

if you only got well. Very good-hearted is mother," added plain-spoken Kitty. "I wonder if I shall ever be able to walk about again without crutches?" he moaned in a most mournful tone, and with an expression of intense melancholy in his dark eyes. He was evidently thinking of something far away from medicine or Kitty.

"Do not worry your head about the future. Try, when you've swallowed this, to get to sleep again," said Kitty calmly.

He looked half wonderingly at the almost pretty and truly pleasant face, drank the draught without a word, and then lay back silently on the pillows. He fell asleep again, and this time dreamed—dreamed that Kitty O'Hara, the Irish farmer's daughter, had fallen in love with him, that somehow he had discovered the secret and plunged poor Kitty into the deepest distress, and that he could hardly see her face for the tears that were blinding his eyes—and why he cried was a mystery—when he told her that he was engaged to marry a beautiful young lady with long golden hair, who could play exquisitely on the piano, the harp, and the organ, could speak fluently four languages, could paint lovely pictures in water-colors and oil, and dance—oh, just like a fairy! It seemed such a difficult task to make Kitty understand that this divine creature was his promised wife—the future mistress of Dylton Hall. Would not Kitty be content to be his and Maudo's best friend? Oh, how he hated her to kneel at his feet and cry so! She ought not to mind—she really ought not. He thought that he went out in the very early morning and gathered a sweet bunch of violets to give to Kitty when he should say farewell—that when he placed them in her hand she said, "For ever—for all time will I keep these flowers in memory of you"—that he answered wildly and despairingly, "Nay, nay, 't would not be right for you to remember me! I belong to some one else—some one else. These violets will soon perish; so must your thoughts of me." "Flowers and memory shall live for ever; I say that neither shall die!" Kitty screamed; and her voice was so laden with horror, soloud and terrible, that Reginald began to shout, "Help, help!"

With that cry he awoke. Mrs. O'Hara was smoothing the tumbled blankets, and Kitty was not in the room at all. How pleasant it was to awake from such a wretched dream!

"It's my opinion, Mrs. O'Hara," said the short, fat medical adviser, spreading his thick fingers before the comfortable kitchen fire, "that our patient's going on remarkably well—yes, remarkably well. You're a wonderful woman, Mrs. O'Hara—wonderful. By-the-by, do you know what part of the country he came from, this guest of yours—his name, profession, and so on?"

"Only his name—Reginald Dylton." "Ah, yes! Well, more in good time; I'll not idle here. Good morning, Miss Kitty. Good-bye Mrs. O'Hara."

It really was surprising how rapidly, now that the critical point was turned, the patient seemed to improve; each day added new strength, new vigor.

"Very soon I shall be able to join my friends in England," he said smiling one morning to Kitty.

"How terribly they must have missed you! How anxious they must be?" she remarked quietly, with eyes drooped.

Dylton laughed,

"I have a tolerable number of friends who, I dare say, have troubled themselves once or twice to wonder what's become of me all this time; but of near kin—relatives—I possess not one."

"What! No father, no mother?"

"No; and neither sister nor brother."

Kitty's entire face was beaming with compassion and her voice full of gentleness as she said slowly:—

"How very lonely you must be!"

Dylton made no answer. He was watching her curiously; but the girl did not know it. She was thinking, "Who

is Maudo—Maudo that he has raved about in his sad delirium?" Kitty knew now that it was no favorite sister. "Why does my heart beat with such mad rapidity? What is it to me?"

She raised her eyes just as these thoughts were chasing each other through her brain, and met Mr. Dylton's dark ones fixed upon her.

"Kitty, will you find me ink and paper? I can walk so well now, I think I could manage to get as far as the post-office."

"It is a long way. I will post your letter; my mother wants one or two things from the village."

"Will you? What a dear little soul you are, Kitty!"

She ran away, laughing and blushing, found the necessary articles, and left him to attend to her household duties and make herself ready for her little journey.

"Come here a minute, Kitty?" Dylton was holding a large square envelope in his hand, and, as he beckoned to Kitty, he pointed to the direction, "I told you the other day that I had no relatives; well, this letter is to a lady who, I hope, will soon be my wife. She is very beautiful, very—the youngest daughter of an Earl—and I am afraid she will have been worrying herself about me. But she travels a good deal, and mixes in high and brilliant society, so that she has very little time for despondency or melancholy. I have told her in this note how a certain little girl, under Providence, has saved my life, and how I hope, if all goes well, to be with them next week."

"Yes," said Kitty; and she tried to look indifferent and make herself believe that this gentleman's coming and going did not matter to her in the least.

"It's nothing to me—nothing at all," she said again and again, tripping at a dangerous pace through the slippery snow, clutching almost with a fierce grasp that detestable letter in her hand. "He will go back to his people, and we shall forget him, and the old life will go on as it did before—that's all." And Kitty began to sing a snatch of some merry air, as if she had one of the happiest, lightest hearts in the world.

"Good-bye, Kitty, good-bye! I'll not forget my promise," said Reginald Dylton gaily. They were all grouped in the doorway and bidding their guest farewell. He had shaken hands with every one, and O'Hara had politely hinted that there was only bare time to meet the train; but the young man persisted in lingering by Kitty. "Remember, next summer, Kitty, I and my wife hope to pay you a visit," he went on, and then, turning to Mrs. O'Hara, he added, "and you will have to spare Kitty for a return visit to England."

One wave of the hand, a last nod to Kitty, who was staring with a fixed dazed look till the little vehicle was lost to sight round the hills, and then—

"Bless the girl," said Mrs. O'Hara, "how solemn you look! Here—come and churn the butter!"

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"So you won't have me, Katharine?" "No, thank you," answered Kitty promptly.

She was sitting in one of the out-houses of the farm, shelling broad beans, and opposite to her, or rather in the farthest of the four corners, a bashful young man was standing, twirling his wide straw hat at a mad rate, and looking very miserable indeed.

He was a most persevering young man, this Donald M'Nab. He had been known, when a boy at school, to forego the delightful pleasure of a whole Saturday afternoon's fishing because a difficult sum would not "prove." Very hard-working, very steady, very earnest in everything he undertook was honest, red-headed Donald M'Nab.

The perspiration pouring down his red cheeks—certainly it was a warm June morning, close upon twelve o'clock, and

his position was very trying—he took out a large speckled pocket-handkerchief and wiped his forehead—wiped it furiously, and made his face more fiery than ever.

Kitty declared, with great vehemence, that if she lived to the age of Methuselah she would never change her mind.

The poor fellow felt utterly "cut up" and low-spirited, for, as long as he could remember, he had adored Kitty. He knew that he was not handsome, he had felt keenly, and often how little there was about his personal appearance to recommend him, but that put answer, coming so unexpectedly, had given him a shock. He could not "pull himself together" again all in a moment, he was forced to twirl his hat around a few times more in the desperate effort to collect his thoughts and retire.

"Both your father and mother say you behaved very shabbily to that young man. A steadier, more painstaking fellow isn't to be found in all Ireland," said Mrs. O'Hara coming in soon afterwards.

"He's a good young farmer, and saves a deal of money; but—but—I'm not going to be his wife; so there!"—and Kitty dashed the last bean into the dish and put into the basket, and looked up half pleadingly at her mother.

"You are very strange in your manner lately. I cannot tell what's come to you," said Mrs. O'Hara.

"Don't let any one bother me again; just let me live quietly with you and father!"

"Snarlesleigh isn't overcrowded with Donald M'Nabs. Rest contented, my dear; I'll answer that no one will worry you again;" and, though Mrs. O'Hara smiled as she made this remark to her daughter, she felt really uneasy about her in her mind. Kitty was changed sadly, seemed unhappy and restless, and gave away to pettish temper.

"Wants a change, ma'am, believe me; Miss Katharine wants a change," said the village doctor.

But, when this idea was suggested to Kitty, she held up her hands in dismay, declared that there was nothing the matter, and insisted that she was well. So the roses bloomed and faded, and rich fruits ripened and dropped into the garden.

The busy hay-making time came and went, and autumn crept on, stealing the leaves from the forest trees and sighing in a sad plaintive strain around the mountain paths. The harvesting was all done, and the corn gathered in the barn.

"Tilly, go and throw the striped rug over Miss Kitty."

Tilly did as she was bidden; but she could not help staring in a regretful fashion at the sleeping face, and wondering for the hundredth time what in the world ailed her young mistress.

"She'll go off quite quiet-like, after the manner of my cousin Jane—that's my idea," thought Tilly.

Four o'clock—four loud clear strokes—sounded from the tall timepiece in the kitchen. Still Kitty slept on.

"You said you'd come in the summer, and the summer's gone," she muttered. "I'd like to see you once again before—"

—She will forgive me—your—your—when I'm—dead!" The sleeper shuddered, and a slight smile played round her mouth.

Some one who had noiselessly entered the parlor and was sitting by the head of the couch looked at her intently.

"And I never guessed that she cared for me—poor little Kitty!" and the speaker stooped over the still face and kissed the white forehead.

With that kiss the girl awoke and gazed straight into the dark beautiful eyes she had just been dreaming of, and heard in reality and truth the dear voice.

"I have come back to you, my Kitty!"

His Kitty? How dared he called her so when—when—In bewilderment she stared round the room.

"Where is Lady Maudo?" was the first sentence she uttered.

"Lady Maudo, now the Countess of Altonleigh, is, I believe, in Rome at the present moment."

"What do you mean? I thought you were going to marry Lady Maudo!"

"I did contemplate the idea of such an alliance being formed once, Kitty, but Lady Maudo made a mistake, like many other young ladies have done before. She told me candidly one day that she would never be happy if she married me—that I had not been to see her for so long, and that during my absence she had learned to love some one better. There was also another reason. Kitty look at me!"

Reginald Dylton stood up, and, as Kitty looked at him, she saw a crutch under his left arm and his leg amputated to the knee. Her whole face flushed a vivid scarlet. She tried to say something, but her lips seemed locked. A mist was gathering over her eyes, and big tears were ready to fall.

"Don't you see?" said Reginald playfully. "An Earl's daughter couldn't possibly marry a man with one leg; but a farmer's daughter might—eh, Kitty?"

But Kitty did not answer. How provoking he was! How little he seemed to care either for the loss of his love or the loss of his limb!

"Yes; we'll have a quiet little wedding, and then travel about for a whole year, and see some of the finest sights of the world; and after that, when we've put the final polish to our education, we'll go to England and settle down, a steady old couple at Dylton Hall. Ah, the good old place sadly needs a mistress, Kitty! Don't you think I've planned it all beautifully?"

"Splendidly," answered Kitty; but in her heart she detested the lucky farmer's daughter, and felt that life was unbearable.

"You don't inquire how I lost my leg; you have become wonderfully silent."

"How did it happen? Tell me; indeed I want to know!"

"Well, I was terribly hurt in a railway accident; but your mother told me that you had been ill, therefore I'll not excite you now, but give you particulars another time. I'd better be going."

He rose, lifted his crutch, and held out his hand. Kitty touched it lightly, and looking at him shyly, said:—

"I hope the young lady you are going to marry will be aimable and good and not so fickle as Lady Maudo."

"I rather think that I shall not marry at all, Kitty. I shall probably settle abroad, and let the old home."

Kitty's eyes were wide with astonishment.

"But what will the farmer's daughter say to your changing your mind? Her friends will make a fuss, won't they?"

"Oh, no! The friends won't do any thing; and the girl she was pleasant once, but lately she's awfully morose."

"Did you meet her in England?"

"Oh, no—Ireland!"

"What is her name?"—"Katharine O'Hara."

Kitty hung down her head; for very shame she could not raise it.

"Come, Kitty, don't look so woe-begone. Kiss me just once before I go away. I know you cared for me a wee-bit—never mind how I found it out—before my leg was broken. It isn't your fault, child, if you can't entertain the same feeling towards me now. I am only a wretched cripple."

"Do not go far from Ireland for ever," pleaded Kitty.

"Child, is it anything to you whether I go or stay?"

"It is everything to me!" sobbed wretched Kitty.

"Then, darling, if you are in earnest, come with me."

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"Reginald," said Kitty three years later, watching her husband playing with their baby-boy, "I look upon your lameness as a special blessing."

"Why, my dear?"

"Had you the free use of both your limbs, you would never have been so devoted to your home and family."