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TOO EARLY WED!

BY MRS. S. C. HALL.

find not high things, but condescend to mean estate."—ST. PAUL.

(Concluded.)

Years had elapsed between the scene endeavoured to describe, and my once visiting my native land; and greatly as I was once more to feel its bright grass beneath my footsteps, to hear the of its birds and rivers, and meet the of its bright eyes and warm hearts of who had known me in childhood. Dur-

ven so short a period, England had been going onwards to perfection; Ireland, I had been creeping—and that is something yards it also. Schools had been estab-

lished, where education had never before been of; gardens had expanded around many acres; the Sabbath day was more respect-

fully hallowed than of old; and the dress of men and women was neater and in better taste. I certainly fancied beggars were in decrease, but this must have been only false. The truth was, I came from a land where

are comparatively unknown, and had forgotten how crowded my poor coun- ways was with poverty-stricken creatures

unable to provide for themselves the simplest food or the coarsest apparel. Dub- in a solitary-looking city. The magnifi-

cance of its noble buildings badly accords with emptiness of the broad streets. There is of desolation in its high-ways, a loneliness in its most public places; "Greece, but being Greece no more." I can hear the echo of your own foot-steps

tures who asked our charity with an impo- tunity which only their civility prevented from being offensive. One slight creature—a child clinging to her cloak, another slung at her back, and one resting on her bosom—had followed us nearly to the corner of Gratten St., not begging with her tongue, but appealing to our feelings by many outward tokens of misery.

"If you want charity," said I, "why do you not ask it?" "We are all dying for want of food," was the reply; and the voice though I did not immediately remember to whom it belonged, thrilled through me like a strain of long forgotten music.

"I have not tasted food all day," she continued, leaning against a projecting shop shutter, "nor wet my lips except with water; have mercy on me, for I am very young, and not used to begging."

"I believe you," I replied, for I had by that time recognised her voice; "I believe you; your name is Lucy Donovan." Poor, poor Lucy! She threw the hood back from her wasted features; she would have fallen on her knees at my feet, if I had not prevented her; her soft hair was matted across her brow; tears coated each other down her cheeks; her nose was pinched by starvation; her lips, blue and trembling, could hardly give forth her thoughts—her prayers, I should rather say—for she appeared for a time to have forgotten her misery in the joy occasioned by the sight of a friend.

"To think, my lady, of my seeing you here!—and I coming over in my own mind yours and the mistress's warning about being too early married; it was the ruin of us all out there enough; the childer came so fast, and nothing to give 'em. This is little Sandy, ma'am, the moral of his father; only you can't see him, the moonbeams are so pale. And the one at my back little Thomas, after my poor father. Ain't I thankful that he never lived to see me in this trouble! And the little hungry girl is Anty, after my grandmother; sure I am glad she's in heaven, too. Ah, ma'am, honey, a young living heart must suffer a dale of sorrow before it blossoms the grave for closing over, and the red worm for destroying, the things it loved more than life."

"Come to me to-morrow morning, Lucy," I said, "and we will see what can be done for you." I pressed a small donation and my address into her hand.

"I can't be out in daylight," she whispered; "I'll come at night—I've no clothes—nothing but the cloak left."

My English readers may believe this tale; it is no fiction; it is perfectly true; true, without an atom of exaggeration. The young mother had parted with every article of clothing she possessed in the world, except the thin blue hooded cloak, in which she enshrouded her misery and starvation; under its feeble protection she begged at night. I mentioned the circumstance to the lady at whose house we were residing. She assured me it was a fact of no uncommon occurrence.

The next night Lucy came with her children. We had provided something for her in the way of clothes. "Won't you put on these shoes, Lucy?" "I thank you, my lady," she replied, while one of her old smiles brightened up her face; "I'll take them since ye're so good; but it's a bad fashion to be tending my feet up with shoes, they're used to the stones now, poor things. And so best—"

"Where is Sandy, Lucy?—I cannot believe he has deserted you." God bless you for that right thought my lady. He has not; he was forced to leave me, but that wasn't deserting me. You see, ma'am, after we married we got on very well for a bit; and the earnest true-hearted love we ever and always had for each other, held out wonderful; and I was not over strong, and poor Sandy took to working after hours, which every body knew he need not have done had been single. But any way, that brought on the fever. The fever, my lady, and this little Sandy, came together, before, indeed," she added, with her usual simplicity, "we were ready for either—to say ready; and then, between nursing the husband and nursing the

child, when I got up I had my hands full, and we both so young, and no experience. To be sure the poor neighbours helped us. They gave us a share of all they had, even to a handful of meal or a stone of potatoes; and the hardest word the ever spoke was, 'God direct you, ye poor you; craythurs; ye married too soon.' Your cousin, ma'am, is a fine lady, and a good lady, but she put me ever and always in mind of how much better I might have been off had I remained single, which was true enough; and while my poor husband lay so badly en-

tirely, the bitter taste of my folly was never off my lips. But when it pleased God he grew better; and when I saw him once more able to raise his head to the sun, and to notice the baby, I forgot a great deal of the bitterness, and though it might pass away all together; but it never did. If a young bird gets a hurt, my lady, in the nest, it never rightly recovers it. It was so with us. We began poor—we began for that; but the sickness that's born of poverty came on the top of us, and they both together crushed us. Well, ma'am dear, the gentleman where he worked when he got up, again, took great pleasure in foreign parts, and couldn't afford to pay so many labourers, and Sandy was discharged. It's a poor care, ma'am, when the money scraped up in one country is taken clean away to spend in another. Sandy could have made out life alone, but another poor little babe had a mind to come into the world; so I could do nothing to help him. I could have got plenty of knitting, and spinning, and sewing, and straw-bonnet making, but my hands war tied with the two childer; and it pleased God to take the second in small-pox. We struggled on, and had been put above the world in regard of debt, by the death of my grandmother; and one morning

Sandy said, 'It's no use slaving on and starving as we're doing. Lucy had an offer yesterday when I was driving Ahy Levy's cart, and if you've the heart to hear it, I'll tell it to ye. And I clenched my hands, and set my teeth, as if it were death I expected, for I guessed that his mind was set on foreign parts. But I didn't gainsay him, though I was right. He promised to send me word, and money to bring me and the childer out to him, and I waited at home, and three months after he went this craythur was born."

"To add to your trouble," I said. "No," she answered, pressing it to her bosom; "it helped me to put the trouble over; it has the very eyes and smile of my poor Sandy."

"How foolish," I thought, "it is to attempt to sound the depth of woman's love! What fine feelings there were beneath that cloak—crushed by circumstances that must ever crush those who, without any provision, too early wed!" "At last," she continued, "I grew ashamed to stay longer in my own place; I couldn't beg there—I could not go there, from door to door, or stop those I met to ask for food or half-pence. I locked up the door of the cabin, put the key in the thatch, left word with a neighbouring woman that they could send to his uncle near Dublin any letter that came from us, and begged my way here. The poor always helped me on my journey, and I was easier moving from place to place—it seemed as though I was getting nearer Sandy; but I've had no letter; those more used to this life than me, get more than I do—I pray, instead of beg. Bit by bit, I lost every scrap of clothes. But my worst trouble is, that my early marriage has brought these darlins into a world of trouble, from which I have no power to deliver them; and though I have loved to look at them; yet, often, my dear lady, when I have seen them staggering with hunger, I could have knelt in the cold snow, and cursed myself. Wicked thoughts have come into a head then, and I have had no peace until I prayed to God to cool my poor burning brow, and cleanse the badness from my heart. I have one hope still—*as my die*—but he never will forget us. If we can live over the present time, a letter may come; but the weakness is upon my heart when I think either of fresh joy or more sorrow. I walked the length of Stephen's Green after yer honours last night, but the dryness of my parched throat hindered me from speaking.

Since yer ladyship spoke to me last night, I've had fresh hope—and who knows but there will be comfort for us yet." She smiled, but there was a ghostliness in the smile that made me shudder; it was the smile of a corpse, rather than of a living woman. The poor infant devoured the food we gave them; and when they were satisfied, she ate, but not till then; nothing could exceed her gratitude; and the past seemed almost forgotten, after her story was told—a story of simple suffering, with no strong incident to rivet the attention, no powerful event to work upon the imagination—nothing but a tale of Irish misery, brought on, not by misconduct, but a want of that carefulness, that "long-headedness," which makes the Irish peasant a beggar; and the simple possession of which lays the foundation of Scotch and English independence. My story, if so it may be called, is finished.

Lucy has been worn to a skeleton by anxiety and starvation. I saw she could not live; my succour came too late; she was dying—dying at the very age, when, if she had followed our advice, she might have married in sure anticipation of happiness, and with a reasonable prospect of prosperity. I went to see her; for little Sandy had cold me, with fearful eyes, "that though mammy had plenty to eat, and new milk to drink, she was too sick to come out." She was lingering in that hectic fever which scorches up, by slow degrees, the moisture of existence; the baby, too, was dying. "I am sure," said she, "there is a letter from Sandy at his uncle's." I found out the place; she was right. How she screamed, and how her skeleton fingers quivered, when she saw it! "I knew if he was in life, he would not forget us," she said.

The poor fellow was full of hope; and though his feelings were roughly expressed, they were there, warm from his affectionate but imprudent heart; the next letter was to bring money—but a little, yet some; and the one after would bring more—*all well to him*.—And she heard all his; and at first while I read, the dash was bright on her cheek, and then it faded; and she called little Sandy, and said, "You he—"*it is from your own daddy, my boy*"—and then I thought a slight convulsion moved her features. She grasped the poor soiled paper, the record of his affection; pressed it to her lips; another convulsion; her fingers stiffened round it—she was dead!

ENGLISH NEWS BY THE RIVER.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, July 11.—Lord John Russell moved that the House go into Committee on the Lower Canada Government Bill.

Sir Wm. Molesworth rose to move as an amendment, the resolution of which he had given notice—"That it is the opinion of the House that every consideration of humanity, justice and policy, demands that Parliament should seriously apply itself, without delay, to legislating for the permanent government of Her Majesty's provinces of Upper and Lower Canada." The Hon. Member complained of the delay of Her Majesty's Government in legislating on this important question, notwithstanding the statements of Lord Durham in his report of the dangers of delay, and notwithstanding their promise at the commencement of the session to bring in a bill before Easter to provide for the Government of Canada.

Mr. Leader seconded the motion. Sir C. Grey opposed the motion after an interesting debate, (so says the Belfast News Letter,) the house divided—and the resolution was negatived by 293 to 28. The house then went into committee on Lord John Russell's bill (granting further powers to the Government and Special Council of Lower Canada). The first clause was opposed and divided upon; it was carried by 278 to 15. Lord Stanley opposed the second clause, on which, after discussion, there was a division. It was carried by 174 to 156—majority 18. Other clauses were adopted, with some verbal amendments suggested by Sir R. Peel.

THE CHARTER PETITION.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, July 12.—Mr. Atwood rose to bring forward the motion of which