

how bad the times are," the poor fellow continued; "and for sake of the ould friendship, he can't be hard upon me for a while."

Alas! Paddy did not know how hard is the grip of gold upon the human heart. Only experience can teach one how gradually, but how surely, the demon of avarice, like to the locusts' plague, eats up all green and gentle things, and destroys every blossom of even natural affection in the soul.

As the famine-stricken father toiled up the steep mountain path, he forgot half his weariness in the contemplation of Mr. Giffard D'Alton, as he should be, and lost himself, even as the thirst-maddened travellers pursue the mocking mirage of the Eastern desert.

It had been a hot day, and was now towards twilight; for poor Paddy felt a certain shrinking from facing the great house in the full glare of daylight, when all the people would be about, and full of speculation as to his probable necessities. Paddy though not proud in the worst sense of the word, was keenly sensitive; and he shrank at any exposure of his wants, even to his nearest neighbors and best-tried friends; and so he made up his mind to seek Mr. Giffard D'Alton in the quiet evening time.

Already the white vapors wreathed the crest of Slieve-na-Mon, and a dull, stifling atmosphere attested the scorching heat of the noontide. Not a leaf stirred; not even a tiny blade of grass trembled; the very birds were silent in the sultry gloom, and the clouds gathered themselves in low-lying yellow packs—as if too lazy to float in the golden mellowness of the sun. Yet there was a strange gloom in the sky, and there was a faint, subtle and most deadly oppression. Some people called it an odor of death in the air. It could not be named, and it was too flitful for analysis; but it hovered like a malignant breath all over the land in that Black '47. Many said it was the infection of the blackened potatoe stalks, and others that it was spread by the garments of the fever stricken; but one felt it in the saloons of the rich and in fair wide city squares—far away from the blight and the squalor—irrepressible and almost insensible, but yet ever active. It seemed the visible expression

of a curse; and it haunts us still with a strange and oppressive memory! Borne onwards and upwards with the thick mists from the valley, it entered into poor Paddy Hayes's very heart, and poisoned the life strength that had been left to him after long days of hunger. His step became slower and then uncertain; his chest heaved painfully; a cold sweat burst out upon his forehead; and murmuring "Mother of God, assist me," he staggered and fell, fortunately against the soft, green pillow of the ditch side.

For a long time—he did not know how long—he was quite insensible. Then, gradually, the cooler air of the night revived him, and he recovered a kind of dreamy consciousness. We say dreamy, for it is difficult to account for his further experiences on that most eventful night, otherwise than as the highly-wrought fancies of famine-bred delirium. Paddy declared that, when he came to his senses, he saw, above and below and about him, a number of night fires, glowing like so many gems in the pearly gloom of the moonshine; and then, remembering what, in his great sorrow, he had forgotten—that it was St. John's Eve—he took out his rosary and commenced to say his beads. Having come to the Fifth Glorious Mystery, he says he found himself all at once in a glow of radiant light—brighter and clearer than ever he had known before; and he found himself in a mighty space—immeasurable; and he was surrounded by a multitude of every age—men, women, and children, all clad in white garments, and wearing golden crowns, and all alike bearing green palms in the right hand. Around this palm in every case was twined a rosary, sparkling as so many diamond dewdrops in the great glory of the unearthly light! Paddy seeing the eyes of all turned upwards, with a look of unspeakable peace and joy, sought for the object which seemed so to entrance them; and far and far above—away and yet, from the dazzling splendor which surrounded her, near by the very reflection of her glory—he saw a lady, standing lightly on the crescent moon—a crown of twelve gleaming stars upon her head, and in her clasped hands a golden rosary! Suddenly, a low, sweet strain fell upon Paddy's ravished ears,