baby reminded him of Eileen.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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