

"Oh, then," cried Kathleen, clinging to his arm, "Why not give in at once, and vex him no more."

Hugh bent fondly over her.

"My Kate, men war not thus; he would despise an' we yield too soon. We must not be cowards in the hour of danger. Farwell, love; adieu, ladies, I must to my post."

The next two days were indeed a time of anguish to the poor ladies, although they had little leisure to think. Their patients came in with fearful rapidity, and deafened with the noise of the siege, they had to bind up wounds, give drink to the parched lips soothe as best they might the agonies of death.

The rapidity with which Cromwell made his assaults, and his indomitable perseverance, overthrew many a calculation made by the defenders.

"I must breathe the air," said Bride, impetuously, on the evening of the second day, when Hugh, released for an hour from guard, came into the hospital.

"Take me, Hugh, to some high point where I may see the foe. I cannot go on with the work here if I do not breathe a moment. I must look upon the Boyne."

"Take her, Hugh," said his wife, "If she fail us we can none of us go on."

Hugh led the way to a point where half Drogheda, the Boyne, and the camp of Cromwell could plainly be seen.

It was a beautiful autumn day. The glorious sun was shining as he is wont to do "on the evil and on the good," the river flowed calmly on, the little flowers in the hedgerows shut their tiny heads, for the evening was drawing near; the leaves had not begun to fall, only human lives were falling thick as autumn leaves, only human hearts were breaking fast.

Bride flung back her hood and let the breeze play on her face and throbbing head.

"Ha!" cried Hugh, starting forward, "is't possible? He is foolhardy after all! We shall win the day yet."

"Where?—what?" gasped Bride with dilated eyes.

Hugh, too absorbed in watching to speak again, pointed silently to the spot where a "forlorn hope" of Cromwell's men were attacking on the south side.

Bride could see nothing but smoke and a confused struggle. Hugh's practiced eye could discern that the men were being driven back. Then he saw one who was leading them on reel and fall; he guessed, and truly, it was the Colonel of the party. He saw the retreat, and, flushed with joy, hastened to impart the news to Bride.

They returned to the hospital in good spirits. Alas! had they been nearer the spot they would have seen what fatal injuries the assailing party had wrought ere the fall of their leader compelled them to withdraw, and neither they nor the garrison would ever have counted on the indomitable purpose of the General, who, seeing his men return bearing the dead body of one of his best officers, while many of their comrades who were picked men were left dead beneath the walls, instantly went forth himself at the head of his reserve to make good the advantage he had gained, again attacked the weak point, and ere darkness gathered over the devoted city, was master of her fate.

The moon rose in all her splendour, as on the night when the nuns stole down to the river's side. She had not yet begun to wane, that glorious harvest moon, but that night she looked down on the harvest of human lives that fell beneath the savage hand of the reaper thirsting for blood.

Well indeed that night some might have gazed on the silver moon and cried:

"Art pale with very weariness
Of walking heaven, and gazing upon earth?"

Hugh had the guard of the hospital assigned to him, and at the beginning of the night brought hope to the fainting hearts of the women by announcing that a parley had been held by the garrison, who now retreated into the Millmount, a position which was the key to the whole town, and the invaders; and a promise had been given of quarter, should an immediate surrender take place. Sir Arthur Aston, seeing that further resistance was futile, accepted the terms, and yielded. According to civilized warfare the conflict would have ended here. But the brave old cavalier who had fought in his youth for King Sigismund of Poland, who had marched with Gustavus Adolphus, who had led