

* * The Story Page. * *

Kathleen.

The Story of an Irish Girl.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

"Kathleen, is it possible that you are crying again? Did I not tell you that I should discharge you if I found you indulging in this foolish whimpering any more?"

Poor Kathleen O'Neill had been dusting the elegantly furnished drawing-room, and she stood before an exquisite little painting of one of the blue, sparkling Irish lakes, set in gold-green shores, with a sky beyond like liquid amber—stood, with her apron to her eyes, and her ruddy cheeks deluged in tears.

"I couldn't help it, ma'am," she sobbed, "but it puts me in mind of home!"

"Home!" scornfully echoed Mrs. Arnott. "Your home! A shanty in a bog. It isn't likely that you ever saw such a spot as that!"

"Deed did I, then, ma'am," answered Kathleen, "and many a time. For we lived just beyant them same green shores, when—"

"There, then, that will do," said Mrs. Arnott, coldly. "I do not care about any reminiscences."

Kathleen did not understand the five-syllabled word, but her quick nature comprehended the bitter, sarcastic tone. The tears were frozen in their fount—the scarlet spots glowed in either cheek.

"She looks down on me as if I were a dog!" Kathleen thought to herself. "And sure it's the same flesh and blood God has given to both of us. How should she like it, I wonder, if it was her in a strange land, and never a kind word spoken to her! Oh, if I could but see the old mother, and little Honora, and Teddy, that's but a baby yet! But the wide blue sea rolls between us, and it's all alone I am!"

Poor Kathleen! The sense of desolation came upon her with a sickening power just then, as she stood before the picture of the sweet Irish lake, with the wet splashes on her cheek, and Mrs. Arnott's cold, hard voice yet sounding in her ears.

"It's a great trial to be obliged to do with these wild, untutored Irish."

Kathleen was just bringing up the tray, and Mrs. Arnott's words sounded distinctly in her ears, as she paused on the top step to get breath.

"Of course, my dear," said Mrs. Tudor Audley, sympathetically. "They're bad—thoroughly and systematically bad, the whole lot of 'em. I'd send them all back to their native country if it lay in my power."

"I wish they were all at the bottom of the sea," said Mrs. Arnott, sharply, "and then perhaps we should have a chance to employ Swedish or Chinese, or somebody that would at least earn their bread. Is that you, Kathleen? Why don't you bring the ice-water in at once, instead of standing dawdling there?"

Kathleen obeyed, but the dreary, homesick feeling that thrilled through all her pulses can scarcely be described.

"If I was only at home again," she thought, "in bonny Ireland, where the poorest and the meanest have a kind word for each other! They scorn and hate me here; and sure I've tried to do my best, but the lady has got a heart of stone, and even the little child in the nursery, with their French maid, make game of Irish Kathleen."

And the lonely exile wept herself to sleep upon her solitary pillow that night. It was a mere closet of a room, without either light or ventilation, that she occupied. Mrs. Arnott thought any place was good enough for Kathleen O'Neill; the bed was hard and insufficiently provided with clothing, but as Mrs. Arnott carelessly observed, it was, no doubt, a great deal better than what she had been used to at home. And she had just paid Messrs. Isaacson & Co. a thousand dollars a piece for draping her drawing-room windows with lace and brocade—so, of course, there was nothing left for such a trifle as the comfort of her servants.

"Is Kathleen sick, mamma?" little Julian Arnott asked one day; "she cries so much, and she looks so white!"

Mr. Arnott, a stout-built, good-hearted man, of forty or thereabouts, glanced up from his newspaper.

"What does the child mean, Lucretia?" he asked of his wife. "I hope you look a little after your girls."

"Of course, I do," said Mrs. Arnott, sharply. "Kathleen is only moping. She's a silent, sullen thing, at best, and I shall discharge her next month. Natalie has a cousin who wants the place."

"Has she any friends in this country—Kathleen, I mean?"

"Not that I know of."

"Seems to me I wouldn't discharge her, then. It would be rather hard, unless she has actually been guilty of some fault."

Mrs. Arnott bit her lip.

"Gentlemen understand nothing of the management of a household," said she, tartly. "These girls haven't our sensitive natures either; they are quite used to knock-

ing around the world. Are you going down town now?"

"Yes."

"I wish you'd stop and ask Dr. Hart to stop here this morning. Little Clarence is feverish."

"Anything serious?"

"I hope not," the mother answered; "but I always like to take these things in time."

Dr. Hart looked grave over Clarence's little crib; he involuntarily uttered the name of a malignant type of fever just then raging in the city.

"I wish you had sent for me before," said he; "but I fear it is too late to secure the exemption of your two other little ones. But with constant care I think we may save the little fellow. You have a good nurse?"

"An excellent one. I can trust Natalie as I would myself."

"You are fortunate," said the doctor. He had scarcely closed the door behind him, when Natalie came to her mistress.

"My month expires to-morrow, madame—will you pay me my wages, and let me take my departure at once?"

"But, Natalie, the baby is sick—"

Natalie shrugged her shoulders.

"One's first duty is to one's self, madame. I would not risk the infection for twice you pay me."

And Natalie packed her trunk and departed without even coming into the nursery to bid little Clarence good-by.

The cook was the next to give warning. Matilda, the laundress, took herself off without any such preliminary ceremony.

"I know what the fever is," said she. "And missus can't expect we're going to lose our lives for a bit of money."

"I'm going, too," said the seamstress. "Mrs. Arnott wouldn't have lifted her finger if we'd all been dying, and I believe in doing to others as they do to me."

And almost before she knew it, the stricken mother was left all alone by the bedside of her suffering babe. Neighbors crossed on the other side of the street, like priest and Levite of old; friends contented themselves by sending to inquire; even hired nurses avoided the malignant fever.

"Is there no one to help me?" she moaned, wringing her white jeweled hands together. "Have all pity and charity and womanly sympathy died out of the world?"

She turned at some fancied sound—Kathleen O'Neill was at her side, busied in arranging the table.

"I thought you, too, had gone, Kathleen," she cried out.

"Sure, ma'am, what should I be going for?" asked Kathleen, simply, "and the bits of childer sick, and you in the sore trouble? I nursed the little brothers and sisters through the fever at home, and I know just what needs to be done."

And she took little Clarence in her arms, with a soft tenderness that went to the mother's heart.

"Are you not afraid, Kathleen?"

"What would I be afraid of, ma'am? Isn't the good God's sky over us all, whether it's the green banks of Ireland or the church steeples in this great confusion city? Oh, ma'am, don't fear. He'll not take the bonny baby from us."

All Mrs. Arnott's children had the fever—last of all she was prostrated by it—and Kathleen watched over every one, faithful, true and tender.

"Kathleen," Mrs. Arnott said, incoherently, the first day that she sat up, with the Irish girl carefully arranging pillows about her wasted form, "oh, Kathleen, I don't deserve this."

"Sure, ma'am, if we all had our deserts in this world, it's a sorry place it would be, I'm thinkin'," laughed Kathleen.

"But, Kathleen, I was so cruel to you—so heartless!"

"We won't talk of it, ma'am, dear," said Kathleen, evasively.

"But say just once that you forgive me?" pleaded the lady, once so haughty.

"I forgive you, ma'am—as free as the sunshine!" Kathleen answered, softly.

"And you'll stay with me always and be my friend, Kathleen?"

And Mrs. Arnott put up her lips to kiss Irish Kathleen's fresh, cool cheeks.

The years that have passed since then have made men and women of the little people that Kathleen nursed through the fever; and strangers who visit in Mrs. Arnott's house, scarcely know what to make of the plump, comely, middle-aged woman who moves about the house, apparently as much at home in it as the mistress herself—who is always consulted about everything and trusted with all secrets.

"Is she a housekeeper, or a servant, or a relation?" some one once asked. And Mrs. Arnott replied:

"She is my true and trusted friend, Kathleen O'Neill!"—Journal and Messenger.

Nettleton's First Parish.

The Wrestle With the Organization.

BY ALLEN CHESTERFIELD.

Before Nettleton's coming to Eastfield, when the Church was looking around for a pastor, Deacon Bisbee dropped down to Boston to interview the Board of Pastor-

al Supply. He had read in the religious papers occasional appeals in behalf of that institution, and he thought it would pay to test its possibilities. It being Saturday, he had to wait quite a long time for his turn while a lengthy procession of men arrayed in Prince Alberts and carrying grip-sacks passed in and out of the room. He gathered from fragments of the conversation, which he could not help overhearing, that opportunities for the remunerative preaching of the gospel in and around the New England capital were in inverse proportion to the number of applicants. He had a chance also to admire the coolness and tact with which the Man in Charge handled the various applicants when they manifested a little irritation at being obliged to adjust their twenty-dollar ambitions to their ten-dollar chances, and his sober eye almost twinkled when it was suggested to two or three men, for whom nothing could be provided, that there was plenty of room on the Common, and that they were sure of an audience at any hour of the afternoon. The deacon did not propose to commit to the institution, whose presiding genius he finally met face to face, the important trust of selecting a minister for Eastfield, but he wanted to get some suggestions; and he wound up his description of the ideal desired with this most emphatic declaration, "We must have an organizer."

So it came about that Nettleton began his work with the impression strong in the community that he was going to make his church members work, and he himself was banking considerably on his talent in this direction. He had spent one of his college vacations clerking in a White Mountain hotel, and during his senior year in the seminary he was president of a tennis club, and successfully conducted a tournament, the management of which required some nice planning. He had read Parish Problems and one or two other books on the practical side of a minister's work, and so he was prepared to look upon his church as a "force and not as a field." What satisfaction he would take plowing up virgin soil, in finding for each person his work and in unifying the various activities when they were fairly in running order.

Among the notices handed to him on the first Sunday after his installation was one relating to the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, another about the Junior Endeavor and a third announcing a sale by the Seek-No-Further Circle of the King's Daughters. His eyes widened a little with surprise. He knew already about the Senior Endeavor Society and the Happy Workers and the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip, but he was not till then aware of the existence of other organizations in the church. "They are all good things, anyway," he said to himself, "but I guess I'll drop into them all and see what they amount to, though."

So the late afternoon of that very Sunday found him observing a dozen boys and girls in their early teens whom Miss Susie Dresser was trying to imbue with proper ideas. They were not any more frolicsome than the average youth of their years; and they said their verses readily enough. A part of the hour was devoted to business, and from the proceedings Nettleton gathered that the Junior Endeavor had its full quota of officers and was tolerably well supplied with outlook, social, flower and other committees. Something was said about sending delegates to the State Convention, and Nettleton inferred that there was no dearth of candidates for the honor. On Wednesday afternoon of that same week occurred the fortnightly meeting of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, whose complete title Nettleton subsequently discovered included the additional words, "Auxiliary to the Middlesex Branch of the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions." About twenty women were present, and he recognized at once Susie Dresser, Mrs. Deacon Bisbee and the Spinnet sisters. It was a good meeting—Susie Dresser led it and Julia Greenleaf read extracts from Life and Light, and naturally the new pastor was called upon for a few remarks. Nettleton expressed his gratification at seeing so many present, hoped that the numbers would increase, and then said that, deeply interested as he was in foreign missions, he believed that in order to save the world we must first save America, and that he felt that now and then this woman's society ought to look out upon the field of home missions. After the meeting he was at once informed that there was already in the church a Woman's Home Missionary Society, equipped with a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, and meeting once a fortnight through the winter.

"Do you ever meet together, or do you ever exchange greetings?" he inquired.

"No," replied Susie Dresser.

"Who belongs to it?"

"Mostly the same women you see here, though of course they have a different set of officers."

Nettleton mused a moment and then observed, "I don't see any of the young ladies or high school girls here."

"O, well," rejoined Mrs. Bisbee, "they never come. They have their own societies. There's the Junior Auxiliary for the girls over sixteen and the Mission Band for the younger girls and boys."

"Who runs these organizations?" pursued Nettleton, still bent on fully probing the situation.

"O, they have their own officers, of course," answered Mrs. Bisbee, "but Jane Spinnet sort of oversees the Mission Band and we are hoping that your wife will help out with the Senior Auxiliary."

Nettleton ran rapidly over in his mind his wife's qualifications for such service, and among other things, by a singular freak of memory, recalled the fact that she had carried most successfully a leading part in the Midsummer Night's Dream, which her college class had given Senior year. Just at that moment he did not exactly see how that histrionic talent could be put to use in connection with the Junior Auxiliary, but his naturally

hopeful disposition led in somehow, so he replied to the ladies good-by, "I'll be back."

Nettleton's diagnosis Seek-No-Further Circle \$1.40, and he thought ly, considering what usually are. The girls evening gowns. The y in considerable nun society tone, while the Spinnet sisters, who o took place under the matter what hour of the occasion from beco outcome of the eveni laid aside for the Will Destitute Negroes in King's Daughters circ Look Out Circle, was tion into which it ha that they would have month, and so totally performance.

As the weeks went covering some new o paleontological rema one, or the rudiments do the work that the was, therefore, hardly evening, when he and ham were having one break forth with the what Deacon Bisbee wanted an organizer, organizer or a deorgan

"O, he meant all here longer than yo deacon pretty well, a the machinery set in the church didn't a force in this town. idea that we needed he's after the same theology is he loves the

"Well," rejoined got to be done, for organizations that I've enough when I confi but the men are pre Brotherhood and the Boys' Brigade, and so the Knights of King

"And the worst of more we organize the steal of working the they think when it combination will do Susie Dresser was her Cradle Roll. We ha she thinks we ought t

"No, that isn't th "The very worst of are still drones, depl offering them a chan the other tenth is a Dresser herself. Lo with he is president is vice-president of th superintendent of th the executive comm many offices he hold except that he is p Union and treasurer too, seems posses cently organized."

By this time supp stretched himself o strain from his even the fire, and then do about it Steve, to say, "If you are where you are."

"Yes," said Nettle out tomorrow morn

he twenty-five less co nine-tenths of the mere figure-heads an continued, "Is wha Eastfield, now that and committees? W of-the-way place wh methods and interna

"Come now, N

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Christian's Individu

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So did the people

Eastfield I never

meetings. We have considerably more s