

"Mrs. Hogan!" shouted the priest.

"Coming, sir;" and Mrs. Hogan made her appearance, looking well, considering the times.

"Well, Mrs. Hogan, look at all the company I've brought you."

"Shure they are welcome, your reverence," and Mrs. Hogan made a low courtesy to those on the car.

"What will we do with these, Mrs. Hogan?" and he pointed at the ragged group.

"Hunt them away, sir; shure if they haunt you as they are, you won't have a bit, nor a sup, nor a stitch to wear, for the matter of that soon. You gave the last shirt you had to that poor man y-terday—would have given your coat, but I stopped you."

"Hush, hush. Mrs. Hogan, like a good woman, bring out the potatoes Mr. Maher sent us and divide them amongst them."

Mrs. Hogan raised her eyes and hands to heaven, and ejaculated: "What will become of us at all, at all; it's the poor-house we'll have to go to?"

"It's Christmas Day, Mrs. Hogan," said the priest, persuasively. "How would you like to be without your dinner to-day?"

Mrs. Hogan looked for advice and consolation to those on the car.

"Give them to the poor people; I'll send you another load to-morrow," said Mr. Maher.

"Thank your honor; shure I will, your reverence. I was only waiting a shurt," said Mrs. Hogan.

Mrs. Hogan proceeded to divide the potatoes, and our party went into the priest's cottage. The young people sauntered about the lawn, whilst Father O'Donnell, accompanied by Mr. Maher, went to have breakfast.

Alice and Frank walked arm-in-arm along a sheltered walk in the little garden. Willie Shea and Kate had so much to say to each other, so many little affairs to settle, so many promises to make over and over again, that they could attend to nothing else. They sat for the last time together in the old summer house.

"Kate, my love, we have but another week to spend together. Heaven alone knows what may befall us."

"God will watch over us, Willie; my life shall be dark, indeed, until we meet again."

"And will mine be one of roses, Kate, think you?"

"I fear not, Willie. Let us love and pray for one another."

"Yes, darling! let us, Kate, remember me in your prayers."

"You need not tell me."

"I know that, my love."

"Should I die far away, or meet any mishap, love, sure you'll never forget me."

"I'll go to the grave, ay, and to an early one, too, should anything befall my first, my only love."

"God bless you, Kate! Here," he continued, "is a locket with a miniature of me; see, there is some of my hair in it also."

Kate placed it around her neck.

"Now, Willie, I have not forgotten you either," and she pulled a gold locket from her breast. "Take this, Willie; a lock of my hair is in it, entwined with some of yours."

Angels looked down with pity, and sanctified their vows of mutual love.

Alice and Frank walked up and down in silence for some time.

"Alice," said Frank, "I fear fortune is against us."

"I hope not, Frank. At least, we can love one another."

"Yes, it is a sweet dream, Alice. Would that the future were as bright as the past."

"Let us hope for the best, Frank; a little time might put your affairs right; I know you are a favorite with my father."

"Do you say so, Alice? But, then, what's the use? I could not ask his child to share a lot of penury; no, I love you too well for that, Alice."

Alice looked into his face, and her old gay smile played about her pretty mouth.

They were silent for a time; at length Frank said—

"Alice, if I were poor, could you love me?"

"As deeply, and more so, than when you were rich; you know me not, you know not woman's heart, to say so," said the noble girl, as a tear stood in her eye, and again they sparkled with love and reproof.

"Forgive me, Alice; love and poverty are jealous."

Alice was silent.

"Well, do you forgive me, love?"

"I do, Frank."

"Alice, I have a little plan."

"Like you, always planning," said she with a smile; "well, what is it?"

"This, Alice; if our affairs do not improve, I'll follow the example of Willie, and win gold in some foreign land, and then return to my own sweet love."

Alice sighed, and wiped away a tear.

Father O'Donnell had finished his breakfast, and was seated in his old arm-chair, enjoying a cosy chat with Mr. Maher.

The wretched state of the country was a prolific subject for gossipers, and politicians, and newspapers; most likely they had it in hand too.

At least, Father O'Donnell sighed and shook his head, and spread his thin hands over the fire and finished the discourse with—

"God help them, Mr. Maher; God help them!"

Our party now entered the parlor.

"You look like the genius of melancholy brooding over that fire, Father William," said Alice, going over and laying her hand playfully on his shoulders. The