

mother with great respect.

"How now, Hugh, have you come for a truant wife?"

"Indeed, have I," answered he. "I guessed how she would take the news."

Kathleen clung to his arm.

"Is there any hope—are we all lost?"

"Tush child, nothing is lost! Lord Cromwell is not here; 'tis rumored he doth approach—but 'tis not certain. Again, if his troops come he may not be with them in person; and, lastly, what think you, Lord Ormond saith in a despatch sent ere while to the Governor?"

"I cannot divine," sighed Kathleen, not yet re-assured.

"Oh! tell us Hugh," cried Bride eagerly, "Ormond though, is coming to us, and I should love to know what he said."

"He saith he is well content that Cromwell should come hither, that the siege will detain him so long. See we are at the very end of August; winter will come on apace. He could not reduce this place under many more months. His own men will suffer sorely, and his attention will be called off to other parts of Ireland. Fear not, good and kind friends, we are all safe. Would to God all Ireland were the same."

Kathleen dried her tears, and her gentle face reassumed its usual look of peaceful tranquillity.

Bride exclaimed, "Then, Hugh, I may tell Mother Abbess 'tis folly to think of quitting the place and taking refuge at Wexford."

"Folly, indeed," answered the young man lightly: "but now, Kathleen, if you are ready, we must bid our good friends farewell."

After they were gone Bride told her mother all that was passing at the Convent, and together they lamented over Mother Abbess's ideas and resolved to try and change her mind. Bride would go thither on the morrow and recount all she had heard. This settled, she went about her household duties, singing as usual. Why did her voice falter ever and anon? Why was there a heavy weight at her heart? Why did the words, "In the hour of death deliver us O Lord," ring in her ears? Why did a rush of unwonted tears fill her eyes? She could not tell; perhaps it was the

grief for losing her friends. No, something, whispered it had a still deeper cause Bride knew not; but she could not rest, and putting on her ample cloak, she stole to the Franciscan Church to find Father Taaffe.

A long grave conference followed between them. Bride resolved to follow his advice and prepare her soul now while life coursed through her veins for that awful hour which so often comes upon us unawares.

In the evening the nuns again gathered round their Abbess and she bade them speak their mind freely.

Almost all were anxious to go to Wexford.

"My only fear is," said Mother Vicarress; "but doubtless Mother, you also have thought of it, whether we ought to leave the poor city in which we have had so much kindness shown unto us, at the hour of its peril. Cannot our unworthy prayers do somewhat to avert the misfortunes which seem to hang over it?"

"I have thought of that, dear sister, and I have taken advice from our good Fathers here on the point; but they reply the siege is likely to be long and protracted. The well-known determination of Cromwell leaves no doubt that eventually he will conquer the town, though the resistance will be long and sharp; but every month to be fed within the city will be an additional tax on the defenders. The Fathers think no women ought to stay, except those bound by family duties or necessity."

"Then, there is nothing more to be said," remarked Mother Vicarress; "twould be flying in the face of Providence to remain under such circumstances."

"We must follow our Master's counsel then, dear sisters," continued the Abbess.

"When they persecute ye in one city, flee unto another. And we shall go forth with joy, shall we not, rejoicing to suffer for the Lord?"

Every voice answered with an eager accent.

"Then we make our preparations for departure," remarked the Mother Vicarress. "Is there great haste in the matter, Mother?"

"No," said the Abbess, "the information is not certain, and the enemy can-