A LEGEND OF THE HOLLY.

When the Shepherds came to the holy [illegible]
(Their [illegible] delta bringing),
While [illegible] the Angels [illegible]
Their songs of praise were singing.

They found with awe at the stable door,
Where the Christmas snows lay whitest,
With awe and fear, at the stable door,
Where the Christmas stars shone [illegible]

A shrub, round which sweet May weaves
Her spell; at Yuletide showing
Its jagged, emerald, glossy leaves,
With blood-red berries glowing.

And [illegible] only said
"Who, 'mid the snows hath set it?"
An Angel drifting overhead
Replied: "Ah, so'er forget it!

"The symbol 'tis of days to be,
Foreseen by prophet-dreamer,
The future's spinless mistletoe,
Awaiting earth's Redeemer.

"Hidd'n in each sharp-pointed leaf,
The knife of Circumcision,—
The thorns, the nails, which Love and Grief
Salute with tear-dim'd vision.

"And in each scarlet berry-tear
The Blood-drops, pure and holy,
Of Him, Who died to save from fear,
A Saviour, meek and lowly!"

—The Shepherds heard. Their wisdom poor
This world may scorn as folly,—
But, kneeling at the stable door,
They hailed the Christmas Holly!
—*Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart*

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

BY ELEANOR C. DONNELLY.

Crouching at Anna's door in dumb affright
The Demon hears the roar, as of the drums
Of Hell's dark vanguard pass the moon of night
The thunder on his ear. "She comes! She comes!"

"Who comes?"—the anguish of his dreadful cry
Pierces the lightless lodgeon,—where, within
In glad, secretive song, the vault's reply—
A glorious star into blest being springs,

And glows at zenith, like a mighty gem,—
Its streaming splendors whiter than the snows
Of Himalaya's virgin diadem,
Or Chimborazo's lone, untouch'd repose.

—Forefoot as melted heel, the dazzling beauty
Beat on the cowering head of Lucifer!
A voice pervades him, as from shudd'ring dreams:
"*I will put enmities 'twixt thee and Her,*

"*Thee and the woman;—'twixt her seed and thine!*
Lo! She shall crush thy head, and thou shalt wait
Her heel!"—Oh sinful Eve's doomed seed shall shine
The star of morning—Eve Immaculate.

O Deus! Thou hast fulfill'd Thy promise sweet,
Thy prophecy mysterious and dread!
Satan, to-day, lies chained at Mary's feet
The Virgin's heel hath crushed the Serpent's head!

THE MYSTERY OF KILLARD.

BY RICHARD DOWLING.

PART III.—ORDEAL OF GOLD.

CHAPTER V.—(CONTINUED.)

'I'm some judge of gold by this time, but not infallible. The Bishop's metal is redder than what I have been used to, but it feels much the same weight. It is gold I cannot be too cautious; if it is not gold there is no use in adding the accusation of forgery to my name. Should it turn out to be real, what shall I do? But there! it is no use to dispose of the future in that way. Let me find out what the metal is.'

The first stage of his proceedings was simple enough. He had brought with him a few ounces of the metal. The form of those pieces were irregular, but most of them were flat, and very few had more depth than a third of their superficial diameter.

He put a few pieces in his pocket the day after his arrival, and strolled along the Strand and Fleet street.

He entered a jeweler's and produced a piece of the metal about the size of a sixpenny piece.

'Could you make this into a scarf pin for me?' he asked of the man behind the counter.

The man took the piece of metal, weighed it on the end of one of his fingers, examined it through a glass, and said:

'Certainly. What pattern will you have it?'

'An anchor. But is there enough?'

'Yes; there is enough for a small head and pin. If you wish, we could add a little. Suppose we make the head of this, and the pin of some we add.'

'That will do very well, thank you. You will try to match the color?'

'We shall match the color exactly, so that it will seem all of one piece.'

'Do you think that a bit of good gold?'

'Yes, it seems a good piece.'

'Of course, you know gold by the look and weight.'

'Well, I ought; I've been twenty-five years passing it through my hands.'

'That's a long experience. But could you tell virgin gold from gold with an alloy?'

'I'd make a good guess where the alloy is considerable, but a small portion might escape me.'

'And what do you think of that little piece?'

'There's alloy in this, beyond doubt—both silver and copper, I should think. The copper gives the red or purple marks to the fracture and adds also to its hardness. Not much alloy. Can we do anything else for you to-day?'

'Nothing else, thank you. Good morning.'

When he found himself in the street he began thinking once more.

'There were silver mines in Killaloe, and I've heard that gold has been found as far west in Clare as Killard. Then what brings the copper in the gold? And, most of all, what brings that enormous quantity of gold where it is? Why, in all Clare there isn't as much as there is on that one island. Where did it come from?'

He asked a student, whom he met by the Kingsway, which half-crown might him that the metal was real gold with a slight alloy.

'All gold!' he thought, suddenly, 'and all mine. Now I see why my grandfather bought the island and had the clause inserted about the hawking, hunting, fishing, mines, wood, water and foreshore rights' reserved. It was this gold. He found it or knew of it, and married a dumb wife that he might secure children who could not tell. If he found the gold in any ordinary way, why need he keep it a secret? But I'm forgetting there's copper in it, and that it can't be native. How did he get it? There isn't as much in all the rest of Clare. He never could have stolen it, for no one has such a vast store. Even banks, except the very largest, don't keep such sums; and until my grandfather bought the island and went inland for a wife, I have heard he never was beyond Clonmore, in which place there was then no bank. How did he come by it? That's what I want to know.'

These were the thoughts he expressed boldly to his own mind, but under them waged a fierce struggle. Should he enquire no further, but take the gold away and sell it, and become a rich man all at once, with everything in the world he could desire, or should he hunt up some clue to this gold and act the honest part? He kept the struggle out of his view as much as possible, and endeavored to deal with objective matters as much as possible. The strife went on all the same, stunning and shaking him, and, above all, keeping his mind away from the blue-eyed white girl of Killard. An oracular voice declared to him that the girl and the gold were inconsistencies. He could never hope she would be content to share wealth of the source of which she knew nothing, and even if he had been disposed to do such a thing, he could not now deceive her as to the gross results of his two visits to Australia, for the day he and she drove home from Killard he had put her in possession of all facts and figures. From the period he emerged upon the great world through the gateway of the books read in boyhood, he had yearned to be in the midst of the motion and the tumult. He had thought that if his race had previously merely awaited death on that island he would not follow their example, but would go into the great world and live. Putting the discovery of the last few days out of account, he was now a rich man according to the standard of his boyhood; but he was no longer a boy; he had been in the world and had seen life and tasted the power of gold, and was no more than a poor man according to his present standard. He could enjoy riches—riches come suddenly upon him—as few could, for he was young, full of health, spirits, imagination. And now here was positive wealth before him—wealth which, for goodness knows how long, had lain where it now slept; which his grandfather and father had possessed before him, and yet, because of something, some warning finger, some principle of right, some unappreciated influence of that girl whom he wished to keep out of his mind just now, he did not like to stretch forth his hand and grasp—what? Everything, it seemed—everything but peace!

And so the strife went on, over and over again. He tried to quell it, but in vain. He exercised the whole force of his will to suppress it, to keep his mind fixed on the absolute business in hand; but as often as he fancied he had cast out the torment, it came back again to rack and waste him with redoubled force.

'I now know,' he thought, driving his mind into the channel of his immediate action; 'I now know that there is a alloy in the gold. Let me find out how much.'

Accordingly he sought an analytical chemist, gave him a specimen, told him what he wanted, and was requested to call in three days. He returned at the time appointed.

'I am exceedingly sorry, sir,' said the chemist, 'that I have not been able to commence the analysis. I may tell you, however, that I have made a kiscovery that will simplify matters a good deal. In looking at the largest piece of metal I saw a fissure, and, enlarging the fissure, I found two of the pieces had been imperfectly fused; they came asunder readily, and here is the larger of the two. The specific gravity of the piece of metal corresponds with the discovery.'

John Lane took the piece in his hand, and saw, a little blurred by fusion, the head of George III., and the legend, 'Georgius III. Rex.' There could be no further reason to doubt. Here was the face of a guinea before him.

With a great effort he controlled himself so as to show no surprise, and having thanked the chemist, and said that his discovery answered as well, or better than an analysis, he went away, taking with him the guinea face.

The jeweller had told him the metal was gold, and here was a guinea embedded in a partly fused mass. It was now quite plain to him that all the metal in the Bishop's had at one time been coined gold. He remembered how there was no talk of sovereigns in connection with his father's or grandfather's mysterious money. He had heard of those fires which helped the people to the idea that his grandfather and father had had dealings with the evil spirits. Now he had leaped into two secrets at once. The gold had all been guineas, or, at least, coined gold at one time; and the fires had been kindled to reduce it to its present form, with a view no doubt, to make it appear as though it had been an ordinary native product of the island, and had never before passed through the hands of man.

Now he knew why his father had expelled him, when he found out he could hear. He feared this secret might be discovered by him, and upon his learning to speak, at some time before he arrived at the age of discretion, he might tell of the gold, and so lead to a forcible withdrawal of it from the island, where it did not rightfully lie.

Again the fierce conflict between temptation and conscience arose, and John Lane strode through the crowded streets of London with an overwhelming secret on his mind and a tempestuous tumult in his breast. To-morrow might be become calmer, and he put the question repeatedly to himself, 'What am I to do next?'

For days he remained in a state of the greatest anxiety and perplexity. He could not go back and live on the island, watching that treasure. No portion of his scheme of life admitted of such an idea. He wanted to live until he died, not to sit down and await the falling of the shadow. He was not ignorant like his grandfather, or dumb like his father. He was in the very heyday of life, and live he would. What should he do? The gold could not be left in its present hiding place any longer. Whatever was to be done with it, the best thing was to remove it. It brought good to no one where it lay, and might be discovered at any moment. What should he do? Remove it? Yes; that was very easy to say, but how to accomplish it? He calculated that if it were all put together it would nearly fill an ordinary corn sack, but such a sack, supposing one could bear the strain, would weigh at least a ton. Yes; there was about a ton weight of the metal on the island? How was it to be got away, and where should it be brought to?

It was not until a week had passed that he hit upon a plan. He put an advertisement in the Shipping Gazette to the effect that L. J. (he thought it best to reverse his initials) wished to hire a forty ton yacht for the summer months. Offers were to be sent to the Mexican Hotel, Covent Garden

In a few days he decided upon trying one of the boats tendered. He saw the proprietor, a man who made his living by lettidg yachts. The Water Lily was refitting for the season at Cowes. He got a description of her from the owner, and having agreed to pay a deposit of fifty pounds and to pay twenty five guineas a month for the two months, a bargain was concluded.

Next, about a captain and crew? Yes, but the captain and crew were to be French. Could a French captain and crew be got—say a captain, three men, and a boy—in London?

'Yes; but not quite so quickly as an English crew.'

Never mind. Use all dispatch; and when the boat and crew were all ready he was to be let know,

So he parted from the man, and came back west to Covent Garden, once more a prey to the old struggle

CHAPTER V.

"GOOD-BYE FOREVER."

The month of May went by and brought no solace to the heart of Mary Martin. Once the first great shock had passed away, she returned very much to her old ways. But her manner was listless, and she took little heed of what went on around her; the neighbors said she was pining away, and pointed at her faded cheek and saddened eyes in evidence of the inward havoc. The girl would sit the whole evening in the chimney-place, and never break the silence unless her father or mother addressed her; then she did not readily comprehend what was said to her. Often when she and her mother were alone, the woman would put her arms round her daughter and say:

'You musn't give way like that, Mary. Try to bear up, my child. You will only fall sick if you give way like that, and then what will your poor father and mother do?'

The girl would answer:

'I am doing my best, mother; indeed I'm doing my best. But it is very hard on me.'

'I know it is, my poor child.'

Sometimes the girl would give way and break into sobs, and for a while the mother would hold her to her breast and speak such words of consolation as she could, often forgetting the little Mary who had taught John Lane her own name, was the little girl no longer, but a woman, with a woman's sore trial upon her.

From the day Edward Martin had made known to Mary and his wife the decision to which he had come respecting Lane, he had never once uttered his name, nor in the presence of the three had any allusion been made to the trouble. Martin was more taciturn than usual; his deep, sad eyes followed his daughter about the room, when she was not looking, with an expression of sorrow and tenderness, and when he spoke to her there was a tone of protesting grief in his voice seeming to say:

'I could do less than I have done, Mary, and it was my duty to step between you and danger, although your heart was in my path.'

But if there was silence in the cottage, there was plenty of talk in the village. Look at what had come of flying in the face of Heaven, and having anything to do with the son of that pagan dummy. The boy had not promised very well at first, and they did not care much for his dark and sullen ways. But when he returned from abroad, how he had improved. How gay and sociable he was, the gayest and most sociable in all the village. But, once under the influence of that awful island, all his lightheartedness had departed; he went back suddenly to his old sullen manner, and practically broke of his engagement with the sweetest girl in all the parish, or the next parish to it.

Somehow, the anger of the people did not rest on John Lane himself. They would not have stoned him or hissed him if he had stood among them. They regarded him as a man smitten with a hideous leprosy rather than an enemy. The curse of that island had come upon him without any fault of his own, as far as they could see, and he was to be shunned not feared; pitied, not execrated. They had, at the first, prophesied evil would follow the boy. Although for years they had forgotten their old foreshadowings, they now remembered them in more than their original vigor.

Mary had heard her father talk of the fight in the public house the day of John Lane's return, and how Cahill had got a month's imprisonment for his conduct.

When asked by the magistrate the reason of his unprovoked attack on the man, he had said he supposed he was drunk, but gave no further explanation; and this being deemed far from satisfactory he had been sent to gaol.

When the girl learned the particulars of the fight, and the place and time at which it took place, she had half guessed that John's arrival had something to do with Cahill's unaccountable violence. She was deeply touched—deeply sorry for this. Now she could, in a way, understand more accurately what his feeling must be; for, although they were far removed from hers, there stretched a connecting cord that brought her more into sympathy with him. He cared for her, no doubt, in somewhat the same way as she cared for John, and he had seen a man come between him and her, and his frenzy had burst out in wild, irrational resentment. He was a man, and anger naturally took the form of violence. She loved John with all her heart and soul, and a shadow which no one could exactly define or explain had come between them. It seemed as though she should never see him again: never hear his voice or feel the pressure of his arm.

Oh, what had happened to John to change him so? He had gone off as though he cared to see her no more; he had sent no message to her by her father. What had driven him away after all his promises? What her father asked him to do may have been hard, but would not she have leaped from the Bishop's into the sea if it could have saved John from great sorrow, and what sorrow could be greater than was now upon her?

What was he doing now? Could it be he had already begun to forget her? Perhaps she had disappointed him on his second return. He may have thought her beauty less, or, after the fine world he had been through, perhaps her manners had seemed rude or harsh. Forgetting her! Could John be forgetting her, after all he had said, all he had written? Now he was rich and might go where he chose. He knew much more than she ever dreamed of; was fit for society in which she would be laughed at. She knew she was only a fisherman's daughter, but she had read books, and talked with poor old Mr. Heywood and John, and had picked up some notion of what people above her were like, and felt that in time, if she, too, had gone away like John, she might be somewhat—a great way off—but somewhat able to avoid disgracing him as his wife. How she had planned in her heart to try and be ever so little worthy of him. And now all seemed gone.

A month passed and they had heard no tidings of him. He had not been seen in the neighborhood since that black day her father stood over her and told her the sickening thing. Would the second month go by as the first? And, merciful heavens, should she never see him again?

One morning, early in June, Edward Martin came in with an expression of excitement on his face, usually so calm.

'There's a smack at anchor under the Bishop's and two of the crew have been ashore on the beach of Killard for fresh water, and neither of them could talk English or Irish, only gibberish. They say, down in Killard, that John Lane is in the smack,' said the fisherman, all in one breath.

Mrs. Martin listened with open mouth and eyes.

Mary turned pale and cold.

The man continued:

'The smack anchored in the night, and they say John Lane came in the boat and showed the men where the spring is in the rocks, but didn't land himself on the beach; and they say the Fool has gone inland to Clonmore.'

That day passed, and John Lane, who had been seen on the island, never came near the village.

Mary sat indoors, wearing her heart away with grief. Would he make no attempt to see her? Would he not even send a message? What was the meaning of these men, who could not speak to the people? Was there really something, after all, in that talk about a curse? His father had married a dumb wife, and now the son found in company with men who could not speak to the honest people of the village. There did appear to be some connection between these two facts; and—withering thought!—could it be that John had already determined to meet her no more, and to put in her place one afflicted as his grandmother and mother had been? Oh! if that was so, why was not she mercifully so afflicted?

At night Edward Martin had more news, for the people of the village were watching the island. John Lane was towering into the smack all the furniture of his father's hut, and bags of ballast. He had been so engaged all day.

Next morning the smack was gone, and John Lane too, for no smoke arose from the chimney. There appeared no trace of any one on the island.

Come and gone, and no message to her! Not even landed on the mainland where she was. Ah, now all was too, too plain! There was a curse, and it had fallen upon her John, and her John had left Killard and her. If he ever returned it would be secretly to the island; if ever he married it would be a dumb bride. All was over. Life was done, but the way to death seemed very long and indefinitely dreary.

It was a thousand times worse than if he had never come back, for fears, which had haunted her only as shadows before, now hardened into chilly, cold realities, and stood ever conspicuous before her aching eyes.

What use in counting the days until the second month should expire? And yet she did—nine, five, three, one. Gone! gone! Gone by! The two months gone by, and he had made no sign! All now was at an end. Would not merciful death come and take her away; take her away from memory, and the pity in the eyes of those around her?

She seldom or never went down to the village now. She could not bear to meet the people. Their avoidance of his name stung her worse than anything else, and she kept in the house, or wandered forlorn on the upland downs during the warm summer sunlight.

Her favorite seat was in the depression of the cliff; the spot he had loved as a boy, the spot where she had first seen him as a man. Here she cared most to be, watching the long polished surface of the swells as they crept silently towards the hidden bases of the cliffs. She remained whole hours in this nook, living over the past, and, for a time, persuading her heart that no change had arisen; that John was still to return some day—perhaps as he had on that morning when she looked up and discovered a strange, brown-bearded man, and found the strange to be John Lane.

One day, towards the close of July, she was in her favorite seat. The larks were singing aloft, and the deep breathing of the ocean on the shore rose up in the dull, solemn monotone.

Suddenly a shadow fell on her, and, looking up with a start, she discovered a low-sized, thick-set man gazing intently at her from the edge of the hollow.

She uttered a faint cry, for at that moment she had been rehearsing to her heart the memorable day, years ago, when she and John had stood face to face, neither recognizing the other.

'Good morning, Mary. It's a long day since I saw you now. I've been in trouble over a row. I suppose you heard of it?'

He sat down on the edge of a slope a few yards off.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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