

## Childhood.

### HOW MICKEY SAW THE QUEEN

#### On Her Recent Visit to Ireland.

"Mickey, did ye hear the Queen is in Dublin, an' we're to be took to see her?" she asked, clasping her small, brown hands round his knees, and fixing awe-struck blue eyes on the boy.

"Shure, I did. Is'n't me gran'mother makin' down Billy's ould coat for me to go in."

"Will she spake to me, do you think, Mickey?"

"Not her, indade, She's a gran' lady, entirely. What for wud she be spakin' to the likes av' us. It'll be quare an' fine to see her al' the same."

They were sitting on a high bank of moss and shamrocks under an old elm tree, whose leafless branches, with just a glint of green stretched upward to the blue April skies. Away over the distant tree-tops the broad waters of the beautiful Killala Bay lay, sunshine and shadow chasing each other across them. The sunshine had its way now, and flickered through the twigs on the two small heads. Mickey started up, and executed a dance round the trunk of the old tree. "God Save our Gracious Queen," he sang, in a shrill, childish treble, and "God Save Ireland," he added, coming down with a plump on the moss, as a gnarled root took his bare toes.

The little girl looked solemnly at him. He was Mrs. Doran's "wee boy," and her special chum. Her dark blue eyes, with their fringed lashes, were very serious, and she raised her head to push back the black curls from her brow. Mickey's round, rosy face was beaming with life and fun, and his shock of red hair stood upright and matted through the ventilation holes in his cap. He put two, fat, dimpled hands on his knees, below which the fringe of his ragged trousers fell to his ankles.

"What will she be like at all, at all?"

"She'll just be like another lady; an' she'll be in a gran' carriage, wi' sogers roun' her, an' coachmen an' footmen an' things. Hooray! Hooray!" he broke out suddenly, waving his ragged cap round his head. "Shure I'll cheer her till I split me ould throat, I will."

A tall, stout man in clerical dress passed down the lane below, swinging a blackthorn with a jaunty air. He looked up and smiled. The children started to their feet to salute him.

"Making good use of your lungs, as usual, Mickey," he said, good-humoredly.

"'Tis jist practisin' I am, yer rivverence, to give the Queen a good bit av' a cheer," answered the boy, undaunted.

"Right you are, my lad. You will not be

so lively when you get a few more years on your red head, maybe," he said, looking rather sadly over the green pastures and the brown and purple of the upturned sod. "'Tis hard work and little for it the like of you have in the dear old county of Mayo. So you're going to see the Queen, God bless her, Mickey; and you mean to give her a good Irish welcome?"

"I'll do that, your rivverence. 'Tis little I'll min' if I'm hoarse for a week after it."

"Cheer your loudest, my boy. There's grand days coming for the dear old country yet. We'll be on the top of the world before we know. What's the news from your uncle, Bridget?"

The girl looked shyly at him. "Gran' news, sor. Mother's keepin' the letter for you. She would a' been roun' to ye with it, but she's been that busy makin' me frock for seein' the Queen."

"Well, what's the news?"

"He wrote to say he's not kilt yit, an' he got the box av shamrocks you sent him an' the boys. They were wearin' them in their caps, an' they bate the Boers right an' left, the craythurs." She paused breathless.

"Three cheers for the Dublins!" shouted the irrepressible Mickey. "Shure 'tis they that's the boys, and no mis'ake."

"Pitch me down a bunch of shamrocks; it's never too late for the wearin' of the green," said the clergyman.

He passed on, the transient smile fading from his strong, clear-cut face. He had worked for twenty years among the peasantry of the lovely county; he had baptized and married and buried them, and they were very close to his heart. He scolded their shiftlessness, smiled at their optimism, settled their quarrels with a high hand, and was their earthly providence so far as his powers reached. He walked down the moist, rutty lane with a soldierly step and upright bearing.

The evening shadows were gathering in Mrs. Doyle's little kitchen, dimly lighted by a single candle and the glow from the turf fire. She was bending over some sewing in her lap, and Bridget sat on a three-legged stool in front of her, earnestly watching her progress.

"Now, Bridget darlin', 'tis ready to thry on," she said, shaking out a little green frock.

The girl took off the thin cotton dress that shielded her but poorly from the winds of spring, and stood proudly while the new garment of green, woolen stuff, with tinsil trimming at the neck and cuffs, was fitted to her slender figure.

"Foine feather make foine birds," quoted her weary looking mother admiringly. "Your Uncle Pat would be quare an' proud o' you could he see you now, dressed up to see the Queen, that he's fightin' for agin' the Boers."

Mrs. Doyle was a widow with this one little daughter. A worn, sweet-faced woman with youthful eyes. The glow from the candle