

“LET THE ROOF FALL IN”

she knelt at the Dowager's knees. Now she felt the old hands trembling on her hair, caressing her, and she heard the words too, although they were mumbled words, not very clear, coming slowly :

“In my old age—to be a son to my old age! To me, that doubted His goodness. I didn't deserve it, didn't I question and complain? And then I saw him, Terence himself, and the quick smile of him . . . come back to me. My own baby boy, with the sunny hair, and all the pretty ways of him. Not dead at all, never dead. What had I been thinking about?”

She had lapses of memory, not only that night when Rosaleen knelt at her feet, with quieting sobs, and quieting heart, but often in the after days. Presently the knowledge came to Rosaleen that her ordeal was over, and done with, and that, without words, or any explanation that must cover her with shame, or stain the memory that Derry had helped to keep white, Terence's mother had accepted Terence's son.

Often, after that night, they had to humour her, and bear with her. The broken blood-vessel in her brain leaked, and obscured her judgment. It became difficult, later on, sometimes to make her understand why they called Derry, Lord Ranmore. She never resented his being there. On the contrary, she came to depend upon, and to consult him, and lean upon him, but never as Ranmore's lord. The sturdy middle age the Duchess had hoped would come again to her was not hers; but its passion returned. Again she wanted nothing but that Ranmore should stand fair and clear for Ranmore's heir. That she saw the heir in Terence's son, and not in Derry, mattered little, whilst yet he was but a baby. For him the workmen were recalled, and the pick of the miners echoed in the valley. For him the rents were released, and the fishing-