

No one spoke, and a loud knock at the door in an instant after interrupted them. A messenger had arrived with despatches for the O'Neill. He drew to the window to read them, and the party sat waiting in silence till he should speak again.

He folded up the letters with a smile.

"The standards reached my Lord safely at Limerick," he said, "and were carried in procession through the town to the Cathedral, and a solemn *Te Deum* chanted."

"Glory be to God," burst from his hearers, as they rose to their feet.

"And, as I thought, my Lord bids me proceed without delay to meet him. He will convoke a national synod to meet at Waterford with all dispatch. So to-morrow I must set forth again," ended he; and turning with an arch smile to Henry, he said, "Henry, your leave of absence is nearly up."

This announcement dispersed the party; the ladies at once disappeared. Sir Luke muttered in Father Egan's ear, "You'll live to see the end of this, Father; they do not know how to use him. He is the greatest man amongst them all. If he had the rule, Ireland from end to end should be free in twelve months from this."

"Hush, my friend," said the priest, gently; "his noble words anon struck shame into my breast. He is in the right. Knowest thou not the words of Holy Writ, 'the obedient man shall speak of victory.'"

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It was the lovely dawn of a day in midsummer. Soft and balmy was the air, bright the sunshine, on the day that rose for Mary Fitzgerald's bridal. No wedding music woke the echoes, but the little birds carolled their sweetest song as the fair bride, in her long white robe, and covered with a snowy veil, stood before the ruined altar for the solemn rite.

Beside her were Eveleen and Bride. She clung to her father's arm as he led her up the grass-grown aisle and placed her by the side of her noble bridegroom.

A fair couple to behold, as the people who were there in crowds averred. The fine form, the open, generous face of the bridegroom, the delicate loveliness of the bride, won praise loud and deep.

Into the giddiest wedding throng the

words of Holy Church sound with solemn import. How much more in the days of which we write? Yes, in sickness and in health, for weal or for woe, to share together peril, exile, death, did Mary and Henry pledge themselves.

The Sacrament is completed; the ring is on her hand; and now the Nuptial Mass commences; they pray on, hand in hand, heart knit close to heart. The soft breeze waves the bride's hair, and seems to breathe low warnings.

As Mary rose from her knees, supremely happy, the words that echoed in her soul were, "the fashion of this world passeth away."

The wedding breakfast, the last meal which all the party should ever share together in this world, was a marvel of culinary skill on the part of Bride and her handmaidens. Eveleen had not been suffered to have a hand in it.

"Henry ought to have had a sonnet of Lord Surrey by heart, Mary," observed the O'Neill, "to recite on the proud day when he hath wedded a 'fair Geraldine.' How run the lines, Henry? Shame on thee that my memory serves me better than thine!"

"Bright is her hue, and Geraldine she hight;
Her beauty of kind, her virtues from above;
Happy is he that can attain her love."

Mary blushed beautifully at the compliment, and her hand stole into that of her husband. "Ah! my lord," she said, "would that all the Geraldines were on the right side!"

"Dost thou think, O'Neill," enquired Father Egan, "that there is any hope of our gaining Kildare?"

"I fear not," answered the chief; "our last endeavors proved fruitless. Much, of course, depends on the turning of affairs in England. Kildare is true to the King; at least, he doth not disgrace his blood by herding with these cropped-eared, psalm-singing hypocrites of the Parliament. And if they gain the upperhand, which I misdoubt me much they will, all the King's adherents will be glad to seek our aid."

Sir Luke, on whose brow, since the night before, a settled cloud had gathered, muttered in Bride's ear, "Yes, if we have any aid left to give to them, and do not waste our victories by submitting to the absurd orders of a set of men who