



DERMOT

(SA) dr



THE
JOHN SULLIVAN HAYES
COLLECTION

A Bequest to
THE OSBORNE COLLECTION - TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY
in memory of
JOHN SULLIVAN HAYES & JO ANN ELLIOTT HAYES
from their children
ANN ALYCIN AND ELLIOTT HAYES

37131053 615 621

Presented
to

by
The Trustees of SS & C^o
for attendance during
the past year.

Jan 28th 1867



DERMOT,

THE

FISHER-BOY OF INNISKERRY.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION,
APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

LONDON:
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE;
SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORIES:
77, GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS;
4, ROYAL EXCHANGE; 48, PICCADILLY;
AND BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

LONDON :
R. CLAY, SON, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,
BREAD STREET HILL.

DERMOT,

THE FISHER-BOY OF INNISKERRY.

CHAPTER I.

WHO has not gazed with feelings of inexpressible delight, feelings too deep for utterance, upon the mighty bosom of the boundless ocean? Who can watch the returning and receding wave, the sparkling foam which crests each heaving billow, the deep, deep blue of the unruffled waters, or the darker and more angry hue of its tempestuous mood?—who can behold the vast rocks, which, rising in proud but silent grandeur, seem as it were the guardian barriers of the land?—who can contemplate all these things, and not from the inmost heart exclaim, “O Lord, how manifold are thy works: in wisdom hast thou made them all?”

I love the sea; and often have I sat for hours on its shores, until my whole being was imbued with a soft and pleasing melancholy, inspired by the scene, and heightened

by the thought of the boundless waters that cut me off from the land I loved. But, oh! who can paint the rapturous delight with which I gazed upon it, dashing its white foam upon the shores of my own bright isle?

Circumstances, needless to relate, had obliged me to reside for many years in a foreign land; but the days of my boyhood, and the calm hours of my happy infancy, had been spent in Ireland. Round every stick and every stone was twined some fond association of the dreams of earlier years; some dear remembrance of the gay scenes of what I then thought a perfect, as well as permanent happiness. But years of disappointment and sorrow came, and the world lost its rosy hue. Yet, what of that? It is of Ireland I am to speak; and, in her own beautiful language of metaphor, I shall only add, that if clouds have rolled over the pathway of my life, I have learned to penetrate through the gloom, and to discover that there is a silver lining to them all.

For the benefit of my health I had been ordered a sea voyage. With this purpose, I embarked on board a ship bound from London to one of the western sea-ports of Ireland. Here I was received with cordial warmth by the friend at whose hospitable rectory I was to be a visitor.

CHAPTER II.

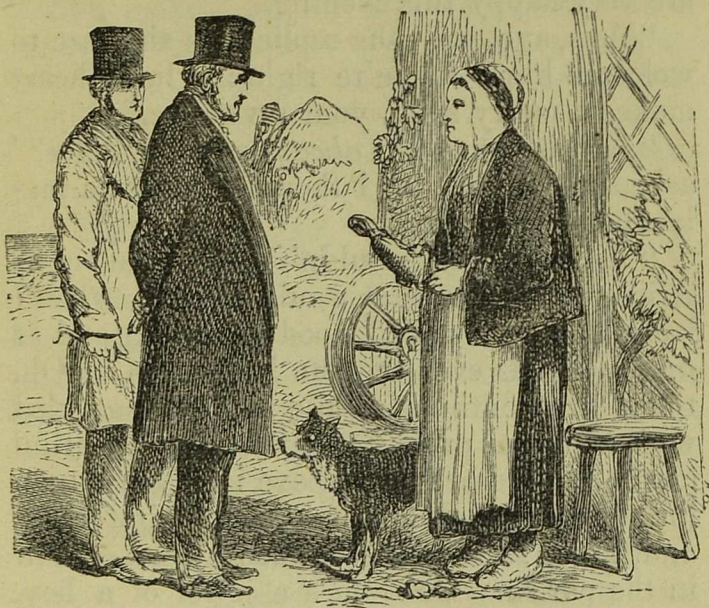
NOT many days after my arrival, I accompanied Mr. Vernon in a walk along the pebbly beach of the wild and rugged coast. My frame had been weakened by recent illness; and, while inhaling the strengthening breezes of the ocean, we paused several times to rest upon the fragments of rock around us. Calm, blue, and cloudless, were the heavens above; and a corresponding calmness was spread over the deep and stilly waters. Even the very sea-fowl seemed to slumber on their bosom, and scarcely a ripple disturbed their surface, except now and again, when a light skiff darted by the echoing rocks resounding to the fisher's merry laugh, or merrier song.

We pursued our pathway to the entrance of a small village, inhabited chiefly by fishermen, as the various implements around each cabin seemed to imply. The little school-house, which stood alone in the midst of a small garden, at the foot of a hill whose summit was crowned with the modest church, was an exception; thus silently proclaiming to the passer-by the blest instructions that were daily conveyed in *one* humble mansion to the young, and that were weekly

enforced with the prayerful fervour of their much loved and faithful pastor, alike to the parent and to the child, in the other.

The first cottage in this village attracted my attention. There was a degree of neatness in it which I had not observed elsewhere. There was even an attempt at ornament in the small trellised porch, and in the creepers trained over the whitewashed walls, which pleased me not a little. At the door sat a woman, apparently past forty years of age, busily engaged at her wheel. By her side, in the last gleam of the setting sun, lay a little terrier dog, who seemed well satisfied to allow a couch upon his back to a fine tabby cat, while a little further off, a huge sow, with a litter of young ones, completed the group. We had approached close to the woman before we were perceived, for the noise of her wheel, and the loudness of her joyous song, drowned every other sound; but the bright eyes of the watchful terrier, though half covered with his paws, soon observed us, and his shrill, sharp bark announced our presence to his mistress. She was of a tall, commanding, figure, though rather masculine in appearance. She was clothed in a gown of dark linsey-woolsey, which, though old, and mended with patches of various sizes and colours, was yet carefully pinned up behind, and displayed a petticoat of scarlet stuff. A blue spotted apron,

and a brilliant cotton handkerchief, completed her toilette, except that, indeed, she



had—I suppose to guard against the chilly evening air—put on over her other habiliments what appeared to me to be one of her husband's cloth jackets. This, being open in front, did not conceal her handkerchief. Her hair was carefully combed back off her forehead, and confined under a very tight cap, over which was tied another scarlet and green handkerchief. The scene was picturesque; and I determined to take a sketch, while my friend Vernon entered into conversation with the woman.

Addressing her in a friendly tone, he said :

“ Well, Alice, to judge by your song, you are very happy this evening.”

“ Aye, aye, sir,” she replied, as she rose to welcome him ; “ you’re right : a light heart makes a merry song, your reverence.”

“ And is your heart *always* so light, Alice?” asked my friend, in, I thought, rather a melancholy tone.

“ Ah, then, why wouldn’t it, your honour ?” Alice replied ; “ what would vex me, when I have a sober, *quite*,* good husband, and as fine a boy as ever the sun lighted on ? Oh, then,” she continued, while her eyes sparkled with maternal pride ; “ isn’t he the beautiful cratur ? The heavens above isn’t bluer than his eyes ; his cheeks is like the first rose ; and, sure, sir, there isn’t such a head of hair in the parish. Och ! he’s a jewel of a boy, and he’s as good as he’s handsome. My lanna, heavens bless you for a darling !”

“ And, Alice,” returned Vernon, “ what do you think about, while you are alone here at your wheel ?”

“ What else would I be thinking of, your reverence, but my darling Dermot ? makin’ and scrapin’ for him, out of my little *industhry*. That’s the whole of it. Sure, there isn’t a being on the living airth, not his father himself, I think so much of intirely as him.”

“ And do you never think of Him who

* *Anglicè*, quiet.

gave you your precious boy, Alice?" asked Vernon.

She looked up for a moment, and then replied, "Sometimes I do, your reverence; but, troth, Dermot's so much in my mind, there's little else there."

"Do you know," said Vernon, "who said, 'Give *me* thine heart?'"

"Faix, I don't, sir," she answered quickly, and, I thought, in rather a surly voice.

"It was God," said my friend. "In His Holy Book He tells us that none shall be dearer to us than Himself; and if we love our best friend better than Him, we are sinning against Him. Now, what if God, to punish you for letting Dermot have all your heart, were to take him from you?"

Her lip quivered and grew pale, and she replied, "Ah, sir! He wouldn't do it. He gave him when I didn't expect him; and He's too merciful to take him away again, and to break my heart intirely."

"Take care, Alice; remember He is a jealous God, and will have the whole heart. Take care that you are not laying up stores of misery for yourself."

Alice looked up, and, with determined misunderstanding, replied, "No, sir, he never was, and never will be anything but a blessing. Sure he's the best boy living, though I say it that shouldn't, and to tell your honour the truth, it's a wonder, for I *never*

crassed him since the hour he was born ; and, when the father would be for chastising of him, I wouldn't lave him ; and the child never got so much as one *gaillog** yet."

" Indeed, it *is* a wonder ; but it is only another mercy, Alice, from the God whom you seem so entirely to forget."

To this she turned a deaf ear, and continued, " But, indeed, I'll tell you no lie, sir ; he wasn't always so good ; and many a scourging he'd have got, if we weren't trusting only to the one. But those four years past, he's like an angel. I think 'tis through the *manes* of the father being always at him with that book."

" How at him ? " I inquired ; for I did not fully comprehend her language.

" Why, your honour, giving him an advice, and reading to him. My husband's a raal good man ; but he wasn't always so, and many a sore day and many a heart scald I had with him. But from the time Dermot was born I didn't mind. He might strike me, right and left ; but so as I had the child safe, 'twas all nothing to me."

" But," I asked, " what has changed him so much for the better ? "

" 'Tis the way, sir, when the boy was going on eight year, there was a man came thereabouts in one of them overside boats ; and he stopped here as good as six months—

only it wasn't all out intirely six, only five and a piece of one—and my husband and him was great comrades; and he used to be in here of an evenin' over the fire, talking to Larry (that's my man), and telling him about the book that the two was ever at. And, indeed, I didn't *begridge* em to be together, for it kept Larry *quite*.* Why then, sir, from that time there never was a man so changed; and when Jimmy Brien went away, he left the book after him, and day and night my poor man would *car' it* about with him, and the *dickens* a bit of him would go to whiskey shop, or jigs, or shebeen houses, or anything else, ever since; but when he'd come home he'd be reading, or mending of his nets, or talking to the boy; and I am sure your own honour's worship isn't milder nor what he is."

"Well, and what was the book all about, will you tell us, Alice?" said Vernon.

She coloured deeply; and, after a little hesitation, replied, "Faix, I don't know, sir; Larry's ever at me to hearken; but I've no larning, and I do be busy about everything; only sometimes I hears him reading it. 'Tis a dale about our Lord Jesus Christ, His holy name be praised," said she, rising and curt-seying.

"Does Dermot read it?" I inquired.

"He do, then, your honour; and you'd

* Quiet.

think his heart and soul would be in it, he takes such pride out of it; and, indeed, I don't doubt but 'tis that makes him the boy he is. I won't tell no lie, sir; I know 'tis beautiful, and if I'd time, I'd hearken."

"And, Alice, have you *no* time to think of your soul? And yet must you not have a time to die?"

"Och, sir! I'm a stout, hearty woman. I'll not die yet; and, if I gets sick, I'll send for the priest, and he'll give me absolution and the oil, and then 'twill be all right with me. And indeed, your reverence," she added, in a lower tone, "the priest isn't agreeable to them two reading of the book at all. There's Larry never goes to confession this long time on the 'count of it, for his reverence axed him to give up the book, and Larry wouldn't; and he never went next nor nigh him since. Only for the priest's a *quite** old man, we'd have great work; he called 'em in chapel two or three times, as I could hear (for I wasn't there), but all to no purpose. I struv to hinder 'em of reading it for a while; but 'twas no use; and, troth, I think there can't be much harm in it wherein they gets so good from it."

Vernon did not here enter upon a discussion with this poor woman upon the subject of confession and absolution. Her ignorance and determination not to listen would alike

* Quiet.

have made it useless; but a few words he *did* speak to her of deep and solemn warning; and, endeavouring to impress her with the idea that God alone can forgive sin, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin, he added: "Oh, Alice, Alice! remember your never-dying soul; remember '*now is the accepted time,*' not to-morrow, not this evening, but '*now is the day of salvation!*'"

She appeared slightly touched, and raised the corner of her apron to wipe away a tear, but made no reply; and we thought it best to leave her for the present.

CHAPTER III.

THE shades of night were gathering around us; a thousand wondrous worlds of light glittered in the starry firmament, and the calm bright moon smiled placidly upon the waters, while her beams reposed in peaceful beauty upon the far-off rocks, and made a silver pathway from the horizon to the shore.

My friend was silent for some time; and then, pointing to the moonlit scenery around, he exclaimed: "Still, still, does that heart, where there is so much of woman's tenderness

and woman's love to adorn it, yet remain as cold and as hard, when you speak to her of the sinner's only Friend, as yonder rock where the moonlight plays."

"Then you *have* spoken to her before on this subject?"

"Frequently; most frequently. She had been a faithful and attached servant in our family, from the age of fifteen till she married. Alas! at that time, before her mind had become occupied by household cares, we lost many precious opportunities of speaking to her of her eternal welfare—for we had not at that time learned the value of our own souls, still less the value of the souls of others, though I had carelessly declared my intention to enter upon the ministry, and to take upon myself the sacred vows of ordination. But thanks be to the *Eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, ere the time came, *through His grace, which was abundant to me*, I was roused as it were from sleep, and taught to feel the solemnity of the office. And, by the aid of His spirit, I have, I trust, *stood upon the watch-tower*, and have sounded the gospel trumpet, without compromise or fear, though, alas! with what *deep searchings of heart*, what heaviness of spirit, am I forced to confess that 'I have left undone those things which I ought to have done, and have done those things which I ought not to have done, and there is no health in me.'"

Here Vernon paused, and seemed lost in thought for some minutes, until I ventured to remind him of Alice, when he continued:—

“With the characteristic thoughtlessness and precipitancy with which our poor Irish are accustomed to form the dearest and holiest of all earthly ties, Alice, contrary to our advice, at the age of three-and-twenty, entered into a hasty union with a fisherman who lived near us, and of whom we had not heard a very good character. With him she removed to the opposite side of the coast, and we lost sight of her for some years. I need not repeat to you what you already well know of the various changes which took place in our family, until my father’s death, when my brother became master of Ardlish. This living was bestowed on me: here I again met my friend Alice; her husband had, not long before, taken the cottage in which they now live; and her joy was very great on discovering that I was the newly-appointed rector. Poor Alice! I saw at once that she was unhappy; her look of cheerful, blooming health had given way to a care-worn expression of fretful anxiety. From *her* I heard no complaints; but from those around I learned that her husband, who was scarcely ever sober, treated her not only with neglect, but with great cruelty. I felt deeply for her, and longed to offer to her the only balm for the sorrow-stricken heart. On my

first visit to her, I said, without of course referring to her domestic sorrow, which she evidently wished to conceal,—

“ ‘Many years have passed, Alice, and many a change has taken place since last we met; and sorrow, too, has visited both our hearts, and sobered down our spirits.’

“ ‘True for you, sir,’ she replied; ‘I believe we both of us thought the way before us was bright and smooth; but we’ve found it dark and stony enough. Signs by, the eye is not so lightsome, nor the heart so cheery as it was.’

“ ‘Yes, Alice; but that need not sadden us, when we can look forward to the world where the eye is never sad, and the heart is never dreary; is not this a blessing?’

“ She looked rather surprised, but gave a cold assent.

“ I spoke a little more to her, and endeavoured to direct her to the *Rock of Ages*; but she evidently disliked the subject, and several times tried to turn the conversation. Often, afterwards, did I seek to draw her to the only source of consolation for sorrow such as hers, but in vain. My wife, too, who had known her at Ardlish before our marriage, and who took no small interest in her welfare, assisted me by every means in her power, but in vain. From both of us she turned, with a deafened ear and averted heart; and at last told us plainly that her priest had forbidden her ever

again to allow us to interfere between her and her God, as she called it."

"Was Dermot born at this time?" I asked.

"No; and as they had been for several years married, they had no great expectation of a child; but at last it did please God to send them as lovely a little infant as I have ever seen."

"And did not this soften the mother's heart?"

"It did for a time. We hastened to congratulate her, and found her with a heart overflowing with the soft, tender joy and pride of a mother's first love; but, alas! mingled with it was no feeling of gratitude to the gracious Giver of the unexpected boon. '*He is a lovely child, Alice,*' I said; '*and will you not give thanks to the merciful Father who has sent you such a precious little gift? Will you turn your back upon Him who, in spite of your forgetfulness of Him, has given you your heart's desire?*'

"A tear sprung to her eye, and she replied, '*Sir, I did thank Him, and bless Him too; and will ever bless Him while my darling lives; my own lamb, ma cushla ma cree (the vein of my heart); gra machree ma vourneen, may the sun of joy lighten the way before ye!*'

"And yet, Alice, even should the Almighty be pleased to take him back again, still you should bless Him, and say, *Thy will be done.*'

"*I couldn't, sir,*' she said; '*I couldn't*

bless Him if He did that. Now, I ve got my little beauty, I couldn't give him up; no, avourneen, I couldn't nor I wouldn't, either, she added, kissing the baby's velvet cheek.

“I was grieved at the last expression, and tried to point out the evil of her words; but she had again steeled her heart, and would hear no more. And seldom after that could I induce her to listen to me.”

“And what effect had the birth of his child upon Larry?”

“For some time after, he became much more respectable in his conduct, and said, now he had some one to come after him, he would keep all his earnings for him. He had even joined what was called the Temperance Society, taking an oath to abstain from every kind of spirituous liquor; but this society sought only to bind its members by a moral obligation, without bringing before their eyes the holiness of that sacred Gospel, which enjoins men to soberness and temperance, as being one of the characteristic marks of him who *walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. It painted strongly the disgrace and ignominy of intoxication, with the poverty and destitution it produces; and it urged people on *these* grounds to abstain. But it never directed them to Him by whose power alone the natural heart can be kept from indulging in its continual vices; it never urged them to seek in prayer for the aid of

the Eternal Spirit in resisting this too prevailing temptation. Consequently, though some did, from the desire for worldly prosperity, persevere steadily in the observance of their vow, and became respectable members of society, yet many, who had set out with an equal determination to persevere, overcome by the temptation of their too favourite indulgence, and having no power to resist, fell back again, and added to drunkenness the guilt of a broken vow. Thus *their last estate was worse than the first.*"

"And thus it was with poor Larry, I doubt not."

Too truly so. His resolutions not being founded upon the solid ground of religious principle, they soon gave way, and before Dermot was much more than a year old, he was become as great a drunkard as ever! Yet so remarkable was his love for this child, that never, in the worst moments of his aberrations, not even when his passion rose to such a height that his wife was obliged to fly from the house, did he show one symptom of violence towards *him*. One look at the baby, one murmur of its infant voice, would soothe him; and he would caress the little creature with as much tenderness as the gentlest woman! At times, indeed, when Dermot was older, he did endeavour to correct him, when he really deserved it; but his wife, knowing his natural violence, always inter-

posed, and never suffered her child to be touched. No wonder that this boy, handsome, amiable, and endearing as he was, should grow up a torment to the whole neighbourhood, from the wild mischievous habits which he was allowed to contract."

"When, then, did this great change take place in poor Larry?"

"When Dermot had nearly reached his eighth year. At that time, as Alice said, a fisherman from the other side came here, who had been an early friend and associate of Larry's, but who, since then, had learned, in deep penitence for past offences, to know and love the Saviour of his soul. He mourned deeply over the recklessness of poor Larry, and strove to lead him to the right way. At first, his efforts appeared unavailing; but he possessed, what to Larry's heart was dear as the life he breathed, a knowledge of the Irish tongue; and in that tongue he proclaimed to his wondering friend the glad tidings of salvation."

"And was it that which worked so powerfully upon his mind as completely to change his conduct?"

"Apparently it was. After his friend had sufficiently engaged his attention, he ventured to read to him a portion of Scripture in the same language. I was present at his first reading; and to paint the various expressions of wonder, delight, and contrition, which

marked poor Larry's speaking countenance, would be impossible."

"Then when the novelty wore off, he still continued to like it?"

"He did. From that time, a day never passed that he did not entreat his friend to instruct him in reading the Irish tongue, and to read to him out of his *elegant book*, as he called it. And even when out in his boat, he would snatch every idle moment to pursue his beloved study. Often, while the rest of his companions lay sleeping on the beach, have I seen him seated on a stone, his elbows resting on his knees, his hands supporting his face, while his eyes, fixed in the deepest attention on his friend, seemed to drink in every word that was uttered, proclaiming a dying Saviour's love to each repenting sinner."

"Well, and how long did this go on?"

"For six months; during which time, as Alice told you, a surprising change took place in Larry; and even the expression of his countenance was completely altered."

"And his friend, what became of him?"

"At the end of six months I had a visit from Brien, who informed me that he should in a few days be obliged to leave our coast; 'and,' added he, '*I'm in a great amplash, your reverence; for there's poor Larry O'Leary crying like a child, for parting me. Only it's the book intirely that's breaking his heart; for I havn't only the one. And indeed, your*

honour, I'd sooner part all I has in the world nor that. But Larry says what will he do; that he'll have neither friend nor tacher when I'm gone; and that he'll be for all the world like a boat without a rudder; and that the book would tell him everything. For he isn't cute at the English at all, your reverence; but he reads that as pat as myself; and I come to see what your reverence's honour could do for me. I'm pulling two ways, for, the dear knows, I'd be lost without my book, and to take it from Larry would be a murder. For, God knows, there's many a rock and many a sand-bank in his way; and he don't see very clear intirely yet; and I'm in dread, poor fellow, if I takes the light from him, he'll be wracked intirely!

“‘And do you think, Brien,’ said I, ‘if I was to give Larry another book like yours he would take care of it?’

“‘Take care of it, sir! would he take care of his child? Why, then, ’twould be as dear to him as that same. And there’s another thing, your honour; he’s beginning to tache it to Dermot; and it’s after killing him dead intirely to think he’d be hindered of that.’

“‘Well, Jim,’ I answered, ‘I have some of those books here, and as you will go security for Larry’s care of it, I will give you one for him.’ So saying, I took one down, and gave it to Brien. He turned over the pages for a few minutes, and then said:—

“‘If it wouldn't be displeasing to your reverence's honour, I'd keep this one myself. And don't be thinking 'tis for the lucre of getting the new one, for the other's an old friend, and I likes to stick to them always; but 'tis the way, the pages isn't the same; and Larry wouldn't get out the places so easy as in the other one. And besides, there's a dale of marks in the other, the two of us made together; and 'twould vex him to lose them, your reverence.’

“‘Do whichever you think best yourself, Jim,’ said I; ‘I know I can trust you.’

“‘Thank your reverence's honour, sir,’ he replied; ‘indeed you may; and God Almighty guard and guide you, and all belonging to you, all your days; and steer you into the right harbour at last!’”

CHAPTER IV.

“THE next day Brien took his departure; and, from that time, Larry has gone on steadily reading his Irish Bible, and praying for the Spirit's teaching, both for himself and for his son, who can now read as well as his father, and takes, if possible, more pleasure in it; entering, as he does, fully into the blessings and promises therein contained, so

full of comfort to the Christian's heart, as the following little incident will show.

"Not long ago, I walked out, very early in the morning, along the beach, after a very stormy night; and, in a niche of the rocks, at some distance, I saw young Dermot stretched at full length, studying his Bible so intently, that for some minutes he did not observe me. At length I said, '*Well, Dermot, my child, you seem very busy.*' The dear boy looked up: and, while a glow of pleasure overspread his fine countenance, he exclaimed, '*I've found it here, Mr. Vernon.*'

"'Found what, Dermot?' I asked.

"'*The reason why father was kept from going out agin the storm last night, your honour; 'tis, sir, because [here he pointed to this verse in his Bible, begging me to read it] the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive.*' (Psalm xxxiii. 18.)

"It is evident too, from the whole tenour of his conduct, that not only are God's promises the comfort of his soul, but that His precepts are the rule of his life, and that, young as he is, he has '*chosen that good part, which shall never be taken away.*'"

"And will not even the influence of her precious child," I inquired, "avail to arouse the interest of poor Alice?"

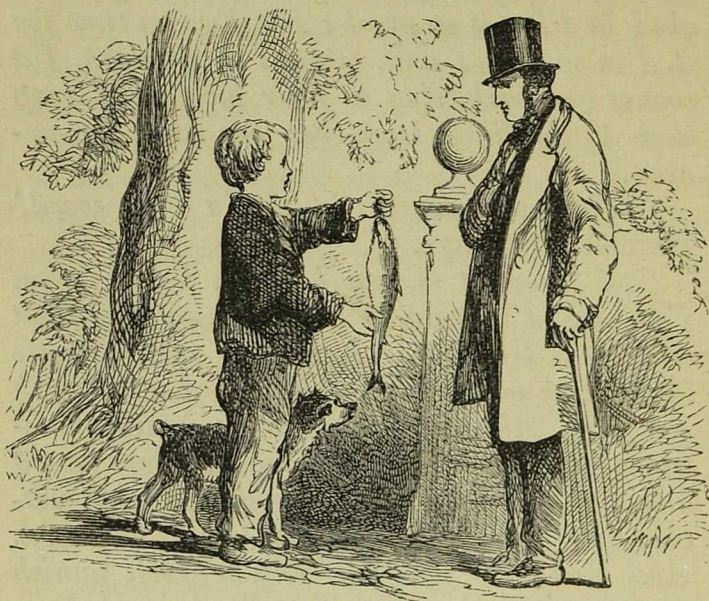
"No: often and earnestly have both

Dermot and her husband endeavoured to do so, but in vain. With a smile and a kiss, she will reply: *'Thank ye, my darling; I'm glad ye likes it so much: but I've no time for it, I'm so busy: and, when I'm at work, I'd sooner be hearkening to your own sweet song than to the finest book ever was wrote, avourneen.'*

"'But, mother, it is God's own word,' Dermot often says.

"'I know it is, ma bouchel. And, when I'm sick, I'll hear to it; but now I'm stout and well, I'd sooner hear your own welcome talk, avich ma chree.' (Oh son of my heart.)

"'Oh, Alice, Alice!' her husband sometimes says, *'hould your tongue, before you'd anger the Almighty too much. You're putting your child between you and the Lord. And God help you, but may be He'll punish you for it yet.'* But all falls unheeded on Alice's ear; which, *like the deaf adder, will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.'*



CHAPTER V.

By this time we had reached home, and found tea ready, and Mrs. Vernon awaiting our return, having dismissed most of her merry little group to bed. The next morning, just as I was about to set out for a walk, I met at the door a fine blooming lad of about fourteen, whom I instantly guessed to be our friend Dermot. On seeing me, he

took off his cap: and his fine curly hair, blowing back from his sunburnt brow, displayed a countenance radiant with happiness and good temper. I asked him what was his business; he touched his hair, and replied: "I'd like to see the *Mistis's* honour, sir,—we'd a great take last night; and this," said he, holding up a large fish, "was the best among 'em,—so I brought it to her ladyship."

"And what is your name, my boy?" I inquired.

"Dermot O'Leary, plase your honour: and the man that owns me, is him they calls big Larry, the fisherman below at the carrig."

I summoned Mrs. Vernon: and, having despatched his business with her, I accompanied the lad during the greater part of his walk home.

"Well, Dermot," I said, "and are you a great fisherman?"

He smiled, and replied: "I'm getting into it, sir; but my father's the best among us. Only for him, we wouldn't get so much last night."

"You don't always get so much, then?"

"Och no, your honour; we do be sometimes the whole night, and we gets nothing."

"And what are you all doing, while you are waiting for the fish?"

"Some do be sleeping, sir; and more

do be watching, or smoking, or singing, sir."

"And what do *you* do, Dermot?"

"My father do be always reading to me, sir, or either I to him: and there's a couple more of the boys likes to be hearkening to us often, your honour."

"And what book do you read, Dermot?"

"The Bible, sir."

"And do you love that book, Dermot?"

He raised his sparkling eyes to mine, and replied: "With all the veins of my heart, sir; and why wouldn't I?"

"And what makes you love it so much, my boy?"

"Ah, sir, sure there's everything in it. If I wants an advice, 'tis there better nor I'd get from any one: if I do be any way down-hearted, sure I finds peace there: and if any harm overtakes us, I reads there, that He that keeps us neither slumbers nor sleeps. And all that a body wants, they finds in it!"

"And are you often down-hearted, Dermot?"

"Och no, your honour; I've nothing to trouble me, only one thing."

"What's that, my boy?"

He coloured deeply, and began to twist a little stick in his hand with great violence. Then, after a short pause, he said in a low voice, "My mother, sir!"

“What!” said I, “is your mother unkind to you?”

“Oh no, sir,” he cried, “not that, not that. She’s the best mother ever boy had. Sure, if it would benefit me, she’d lie down, to let me walk over her! She’s only too good to me!”

“How do you mean she’s too good to you?”

“Why, sir, she loves me too well; for she loves me better than Him that ought to be dearer to her than all. Oh, sir! she puts away the thoughts of Him from her too much intirely.”

“And don’t you try to lead her to think of Him, and hear of Him?”

“Ah, then, I do, your honour; and so does my father. And it’s the only thing she won’t do for me. She says, she’d sooner be hearkening to me, than to God’s word: and, ah, sir, dear! sure that isn’t the way she ought to be!”

“And, Dermot, do you do nothing but ask her to think of God?”

“Oh, many and often is the time my father and I kneels down before the Lord, and axes Him to bring her to the right way of thinking: but He didn’t do it yet.”

“Remember, Dermot, we are told to *continue* in prayer.”

“Yes, sir, we often thinks of that, and how often David almost gave over prayer,

and said he was desolate, and no man cared for his soul, and after all he was heard; 'tis that, sir, and many such like, that's all our comfort."

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER a little more conversation with this interesting boy, we parted. I had; subsequently, many interviews with both Dermot and his father, with whom I was equally pleased, and whose conduct, as well as words, evinced a degree of piety only to be met with in those who, under the Spirit's teaching, have made the Bible the rule of their lives.

In Alice, too, I took a deep interest; for though I could not but deplore the determination with which she turned away from everything connected with her soul's salvation; yet, on other subjects, there was a depth and tenderness of feeling, a warmth of heart, and even a rectitude of principle, which I could not but admire. After remaining with my friends a few months, I departed, promising to pay them another visit the following summer, if life was spared to us all.

CHAPTER VII.

QUICKLY passed the winged days, weeks, and months: the period soon came round again, and I embarked for Ireland. I need not stop to tell how delighted I felt once more to land upon my own green isle, nor with what mingled feelings of sorrow and of love I sang—

“My country, my country, my beautiful Erin,
 Ah, why hangs this darkness around thy green plains?
 Ah, why comes there, blent with thy name so endearing,
 A remembrance of sorrow, of guilt, and of chains?”

“There are mists of more gloom than the murkiest
 night:

Like clouds o’er thy mental horizon they roll,
 There are chains, than the bondslave’s more galling and
 tight;

They shackle and bind the free thoughts of thy soul.”

Every blade of grass was dear to me. Every furze bush, every mud-built cabin, told me I was in Ireland, in my native land: and I was happy, for who is there

———“with soul so dead,
 Who never to himself hath said,
 This is my own, my native land?”

I found my hospitable friend well and happy in the midst of his numerous family.

At the first leisure moment I inquired for my friend Dermot.

“He is as well as can be,” answered Vernon, “growing quite a man; and, if possible, a greater idol than ever with his poor mother.”

“Then Alice is not improved?” I said.

“In some things she is,” said Mrs. Vernon. “She does sometimes show an interest in serious things, and has more than once lately asked Dermot to read his Bible to her: but her idolizing fondness for that boy is, as my husband says, if possible, increasing.”

“Poor, poor, Alice,” I replied; “will she never be warned of her error?”

“Some months ago,” continued Mrs. Vernon, “just after you left us, Dermot was seized with a sudden and dangerous illness. For some hours his life was despaired of: and, to paint the wretchedness of his agonized mother, is beyond my power. We begged of her earnestly (at the same time that we felt deeply for her sorrow) to remember, that He, who had given her her child, surely had a right to resume that gift.

“‘I don’t care who gave him,’ she said, ‘he’s mine now, and I *won’t* give him up.’”

“Oh, Alice, Alice!” I said, “think who it is you speak of: the great, the Almighty, the merciful God, who gave up His own, His only Son, to bear poverty and pain, and distress and sorrow, to see all His friends

forsaking Him, and then, alone and in misery, to give up His life upon the cross; all for you! And will you refuse the very first thing He asks of you? Will you not try to submit to His will?’

“ ‘If He’d ask anything else in this wide world, I’d give it: but my child, my life, my darling, my *weenach*, that I nursed in my bosom, and carried in my arms, and that never drew one tear from my eye till now; my jewel, my bright beautiful flower! Oh, my boy, my boy! I can’t, I can’t!’ she cried, bitterly sobbing.

“ Charles knelt down, and prayed that God might, in His infinite mercy, be pleased to spare this poor mourner’s child, if such was His allwise will. In every petition she joined fervently and warmly; but, when he went on to pray that, if His sovereign wisdom saw fit to do otherwise, He might send His Spirit into her heart, and enable her to bow in meek submission to His will, we observed that she was silent; nor, while he prayed that Almighty Grace might enable her to loosen her too tightly drawn affections from this idol of her heart’s worship, did one single amen escape her lips. She remained in sullen silence, except when a groan of anguish relieved her burdened heart.”

“ What a sad state of mind! but yet her child *was* spared?”

“ Yes; and a few days after he had been

pronounced out of danger, we called on her again.

“ ‘Oh, Alice!’” said I, ‘have you not great reason to thank your heavenly Father for His goodness to you?’

“ ‘Indeed, and that’s true for you, ma’am,’ she replied: ‘and I thanks his reverence, too, for his beautiful prayers; for I wouldn’t believe but ’twas them *done* it, for he got a turn for the better that very night.’

“ ‘But, Alice,’ said Charles, ‘you did not join in those prayers.’

“ ‘I did in most, your reverence; but you axed what I didn’t want of you, sir.’

“ ‘What was that?’ inquired I.

“ ‘Why, ma’am, that I mightn’t love my child as well as I does now; and, sure, that was a *quare* thing to ask for any mother; and I wouldn’t give in to it, for I wouldn’t wish to love him a bit less than I does: sure, if a mother wouldn’t love her child, let alone her only one, would there be any love in the world?’

“ ‘Alice,’ I replied, ‘I well know the depth and tenderness of a mother’s love; but I know, too, there is a higher, holier love: and, if we do not prefer the Giver of all good to any of His gifts, we are committing idolatry, as much as if we made a god of stone, and fell down to worship it.’

“ On hearing this, Alice turned away, with the same obstinacy of countenance as you

may sometimes have observed in her. ‘Agh, ‘tis easy talking: but, if God didn’t choose we should love the childer, He wouldn’t give ‘em to us; in especial wherein we didn’t expect one.’

“We rose to go away; and Charles said, ‘Alice, from my heart I pity you, for I cannot but fear that your rebellious idolatry will yet call down the vengeance of God upon your head. You have said, you would not give up your child to Him. Beware! beware lest His anger be provoked to tear away from you that which still keeps your heart from Him.’

“She made no reply; and we left her.

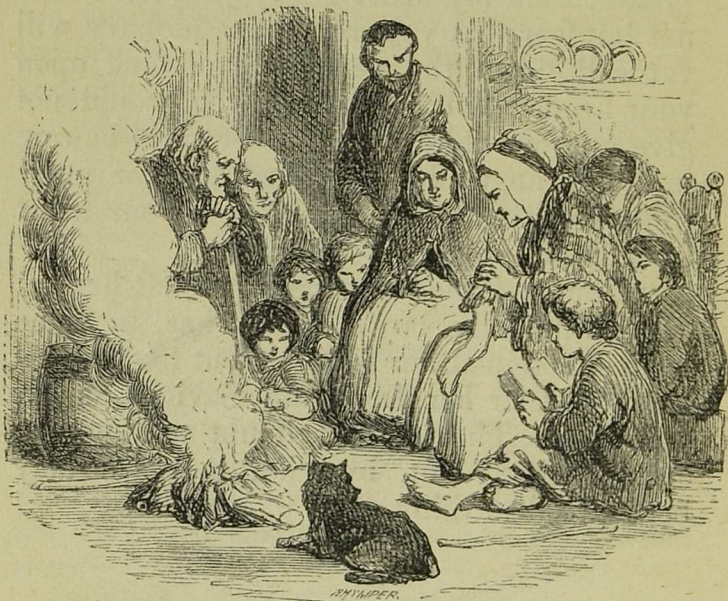
“I think the boy’s illness has, in some degree, softened her feelings, but has not led her to prefer her Lord and Saviour as her chief joy. That will, I doubt not, yet be accomplished; but, by what means it may be, I dread to think of!”

CHAPTER VIII.

A FEW days after this discourse I accompanied Vernon in a visit to Alice. As we entered very gently, we were not observed for some minutes, and my surprise was only

equalled by my pleasure at the scene before me.

The always industrious Alice, as usual, busy with her knitting, sat on a low stool near the fire on the floor. At her feet was seated Dermot with his Bible, which he was



reading aloud to her; while around the room, some on the floor, some on the settle, one on a tub turned upside down (to serve as a stool for the time being), and others on any other accommodation equally uncouth and near at hand, were assembled a group of listeners: some women, with infants in their arms, a few boys and fishermen, two or

three girls and four old men. Among the last was Larry, occupied with his nets: and, as Alice turned to make some remark, which showed her interest in the subject, I observed him, poor fellow! lifting up his eyes towards heaven with an expression of thanksgiving; while, with the rough sleeve of his jacket, he wiped away an unbidden tear. At length, one of the women perceiving us, the whole group arose: but Dermot's countenance was much too expressive not to display, in spite of his welcome, no small degree of disappointment at the interruption. However, after they had paid their respects to us, Vernon desired them again to be seated; which they obeyed, having first presented us with the two best chairs the house afforded, their former occupiers contenting themselves with the floor.

Dermot then proceeded. To *me*, all he said was unintelligible; but Vernon, by now and then looking to his own Bible, was able to follow him nearly through the whole; while, in watching the varying countenances around me, I found abundant and interesting occupation. Poor Dermot! I never shall forget the smile of delight with which he looked up at us, when, having ended one chapter, his mother begged of him to begin another. Dear, happy Dermot! poor, fond Alice! how little did either of you imagine what was at hand!

At length the reading was concluded; and the delighted auditors, having thanked their young friend, some, even with tears of joy, departed, freely expressing their opinions as they went.

“Ah, then, he’s a fine *scholar*,” said one.

“He was ever ready at the book, God bless him! said another.

“Why, then, I’ll tell you what,” said an old man, with a solemn and important shake of the head, “the larning’s a fine thing, and a good thing too; and that’s what *I* say.”

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER they were all gone, we conversed for some time with Alice, whose mind certainly appeared opening to the new and blessed truths which her son had just been conveying to her ears. I say her *mind*, for it did not appear that her *heart* was yet engaged. Her *reason* was convinced; but her *heart* was still cold and hard towards its God; while she clung with far greater tenacity to her darling child, than to Him, the Saviour, the Mighty and All-merciful Redeemer!

A circumstance had occurred not long before my arrival, which had certainly made

an impression on her mind, and was not without its good effects.

It was this.

There were at Inniskerry two distinct parties: those who read the Bible, and those who did not. Larry was not the only one in the place who was concerned for his soul's welfare: many more had followed his example; and the effect of that blessed word, accompanied as it was by the Spirit's teaching, was very visible among them.

It happened that there had been for some days very little doing among the fishermen; but at last, one Sunday morning, there was, as they said, "*a great sign of fish on the water*;" and, regardless of the sacredness of the day, they began eagerly to prepare their boats, all but Larry and the "little flock" who shared his sentiments. This was by no means pleasing to the opposite party, who were anxious to enlist Larry, as being the best and most experienced fisherman among them. They urged him strongly to it, represented the distress they had been suffering for some time, and declared that it was his duty to provide for his wife and child, as well as that of others.

"Ah, then, 'tis you that will get the fine tearing from the wife, if you stops at home. Let her alone for a tongue, when 'tis let loose."

"And small blame to her," said another:

“when she’s without her rights this time back, and might asy get ’em now if he chose. And, sure, the priest came down and blessed the boats; and where’s the fear now, except that they’d be too full to bring home?”

The temptation was strong, but the “stronger One” was with Larry. He lifted up his heart for a moment in prayer; and then said, “I tell ye, boys, there’s no blessing can ever be with them that crosses the will and commandment of God; and with His help, I’ll not lay a hand to my boat afore twelve o’clock this blessed night.” And he turned away and entered his house, followed by the jeers, laughter, and curses, of the other party; and received from Alice no gentle reprimand, for what she called “his *Protestant palaver*.” He listened for some time in silence, knowing too well how useless it is to attempt to stay the torrent of an angry woman’s tongue; but when there was a pause, he said calmly and solemnly, “Protestant or Roman, it’s all one if they reads their Bible, and believes it, they’ll not go *agin* what God commands; and I’ll tell you once for all, Alice, if you expects me to consider your will and pleasure before the Almighty God’s, it’s what I never *can*, nor never *will* do. Anything else in this earthly world to serve you, I’ll do: but I cannot put even you *betune* God and my own soul;

and, with the help of Him above, I never will: and so give over your talk now."

Alice was not an ill-tempered woman: her passion was soon over; and Larry spent the remainder of the day in peace.

When the Sabbath was over, and the morning of Monday began to dawn, he and his companions, together with Dermot (who had heartily concurred in his father's decision), launched their boats, and departed on a fishing expedition: and, on the following evening, all the boats returning, to the great discomfiture of the first party, the boats of Larry and his company were abundantly supplied, while their own had scarcely brought enough to show even what they had been about. This excited great surprise among the people, who could in no way account for the superior success of the *unblest* boats.

On some this affair, which they pronounced "the *quarest* thing ever they knew," produced a most happy effect, leading them to depend no longer upon the word and power of a mortal man, but to seek in Jesus alone for pardon, acceptance, and life everlasting. As to Alice, it greatly shook her confidence in her spiritual directors, and led her to inquire, for a time at least, after the true God of power and of love. But much more was yet to be done; and the time was not yet fully come.

CHAPTER X.

WE shall now return to Larry, who accompanied us part of the way home.

From his conversation we gathered, that the Lord was daily drawing him nearer to Himself, and that Dermot was fast ripening for that eternal glory, of which he was so soon to be made a partaker. To some remark made by my friend, Larry replied, with a fervour of devotion I never shall forget, "Oh, sir! a heart of iron would melt if it could call to mind all the whole love of God together!"

"His love is indeed wonderful," said Vernon; "far beyond what man's heart can imagine."

"Ah, sir! I sometimes thinks of all His love, and all His mercy, till I feels a'most choking; and I'd cry my two handsfull, and then I'd get ease, and fall down, and thank Him for everything. There's one book in the Bible, your honour, is very full of the love of God; not but what 'tis the way with the whole of 'em, but I *consates* there's most in that. 'Tis Hosea, your reverence. Ah, sir! it seems to go very hard with the Lord, to give up His people, bad intirely, and wicked as they were." And he repeated, in

Irish, the 8th verse of the 11th chapter, "*How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?*"

"Yes," replied Vernon; "and then how sweetly He tells them, '*I drew them with the cords of a man, with bands of love, but they refused to return!*'"

"Oh, sir!" said Larry, "sure I was just like them myself once. Many a way did the Lord strive to draw me to Him (I seen it all since, but I didn't know it then): and I hardened myself *agin* Him, till at last, without any grief or misfortune, but just by the bands of love, through the means of His own blessed word, He wakened me up at once. And sure, sir, what thing else was it but the hand of God brought that word to me? Ah, then, wasn't it the love of God that sent Paddeen to the stream just at that minute; and wasn't it He made the book stick to the hook; and wasn't it He made Jimmy Brien *larn* himself first, and then sent him here to *larn* to me? But sure enough, when He roused me first, I thought it was only to put me to greater punishment; for, oh, your reverence! I thought my sins so black intirely that the Lord would never look on me, but only to destroy me. But blessed be His name, He said to me, as He said to them of old, after telling 'em '*He'd carry 'em away like a cloud—Yet I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt know no God but me, for there is no Saviour besides me!*'"

CHAPTER XI.

HERE we parted; and, not long after, we met a woman, who appeared in a state of no small irritation, as her words evinced.

“Bad luck to him for a young rascal!” said she: “never fear, but I’ll wallop him well, when I catches a *hoult* of him!”

“What’s the matter, Judy?” inquired Vernon.

She started at the sound of his voice; and, appearing rather confused, replied, “’Tis Barney, sir, the young *villian*. I’m bawling here, till I’m tired, and I can’t get him high nor low. Ah, then, if I don’t make his four bones sore this blessed night!”

“Oh, Judy! pray have more patience. I suppose the poor child does not know you want him.”

“Oh, then, if he don’t, sir, small blame to me to be angry, when he knows he’s my only dependence!”

“Have you no son but him?” I asked.

“Not one in the wide world, your honour; only Bill that do be minding the crows, and Pat, and Joaneen, that’s a girl, and three I buried, the cratur; but they didn’t break their fast to-day! and haven’t a drop to wet their little hearts!”

“And what is Barney to do for them?”

“Why, sir, to be down on the *crass* roads,

your honour. There's a *dale* of quality passing to-day, and he ought to be there to *ax* a penny for God's sake."

"That's a bad trade for him, Judy."

"Wisha, then, 'tis a poor one too, your reverence; but sure I can't help it!"

"Could not Barney as well work for you as beg?"

"Agh, sir, what signifies the trifle of brass a poor gossoon like him would get for his work? 't wouldn't put a pratie in his own mouth, let alone the others."

"Well, Judy, just try. I have some hay to be made, so send him to-morrow; and we shall see what sort of a day's work he will do."

"The Lord prosper and bless and increase your honour's reverence, and that I may never live to see your downfall, and that you may never feel *cowld* nor hunger, you nor yours, for a darling man! Oh, then, 'tis Barney will be proud intirely; for he don't much like to be after the quality that way at all; not but what he used to be as *cute* at it as any boy from this to Dublin."

"And what has changed him so much?"

"Wisha, I don't know, sir; only he's ever after Dermot O'Leary, and he got it out of his book. That 'tis his, I makes him tell; and sure your honour, 't isn't right for a boy to go *agin* his mother that way."

"But does he go against you in any other way, Judy?"

“Indeed, your honour’s worship, he do not. I’ll tell you no lie. He was a wild chap enough once; but since he took up with Dermot and his book, there is not a milder, *quiter* child in the barony. ’Twould be a fine thing for me if Bill was like him. I am sure I don’t know the *raison* of it, but there never was a greater change come on any one. Only for that, I’d never let him near Dermot. In regard of him refusing to go down the *crass* roads *barrin*, I’ll *lave* him say what he chooses himself.”

After a little more conversation, during which Vernon endeavoured to enlighten poor Judy upon the subject of falsehood, of the guilt of which she seemed to have a very small idea, we parted, obtaining from her a promise that Barney should be in the hay-field early next morning.

Thus did this dear boy Dermot give evident proof of his being a child of God, by his anxiety to impart to others that saving knowledge, which was to him *sweeter than honey, and the droppings of the honey-comb*.

CHAPTER XII.

WE must go back a little in our narrative, to explain the somewhat ambiguous expressions

used by Larry in the conversation which I have just related, and which may at the same time show the beautiful manner in which the God of Providence makes what appear to us the most trivial incidents work to the glory of His name.

In the part of the country where Larry's friend Brien resided, there was a narrow rapid stream, running at the foot of a mountain. In this stream the boy, whom Larry called *Paddeen*, was one day fishing, when



something unusual struck his hook. He drew it slowly and carefully up; and, finding it to be part of a book, he dried it, and took

it to his uncle, James Brien. His uncle, having some time before this been studying Irish, was delighted to find this *prent* book, as Paddeen called it, in his own tongue. This book turned out to be a portion of the New Testament; and constant, diligent, and earnest, was Brien's perusal of it. The Lord was pleased to enlighten his mind by it; and from that one small portion, found, as the world would say, by chance, this hitherto reckless sinner had learned *to flee for refuge to the hope set before him*, and to seek for admittance to the heavenly inheritance alone through the righteousness of his redeeming Saviour! He afterwards procured a Bible. How much he valued this we have already seen, and how his knowledge of it was afterwards blessed to poor Larry. The boy Paddeen also, through God's blessing on the perusal of it, has been led to the Saviour's feet, and has learned to esteem *the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of this world*.

CHAPTER XIII.

OH, would that I could draw a veil over the sad and dreary future! But no: it were to hide the just dealings of Almighty wisdom and Sovereign love!

I scarcely remember a more lovely evening than that of the 15th of August. The extreme warmth of the air would have been oppressive, but for the gentle and balmy breezes from time to time wafted over the waters. How calm and still were those deceitful waters, as, reflecting heaven's own light, they lay outstretched before us,

“Deeply, darkly, beautifully blue.”

I cannot describe it better than in the words of the *painter poet*, thus :

“Then the broad bosom of the ocean kept
 An equal motion, swelling as it slept.
 Then slowly sinking, curling to the strand,
 Faint lazy waves o'er-creep the ridgy sand ;
 Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,
 And back return in silence soft and slow.
 Ships in the calm seem anchored ; for they glide
 On the still sea, urged solely by the tide.”

The sun was near its setting, and its last golden rays were dancing with fitful lustre upon the stern rocks : now lighting the entrance to some dark cavern, now smiling upon the many-coloured heaths or herbage scattered around ; again stretching away into a long line of softened light upon the sparkling sea ; and finally resting its laughing beams upon the merry group assembled round the fishing boats. What numbers that evening saw their dearest earthly treasures embark upon those frail vessels without the shadow of fear or mistrust ! Wives parted with their husbands ; children with

their fathers; mothers with their sons. Among the latter was Alice, whose tall form we recognised, busy in stowing on board her husband's little bark everything that affection could suggest, or her slender means afford to her idolised child.

"Hurrah, boys!" cried one of the men, "where's the use of dilly dallying? let us be off."

"Stop a minute for Dermot," said another; "he's off for something he forgot. Here he is! musha, 'tis the book, I'll be bound: he wouldn't lave that after him."

"I wouldn't then," said Dermot, who now appeared with his usual bright happy smile. "What business would we have of a boat without a rudder? And this is the best rudder, for 'twill steer us *beyant* this world!"

"*Slawn agaeth*, and God keep you, cushla ma cree!" said Alice, embracing him: "may the Lord bless you, Dermot, my *lanna*, and bring the both yees safe home to me again, avourneen!"

"Amen, then!" resounded from many a cheerful voice. The word was given, and the five well-manned boats departed.

CHAPTER XIV.

THAT night I was aroused from sleep by the deep booming sound reverberating along the shore, which is ominous of an approaching storm. I thought of the boats, and sat up to listen. A sudden and violent gust of wind shook the house: another, and another followed. I could no longer sleep; and rising, I dressed myself, and ran to a window from which the shore was visible. There I perceived lights moving quickly backward and forward. I was soon joined by Vernon, and we proceeded to the beach, to try what aid we could afford to the poor terrified villagers. What a scene was there!

“All where the eye delights yet dreads to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam
Upon the billows rising. All the deep
Is restless change. The waves so swelled and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swell
Not one one moment in its station dwells.
But nearer land you might the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase;
Might watch the mightiest, till the shoal they reach;
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch,
Curl'd as they come. They strike with furious force;
And then, reflowing, take their grating course,
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past
Roll'd by their rage, and shall for ages last.”

The night was fearfully dark. We hung out lights in all directions; but the rain and wind as quickly extinguished them. We

kindled a large fire, which we continued to feed as long as we could get fuel. At length the morning began to dawn, and exhibited on all sides devastation and woe. All that long fearful day the storm continued to rage with unabated fury. Weeds, wrack, fragments of trees, all were tossed about in a mingled mass of ruin, while the wild sea-birds added their "weak complaining cry" to the unrestrained and loud lamentings of the poor terrified villagers. Vainly, vainly did they watch and weep, and watch again, for one glimpse of the boats. In some, suspense gave way to despair; in others, to hope. Among the last was Alice. She had been all night wandering up and down the beach, her dark hair streaming wildly to the winds, and her eyes haggard and swollen with weeping. She exclaimed, endeavouring to be cheerful, "I know they're safe; they can't but be; they put into Innismullen port when they *seen* the storm coming, I'll be bound. They're safe, they're safe, never fear! God Almighty's above 'em, to keep 'em from harm, His holy name be praised!"

But poor Alice had forgotten that she had never sought the Lord while He might be found. In the midst of His mercies she had turned her back upon Him; and she now expected that her offended God would avert from her the calamity which her own idolatry had called down upon her!



CHAPTER XV.

Two weary days did these poor creatures spend in vain expectation.

Towards the close of the second, as we were again proceeding along the beach, we observed something at a little distance floating on the water. In dreadful suspense, we watched each returning wave. At length, one long, rolling billow swept in the object of our anxiety close to where we stood. It was a human form! Immediately another billow succeeded. And how shall I describe

our feelings, when we recognised in the pale corpse the sunken features and glazed eyes of the once bright and blooming Dermot? His soft curly hair, of which his poor mother had been so vain, was dripping with the briny waters. Not a ray of colour remained in his cheeks; his hands, in the stiffness of death, were tightly clasped across his breast. With some difficulty we disengaged them; and, opening his waistcoat to try if any pulse yet throbbed, we found, laid next to the once warm and beating heart, which had in life so fondly cherished it, his own treasured Bible—"The story of peace!" Yes, blessed Dermot, it was to thee, while on earth, a story of peace, of joy, of love. And it was thy guiding star to lead thee to thy home of peace above: even the bosom of thy reconciled Father and God!

CHAPTER XVI.

WELL was it for poor Alice that her restless anxiety had led her to walk to a coast-guard station, nearly four miles distant, to make inquiries, which had been asked and answered many a time.

During her absence, we had all that re-

mained of her poor boy carried into the house, and laid upon his bed. Oh! it was a sad, sad sight. There were seen the woodbine, the rose, and the beautiful white jessamine, with its deep green leaves, and its pure star-like flowers. They had been trained by Dermot's own hand, and softly they smiled in the glad light of the evening sun—that sun whose laughing beams shone with such a painful contrast into the little room where his cold remains were laid! How he had loved to train these beautiful children of nature over the whitewashed walls of his humble but happy home! They flourished still in unconscious loveliness; but the bright countenance, the sunny smile, which had gladdened that lowly dwelling, was gone for ever!

A few of the weeping neighbours endeavoured to render death's awful change a little less appalling; but, oh! no appearance could lessen the anguish of a mother's breaking heart. And when Alice, who had heard some rumours of the occurrence, came rushing wildly in, and beheld what was once her idol, she shrieked fearfully, and fell into a violent hysteric fit. Fit after fit succeeded, and her state became so alarming that Vernon sent for a physician, who, when he came, bled her profusely, and ordered her to be kept in a state of perfect quiet.

CHAPTER XVII.

WE shall now leave her for awhile to give some account of the remainder of the boat's company.

Not long after we left poor Alice, three men arrived, to the inexpressible joy of their nearly distracted wives. From them we learned that, with the exception of Dermot, two men, and one little boy, all had escaped.

We were rejoiced to find that Larry survived, though so exhausted from fatigue and anxiety about his son as to be unable to leave the house where he had taken shelter.

The boats, they said, had proceeded to a greater distance than usual. On the first symptoms of the approaching storm, they had endeavoured to gain the nearest port. But the wind rose so suddenly and violently, and the waves rolled against them with such tumultuous force, that all their efforts were unavailing. A sudden squall had upset Larry's boat, and plunged the whole crew into the waters, while the darkness of the night precluded all hope of saving one another. They all tried to swim to the nearest land, where they perceived lights were hung out; Larry and Dermot had kept together as long as possible. At length, Larry dis-

covered that Dermot was no longer near him; and his agony was so great that his companions could scarce prevail on him to proceed; but, recollecting that perhaps Dermot might have got nearer to land than they, he made a great effort, and was saved. But so exhausted were they, that he and several others were carried in a state of perfect unconsciousness to the house of the persons who still kindly harboured them. Their more fortunate companions, who had been able to reach the shore in safety, now anxiously went in pursuit of Dermot, and of the others who were missing. Two whole days did they spend in this vain search; all the means in their power were used; but the whole was useless. The trembling father could not give up all hope; and the kind-hearted men, who had remained to comfort their afflicted companions, now hastened to the village to learn if any tidings of Dermot had arrived there.

Vernon, hearing this, resolved to go himself to convey the melancholy news. The little terrier, Dermot's favourite companion, followed us. Even *his* bright eyes wore an expression of sadness, and his low, melancholy whine, as he licked the lifeless hand of his young master, went to many a heart. He now trotted on before, not as was his wont, with tail and ears erect, but with a drooping head, and nose to the ground he pursued his

road, uttering now and again his dismal howl, till we approached the house where Larry was. Led by his instinct, the poor little animal rushed impetuously forward, and was in Larry's arms before he had time to see us. He started up, and cried out, "What news, sir? is Dermot——?" Here the dog moaned piteously; and that, together with Vernon's expressive countenance, told all. Poor Larry, covering his face with both his hands, wept long, bitterly, and silently—wept in heart-rending anguish. At length, when his sobs permitted him, he said, "My blessed boy! my poor, poor Alice! I must go to her." Vernon told him of her state in as gentle terms as possible; and, with great difficulty, persuaded him to remain one night more with his hospitable friends. Having related to him the place in which Dermot's Bible was found, he took it from his pocket and gave it to him. The poor fellow pressed it in silence to his lips, and covered it with tears. Vernon then spoke a few words of comfort to him, and exhorted him to implore the aid of his heavenly Father, both for himself and for Alice, under this overwhelming affliction; and then, preparing to depart, he called to the dog to accompany him. But the little creature only nestled itself the closer to poor Larry, and looked up into his face with such a look of real sorrow, that it again called forth a flood of bitter tears. He sobbed out, "Oh,

“sir leave him ; leave him with me : he loved my child, and my child loved him ; and I’ll never, never part with him !” And, taking him in his trembling arms, he fondled him like a child.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MEANWHILE poor Alice’s illness rapidly increased, and a violent fever seized her.

Totally deprived of reason, she called loudly on her husband and child, and earnestly begged them not to forsake her. The next moment she would start up with vehemence, and exclaim : “They took him from me : give him back—give back my child, I say !” And then would sink down exhausted on her pillow.

She continued in this state for some days ; and when poor Larry returned to his now mournful home, she seemed not to recognise him in the smallest degree. Thus she remained for a week, during which time we daily visited her cottage.

CHAPTER XIX.

ENTERING suddenly one day, we found Larry seated on a stool, near a low table, on which he had stretched out both his arms, while with his hands he had covered his face, so that he did not perceive us.

“Larry!” said Vernon.

He started up, and we beheld a countenance bedewed with tears, and marked with traces of deeper dejection than we had yet observed.

“Oh, sir! what will I do?” he cried; “What will I do? She isn’t a bit better; and they say without she gets a coolin’ to-day, they don’t think she will this side twenty-one; and, och hone! your honour, sure with the raging fever that’s on her, she’ll be lost intirely!”

By this, Larry meant to say that if her disorder did not that day come to a crisis, it was not likely to take place till the twenty-first day; and he feared, from the violence of the fever, that by that time her strength would be completely exhausted.

Vernon was indeed what the Apostle Paul so beautifully describes himself to be, *Gentle among his people, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.*

“Larry,” said he, in the mildest tone, “is your faith beginning to fail?”

“Oh, master dear!” replied Larry; “I think I have faith sometimes; but when I looks at her, and when I thinks of him that’s gone, it all goes from me, and I’m *tossicated* and broken-hearted intirely. Och hone!—my child!—my darling!—my son!—my joy! And you too, my wife, my poor Alice, wirrastrua! Och hone! och hone!”

Here the poor man wept like an infant.

Dermot’s Bible lay on the table, and Vernon, taking it up, read the following verses: “*He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.*” (Psalm xci. 15.)

Larry made no reply, and he proceeded:

“*Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*” (Psalm l. 15.)

“*Thou shalt make thy prayer unto the Lord, and He shall hear thee.*” (Job xxii. 27.)

“*Hear my prayer, O God! attend unto my cry. From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee when my heart is overwhelmed within me. Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.*” (Psalm lxi. 1, 2.)

“Ah, sir!” said Larry: “it’s very beautiful: if I *could* pray.”

“My poor friend,” replied Vernon; “in the day of prosperity you could call upon

God; and will you not in the day of adversity?"

"God help me!" he answered; "the sorrow has put me all astray! Will your reverence pray?"

Vernon knelt down, and with deep fervour appeared to address the *God who heareth prayer*. As his words were Irish, I could not understand them; but the earnest tremulousness of his voice, and the glistening of his heaven-directed eye, showed how his whole soul was engaged in the work. Larry knelt also, and covered his face with his hands; but many a tear forced its way through his closed fingers. He remained on his knees for some minutes after Vernon had ceased to pray; and when he arose, though he still looked melancholy and dejected, his countenance had lost its former expression of despairing misery.

"There's a peace, sir," he said, "that earth can't give; for it comes when the heart turns away from earth intirely."

"Yes, Larry; it is the gift of God alone. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you*, is the promise of our blessed Redeemer; and if the tempter tries to rob you of that peace, lift up your heart at once to Him whose goodness you have experiencep. Though you may not be able with your tongue to pray, yet let your heart come before the Lord, who has said: '*Before they call,*

I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.' And, '*May the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ.*' "

"Amen!" was all poor Larry could utter ; but he wrung Vernon's offered hand with an almost convulsive grasp.

His prayers were heard ; for that very night Alice got some hours' quiet sleep, after which she appeared decidedly better.

From that time her bodily health rapidly improved ; and in about a fortnight after she was able to sit up in her wicker arm-chair. But, alas ! the sudden shock which she had received, and the violent fever which had succeeded, had been too much for her mind to bear, and her reason was gone !

CHAPTER XX.

FOR some weeks after her illness, Alice remained in apparent unconsciousness of what had happened ; and would, in plaintive tones, ask why Dermot was so long in coming. Then she would burst into a wild, convulsive

laugh, which pierced to the very heart of her bereaved husband.

In this state she continued a considerable time; at some periods extremely violent, at others, perfectly quiescent, until one day an incident occurred, which appeared to alter the current of her ideas.

In one of our visits we were accompanied by Mrs. Vernon, and a little boy, who was a great favourite with Alice. For a few minutes she talked to us in her usual incoherent strain; then, starting up with a solemn countenance, and with considerable dignity of manner, she approached Mrs. Vernon, saying, "Mrs. Vernon, do you love your child? Have you the feelings of a mother?—aye, tell me, have you?"

Mrs. Vernon replied only with tears.

Alice again exclaimed: "You have, I see you have! I see it in your eyes. Then tell me, *Where is Dermot?*" She pronounced the last words slowly, firmly, and distinctly.

Mrs. Vernon hesitated to reply, when Alice almost screamed, "Tell me, I say! where's my child? Why does he not come back?"

Vernon's little boy gently took her hand, saying, "Dermot will come no more, Alice."

"Come no more, child! come no more! Where is he gone to?" she said.

The child calmly raised his eyes to her perturbed and agitated countenance; and then, pointing to the sky, he said, "He's up

there, in heaven, Alice ; he's waiting for you to come there."

These few words seemed to have removed the cloud from her mind, and to have burst the flood-gates of her grief. She clasped the little one to her heart, and gave way to an agony of tears—tears which we did not attempt to restrain ; for they seemed to be a sweet and salutary relief to her oppressed heart and burning brain. At length, she gave expression to her varied and confused feelings in the following words:—

“Dermot, my child ! light of my eyes ! darling of my heart !—why do you wait so long ? Your father's here—the boat's ready—the sea's smooth—the bright sun is shining—even the dog looks up at me, and wonders. Why won't you come, my *lanna* ? But my flower is cut down ! he'll blossom no more ! my pretty bird will never sing again ! *Och hone* ! my heart's jewel ! but you're up there above us ! Are you, honey ? Yes, *cushla ma cree*, you are. You're looking at me ; and one you loved is keeping you from me ; and you won't come to your own poor mother. Her heart is broke—is broke—is broke intirely ! The praties is boiled, my darling, and the *baine gort** is ready ; and the *baine milis*,† if you like it better, ma vourneen ; and the *cead mille failthe* is before you ; and

* Sour milk

† Sweet milk.

you won't come; you won't! Oh, wirra! wirra! you won't; Och *mairg dawmsha! mairg dawmsha!** Oh, avick ma vourneen! avick, avick ma cree!"†

No restraint was put upon the expression of her grief; and she continued all that day in constant fits of weeping and lamentation. At last, wearied and worn out, she lay down to rest; tired nature sank into a sweet and refreshing sleep; and she awoke next morning without (as she said) "the fire that was about her head and heart."

CHAPTER XXI.

THUS we may see the very different effects of affliction upon different hearts.

Larry's feelings were not less ardent, nor were his affections less warm than those of Alice. *His* heart, too, had been so closely drawn to his cherished child, that, with Jacob, it seemed as if *his life was bound up in the lad's life*. But his was a chastened and purified affection. While Alice gave herself up to all the idolizing fondness of a

* Woe is me.

† Oh my beloved son,—my son,—the son of my heart.

doting mother, forgetful that the object of her love was in the hands of Him who, having power to give, has also power to take away; Larry's heart was drawn by the cords of gratitude from the gift to the gracious Giver; and each endearing quality in the character of his son only gave him fresh reason for thankfulness to Him who had endued him with these gifts.

When the blow came,—the sudden and awful blow,—which severed them for ever in this world, though stricken to the very soul, and for awhile bowed down beneath the weight of woe, yet never for a moment did he question the dealings of his heavenly Father. Meekly submissive, he exclaimed, "*I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. Thou, Lord, doest all things well: he was Thine: Thy will, not mine, be done.*"

Alice, on the contrary, had looked upon this precious boy as *all* her own. She had thought a mother's fondness could shield him from every ill. She had never allowed herself to admit the possibility of his removal from her. She had turned wilfully from the thought of her divine benefactor. Hence, when the hour of trial came, she sank at once. She had contemned the idea that God would rob her of her treasure; and when His mercy saw fit to withdraw her heart's idol, she fell powerless and wretched beneath the stroke. He had spoken softly

to her soul; but she had refused Him admittance, and in the hour of desolation He was not to be found. *He had withdrawn Himself, and was gone.* But it was only for a time. It was not His will that this stricken one should perish. The day was coming when she, too, was to *hear His voice, and be led into His fold.*

CHAPTER XXII.

A FEW days after this sudden revulsion in the mind of poor Alice, we again visited her cottage.

The kitchen was empty, and Mrs. Vernon, softly entering the bedroom, beheld a sight, new indeed, but how delightful! Alice was on her knees; her hands were clasped together, and her whole soul seemed to ascend with each petition to her God.

Mrs. Vernon's eyes filled with tears. She gently closed the door, without being perceived by Alice, and we left the house.

Not far distant we met Larry, who accosted us with, "Good morning to your honour's reverence. Were you along with Alice, *Mistis?*" he asked.

Mrs. Vernon told him what she had just seen; and he replied, "Ah, *Mistis* dear,

the Lord's ways is wonderful! Shure, after all that He sent upon us, and after the senses was *druv* out of her intirely, the dear knows; but He's bringing her back now, and turning her to His-self. She do be ever and always axing me to read *the* book to her; and she crying like an infant, not for her trouble at all; but all her talk is, that she is a great sinner."

"Ah, Larry!" answered Mrs. Vernon, "we may see now why it was the Lord saw fit thus to afflict you."

"Wisha, ma'am, I do see it, your honour," said he; "and long ago I seen it; and, though I haven't faith enough to be glad—though it broke the very core of my heart—I'm not sorry."

Poor Alice! though the Lord had afflicted He had not forsaken her: *the time to favour her, yea, the set time, was come!* and that proud unyielding heart, which had refused to bend, was melted by the all-powerful beams of the Divine Spirit. She had, as it were, exclaimed in the bitterness of her grief, "*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger.*"

But a friend was at hand; and her pious husband had whispered to her: "*God doth not WILLINGLY afflict, or grieve the children of men. Let us then search our hearts, and*

try our ways." And earnestly had he besought the Lord to aid them in the work, and finally to "*lead them in the way everlasting.*"

What the result was we shall perceive from the words of Alice herself.

In one of Mrs. Vernon's almost daily visits, Alice exclaimed, "Ah, ma'am! I was very unhappy last night; I was awake all night, thinking."

"Thinking of what, Alice?" inquired Mrs. Vernon.

"Why, ma'am, your honour, thinking of everything that happened; and I was getting very angry with the Lord, to say He'd take my only one from me, and spare theirs that has plenty. There's Nelly Regan and Kathleen M'Carthy, and all of 'em has a housefull; and my beautiful child, my diamond, my only one, in his *cowld*, dark grave!" Here she began to weep bitterly.

Mrs. Vernon replied: "And did you allow yourself to give way to such feelings, my poor Alice?"

"No, ma'am; I began to think of what Larry often tells me, that the Lord never *willingly* afflicts; and, says I to myself, there surely must be some reason for it. And ah, ma'am! with a scalding heart I called to mind the time, and it wasn't once nor twice, but many and many a time, that I said, I wouldn't give up my child. And I usedn't to care

at all about the Lord, nor wouldn't hearken to His word at all: only, for I thought it would pleasure my poor boy, I did sometimes."

"And you see, Alice, that the merciful Lord loved you too well to allow you to go on in your sin."

"I do, ma'am; I do. 'Tis His love makes me cry, and not His anger at all. Oh, what wonderful love He had for us poor creatures! Sure He had a right to let me go on in my wickedness to the end, and to destroy me for ever. Oh, *mone deeliagh*, and what did I do to deserve His love, or what will I ever do for Him, poor sinner as I am!"

Here this poor, humbled creature wept again, with the overwhelming sense of her Redeemer's love.

"We did nothing to deserve His love, Alice," said Mrs. Vernon. "While '*we were yet sinners, He first loved us. Of His own will He laid down His life for us. No man took it from Him; but He laid it down of Himself, that His sheep might hear His voice, and follow Him, and live.*'"

"And oh, ma'am!" cried Alice, clasping her poor, worn hands together, "can we do nothing for Him?"

"We can, Alice; and it is a very small thing He asks."

"That's our hearts, ma'am," she replied, quickly; and that's what I refused. *Oh a*

weenach, how could I love even *you* better nor Him! My blessed boy, you often told me that, and I didn't give heed. How could I be so hardened intirely? Oh, ma'am! there's light on it all now! He took what kept my heart from Him, and blinded my poor eyes from His love. And 'twas all to save the soul of one who never loved Him! and His name be praised! His holy name be praised!" said she, reverently curtseying; "'tis the first time I said it since I lost my jewel!"

And this feeling did not subside. Alice daily went on, drinking "*water from the wells of salvation*," and under the teaching of her husband, by the Spirit's aid, "*growing in grace, and in the knowledge of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*." Instead of a proud self-satisfied worldling, she is now become one of the meekest of believing Christians. Deeply sensible of her own unworthiness, she casts herself, in childlike confidence, upon her Redeemer. Feeling the great change in her altered mind, she gives all the praise and all the glory to Him who caused that change.

The last time I visited my friends, I found her and Larry still living "*in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life*."

There is in the churchyard of Inniskerry a lowly grave beneath the shade of a beautiful cypress. There rests all that is mortal of

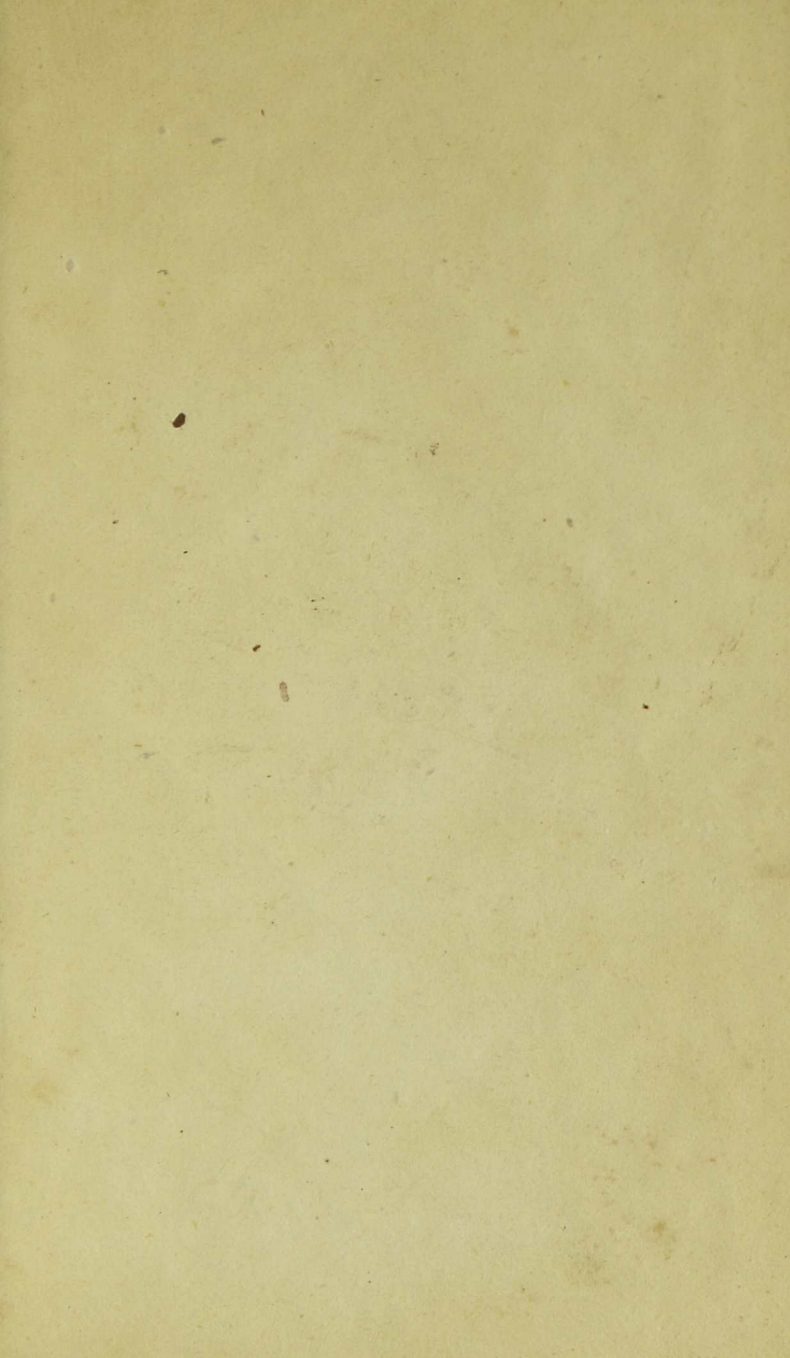
the happy Dermot; and Vernon's children have decked their young favourite's tomb with a variety of lovely flowers. There, the first pale primrose is seen to blossom; and there, in their season, the sweet-scented violet and lily of the valley spread their richest fragrance.

No stone marks the spot; but bereaved affection loves to linger there; and often has the green sod been moistened by the sorrowful, but not rebellious, tears of the lonely parents.

There Alice comes each evening to muse upon the dead. With her apron rolled over her arms, she sits and rocks herself backward and forward in unison with the winds, which, whistling through the trees, seem as it were to utter a requiem for the dead. But she sits there, not to mourn or wail; but, turning her heart and her thoughts to the God of her salvation, and to the unseen world above,

She lifts the eye of Faith to Heaven,
And thinks "my child is there!"

THE END.



C-5139-S711

