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Kathleen's Glory,
OR,
An Irish Girl's Sacrifice.

BY CLARA MULHOLLAND.

In a big armchair, near the fire, Mrs O'Neil lay sleeping. She was wan and pale; her body was wasted to a mere shadow; and her small hands were almost transparent, as she moved them, restlessly, to and fro upon her knees.

'Poor dear! How broken her sleep is!' wailed a young girl who sat at a table drawn close to the window, so as to catch the now waning light—her head bent low over a shabby, well-worn dress, which she was trying to mend, and make look respectable.

Mrs O'Neil turned and uttered a low moan, and Kathleen dropped her work and sprang quickly to her side.

'Are you in pain, dear?' she whispered, softly, laying her cheek against her mother's.

The invalid opened her eyes and smiled sadly.

'Not more than usual, darling. I was dreaming—dreaming of home—of Ireland. And the skies were blue, and the air was sweet and you and I were happy and content, my Kathleen, in our little cottage by the sea.'

'Oh, mother, mother, would that we were there again. Why did you ever leave it—you and father?'

'Why? Aye, so you may ask. But, people told him the streets of London were paved with gold—that work was to be had for the asking; and, so, one year, when the crops failed and the potatoes rotted in the ground, Denis said, "We'll go to London." And we came. But, alas! we soon found it was not what we expected. Work was hard to get, and money became scarce. The disappointment and bitter want broke your father's heart, and he died. But we might soon go back near to the old home, Kathleen, if you would—'

'Marry Morgan McKail. Oh! mother dear, I could not do it.'

'Because he's old, and a Protestant. But age matters little when it's a question of life or death. And he wouldn't interfere with you. He cares nothing about religion.'

she knew only too well that there was not. Suddenly she started, and a little cry escaped her. The room was bare. There was no carpet on the floor, no curtains on the window; but on the wall hung a tiny mirror, and in this, the firelight shining upon its heavy gold red coils, Kathleen caught sight of her splendid hair.

'My little Kathleen has little to boast of in the way of beauty,' her father used to say, laughingly, in the old days. 'Her face, if pleasant is homely; but she has one glory—her hair.'

'The time has come when my glory must depart,' the girl said, smiling. 'People do buy hair. And I'll get a good price for mine. So, I'll carry it to Regent street to-morrow.'

She pulled out the pins that held the massive coils round her head, and in an instant she was covered as with a mantle of gold.

'I is nice,' sighing as she peeped into the glass, and fingered the silken tresses a little regretfully. 'And, Larry, dear fellow, admired it. But, taking up the scissors, "off it comes." Then she paused. "No. Let the man who buys it cut it. It's more than I can do."

And she twisted up her bright locks, quickly, and went to bed.

Early next morning, Kathleen set out for Regent street. Her mother was unusually well; so, having seen that she had everything round her that she would want, the girl kissed her and bade her not be surprised if she were a long time away.

'I may find work—who knows,' she said. 'So don't be uneasy if I remain out all day.'

Her mother sighed. The prospect was no cheering. But she bowed her head to the inevitable, and wished her child 'God-speed.'

From the humble lodging to the beautiful church in Spanish Place was but a few steps, and there, before the altar Kathleen knelt in prayer, begging God to bless the sacrifice she was about to make, and inspiring Him to aid and help her in her dire distress. Then placing herself, her mother, and her beloved Larry under the protection of our Blessed Lady, she rose up, strengthened and consoled, full of a sweet, fresh hope that good would come to her that day.

The morning was cold but bright, and the streets were thronged with busy, well-dressed people. The shop windows were gaily decked out, and Kathleen lingered here and there to admire a pretty dressing gown or a warm soft shawl that she thought would look well upon her dear, little fragile mother.

'golden lady' home, and she felt that she must stifle her pride and accept this strange position with a thankful heart.

Very long and dreary the hours seemed to Kathleen, as she sat upon her perch in the shop window, her beautiful hair brushed and spread out to its fullest extent, covering her like a cloak. The people coming in and out, the various remarks and comments of the purchasers of the wonderful hair wash, amused her at first, and she tried to imagine that she did not mind being stared at, as if she were a waxwork or a statue, and that on the whole it was an easy and pleasant way in which to earn one's bread. But, after a time, her spirits drooped, a feeling of intense weariness came over her, and it was with the greatest difficulty that she choked back the tears that gathered continually in her poor, burning eyes.

Late that afternoon, two ladies entered the shop, and while one went to the counter to buy a bottle of hair wash, the other stood gazing with a kind of compassionate expression at the three girls in the window.

'What a life!' she thought. 'How can they endure it?' Then, as her glance rested on Kathleen's sweet, modest face and downcast eyes, she started violently and looked at the girl again. 'Yes; the likeness is extraordinary. And he said she had splendid hair. But there must be something wrong. She couldn't—wouldn't do it. And yet—'

'Have you seen a girl, Belle?' asked her friend, as, having completed her purchase, she prepared to leave the shop?

'No. But if I am not making a great mistake, either my Guardian Angel or Larry's sent us here to-day, Kate.'

Kate looked at her friend blankly, and wondered what on earth she meant.

'I'll tell you presently all about it,' said Belle. Then, scribbling upon the fly-leaf of her pocket-book, "Come to North 80 Gate, Regent Park, at 8 to-night, and ask for Mrs. Kane," she tore it out, and handed it to the astonished Kathleen, who, blushing to the roots of her hair, read it, and bowed assent to the invitation.

Belle smiled and nodded and passed out to the street.

'Kate,' she cried, 'I am sure that is Kathleen O'Neil.'

The girl Larry O'Brien is looking for poor fellow—'

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