

me,—husband, and sons—they're gone—gone, this many a year—paice an' comfort, house an' land—they're gone, too, or else goin' fast, ay fast; an' may be 'tis well that the ould eyes will be fadin' too; the good Christins may be more openhanded when they see that the widow that begs a could pee-aty from them, is blind as well as poor."

"She's frettin' herself into the grave from me, this away," said Moya, still weeping; "an' there's no use in my tellin' her that God is good, and that he never shut one door on us but he opens another. Mother, I'm strong, an' young, an' able to do for you."

"That child puts the vexation on me, Murty Meehan," resumed the peevish and therefore selfish old woman; "just listen to the words of her mouth; she goes on talkin' o' doin' for me!—does she call givin' me half a mayle o' pee-aties doin' for me? Is she able to put her hand again the rascal of a sheriff an' his bailiffs, an' shuv 'em from the door? Will she stock the land, and till the land?—will she pay the black-hearted landlord his rent?—will she keep me in the house where I was born, as I used to be kept in id? I'm not to be under this roof another week."

"Mother, mother! don't be so cast down in yourself," comforted Murty, as Moya turned away, hopeless and pained, though not feeling offended, and weeping more than ever. "Betther times is comin'."

"Betther times! well, ay; I know that; the day I'm sent adrift over that thrashold, the heart will burst in my body; an' then there will be the better times—in the grave: betther times, because I can't call to mind there the times that are gone; ay, ay; I know it well; an' I'm thankful to you for your comfort, Murty."

"She's sore afflicted," whispered Moya, coming back, and wishing by her remark to soften to Murty's ear her mother's bitter and hurtful words.

"Mother, you'll want none o' the grave's comforts yet a start, please God; you'll be livin' under the roof that covers you, an' that you was born under, this many a day to come; an' you'll be livin' under it prosperous an' happy."

"Did you stalk over here on your long legs, Murty Meehan, thinkin' you had a witless woman, as well as a broken-hearted woman, to make your mock at? You have a house to cover you; don't jibe them that'll soon be houseless, an' that onct had a home o' plenty. Go to your own place, Murty Meehan, an' laive me to myself; go to your own place an' take your gorsoon on your knee, an' promise him a coach an' four horses, if he stops cryin'; but don't bring sich stories to the ould widow in her misfortunes."

"Och, mother, mother?" gently remonstrated Moya; Murty 'ud never come to your hearth-stone to mock you."

"Mother, the colleen says the truth," blandly continued Murty; "I was never given to say or do what 'ud give pain to the heart of a stranger, not to talk o' you; an' I tell you again, an' I know what I'm sayin', that you'll live in the ould house to the ind o' your days, asy an' comfortable an' happy, if you like."

Moya had begun to listen to Murty with a beating heart: now she looked at him in breathless interest. The widow relaxed her clasped fingers from her knees, put back, with one hand, the neglected grey hairs from her face, and rested the palm of the other on her low stool, that so she might enable herself to turn round, and gaze her full wonder into the speaker's face. Her fluent words ceased.

"First an' foremost," Murty went on, "you don't owe a *laffina* o' rent in the world wide, this blessed moment! there's the landlord's resate in full, to the present day." He laid it on her knees. "An' will you b'lieve me now, mother dear?"

Moya, uttering a low scream of joy, suddenly knelt, clasping her hands, looking upward and moving her lips in prayer. The aged woman snatched up the paper, started on her feet, flung back the gown which had been hooded round her head, tottered to the rush-light in the middle of the floor, read the writing, and saw there was no mockery.

"May the ould widow's blessins," she began, also kneeling, "fall in a plentiful shower on the head that—that—" she could not go on; a passion of tears interrupted her speech. Moya piously finished for her the intended blessing, adding, "An' mine with it, our Father in heaven! mine—the blessin' o' the poor widow's orphan child on whoever it is, that takes my mother out of her sore trouble this holy and blessed night!" She then arose to assist her parent off the floor to her low stool again.

"'Tis more nor two years," resumed Mrs. Moore, wiping with her apron the plentiful moisture from her eyes and her wrinkles, "more nor two years since a tear fell from me; my heart was crusted over wid bitterness, like the water when the frost is upon id: an' I'm cryin' now because the thaw is come to me; don't be afcared, Moya; don't let it trouble you; nor you, Murty, asthore; it's the joy makes me cry, an' it will do me good."

For some time the certain tidings that she was not to be turned out of her house—the home of her fathers, of her youth, of her womanhood, and of her matronly consequence—were sufficient tidings for the widow Moore; and as she professed to receive relief from her tears, Murty allowed her to indulge them without interruption.

Moya also experienced a temporary abstraction of joy, though not of a nature so selfish as that indulged in by her mother; in fact, her heart thrilled with pleasure, because her mother's had been comforted. Both, however, awakened, at length to the interest