

beating heart and overflowing eyes into her own room. The sudden loosing of the long strain was more than she could bear; so often in the silent, sleepless nights she had pictured him lying cold and still on the battle-field; so often she had tried to steel herself for the sacrifice of her young hopes and visions, and now! he was safe—he was well—he was returning to her side, a victor, and it was her hand that should twine the laurels round his brow; her own noble Henry, her hero.

It was impossible that the tired and heavily-laden soldiers could have followed so quickly on the steps of Terence, who leapt about the hills like a deer, and rushed through brushwood, bogs, and other impediments, with the speed of a wild-cat.

But somebody had come; there were sounds of welcome in the house, and trampling of horses' feet in the courtyard. Yes, there was a burst of silvery laughter, and a cry of "May, May, come down; it is Bride."

Mary flung open her door, and ran down stairs. In the narrow hall stood Eveleen, and by her side a joyous young creature who bore the name of Brigid O'Sullivan, but who was generally called Bride.

"Yes, here I am, Mistress May," cried she, giving her a hug; "if the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must come to the mountain; an' see'st thou, my good friend, that you and Eveleen are as immovable as a mountain, and I as determined as Mahomet. If you think that you are going to bury yourselves here all your lives, I assure you 'tis a great mistake. I have come to pay you a visit, and then back you must go with me to Drogheda, where, though 'tis not over-lively, there are at least three people to speak to."

"Oh!" said Mary, mischievously; "you will find Eveleen, at all events, quite ready to go to Drogheda."

"Oh, yes; I know all about that," rejoined Bride; "and I am not going to allow that, Eveleen. In fact, I have told Mother Abbess so, and said, that if she were in want of subjects, I would offer her *myself*."

As she uttered the last word in a tone of assumed gravity, both her companions burst into a merry laugh, and even

Father Egan, who was sitting still contemplating the group, could not help joining. Nothing certainly could be more unlike the idea of a nun than Bride.

She was the very picture of careless glee. She was radiant with beauty, with youth, with health; sickness had never laid its subduing hand upon her, sorrow had never shadowed her young life. Her nature was too buoyant, too sanguine to be depressed even by the woes of her country. An ardent Catholic, a loyal Irishwoman, she firmly believed victory was at hand, and a bright future opening before her country. And so fair Bride sang and carolled through the day, the spoilt child of her doting parents, the joy and sunshine of her home and friends. She laughed at Eveleen's wish, although in her heart she revered her intensely. To be a Nun while life was bright before one, seemed to her quite equivalent to mounting at once to the martyr's pile; the still small voice, which draws away the heart with unutterable longing from the joys of earth, had never spoken to her soul. She laughed at Mary, blushing and trembling for the weal or woe of brave Captain Henry O'Neill. Bride had many a suitor, but she recked little of them; when they—

"Vowed she was wondrous fair,
The sound of her silver laughter
Showed love had not been there."

Ah, fair Bride, as thou standest on that bright summer day at the window of that peaceful dwelling-house, with one white arm thrown round Mary's neck, while thy bright eyes gaze lovingly into Eveleen's face, does no foreshadowing of thy fate come before thy spirit!

Dost thou indeed dream of a long, bright future, and a peaceful ending. Is there no presentiment of that dread day, when all thy winsome beauty shall not avail thee, when thou shalt cry for mercy, and hearts harder than stone shall be deaf to the tones of thy pleading voice?

No, Bride, the future is hidden from thee, and thou art dreaming and singing on like the little bird who answers thee from the neighboring tree, little recking that in an instant a careless shot may stretch him bleeding and quivering on the ground.