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Answered

"Now," said Hester Deane, in a triumphant tone, and with an extensive sweep of her arm—"now confess, Eleanore Lee, that I have not exaggerated the beauties of Ireland! Where would you see such coloring, such greens and purples? And look at the clouds! They are distinctly Irish clouds."

Eleanore Lee laughed. The two girls had dismounted from their bicycles, and stood on a slight elevation that commanded a fair view of the country around. On the right hand the hills covered with the tender green mountain grasses and patches of heather, rose to considerable elevation; on the left was the gold rocky coast that is so characteristic of the west of Ireland, and beyond that the restless Atlantic.

Eleanore Lee laughed. She was some years older than her companion, and the strain and the worry of a journalistic life made her look less young than she really was. She had consented to spend her short annual holiday in Ireland at her companion's urgent entreaty. Despite their difference in years, and also in disposition, a very warm friendship existed between the two, though Hester Deane never guessed how much of her success in finding abundant employment as an artist on various illustrated papers was due to Eleanore, and not to Eleanore's influence.

"Yes," the latter assented, "the country is very beautiful; but the clouds, don't they foretell rain?"

Hester looked up to the sky. "I think not, and we may as well walk down this hill. It is rather rough."

"Rather!" Eleanore laughed. "Well, rough, then," Hester said; and after a momentary pause added: "I can scarcely believe it is two years since I was here before."

"Time flies," Eleanore said. "I suppose so. I was summoned to Monte Carlo from here, Eleanore."

"I know," Eleanore said. "Poor Lionel!" Hester's voice grew a little tremulous. He was my only brother. He lost the money of his employer—he was a clerk in a big London warehouse—and then—"

Hester paused. "Yes dear," Eleanore had never before heard Hester speak of her dead brother, but she had learned from others how the foolish lad, when on a business journey, had been tempted "to try his luck" in the fair southern town; how he had lost, not only his own money, but that of others and ended by taking his own life. She had heard, too, that Hester had arrived at his bedside in time to hear his last words and close his dying eyes.

"It was dreadful. Poor Lionel! Poor boy! I hate the name of that place. I was ill for a long time afterwards."

"Yes," Eleanore said. "There was a silence broken by an exclamation from Hester. "Why, it is going to rain! And we shall be drenched."

"Are there no houses near?" Eleanore asked. "Not one! But get up Eleanore. There is an old chapel a short distance away; I think it is always open. We can take shelter there."

Ten or twelve minutes brought the two to Mountrath Chapel. The building was a small one and showed signs of disuse, being used only on rare occasions as a place of worship. The door was partially open and the two entered it as the rain began to come down in torrents. "Well, we're in luck to gain shelter," Hester said. "Come inside, Eleanore."

Eleanore hesitated. "I have never been in a Catholic church before. I have always tried to avoid entering one," she said. "Oh, you strict-Calvinist, is it?"

Hester laughed. "I wonder you haven't grown more liberal minded, Eleanore—really, I do."

"I suppose it comes from my upbringing," Eleanore explained. "I don't think that I am illiberal, but I confess I like to see people keeping to the practice of their religion, whatever it may be."

And I don't find fault with any one's religion, nor approve of any one's," Hester laughed. "I am new womanish enough for that."

"I wish you weren't," Eleanore said, rather sadly. "I dislike that expression 'New Woman.'"

"Eleanore!" "Yes I do. A woman should be religious. If she isn't—"

"Well, if she isn't?" "Never mind now. What a very small building, and how ruinous the place seems!"

"Mass is said only on the occasion of a funeral or the like," Hester said. "A new church has been built a mile or so away."

"And that altar! Is it an altar?"

Eleanore paused where, just outside the sanctuary rails, a statue of the Blessed Virgin stood. As a work of art it possessed little value, and the lace drapery surrounding the wooden erection on which the figure stood was worn and yellow; but half a dozen lately gathered bunches of wild flowers testified that some pious persons still came there in reverential mood.

"No, no; not an altar. It is just a statue of the Blessed Virgin, of the Madonna."

"I wonder what is written on that paper in her hands," Hester spoke in clear high tones.

"If you care to hear I will tell you," a man's voice said, and the two strangers turned round to meet the pleasant smile of a young priest. The rain was running into little pools from his long thin coat.

"Like yourself, I presume," he said, "I have been caught in the shower. One needs to remember that the Irish climate is a veritable one. I am the curate of the parish, Father Greer."

"And we, two tourists from London," Hester explained. "I was wondering what might be written on that paper." She pointed towards the sheet of paper and held it forth. "Just these words: 'I leave Michael to your care, Mother, Bridget Joyce.'"

"What do they mean?" Hester asked, bending forward to examine curiously the slip of paper in the priest's hand.

The priest before answering, drew forward a rough bench. "Will you not sit down?" he said courteously; "the shower promises to be a rather lengthy one."

"Thank you," Hester said. She had constituted herself spokeswoman, and Eleanore, naturally, and always distrustful of anything Catholic, allowed her to do so.

"To me," the priest began, "Bridget Joyce's simple faith and confidence is most touching. She was a poor peasant woman who had suffered much. Her husband had been evicted from his farm and died. Her one son, the Michael spoken of here"—Father Greer touched the paper—"was rather wild, I am told. No one said there was much harm in the lad. He was merely a bit unsettled and very impulsive. Well, on one of his hunting-poaching, perhaps, I should say—expeditions, the son of the landlord who had evicted his father had him arrested, and Michael was sent to jail for three months. On his liberation he made use of many threats against Captain Deverill."

"Yes," Hester said. Eleanore was listening quietly. "Three weeks after Michael's release from jail Captain Deverill was murdered. He was hurled from the cliffs that lie between this and his father's estate. Michael was seen lurking about the spot not very long before the murder—was supposed to have been committed."

"Could not Captain Deverill have fallen over?" Eleanore asked. "There was evidence that a struggle had taken place. The ground was soft," the priest ex-



EASTER MORNING FROM PAINTING BY HOFMANN

plained. "Michael was arrested and failed to account for his whereabouts on that particular evening in any satisfactory manner, and was sentenced to imprisonment for life. He said he had fallen asleep in Garva Wood."

"Garva Wood! Hester ejaculated, rising from the bench on which he was seated. "Garva Wood! The little grove that lies beyond Fallon Head?"

"Yes," the priest answered. "When—at what date was Captain Deverill murdered?" the girl demanded. Eleanore was looking towards her friend in some surprise.

"On the afternoon of the 20th of July, two years since," Father Greer said promptly. "Oh!" Hester exclaimed. "Was he here then. On that very evening I received the telegram from Monte Carlo. The girl turned to Eleanore."

"Yes; but what do you mean?" the latter inquired. "I saw a man lying sleeping in Garva Wood on that day, that afternoon, and—" Hester paused. The priest smiled faintly. "That might not mean much in Michael's favor," he said. "Did you never hear of the murder?"

"No; I was summoned to Monte Carlo, to a brother's death-bed, and then I was ill for a long time," Hester explained. "Your statement might be useful to poor Michael, but I don't know. However, it might be well to acquaint the proper authorities with it," Father Greer said.

"But there is more," Hester spoke nervously and hurriedly. "I had a camera with me and I was in the habit of taking instantaneous snapshots here and there of the scenery and houses. That afternoon I had been busy as usual, and I had just taken some photos on tin plates. When I examined them long after I found the appearance of two men wrestling as I supposed. The men were standing on or near some rocks known as—" Hester paused. "Grant's Rock," Father Greer said.

"Yes, yes; and should these figures be Captain Deverill and his murderer, the murderer could not have been Michael Joyce I saw in Garva Wood," Hester said. "I saw in Garva Wood," Hester said. "I saw in Garva Wood," Hester said.

"I see, I see!" the priest exclaimed. "Should you know the man again?"

"Yes, I have a keen memory for faces, I remember remarking this," Hester said. "He was of very dark complexion, tall—oh, he had lost the first finger of his left hand!"

"Yes," the priest said excitedly. "Michael had but four fingers on the left hand! It looks as if his mother's confidence in Mary our Mother, was well founded."

"What do you mean, Father?" Eleanore asked the last word half indignantly. "Well, while poor Bridget Joyce always professed her son's innocence of the crime which he was charged with, less insistence did she have her belief that the Blessed Virgin would aid him."

"I saw a man lying sleeping about a quarter of a mile from this church, and there was never a day foul or fair, but she was to be found on her knees invoking Mary's aid—attended her on her death-bed. Even then, the hope of her son's ultimate liberation did not fail. She had the lines on this paper written out and I promised her that I should place it where you ladies saw it. You saw it, didn't you?"

"Hester," should leave Michael as he is, Hester said. "Oh, I hope so, I hope so!" Hester cried. "Somehow I blame myself for being in ignorance of the trial."

"I don't see how you can," Father Greer said. "And now what is to be done?" Hester asked. "I know nothing of what should be done."

"But I do," Eleanore said. "A distant cousin of mine is Under-Secretary of State for Ireland. He will know the quickest way in which to set to work. I never knew the use of influential relations before. Won't you go away, Hester, and write to your cousin in Dublin at once? And, while waiting, Hester Mary returned."

News From Ireland

Armagh. The death occurred on March 2 of Rev. Mother Robertson of the Sacred Heart Convent, Armagh. Died—March 2, at his residence the Mall, Armagh, Henry A. Worsley, Inspector of Schools, Armagh.

Cavan. The death of Sister Maria Paula Cahill, daughter of Thomas Cahill, Lissen, Strabane, at the early age of 30 years, occurred at the Convent of Mercy, Cavan, on Thursday, February 23. She was deceased, who had been ill for some time, was buried at 11 o'clock on Friday, the 24th, when a burning funeral took place, resulting in her death the following day.

Down. A young man, named, aged 19 years, got drunk at a wedding party near Lismore. Going outside the house he fell and was found there in the morning through a very thick fog.

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