ANNA HANSON DORSEY, AUTHOR OF "COAINA," "FLEMMINGS,"
"TANGLED PATHS," "MAY
BROOKE," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.-CONTINUED.

" It would be more merciful to throw the poor wretches into the Tiber, and so and their miserable existence; but never fear-I will do them no mischief, he said, laughingly, as he noticed the quick shadow that fell over the youth's "I spoke in their interests, not my own; for life, my choragus, is not worth much even to the most fortunate. Are all well at the villa ?"

re all well at the villa?

Answering in the affirmative, Adetus would have passed on had not metus would have passed on had hot Fabian tossed him some silver, saying: "For thy poor." With a whispered blessing on the generous pagan donor, he stooped to gather it up, and by the time he had secured the last coin, he was alone, and Fabian was already at the other end of the broad avenue. When Fabian dismounted, a slave led

away his horse; he crossed the portico and went into the Atrium, hoping to find Claudia there, as it was her favorite spot within doors; but all was silent, and only the beautiful lights and golden shadows dancing through the vines over the mosaic floor greeted He heard a footstep; it of the household slaves who had seen him enter, and come to know his pleas-" The little lady is in the garden somewhere," she said, in reply to his question as to the whereabouts of

' As I might have known, had I not been stupid," he thought, as he turned to go and seek her. He hastened through the fragrant alleys down towards the old Grotto of Silenus, expect ing to find her and Zilla at the foun tain, weaving fresh wreaths for the But another spectacle met his astonished eyes: he saw a number of pale faced, scantily clothed little children, some of them leaning over the low rim of the fountain, splashing the water with their hands, while others relled lazily on the violet-sprinkled grass, happy in the sweet odors and the beauty of all things around

Fabian stood bewildered by the sight, and began to think he must under a spell of some sort. What could this mean? A swarm of beggars What could this mean? A swarm of beggard at the gate, and here, in the most pri-vate part of the gardens, reserved ex-clusively for the use of the family and their guests, infantile paupers of the rabble class, apparently as much at home as if everything belonged to them! How could he know that these little creatures were the crphans of those who had suffered for Christ, whom Claudia-not understanding all-had nder her special care, and mad her daily companions? Poor, friend-less and sick, she knew them to be the "little ones" of Him she loved, and this was sufficient to enlist her sym-Poor, friend es and endear them to her, and make her joyful in her ministrations to

Claudia was near the grotto, training up some vines over a trellis that a re nt storm had displaced, concealed from observation herself, but able to see all around her through the green net work. She heard footsteps, and glane ing out, she saw a tall, handsome stranger approaching, who stopped to gaze curiously at the children, and then cast his eyes around as if in search of something else. She was there alone and unprotected, and a tremor of dis may paled her face; but perhaps he pass on and take no notice. would pass of and to on, Fabian, who instead of passing on, Fabian, who knew every spot she loved, came straight towards her as she stood nounted on a moss grown stump, holdng up the fragrant vines. Seeing that inevitable, she dropped the vines and stood revealed, an image of loveliness against the dark foliage of the background.
"Have I found thee at last,

pretty dryad?" he exclaimed, in his pleasant, laughing way.

A flush overspread her face, and as

she looked gravely and steadily at him, a strange, puzzled expression came into her eyes; but she did not whispered a prayer in move, she only her heart for protection.
"Let me assist thee, dear child;

give me thy hand. What! shrinking back from me! How have I offended thee, fair little lady?" he asked amazed.
"Thy voice sounds like Fabian's— "she began, in a low, tremulous

voice. "I am Fabian. What spell has come over thee not to know that it is I !"

exclaimed, astonished.

"I know the voice of Fabian, but his

face I never saw. I was blind— "Was blind!" he cried.

"Yes: I was blind from my birth, and if thou art truly Fabian, forgive me and if thou arturnly rabian, lorgive me for not knowing thee when my eyes for the first time behold thy face! Thy voice is the voice I know so well."

"I am Fabian, I call all the gods to

witness, and none other-and am beside myself with joy! What! have the gods been at last propitious and given What! have the thee sight? I will build a new temple in their honor! Oh, my beautiful one it is the most joyous thing I ever heard of. Let me look into thy eyes! How they sparkle! how they drink in the light with a flash like wine! I am in a devout humor with the gods, and will never doubt them again!" exclaimed Fabian, in tones of exalted emotion.

"The gods did not give me sight, Fabian," she answered, gently. "How then—what great physician

healed thee ?" he asked. Jesus Christ gave sight tomy eves: all at once, as the holy water of baptism was poured on my head, the blindness and darkness fled," she answered, her voice full of sweetness, her eyes radi-

ant with faith.

A shock that chilled his blood passed through Fabian; he turned sick and faint, and dared not trust himself to speak. Pagan philosophy offered no shield to avert a blow like this; its feet were of clay, which crumbled before his eyes, leaving him for the moment bereit of strength. The child's blind eyes had been opened by one of those startling miracles so often wrought by

the thaumaturgic skill of the Christian priests, and it was evident that she had tallen under the spell of their delusions. With this conviction there arose stantly and vividly before him the frightful results that were almost cer-

"And thy father, my child?" he a last found voice to ask.
"Oh, Fabian! hast thou not heard? a Christian!" she replied, her He is countenance glowing with happiness. wilds of "I am but just back from the

Imbria," he said, quietly.
This was the last thing that Fabian would have thought of, had any presentiments of evil been haunting his mind. He remembered his long conversation with Nemeisus relating to the ancient and curious predictions of an expected One, Who was expected to appear, revive the glories of the Golden Age. vive the glories of the Golden Age, and make mankind like unto the gods, and his scornful incredulity; it was of the Golden Age, only a few brief days ago, and it seemed incredible that so sudden a transformaion could have taken place. Nemesiusa ould be have heard of his death; rather a thousand times would he have found the beautiful child, standing there in her fearless innocence before him, dead and beyond the reach

of all harm.
Fabian felt as if he had been away a hundred years, instead of a fortnight; and had he only known of these dreadful changes in time, he would not have reed to Rome, but hied away to som corner of the earth where it would be impossible for the news of how it all ended to reach him; for well he knew that in times like these men so distin-guished as Nemesius could not become a Christian with the least hope of escaping discovery, and death attended by crueities too barbarous to think of. Nor could it be supposed that his child, hose blindness had made her an object of tender sympathy and commiseration in Rome, should suddenly receive her sight without its presently

Should the impending war with Persia soon break out, then there was a hope; for Nemesius—his apostasy unsuspected —could lead his legion away to do battle under the Eagles for the defence and glory of the Empire, as many Chris tian soldiers had done in times past, while he would find a safe retreat for the child; but alas! how fatal would be delay!—for her misfortue was too weel known to the Emperor, and all who had ever seen or served her, such a wonder as that which had occurred to be long concealed.

Fabian's mind was torn by contendng emotions-not that he cared for the change io its religious aspect, but be cause he dreaded the consequences fo these two who were so near to his heart. He would not disturb the serene happiness of the beautiful child by question or argument; he would restrain himself until he could see Nemesius, to lay be-fore him the peril in which they both stood, and suggest measures by which they might escape the fate that threat-

ened them.

It had only taken a few moments for these tumultuous thoughts to sweep through Fabian's mind, but they left him shaken to the centre of his being, outwardly calm. At last he said,

gently: "And how does the world look to thee, fair child?"
"Oh, Fabian! I have not words to

say how beautiful it all appears to me; and when I think of Him Who made it, my heart almost bursts with love and gladness," replied Claudia, while the long, white blossomed sprays she had again gathered up to weave in the trellis dropped from her hands. 'And I-how do I look to thee, sweet

one? tell me, if it will not wound my vanity too much," he said, trying to speak in the cld way.
"Thy face is strange to me, Fabian,"

she answered, while a delicate glow she answered, while a delicate glow suffused her countenance, "and sad; but thy voice is the same I always loved to hear. By-and-by I shall be well to hear. By-and-by I shall be well to hear. By-and-by I shall be well to hear by a strong effort of his will be compelled himself to wear.

When at last Fabian and Nemesius and love it, too." How is Grillo?" he asked, pleas-

antly.
"Grillo is very well; and, now that he knows me, follows me, and sometimes lays his head upon my shoulder, and

with his long ears," she said, fans me with his id with a little laugh. "Grillo has the wisdom of a sage: he makes the best of the situation, and neither pines for thistles, or risks his prosperity by unreasonable freaks. Bravo! for the king of the donkeys,"

said Fabian, laughing; but the words had a covert and bitter significance. I thought of thee every day, my little cousin, while I was up yonder amon the hills, and have brought thee a pe that will rival poor Grillo in thy affections-a gentle, graceful little antelope from Grillo's country, perhaps his cousin; but I see so many strange companions around thee," he said, waving his hand towards the pale-faced children near the fountain, "that I fear h will not find favor with thee. Tell m who they are and whence; for they are so unexpected and out of place that it seems they might have been rained

down, like frogs, out of the clouds. "They are the little ones of the dear Christus; they had none to care for them, Fabian, and were sick and hungry, and I am allowed to keep them they had none to care for at the villa; for they had no homes of their own, and now they are getting strong and merry. Oh! it is a great favor to have them," replied the child, in low; tender accents; "for He loves them, and it makes me glad to serve

them for His sake."

"I hope thou wilt love the little antelope, then, for my sake; it is a pretty creature, with eyes as soft and bright as thine, and diminutive enough bright as thine, and diminutive enough to be carried about in thy arms; and, better still, it doesn't laugh like the blast of a trumpet, as Grillo does," said Fabian, veiling the bitter pain of his heart under an assumption of the old gay manner. He would ask no quesold gay manner. tion that would seem to be a recogni tion of the astonishing changes that had taken place in his absence, but, as we see, put them aside as childish fancies unworthy of notice, although he gauged the gravity of the situation to

its bitter depths. "Thank thee, dear Fabian, for thy kind thought of me, and I will love the

little creature for thy sake; I love frillo and my doves, but there's room snough for thy pretty stranger," she answered, with a bright glance. "But come, let us go and find Symphronius that he may order thy favorite dainties

"I cannot accept thy hospitality today, little lady. I will see Symphronius a moment, to leave a message with him, then hasten away to an engagement in Rome; meanwhile remain where thou art to finish the task I interrupted, and be happy with thy frogs," he said and be nappy with thy frogs, he said, laughingly as he nodded towards the children, and walked swiftly away.

The old steward, oppressed by the heat, had just left his desk and gone

to a window for a breath of fresh air. The very first object that met his sight was Fabian, coming with hasty steps towards his office. "It is the beginning of sorrows," thought he, while his heart gave a great thump; and he made Cross upon his the blessed Sign of the breast, commending himself to the pro-tection of God. How could be tell Fabian of the great events that had taken place while he was absent? How find courage to announce that which, he feared, would disrupt the friendship and love of a lifetime? He advanced to welcome him, however, as he en-tered, with his usual kind, courteous greeting, but, as Symphronius remarked without the genial smile and j words that had heretofore always smile and jesting ecterized his salutation. It was a great relief to him, therefore, when he discovered that Fabian's only object was to inquire where he should be most likely to find Nemesius in the city, and when he might be expected at the but the old steward could give him no

ertain information on either point. My master," he said, "has obtain leave of absence from his military luties, and is occupied with his privaaffairs, which, having been neglected for years, require his attention; but if the illustrious signor will leave a letter I will send it by his messenger, who comes daily with words to our little

lady. Christianity, secrecy and mystery always hand in hand," thought Fabian as he seated himself to write to Nemesius, urging an interview wherever he might appoint; then, having secured the letter in the usual way with twisted threads of silk and a seal, he arose t go. No: he would take no refre-h ent; he was not feeling well, he told Symphronius, who wished to spread a dainty repast for him, and went away the heaviest heart he had eve

Had not the persecution been raging Fabian's latitudinarian principles in matters of religion would have enabled him to regard the conversion to Chris tianity of a man of such distinction as Nemesius as an eccentricity which he could have made a jest of; he would only have thought he had lowered his patriarch rank, and pos ibly damaged his career, by giving up old traditions and the religion established by the State, for new-fangled doctrines and delusions; otherwise, it would not have affected their friendship a single iota, at least so far as he was concerned

Fabian had no veneration for the gods, but he thought that an established system of belief was conducive to individual and social order and public prosperity. Like the fasces of lictors, which bound together resisted all effort to break them, but disunited could be singly snapped asunder by child, he saw strength ln unity, as looked upon innovations as disintegrating and destructive; but the per secution he thought worse than the innovations it attacked and sought to exterminate. And now the only friend he loved on earth had chosen this time to commit the supreme folly which could be expiated by the sacrifice of his own life and that of his child. He was nearly distracted under the calm

met at the palace of the former, the soul of each was tried to the very limits of endurance by what passed between them. Knowing Nemesius as we do, it is easy to imagine the courage, firmness and constancy with clared his faith, and related the circumstances that led to his conversion, and the warning, pleading arguments he used to persuade Fabian to east aside his idolatrous errors, and accept the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. is easy also to imagine Fabian's worldly, plausible, sophistical arguments in reply: his logic, sharpened by satire; his passionate philippies against Christianity, which, all summed up, meant that Nemesius was guilty of the most culpable foolishness in risking honors, fortune, life, and the life of his child, tor a creed which the wisest philosophers of the times declared to be false

and delusive.

He did not spare Nemesius, but his tears flowed even when his words were the most cutting and severe; for, like a skillul surgeon, he knew that to heal he must first wound. But Nemesius having counted all earthly things as dross and nothingness in compari with the higher and eternal good for which he had relinquished them, the words of his friend were as "tinkling eymbals," and his arguments like water melting in the sand. It was only cymbals." Fabian's pain that touched him, for he knew that it was the outcome of his great, unselfish love for him.

The interview had been peculiarly paintul to both, for the tie between the wo men was closer than that of brotherhood. A glorieus and assured recompense awaited the sacrifice of Ner but for Fabian, who looked not beyond earthly limits, there was only despair. The lamp above them gleamed low; and the dawn, now stealing faintly through the open windows, revealed o their pale countenances traces of the crucial pain they had endured—one marked by divine faith, the other lined by the passionate sorrow of defeat,

Fabian, breaking 'At last." silence, "and while there is yet time, take the child and fly to some remote region for safety. My pleasure galley lies at Ostia, and everything can be got

where they led, without question or thought of the perils to be faced, and now that I am a soldier of Jesus Christ, with His Cross for my standard, shall I do less? No; I will not fly," answered Nemesius.

" And the child—thy lovely Claudia ! Why subject her to the same cruel fate so eagerly courted by thee? Oh, Nemesius! unfeeling parent! How canst thou bear the thought of her being killed by wild beasts, or cast into the flames? Gods! the very thought of it maddens me!" exclaimed Fabian, his iace ghastly white.

Nemesius folded his hands and bower

his head; for here was the human, vul nerable part through which his nature might be wounded unto death.

He did not speak for some moments he was silently offering the dread an-guish that wrung his soul with gener-ous love to Him through whose Passion and Death redemption had come to mankind.

'A few short pangs, and then eternal "A lew short pangs, and then certain life!—I can ask nothing more precious for my little one, should He in Whom we trust will it so," he said at last. "My Fabian, let us not speak of this again." "My life-long friendship for thee, my love for her, forbids silence. Listen Nemesius: I must speak! Since thou

art so set on thy own destruction, confide Claudia to me. I love her as tenderly as if she were my own offs I will take her away to a home in one of the pleasant lands I know of, and all that I possess shall be hers; and she shall be guarded as the most precious treasure of my life," urged Fabian.
"Ah, my Fabian, how thou render my heart! By consenting to thy gen-erous wish I should risk her eternal salvation. Better she should be safe in heaven than live without faith on earth; for she is of tender age, and with no one-to encourage and guide her, tempted and warped through her affections, there would be danger of her losing the inestimable graces that are now hers. These grown weak, faith would gradually expire in her soul. No: I dare not consent," said Nemes-ius, in a voice that betrayed his

Hast thou gone so mad that thou wilt even take no precautions for thy safety? Thou canst not long escape; thy position and fame are too distin-guished for that which thou hast done to escape detection," exclaimed Fabian.
"I am in the hands and at the holy

will of Him Who created and redeemed

me. I have no wish, no hope, no plan that reaches beyond that," he said, in grave tones, which had in them an exultant ring. "Remember, Fabian," he added, after a momentary pause that it was from thy lips I first heard the wonderful story of the divine Christus, which sunk deeper than I then knew, and led me to consider, even while I scoffed, the possibilities of its He is indeed the long-expected truth. Messiah of the world old prophecies, the very Son of God-the Saviour who who has in our nature overthrown the adversary of our souls, and won from God that elemency for fallen man which He refused to the revolted angels. Thy passion for curious investigation has led thee unwittingly to a dim knowledge of the truth, wherein thou art privileged above many; this know ledge supplemented by grace—which only awaits the action of thy own will and desire to receive it—will open to thee the inexhaustible treasury of faith and holiness, with all its fullness and perfection of knowledge, whose divine heights, without it, no mortal can ever reach. Be persuaded, then, to throw aside all human motives, all vain philosophy, and seek only the truth as it is

The words of Nemesius were rendered more impressive by a sudden golden glow which at this moment the newly risen sun flashed through a window erowning his noble head as with a halo 'My Achates!" said Fabian, with a

wan effort to smile in his old gay, ning way; "I am not prepared either to discuss or accept mysticisms which have brought into my life its into the hitterness. The appearance of the bitterness. The appearance of the Christus, coincident with the ancient predictions and the phenomenal enthus-lasms resulting therefrom, I regard only as singular facts in the world's history—mental disturbances which seem to lie beyond the knowledge of natural The only thing I am entirely sure of at this moment is my friendship for thee, my Nemesius, which no mortal power can shake.' He arose, and threw his arm around

the shoulders of Nemesius, while tears

dimmed his eyes.
"And yet, my Fabian, thou art willing to let death dissolve a friendship as dear to me as to thyself, by rejecting the only condition which would its eternal continuance," said Nemesius, with deep emotion, as he embraced farewell! I have an as him. "Now, farewell! I have an as-surance that fills me with hope for

And so they parted, Nemesius going away towards the Via Latina, while Fabian flung himself upon his couch to seek repose after the agitations of the night, firmly convinced that he might as well by a wave of his hand expect to remove grim Soracte from its founda-tions, as to endeavor to shake the constancy of Nemesius in what was evid ently to him a vital and eternal prin-

ciple.
Fabian was convinced that indiffer ence to beliefs and dogmas, as taught by his favorite Pyrrho, was not a saie guard to tranquil ty and happiness far better for him, he now thought, had he adopted the stern philosophy of Zeno, which would have raised him above the passions and emotions of humanity. But vain regrets were only weakness, and there was nothing left him to do but to fight his battle out as best he cold, without taking the world

into his secret.

On the following day he prepared to go his customary rounds-to the Forum, the Baths, look in, perhaps, at the Theatre, should anything new be going on, and make a visit or two. Never on, and make a visit or two. Never before had Fabian been so fastidious in the choice of his apparel, the draping of his toga, the splender of the few jewels he were, and the quality of the in readiness before the sun sets to-day." jewels he wore, and the quality of the "lam a soldier, Fabian, and have always followed the Roman Eagles in short, silky rings all over his statu-

esque head. Dismissing his servant, he made a critical survey of himself in his Egyptian mirror, and was annoyed ver that he was unusually pale and that there were dark shadows under his eyes—traces of the passionate emo

on he had suffered.
"I will only have to smile the more tion and be careful that my smiles do not become grins; then, if comment is become grins; then, if comment is made, I shall have to draw on my fever lustrum ago as the cause, Fabian, turning away with a short, bitter laugh, which ended in a sigh by the time he stepped into his chariot. TO BE CONTINUED.

FATHER BANNON'S UMBRELLA. Things might have arranged themelves better if Sabina Murphy' ad been less anxious for his daughter's union with Cornelius O'Donovan; if Cornelius' mother had looked less wistful whenever she saw the young couple Sabina's farm joined together. Sabina's farm joined Cor-ney's. Both farms were much of a size

ney's. Both farms were much of a size and in the pink of condition. They were unimportant taken separately; joined together none could look for a prettier farm, and people were as fond of the land in the '30's in Ireland as But the resolute intention of rela-

But the resolute intention of relatives and friends to force the young people together only succeeded in defeating its own ends. Sibbie, as all the world called her, was something of a spoiled child—a beauty, an heiress, her father's darling. She had only to condition father's darling. She had only to send a glance from under her long black eyelashes at any swain of them all to bring him to her side. Corney, on the other hand, was, from

his own point of view, nothing at all of a match for her. He had the soft, ugged, melancholy looks which often belong to the Celt and are as appealing to the sensitive as the sadness of ani-mals. An artist would have found Corney beautiful. To his own class he made no appeal at all. He was heavy, clumsy, dark, his features shapeless his limbs cast in a great mould that carried ungracefully. Sibbie—Sibbie had a Japanese dainti

ness of aspect, though they nothing of Japan in Corrieglen. smooth hair was like black satin, her black eyebrows were exquisitely arched over long eyes, she was milk-white of skin and had delicate, disdainful red lips.

No one person in the world suspect

ed that Sibbie had sometimes said to herself, in the seclusion of her own pretty room, "Why is he such an omadhaun?" stamping her foot angrily at the same time; nor if they had, would they have suspected any connection between the speech and Corney O'Donovan. When Terence Murphy in his last ill-

ness spoke of the wish of his heart to Sibbie, she leaned over him and moothed his pillow tenderly. "He's a great old omadhaun," she

"Is that how it is?" asked Terence, sudden enlightenment coming into

his sunken eyes.
"That's how it is!" answered Sibbie, nodding her head emphatically.
"'Tis surprising, the foolishness of

people and things," said Terence.
And that night he died in his sleep, so that Sibbie's secret died with him.

The next to go was Peggy O'Dono van, a kind, hard-working woman for whom the neighbors had nothing but

good words when she went. I wish I could have seen you tled, Corney," she said wistfully.
"Sure, I never had eyes but for the

Corney answered, "and she won't look at me.

"Are you sure, Corney?"
"Sure? It's too sure I am."
"Whethen, she doesn't know what' good. A better son never walked the world, and a good son makes a good husband. 'Tis her loss, Corney.''

' Maybe, I know it's mine. "I've longed this many a day for your children on my knee. I'll never see their faces now.

"I wouldn't want children unless hey were hers and mine," he said, And if she holds out against me to the end, I think 'tis an old bachelor I'll be dying, like my Uncle Peter."
"She bids fair to be an old maid herself, the way she's letting all the boys go by her," said the mother, with

little bitterness. Corney looked at her in amazement 'Is it she an old maid," he asked that could have any boy in the country, from old James Fogarty, that's try, from old Jam worth ten thousand pounds if he's worth a penny, down to Linty Whelan, that hasn't got two pennies to call his own nor the first hair on his chin? Sare why would she be an old maid?"
His eyes kindled in sudden violence

he curbed himself. He wasn' going to distress the old dying mother with a revelation of the depths of hi appeless love and the fury of jealousy that shook him when he thought of that shook him when he nother man winning Sibbie.

But the mother had comfort. Cld Father Bannon, of Newtoncross, who had a great and deserved reputation for sanctity which extended Dublin itself, knew her desires and assured her at the last that he believed they would be satisfied. Perhaps he something, perhaps he did not. Anyhow, she died easy in her mind

When the two were left alone they seemed more contrary to each other than ever. They bore their griefs in a lonely isolation, Sibbie prouder than ever now that her cheek was pale and her eyes ringed with purple, while Corney walked with a stoop of the shoulders, as though a burden pressed them down, and a face that had more than ever the dumb sadness of an animal's.

Often they were within hail of each

other across the dividing hedgerows of the farms. Sibbie had taken to looking after things herself since father's death. Once on a time they used to be friendly; now no greeting passed between the girl on one side o the hedge, superintending this or that farming operation, and the man on the other side, ploughing with his heavy, old-fashioned plough—an austere, lone-ly figure against the gray sky of and drew the curtains, hiding the

winter going up and down the furrows. Rumors came presently to Sibbie that Corney was sadly neglected since his mother's death. She could have told the gossips that she knew more about it than they did, for although she never lifted her head to send a glance acros the hedgerow that divided her from Corney at his ploughing, nothing escaped her of his increasingly unkempt and untidy air.

When she re-entered her own neat and clean house at the end of the short day and sat to the comfortable meal which Bessie her excellent maid of all work, had set out for her in bright lamplight and firelight, her thoughts wander to Corney lected house, at the mercy of the thrift less woman who was suppossed to serve him. Somehow it took keenness off her appetite and her appreciation of the pleasant things with which she was surrounded.

She missed her old father greatly ; ndeed, it was the ache of missing h that had driven her to take his place in the fields, instead of leaving things to Nick Brophy, who had been her father's right-hand man in his latter days. She grew sharp with those about her, which was due partly, no doubt, to that gnawing tooth of grief which made a perpetual discomfort in her life. And she was sharpest of all to the suitors who came thicker than ever now that she was alone.

When she had succeeded in getting rid of the most eligible of them, she smiled grimly to herself.

"You're shaping well for an old maid. Sibbie Murphy," she said, and then added: "And upon my word, things being as they are, I don't know but what you're right. You're very comfortable so you are. And they are too sure themselves and too keen after the money except one, and he's nothing lan omadhaun." Her grief and dissatisfaction had

their effect on her looks, as her friends and neighbors weren't slow about tell-ing her. Even Father Bannon, the least observant of men, noticed it. 'You're not looking well, Sibbie," he said, with the kind, anxious, far-of

look of one who saw the world and its troubles from a great distance. "It'll be that I'm getting old, father," said Sibbie, with a flout at herself. 'pulled out a gray hair this morning

"It seems like yesterday, since christened you, and it can't be more than twenty three years ago. Twenty-four, is it? Well, we can't call you old yet, child. I've been visiting that poor neighbor of yours, Corney O'Donovan. His house is in a miserable state, enough to make the kind woman his nother troubled even where is. I gave him good advice.

gave him good advice."
"To turn out Biddy Flaherty and
get a clean, honest girl in her place?"
"To get a wife; he'll never be com-

fortable till he does."

The kind, old, far-off eyes looked away from Sibbie, over whose face the color had rushed in a flood.

"I hear you re a great contrivance for keeping off the rain," she said, in a confused effort to get away from what was apparently an awkward sub

It was sent a present to me from Dublin," Father Bannon answered, brightening. "Indeed, I'm afraid to go out with it, for all the children in the place will be following me and the dogs barking at my heels. You wouldn't for the place will be followed by the state of the s believe how it holds the rain off. For all the world like a little roof it is." "So I heard," said Sibbie, not greatly

interested in Father Bannon's acquisi tion, but pretending to be so, "What at all do they call it?"

"It has a queer name—it's called an umbrella. I have a good many people umbrella. It have a good many people dropping in to see what it's like. It shuts up very handy, too."
"Indeed?" said Sibbie, politely

"Indeed?" said Sibbie, politely interested. "I would like to see it, so

would. "'Tis a long time, Sibbie, child, since you came to see me. Supposing you come over to tea on Sunday? I know women.'

Sibbie looked eager, finally confessed that tea was her temptation—it was nearly as scarce a thing in the parish of Newtowncross at that date as the umbrella which Father Bannon had just acquired.

She dressed herself in her best to do honor to the occasion. Her best was a scarlet petticoat, a loosely fitting jacket of some flowered stuff, white and scarlet, caught in with a scarlet ribbon at the waist, blue knitted stockings and stout, pretty little shoes. It was a fashion of dress that never went out in Newtowncross, and when she took of her blue hooded cloak and revealed her finery, the old priest took snuff and paid her a compliment.

He was reading his breviary when

He was reading in stream, which will be a sible arrived by the window that overlooked the valley of the Daugh river, with rampart of the mountains behind it.

"You're fine enough for a wedding, and the will be a wedding, and the wedding, and wedding,

Sibbie," he said. "Sit down, child, while I make the tea. I'm expecting another visitor. Ah here he is! How

He looked away from Sibbie's red cheek and wore a half guilty air When he looked back again it seeme as though a hedge of briars and thorns had grown up about the girl during the little interval instead of uralness of the Sibbie of a few moments ago, this Sibbie sat on the edge of her chair in an uneasy attitude, her mouth was prim; she looked so chilly, so un friendly that it was no wonder Corney in his bottle-green coat with brass buttons, his knee breeches and frilled shirt and gray worsted stockings, felt all of a sudden chilled and depressed. He had taken his best clothes from the chest of drawers, where his mother's hand had last smoothed them out, to do credit to the great occasion of drinking tea with the priest. They had become him remarkably well, too. He had not known Sibbie was to be there. But there she was, looking more beautiful than he was, looking the beautiful than he was beautiful than he was cold, so had ever seen her - but so cold, so angry almost. Why he had done nothing to bring that look to her face.

mountains and the cold glin mountains and the cold gill river in its valley under evening sky. She lit the stirred the fire. The roo books in dull bindings that odd glimmer of gilding, it pictures, the sacred embly mantel shelf, the dog lying that the rive, the snowy clother rth rug, the snowy clot i silver laid for the tea grand and imposing in the ney and Sibbie. They a their shyness of each other the priest ladle from th caddy a few precious spo and pour the boiling wa tea was deliciousto Sibbie's feminine palat not unlock her tongue. S quite willing to chatter w but the arrival of he in, but the arrival of he had frozen the current of And as for Corney, Codumb as though he had While they sipped the while they sipped t saucers, sitting atarm's l-table, Father Bannon e-an expression half de waggish. He was oblig three. A cold curtain hung over the room.

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wo talk to each other, h This afternoon had As the darkness gather moan of wind; again a c which seemed to ratt sails before it died aw in a hospitable endeave guests, the priest broug board and instructed th of the game. It had h companion since he had at the college of Do But while the game pa was aware that neithe couple shared his inte About 8 o'clock the

" 'Tis pouring with "and your reverence thet ran up as if it wa this morning, is tumifast. Glory be to go the wind ! Father Bannon ha by the game, and the nearly kept out sour was crying

with an ominious m shutters he could hea the rain upon the gla Sibble, standing up. There was a patt the window and the chimney.
"Yes," assented not a long way, and fore the storm brea

me, you never saw all. You shall go h think you can hol head, Corney?" Never fear, you "I wouldn't be van so far out of his in a mineing voice. Sure, 'tis my o ney, turning red.

"I'd take no ha said Sibbie. And the umbre "You couldn't ho but Corney'll hole bring it back saf Corney? Now, S I'll open it for you side the door. 'T side the door. the house." The umbrella c

first which had f parish of Newtow like the slender. to-day. This pa as large as the c bed. It had hu and a stick grea walking stick. with great diffict carry the umbre However, he man, and very secret of holding

the wind, which ously from the s "If it was to ney to his sile maybe, blow me of course, I'd ne that belongs to A little later "I think the ud be to shut

that maybe it

edge."
They were descending pa was a wall of cipitous fall Sibbie uttered denly caught the umbrella that. If the ragged clouds ray on Corne vealed an experience of the credulous del "Sure, you let the pries

he faltered. Your life she whispere Correy's shadew.
"You'd be he said "or with me. I place I'd be He stagge

wind and th precipice. both hands thick cloak her heart. died away of the pat which it w "I think

said Corn

enormous