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NEW YEAR'S THOUGHTS.

A Spirit from the skies  
Came into our trodden land;  
It glowed in roscate dyes,  
And around its brow a band  
Was bound like a sun stream in the west;  
And as its accents broke  
O'er the land our men awoke,  
And each felt the stranger's yoke  
On his breast.

And first a flush of shame  
Spread along their manly brows,  
And next, in God's dread name,  
They swore and sealed their vows,  
That Ireland a free state should be;  
And from the mountains thence,  
And from each glade and glen,  
Gray spirits taught the men  
To be free.

There was candor in the land,  
And loud voices in the air;  
And the poet waved his wand,  
And the peasant's arm was bare,  
And religion smiled on Valor as her child;  
But, alas! alas! a blight  
Came o'er us in a night  
And now our stricken plight  
Drives me wild.

But wherefore should I weep,  
When work is to be done?  
Wherefore dreaming lie asleep  
In the quick'ning morning sun?  
Since yesterday is gone and passed away  
I will seek the holy road  
That our martyr saints was trod;  
And along it bear my load  
As I may.

I will bear me as a man  
As an Irish man, in sooth—  
No barrier, wile, or ban,  
Shall stay me from the truth;  
I will have it, or perish in the chase,  
That I loved my own isle well,  
My bones at least shall tell,  
And on what quest I fell  
In that place.

But if God grant me life  
To see the struggle out—  
The end of inward strife  
And the fall of foes without,  
I will die without a murmur or a tear;  
For in that holy hour  
You'd not miss me from your dower  
Of love, and hope, and power,  
Ere I, my dear!

THOMAS D'ARCY MCGEE.

"KILSHEELAN"

OR,

THE OLD PLACE AND THE NEW PEOPLE.

A ROMANCE OF TIPPERARY.

"The gilded halo hovering round decay."  
—BYRON.—*The Gleaner.*

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN THE SHADOW.

On the morning of the day on which young Mr. Sackwell and the Marquis of Babblington elected to shoot duck instead of shooting one another, Tade Ryan sat, bending gloomily over the dying fire, in his little cabin, with his scanty breakfast of potatoes and sour milk untouched beside him, his pretty wife, Kitty, watching him anxiously at the other side of the table, and his chubby-checked son and heir (Tadeen; *anglice*, Tade, junior, three years old) striving in vain to excite attention by pulling papa's hair.

The scene was wholly anguishing—even baby's obstreperous crowings and pranks made melancholy-out-of-place, like a fanfare in some dead catacomb, mocking extinguished life with life's joy. The little cabin pictured a long struggle, that was always losing, inching back stubbornly to where loss was final—back to the great precipice over whose brink terrene enemies follow not. Even now, when the end was near, it made its bravest show, enheartened by a woman's courage, which, shrinking from misfortune afar off, is ever its worst foe at close quarters. But its best was pitiful.

Holding together on props, like an old man on crutches, the wretched walls and roof seemed ready at any moment to fall down, and die, weary of the unequal fight with wind and weather, grown aged and decrepit in misery. And had they buried all within in the fall, there had been small share of human happiness extinct—how many an ache and pang laid eternally to rest! Yet the place was not without its comfort, rather shadow of comfort, and a