

even-meshed nets extended on high; a shuttle was sent along by a quick hand, then a white foot—yes, all the feet were white as a hand—sprang to set a low crank—never mind the non-technical word—then feet flew back, and a treadle was set going. So along the rows. And one girl was tall and ruddy, and another was small and frail-looking; one was an Amazon, and another one—only one—looked worn and weary.

Then one was beautiful, undeniably beautiful. This was Lizzie Mirea. Her foot and hand were swift and sure; and what a lithe, straight figure the girl had!

It was at her loom that the strangers stood the longest, and she it was who showed all the doings and intricate turns of the machinery.

But she was proud, and she turned haughtily away as one lingered behind and would have left a gift for the net-makers.

"Where's the sense o' yer being so high?" said the girl who we have called the Amazon. Her frame was huge, but she had the soft Manx tongue. "It'll be good for the rest of us, if ye'll be above taking it."

"It'll be on that bench, if ye're wishing for't," Lizzie answered.

She, too, had the soft voice and easily gliding speech of the island.

A quick glance and a quicker dart from the girl who looked so weary, and the coins were taken possession of.

"We'll not have the luck o' Lizzie!" came as sharply as the other girl's tones had been soft. "Eh, Liz, if I'd your luck, I'd have done with this long ago!"

"Would you? You are not like me." There was a quaint decision in the girl's manner as she still worked on deftly. "Eh, I'm half-thinking I'll be sorry when I leave the factory."

"That's likely!" the other retorted scornfully.

By and by work was done, and the sweet, pure evening had set in with the breeze blowing freshly in from the western sea.

Some of the girls sat on the low seawall; only one now had her feet bare, and she was Nan Clucas, the sharp girl who was careless of her appearance—careless of most things, in fact. Of course all the rest walked the streets shod, whatever they might do for the easy performance of their work.

All the houses along the shore-road faced the bay except one, and that one stood apart, and with one side set to the dancing Summer waters, set its face looking adown the road to the pier, and harbor, and ruined castle.

A girl came out of this. It was freshly white-washed, like every Manx cottage in Summer time, and the flowers behind its polished windows were the finest in the place. To have good flowers in one's window is a pride of these fisher-people.

"Eh!" came in a long cry from Nan, sitting and dangling her feet. "Eh, and who has he gone walking with the night? Lizzie! Hearken to me!"

Lizzie did not hear, but went on her errand to a cottage, and was back in a few moments.

"I'd have more pride than that," Nan shouted to her.

"What will ye be saying?" The girl came up.

"When my man takes another lass out with him, I'll not go to his mother's asking for 'm," cried Nan mockingly.

"You dare to say such a word!"

Lizzie was proud, and could fire up.

"Don't answer her," a companion, the Amazon, advised.

"That will I not."

"It's well to be grand. Tom Caine's as chancy as the rest. I'll go with him next time he asks me."

"And ye may," Lizzie answered.

If she had a fault, and of course, like the rest of the world, she did have one, it was that of a haughty and proud spirit. She turned away, saying:

"But never, till I see 't with m' own eyes, will I believe that of Tom."

"Then where will I be getting these from?"

And the careless Nan pointed to a knot of sea-pinks she had, contrary to her usual custom, set for adornment in the fastening of her dress, under her chin.

There are times when a girl's heart is seemingly waiting to be wounded. Such a moment had come to Lizzie. All her love and faith had gone to Tom, the finest young fisherman of the town, and yet here was a stinging word spoken, and her strong heart had one weak point in which it took root.

She walked, erect and proud, away from the other girls, but directly she was within the door of her father's cottage she bowed her head and sobbed aloud. No one was by her, there was